National College of Ireland

An Assessment of Cultural Transition after a Merger and Acquisition in a Gambling Company

A Case Study

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An Assessment of Cultural Transition after a Merger and Acquisition in a Gambling Company

Abstract

This study explored change management in a gambling organisation that has recently gone through an acquisition. The acquired company had gone through a failed merger so a cultural integration strategy was put in place which was led bottom up with employee involvement from the very beginning. A case study approach was taken using qualitative questionnaires across five of the major office locations using the cultural web change model as an assessment tool to evaluate the current temperature of the culture. Results of the study indicated that the cultural web gave a good overview of the current culture of the organisation and clear recommendations could be given as a result of the model.

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List of Abbreviations

Case Study Research	CSR
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development	CIPD
Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Hewlett-Packard	HP
Human Resources	HR
Mergers and Acquisitions	M&A
United Kingdom	UK
Units of Analysis	UOA

Chapter One- Introduction

1.1　Introduction

Within the past few years there has been mergers and acquisitions (M&A) in the gambling industry occurring at an accelerated rate, many large conglomerates joining forces in order to dominate the industry with analysts predicting that this sector will continue to grow in the years to come (Thomas, 2015). The United Kingdom (UK) Gambling Commission reporting revenues of £5.6bn in 2010 however by March 2016, revenues were reported to be £8.8bn. This is an increase of 57% growth with no sign of it slowing down (The Good Gambling Guide, 2017). Although the gambling sector is not a new business sector, online gambling has changed the face of gambling at a rapid speed. Customers do not need to go to betting shops or casinos any more in order to gamble, they can simple download an application on their phone or log on to a website twenty four hours a day, seven days a week to place a bet (Smith, 2016). While the business motives for these M&A's is growth, synergies and dominance, the human factor of organisational culture cannot be overlooked.

1.2　Research Problem

It is argued by academics that due to the number of levels of culture within the two firms who are involved in the M&A, culture is difficult to interpret (Teerikangas & Very 2006). They further noted that culture unfolds and changes over time and therefore the methods used to integrate the cultures depends on the integration strategy, the process of the cultural integration, whether they choose one organisations culture traits over the other and buy in from senior management. Drucker stated "company cultures are like country cultures. Never try to change one. Try, instead, to work with what you've got" (Sources of Insight, 2016), Cultural change and integration is a long term strategy, continuous attention must be paid to it in the strategic plan which is often not the case as organisations lose the momentum (PWC, 2017).

1.3　The Organisation

There is a famous quote which is attributed with Peter Drucker that states "culture eats strategy for breakfast" (AZ Quotes, 2016). This study will explore organisational culture in the context of an M&A within the online gambling sector to assess whether the introduction of a new culture is

having a positive influence or in fact any influence at all. A single company case study will be used to investigate this area. The name of this company will not be divulged and will be referred to as Company X during the study however it will be available on examiners request.

1.4   Background to the Organisation

This organisation was involved in a merger in 2011 and an acquisition in 2016. In 2011, two of the largest online gambling companies merged to utilise the strengths of each other. In the business world this merger would have been viewed as a 'merger of equals' (Investopedia, 2017), each had focused on different areas of the online gambling business and came together to bring what they believed would be a force in the online gambling world. The executive team from both companies remained within the newly merged company, they continued to run the business as two separate companies failing to create a corporate strategy around synergies or organisational culture. Eventually this led to the monetary value of the organisation becoming less than half of what it was worth when they originally merged. In 2016, a much smaller company acquired the organisation, this is turn meant that there was now three different organisational cultures. Senior management reluctantly agreed on an initiative driven by the HR Director which is the introduction of a new culture rather than cherry picking which of the cultures best suited the newly enlarged group. This culture will be driven by five values and behaviours associated with these values.

The values were chosen by the employee's through local workshops at each of twelve office locations. The top ten values were chosen by the employees and two representatives from each location came together in one global workshop to identify the positive and negative behaviours associated with the values. All employees voted to decide on the top five values and behaviours which would be utilised going forward in order to create one single culture. While this strategy was led by the HR department, employee buy in was encouraged by offering incentives such as vouchers in the form of a competition for employees whom designed visuals around the chosen values, values champions were voted by the employees in each location with the sole purpose that they would create local and global awareness on the values and behaviours. HR will drive the values with HR practices such as performance management, talent management and a newly created career development framework.

1.5   Purpose of this Case Study

Research into the area of post acquisitions suggests that the culture of the acquiring company would usually be the main culture that is the driver for change (Teerikangas, & Irrmann, 2016). This research will set out to explore an alternative model to cultural integration following a failed merger and subsequent acquisition. The model adopted is a bottom up approach, led by the employees to ascertain if this approach might be deemed more successful. The research adopts a single subject case study examining the experience of one organisation over a period of one and a half years. Chapter two will provide a review of the literature surrounding organisational culture, merger and acquisitions and change management. Three models of change management will be analysed to assess their effectiveness in measuring organisational culture during a merger and acquisition. Other factors that influence culture will also be examined. Chapter three will detail the methodological approach taken by the researcher and within this chapter the aims and objectives of the study will be explored. Chapter four presents the findings of the data and the themes which emerged. Chapter five provides a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature within this study. Chapter six offers conclusions and recommendations with relation to this case study and highlights areas in the future where future research might follow.

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Chapter Two -Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review will focus on the mergers and acquisitions within the context of organisational culture. The aim of this study is to explore a change management model to assess if it is a valuable tool to use when major change has occurred. The research question for this study is 'Is the Cultural Web Change Model an effective tool in assisting cultural transition in a gambling organisation that has recently experienced an M&A?'

The first section in this chapter will provide a more specific analysis of the literature around mergers and acquisitions. The second section will detail the drivers of organisational culture within the context of M&A's. The final section will analyse three theoretical frameworks in the relation to this study. Lewin's three-step model, Kotter's eight steps for change and Johnson and Scholes cultural web (Johnson and Scholes, 1999; Kotter, 1995; Lewin, 1947). The chapter will conclude with a summary section.

2.2 Mergers and Acquisitions

Within the past three decades Merger and Acquisition's (M&A) are common practice in the business world (Weber, & Shlomo, 2012). Organisations with similarities to their business partners can benefit from increased power within the marketplace, economies of scale and economies of scope (Dauber, 2012) and with globalisation deals can be done at a much faster pace (Ismail, Baki, Omar, & Bebenroth, 2016). However research into the area suggests that more than two thirds of M&A's fail as they do not achieve the desired strategic or financial objectives (Dung & Moisescu, 2013; Napier, 1989), so why do companies bother?

M&A's have radically changed the corporate landscape across the globe (Duksaite, 2009). The motive usually financial and strategic with the goal of achieving growth at a much faster rate than might be accomplished by simply building the organisation year on year (Appelbaum, Roberts & Shapiro, 2013: Johnson, Whittington, & Scholes, 2012).

2.2.1 History of M&A's

M&A's often happen in short periods of concentrated activity known as waves and tend to last for five to seven years (McNamara, Haleblain, & Dykes, 2008). These waves began in at the end

of the ninetieth century, each wave having its own characteristics. The first wave in 1893 to 1904 was a time of horizontal mergers and reflected the industrial revolution (Harford, 2005; Lipton, 2006). While it is not the intention of this paper to do a systematic review of these waves for the purpose of understanding M&A's Table. 1 shows the history of merger waves (Boundless, 2017).

Period	Name	Facet
1893- 1904	First Wave	Horizontal Mergers
1919-1929	Second Wave	Vertical Mergers
1955- 1970	Third Wave	Diversified Conglomerate Mergers
1974- 1989	Fourth Wave	Co-generic mergers: Hostile Takeovers: Corporate Raiding
1993-2000	Fifth Wave	Cross- Border Mergers, Mega Mergers
2003- 2008	Sixth Wave	Globalisation, Share hold Activism, Private Equity, LBO
2011 -2018	Seventh Wave	Current

Table. 1 Adapted from: Source: Boundless (2017)

Research suggests that a seventh wave began in 2011 with deals beginning to emerge within the technological sector leading with the acquisition of Instagram by Facebook in 2012 (Clark, 2013). Optimism returning to the markets having gone through a period since the crash in 2008 where organisations were risk adverse, (Cordeiro, 2014, p.7) states that "the value of mergers and acquisitions globally reaching 1.75 trillion U.S. dollars in the first six months of 2014, an increase of 75% over the same period last year and the largest volume of transactions since 2007". The significance of this is important to consider as (McNamara, et all 2008) posit that organisations that 'acquire' at the beginning of a wave have a higher performance rate than one that 'acquires' in the height of the wave.

2.2.2 Risks of M&A's

During a wave excessive premiums or over paying in a bidding war can lead organisations to overestimate the value of the company and borrowing monies that over inflate the value of it (Sinha & Sanchari, 2014; Steger, & Kummer, 2007). An example of excessive premiums being

paid was the Hewlett-Packard (HP) acquisition of Autonomy in 2011 for $11 billion, a few months after the deal had been completed, HP management claimed that Autonomy were a smaller and less profitable company than had been stated and accounting irregularities had been uncovered by HP, a legal battle ensued with HP having to write off $8.8 billion (Monaghan, 2016). Eccles, Lanes, & Wilson, (1999) suggest a combination of strict process and analytical rigor will guide senior executives to ensure they are pay the correct price. Yet despite the volatility of the current world economy and countries failing to pay their sovereign debt, organisations are using M&A's to grow their business as it's easier to buy growth and not build it (Cordeiro, 2014). But what happens when they fail?

2.2.3   What are the Reasons that M&A's Fail?

A large amount of research into M&A's suggest many reasons why M&A's fail, (Schuler & Jackson, 2001) argue factors such as misalignment of strategies, unskilled execution by the management team , lack of capable leadership, underestimating the costs involved and the eventual drain to the finances all have an impact on a failure of an M&A. Organisational culture however is now acknowledged as an equally important influence to consider when deciding on a merger or acquisition (Appelbaum, et al, 2013; Haspeslagh, & Jemison, 1991; Stahl, & Voigt, 2008). The importance of considering organisational culture is also highlighted by (Applebaum et al., 2013 p.34) "While strategic, cost, revenue and legal issues drive most deals it is cultural issues that determine their success, it is not an exaggeration that how companies handle culture issues is probably the single most decisive factor that can make or break a deal." (Appelbaum, et al, 2013).

Much of the research into M&A's failure have found that cultural differences post M&A can also have an impact on its success or failure (Dung & Moisescu, 2013: Schuler & Jackson, 2001). An example of cultural failure is when German based Daimler-Benz and Amercian -based Chrysler merged in 1995, it was a marriage from hell culturally. Chrysler's culture was one of creativity and openness where as Damiler- Benz was higharchiel and conservative (Appelbaum, et al, 2013). This total mismatch of culture led to its eventual failure, so why is it that organisations do not learn.

One of the main reasons cited is the use of consultants, lawyers, accountants and technical specialists from outside of the organisation while the deal is being brokered (Sinha & Sanchari,

2014; Weber, & Shlomo, 2012) and the motivation for senior management during the negotiations is the get the deal across the line failing to conduct due diligence on cultural fit. This can be addressed by involving HR as early as possible to prepare an integration strategy around change management, policies and procedures. (Sinha & Sanchari, 2014). Why then is HR often the last to get involved?

2.2.4 HR and Integration

The HR function usually plays a secondary role during an M&A planning stages, the managers focus is to get the deal across the line and think about the softer issues later (Mirc, 2013). Haspeslagh & Jamison (1991) postulates that the key difference between success and failure lies in the decisions made around the integration process. Redundancies can often occur as a result of an M&A which is turn can lead to ambiguity, uncertainty and conflict (Bajaj, 2009; Ovseiko, Melham, Fowler, & Buchan, 2015). Baker, (2002, p 8) agrees stating that "successful leaders (Herb Kellerher of Southwest Airlines, Lee Iacocca of Chrysler, Alfred P. Sloan of G.E., General Robert E. Wood of Sears, Roebuck & Co.) have succeeded in transforming the culture of their organisations". They did this by strategic planning, ensuring culture is aligned and creating a philosophy around values (Baker, 2002).

An analysis conducted by (Anon Hewitt, 2011) noted three key differences from organisations who had been successful in some or all of their deals verses organisations who had failed:

1. *They focused on culture while starting the due diligence process (Anon Hewitt, 2011).* Putting a well-managed M&A integration team in place is a vital factor in successful M&A's (Schuler & Jackson, 2001). Companies are now seeing the benefits of focusing on integration much earlier in the process, (PWC, 2017) purporting that due diligence is too late to begin to question if people will integrate, they discovered that more and more companies are addressing this concern during the deal screening. They found that organisations concentrating on integration was up by 32% in 2016 from 21% in 2013, citing that "this accelerating trend helps explain the financial and operational improvements that organisations are reporting in many areas" (PWC, 2017, p.14).

