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An Exploratory Investigation into Change Management in a Privatised Irish Organisation

A Thesis

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by

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Dedications

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, my mam and dad, my three sisters and two nieces and my partner Andy, who provided me with the support and encouragement and means of escapism, (in the case of my two nieces), when needed throughout undertaking this research Each of them, having motivated me during this journey of hard work and commitment without their enthusiasm and support I could not have completed this testing piece of work

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The focus of this research is in the area of organisational change management Change management poses significant challenges for organisations throughout the lifetime of the company but particularly in today's perplexing economic environment With turbulent economic conditions, weakened consumer expenditure, a competitive marketplace and the speed of technological changes, organisations must consistently adapt to constant changes to remain relevant and competitive

In order for change to be effective, change must be managed appropriately within the organisation An organisation can face employee resistance to change, which may result in a failure of the particular change initiative A review of the literature on change management reveals that change creates feelings of uncertainty, frustration, alienation and anxiety (Ashford, 1998), therefore it is important for organisations to understand employees' perceptions regarding the change before proceeding It is also agreed that employees must be committed to the organisation in order to reduce resistance to change This research investigates employee's attitudes towards change, employee commitment and readiness for change

In particular, this mixed method study, investigates change management within the eircom group, a privatised Irish organisation within the Telecommunications sector The organisation at the time of writing has recently emerged from examinership, however, due to the large amount of remaining debt the organisation is undergoing numerous change initiatives and this research will use the 'eircom recovery plan', a change initiative implemented by the

organisation in order to achieve cost reductions and modernisation of the organisation, as a basis of which to relate this research

The study assessed the levels of commitment within the organisation, attitudes towards organisational change and employee readiness or resistance to change among a sample population of employees and management within the organisation This was done through the use of primary research which included semi-structured interviews with management, an online survey questionnaire distributed to 295 employees and a focus group session held with a sample of employees

The results were that, broadly speaking there is a moderate level of commitment to change within the organisation, particularly continuance commitment, whereby employees feel they should stay with the organisation because they 'have to' Employees feel a sense of belonging within the organisation and due to the high tenure within the organisation, employees feel almost like being part of a wider family This commitment transfers across to a commitment to organisational change initiatives' and employees within the organisation have become accustomed to change due to the nature of the organisation and the numerous changes that have occurred within the organisation over the years Employees are aware of the urgency for change at the present time, which has led to an understanding of the need to change, more so than a willingness to change Employee attitudes towards change are generally positive with some misgivings in relation to organisational justice and trust and the process and involvement of employees in the implementation of change Communication of organisational change was found to be agreeable with management and employees agreeing that they are satisfied with top management and are very happy with the quality and process of change communication

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalised society and competitive business environment, rapid technological advances and the current challenges of the economic downturn, change is inevitable for organisations to stay competitive and profitable Organisational strategies, process', policies and structures need to be constantly reviewed and changed According to Stark (1999) organisational change presents "tremendous potential for improved performance for today's product development organisations" and adds it is "difficult, time consuming and costly" In addition it runs the risk of failing and having a negative impact Managing the change effectively is a main challenge for organisations as they face employee resistance to change According to Kotter (1995) the difficulties associated with understanding change have contributed to many failed change initiatives The implications of not managing change effectively include disruptions in productivity and morale and wasted resources and time (Kotter, 1996) Change creates feelings of uncertainty, frustration, alienation and anxiety, (Ashford, 1998) therefore it is important for organisations to understand employees' perceptions regarding the change before proceeding The literature reveals the phenomena of employee resistance to change and in contrast change readiness or willingness to change There is a general consensus that organisations focus on the technical side of change rather than the human element of change despite the fact that psychological factors or human elements have been commonly identified as cause and contributors to failure and difficulty in implementation efforts (Beer & Nohria, 2000, Clegg & Walsh, 2004) Theories identify the correlation between organisational culture and organisational change Wildermann (2001) suggested the development of "an outward-facing collaborative culture" Although there is much research on the individuals/employees reaction process in terms of cognitive and behavioural reactions to change, there has been little research if any, in regards other factors

that may increase the level of resistance to change or change readiness, such as demographical factors like longevity of service and the organisational context

