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<u>Declaration</u>

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not previously been

submitted as an exercise for a degree or other qualification.

Signed: _____

Clodagh Sands, 2004

National College of Ireland

Course Title

BA in Human Resources Management

Project Title

Effective Communication and its Impact on Organisational Performance and Motivation

By

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Management

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Abstract

IBEC (Guideline 27) emphasize that effective communication and the sharing of particular information between management and employees is a fundamental prerequisite in organisational strategy to positively involve employees in the organisation in which they are employed. The primary management aim when formulating a communication policy or strategy should be to encourage employees to connect with the organisation as a whole. IBEC further emphasise the significance of sufficient comprehension of the various structures and processes that are involved in communication within an organisation.

Communication can be defined as the act of imparting news or information. In the context of a work environment this may have many pretexts. Communication may be on an informal basis, with much of it left to chance and the 'grapevine' being the most recurrent medium. Nevertheless, many organisations recognise that a formal communication structure is of benefit and have drawn up policies in that regard.

Some policies can be very wide-ranging with team briefing, quality circles and problem solving groups in place. Other companies, while maybe not as sophisticated, may have simple structures, but structures that are methodical and instructive. The key factor is that management talks to the workers and, in doing so, instils authority and responsibility within the workforce.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

The aims and objectives of this dissertation are:

a) To review the current literature pertaining to effective organisational communication in order to identify the various theories and models that are recommended by the theorists.

b) To present a case study of NPL, including a brief history; an outline of the environment in which the company operates; how it has addressed the need for effective communication; the barriers or resistance that exist and the approach that has been taken to overcome these.

c) To link the theory gleaned from the literature review with the case study in order to establish if the communication structure at NPL has followed any identifiable model or approach and what, if any, opportunities for improvement in the process exist.

d) To identify the key issues to be addressed.

e) To suggest action to be taken in addressing the key issues.

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Chapter 2

Literature Review

2. Communication – An Introduction

Effective communication and the sharing of information between management and employees is a fundamental prerequisite in organisational strategy to positively involve employees in the organisation in which they are employed. The primary management objective when formulating a communication policy or strategy should be to encourage employees to connect with the organisation as a whole. Emphasis must be placed on the significance of sufficient comprehension of the various structures and processes that are involved in communication within an organisation.

Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) recognise that one of the main problems facing organisations lies in persuading employees to work effectively towards the interests of the organisation. They refer to a survey carried out by Katherine Burke (1999) who concluded that adequate attention is not given to communication in organisations, which, in turn, results in absenteeism, turnover, low productivity and workplace disputes.

Communication is of paramount importance in management theory and practice as a contributory factor towards business performance and productivity. Beardwell and Holden (2001) relate how, during the 1990's, many organisations came to recognise that the establishment of effective communication is an exceedingly significant aspect of the efficient administration of organisations.

The content of the literature review is confined to a perspective on the nature of communication within organisations. The importance of effective communication in organisations is based on the theory that if employees are informed about the organisation's decisions and have a good understanding of the reasons for decisions, they are more likely to accede to the requests or changes put forward by management.

2.1   Communication – A Definition

There are numerous definitions or descriptions of communication throughout literature theory and; whilst it is not given much weight by earlier management theorists, in recent years, it has become recognised as a specific function of management theory and practice. Greenberg and Baron (2000), define communication as

> *"The process by which a person, group, or organisation (i.e. the sender) transmits some type of information (i.e. the message) to another person, group or organisation (i.e. the receiver)."*

Houston (1999) describes how communication is about the right information being available to the right people at the right time. She further describes communication as a transfer of knowledge, which is categorised into three separate areas, the internal knowledge of an organisation, the external knowledge, and the employee's knowledge.

Steers (1991) categorises communication into two separate areas, interpersonal communication and organisational communication. He expands his theory further through the introduction of structures and processes that are essential to effective communication. Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) introduce the topic of organisational communication in the Internet age, an area that is particularly pertinent in today's changing and fast moving global environment. They define communication as

> *"the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver, and the inference (perception) of meaning between the individuals involved."*

Note the introduction of perception, which is of paramount importance in the decision making process concerned with implementing or reviewing a communication strategy in any organisation. Perception and perceptual processes are a vital component of

management theory and form a distinct separate topic, which is too vast to cover in this dissertation.

Vecchio (2000) puts forward the view that

"true communication is the creation of a mental image in the mind of a receiver in exactly the same detail as intended by the sender."

This supports Kreitner and Kinicki's (2004) assertion that perception is a critical factor in the communication process. Davis and Newstrom (1989) discuss the magnitude of communication and contend that organisations cannot exist without communication; that an understanding of the communication being delivered is critical for success. Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) describe the communication process as

"involving the transmission of information and the exchange of meaning between at least two people."

It is clear from current literature that communication is a vital component of successful management strategy and, whilst varying definitions, processes and structures are described, the essence of the literature is the assertion that effective communication processes and structures are vital for the achievement of the required standards of performance and productivity within an organisation. This becomes more evident through the investigation of the process and structure utilised in an organisation.

2.2 What Communicating Does

Harris and Hartman (1992) state that appropriate interpersonal communication accomplishes a great deal for those involved in organisations. They describe Thayer's (1968) division of the functions of communication in organisations into four specific categories: (1) the information function; (2) the command and instruction function; (3) the influence and persuasion function; and (4) the integrative function. Harris and Hartman have added a fifth function, the innovation function.

(1) The Information Function

As an information function, communication conveys information to individuals, including data relating to jobs, the organisation and other associated resources.

(2) The Command and Instruction Function

As a command and instruction function, communication creates awareness among individuals of their responsibility to the organisation.

(3) The Influence and Persuasion Function

As an influence and persuasion function, communication, primarily referred to as motivation, is used to influence individual performance or to encourage individuals to behave in specific ways.

(4) The Integrative Function

As an integrative function, communication is used to connect the activities of workers so that they complement rather than detract from one another.

(5)   **The Innovation Function**

As an innovation function, communication is intended to facilitate adaptation by the organisation and its members to internal and external influences as they occur.

2.3   The Communication Process

There are common key elements in the communication process throughout theory literature.   Schermerhorn et Al (1991), Harris and Hartman (1992), Steers (1991), Greenberg and Baron (2000), Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) and Huczynski and Buchanan (2004) are among theorists who describe the process in a similar fashion.   Apart from the semantics employed, the underlying foundation of the process is consistent throughout the literature. Figure 2.1 outlines the basic elements of the communication process.

Figure 2.1: Exchanging meaning: a model of the communication process
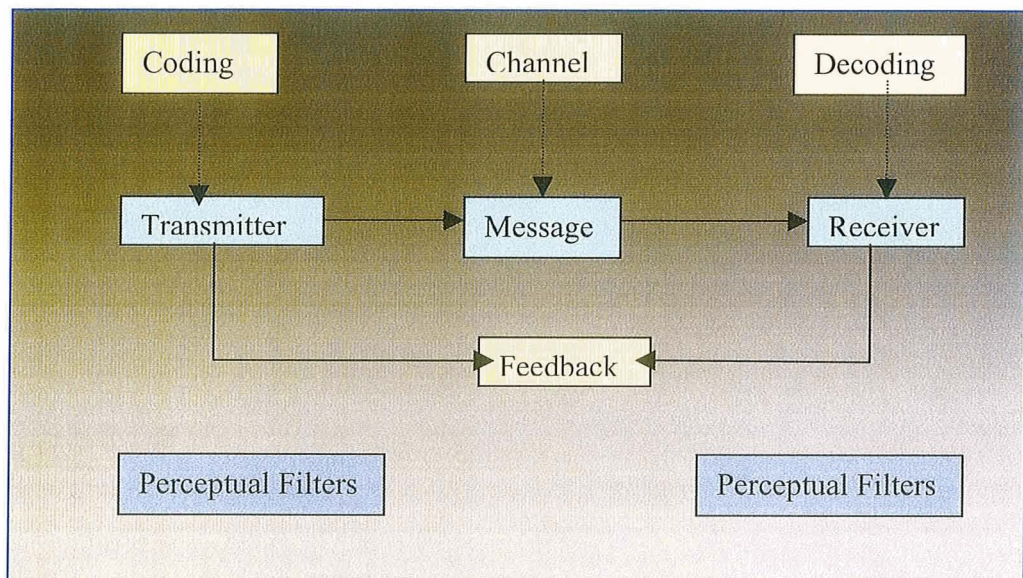
(Source: Huczynski & Buchanan (2001), Organisational Behaviour, An Introductory Text)

2.3.1   The Sender (Transmitter)

The sender, an individual, group or organisation, has a message it wishes to pass on to another party.   The sender commences by 'encoding' the message, which essentially involves translating thoughts into a code or language that can be understood by others. Encoding is performed when words are selected to write a letter or to speak to someone

personally. A crucial factor at this stage of the process is the ability of the sender to translate their ideas into a format that allows the others to extract the intended meaning.

2.3.2 The Receiver

The receiver, an individual, group or organisation, receives a message from the sender and must 'decode' or translate the message to correlate to the senders intended meaning. A number of sub-processes are involved at this stage, namely the receiver's understanding of the spoken and/or written words, interpretation of the sender's facial expression and perceived knowledge of the role and status of the sender. At this stage, misunderstanding or incorrect translation of the message can be caused as the receiver is subject to social and cultural values that may not be understood or known by the sender.

2.3.3 Feedback

Feedback occurs when the receiver decodes the message and replies with a new message to the sender. At this stage, the original sender is able to determine whether or not the initial message was understood correctly. The process may then be repeated with different messages passing between the sender and the receiver.

2.3.4 Noise

Whilst part of the communication process, noise is also deemed to be a barrier to effective communication. Noise occurs when there is an extraneous factor that dilutes or inhibits the sending and receiving of messages in an organisation. It may include factors such as physical distractions, cultural differences, absence of feedback, status effects, physical defects such as poor hearing or eyesight, illegible writing, etc. Organisations must be able to recognise noise factors and reduce them in order to maintain effective communications.

2.3.5 Perceptual Filters (Perceived Meaning)

A final element in the communication process is perceptual filters that are characteristics that interfere with the effective encoding and decoding of messages. Perceptual filters affect what is said and what is heard. The sender's own motives, personality traits, objectives and values will affect the manner in which the information being send is encoded. The receiver's own perceptual filtering will determine how the information being received is decoded and the way in which it is understood.

2.4   Mechanisms for Communication

Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) define a range of one-way-downward mechanisms used by organisations to communicate with employees.

One-way (downward) mechanisms include:

- o   *the management chain;*
- o   *Regular meetings with senior and/or middle managers;*
- o   *In-house newspapers and magazines;*
- o   *Notice boards;*
- o   *Videos;*
- o   *Conferences and seminars;*
- o   *Employee reports (similar to but different from shareholder reports);*
- o   *Team briefings, to cascade information through the structure;*
- o   *E-mail and intranets.*

Two-way (upward-downward) mechanisms include:

- o   *'speak out' programmes, in which problems are taken to counsellors;*
- o   *suggestion or 'bright ideas' schemes;*
- o   *open door policies;*
- o   *the appraisal system;*
- o   *quality circles;*
- o   *attitude surveys;*
- o   *interactive e-mail*

Vecchio (2000) discusses three common forms or media of interpersonal communication that take place within organisations. The first, and most frequently used, form is verbal communication, which is typically the most rapid and more likely to be correct as the parties can elucidate on the message further during ongoing discussion. Verbal communication may take place face-to-face, by telephone or interactive media. The second form is written communication, such as memos, letters, reports, faxes, order forms, e-mails, etc. Written communication is equally as important as they afford a permanent record that augments their accuracy and clarity in comparison to verbal communication.   The third form of interpersonal communication, nonverbal

communication, comprises implicit signals that a communicator sends in tandem with a verbal or written message. For example, through hand gestures, nodding and posture a speaker can give emphasis to the spoken words. Occasionally, however, nonverbal signals may seem to conflict with the spoken word, as when a speaker smiles while announcing bad news. In such instances, sorting out the intended content can be a challenge for the receiver. Non-verbal communication may also take the form of symbols. For example, the style of dress a person chooses or the specific format in which a message is written can suggest supplementary information to the receiver.