2. *They put strategies in place to ensure there was a dedicated approach to culture and analysed the newly combined organisational allowing for a new cultural integration*

process (Anon Hewitt, 2011). Typically integration of cultures start when the deal is announced, key individuals are identified, and HR should be a strategic partner with the business at this stage (Antila, 2006). Companies such as General Electric (GE) who have a good history with M&A's always ensuring that retaining key talent is a top priority for them (Schuler & Jackson, 2001) also in order for successful post acquisition integration, the importance of good leadership to implement the changes and create a new vision is key(Savović, 2012). Cisco for example created a position of a senior executive and team, dedicated to lead all aspects of their M&A's (Schuler & Jackson, 2001).

3. *They communicated change in a proactive rather than reactive manner (Anon Hewitt, 2011).* Research now is showing that an important factor in overcoming resistance to change by employees is transparent and open communication (Appelbaum, Karelis, Henaff, & McLaughlin, 2017: Sinha & Sanchari, 2014). Organisations that communicate when change occurs tends to increase the perception of the employees that the company is honest, cares about them and is trustworthy (Weber, Rachman-Moore, & Taraba, 2012). Furthermore ensuring that communication goes out to all stakeholders involved in a timely manner is the practices conducted in most successful M&A's (Schuler & Jackson, 2001).

Accepting the opinion of the literature that cultural focus, strategies around culture and communication influence successful M&A's, the following section will focus on organisational culture and the specific drivers of culture during an M&A which are the leaders of the organisation, peer to peer recognition schemes and employer branding.

2.3   Organisational Culture

In the late seventies/early eighties organisational culture began to emerge as the key component to organisational performance and it was noticed if managed effectively could lead companies gaining the competitive advantage (Baker, 2002). European and American companies began to expand their business globally in order to avail of cheaper workforce, tax breaks and access to materials creating multinational corporations while bringing their management practices and ideas with them (Fleury, 2009).

Academic opinions into the area of organisational culture have many definitions of what it is (Barney, 1986 pp.66) defines culture "as a complex set of values, beliefs, assumptions, and symbols that define the way in which a firm conducts its business". Likewise (Schein , 2010, pp.18) defines it as a "pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group has learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems". He states that culture is to an organisation what a personality is to an individual, a force we cannot see but are aware of its presence (Schein, 2010) or simply put 'how things are done around here'. However all of the literature written within the area of organisational culture appear to concur with the definition that culture is a set of values, behaviours and norms that makes the organisation what it is (Barney, 1986; Johnson & Scholes, 1999: Handy, 1995: Schein, 2010)

2.3.1   Drivers of Organisational Culture

When we look at organisational culture and what drives it, it is not a one size fits all model, no two company cultures are the same (Charmer, 1999), however Schein (2010) argues that culture is driven from the top down, he believed that leadership and culture go hand in hand together and that culture and strategy are the core responsibility of the leadership team within every organisation. Schein (2010) maintains that the strategic plans, beliefs and values of the founder of the organisation should be cascaded down and implemented by its leadership team (Schein, 2010). Other academics in this area also agree that culture is driven by the leadership team if it is to succeed (Dawson, 2010; Handy, 1995). The challenge with a values driven organisation led by the leadership team values could be in direct conflict with the actual reality of the organisation itself. Schein's emphasis on leadership could disregard a more holistic approach to values and beliefs and in fact could over look or not have any employee buy- in at all (Kotter, 1995). Schein (2010) is also assuming that within the leadership team that are driving culture, the organisation is not embroiled in a 'them and us' culture and employee participation has been encouraged.

This asks the question, how does the leadership team get employee buy-in when it comes to promoting the company values? Human beings are fundamentality social by nature with a need to belong to something, and given that we spend a large portion of our time within the workplace having a place where we feel appreciated is a key aspect to employee engagement (Schweyer, &

Callahan, 2012). In the world of social media websites like Facebook for example where 'likes' and a 'thumbs up' are given on an daily basis by your friends and acquaintances for merely sharing a photograph or an amusing story has led companies to see how the benefits of peer to peer recognition can help shape organisational culture by bringing what is used in everyday life of their employees outside of work to their working environment (Schweyer, & Callahan, 2012).

2.3.2 Peer to Peer Recognition

A peer to peer recognition platform gives employees the opportunity to acknowledge each other in a setting that reflects the company values, organisational goals, direction and culture. This is driven by the employees with no input from management and allows employees to be part of creating a culture of recognition (Achor, 2016). This type of platform also allows management to take on other points of view regarding their team members which they might have missed as their focus tends to concentrate on the annual review process only when recognising employees (Zielinski, 2012). Great place to work (2012) notes that companies high in their ranking list set aside a budget for employee recognition schemes.

While the research suggests the many benefits of peer to peer recognition (Zaslow, 2007, p.1) argues that a constant stream of recognition could turn many adults into what he described as "narcissistic praise-junkies" if praise is not given on a regular basis. Other concerns on peer to peer recognition schemes are if managers deem an employee an average or below average performer while their peers do not, what affect does that have on the employee manager relationship? (Zielinski, 2012). Fundamentally it is agreed by researchers that these schemes can have a very positive impact within the workplace if managing correctly with (Achor, 2016) noting in their research with JetBlue Airline and their findings based on the introduction of a peer to peer recognition scheme was "The JetBlue data revealed that for every 10% increase in people reporting being recognised, JetBlue saw a 3% increase in retention and a 2% increase in engagement" (Achor, 2016).

There are many drivers that create organisational culture, employer branding is one important major factor. When we investigate organisations such as Google for example, to some a role at Google is seen as the golden ticket of jobs. They will endure the long and drawn out interview process for the small chance that they become a "Googler" such is the power of the Google brand

when it comes to their culture (Barney, 1986; CIPD, 2007). The next section we will address the importance of having a brand integration strategy.

2.3.3 Employer Branding

Within the integration process branding or perhaps rebranding is an essential yet often overlooked factor in M&A success (Dung & Moisescu, 2013). Ettenson, and Knowles, (2006) who conducted research of two hundred and seven M&A's discovered within that two thirds of M&A's they researched, a brand integration strategy was a low priority for the executive team pre M&A. Research suggests that failing to include a branding strategy pre M&A can have repercussions across the business from shareholders and employees to the customers alike (Dung & Moisescu, 2013; Ettenson & Knowles, 2006). Osolind, (2017) agree stating that brand loyalty can have an impact on an M&A with employees feeling territorial of their 'brand' especially if they are part of the acquired company, creating cultural integration challenges and mistrust. Ensuring the unification of the company brand immediately after an M&A can begin the journey to galvanize teams and breakdown any cultural legacy (Ettenson & Knowles, 2006).

2.3.4 Summary

Every organisations culture has its own rules, structure and style that make it what is (Appelbaum, et al, 2013). Culture can be seen as a barrier to change as it's not something that is tangible and is therefore difficult to decipher (Scholes & Johnson, 2000). However as many academics in this area have observed, while organisational culture is a concept, "it has powerful effects on the way organisations think and behave" (Desson & Clouthier, 2010, p.3). Change management looks at where we are now and to how we get to where we want to be. The next section will discuss change management and analyse three change management frameworks to assess their suitability to this study.

2.4 Change Management

While M&As can be considered a major change for organisations, companies are undergoing other changes throughout their business lifecycle in order to remain competitive. The pace of business is changing triggered by factors such as market competitiveness, globalisation, and innovation in technology and as stated mergers and acquisitions (Brisson-Banks, 2010; Price, & Chahal, 2006). The process of change is not something that most people relish (Sohmen, 2016.

p.103) states that "our future is strongly rooted in our present and past", people like familiarity and change brings fear, uncertainty and insecurity. Likewise (Kezar, 2001) challenges whether people can easily change or if human beings are just too fundamentality stuck in their ways however, change is inevitable.

When it became apparent during the Western Electric Hawthorne studies 1924–32 that paying attention to employee's feelings and attitudes increased productivity, academic researchers began to look a systematic models of addressing change in business (Axelrod, 2001; Hassard, 2012). Desson & Clouthier, (p.5. 2010) define the change management process as "planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting on a series of tasks and activities required to achieve change objectives". They further note reactive change is a response to outside triggers such as new legislation for example and usually occurs over a short space of time with no time to formulate a plan whereas proactive change can be managed within frameworks and step by step procedures (Desson & Clouthier, 2010).

2.4.1 Models of Change Management

There are numerous models of change management within academic research which can be utilised to implement change across a wide and varied range of organisations and contexts. These models can show in practical terms the step by step process by which organisations can facilitate change by identifying the key areas of focus for managers and change agents. According to (Kezar, 2001 pp. 40) "each model represents a different ideology with its own assumptions about the nature of human beings and social organisations".

The very nature of change is the change itself and many of the models show commonalities which can be used as a guide for organisations but it is not a one size fits all. There are positive aspects of all which can be adapted to the needs of an organisation (Brisson-Banks, 2010). Models such as Kotter's (1996) 'eight step model' and Kanter, Stein, & Jick's, (1992) 'ten commandments for executing change' focus on the leadership team to implement and drive change (Kanter et al., 1992; Kotter, 1996). Other models mirror Lewin's (1951) model of change which is examining, planning and implementing (Beckhard, 1969: Bridges 1991: Lewin, 1951). Certain model focus on particular processes, and drivers of change, for example, Johnson and Scholes, (1999) model emphasizes organisational culture as the driver for change where as

Argyris and Schon, (1978) examines processes for organisational learning in order for change to occur (Argyris and Schon, 1978; Johnson and Scholes, 1999).

Three models will be analysed which offer the potential to address change in the context of this study.

2.4.2   Lewin's Three-Step Model

Kurt Lewin (1947) is considered to be one of the pioneers of the concept of change management, through his research he determined that involving people in the change process not only increases productivity but also boosts the chances of the change becoming accepted (Axelrod, 2001; Brisson-Banks, 2010; Cummings, Bridgman, & Brown, 2016). This model breaks the process for organisational change down into three steps: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing Figure. 1. (Brisson-Banks, 2010; Cummings, Bridgman, & Brown, 2016) and a detailed description of each of this elements can be found in Appendix. 4.
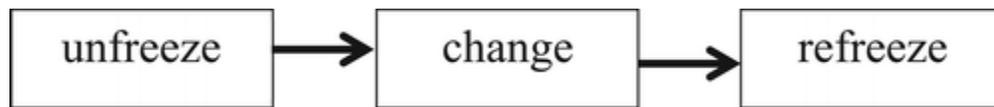
Figure.1. Adapted from Source Cummings, Bridgman, & Brown, (2016)

Lewin's model has fundamental maintained its integrity since its formation, it is goal and plan oriented and extremely rational (Kritsonis, 2005) however (Calegari, Sibley, & Turner, 2015. p.34) state that "despite the popularity and intuitive appeal of this formulation, it has been criticized for somewhat vague recommendations regarding specific actions needed to produce change". This model was not utilised in relation to this study as it is linear, goal and plan oriented and fails to consider that change can have a negative impact on employees. Not all employees are excited about the idea of change, creating a new culture during an M&A takes effort from every level within the organisation (Appelbaum, et al, 2013)

There have been several variations adapted by other academics but it was not until Kotter's (1995) Eight-Step model was published in in the Harvard Business Review in 1995 that focus began to shift beyond Lewin's three step model (Kotter, 1996).

2.4.3 Kotter's Eight Steps for Change

Kotter's model of change management (Figure. 2) became an instant success when it was first introduced in 1995 and continues to be a key framework utilised in the field of change management today (Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo, & Shafiq, 2012; Kotter International, 2017).