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate employee responses to organisational change within the case study organisation The study aims to examine the attitudes towards change and to assess the willingness to change among a sample population of employees

A mixed methods approach that was conducted at the company explored organisational commitment, the attitudes towards organisational change and employees' readiness for change

Research Aims and Objectives

The aim is to explore the nature and attitudes towards organisational change within eircom The research aims to assess in particular, the levels of commitment within the organisaiton, employee attitudes towards change and readiness or resistance to change amongst employees of eircom The research aims to assist the subject organisation in future change management initiatives in terms of implementing change programmes, communication strategies and training

Research Questions

The researcher will aim to answer the following questions

> RQ1 How committed are employees within eircom?

> RQ1 What are the attitudes toward organisational change amongst employees within eircom?

RQ3   How willing/ready for change are employees within eircom?

Research Relevance

The research has relevance within the current Irish economic climate of 2012 In the midst of a recession and the economic challenges faced by the Irish economy, Irish organisations in general, are finding it difficult to complete within a weak consumer market and face stiff competition This has prompted organisations to undergo transformational or radical change in order to keep up with competitors According to IBEC *"Irish businesses have implemented unprecedented change over the past three years in order to adjust to radically different economic circumstances"* (IBEC, 2010)

The relevance of the research is also apparent, as there has been much recent debate and political consideration of privatisation of state owed enterprises According to the ICTU (Irish Congress of Trade Union) "There is always a case to review the operations and structure of the commercial state companies, and for restructuring" They also outline that "The lessons from the privatisation of eircom must be taken on board by a new government" (ICTU, Spring 2011) Recently a review group on state assets and liabilities – chaired by Colm McCarthy, referred to selling off state assets In this regard, the research into the challenges faced by an Irish privatised organisation is topical and relevant and should be considered

Organisational Context

The subject organisation in which this research was undertaken is an established privatised Irish telecommunications organisation, namely eircom Ireland ltd, or eircom group 'the company/organisation' The organisation was privatised in 1999 According to its website, eircom is the principal provider of fixed-line telecommunications services in Ireland with approximately 2 6 million fixed-line telephone access channels in service The mobile division includes Meteor and eircom mobile, and as at 31 March 2010 the company had c 1,065,000 customers Meteor, which was acquired by eircom in November 2005, is the third largest mobile operator in Ireland Turnover for the group was approximately €2 billion and EBITDA* was €692 million in the financial year ended 30 June 2009 (eircom net, 2012)

Organisational History

The organisation was known as Telecom Eircom, the country's national telecommunications company from 1983 to 1999, it had previously been part of the department of posts and telegraphs, part of the civil service state agency responsible for Ireland's postal and telecommunications services from 1924 to 1983 At its peak, the department was one of the largest civil service departments in Ireland Telecom Eireann was established under the Postal and Telecommunications Services Act, 1983 In 1999, the company was privatised through an initial public offer (IPO), and was floated on the Irish stock exchange, London stock exchange and New York stock exchange The Irish state encouraged investors to purchase shares, and the company was renamed eircom The eircom flotation is considered to have been an example of a stock market bubble— after the initial hype of the flotation had died down, the stock price fell rapidly

At this time, the firm undertook to significantly reduce employee costs and improve labour productivity through the negotiation of a radical restructuring plan, *The Telecom Partnership*

Under this agreement the firm established an internal labour market and a new management-union partnership structure The agreement also entailed a number of changes to work practices and the introduction of cost-cutting measures aimed at saving €140 million per annum for five years (Telecom-Eireann, 1997b) In exchange for accepting the concessions outlined in *The Telecom Partnership*, employees received a 14 9 per cent shareholding through the establishment of an ESOP (employee share ownership programme) in 1998 (McCarthy & Palcic 2011) Shares are generally offered to employees for free or at a discounted price in order to ensure their consent to firm restructuring and avoid opposition to privatisation (Jones, Megginson, Nash and Netter 1999) They are also used to neutralise union opposition to privatisation by means of the substitution of employee participation in companies at board level with financial participation (Sweeney 2004 16) Also aiming to increase productivity and improving employee attitudes