Whilst Vecchio separates verbal and written communication into two distinct forms of communication, Greenberg and Baron (2000) refer to verbal media, which is any communication involving words, written and oral. The second form of communication described by them is non-verbal, such as gestures, use of space, style of dress, etc.
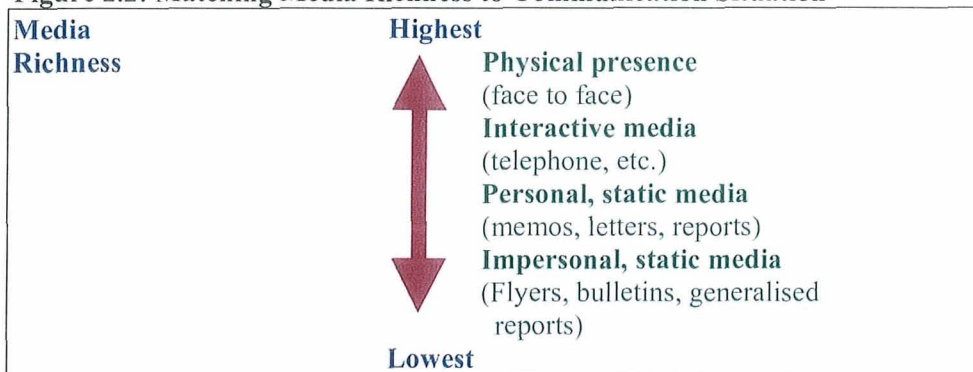
Harris and Hartman (1992), Greenberg and Barron (2000) describe the key to successful selection of the proper medium (form) to send a message as being the right degree of richness. A rich medium is the one where the most learning can be realized. A lean medium, in contrast is one where only scant information is given without any help. Richness of a communication medium can be ascertained by evaluating the medium's aptitude in managing multiple information cues simultaneously, facilitate rapid feedback, and establish a personal focus. The communication medium with the highest level of richness is the physically present communication, followed by interactive media such as telephone conversations, then personal, static media and, finally, the media with the least richness, such as bulletins, comes last. Learning, in other words, transpires better through

direct personal messages. Lengel and Daft (1988) emphasise four rules for matching media richness to the communication situation:

1. Send non-routine messages through a rich medium (such as face to face)
2. Send routine, simple messages through a lean medium (such as bulletins)
3. Use rich media to extend your presence throughout the organisation.
4. Use rich media for implementing company strategy.

This is further demonstrated in Figure 2.2

Figure 2.2: Matching Media Richness to Communication Situation

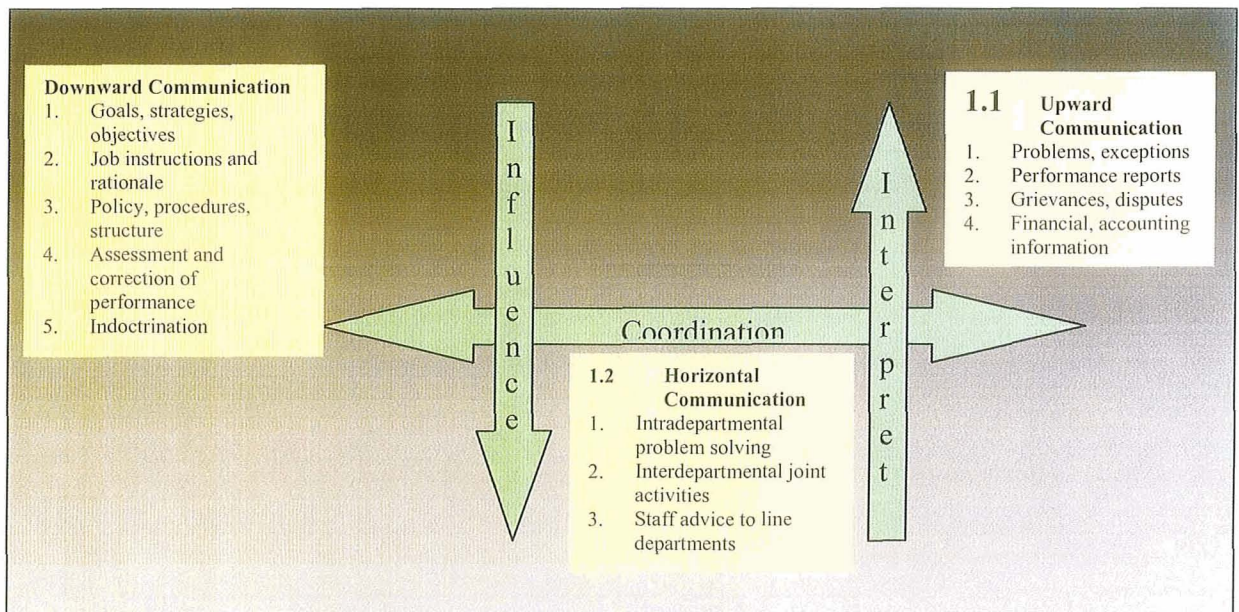|	
Media Richness	**Highest**
	Physical presence (face to face)
↑	**Interactive media** (telephone, etc.)
↓	**Personal, static media** (memos, letters, reports)
	Impersonal, static media (Flyers, bulletins, generalised reports)
	Lowest

Source: Robert H. Lengel and Richard L. Daft, *"The Selection of Communication Media as an Executive Skill,"* Academy of Management Executive, Volume 2, Number 3, August 1988

2.5 <u>Communication Flow</u>

To generate positive performance outcomes, it is imperative for management to differentiate the various structures through which information is conveyed and accepted within the organisation. Greenberg and Baron (2000) differentiate the two basic types of organisational communication as being formal and informal. They suggest that the basic processes of communication described previously are similar in many different contexts, but all are affected profoundly by one organisational feature, which is organisational structure. Organisational structure relates to the formally arranged pattern of interactions between the various units in the organisation. Typically there are three formal directions in which information can flow in an organisation, the direction of which is dependent on the purpose behind the sending of the information or communication. These are outlined in Steers (1991) figure 2.3

Figure 2.3: Downward, Upward and Horizontal Communication in Organisations

Downward Communication
1. Goals, strategies, objectives
2. Job instructions and rationale
3. Policy, procedures, structure
4. Assessment and correction of performance
5. Indoctrination

Influence

Coordination

1.1 Upward Communication
1. Problems, exceptions
2. Performance reports
3. Grievances, disputes
4. Financial, accounting information

Interpret

1.2 Horizontal Communication
1. Intradepartmental problem solving
2. Interdepartmental joint activities
3. Staff advice to line departments

(Source: R. Daft and Rl Steers, Organisations: A Micro/Macro Approach (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1986, P. 538. copyright © 1986 Scott, Foresman and Company)

A fourth structure, which is informal, and through which information typically flows in an organisation is referred to as the rumour mill or the grapevine.

2.5.1 Downward Communication

Downward communication allows management to inform personnel of important matters relevant to the organisation before they hear it through the grapevine. Davis and Newstrom (1989) define downward communication as an information flow from "higher to lower authority." Vecchio (2000) concurs with Davis and Newstrom's definition, whilst Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) use the term 'hierarchical communication' to encompass the downward flow of information or communication.

The most frequent messages to flow downwards in an organisation include changes in policy and processes, new developments and sales, and individual performance. The downward flow of information plays a pivotal role in assisting individuals on the same level to understanding the required tasks and responsibilities and contributes to the organisation's aim of getting each employee to work towards common goals and outcomes.

Several problems are associated with downward communication that, unless identified and rectified at an early stage, can lead to a negative outcome rather than a positive outcome. Downward communication is not ordinarily a direct means of communication and information is often passed down through a number of layers. It is essential that the sender of the message creates a checking system to determine whether the intended message was accurately received at the end stage. Another downside is that recipients have a tendency to interpret a message from the top as being a signal that management are dissatisfied with the recipient; this interpretation is drawn from the

individual's perceived view that when management take time to communicate an issue or topic, there must be an exception to the norm that needs to be corrected. (Vecchio, 2000)

If the hierarchy or chain of command is not clear in an organisation, there may be confusion among individuals as to whom they should receive information from and to whom they should send information. This can lead to excessive confusing information or a lack of information that may be vital to the successful operation of the organisation. (Harris and Hartman, 1992)

The flow of downward communication is from one level to the level below, the information eventually filters down to the lowest level, however, as the information moves from level to level, it inevitably becomes less accurate, particularly where it is a verbal communication. Downward communication, therefore, is more effective when the information is imparted directly to those most affected. (Greenberg and Baron, 2000)

2.5.2 Upward Communication

Upward communication is the flow of information from a subordinate (individual or group) upwards to a superior (individual or group). Upward communication is information that has worked its way up the organisation and could be described as 'management by exception' as it communicates problems or exceptions to normal operating policies that require management attention. (Steers, 1991)

Common information that may be communicated upwards will include ways to improve work procedures, issues and complaints, questions about strategy or goals and requests for help.

Upward communication is less prevalent than downward communication. Greenberg and Baron (2000) discuss studies that have found that

"70 per cent of assembly line workers initiated communication with their supervisors less than once a month and that managers directed less than 15 per cent of their total communication to their own superiors."

Whereas their superiors expect an immediate reaction to downward communication from subordinates, the reverse does not automatically happen. The recipient of upward communication risks being perceived as a supervisor or manager who *"lets the tail wag the dog"*, (Vecchio, 2000) which, in turn, leads to a loss of respect, trust and credibility among his/her peers and superiors, in addition to his/her subordinates.

Another crucial factor in upward communication is perception. Steers (1991) discusses the findings of a study which found that individuals with career progression aspirations tended to filter their upward communication to highlight the positive side of messages and either ignored or downplayed the negative side. The same study also concluded that the level of trust an individual had for a superior contributed to the frequency and detail of upward communication. Likewise, an individual's perception of the amount of influence a superior held within the organisation contributed to the content of and amount of upward communication.

Harris and Hartman (1992) discuss the difficulties experienced when encouraging upward communication, where the initiative to communicate is in the hands of lower-level employees who must feel the need to communicate and have a certain level of trust and respect for their superior. They go on to suggest a number of reasons why an individual may be reluctant to communicate upwards such as a fear of punitive action, a lack of trust and respect for the superior and the employee's perception of their immediate superior's attitude toward them. Beardwell and Holden (2001) on the other

hand, discuss schemes such as quality circles, which are instrumental in facilitating acceptance of work practice changes, functional flexibility and the introduction of new technology, which in turn, engenders a culture of co-operation and team-building.

Davis and Newstrom (1989) recommend that a general policy and practice be implemented to clarify what categories of upward communication are desired. This has a filtering effect and ensures that individuals and groups at all levels have clarity about whom they should enter into discussion with on particular issues, requests, concerns, suggestions, etc.

2.5.3 Horizontal Communication (Lateral)

Horizontal communication consists of messages sent between peers within an organisation; it can exist within a single department or inter-departmentally. It allows individuals on the same level to understand their own tasks and responsibilities and to foster a culture of employee engagement. Steers (1991) describes horizontal communication as

> *"typically used as a means of co-ordinating activities or projects between department or units."*

Davis and Newstrom (1989) talk about 'lateral' communication or 'cross-communication'. This communication across chains of command is a necessary tool, used to co-ordinate jobs with other departments. Greenberg and Baron (2000) concur by describing horizontal communication as information that flows laterally and which is characterised by efforts at synchronisation.

Steers (1991) describes how Henry Fayol (1949) first recognised this process, which circumvents the formal organisation structure and noted

"There are many operations where success depends on rapid execution; we must find some means of reconciling respect for the hierarchic channel with the need for quick action."

This is often referred to as *Fayol's Bridge*. (Steers, 1991)

Vecchio (2000) suggests that typically there is little occasion for horizontal communication due to the disparity between departments and the way in which some individuals are relatively segregated from others who occupy comparable positions. Greenberg and Baron (2000) take a different view with the hypothesis that horizontal communication has a tendency to be friendlier and easier, is much more casual with less social barriers, therefore it occurs earlier in the communication process and at more frequent intervals.

Steers (1991) develops this viewpoint further by theorising that some organisations may already have formal chains of command with regard to information flow and may seek, therefore, to discourage horizontal communication. A consequence of this strategy is to diminish the speed and accuracy of the information to be shared between relevant parties.

One significant disadvantage of horizontal communication is that different departments may feel compelled to compete with other departments or individuals for resources and will adopt an approach that is highly competitive and antagonistic. (Greenberg and Baron, 2000)

2.5.4 The Grapevine (Rumour Mill)

Theorists such as Harris and Hartman (1992), Greenberg and Baron (2000), Schermerhorn et Al (1991) and Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) expand on a fourth

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communication structure frequently referred to as the grapevine or rumour mill. This is an informal structure, whereas the previous structures are the foundations of formal communication and information flow. Whilst this network of communication co-exists with formal communication structures, it diverges from them by ignoring the formal chains of command in the hierarchy and circumventing the vertical chains of command. One advantage of the grapevine is the ability to transmit information quickly and efficiently through an organisation. It also leads to a sense of security for those involved in the process by keeping them in the loop.

Within an organisation, there exists an 'informal organisation' which fulfils the specific needs of a group and its members by allowing them to socially integrate and to garner support from others within the same group. Within this informal organisation, the grapevine is relied upon to provide functional information and knowledge that may otherwise take time to filter down through more formal channels. (Harris and Hartman, 1992) The grapevine does not have a hierarchical structure and it is common to find individuals from all organisational levels in any chosen group.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) assert that whilst the grapevine can be the source of inaccurate rumours, it has a positive role as an early warning indicator for organisational changes, acts as a medium for establishing organisational culture, is a means for nurturing group cohesiveness and is a way of informally testing ideas.

Greenberg and Baron (2000) report on a US national study, carried out by Harcourt et Al, of middle managers' assessment of organisation communication quality. The study concluded that middle managers have ranked informal networks as being better sources of organisational information than formal networks. They conclude with the supposition

that if the formal communication structure within an organisation represents its skeleton, its informal communication represents its central nervous system.