A detailed description of each of this elements can be found in Appendix. 5.
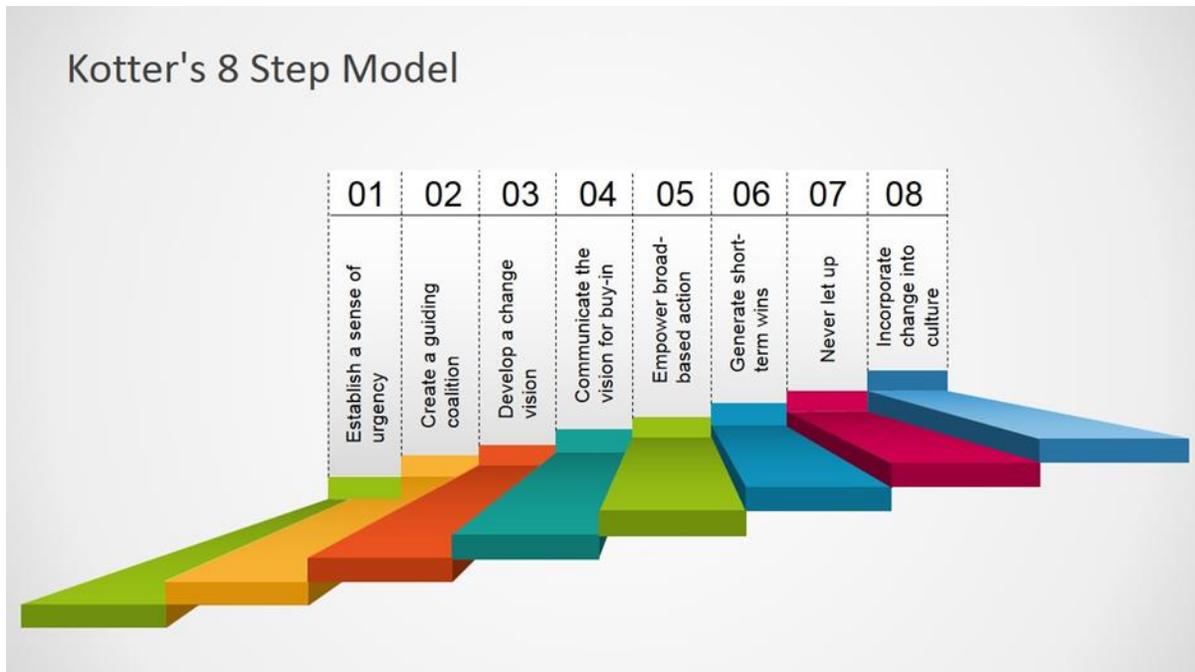
Figure. 2. Source: Slide Model (2017).

The advantages of this model are that it offer a clear set of procedures and steps to identify the desired outcomes of the change process (Calegari, et all, 2015). Critics of Kotter's model argue that it relies too heavily on the leadership of the organisation to manage the change. Graetz & Smith (2010 p.137) suggests that "it ignores the not-so rational wild card, the human factor" and leaves no room for co-creation with employees and management. Other limitations of the model is its rigidity, (Kotter, 1996) states that each step must be followed in sequence meaning that each step relies on the next one to succeed, but it is also sometimes necessary to circle back to a previous step in order to complete each stage (Appelbaum, et all, 2012). Therefore this model was not considered in relation to this study because this study is fundamentality being driven from the bottom up.

2.4.4 The Cultural Web

It is stated by (Johnson and Scholes 1999: Johnson, et all, 2012) that in order to understand the existing culture of an organisation it is important to analyse what is organisational culture. Their theoretical model 'The Cultural Web' Figure. 3. "shows the behavioural, physical and symbolic manifestations of culture that inform and are informed by the taken for granted assumptions or paradigm, of an organisation" (Johnson, et all, 2012 p.98). Their model highlights seven key elements that are inter-linked. At the core of the web is the paradigm (the culture) , which is the values and beliefs and assumptions held across an organisation (Johnson, Whittington, & Scholes, 2012; Sun, 2008), the other six elements of symbols, routines and rituals, power structures, control systems, organisational structure and stories are the factors that contribute and make up organisations cultural paradigm (McDonald, & Foster, 2013). A detailed description of each of this elements can be found in Appendix. 3.
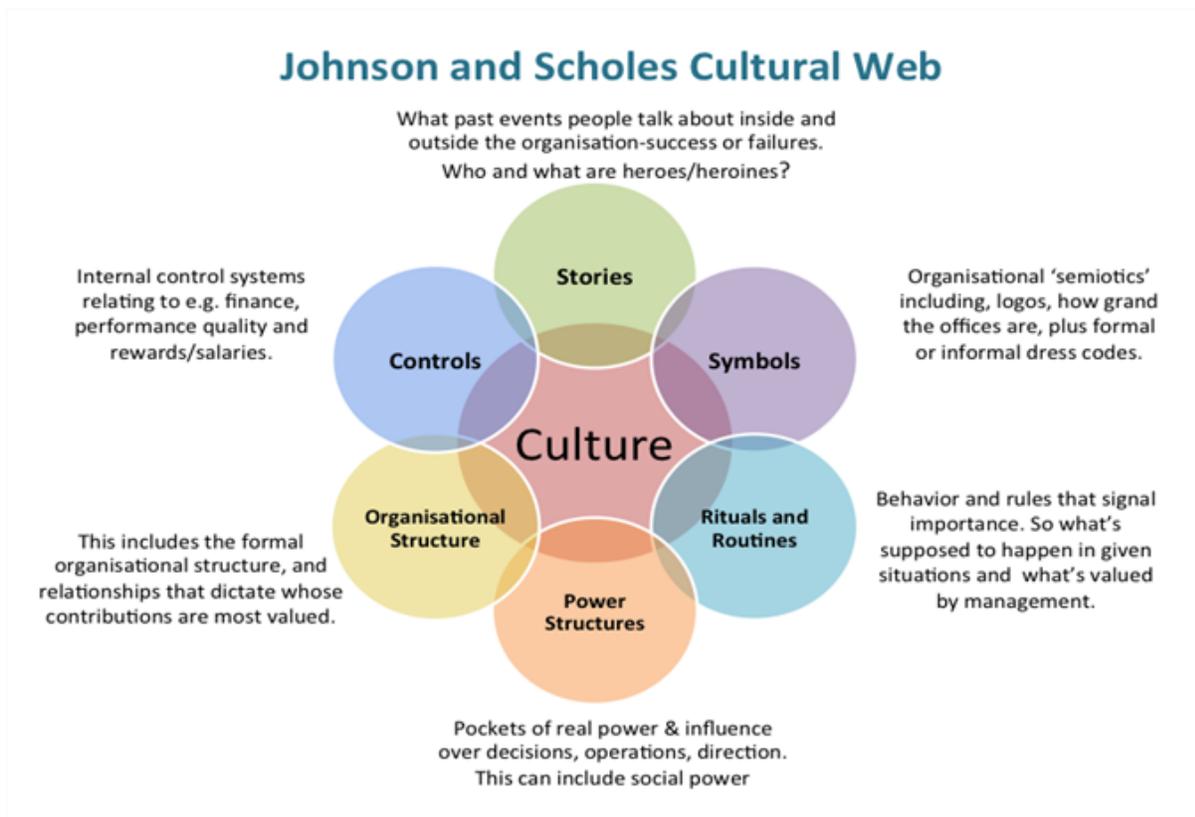
Figure. 3: Source adapted from The Management Centre, (2017): Johnson, G., Whittington, R., 1958 & Scholes, K. (2012).

Scholes & Johnson, (2000) give three main benefits to mapping organisational culture:

1. Bringing to the surface what is taken for granted can be a valuable way of assessing what is invisible but always present. If the culture of the organisation is never questioned then they suggest that change will be difficult.
2. By mapping the culture to the areas within the model, it may be possible to assess where the obstacles exist in order for change to manifest also it can be utilised to evaluate the current state and how far it is from the corporate strategy.
3. Mapping the culture can also provide a step by step road map to suggest what areas specifically that the changes need to occur in order to deliver the strategy by providing practical ideas for implementing change.

The strength and weakness of this model lie in its simplicity, it is restrictive as in researchers are forced to categorise sometimes complex concepts into seven small boxes, however with these restrictions gives researchers a one page overview of the organisations current culture and any issues that might have surfaced while mapping the culture (McDonald, & Foster, 2013). Scholes & Johnson, (2000) note that identifying the paradigm is usually the most difficult part of the process. Managers can over analyse which often leads to them substituting business strategy for the culture. They suggest that often managers can come up with a plethora of concepts in relation to the paradigm but there may be very few that are actually the common culture and taken for granted states.

The cultural web has been utilised as a framework to identify blockages in many organisations such as "Shell, KPMG, Castrol, the NHS, the UK Labour Party and as part of high profile executive education programmes at Manchester Business School, Cranfield School of Management, Strathclyde Business School and Lancaster University Management School" (Strategy Explorers, 2017). Within their study in a UK veterinary school (Mossop, Dennick, Hammond, & Robbé 2013) also agree that the framework worked well to ascertain the 'hidden curriculum' for both staff and students alike.

Scholes & Johnson, (2000) suggest that the web offers a holistic approach to change management by giving insights into current state and mapping it to desired state in line with the corporate strategy as opposed to what they describe as a more traditional approach of trying to persuade people to change their taken for granted assumptions (the paradigm). Heracleous,

(1995) recommend that remapping the web should be done every six to nine months examining any changes to the web that have taken place and ensure that the organisation remains on track to reach its strategic goal.

The focus of this study is change in the context of culture, the author established that the cultural web model of Johnson and Scholes, (1999) is the best fit model for the organisation within the context of this case study. The aim of the cultural web to gain an insight into the perceptions of the organisations culture from the point of view of its employees (Scholes & Johnson, 2000). Implementing cultural changes is not an easy process, it requires changing the values, behaviours and beliefs of its employees and requires involvement from all. The cultural web model provides a good foundation with a guideline of questions to begin this process employees (Scholes & Johnson, 2000).

2.5   Conclusion

Within this literature review the author has sought to provide context for the area of research proposed in this study. The subject of change management has been studied for decades by management theories from Lewin (1939) who is thought to be one of the pioneers in the field of change management to modern theorists such as Kotter (1990) and Johnson and Scholes (1999). Although there is numerous models for how to conduct organisational change, there is no model or framework that can be utilised with one hundred percentage accuracy that it will implement the change needed or if it fact it will have any impact on the organisation (Desson & Clouthier, 2010).

In the context of mergers and acquisitions there is a robust amount academic literature that points to cultural dynamics as a factor for the failure during a merger and acquisition (Ovseiko, Melham, Fowler, & Buchan, 2015; Schuler & Jackson, 2001: Weber, & Shlomo, 2012) There are many well-known failures cited due to culture two examples are the Daimler- Chrysler merger and Southern Pacific Rail -Union Pacific Corporation merger (Appelbaum, et al, 2013; Schuler & Jackson, 2001). Yet despite the data, there is little change in the rate of M&A failures over the past thirty years (Cartwright & Schoenberg, 2006). Therefore, managing the success of change initiatives in M&A situations seems to be as important as ever.

M&A's within the gambling sector have gained momentum over the past number of years as the industry grows at a rapid pace. However there is little or no literature as yet on whether cultural integration has been successful within the sector. The author will evaluate if the cultural web model also can be applied in a recent M&A situation.

Therefore the following question is posed for the study is:

'Is the Cultural Web Change Model an effective tool in assisting cultural transition in a gambling organisation that has recently experienced an M&A?

The sub-objectives accompanying this question are detailed in chapter 3.

Chapter three will examine research methodology and discuss the methodical approach taken in regards to this study.

Chapter Three- Methodology

3.1   Introduction

This chapter details how the research was undertaken for this thesis in order to examine the question 'Is the Cultural Web Change Model an effective tool in assisting cultural transition in a gambling organisation that has recently experienced an M&A? The research process is guided by the Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2012) 'research onion' (Figure. 4). This approach gives a clear framework on how to conduct research is an efficient and effective manner. Once a research philosophy is chosen, a research strategy must be adopted that will address the aims and objectives of the study. The research onion is useful when conducting research as it provides a step by step process to identify various collection methods of data and can be adapted across a variety of contexts (Bryman, 2008). A description of the research philosophies, the approach and research methods that will be utilised within of this study including an in-depth analysis of case study research.
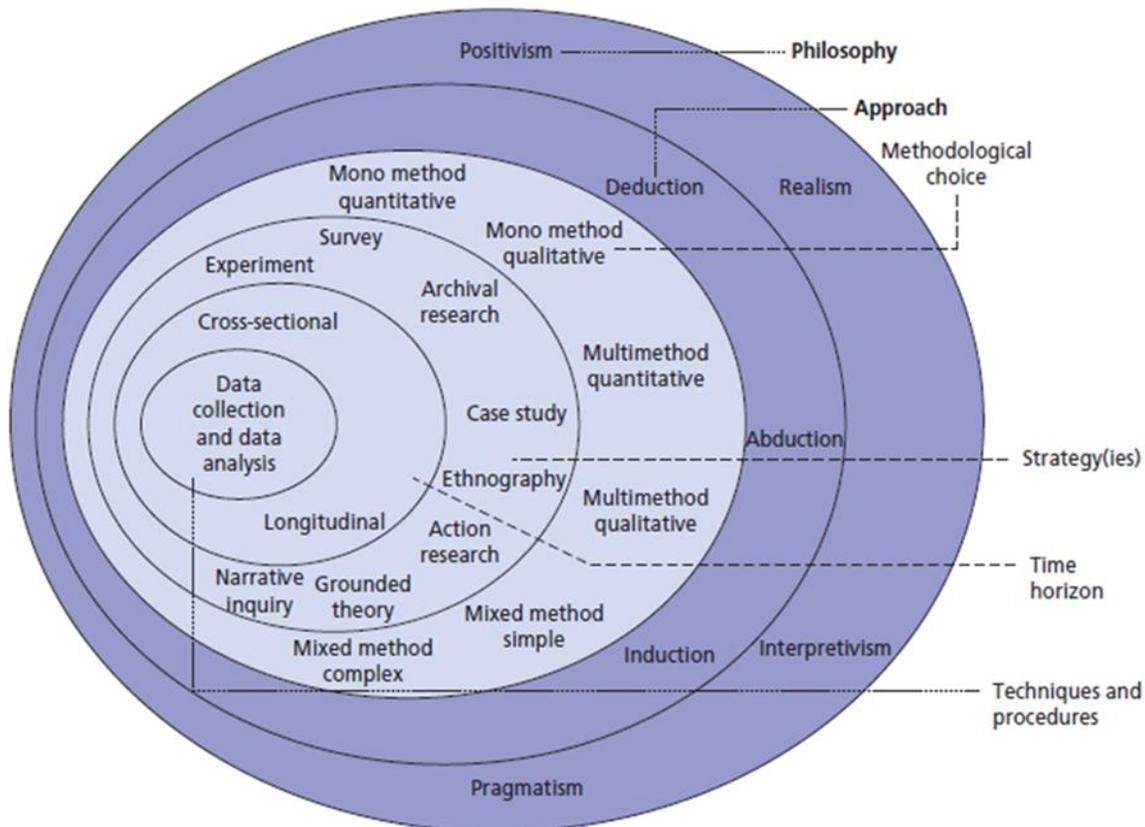
Figure 4. Source: Sanders et all., (2012).

3.2   Research Philosophy

The research philosophy refers to the way we gain knowledge and the nature of knowledge (Sanders et all, 2012). There are two main ways of thinking about research philosophies, they are ontology and epistemology (Saunders et al., 2012; Bryman, 2008). According to (Saunders et al., 2012 p.149) "each contains important differences which will influence the way in which you think about the research process". Ontology is study of what is, the nature of reality or social entities (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Lawson, Latsis, & Martins, 2013). Epistemology is concerned with how to do something, "what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study" (Saunders et al., 2012, p.132).

In relation to the research onion, philosophy can involve positivist or an interpretivist approach to research. The positivist approach to research collects data and exposes truths in an objective manner. This approach does not seek the opinions and instead focuses solely on the data collected failing to explore further insight into why the participants sustain this viewpoint (Saunders et al., 2012; Quinlan, 2011). Some critics of the positivist approach state that using a short simple questionnaire to collect the data for example will limit the information received depending on the subject matter if more in-depth data is required as the data is superficial (Anderson 2013). The interpretivist approach acknowledges the differences between people and their perception of the world by conducting research through interviews and observations. Saunders et al., (2012, p.137) argue that is "crucial to the interpretivist philosophy is that the researcher adopts an empathetic stance." The researcher must enter the world of the subject and see the world from their view point. Criticisms of the interpretivist approach suggest that researcher can lose direction, with the large volumes of data collected a clear plan must be created to ensure it analysed correctly and in a timely manner (Anderson 2013). The approach taken by the researcher depends on which outcomes are more relevant to the study undertaken (Goldman, 2016). The approach taken by the author is an interpretivist approach which is best suited to this study.

3.3 Research Approach

Studies into the main approaches to research have used different descriptions with "common themes, categorisations and overlapping emphasis, which is, in fact, qualitative and quantitative" (Mkansi, & Acheampong, 2012 p.135). Depending on the reasoning you adopt, this is either deductive or inductive.

Deductive reasoning is also known as the top down approach in which you take a premise, or hypothesis and subject it to rigorous testing to confirm or refute it. The researcher would begin with a premise that is logical and by testing the data conclude whether it was correct or not (Saunders et al., 2012). This approach is typically applied to quantitative research (Bryman, 2008). In comparison, inductive reasoning gathers data from specific observations to build a theory making broad generalizations, it is known as the bottom up approach (Anderson 2013; Saunders et al., 2012). This approach would be applied to a qualitative research. The author has concluded that inductive reasoning is more appropriate for this study due to the subjective nature of organisational culture.

3.4 Research Methods

Research is used to gather data in a systematic manner in order to gain information and knowledge on a particular subject. Research strategies are categorized by three approaches, which are quantitative, qualitative or a mixed method approach (Harreveld, Danaher,Lawson, Knight,& Busch, 2016). Saunders et al., (2012, p.162) states that "quantitative research is generally associated with positivism, especially when used with predetermined and highly structured data collection techniques". It is usually coupled with a deductive approach, where the researcher is using data to test a theory. The emphasis is on facts and the researcher examines the relationship between the variables using numbers and statistical analysis (Golafshani, 2003). Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach and is "associated with an interpretive philosophy" (Golafshani, 2003; Saunders et al., 2012, p.163). The data is subjective where the phenomenon of study unfolds throughout the study (Golafshani, 2003). A mixed methods approach which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative data might be utilised in some research if it was felt by the researcher that one method alone could not generate the desired result (Bryman, Becker, & Sempik, 2008).

The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions and opinions to ask the question 'Is the Cultural Web Change Model an effective tool in assisting cultural transition in a gambling organisation that has recently experienced an M&A?. The research methods utilised for this study is a qualitative as organisational culture itself is quite subjective and variable and something that is created over time but hard to quantify.

3.4.1 The Rational for Qualitative Research in this Study

The subject matter in this study is one single case study, therefore using qualitative research for this purpose is suggested (Starman, 2013). Other methods can be useful in case study research however (Starman, 2013, p. 30) argues that the" paradigmatic basis of qualitative research are closely linked to the definition and characteristics of case studies". Qualitative research uses a wide range of approaches when it comes to understanding social science. It looks in-depth at the experience of the individual and allows the researcher to interpret the information allowing for more flexible research as opposed to the rigid facts and numbers of quantitate research (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). MacDonald & Headlam, (2009) state that the researcher becomes immersed in the subject allowing for more dynamic data as they themselves are the data gathering tool. The following section examines the limitations to qualitative research.

3.4.2 Limitations to Qualitative Research

Researchers using qualitative methods to analyse data must take a number of factors into consideration, for example the researcher must be aware of their own bias into the outcome of the results (Bogdan, & Biklen, 1992; Mays, & Pope, 1995). Other arguments suggest that the researcher can be too involved in the study that it lacks reproducibility (Mays, & Pope, 1995). Access to participants can have an impact on the study or if lack of rapport has occurred in the data collection process, this can also have an impact on the outcome (Saunders, et all, 2012). In selecting participants, researchers must ensure that the sample is balanced to allow for other points of view and there is not one cohort of individuals that will influence the findings (Norris, 1997). As the focus of this study is one single case study, the author will discuss case study research and the benefits to research.

3.5 Case Study Research

Case study research (CSR) is widely used across the social sciences yet it remains a challenge for researchers (Kohlbacher, 2006; Yin, 2014). CSR explores a research topic or phenomenon within an individual case or multiple cases methodically investigating the chosen subject of study within real life contexts when a robust method of research is required (Yin, 2014; Zainal, 2007). According to Yin (2014) CSR should be considered if the focus of the study is to explore 'how' and 'why' questions or when the researcher cannot manipulate or influence of those taking part in the study or over contemporary events.

Yin (2014 p.16) is cited as one of the leading academics in CSR offers a twofold definition of a case study:

1. "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2014).

2. "A case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with the data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions too guide data collection and analysis" (Yin, 2014, p.17).

3.5.1 The Benefits to Case Study Research

CSR can be beneficial in forming descriptive interpretations of data (Gerring, 2004). Stake, (1995) suggests that case studies provides substantial data to test theories as long the researcher has the attributes to interpret the data correctly, a researcher can learn a lot through the lens of one single study (Stake, 1995). Likewise (Hodkinson, & Hodkinson, 2001, p.7) agree that CSR "can facilitate rich conceptual/theoretical development" by comparing existing theories within a real life context which may create new ways of thinking. Gaya, & Smith, (2016, p.536) state that "case study research and qualitative methodology are also joined at the hip as they complement each other" (Gaya, & Smith, 2016), however (Starman, 2013; Yin, 2014) argue that CSR can be applied to both qualitative, quantitate or a mixture of both. Each research strategy has its limitations, we will now explore the limitations for CSR.

3.5.2   The Limitations to Case Study Research

Conducting a single case study research has been criticized for its lack of methodological rigour. Yin, (2014) suggests that a researcher might not follow systematic procedures or allow bias and subjective findings to influence the direction or outcomes of the study (Yin, 2014). Given that the sample of data a small (Hodkinson, & Hodkinson, 2001) argue that there is no way to establish whether the data accurately represents a larger population. This argument is supported by (Yin, 2014) who agrees that a common assumption is data in CSR is to general however he states while conducting a case study the researchers' goal will be to expand on general theories and not to predict possibilities (Yin, 2014).

The advantage and disadvantages to CSR have been discussed, the next section will set out the design of this research.

3.5.3   Case Study Design

When applying a plan and design for this research, the below steps as suggested by Yin, (2014) will be applied.

There are five components that are important to all case study design are (Yin, 2014):

> 1) a case studies questions;
>
> 2) its propositions, if any;
>
> 3) its unit(s) of analysis;
>
> 4) the logic linking the data to the propositions; and
>
> 5) the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2014, p.29).

3.5.4   Case Study Question

The following question is explored within this study.

'Is the Cultural Web Change Model an effective tool in assisting cultural transition in a gambling organisation that has recently experienced an M&A?'

The literature into the area of organisational culture after an M&A repeatedly highlights that failure to include a cultural integration strategy can have an impact on the success or failure of

the M&A. The question asked in this study came around from the researchers own involvement in a cultural integration strategy and whether this tool can be utilised to assess a temperature check on the approach taken by the organisation.

Therefore the purpose of this research is:

- An assessment of the change management initiatives being implemented taking guidance from the cultural web model.
  And
- Providing data for the organisation that would to assess the current view of the change initiatives and suggest further practices that could support a more effective integration.

By assessing the components of the cultural web model in relation to an M&A, the following sub objectives are explored:

- Can a bottom up approach to cultural integration have the same influence as a top down approach?
- Can an integration strategy work if the leadership team are not involved?
- Does peer to peer recognition have an impact on culture?

3.5.5 Case Study Propositions

When a phenomena under investigation includes specific suggestions it increases the possibility that the researcher can derive a conclusion therefore the proposition of this case study research will be considered successful if the findings show that the cultural web is an effective tool to assess cultural transition during an M&A (Baxter, & Jack, 2008 :Yin, 2014).

3.5.6 Units of Analysis

When conducting CSR a researcher must decide if the study will comprise of one single or multiple cases (Yin, 2014), the next steps are "defining the case and bounding the case" (Yin, 2014 p. 31). When defining the case the researcher must decide what are the 'units of analysis' (UOA)/ the case (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2014). The subject of this study is an investigative scope of a holistic single case study and the UOA is the organisation itself. The boundaries of a CSR could be time and place or by the context or definition, binding a case ensures that it stays within scope (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The boundaries of this case study is the period of time that

has occurred since the acquisition which is just one and a half years plus the fact that the change management initiatives are very much in the infancy stages therefore a further analysis of the data in a longitudinal study would be recommended.

3.5.7 Linking Data to the Propositions

As previously stated above CSR and qualitative data collection are typically associated together (Gaya, & Smith, 2016). The data collection method used in this was conducted through qualitative interviews in the form of semi-structured interviews. The main interview questions were taken from the suggested questions from the cultural web model which can be viewed in Appendix. 1. Although a suggested list of questions was provided to assess the model, the semi structured approach taken by the interviewer allowing the facilitation of the participants to raise interesting points that enriched the data collection.

In order to reduce bias of the researcher, a pilot case study was conducted with two of the values champions prior to the main interviews. This protocol as suggested by (Yin, 2014) guided the interviewer in the remove some of the questions suggested by Johnson and Scholes (2012) as the participants found some of the questions confusing and it was also noticed by the interviewer that if asked in a particular manner the questions could be manipulated to drive a particular outcome. Therefore the questions were adjusted accordingly.