There are disadvantages to the grapevine, one of which is the lack of control the organisation is able to exert due to the unpredictable pattern and the speed with which information flows through different groups.

A further disadvantage is that information, whilst spread rapidly, is also spread selectively and different individuals or groups may find themselves excluded from the loop, often to their detriment – the grapevine cannot be depended upon to disseminate messages accurately throughout the organisation (Harris and Hartman, 1992)

Another primary disadvantage proposed by Schermerhorn et Al (1991) is that the transmission of incorrect or untimely messages may result in the circulation of dysfunctional information. One way to govern this is for management to be mindful of the informal organisation structure and to endeavour to utilise it to their advantage by ensuring key members are used as a counterbalance and are supplied with correct information from the offset.

2.6 Barriers to Effective Communication

There are innate barriers to effective communications that must be recognised in order for a strategy to be effectively implemented and to produce the desired outcome, such as productivity and motivation. Schermerhorn et Al (1991), Harris and Hartman (1992), Steers (1991), Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) and Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) advocate the supposition that effective communication processes are similar in many different contexts, however, they are differentiated by barriers to the process which are present in all organisations.

Kreitner and Kinicki describe four key barriers to effective communication. These are (a) Process Barriers; (b) Personal Barriers; (c) Physical Barriers; and (d) Semantic Barriers.

(a) Process Barriers

The process barriers are derived from the communication process described in section 2.2 and include barriers that originate from the sender; the encoding process; the message itself; the medium exercised; the decoding process; the receiver; and finally, the feedback process. Barriers that exist in any of these process elements can serve to distort the transfer of meaning. It is difficult, given the diversity of an organisation's workforce, to overcome these barriers, however, it is essential to endeavour to reduce the impact they may have on effective communications.

(b) Personal Barriers

Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) highlight eight common personal barriers to effective communications. These are:

1. Our ability to effectively communicate;
2. The way people process and interpret information;

3. The level of interpersonal trust between people;
4. Stereotypes and prejudices;
5. Personal egos;
6. Poor listening skills;
7. A natural tendency to evaluate or judge a sender's message;
8. An inability to listen with understanding.

(c) Physical Barriers

The distance between employees can cause distortion in the transfer of information, this distortion can occur whether employees work in close confinement or whether they work in different locations. Time zones, particularly in multinational organisations, are a further example of the physical barriers to effective communications as is the quality of telephone and computer systems.

In order to counteract physical barriers, managers should attempt to choose a medium that optimally reduces the physical barrier at hand.

(d) Semantic Barriers

Semantics are manifested as encoding and decoding errors as these steps in the communication process involve the transmission and receipt of words and symbols. These barriers may be caused by the use of jargon and unnecessarily complex words or through cultural diversity and language differences.

Steers (1991) approach to defining barriers to effective communication is to summarise the available information on 'impediments' into a list of five barriers: (a) Distortion; (b) Omission; (c) Overload; (d) Timeliness; and (e) Acceptance.

(a) Distortion

Similar to the semantic barrier described by Kreitner and Kinicki (2004), distortion occurs when an intended message becomes altered as it flows from sender to receiver. It will also occur where there are language differences between the sender and the receiver.

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Whilst distortion occurs unintentionally, it can also be created intentionally when the sender or receiver uses the filtering process to distort the meaning of the message sent or received.

(b) Omission

Omission occurs when part of the intended message is conveyed to the receiver. This may be a result of intentional filtering, for fear of punitive action, or when the sender is unable to formulate the entire message and transmits incomplete information.

(c) Overload

Overload will occur when a receiver is presented with a profusion of information and, as a result, is not in a position to take a rational and logical approach to decision making. Overload will often occur when subordinates fail to effectively select the information offered to the manager, hence managers are required to spend so much time analysing the information that they may fail to recognize the foremost issues in time to take appropriate steps.

(d) Timeliness

Described by Steers (1991) as a major factor in effective communication, the timing of transmission of information will impact significantly on the expected outcome. If an instruction is given to far in advance of a specified task or project, the time lapse may lead to performance failure, equally if the instruction is given with an unrealistically short deadline, the lack of preparation time may also lead to performance failure.

(e) Acceptance

Steers' final barrier to effective communication is the acceptance of the message by the receiver. The receiver may refuse to accept or act upon an instruction or message if

they feel it is inappropriate or comes from a source outside the formal communication structure.

Harris and Hartman (1992) state some of the barriers are perceptual and psychological, whilst others occur primarily as a result of the specific situation. They describe five different barriers, which further concur with those put forward by Steers (1991) and Kreitner and Kinicki (2004). Namely, they are (a) Filtering; (b) Distortion; (c) Timing; (d) Inconsistency; and (e) the Receiver's State of Mind.

(a) Filtering

This is the action of a receiver in which the receiver hears only what he or she wishes to hear. Objectivity is key to the successful interpretation of a message, however, it is often difficult to achieve. Filtering occurs both in what the receiver is prepared to accept and in the interpretation the receiver assigns to the message. Perceptual filtering was introduced in section 2.2.5 as a final element in the communication process; the filters are characteristics that interfere with the effective encoding and decoding of messages.

(b) Distortion

Distortion was introduced earlier on in this section when similarities were drawn between the semantic barrier described by Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) and the distortion barrier described by Steers(1991). Harris and Hartman (1992) expand on the problem of distortion and assert that it is sometimes the result of misleading conditions or circumstances.

(c) Timing

Harris and Hartman (1992) concur with Steers' (1991) viewpoint on the effect timing has on the effectiveness of information.

(d) Inconsistency

The consistency of information passed along by the sender is of paramount importance. If information is repeatedly constructive and reliable, the receiver learns to trust it and give it consideration. If the messages are erratic and sometimes insufficient, the receiver becomes sceptical rapidly. The degree of trust in the sender as a result of consistent actions and messages, therefore, has its own impact upon message interpretation.

(e) The Receiver's State of Mind

A prevailing factor of the success of communication is the state of mind of those involved. If the participant's minds are positive, progressive, and free of bias, the communication and interpretation of messages will almost certainly be unbiased, objective and rational. Anxiety tends to be damaging to either the sender or the receiver. An anxious sender will have a tendency to over communicate or remain silent, whilst an anxious receiver may react excessively or distort the message.

Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) state we can be careless coders and lazy listeners, both sides of the communication chain are subject to error. Some of the main barriers to communication they describe are (a) Power Differences; (b) Gender differences; (c) physical surroundings; (d) language; (e) cultural diversity.

(a) Power Differences

Employees distort upward communication and superiors often have a limited understanding of subordinates' roles, experiences and problems.

(b) Gender Differences

Men and women use different conversational styles, which can lead to misunderstanding; men tend to talk more and give information, while women tend to listen and reflect more.

(c) Physical Surroundings

Apart from noisy machinery, room size and layout also influence our ability to see others and our readiness to participate in conversations and discussions.

(d) Language

Even within a single country, variations in accent and dialect can make communication difficult; the English spoken in London is not the same as the English spoken in Birmingham, Llandudno, Glasgow or Aberdeen.

(f) Cultural Diversity

Different cultures have different norms and expectations concerning formal and informal conversations; lack of awareness of those norms creates misunderstanding.

Schermerhorn et Al (1991) lists (a) noise; (b) physical distractions; (c) semantic problems; (d) cultural differences; (e) absence of feedback and (f) status effects.

(a) Noise

The only addition to those barriers listed previously, noise is anything that interferes with the effectiveness of a communications attempt. Six special sources of noise are physical distractions, semantic problems, cultural differences, mixed messages, the absence of feedback and status effects. Each of these sources of noise should be recognised and subjected so special managerial control.

2.7   The Importance of Roles in Communication

A further aspect of organisational communication addressed in this review concerns the roles played by individuals in facilitating communication effectiveness. Steers (1991) and Schermerhorn et Al (1991) are two theorists who have studied this aspect of communication and their findings are summarised briefly.

Steers (1991) states that not all individuals play the same role, nor are they equally important in communication within the organisation. They further describe how communication researchers, Rogers and Rogers (1976) have identified four individual roles in organisational communication, (1) the gatekeeper, (2) the liaison (3) the opinion leader and (4) the cosmopolite.

(1) The Gatekeeper is an employee whose position in the organisation allows them to control certain messages into or away from a given channel. Other gatekeepers are those with strong external contacts who serve as primary sources of peripheral information. These individuals have the power to decide what information is conveyed and to whom it is sent.

(2) The Liaison connects two or more groups or departments within a system. Not usually a member of either group the liaison acts as a mediator who develops the forum necessary to exchange needed information. In commenting on the role of liaisons in organisations, Rogers and Rogers note

> "*The liaison role has important practical implications for organisational communication, as liaisons are undoubtedly crucial for the effective operation of an organisation's interpersonal network. Liaisons occupy strategic*

positions within the organisations; they can be either expeditors of information flow or bottlenecks in communications channels."

(3) Opinion Leaders informally manipulate the attitudes or activities of others in a desired way and with relative frequency. In general, they have significant access to external sources of information and are predisposed to hold valued status within the organisation, which affords their opinions being heard and valued. In contrast to their peers, opinion leaders are often characterised by (1) a wide range of contact with outside and technically competent sources of information, (2) greater ease of access to their followers, and (3) higher conformity to the norms of the group they lead.

(4) The Cosomopolite is an individual with a high degree of interface and communication with the organisation's external environment. Cosmopolites epitomise a distinctive type of gatekeeper, in that they can control the communication flow through which fresh information enters the organisation. Rogers and Rogers suggest that cosmopolites are found at the top and bottom levels of an organisation. Executives at the top travel widely have access to a large network of information, whilst at the bottom, many individuals have daily externals contacts with customers, suppliers, etc.

In summary, Steers (1991) hypothesises that each role plays an important part in facilitating organisational effectiveness by helping members of the organisation collect, analyse and act upon relevant information.

Schermerhorn et al (1991) in contrast, describe the approach adopted by management when defining task or role expectations to subordinates and colleagues. In this context,

the role is the set of expected activities undertaken by or allotted to a jobholder in an organisation. The organisational members, such as managers, who have defined expectations regarding the jobholder, are regarded as members of the role set. The manager will communicate role instructions relating to desired behaviour, goal setting, rewards and evaluations on past performance.

Crucial to establishing a cohesive awareness of mission and culture is the communication of a shared role direction for all members. Barriers, such as those discussed earlier may distort role expectation. When distortion emerges, role ambiguity and role conflict may occur. Schermerhorn et al (1991) emphasise that these role dynamics deserve attention as one of the many reasons why every manager should work hard at developing interpersonal communication skills.

Role ambiguity can occur when the jobholder is uncertain about the expectations of the role set. To perform effectively, individual need to know what their peers and superiors expect from them with regard to organisational operations. These expectations must, firstly be communicated to the jobholder and, secondly, they must be communicated in a clear and concise manner to avoid misunderstanding or misrepresentation. Schermerhorn et al (1991) refer to research that indicates that lack of clarity and understanding of expectations may cause a loss of confidence in the organisation with lowered self-confidence and/or decreased job satisfaction among individuals.

Role conflict occurs when the jobholder does not meet the expectations of the role set. The jobholder may understand the expectations, however, they cannot, for whatever reason, comply with them. Conflict of this type may result in diminished job satisfaction

levels, reduced confidence in one's superiors and/or a tendency of avoidance, such as increased absenteeism.

Schermerhorn et al (1991) describe four basic types of role conflicts, which arise through incompatible expectations within the role set. These are (1) Intrasender Role Conflict; (2) Intersender Role Conflict; (3) Person-Role Conflict; and (4) Interrole Conflict.

(1) Intrasender Role Conflict, when the same role set member sends conflicting expectations or instructions.

(2) Intersender Role Conflict, when different role set members send conflicting expectations or instructions.

(3) Person-Role Conflict, when the values and needs of the individual conflict with the expectations of the role set.

(4) Interrole Conflict, when the expectations of two or more roles held by the same individual become incompatible.

Such ambiguities and conflicts can generate pressure that reflects negatively on individual work attitudes and behaviours. Effective two-way communications with all members of the role sets by management will assist in minimising such negative consequences.

2.8 Effective Communication – An Overview

Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) report on a national survey which was carried out in Britain by Duncan Gaillie and colleagues (1998) of approximately 4000 employees and 1000 unemployed, from a broad range of occupational grades that found:

o *"mechanisms for informing the workforce about management decisions and organisational developments are widespread;*
o *it is more common for employers to distribute information (76%) than to hold meetings in which employees can express their opinions;*
o *the higher the skill level, the more likely that people will have good access to information;*
o *more than three quarters of professional and managerial workers have meetings about organisational issues in which they can express their views;*
o *less than a half of all manual workers, skilled and non-skilled, have meetings in which they can express their views;*
o *involvement in communication is better in larger organisations;*
o *less than half of employees working in small businesses report any type of formal provision of company information at all;*
o *in larger establishments employing 500 people or more, 92% receive some type of information, 84% through meetings, and 71% are able to express their views."*

Gallie et al. (1998) argue that larger organisations are more likely to have 'administrative sophistication', in the form of sufficiently resourced administrative or human resources departments, to systematically execute communication policies.

In this context, Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) propose an examination of the prevailing communication climate in an organisation. In an open communication climate, a sense self-worth is developed, people sense they can contribute freely without fear of punitive action, they know their proposals will be appreciated, that errors will be considered as part of the learning curve and they will have a sense of trustworthiness, security and confidence in their role and in the organisation.

On the other hand, in a closed communication climate, information tends to be withheld except where it is advantageous to the sender, and the impression of blame, secrecy and distrust can make for a very unpleasant working life.

The distinction between open, supportive and closed, defensive communication climates is summarised by Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) in table 2.4. These extremes are not absolutes; the communication climate in most organisations will lie on the continuum between open and closed.

1.1 Table 2.4: Open and Closed Communication Climates	
Open, supportive communication climate	Closed, defensive communication climate
Descriptive: informative rather than evaluative communication	Judgemental: emphasis on apportioning blame, making people feel incompetent
Solution-oriented: focus on problem solving rather than on what is not possible	Controlling: conformity expected, inconsistency and change inhibited
Open and honest: no hidden messages	Deceptive: hidden meanings, insincerity, manipulative communication
Caring: emphasis on empathy and understanding	Non-caring: detached and impersonal, little concern for others
Egalitarian: everyone valued regardless of role or status	Superior: status and skill differences emphasised in communication
Forgiving: errors and mistakes recognised as inevitable, focus on minimising	Dogmatic: little discussion, unwillingness to accept views of others or compromise
Feedback: positive, essential to maintaining performance and relationships	Hostile: needs of others given little importance

Source: Andrzej Huczynski & David Buchanan, 2001, *Organisational Behaviour, An Introductory Text*, 4th Edition, UK, Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd, p204

2.8.1   The Perfect Organisational Communication Situation

Rensis Likert (1961) proposed a leadership style, System 4, which calls for participative leadership using a team-oriented concept of people in organisations. Harris

and Hartman (1992) have utilised some of the components of System 4 to describe a model for 'perfect' communication. The 'perfect' communication model, if it were attainable, would exist in an open, stimulating environment, with an open communication climate similar to that described earlier by Huczynski and Buchanan (2001). Harris and Hartman's model encompasses all aspects of the communication function, structure, flow and process. See Figure 2.5

Figure 2.5 – Characteristics of an Ideal Organisational Communication System.

1.	Three-directional communication that moves downward, upward, and sideways throughout the organisation
2.	Downward communication that is accepted with an open mind by those receiving it.
3.	Upward communication that is accurate.
4.	Superiors (supervisors) who know very well the problem faced by their employees.
5.	The things people communicate to each other are for the benefit of everyone, not just one person or a few people.
6.	Employees, peers, and bosses communicate what others need to know in order to perform effectively, not just what they want to know.
7.	Problem areas and subjects where there are differences of opinion that are identified and handled rather than avoided and swept under the rug
8.	People receive and interpret messages in such a way that the intended meaning is given to the message.
9.	Individuals receive feedback regularly so that they know results of their efforts.
10.	Information arrives for recipients when it is needed rather than before or after it is needed.

Source: Harris, Jeff O, Hartman, Sandra J, 1992, *Human Behaviour at Work*, US, West Publishing Company, p255. (Some of the components were derived from Rensis Likert, New Patterns of Management, New York; McGraw-Hill, 1961, pp. 225-227)

"While perfection in communication is impossible to attain, it is useful to recognise what ideal communication would look like. With the ideas mentioned in mind, we can envision what is desirable and strive for the best possible levels of performance. The closer we come to the ideal, the better will be our results in a number of areas." (Harris and Hartman, 1992)

2.9   Improving Organisational Communication

Steers (1991) postulate that none of the barriers to communication described previously are insurmountable. The challenge for organisations is to determine how to improve the accuracy, flow and acceptance of relevant communication in order to reduce uncertainty and distortion. Overcoming the barriers, thus enhancing effective communication, can be affected through improvements in the flow of communication, i.e., downward, horizontal and upward.

Steers further states that problems attributed to ineffective communications are often the symptoms of some other underlying problems that exist in the organisation. These problems may be identified through applying one of the many theories on motivation and described by Huczynski and Buchanan (2001), such as Maslow's (1943) Needs Hierarchy or Alderfer's (1972) Existence, Relatedness and Growth Theory (ERG). Steers states that success in surmounting barriers to effective communication is governed by the ability of all people involved to listen actively to what is being said. The function of listening in communication success cannot be underestimated. He refers to a survey of CEOs, carried out by Barlow (1989) in 1989, which found that listening to subordinates ranked high as a key constituent of managerial effectiveness.

Greenberg and Baron (2000) support Steers (1991) viewpoint, however they further develop the possible methods to improve communication effectiveness. They illustrate separate skills required for effective listening, which are clustered into six groups, known as the HURIER model. See Figure 2.6

Figure 2.6: The HURIER Model: Components of Effective Listening.
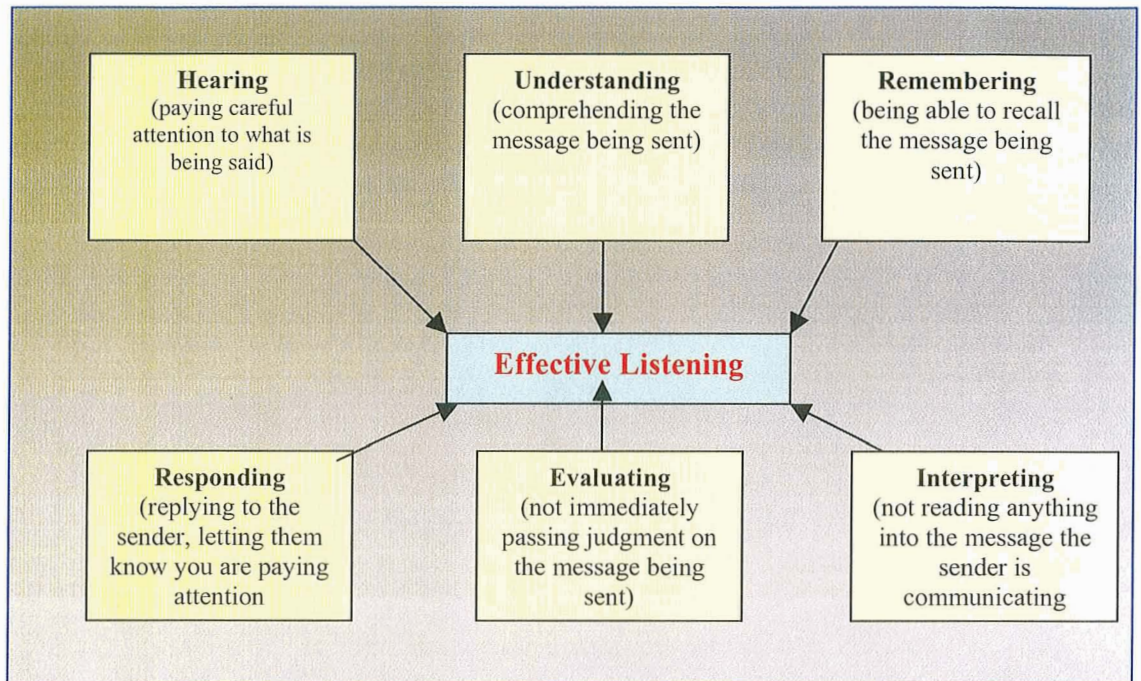
The use of simple, clear language is paramount and needlessly formal language must be avoided. Similarly, the use of jargon is a source of confusion when used outside the professional field to which it relates. It is also crucial that individuals are not overloaded with information. Greenberg and Baron (2000) refer to surveys (Jones, 1997) that show the overload dilemma exists throughout the world. Half the executives surveyed indicated they quite often, or very frequently, feel incapable of handling the degree of information they receive. In this scenario, a gatekeeper, as mentioned earlier, will significantly impact on the quantity of information received.

Feedback is a further crucial component of effective communications. Greenberg and Baron (2000) suggest part of the problem is the lack of available channels for upward communication and a reluctance on the employee's part to use those channels that do

exist.   Organisations ought to look for ways to improve the flow of upward communication through effective feedback, without engendering a fear of punitive action.

A further suggestion from Greenberg and Baron (2000) is the individuals within an organisation must practice supportive communication. Supportive Communication is any communication that is accurate and truthful and that develops and augments relationships instead of endangering them.

Earlier in the review the topic of organisational communication in the Internet age was introduced (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2004), this view is supported by Greenberg and Baron (2000) who urge the use of technology to enhance the efficiency of communication. They hypothesise that technology provides superb opportunities for people to communicate with each other more effectively.

2.10 Employee Communications in Ireland

Gunnigle (1999) discusses the increased attention that has been given to communication in organisations in recent years. He reports on research carried out by Drury Communications in conjunction with IPD Ireland between April and June 1997, the purpose of which was to benchmark communications in Ireland. Thirty companies with 1350 front-line employees participated in the survey which sought to establish the extent to which clear communication objectives were set, where the responsibility for communications lay, staffing levels, budget allocation and training levels. The findings of the survey are detailed in Figure 2.7. Whilst the benchmarking survey established the commitment by the organisations surveyed to employee communication, it did not provide any analysis on the contribution effective communication has made towards improved organisational performance. Therefore, for the purposes of this dissertation, it serves as a point reference and not as evidentiary substantiation.

Figure 2.7: Survey on Internal Communications – Results

The National Survey on Internal Communications was conducted by Drury Communications in conjunction with IPD Ireland between April and June 1997 among 30 companies and 1350 front-line employees. The findings of this benchmarking survey show that in these organisations:

o Around £113 per employee is spent on internal communications each year;
o Responsibility for internal communications is mostly based in the human resources function and at a senior level;
o Fewer than half of managers are required to set aside more than two hours per month to communicate;
o Two-thirds of employees are told how the organisation is performing on at least a quarterly basis;
o Team briefings are used more than newsletters;
o Communications skills training is a key strategy;
o Use of measurement techniques tends to be limited;
o Employees feel that they are kept informed about their job, but do not know what is happening in other areas of their organisations;
o Employees do not feel encouraged to contribute to any part of the organisation beyond their direct job

Source: Drury Communications/IPD (1997), *National Survey on Internal Communications*, Dublin: Drury Communications. In Gunnigle, Patrick, 1999, *The Irish Employee Recruitment Handbook, Finding and Keeping a High Quality Workforce*, Ireland, P439.

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Chapter 3

Methodology

3   Introduction to Methodology

The aim of the research undertaken was to explore the impact of and/or determine the linkage between effective communication and organisational performance and motivation. For the purposes of research and to maintain anonymity, the selected organisation is referred to throughout as NPL. NPL was selected due to the familiarity of the author with the company, the ease of carrying out research internally, in addition to the author's knowledge, as a member of the Human Resources Department, of the current perception or views prevalent among the current workforce.

The author has been employed by NPL for over four years and, during that time a number of issues have arisen around the topic of communication. Prior to embarking on this dissertation, discussions were held with various senior management within the company to ascertain if there was a preference for a particular research topic. The management team were unanimous in their choice of communication and its impact on performance. It was anticipated that such research would be beneficial in identifying numerous aspects of good practice, in addition to the identification of areas requiring further action.

A final, and crucial, deciding factor in the selection of the research topic was the operational method of NPL. Established in Ireland in 1987, NPL, a non-union company, is a wholly owned subsidiary of a private corporation based in San Diego, California. NPL supplies, through Direct Mail Marketing, to business and professional people, imprinted pens, pencils, calendars and other speciality items for their office and advertising needs. The Irish based operation includes two Call Centres, one dedicated to inbound customer service and sales related to direct mail marketing and the second

dedicated to outbound telemarketing of existing customers. On-site Manufacturing and Imprinting facilities support the Call Centres. At the time of writing there are twelve working languages within the Call Centres. NPL services twenty countries in Europe and Australasia, including Japan, and is subject to seasonal fluctuations in the market

NPL has a permanent workforce of 165 employees, divided 60/40 between Call Centre/Administration and Manufacturing. The nature of the business is seasonal, with up to 60% of sales and manufacturing taking place from September to early December. To cope with the seasonality of the business, there is a requirement for up to 300 additional staff in the last quarter of the year, spread throughout Manufacturing and the Call Centre. The additional manpower requirement is satisfied through the recruitment of temporary staff, recruited on short-term contracts. The successful induction and integration of the additional staff is crucial to organisational performance and it is believed that effective communication throughout is a sustaining factor of integration.

3.1 Primary Research

3.1.1 Communications Check-Up

Twenty one key personnel, made up of supervisors and managers within the organisation, were asked to take part in a 'communications check-up', which examined the role of management and supervisors in ensuring employee engagement through effective communication (Appendix 1). This required the group to complete an anonymous survey that determined their views on communication between the supervisory management group and the workforce.

The results were then fed back to the entire group at an off-site workshop and an in-depth discussion took place on the results. Everyone was given the opportunity to comment on the results and to expand on their own viewpoint. A shorthand secretary within the organisation took notes during the discussions.