Prior to taking part in the interviews participants was fully informed to the nature of the research, the method by which the data would be collected and their right to withdraw at any stage if they wished. All participants was fully aware that they would remain anonymous and confidentiality would be assured. All participants were asked to read and sign a consent form prior to agreeing to participate in the research interviews a copy of which can be found in Appendix. 7. They were also sent a copy of the cultural web sections to ensure that they understood what section each question was referring to. This can be found in Appendix .2.

The interviews were conducted face to face with four of the ten participants and over skype video chat with the remaining six. As written consent was obtained prior to the interviews, the interviews were recorded using a recording application on an mobile device, this allowed for the full attention of the interviewer during the process. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and each participants was offered the opportunity to read and assess their own transcript before

analysis began. None of the participants availed of this. Once the interviews were transcribed the recordings were deleted.

3.5.8   Interpreting the Findings

Data analysis involves of the examining, organising, mapping and "testing or otherwise recombining evidence to produce empirically based findings "(Yin, 2014 p.132). When beginning a data analysis strategy (Yin, 2014) suggests that you familiarise yourself with it to search for "patterns, insights or concepts that seem promising" (Yin, 2014 p.135). As the subject of this study is of an exploratory nature, the chosen strategy which has taken guidance by (Yin, 2014) is 'working the data from the ground up'.

In order to become familiar with the data, the author listened to the recordings a number of times and to note an initial thoughts. The ten transcripts were then coded using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to analyse the findings to the cultural web model, therefore seven pages of excel was utilised, one for each of the sections of the model, a sample of one of the pages is in Appendix 6. As this study is inductive in nature, theme development was data driven as opposed to driven by theory (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The emergence of five themes began to appear which can be viewed in the mapped cultural web in Appendix 3. The themes and findings will be presented in the following chapter.

3.6   Conclusion

Within this chapter the author presented a detailed process of case study research. The philosophies, approach and research methods were explored and it was identified which would be suitable and used in relation to this study. The data collection and analysis procedure was discussed including the case study strategy taking guidance by (Yin, 2014).

The following chapter will be a presentations of the findings of this study.

Chapter Four -Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

The data presented in this chapter is the empirical findings to this case study. Semi-structured interviews were held with ten of the 'values champions' across five different global office locations, five out of ten had worked in the acquirer company prior to the acquisition and five worked in the acquired company see Table. 2 below. The values champions are the employees chosen by their colleagues as local drivers of the values in each location.

Job Title	Gender
Customer Service Agent	Female
Trader	Male
Head of Employee Engagement	Female
IT Manager	Male
Bonus Agent	Female
Payments Administrator	Male
Copy writer	Female
Fraud Analyst	Male
Office Manager	Female
Marketing Analyst	Female

Table 2: List of Participants and Job Titles

The full results are shown in Figure. 5. The interview questions were taken from cultural web models suggested questions list (Johnson & Whittington, 2008, p. 200). These questions can be found in Appendix. 1. The aim of the interviews was to elicit a response from those who participated that would answer the research question.

'Is the Cultural Web Change Model an effective tool in assisting cultural transition in a gambling organisation that has recently experienced an M&A?

The author used thematic analysis to explore the data collected, identifying several strong themes. "Thematic analysis is essentially a method for identifying and analysing patterns in qualitative data" (Clarke and Braun, 2013, p.120). The themes are as follows:

- The leadership team and culture (Barney, 1986; Johnson & Scholes, 1999: Handy, 1995: Schein, 2010)
- Employer Branding. (CIPD, 2007;Dung & Moisescu, 2013; Ettenson, and Knowles, 20

- The impact of peer to peer recognition (Achor, 2016; Zaslow, 2007)
- Introduction of the new company values (Barney, 1986; Johnson & Scholes, 1999: Handy, 1995: Schein, 2010)
- Bottom up approach to change management (Schein, 2010)

Stories

The good old days

Uncertainty

Management disjointed

Routines/Rituals

Limited Company Routines, More Localised

Events in different locations/ Not all the same

Symbols

Employer Branding

New company Values

Local Brand Loyalty

Differences in office locations with regards to status

Casual work envoirnment

The Paradiym

Still one dominent Culture/ early days to change

Risk Taking and Fast Paced

Control Systems

Kudos Club- Peer to Peer Recognition

Lack of Trust

Power Structure

CEO- Main Person

Leadership Team not visable

Lack of cohesion with the lower levels

Org Strutures

Hierarchial but open door

Formal structures in place but not retrictive

People promoted without thoughts

Figure 5. The Cultural Web Mapped from Findings

4.2   The leadership Team and Culture

The literature on organisational culture suggests that culture is driven from the top and any change is linked to strong leadership influencing the outcome, while it does not necessarily mean the task is solely the job of chief executive officer (CEO), it refers to those individuals that have the influence within the organisation (Johnson et all, 2008).

The main areas that were that were highlighted by all of the ten participants was the lack of involvement by the leadership team in any of the cultural change strategies, their lack of visibility and lack of communication.

4.2.1   Lack of Involvement

All of the participants made comments regarding the level of interest shown towards the culture change strategies and how it appeared to be a more laisse faire approach to employees by management. (Participant 1) *'I think if you go back to like the culture workshops that we had, it was quite apparent that most of the line managers are not that interested in the culture'*.

The findings throughout each interview followed the same pattern (Participant 7) '*I mean not all of them but the majority that they are not very people focused. So I think that success, money, growth, company strategy comes way ahead of staff' and that is noticed in my opinion.* There was no difference in opinions in any of the locations with regards leadership involvement. (Participant 4) *'I mean what it boils down to is that we here don't have many dealings with them other than the standard email that comes out telling us about how we done in the last quarter'*.

While the findings point to lack of leadership involvement, the feedback on the CEO was a clearer message that he is the main power within the company (Participant 4) '*I think that the CEO takes a lot of decisions for mostly everything rather than a distribution of power in the company'.* While each of the participants were clear on who is the CEO, however they all agree that he remains aloof in his interactions with employees. '*The reality is, the CEO isn't as visible either but when you hear stories from people that know him on a much more personal level that say he's more much reliable'.* (Participant 4).

The lack of visibility of the leadership team in the findings will now be discussed.

4.2.2 Lack of Visibility

A very common thread across all of the locations was not merely the lack of visibility from the leadership team but lack of awareness of who actually is the senior management team within the organisation. *'I couldn't tell you the directors, I really couldn't. Apart from CEO, I couldn't tell you their names and I couldn't pick them out. I mean I've made the mistake before somebody said oh they're a director I literally wouldn't have a clue.'* (Participant 1). This is echoed by (Participant 6) '*Like I said I have very good experience with my team leader and with the section head as well but anyone in between so let's say between CEO and the section head I don't really know these people'*

The employees interviewed in these questionnaires are not management level and their feedback focused on their lack of interaction with senior management (Participant 4) '*to be completely honest I haven't had a great dealing with them so I wouldn't be able to say you know what their thought processes are and where they're coming from'* .

Although the findings show lack of visibility on the ground of the leadership team, there was feedback that suggested that it was felt that senior management do have the knowledge within their area ' *I think the assumption is that people feel like the leadership team have knowledge in their industry' (*Participant 10) however lack of cohesion between them as was noted by (Participant 2)*'Core assumptions I'd say from what I see they are not necessarily a team as such but rather just a group of people that look after functions'*.

While lack of involvement and lack of visibility were discussed by all, another area that was discussed by all participants was the lack of communication.

4.2.3 Lack of Communication

It is clear that the lack of communication is an issue within the company. When discussing communication of the senior team some of the participants noted that *'the only time you really hear about of senior management is when they send out an email or you hear something in the press and its usually people finding things out in the press before it's gone around internally'* (Participant 3). This is point is reiterated by (Participant 9) '*we're not a very good company for top down coms, top down vision, stuff like that so the leadership it isn't weak because the*

company is successful but it's weak in the eyes of the employees because we don't see enough of it'.

It would appear from the findings that communication is an area where the organisation is weak (Participant 8) '*There seems to be a huge gap in communication, in my opinion, coming down from the management'.* It was noted with regards to the CEO by (Participant 2) '*it's a shame that actually some of those stories of the CEO are not communicated more , you know simple everyday human things that doesn't get through to you.'* .

Around the theme of leadership and culture which emerged in these findings, all of the participants concurred on the same view that within the areas of involvement, visibility and communication of senior management that it was weak area of the business. The next section will report the findings of employer branding.

4.3   Employer Branding

Corporate branding is often left as an afterthought or overlooked pre and post M&A (Dung & Moisescu, 2013). Rebranding has yet to take place across the organisations with all offices remaining in their original branding. The main areas highlighted here were corporate brand and brand loyalty.

4.3.1   Corporate Branding

The majority of the participants that took part in the interviews made a comment around the lack of one corporate brand. Those who mentioned it seen it as an important message for employees, visitors and customers alike. (Participant 9). '*Most of the offices are still in the COMPANY Y name which I think has an impact on what you see when you walk through the front door especially for new people or visitors.*

It was clear that some had strong opinions on corporate branding (Participant 3) stating *'our office has company Y plastered everywhere and it's sort of like an indirect message,. It might not even be a message it could be purely they've not got around to changing it or whatever the case maybe but it does sort of send the message.*' This sentiment was echoed across others. *'In the London office the first thing you see when you walk in is a Company Y sign and I'm from former*

Company Y but it still annoys me because we need to be one company and it still feels like that's a little bit of a wrong thing to have'. (Participant 10).

When asked if they believed changing the branding would influence the perception of the brand (Participant 8) replied '*I think it would definitely and not for a positive or a negative difference but of course, it would be more imprinted in people's brains who we're working for because I never say I work for Company X, I always say I work for Company Y.* (Participant 6) also noted this point *'I think people need to see who they work for, its hard to push Company X when its says Company Y everywhere''.*

4.3.2   Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty came across through some of the interviews, the brand name of Company Y's is known very well-known in some of the locations. In their view, working at Company Y equals a fun working environment '*I feel that it's so well-known and for me attached to this logo is like a real fun workplace, you know it's really chilled out here so yeah for me when I see that our logo I automatically think oh really fun place to work and dynamic and stuff like that* (Participant 6). Participant 7 stating '*I think the colours of the COMPANY X company are not that appealing, it's not cool enough'.* However it was acknowledged that it would take time to build the brand in some locations.

While not all of those interviewed commented on rebranding or the corporate brand, those that did regardless of whether they had been part of Company X or Company Y remarked that one corporate brand would be a good starting point for building a new corporate culture as it is the first thing employees see when they walk into their office reception.

The next section will discuss the findings on peer to peer recognition.

4.4   Peer to Peer Recognition

Peer to peer recognition platforms gives employees the opportunity to acknowledge each other in the workplace (Achor, 2016). The findings focused on the Kudo's club and what peer to peer recognition meant for the organisation.

4.4.1 The Kudo's Club

The company introduced a new rewards platform which was named the Kudo's club. This platform is peer to peer recognition which is monitored by the values champions and allows the employees to reward each other giving points for challenges that have been set by the head of employee engagement and the values champions without management's involvement.

This is a relatively new system in place and it is beginning to find its feet and while the feedback from it is mostly of a positive nature some of participants felt managers input was necessary for employee motivation as not all of the staff were actively participating in the challenges '*I think it's good to have it as an additional sort of thing but I do think most people would like something that's a little bit more formal. Just so that they sort of know where they stand and whether they're doing a good job or not whereas with the Kudos Club your colleagues might think you doing a great job but that doesn't necessarily mean that your boss does or your line manager and it could work the other way around'* (Participant 3).

Another concern about the peer to peer recognition was around actively getting others to participate '*I think it is very difficult to enable everybody on those things because you know especially in our office. I can't speak about other offices we are doing jobs that it's quite difficult to get involved in something else during your working hours.'* (Participant 5). This was echoed by many of the values champions '*I think it needs to be pushed a bit more so that more people use it and use it for the right reasons but I think it's a good little portal.'* (Participant 4*).*

4.4.2 Employee Involvement

However, all of the participants agreed that they liked the idea of the platform and although it was it was early days, they all believed that it had potential to have the desired affect and empower employees to become more involved. Some of the comments;

- *I think people, in general, love the peer to peer recognition and have really bought into to, we all work a little harder for each other* (Participant 1).
- *We try to teach people how to verbalise saying thank you or recognise a colleague for doing something'* (Participant 7).