This particular method of research was undertaken following a similar project in 2003, the main addition being the feedback and discussion session which did not occur previously. It was felt that such discussions would provide further insight into the final analysis of the results and provide the author and the company with the basis of an action plan for further improvements.

3.1.2 Employee Relations Index

In conjunction with the above, NPL's workforce were asked to complete an anonymous one-page survey consisting of seventeen questions (Appendix 2). A scale of 1-4 was used with 1 representing "strongly agree" and 4 representing "strongly disagree". Each participant was also asked to indicate whether they

were a member of the Manufacturing or Administration functions. The purpose of the survey was to determine whether or not the employees are aware of the numerous communication processes within the organisation, whether they believe they are effective and whether or not the occupation of the participants bore any significance on their overall attitude. The author undertook to provide feedback to participants on the results of the survey and this has been provided through the company's intranet where a section has been dedicated to internal surveys. All employees have access to the intranet, either through their own personal computers or through a computer that has been installed in the Team Room for public use.

It was determined that an anonymous survey would prompt a better response than a survey which allowed the identification of individual employees. It was acknowledged within the company that some employees might prefer not to voice their opinions publicly for fear of punitive action at a later stage. The survey was handed out at team meetings and the reasons for carrying it out clearly communicated. Any fears about anonymity or lack off, were dealt with at the time, each sheet was unmarked and unidentifiable and locked boxes were placed in each area to enable the anonymous return of surveys.

3.2   Secondary Research

3.2.1   Literature Review

The initial approach was to carry out a review of existing organisational behaviour literature in order to identify the fundamental basis of communication within organisations. It was found during the review of literature that theorists such as Huczynski and Buchanan (2001), Davis and Newstrom (1989), Greenberg and Baron (2000), Gunnigle (1999), Harris and Hartman (1992) are just a small representation of those reviewed who support the assertion that effective communication is of paramount importance in management practice as a contributory factor towards business performance and productivity. Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) put forward the assertion that communication is generally recognised as central to both individual and organisational performance, however, many managers regard communication as a major problem and many employees feel they are not fully informed about management plans and organisational activities and goals.

The literature review was instrumental in determining the parameters for the primary research undertaken and provided further insight into the barriers to effective communication currently experienced in organisations.

With all of the above in mind, and in order to demonstrate the validity of the theory, the author undertook research within the selected organisation, NPL. The objective was to determine what communication processes are in place in the organisation and whether they have a positive or negative impact on performance. The research was carried out in the following manner.

3.2.2 Existing Surveys

Following analysis of the primary research surveys a comparison was made with previous surveys carried out within the company. As a number of the surveys encompassed a much wider overview of employee relations, the author extracted information pertaining to those areas only which were relevant to relevant to communication. These included:

(a) Best Companies to Work for in Ireland

In 2002 and 2003 NPL took part in the Best Companies to Work for in Ireland competition, which is run annually, with the overall winner going forward to take part in the Best Companies to Work for in Europe competition. The results from the relevant section from each year were compared with the author's research findings to determine what changes in attitude, if any, had occurred. The information enabled the author to ascertain the impact communication within the organisation has had on employee engagement and motivation. It is pertinent to note at this juncture that the objective of the organisation's management is to be listed in the top 50 Best Companies to Work for in Ireland, an objective that has yet to be reached. It should also be noted that the number of respondents decreased in 2003 and the management were anxious to ascertain the reasons for this. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix 3.

(b) Communications Check-up

As mentioned above, in 2003 twenty-one key personnel, made up of supervisors and managers within the organisation, were asked to take part in a 'communications check-up', which examined the role of management and

supervisors in ensuring employee engagement through effective communication. The same survey has been carried in 2004 with the addition of a feedback and discussion session. This has enabled further analysis of the results obtained in 2003.

(c) Employee Attitude Surveys

Surveys were carried out in 1996 and 1999 to determine employee attitudes within the organisation. Both of the surveys were carried out by independent specialist companies and were totally anonymous. The relevant feedback section of these surveys was then compared to the feedback from the author's research to determine the shift, if any, in workforce opinion on the effectiveness of communication within NPL and the impact it has on performance and motivation. A copy of the 1996 survey questionnaire is Appendix 4. The 1999 questionnaire is unavailable.

(d) Labour Turnover Statistics

It is difficult to quantify the impact communication on it's own has had on business performance within the organisation, therefore, in order to demonstrate this, the author chose to examine labour turnover statistics for the last three and a half years. These statistics are an indicator of employee loyalty and satisfaction.

3.2.3   Current Communication Policy

The author met, formally, with the Managing Director to discuss the current communication policy in the company. An informal meeting with a selected number of departmental representatives, at non-supervisory or management level, to determine the level of knowledge of and confidence in current policy on

communication, followed this. These meetings assisted in obtaining an overview of the different attitudes towards the vital role communication plays in the organisation.

3.3   Conclusion

The author then carried out a comparative analysis of all research information available to determine whether the areas relating to communication, which were highlighted in previous surveys, have been acted upon and, where they have been acted upon, have the actions taken had a positive or negative impact on performance.

Where anomalies have occurred, the author made recommendations for improvement or change.

Chapter 4

Research Results

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4.   Research Results

This section reports on the findings of the primary research conducted by the author.

4.1   Communications Check-Up

Twenty one key personnel completed a survey which examined their role in ensuring employee engagement through effective communication. There was a 100% response rate to the surveys distributed among this group, this is attributed to the fact that the surveys were carried out during an off-site planning workshop. The results are provided in Table 4.1.

In general, the majority of those surveyed answered positively and the indications are that they believe that the current communication processes within the company are effective and produce the desired outcomes. 90% answered yes when asked if their own employees are aware of the aims and objectives of the company, whilst 95% believed that all employees have access to managers through well established procedures. 76% agreed that employees are happy to approach their supervisor with problems and 95% see communication as being an integral part of their managerial role within the organisation. Paradoxically, 48% believe that the employees rely upon the grapevine to find out what is happening, whilst 33% believe this sometimes happens.

4.2   Employee Relations Index

One hundred and twenty five employee surveys were distributed and there was a 54% response rate, of this 74% work in Call Centre/Administration and 32% work in Manufacturing. Table 4.2 details the overall combined result, Table 4.3 details the result from Call Centre/Administration and Table 4.4 details the results from Manufacturing.

4.2.1   Overall Results

When the results of the two areas are combined, the survey indicates that there is a 66% satisfaction rate with the current communication processes. In general, those employees who replied feel they have adequate opportunity to communicate with their superiors, colleagues and inter-departmentally. 81% agree that management are receptive to listening to service and operational problems, 72% believe the company is receptive to ideas from employees on how to improve the business, 88% agree they have received adequate training and 84% agree that people in their own work area co-operate to get the job done. The results indicate that only 48% believe management will act on the issues identified through the survey, 51% believe that management do not create an atmosphere of openness and trust, however 72% believe the company treats employees with respect. 51% believe they are informed on a timely basis about changes which affect them personally, 51% agree they receive prompt answers to problems or requests and 52% agree that the reasons for changes in policy and procedure are adequately explained.

4.2.2   Call Centre/Administration Results

The satisfaction rate within this group is 71%, with 83% agreeing that management are receptive to listening to service and operational problems. 73% believe the company

is receptive to ideas from employees on how to improve the business, 92% agree they have received adequate training and 83% agree that people in their own work area co-operate to get the job done. The results indicate that 54% believe management will act on the issues identified through the survey, 58% believe that management creates an atmosphere of openness and trust, and 85% believe the company treats employees with respect. 58% believe they are informed on a timely basis about changes which affect them personally, 54% agree they receive prompt answers to problems or requests and 60% agree that the reasons for changes in policy and procedure are adequately explained.

4.2.3 Manufacturing Results

The satisfaction rate within this group is lower at 54%. 74% believe that management are receptive to listening to service and operational problems. 68% believe the company is receptive to ideas from employees on how to improve the business, 79% agree they have received adequate training and 84% agree that people in their own work area co-operate to get the job done. The results indicate that 68% do not believe management will act on the issues identified through the survey, 74% do not agree that management creates an atmosphere of openness and trust, and only 47% believe the company treats employees with respect. Only 32% believe they are informed on a timely basis about changes which affect them personally. 42% agree they receive prompt answers to problems or requests and 32% agree that the reasons for changes in policy and procedure are adequately explained

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Communication Checkup - 2004

Question Number

Legend: Yes | No | Sometimes | Don't Know

Table 4.1

52
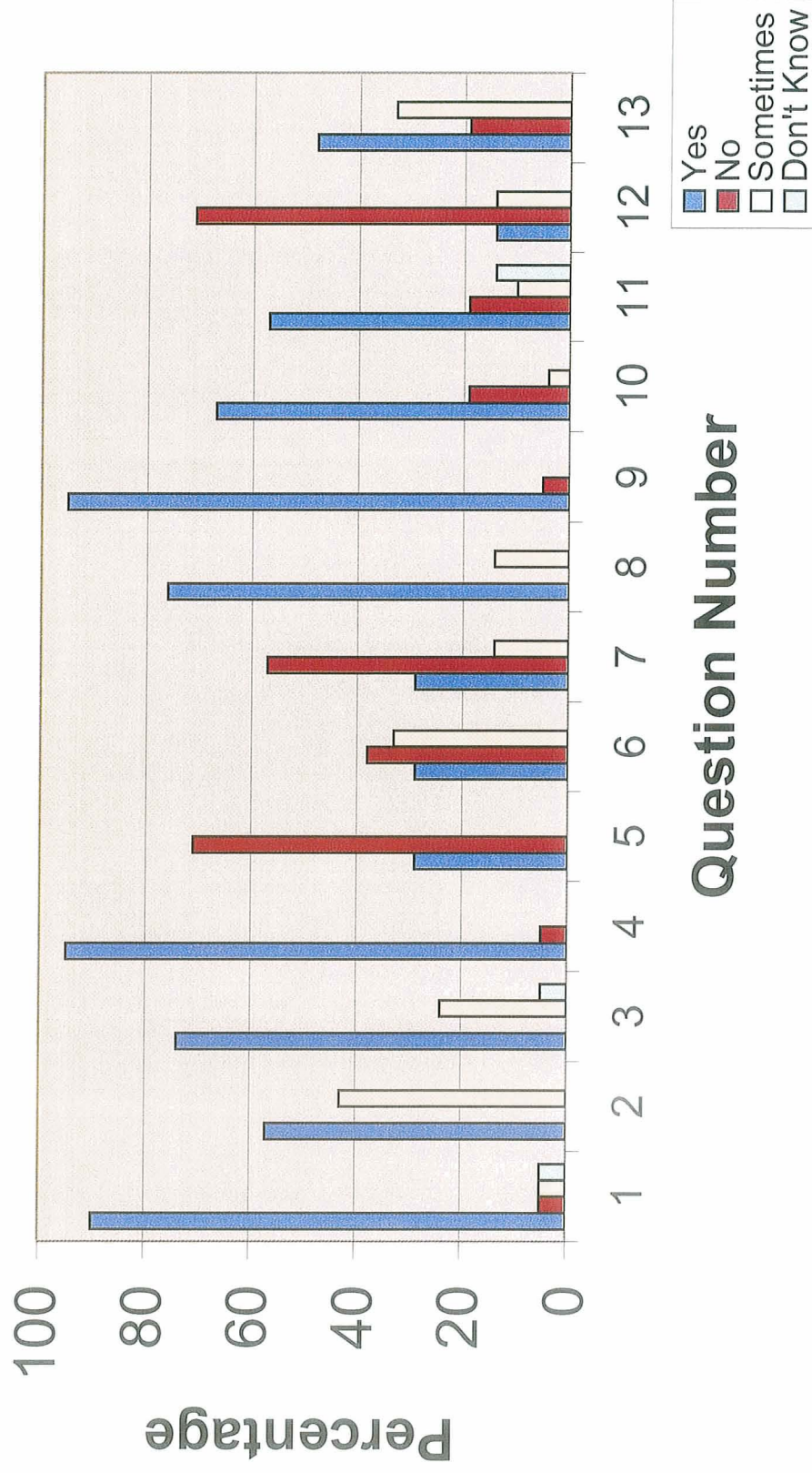
Figure 4.1:   **Communication Checkup – 2004**

1. Are your employees aware of the aims and objectives of the organisation?

2. If yes, do they support them?

3. Are your employees aware of their own role in meeting the aims of the organisation?

4. Do all employees have access to managers through a well-established procedure when they want to ask a question?

5. Is staff turnover higher than desirable in any part of the organisation?

6. Is absenteeism higher than might be reasonably expected?

7. Do formal grievances or complaints frequently occur without management knowing about them in advance?

8. Are employees happy to approach their immediate manager/supervisor/lead when they have a problem?

9. Is communication regarded as an integral part of each line manager's role?

10. Do managers feel comfortable with their given roles in communication.

11. Do senior managers have a good insight into the operational difficulties faced by staff?

12. Does the organisation encounter widespread resistance to necessary changes?

13. Do most people rely on the grapevine to hear about what is happening in the organisation?

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Employee Relations - Communication Survey 2004

Table 4.2

54
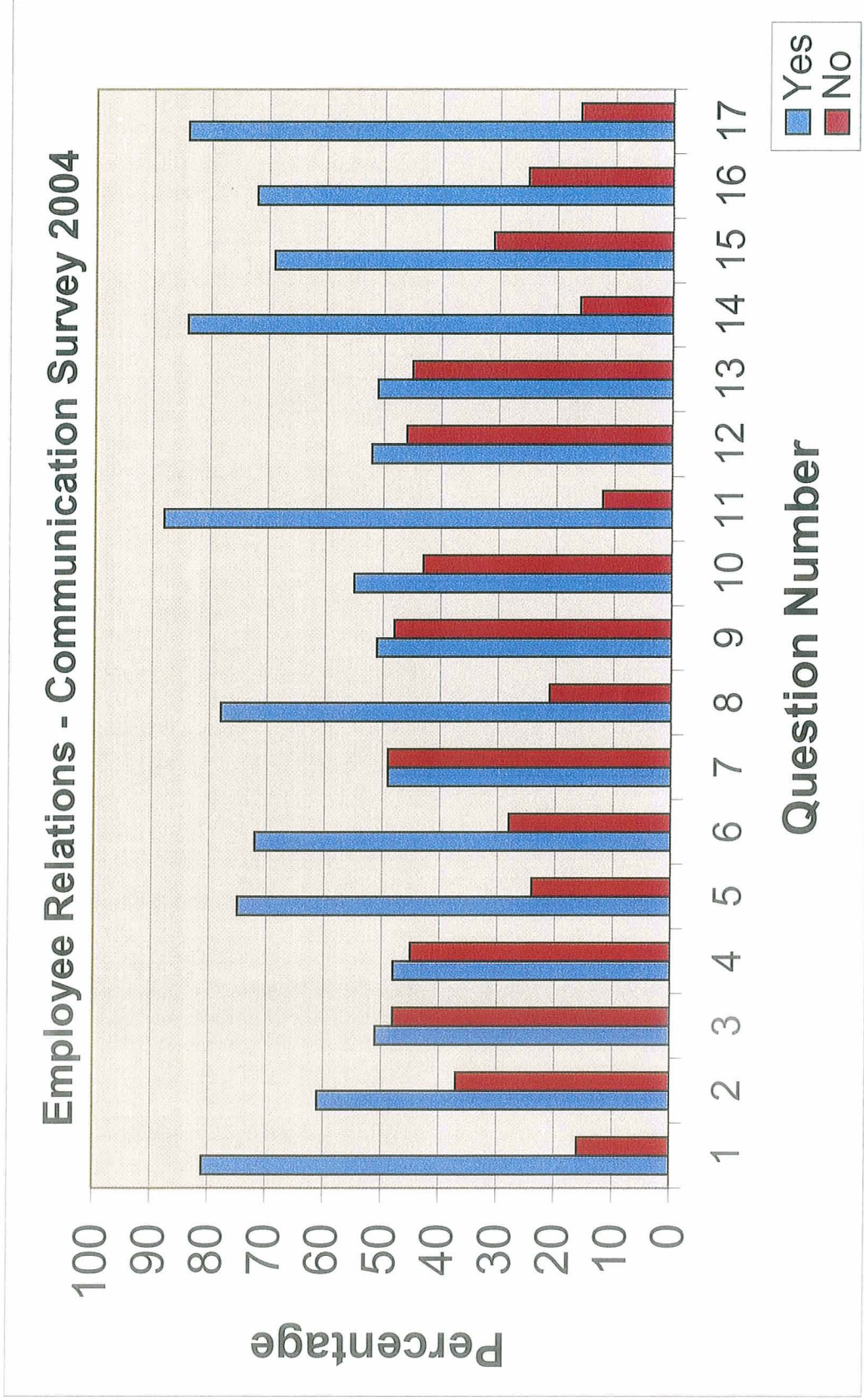
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Employee Relations - Communication Survey 2004 - Admin
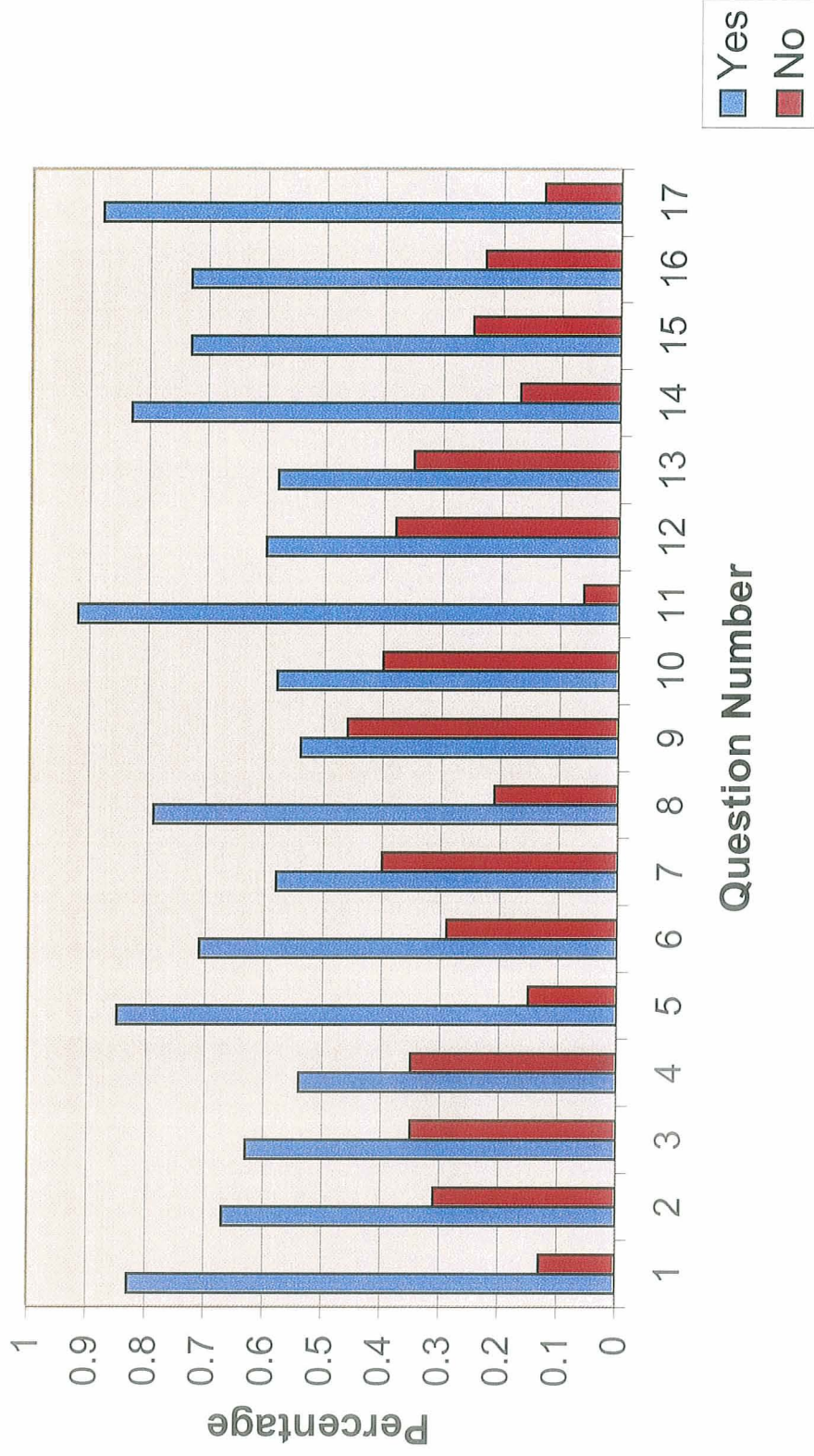
Table 4.3

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Employee Relations - Communication Survey 2004 - Manuf
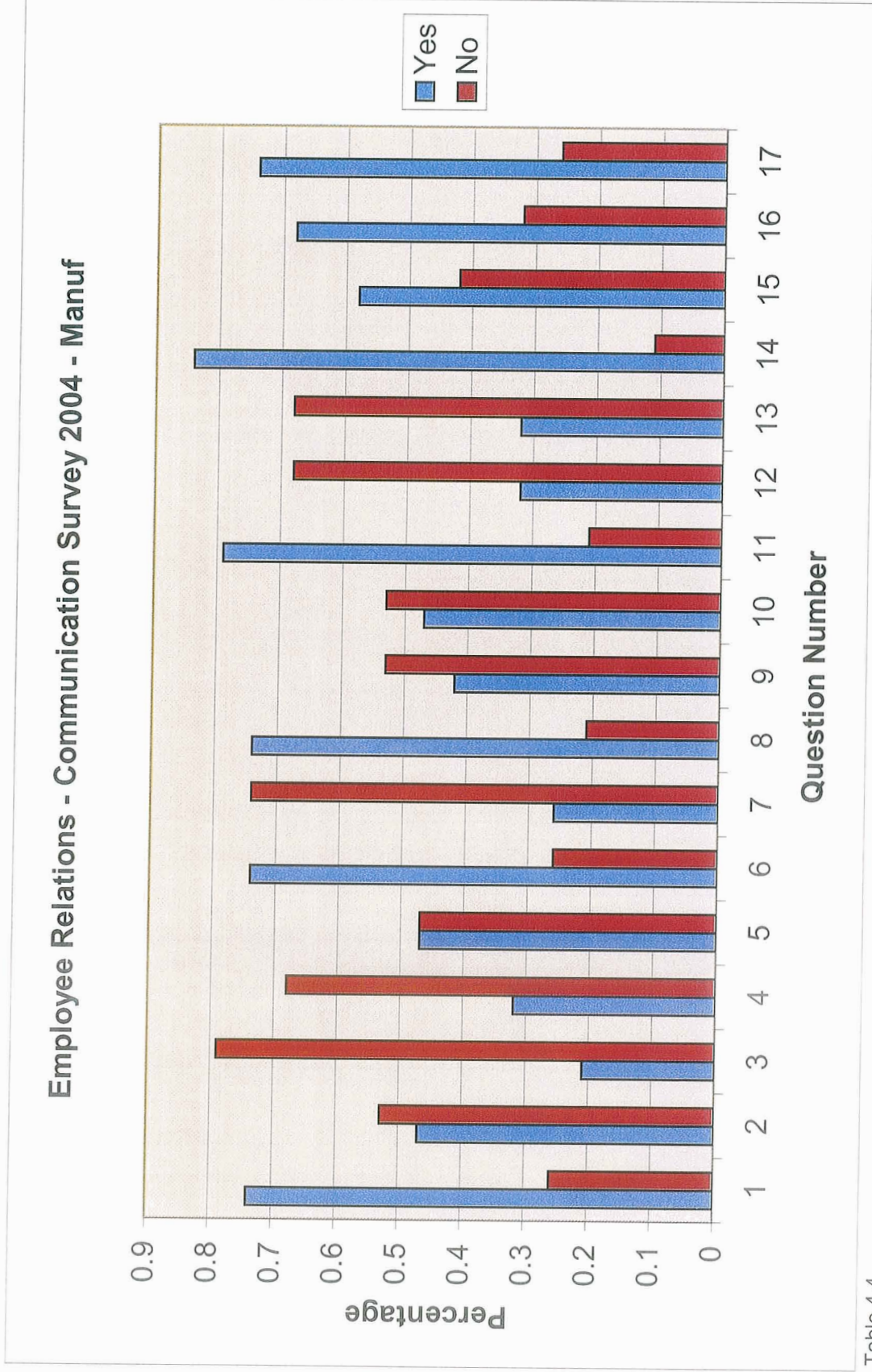
Table 4.4

Figure 4.2: <u>**Employee Relations – Communication Survey 2004**</u>

1. Management wants to know about service and operational problems so they can be fixed.

2. Management is sincere in its attempts to understand the employee's point of view

3. Management provides recognition for employees who do a good job.

4. Management will act on many of the important issues identified by this survey.

5. The company treats its employees with respect.

6. The procedures for recruiting staff are fair.

7. Management creates an environment of openness and trust.

8. I am aware of the procedure for highlighting issues or concerns which affect me.

9. The company gives prompt answers to my problems/requests.

10. I am aware of the procedure for internal transfers and/or promotion.

11. I have received adequate training to use the tools provided to carry out my job.

12. The reasons for changes in policy and procedure are adequately explained.

13. I am informed on a timely basis about changes that affect me.

14. The people in my work area co-operate to get the job done.

15. I have enough opportunities to let management know how I feel.

16. The company is receptive to ideas that would improve our business.

17. I know how well my area achieves its goals.

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Chapter 5

Discussion of Findings

5. Discussion of Results

5.1 Communication Check-Up 2003 and 2004

A comparative analysis was carried out between the surveys conducted among the supervisory/management team in 2003 and 2004. The findings are demonstrated in Table 5.1.