- *you look at Kudos something new, something different where the power definitely sits with the employees and it really gives me a sense of empowerment and that I am part of something bigger* (Participant 10)

The peer to peer recognition platform is in the infancy stages so the findings in this section are largely speculating the outcomes. The next section will discuss the findings of the rollout of the new company values.

4.5   Introduction of New Company Values

Organisational culture is defined as a set of values, behaviours and norms within the context of every organisation, the personality of an organisation. It is as unique to an organisation as each personality is to a human being (Schein, 2010).

4.5.1   The New Values

The company introduced five new company values with the participation in the selection process from employees at all levels. Employee participation was encouraged in this initiative from the very beginning of the project with a plan that it would be led by the values champions and managed by the head of employee engagement.

Feedback on the values was mostly positive from all participants of the interviews '*We've got the five amazing values logos that represent our values and they are amazing because the people of the business designed them and came up with them and they're very powerful'* (Participant 10). *This is reiterated by (Participant 6) 'Having them displayed around the office is good, and the fact that they were chosen by the staff and designed by the staff its good.'*

4.5.2   Instilling the New Values

There seemed to be a slight difference of opinion on how long it would take to instil the values and whether they were beginning to become part of the working life. ' *it's a big challenge, it's sort of going to be changing people's perceptions because if someone things that having values is a good idea then they are going to continue to think it's a good idea, but if they don't, then changing their perception is where the challenge is right'*. (Participant 3). (Participant 8), noted that employees were quick to point out when others were not behaving in accordance with the

new values. '*I definitely think people have taken them on board and I also think that people are very quick to point out when they're not being put into place*'

The fundamental opinion seems to be that culture will take time and change does not happen overnight '*people are settling in and getting accustomed to something that is new the next new thing happens so it's not very stable and because of that also the culture isn't very stable at the moment* (Participant 7).

The findings suggest that the new values are gradually finding their way albeit slowly into the everyday world of the employees. The last theme to emerge was the bottom up approach to change management.

4.6   Bottom up approach to change management

Change management models mostly suggest a top down approach when trying to instigate any major changes with organisations (Kotter, 1995; Lewin, 1951). The approach taken by the company was a bottom up approach using the cultural web model as a tool to test if this approach was having any influence yet or in fact at all. The findings on this were mixed as some believed it could work and others felt that it would only work if the leadership team where on board.

4.6.1   The Approach

Some suggested that this approach gave employees a voice to become involved if they wanted as it was driven by the employees '*like our HR initiative from the bottom up, so it's not stamped immediately when you come up with the idea of doing that so there is a possibility* (Participant 7), one of the participants felt that '*I feel that "bottom-up" management is a good way to involve each and every employee and to create and maintain a collective decision-making process that can (hopefully) avoid any potential issues that arise with any "forced change" (redundancy for example) within the company by allowing individuals within their teams and working groups to come to terms with any impending change.*' (Participant 4).

Others suggested that it was the responsibility of everyone to work at changing the culture "*I think it's everybody's responsibility so if we were creating something new, if we were creating a new product then our first question would be, shouldn't it collaborative?* ' (Participant 2).

While it was mostly agreed by all participants that it was a good approach but it was pointed out by (Participant 5) '*It can change but only if the top is willing to embrace the changes*'. This point was also given by (Participant 3) who felt actually the approach taken should be driven top down '*it seems that we're still kind of use a bottom up approach to build the culture which I think I mean like I said there are clear signs from quite a large number of people that it should be the other way around*'.

The findings suggest that fundamentally like this approach to change management but were unable to give a concise answer if it would work.

4.7   Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings of ten interviews held with the values champions across the business, in the following chapter will critically analyse this findings in relation to the research previously highlighted.

Chapter Five -Discussion of Research Findings

5.1   Introduction

Chapter four presented five themes which the author identified while conducting ten exploratory interviews with ten values champions across five of the office locations. This chapter will provide a critical analysis to each of these themes in relation to previous research highlighted in the literature to answer the question 'Is the Cultural Web Change Model an effective tool in assisting cultural transition in a gambling organisation that has recently experienced an M&A?'

And sub objectives:

- Can a bottom up approach to cultural integration have the same influence as a top down approach?
- Can an integration strategy work if the leadership team are not involved?
- Does peer to peer recognition have an impact on culture?

5.2   The leadership Team and Bottom up Approach to Change Management

Part of the objectives of this study is to assess if culture can change without leadership involvement and if the bottom up approach can have the same influence. Literature into the field of change management suggests that change is led from the top down. Although there are a number of change management models which can be used as a guideline for organisational change (Kezar, 2001), within the context of this study the cultural web model Johnson & Scholes (1999) was utilised.

This study took a different approach to change management within the context of organisational culture by adopting a bottom up approach led by a HR change management team but with all level of employees asked to participate.

Within the literature around successful M&A's the CEO and leadership team are the key to its failure or success. Schein, (2010) states that driving organisational culture is a fundamental role of its leaders. He believes that globalisation, M&A's and increased competition in the market place means that organisational culture is more important today than it ever was with the leadership team leading the way (Schein, 2010). Likewise, Nieminen, Biermeier-Hanson, & Denison, (2013) purport that if leaders can recognise their limitations within their own

development around culture and change their behaviour, they can begin to change the culture of the organisation. Leaders of organisations such as General Electric and Southwest Airlines who successfully transformed their culture by putting strategic planning in place, aligning culture and creating a culture where values are important (Baker, 2008).

The findings of this study show the lack of involvement of the leadership team within the integration process as having some negative impact on building the culture. A number of the comments suggests that culture should be driven top down which supports the findings of the literature, however others indicted that it was everyone's responsibility to drive culture.

5.2.1 Communication

Communication plays a large part of successful M&A's (Schuler & Jackson). Studies have found that companies who communicated any changes proactively with their employees are seen to be more transparent and open (Appelbaum, Karelis, Henaff, & McLaughlin, 2017: Sinha & Sanchari, 2014). This is reiterated by Anon Hewitt, (2011) in their study of successful M&A's Lack of communication from the leadership team was commented several times during the study, it was noted by one participant that communication on changes have often come from outside of the organisation before communicated internally. Therefore the findings agree with the literature that open communication is a more effective way to relive ambiguity and uncertainty in employees.

5.2.2 The New Company Values

Academics agree that organisational culture is a set of values, behaviours and norms or how things are done around here (Barney, 1986; Johnson & Scholes, 1999: Handy, 1995: Schein, 2010). The literature shows that culture changes over time and that cultural integration is a long term strategy (Teerikangas & Very 2006).

The introduction of the new company values and associated behaviours has had a positive impact on employees with some participants stating that colleagues were quick to point out when the values were not being followed. Humans are driven by their values therefore the findings agree with the literature.

Within the next section peer to peer recognition will be discussed.

5.3   Peer to Peer Recognition

Another objective in this study was to identify if peer to peer recognition can have an impact on culture. Organisations are beginning to see the benefits of peer to peer recognition schemes within the workplace allowing peers the opportunity to recognise their colleagues (Achor, 2016). Furthermore, the organisation 'Great Place to Work ' suggest that setting aside a budget for peer to peer recognition is a positive action, as several companies who achieve high ranking in their accreditation allocate a budget for peer to peer recognition schemes (Great place to work, 2012).

The action of Company X in allocating a budget and implementing a peer to peer recognition scheme agree are perceived as beneficial to the organisation. As the findings show that this has largely been well received by the employees with all of those interviewed commenting, that while it is still in its infancy, they see employee involvement and the wiliness to take part. As the control of the system sits with the employees themselves.

JetBlue airlines found that employee retention increased by 3% and employee engagement by 2% (Achor, 2016). This study findings support Achor (2016)'s study and as the number of comments indicate increased employee engagement. There was no evidence to suggest that employees would turn into 'narcissistic praise-junkies' as suggested by Zaslow, (2007) study.

The next section we will discuss employer branding

5.4   Employer Branding

Corporate branding is becoming more and more important for employees when seeking employment. Being an 'employer of choice' is now part of the strategic plan for most organisations when aiming to retain or attract talent (CIPD, 2007) and during an M&A.

Throughout the findings there was a consistent theme around the area of employer branding as corporate rebranding has yet to take place across the organisation. The values champions and the HR change initiatives are aiming to instil one company brand and yet the corporate brand remains in the old branding yet it is has over one and a half years since the acquisition has taken place. The literature suggests that branding is a vital component in a successful M&A (Dung & Moisescu, 2013; Ettenson, and Knowles, 2006). This research support the findings of (Osolind, 2017) that brand loyalty is having an impact on the cultural integration within the organisational

as the employees are not associating themselves with Company X and there has been no communication as to when or if rebranding will be taking place. In concurring with Ettenson, and Knowles (2006) study where two thirds of two hundred and seven companies they studied, the findings of this study indict neglecting a rebranding strategy has a negative influence on employee integration.

5.5   Conclusion on Findings

In summary, the findings of this study has focused largely on the leadership team, with all agreeing that there is a lack of visibility, involvement and communication from the leadership team yet there is optimism regarding bottom up approach to building a new culture.

The next chapter will focus on the conclusions and the recommendations by the researcher to answer the question:

Is the Cultural Web Change Model an effective tool in assisting cultural transition in a gambling organisation that has recently experienced an M&A?

Chapter Six- Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1   Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore whether the question:

Is the Cultural Web Change Model an effective tool in assisting cultural transition in a gambling organisation that has recently experienced an M&A?

The aim was to do:

- An assessment of the change management initiatives being implemented taking guidance from the cultural web model.
  And

- Providing data for the organisation that would to assess the current view of the change initiatives and suggest further practices that could support a more effective integration.

By assessing the components of the cultural web model in relation to an M&A, the following sub objectives are explored:

- Can a bottom up approach to cultural integration have the same influence as a top down approach?

- Can an integration strategy work if the leadership team are not involved?

- Does peer to peer recognition have an impact on culture?

Ten qualitative interviews were conducted with employees across five different office locations. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and inductive analysis was applied. The following section will detail the empirical findings of this research.

6.2   Empirical Findings

The findings of this study would suggest that the cultural web is an effective framework for taking a snap shot of organisational culture as it seen by the employees at this current moment which is one and a half years after an acquisition. There is a list of suggested questions provided by Johnson & Scholes (2000) that can be utilised to ensure that the researcher remains unbiased when conducting the interviews. However, due to the qualitative nature of this study and the very nature of organisational culture an inductive approach was taken. The cultural web gives organisations a one page, high level overview of its culture. The strengths of cultural web is that

it focused on the culture of the organisation from the point of view of everyone that took part. The next section will address the limitations.

6.3   Limitations

The researcher in this study was highly involved in the initial project team tasked with the role of designing a cultural integration strategy after the acquisition. Because of this, it was imperative while conducting the research for this study that the researcher own bias in to what could be the outcomes was taken into account. Another limitation to this study is the length of time that has passed since the acquisition and the values champions were chosen in December 2016 so therefore it is difficult to assess if the initiatives are beginning to have the desired effect as it is very new. The sample of participants is quite small for a study of this size and it relates to their view on the culture at this particular moment of time. Nonetheless, the limitations allow for further possibilities to conduct research using the cultural web.

6.3   Recommendations and Future Research

The researcher will make recommendations around the areas of corporate branding, the kudo's club and how the organization might involve the leadership team more in cultural strategies as well as suggestions for further research.

6.3.1   Corporate Branding

The lack of corporate branding was one of the main issues for the participants in this study. There is several office locations which will need to be completely rebranded to ensure employee see themselves as working for one organisation and not two as the findings have shown. Having conducted a cost analysis on rebranding, the costing per location is approximately €6.25 per square meter. While it is a considerable cost to be factored into the budget for 2018 as some of the locations are very large, according to the literature it has an impact of how employees perceive their organisation (Ettenson & Knowles, 2006).

6.3.2   The Kudo's Club

While it appears that the peer to peer recognition scheme is well received, the researcher suggests that more time is spent with the values champions to ensure that the kudo's club does not lose its momentum. It was commented during the findings that it needs to be pushed more with employees. As people get on with their day to day jobs, projects can fade into the

background. It will be recommended to the head of employee engagement based on these findings that she has regular bi-weekly meetings with the values champions to ensure they stay engaged in the project. There is a budget in place for projects and challenges from the kudos club, this needs to be utilised more.

6.3.3 Leadership Involvement

The lack of visibility of the leadership team was evident across all sections of the business. It is viewed by the employees that they are not interested in anything to do with cultural initiatives. The leadership team are spread across the locations which does not allow all employees to know who they are. Podcasts are used regularly within the company on the company intranet but instead of a podcast, the recommendation is a recorded regular one to one conversations with the HR director and each of the senior team to hear their views on culture and how important it is to them. It is the view of the researcher that it will bring a visible presence of who are they, what they stand for and their beliefs. There is no need to ensure any budget for this as it will not cost anything but based on the findings that it will have a big impact on how the leadership team are viewed by the employees.