Overall the author found that confidence in the communication structure among this group had risen, as had the level of ownership of the task. This group feel that communications within the organisation at all levels is good, with the average number of positive replies rising from 70% in 2003 to 73% in 2004. In 2003 62% felt employees in their group were aware of the aims and objectives of the organisation, whilst the number who answered positively in 2004 had risen to 90%. 95% now feel that communication is an integral part of their function compared to 52% in 2003. 95% place a high rating against the accessibility of managers to employees, a substantial increase from 67% in 2003. In contrast, however, the number of those surveyed who agreed that employees are happy to approach their managers had dropped from 81% in 2003 to 76% in 2004. 71% believe the organisation does not encounter widespread resistance to necessary changes an increase from 57% in 2003. In 2003 67% of this group believed that there was little or no reliance on the grapevine to hear about what is happening in the organisation, this number increased to 81% in 2004.

The author attributes this upward shift in confidence to the following factors.

a) Following the survey carried out in 2003, NPL embarked upon a programme of continuous improvement with regard to employee involvement. This was

facilitated through the introduction of cross-functional project teams, the re-introduction of the company's newsletter and a commitment from senior management to attending team meetings at least once a month.

b) The supervisory management team took part in a training session on communication within organisations. An external consultant carried this out and emphasis was placed on each individual's role in the communication process.

c) Funds were made available to each team to encourage the celebration of success. The only restriction made on the allotted budget was that the celebration must be related to teamwork. The majority of teams chose to celebrate the achievement of one or more of their performance targets.

d) As there is no formal social club within the company, each team was asked to organise at least one function or event throughout the year, which was open to every member of the company. The proceeds of these were donated to selected charities.

5.2 Employee Relations

Table 5.2 details an analysis between the relevant sections of the Best Companies to Work For surveys which were carried out independently in 2002 and 2003. The response rate in 2003 was 49% lower than 2002, which indicates underlying dissatisfaction or apathy throughout the workforce. The reasons for the poor response were sought through team meetings and the general feeling was a fear that individual surveys could be identified through a reference number printed on each. Assurances to the contrary were made and the comments were passed on to the consultant company involved in the analysis.

In summary, the comparative analysis demonstrates a decrease in the level of satisfaction throughout, with 34% of employees agreeing they are informed about changes affecting them in 2002 compared to 33% in 2003. Whilst 70% of those surveyed in 2002 believed management are approachable, the figure dropped to 51% in 2003. There was, however and increase in the satisfaction rating with management delivery on promises and matching actions with words. 87% felt in 2002 that NPL was a friendly place to work in, whilst this dropped to 79% in 2003. Overall, the satisfaction rating among the workforce on the communication process remained static between 2002 and 2003 at 57%. Conversely, the overall rating among the supervisory management team rose 20% from 52% in 2002 to 72% in 2003.

When the above is compared to the Employee Relations – Communications Check-Up carried out as part of the author's primary research methods, the indicators are that there has been an upward trend in employee satisfaction levels. When the results of the

two areas are combined, the survey indicates that there is a 66% satisfaction rate with the current communication processes. Upon separating the results from the two different areas are broken out, the satisfaction rating within the Manufacturing division is lower at 54% than that of the Call Centre/Administration division which is at 71%. These results would indicate that there are issues within Manufacturing which have not been adequately addressed.

5.3 Existing Surveys

Further comparisons can also be made to the two previous surveys, carried out independently in 1996 and 1999.

In 1996, it was found that on the whole people were very negative about the overall effectiveness of communication in NPL. 60% did not feel well informed about what was happening in the company. 55% felt that information was held back to a large extent. 44% rated as quite low the believability of communications. The majority of employees believed that the grapevine was the main way of hearing about what was going on. The organisation was not felt to be very open, 72% believed that the extent of secrecy in the company was very high.

84% felt that staff needed to be listened more about improvements that needed to be made. 53% agreed that there was very little consultation between management and employees. Nearly 75% felt that they were not asked for their opinion and 61% felt that they were not listened to. 78% did not feel they were involved in decision-making. When responses were analysed by job category, the greatest amount of dissatisfaction came from those in the Manufacturing division.

In 1999, it was found that on the whole people were more positive about the overall effectiveness of communication in NPL. 68% felt well informed about what was happening, 40% felt that information was held back to a large extent. 60% rated as quite high the believability of communications. The majority of employees believed that team meetings were the main way of hearing about what was going on. 50% felt they were involved in decision-making, whilst 74% felt they were listened to by management and

supervisors. The organisation was felt to be relatively open, 61% believed that the extent of secrecy in the company was very low. When the responses were analysed by job category, again the greatest amount of dissatisfaction came from those in the Manufacturing division.

5.4 Labour Turnover

An indicator of employee morale and loyalty is labour turnover. The statistics from 2001 through to the end of May 2004 indicate that the attrition rate in the permanent workforce has consistently decreased year on year. The company wide turnover was 22% in 2001, 15% in 2002, 12% in 2003 and is at 7% to end of May 2004. Turnover in Manufacturing was 8% in 2001, 6% in 2002, 4% in 2003 and is currently at zero. The rate in Call Centre/Administration was 36% in 2001, 24% in 2002, 18% in 2003 and 13% to end of May 2004. The author does not attempt to attribute the decrease solely to improvements in the communication process, however, it must be considered as a contributory factor.

5.5 Communication Policy

Finally, the author examined the current communication policy in NPL, Appendix 6, and found that in general, the workforce have a high awareness of the procedure for highlighting any issues or concerns. Signed copies of the policy are posted on notice boards throughout the company and it is also included in the induction pack handed out to new recruits.

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Communications Check-UP	2003					2004				
	Yes	No	Some-times	Don't Know	No Answer	Yes	No	Some-times	Don't Know	No Answer
1. Are your employees aware of the aims and objectives of the organisation	62	10	24	5		90	5	5	5	
2. If yes, do they support them	62		38			57		43		
3. Are your employees aware of their own role in meeting the aims of the organisation	52	10	24	5	10	71		24	5	
4. Do all employees have access to managers through a well established procedure when they want to ask a question	67	14	19			95	5			
5. Is staff turnover higher than desirable in any part of the organisation	14	62	10	14		29	71			
6. Is absenteeism higher than might be reasonably expected	29	33	24	14		29	38	33		
7. Do formal girevances or complaints frequently occur without management knowing about them in advance	10	52	24	14		29	57	14		
8. Are employees happy to approach their immediate manager/supervisor/lead when they have a problem	81	5	14			76		14		
9. Is communications regarded as an integral part of each line manager's role	57	14	24		5	95	5			
10. Do managers feel comfortable with their given roles in communication	52	10	33	5		67	19	14		
11. Do senior managers have a good insight into the operational difficulties faced by staff	48	24	29			57	19	10	14	
12. Does the organisation encounter widespread resistance to necessary changes	10	57	33			14	71	14		
13. Do most people rely on the grapevine to hear about what is happening in the organisation	29	33	38			48	19	33		

Table No. 5.1

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Best Companies To Work For - 2003 and 2004	Employees			Supervisory Management		
	2003	2004	Variance	2003	2004	Variance
No of Replies	77	39	-38	9	7	-2
Mgmt keeps me informed about important issues and changes	34%	33%	-1%	56%	86%	30%
Mgmt makes its expectations clear	73%	72%	-1%	44%	86%	42%
I can ask mgmt any reasonable question & get a straight answer	41%	58%	17%	44%	71%	27%
Mgmt is approachable, easy to talk with	70%	51%	-19%	89%	86%	-3%
Mgmt does a good job of assigning & co-ordinating people	61%	54%	-7%	56%	86%	30%
Mgmt trusts people to do a good job without watching over their shoulder	65%	74%	9%	33%	71%	38%
People here are given a lot of responsibility	61%	51%	-10%	33%	29%	-4%
Mgmt has a clear view of where the organisation is going & how to get there	58%	67%	9%	44%	86%	42%
Mgmt delivers on its promises	27%	32%	5%	33%	86%	53%
Mgmt actions match its words	34%	62%	28%	33%	57%	24%
Mgmt shows appreciation for good work and extra effort	49%	54%	5%	33%	71%	38%
I am offered training or development to further myself professionally	51%	38%	-13%	44%	43%	-1%
Mgmt genuinely seeks and responds to suggestions and ideas	48%	38%	-10%	44%	43%	-1%
Mgmt involves people in decisions that affect their jobs or work environment	42%	44%	2%	33%	33%	0%
Promotions go to those who best deserve them	38%	34%	-4%	33%	43%	10%
If I am unfairly treated, I believe I'll be given a fair shake if I appeal	63%	61%	-2%	50%	71%	21%
People here are willing to give extra to get the job done	73%	64%	-9%	56%	100%	44%
This is a friendly place to work	87%	79%	-8%	89%	86%	-3%
This is a fun place to work	59%	49%	-10%	63%	86%	23%
When you join the company, you are made to feel welcome	83%	90%	7%	100%	86%	-14%
When people change jobs or work units, they are made to feel right at home	66%	67%	1%	67%	86%	19%
People celebrate special events around here	69%	77%	8%	56%	100%	44%
Overall Rating	**57%**	**57%**	**0%**	**52%**	**72%**	**21%**

Table 5.2

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Chapter 6

Conclusion

6. <u>Conclusion</u>

This dissertation has been undertaken to assist NPL in carrying out a review of its current communication policy and the level of commitment and engagement from all organisational members. It will benefit the organisation in increasing the level of contribution made by employees through applying their knowledge and skills to problem solving and augmenting greater team spirit among employee.

There are many approaches to enhancing the level of employee involvement and improving communications. This dissertation outlined some of the approaches recommended by organisational behaviour theorists and examined the approaches currently in place in the subject organisation. A number of conclusions and recommendations are presented which, with the correct level of commitment from all parties involved will serve to further enhance communications and employee engagement.

Literature Review

Communication requires links between all levels of employees. It starts at the top and works its way through the hierarchy or system down to the lowest levels of responsibility and back again. It requires communication laterally and horizontally between different sections, departments and divisions and within these sections. There are many valid reasons for communicating with employees, firstly, it encourages employees to identify themselves more closely with the company. Secondly, by

informing employees about the company's business situation it is easier for them to accept and understand the reasons for change when sought by management.

The format or medium chosen by an organisation for communication must be effective and chosen carefully. The information communicated must be accurate, informative and clearly presented. Information should relevant to the receiver and should include what will enable the receiver to perform more effectively and to understand the rewards for doing so. Barriers to communication must be recognised in order for a strategy to be effectively implemented and to produce the desired outcome, such as productivity and motivation.

A further aspect of organisational communication concerns the roles played by individuals in facilitating communication effectiveness. Not all individuals play the same role, nor are they equally important in communication within the organisation. Each role plays an important part in facilitating organisational effectiveness by helping members of the organisation collect, analyse and act upon relevant information.

Primary Research

The author found that there are varying levels of satisfaction among the workforce at NPL. These are broken into three different sections, supervisory and management, Call Centre/Administration and Manufacturing. The results demonstrate that the satisfaction level is high among the first two, whilst it is relatively low in Manufacturing.

Secondary Research

The author demonstrated through analysis of surveys carried out within NPL in preceding years that the organisation is committed to continuous improvement in the area of employee involvement through communication. A number of previous recommendations have been made by various external consultants and they have resulted in continuous increases in morale and motivation.

A number of structures exist to facilitate communication and involvement:

a) Open Door Policy;

b) Weekly Team Meetings;

c) Monthly Team Rep Meetings;

d) Quarterly Team Briefings;

e) Team Social Events;

f) Notice Boards, Newsletters, memos, etc.

In general it would appear that the workforce feel they have a sense of partnership with NPL.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

a) The Employee Relations survey be further evaluated and a focus group formed to determine how to improve on the three worst performing areas. The focus group should consist of members from each team and the findings relayed to all.

b) A concentrated effort is undertaken to address the issues highlighted by the Manufacturing staff.

c) Employees are encouraged to take responsibility for upward communication.

d) Supervisors and Managers are encouraged to include two-way communication as an agenda item at all team meetings.

e) The company participates in Best Companies to Work For 2004, however, the concerns highlighted by staff must be addressed prior to the survey being distributed.

Author's Concluding Statement

This dissertation has considered effective communication and it's impact on organisational performance and motivation. It has comprised of a comprehensive literature review and a significant piece of empirical research that included a number of different research methods.

This piece of research makes an important contribution in the area of communications and employee engagement as it addresses a very topical area and discusses issues that are important to the subject company.

APPENDICES

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Communication Check-Up

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Don't Know
Are your employees aware of the aims and objectives of the organisation	☐	☐	☐	☐
If yes, do they support them	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are your employees aware of their own role in meeting the aims of the organisation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do all employees you have access to managers through a well established procedure when they want to ask a question	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is staff turnover higher than desirable in any part of the organisation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is Absenteeism higher than might be reasonably expected	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do formal grievances or complaints frequently occur without management knowing about them in advance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are employees happy to approach their immediate manager/supervisor/lead when they have a problem	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is communications regarded as an integral part of each line manager's role	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do managers feel comfortable with their given roles in communication	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do senior managers have a good insight into the operational difficulties faced by staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does the organisation encounter widespread resistance to necessary changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do most people rely on the grapevine to hear about what is happening in the organisation	☐	☐	☐	☐

General Comments:

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Appendix 2:   Employee Relations Index

We would be grateful if you would complete the following brief anonymous questionnaire and return it by Friday 25th June 2004. The final analysis of results will be shared with Teams through the NPL Scoreboard which is available on the Network. On completion of the analysis and, in order to be completely effective, we will concentrate on the bottom three areas of concern. Thank you for participating.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Management wants to know about service and operational problems so they can be fixed.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Management is sincere in its attempts to understand the employee's point of view.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Management provides recognition for employees who do a good job	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Management will act on many of the important issues identified by this survey	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. NPL treats its employees with respect	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The procedures for recruiting staff are fair	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Management creates an environment of openness and trust	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I am aware of the procedure for highlighting issues or concerns which affect me	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. NPL gives prompt answers to my problems/requests	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I am aware of the procedure for internal transfers and/or promotion	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. I have received adequate training to use the tools provided to carry out my job	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. The reasons for changes in policy and procedure are adequately explained	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. I am informed on a timely basis about changes that affect me	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. The people in my work area co-operate to get the job done	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. I have enough opportunities to let management know how I feel	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. NPL is receptive to ideas that would improve our business	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. I know how well my area achieves its goals	☐	☐	☐	☐
Which area do you work in?	Manufacturing ☐		Administration ☐	

Appendix 3

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About this survey

You have been selected at random to participate in an employee survey being conducted by the Irish Independent at a number of workplaces throughout Ireland. Your organisation is a candidate in the contest to find the "Best Companies to Work for in Ireland" which will be published in early 2003. Your organisation's participation in the Irish list will make it eligible for consideration on the first-ever EU Best Workplaces list, which will be announced in March 2003.

Your participation is very important to the success of this project. It should take about 15 minutes to finish the survey, and your response will be used to help evaluate and rank your organisation as a work-place.

Please respond to the questions openly and honestly. **There are no right or wrong answers.** No company is perfect. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. Your answers will be treated anonymously and with complete confidentiality. All responses go to Discovery Research, an independent research company assisting in this project. No one in your organisation will see your individual responses.

Please take 15 minutes now to complete the survey. When you are finished, place and seal it in the enclosed reply-paid envelope and drop it in the post. To be included in the results, please mail your survey no later than the date indicated in the accompanying letter.

Thank you for your participation.

Kim Moller
Great Place to Work® Europe

Bob Lee
Discovery Research

| PLEASE FOLD THIS SURVEY AND PLACE IT IN THE REPLY-PAID ENVELOPE | 25920 |

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For every statement, fill in one answer that most accurately reflects your opinion of your organisation as a whole. If you feel you cannot answer a question for any reason, please leave it blank.

	almost always untrue	often untrue	sometimes untrue/ sometimes true	often true	almost always true
29. I can be myself around here.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. Management delivers on its promises.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
31. People here are treated fairly regardless of: Age	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Race/ethnic origin/religion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sex	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sexual orientation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Disability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. People care about each other here.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. Management's actions match its words.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
34. I'm proud to tell others I work here.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
35. There is a "family" or "team" feeling here.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
36. I believe management would lay people off only as a last resort.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
37. People are encouraged to balance their work life and personal life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
38. If I am unfairly treated, I believe I'll be given a fair shake if I appeal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
39. We have special and unique benefits here.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
40. People celebrate special events around here.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
41. People avoid politicking and backstabbing as ways to get things done.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
42. Management is competent at running the business.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
43. We're all in this together.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
44. Management is honest and ethical in its business practices.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
45. Management shows a sincere interest in me as a person, not just an employee.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
46. I am treated as a full member here regardless of my position.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
47. I feel I make a difference here.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
48. When you join the company, you are made to feel welcome.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
49. Our facilities contribute to a good working environment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
50. This is a fun place to work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
51. I plan on working here until I retire.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
52. I am able to take time off from work when I think it's necessary.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
53. Taking everything into account, I would say this is a great place to work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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EMPLOYEE RELATIONS SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

This questionnaire is a way of getting your views on the strengths and the areas for development in the organisation. We have talked to a large sample of people at different levels in the organisation. The statements here have emerged from those interviews and are based on the opinions given.

You are asked to rate your estimate of the current state of affairs on each of the topics by using a scale from 1 to 7. The questionnaire should take about 30 minutes to complete.

Our experience shows that your first thoughts on the answers are usually your most accurate. So there is no need to ponder unduly over each question.

Give your honest views.

The results of the survey will be presented back to you approximately one to two weeks after filling out the questionnaire. The processing and analysis of the questionnaire will be done entirely by Cadwell Consulting & Training Ltd. and will not come into possession of the company at any time. You can be sure of absolute confidentiality with respect to this survey.

Thank you for your cooperation.

COMMUNICATION

Below are statements which ask you to rate the extent to which various aspects of communications within ▟▓▓▓▓▟▓ are effective. Please circle the number of the scale which best represents your view.

1.   How well informed do you feel about what is happening in ▟▓▓▓▓▟▓?

Not well informed   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Well informed

2.   Extent to which you feel information is held back..

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

3.   Extent to which you think communication is at "the last possible minute".

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

4.   We would like you to rate the effectiveness of communications meetings.

Ineffective   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Effective

5.   How effective do you think communications are between you and:

(a) your boss/supervisor

Ineffective   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Effective

(b) your co-workers

Ineffective   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Effective

6.   Please rate the believability of communications.

Low   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   High believability

7.   Extent to which the 'grapevine' is used to communicate what is happening in the company.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

8.   Extent to which you feel there is a lot of secrecy in this organisation.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

9.   Extent to which you feel it is safe to say what you think around here.

Not at all   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

3

10.   How much fear of speaking your mind.

A lot of fear   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Little fear

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A lot of fear   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Little fear

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Below are some questions about your work environment. In answering these please think of the work groups where you spend most of your time, i.e. your shift/department or your immediate work mates.

11.   Extent to which you have a strong sense of identification with those you work with.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

12   Extent to which work people here have <u>trust</u> in each other.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

13.   Extent to which people in different work areas (or in different shifts) mix with each other.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

14.   Extent to which people <u>help each other</u> out with problems.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

15.   Extent to which you think people <u>communicate</u> well with each other.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

16.   Extent to which you feel <u>work is distributed</u> fairly.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

17.   Extent to which you think people here <u>look after</u> each others interests.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

19   Extent to which people here <u>like each other</u> as people.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

20.   The company encourages people to work together as a team.

Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

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RECOGNITION

21. Extent to which you feel that good performance/meeting targets is recognised and acknowledged.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

22. How valued an employee do you feel in the company.

Low value   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   High value

23. Extent to which you feel taken for granted.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

24. Extent of fairness of the promotion system.

Unfair   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Fair

25. How often does your immediate boss talk to you about your job performance.

Not at all   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very often

26. How effective are discussions with your boss about job performance.

Not effective   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very effective

27. Extent to which people say thanks.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

PAY AND CONDITIONS

28.   Satisfaction with <u>pay and conditions.</u>

Dissatisfied   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Satisfied

29.   I would move to another company in ██████ if I got a similar job paying the same money.

        Yes   ----   No   ----

30.   The pay system in this company rewards people fairly.

Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

31.   Extent to which your interests as an individual are well cared for by management.

Almost never   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Almost always

32.   Extent to which you feel that all people are treated fairly.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

33.   Extent to which you feel that ██████████ is a caring employer.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

TEMPORARY WORKERS

34.   Temporary workers are well treated by the company.

Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

35.   Temporary workers are given appropriate training to help them do their job.

Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

36.   Good temporary workers are usually kept on or rehired.

Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

TOLERANCE

37.   Extent to which you feel there is tolerance for learning from making mistakes.

Low tolerance   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   High tolerance

38.   Extent to which you feel that suggestions you make are well received and welcomed.

Not welcomed   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very welcome

39.   Extent to which you are helped to improve job knowledge and skills.

Low extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   High extent

40.   Work targets that are set are fair and achievable.

Strongly agree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly disagree

RESPONSIBILITY

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

41.   My boss delegates very little to me.

Strongly agree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly disagree

42.   I feel a strong sense of responsibility for getting things done and meeting targets.

Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

43.   Most of the time I feel positive and want to do a good job.

Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

44.   Most people in this plant feel positive and want to do a good job.

Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

45.   There is very little consultation.

Strongly agree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly disagree

LEADERSHIP

46.   The extent to which you feel part of a team within ▅▅▅▅▅▅▅

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

47.   The extent to which you feel listened to.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

48.   The extent to which you feel involved in decision making.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

49.   The extent to which you have been consulted (asked for your opinion).

Not asked   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Asked

50.   Extent to which management in ▅▅▅▅▅▅▅▅▅) have <u>control</u> in making decisions.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

51.   The degree of <u>personal autonomy</u> which you feel you have to do your job.

Low autonomy   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   High autonomy

52.   Willingness of Senior Management to encourage change.

Not willing   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Willing

53.   Level of good management practice at senior level.

Low   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   High

MOTIVATION

64. How <u>motivated</u> are employees of ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓.

Low motivation   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   High motivation

65. Extent to which you feel you can have a big influence on:

(a) quality

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Great extent

(b) production

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Great extent

(c) machine breakdown

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Great extent

66. How <u>motivated</u> do you feel on a daily basis to do your job.

Low   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   High

67. Extent to which you <u>look forward</u> to coming to work.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Great extent

68. Extent to which you feel that your work is boring.

Great extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Small extent

69. How encouraging is management of <u>employee involvement</u>.

Discouraging   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Encouraging

MANAGEMENT STYLE

70.   Extent to which you think threats are used on an on-going basis to get things done.

Great extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Small extent

71.   How much consultation is there over changes.

Low   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   High

72.   Extent to which you feel you are trusted with information.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Great extent

73.   With how much respect are you treated.

Little   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Great respect

74.   Extent to which you feel that you are treated as an intelligent adult by ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Great extent

75.   Extent to which you feel you share a common set of goals with management.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Great extent

76.   Extent to which you feel that your interests are well cared for by management.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Great extent

77.   People around here believe you should "keep your mouth shut".

Strongly agree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly disagree

78.   The company rewards us adequately for achieving targets.

Strongly agree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly disagree

79.   There are no gains for being a switched on and enthusiastic employee.

Strongly agree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly disagree

80.   Management are suspicious of employees' motives.

Strongly agree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly disagree

81.   Employees are suspicious of managers' motives.

Strongly agree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly disagree

82.   From your direct experience how quality conscious are ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓

Not very   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Very

83.   How good is communication between employees and management.

Low   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   High

84.   Staff need to be listened to more about improvements that need to be made.

Agree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Disagree

85.   ▓▓▓▓▓▓n is a better place to work than most around here.

Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Agree

86.   The company is trying to improve relations with its employees.

Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Agree

87.   Do you think your company has more dissatisfied employees than most companies.

       Yes   ----   No   ----

TRAINING

88.   I feel that I have received adequate training to do my job.

Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Agree

89.   Everyone receives proper training prior to ensure that they can operate machinery safely.

Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Agree

PLANT AND ENVIRONMENT

Please rate the plant/office environment in terms of the following dimensions:

90.   Clean, debris and waste free

Not clean   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Clean

91.   Temperature

Unacceptable   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Acceptable

92.   Hazardous

Extremely hazardous 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Not hazardous

93.   Noise level

Unacceptable   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Acceptable

94.   Pride you feel in plant environment on a daily basis.

Low pride   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Great pride

95   Extent to which you feel management care about the quality of plant environment.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

SAFETY

96. Extent to which you feel that ▨▨▨▨▨ is a safe place to work in.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

97. The extent to which the company is concerned with ensuring with meeting safety standards.

Small extent   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Large extent

98. The level of accidents in ▨▨▨▨▨ is too high.

Strongly agree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly disagree

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Below you will see a list of job categories in ██████████. Please tick the category to which you belong. This questionnaire is absolutely confidential and will be seen only by the data entry personnel of Cadwell Consulting and Training Ltd. It will not be possible associate this questionnaire form with any individual in██████████.

JOB CATEGORIES

SENIOR MANAGEMENT   —

SUPERVISOR   —

CLERICAL - PERMANENT   —

CLERICAL - TEMPORARY   —

PRODUCTION - PERMANENT   —

PRODUCTION - TEMPORARY   —

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EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

The Company is committed to encouraging communication with employees and increasing their involvement in the quality of all aspects of the Company's business.

DETAILS

- The Company has made a commitment to attaining the Excellence through People Quality Award

- The Company has introduced regular Staff Appraisals which will be monitored by the Human Resources Department

- The Company encourages staff to put forward suggestions on how to improve work practices throughout. This is facilitated through the following:

    o Team Meetings – held on a weekly basis

    o Advisory Council Meetings – held on a monthly basis

    o Health & Safety Meetings – held on a monthly basis

    o Coffee Updates – held each quarter

    o Grievance Procedure – detailed in the Company Employee Handbook and Letters of Offer

The Company will review the policy at regular intervals and will endeavour at all times to be inclusive of all employees.

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