6.3.4 Further Research

It is recommended that going forward focus groups are conducted rather than one to one interviews to take a temperature check of the culture on a regular basis and assess whether the strategies are working. Building culture takes time so this type of study would need to be conducted over a period of years to make an accurate assessment.

6.4   Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of the recommendations based on the findings of this study. The researcher agrees that the cultural web is an effective tool to assess the culture and would suggest this is used at least every six months.

Personal Statement – CIPD Requirement

When I began this research, I believed working with my company as a case study would ensure I have access to information at the my fingertips. During all of the research lectures it was suggested that case study research was a challenge and having conducted this research I would agree whole heartily with that. If I was ever to do such an undertaking again, I don't believe I would do case study research.

As a novice researcher, I found that I consistently needed to readjust my strategy and remove my HR hat and look at this study purely from the point of research. While it was a huge challenge at the same time it was extremely rewarding. I took many wrong paths to eventually find the right one and have learned a lot along the way.

My job involves a lot of travelling so another great take away from this experience was learning to manage my time effectively. Using the time on long plane journeys to work on this research was a valuable and effective way to complete which has been the single greatest challenge and accomplishment of my life.

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Appendix 1- Survey Questions

Q1. Stories: What core beliefs do the stories being told reflect about the company? How persuasive are these beliefs throughout the company. Do these stories relate to the strengths or weakness, success or failures? Who are the hero's or villains?

Q2. Symbols: Are there any particular symbols/logos that denote the company.

Q3. Power Structures: How is the power distributed throughout the company? What are the core assumptions belief about the leadership team, where are the main blocks to change?

Q4. Organisational structures: How flat or hierarchical are the structures? How formal or informal are they.

Q5. Control Systems: Is the emphasis on reward or punishment? what is closely monitored/controlled? Are there too many/few?

Q6. Routines and Rituals : what routines are emphasised, which are embedded in our history? What behaviours do routines encourage? What are the key rituals? what core beliefs do they reflect? How easy are routines/rituals to change?

Q7: Paradigm: How would you characterise the dominant culture? How easy is it to change?

Appendix 2- The Cultural Web Model

Johnson and Scholes Cultural Web

What past events people talk about inside and outside the organisation-success or failures. Who and what are heroes/heroines?

Internal control systems relating to e.g. finance, performance quality and rewards/salaries.

Stories

Controls

Symbols

Organisational 'semiotics' including, logos, how grand the offices are, plus formal or informal dress codes.

Culture

This includes the formal organisational structure, and relationships that dictate whose contributions are most valued.

Organisational Structure

Rituals and Routines

Behavior and rules that signal importance. So what's supposed to happen in given situations and what's valued by management.

Power Structures

Pockets of real power & influence over decisions, operations, direction. This can include social power

Figure. 3: Source adapted from The Management Centre, (2017): Johnson, G., Whittington, R., 1958 & Scholes, K. (2012).

Appendix. 3 – The Cultural Web Detail

Stories: These are the stories members of staff tell each other, newcomers to the business and people outside of the organisation about the company. They tell stories of the people they see as heroes or villains. These stories are a way of informing others what is important to the business (Johnson & Scholes, 1997).

Symbols: These are the objects, logo's, branded clothing, dress code, the language used within the organisation. For example: offices layout, company cars, parking spaces, job titles basically anything that signifies the hierarchy of the company (Johnson & Scholes, 1997; Mossep ref).

Control Systems: The control systems are all of the internal systems that are used by the organisation to monitor employees in some way. For example, total reward systems, finance systems for expenses, time and attendance for clocking in and out. If too many control systems are in place, these can be viewed by the employee's as a form of big brother is watching and process heavy or disorganised and chaotic if no control systems are in place.

Power Structures: These signify the most important power groupings within the organisation. The leadership team for example or those people that have the power to make business decisions and affect strategy (Johnson & Scholes, 1997, Mossep et all).

Organisational Structures: The organisational structures indicates whether the company is a hierarchical or flat structure, formal or informal. According to (Johnson and Scholes, 1997. p.199) "highly devolved structures may signify that collaboration is less important that co-operation".

Routines and Rituals: The behaviours that happens on a daily, weekly, monthly basis. Events or activities that occur and make the organisation what it is (Johnson & Scholes, 1997).

The Paradigm: The culture of the organisation, the taken for granted and common assumptions of how things are done around here (Johnson & Scholes, 1997).

Appendix. 4- Lewin's Three-Step Model

The first step in Lewin's model is unfreeze or described as the motivation of change. This is creating awareness of the current or existing state of attitudes and behaviours. Within the preparation process change agents must take into consideration the affect that change can have on people. Ensuring that all involved in the process remain motivated to change, this can be done by clear communication, building trust and remaining transparent with each stage (Brisson-Banks, 2010; Kritsonis, 2005). Schein (pp. 62. 1999) argues that while "unfreezing creates motivation to learn but does not necessarily control or predict the direction of learning", therefore the role models for any change is the key once they are at the unfrozen step (Schein, 1999).

The second step in Lewin's model is the change process. During a time of change within an organisation there is a lot of uncertainty and ambiguity while employees struggle to get a clear indication of what is to come (Clayton, 2008), this is the time where strong leadership is essential. Employee buy- in can be sought by persuading them to see the change from a different viewpoint, to work together and support them through the changes (Kritsonis, 2005). Schein (1999) cautions change agents of the dangers of comparisons with other organisations that have gone through similar change and following 'best practice' when it comes to implementing change programmes. He states that "learners can attempt to learn things that will not survive because they do not fit the personality or culture of the learning system"   (Schein, 1999. p. 63), therefore what is fundamentality important that a 'best fit' approach is taken.

The final stage in Lewin model is refreeze. This step is necessary in order to stabilise the process once change has been implemented and a new mind-set is becoming established (Brisson-Banks, 2010; Clayton, 2008; Kritsonis, 2005). Successful refreezing does not happen overnight, this process takes time. Integrating the organisations values and expected behaviours with new policies and procedures and reinforcing them all the time with every aspect of the business from recruitment, performance management, training and development and ensuring leaders continue to drive this forward by not becoming complacent (Kritsonis, 2005; Levasseur, 2001). In order for change to take place individual agendas will not work as the newly embedded behaviours become the norms, the organisation must work in collaboration all working towards the same goal (Schein, 1999).

Appendix. 5- Kotter's Eight Steps for Change

Step One: Establish a sense of urgency. Not unlike the unfreezing step in Lewin's model, the first step is to examine the current state and identify potential losses and gains. This change requires change agent to convince the majority of the business that the status quo is more harmful to the organisation that the unknown (Calegari, et all, 2015; Kotter, 1996). Kotter, (1996) purports that the need for change must be understood in order for changes agents to have enough credibility to initiate the required change as he recognised that people do not like to leave their comfort zone, this happens when at least seventy five percentage of the management team are convinced change is the only option (Kotter, 1996).

Step Two: Create a guiding coalition. This step is about building a team of individuals with the right skills and capabilities who will champion the change programme within the organisation (Kotter, 1996).

Step Three: Form strategic vision and initiatives. Developing a vision and strategies that are different from the past, academics in the area of change management fundamentally agree that a well-defined vision is more likely to have an impact on the change process in the longer term (Appelbaum, et all, 2012; Calegari, et all, 2015: Kotter, 1996).

Step Four: Communicate the vision. In order to begin to embed the vision cited in stage three, communication is a critical component in the change process. Appelbaum, et all, (2012) state that the uncertainty that change brings can have a positive or negative impact depending on the level of communication from management. Likewise in a study conducted by (Frahm & Brown, 2007) in the first one hundred days of change within a public sector organisation found that communication during the process led to employee feeling less frustrated with the process. They argue that despite the plethora of literature into the value of communication during change, organisations fail to acknowledge this research (Frahm & Brown, 2007).

Step Five: Empower broad-based action. Each step of Kotter's model begets to the next stage in its process. Once the previous step in embraced, the next step is to empower employees by removing barriers to change such as any structures, systems or people that do not fit with the new vision for the organisation (Kotter, 1996; Pollack, & Pollack, 2015). This can be done by

introducing a reward and recognition system that rewards good behaviour to drive in the change required (Calegari, et all, 2015).

Step Six: Generate short term wins. Within any change programme, transformation is a long term strategy. Kotter, (1996) explains that it is necessary to create short term wins to ensure that employee motivation remains. He claims "that most people won't go on the long march unless they see compelling evidence within the first twelve to twenty four months that the journey is producing results" (Kotter, 1996 p.6). Throughout the process it is the role of the leadership team to ensure that goals are met by setting high expectations of their teams and rewarding examples of good behaviour (Appelbaum, et all, 2012).

Step Seven: Sustain acceleration. It is at this stage of the process when organisations begin to see the fruits of their labours that they can become complacent (Calegari, et all, 2015). Kotter (1996) warns that success change happens over a seven year period and therefore it is vital that management keep revaluating and if necessary to do so begin at stage one again to create a sense of urgency is the change process has stagnated (Calegari, et all, 2015; Kotter,1996).

Step Eight: Institute change. It is at this stage where the new culture of the organisation should be embedded. The management and employees should be aligned on the corporate vision, values, norms and behaviours. Kotter, (1996. p.8) cites two factors that are critical to this:

1. "Show the employees <u>how</u> the new approaches behaviours and attitudes have helped improve performance" and
2. "Ensuring the next generation of management really does personify the new approach".

Appendix. 6- Sample of Coding used for Cultural Web

Stories	Theme	Feedback
lost cause	How it used to be in the good old days	I think there was a bigger feel that it was a sinking ship like every meeting I went to I was like I've literally just jumped onto a ship that is sinking
lost cause	How it used to be in the good old days	I think everybody had the feeling that Company Y wasn't going to go anywhere
Optimism	Optimism for the future	I think since Company X has taken over I think people feel that the company is actually heading in a good direction
Uncertainty	Uncertainty	I think a lot of people are still either one hoping for redundancy or two worried about redundancy
Vulnerability	Uncertainty	So I think the redundancy thing is something we're still recovering from and I think there will be a few more if I can read into emails correctly.
Vulnerability	Uncertainty	Yeah, it's just what we've got from the new sporting bet that the owner is like oh restructuring and I was like restructuring means redundancies.
The right people	Collaboration at a team level	I think both companies Company Y prior are now Company They've got an incredible natural ability to employ of fantastic people and I think the sort of people of the ground if you will are heroes
Collaboration	Collaboration at a team level	The heroes are definitely team work
Recognition	Seeing the bigger picture	I think we recognize a lot of our own talent and we see the people we work with on a day to day and actually get the shit done are sort of recognizing one of the peers you know we've got that person who's really good at that job, that person is really good to work with
Vulnerability	Uncertainty	People have always said about Company Y and I think l mean now less people are hopefully going to leave
The right people	Collaboration at a team level	but people have always said I stay with Company Y for the people and I think that still carries on,
Recognition	Seeing the bigger picture	I think people still really appreciate the people working with them
Conformity	Sometimes ridged	I think a lot of people find their managers inflexible
Conformity	Sometimes ridged	I think they're getting a lot of pressure handed down to them from higher up so I think that makes them worried about being flexible with their staff
Flexibility	Fast Paced and Dynamic	I mean I was really worried I wasn't going to get time off with my ankle. I don't know why because I rang the head of marketing and she was like oh no that's absolutely fine, I can't see why you can't work from home
conformity	Sometimes ridged	I've not got time off left but I thought I would have to traipse into the office or something

Uncertainty	Uncertainty	But I think it's not so much that I shouldn't have been worried it was the fact that I was and I don't know whether that's my own personal anxiety or is that because I've seen and heard from other people about things.
The right people	Collaboration at a team level	My head of marketing is an absolute legend
Conformity	Sometimes ridged	I worked from home once and then I had something else that I wanted to work from home for and my manager was like no you've already worked from home once in the last two weeks
Conformity	Sometimes ridged	I've asked for less pressure and I kind of got more pressure and more work.
Vulnerability	Uncertainty	then denied working from home when I sort of needed it.
Understanding	Seeing the bigger picture	I don't think its managers being dickheads, I don't think anyone thinks that.
understanding why we conform	Seeing the bigger picture	I mean the people might say that but that's what people say about their bosses every now and then you know.
Understanding	Seeing the bigger picture	. I don't think I am demonizing them because they all seem to be lovely people I think it's just this sort of past down pressure
understanding	Seeing the bigger picture	I think when you're feeling a lot of pressure and nervous about these things I think that makes your employees feel that as well.
How it used to be in the good old days	How it used to be in the good old days	So some of the stories that I kind of hear quite often refer back to old ways, how things used to be.
How it used to be in the good old days	How it used to be in the good old days	So the way that Company Y used to do things, the way that COMPANY X used to do things or the good old days of party gaming back 10 years ago
How it used to be in the good old days	How it used to be in the good old days	it would be things like oh money was no problem so if I need a budget or something it would refer back and something would be said about it like in the good old days there was no such thing as budgets
living in the past	How it used to be in the good old days	but these things happened 10 years ago so those stories have now become elaborated and actually they sound a lot better than what they actually were.
Being Realistic	Optimism for the future	So I think some of the beliefs in terms of stories that I hear are that days gone by are so much better and the company is not as good as it used to be but actually if you were a new starter coming in or if I've only just recently joined and not been here 12 years I'd have no idea of what happened so the stories would either be irrelevant or unbelievable.
lost cause	How it used to be in the good old days	in fact, most of the previous CEOs you never saw them, you never heard them so…
Reality	Seeing the bigger picture	The reality is the CEO isn't as visible either but when you hear stories from people that know him on a much more personal level that say he's more much reliable

Communication	Management disconnected	it's a shame that actually some of those stories of the CEO are not communicated more widely
Disconnected from bottom levels	Management disconnected	you know simple everyday human things that doesn't get through to the customer services people who say say it's out of our remit.
Disconnected from bottom levels	Management disconnected	Their experience (CS) of the CEO is that he's on the internet, they don't get any sort of touch points with him
CEO looks approachable	Seeing the bigger picture	But what I'm saying I see he's great he walks through the office he's got his shirt untucked, he looks like you could just go up and chat to him
CEO looks approachable	Seeing the bigger picture	he doesn't come across as like a very corporate the CEO that's untouchable
Introverted CEO	Management disconnected	It's just a shame he's not a little bit more outgoing so that he can kind of embrace that a little bit.
Nostalgia	How it used to be in the good old days	in terms of heroes you always hear like names floating around like there was someone called John xxxxx he used to work at the office and he was involved in getting a lot of the infrastructure up and running
living in the past	How it used to be in the good old days	There's a few people who still talk about the good old days in sporting bet
Nostalgia	How it used to be in the good old days	I think what it is it's gone through the mergers and acquisitions you get different sorts of stories about how things were then as compared to how they are now
How it used to be in the good old days	How it used to be in the good old days	For example, actually, I think it was recently someone was telling me about how the sporting bets 10th anniversary they flew everyone out to Vegas or something for like a big jolly and how things like that would never happen now.
Uncertainty	Uncertainty	Past and future I would say at this moment in time obviously with everything that's going on.
Nostalgia	How it used to be in the good old days	We have an agent that left a while back Ron he's the God the Guru like he can do no wrong when it comes to fraud.
Uncertainty	Uncertainty	there's a lot of people talking about obviously what's going on at the moment closing down sites, reopening obviously the new sites obviously India is a big factor that being discussed at the moment.
living in the past	How it used to be in the good old days	it's very different from what it was at the beginning
understanding	Seeing the bigger picture	they're going to be saving money which looks good on the company at the end of the day.
Uncertainty	Uncertainty	I think at the moment the stories just center around uncertainty for certain people even now, even with everything that's been told to us and given to us people are still very uncertain

distrust of company	Management disconnected	I'll be in the same position in 18 months anyway which is a story that's going around at the moment.
Understanding	Seeing the bigger picture	I think from my own personal experience I would say the company standing in my eyes hasn't changed.
good company to work for	Seeing the bigger picture	So I mean from my side I wanted to stay because I like the company it's a good company to work for
concentrate on the good stuff	Seeing the bigger picture	that's basically what I tell anybody you know if they start bitching and moaning and all the rest of it you know I will try and concentrate on the positives.
Understanding	Seeing the bigger picture	Listen every company is different, you're going to get good and bad times
external factors controlling	Seeing the bigger picture	but I think at the moment the external factors are having a big impact on people's opinions and the way they see things.
culture of Negativity	Cut Throat	we're trying to do things every month and kind of break that culture of negativity but it is hard, it is an uphill battle.
external factors controlling	Seeing the bigger picture	There are a lot of people butting heads at the moment you know that again is having a negative impact but again it's the external factors
Uncertainty	Uncertainty	Usually very happy go lucky people are very snappy and very picky, it's just that it's the uncertainty
Trying to bring optimism	Seeing the bigger picture	However obviously from the values champions side and that kind of aspect of it I'm trying to rope as many people in as possible to do little things
culture of Negativity	Cut Throat	So I think from that side as I said at the moment here the culture is very negative, however, we are trying to swing it around.
comparing the old	How it used to be in the good old days	Basically, regarding the company we're always comparing what is good now and what we don't like about the new set up
the difference in the two companies	How it used to be in the good old days	it's always about how the things work between the two companies and how the software of Company Y is and how the stuff of COMPANY X is working by this
the difference in the two companies	How it used to be in the good old days	This is mostly what we discuss and whether they are working and how the two companies are different in the way that they are working.
Nostalgia	How it used to be in the good old days	they speak about some others in Head of Trading how good they were in their job
living in the past	How it used to be in the good old days	But heroes they talk about some of the old Head of Trading how good they were and how they developed the company.
Happy as we are	Optimism for the future	I feel they are quite happy this is the type of department that we are
Nostalgia	How it used to be in the good old days	But heroes they talk of the old Head of Trading how good they were and how they developed the company
Being Realistic	Optimism for the future	I don't feel that they make a comparison how good it was back then

Freedom and autonomy	Fast Paced and Dynamic	can speak about myself that David is one my best managers because he gives me a lot of freedom for example
recognition of line manager	Optimism for the future	I had already the knowledge how to work so for me it's about how he's leading.
Fun	Fast Paced and Dynamic	The good is always the fun things we do either when we have a party the Christmas/summer party or when we do fun activities outside well there's always something going on or something happens and it's fun stories people share
Good line managers	Optimism for the future	Well from my perspective as a customer service agent we do like our direct managers
CEO looks approachable	Seeing the bigger picture	they do like the current you CEO
Dislike of middle management and leadership	Management disconnected	We don't like the middle and upper management.
How it used to be in the good old days	How it used to be in the good old days	Of course, stories can date back to the before the company y merger to the bet and win days
How it used to be in the good old days	How it used to be in the good old days	we still have people who really come from the Bet and Win times , and how they were all so close to each other
How it used to be in the good old days	How it used to be in the good old days	They compare of course old days with new days
changing and adapting to the new	Optimism for the future	how they have met so many challenges and had to overcome so many challenges, adapt to things.
Change	Uncertainty	has changed over the years so also the spirit has changed.
Optimism	Optimism for the future	I would say the company has not lost the spirit it just has got new spirits, new ideas, new staff, new stories to tell.
Nostalgia	How it used to be in the good old days	they have stories about our CEOs because they were very personal
the bad old day	How it used to be in the good old days	Then the stories were about the merger how hard that was, how everything changed and then the takeover
Uncertainty	Uncertainty	people expected it to be worse or didn't know so a very long story of uncertainties
Pride	Optimism for the future	that makes you proud
Uncertainty	Uncertainty	in the beginning, the Co-CEOs they were the real heroes for people but they were villains at the same time probably because no one knew what they were doing
Nostalgia	How it used to be in the good old days	we had a very outstanding personality so people have always known each other very well.

sense of belonging	Optimism for the future	Up until the merger I think everybody knew everybody so they knew who got drunk at the Christmas party
focusing on the past	How it used to be in the good old days	I think a lot of people are so focused a lot on how it was before company x took over
living in the past	How it used to be in the good old days	I think many people think that the situation is a little bit worse now
focusing on the future	Optimism for the future	although we have many people who think it's much better now and as a company,
seeing opportunities	Optimism for the future	I guess people see that we're growing and we're getting much bigger now
focusing on the past	How it used to be in the good old days	I think people are even still stuck on the Bain Party merger like party gaming so a lot of them are focused on the past
Optimism	Optimism for the future	I hear good things coming from the staff
Optimism	Optimism for the future	I hear a lot of positive things especially with the possibility for growth
Optimism	Optimism for the future	it wasn't recognized in the past so it was a really great opportunity
Optimism	Optimism for the future	So I think that's well known as well that there is more recognition with company x.
lost cause	How it used to be in the good old days	In the past that it wasn't that way,
Optimism	Optimism for the future	I feel like that we promote that we will help people develop to the next level and I definitely see that now
Optimism	Optimism for the future	so I think others have seen that too
Grow and develop	Optimism for the future	, the possibility to grow and develop in each area is big at the moment
The introduction of the values	Optimism for the future	And the other thing that's a huge topic for people is the values and how we put them into everyday life
using the values for see the bad	Uncertainty	I think people are very easy to point out now when we're not using the values because it's become such a core part of our business
The introduction of the values	Optimism for the future	So as soon as they see that the values are not being put into place they're like well we're working on the values and we want it to be universal all over so why are we not doing it this way, so I think they have become a huge part of our everyday life here.
Positive HR Changes	Optimism for the future	in our HR department group head has become very popular for the changes that she's made
Cut throat	Cut Throat	Company X is the villain because of this and they've done this
Cut throat	Cut Throat	they've come in and taken away all of the old teams and the old members.
different opinions	Optimism for the future	So I think it's up and down.

Cut throat	Cut Throat	The company is aggressive, it's a risk taker, it will cut a corner to achieve a result
dynamic	Fast Paced and Dynamic	it's very fast paced.
dynamic	Fast Paced and Dynamic	We are quick decision makers in the business and that's kind of driven top down
CEO Led	Seeing the bigger picture	So I suppose the stories that are told are very much driven by our CEO, our way of working reflects his style.
Management are both hero's and villains	Management disconnected	I actually think that the heroes and villains are the same people
Management are both hero's and villains	Management disconnected	People look up to our CEO, our heads and they are seen as heroes but villains in equal measure which is quite interesting to see.
Uncertainty	Uncertainty	Because you can have someone talk about the Ceo in one breath and say something that is absolutely what a CEO shouldn't be
fast paced	Fast Paced and Dynamic	I think they are our strengths that rapid ability to change are part of our strengths
Lack of planning	Management disconnected	but could possibly be a weakness at some point in time because of our lack of structures
No solid structures in place for growth	Management disconnected	but it also means that at some point if we carry on growing like we have done then it could be a weakness.
Optimism	Optimism for the future	I think people are starting to talk about current stories
living in the past	How it used to be in the good old days	There was a time when the acquisition happened the two companies came together and everyone would talk a lot about the past
comparing the two	How it used to be in the good old days	they would talk oh, this is how we do things at Company Y but that's not what we do at COMPANY X
Misconceptions of how it used to be	How it used to be in the good old days	you know we're a smaller company we just talk to one another we don't send emails or anything like that but Company Y people went no, no we send emails you have to have it writing, very structured.
living in the past	How it used to be in the good old days	So there was a time when people would talk about the past and what we used to do and how we would run
changing and adapting to the new	Optimism for the future	now a year and a half on you can see that people are starting to talk more about current leadership team what's the process going forward
acceptance	Optimism for the future	so I think the dust is starting to settle the massive changes happened
acceptance	Optimism for the future	people talk about the now and very rarely do you hear people talk about the past as much as they used to
Uncertainty	Uncertainty	Villains I think there's been a year where HR have been villains because they have to deal with a lot of redundancy situations

| Uncertainty | Uncertainty | but maybe behind the scenes it's the leadership team making the decisions but HR are the ones that come out with the message. |
| Uncertainty | Uncertainty | Well more recently yes but it was the bearer of bad news. |

Appendix. 7- Interview Consent Form

Interview Consent Form

Title of Research Project questions:

Is the Cultural Web Change Model an effective tool in assisting cultural transition in a gambling organisation that has recently experienced an M&A?'

Name of Researcher: Liz Cullen

Masters in Human Resource Management

National College of Ireland

- ☐ I confirm that I have read an understood the information sheet for the above study and I have had the opportunity to ask questions
- ☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason
- ☐ I give my permission to record my interview through audio recording measures
- ☐ I give my permission to the researcher to use direct and indirect quotes in their project
- ☐ I agree to take part in this interview for this research project and I understand that it is completely confidential and anonymous

Participant   **Researcher**

Name: _____   Name: Liz Cullen

Date: _____   Date: _____

Signature: _____   Signature: _____