Before privatisation the organisation was the largest operational company within Ireland "It was a company that was rapidly modernising relatively efficient, investing heavily, debt free and had the dominant and fastest growing mobile subsidiary, then a new business area" (Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Privatisation, Spring 2011)

Since the organisation was privatised in 1999 and has since been referred to as *"the biggest single economic mistake made by an Irish Government – until the disastrous blanket bank guarantee of September, 2008"* (Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Spring 2011)

Since then the former state owned incumbent has changed ownership several times and stripped of its assets and loaded with debt This history of once being a state run organisation and its numerous transfers of ownership, along with today's current economic difficulties, has contributed to the organisational challenges it currently faces

Organisational Characteristics

The organisation is currently facing financial, competitive and human resource challenges and is continually undergoing various change initiatives to enable the behavioural change that is required to optimise the new structures in place These changes include the 'eircom recovery plan', continuous internal restructuring, change to work practices, external talent acquisition and a reduction in workforce

On March 29th 2012 the organisation appointed an examiner to facilitate restructuring of the business A five year proposal scheme, outlined by the examiner proposed debt reorganisation and changes in equity ownership which allowed eircom to exit examinership on June 11th 2012

In response to the organisations huge debts and in an attempt to revive the organisation, the company deployed a transformational change programme in March 2011 by means of a three year recovery programme The "recovery plan" agreed by eircom and its trade unions is a radical framework designed to cut employee pay by 10 per cent for 18 months in turn for a pro-rata reduction in working hours aimed at achieving labour savings of €92 million by 2013

This recovery programme involves re-structuring, re-sizing and re-skilling, by means of voluntary redundancies, pay cuts and talent acquisition It also aims to drastically cut the company's costs and assist in the modernisation of the company As outlined by the organisation the plan includes the necessary restructuring of the business "*to make it financially sustainable going forward whilst minimising, where possible the effect on the employee* (Recovery Plan Framework Agreement, 02/03/2011)

Staff Data

The company has already achieved a reduction in its workforce down from 7,170 since March 2009 and at the time of writing currently employs 5,702 employees The average length of service within the organisation is 23 5 years with 2,826 employees still employed under a pre-1984 contract, technically a civil servant contract The gender breakdown with the organisation is currently 1,181 female to 4,521 males

Table 1
Employee Statistics (HR People Services, 2012)

Sum of Headcount	Total	Average years' service
Total	5702	23 5
Gender	Total	
F	1181	
M	4521	
Grand Total	5702	

The eircom recovery plan

The 'eircom recovery plan' deal was established in order for the company to drastically reduce costs to assist in the modernisation of the company, as committed by the groups' shareholders at the time The Singapore shareholders have since withdrawn from the organisation, however the recovery plan programme continues at the time of writing

The framework of the recovery plan consists of two stages, cost recovery measures for immediate implementation (stage 1 measures) and modernisation measures which will be the subject of future engagement between the parties on the details of implementation and which should provide for the return to normal attendances (stage 2 measures)

The stage 1 measures have been implemented effective from 30th May 2011, for most employees of the organisation, however, rollout to full implementation is on phased bases The objective is "*to provide certainty in the delivery of cost reductions and will help reduce*

the requirement for headcount reductions However headcount reductions will be necessary

The exits required through the company's 'voluntary incentivised leave programme' which was also launched on 30th May 2011, aims to achieve the exits required to deliver the €92 million cost savings on a voluntary basis

The organisation's recovery plan will be the change management programme that the research will refer to At the time of writing, the organisation is 14 months into the 1st stage of the recovery plan (18th months duration), this research will not address the success or failures of the change management 'recovery plan', but will simply be an example of a change initiative that is currently taking place within the organisation

However as the organisation is undergoing other various change initiatives in parallel, all forms of change will be considered The research aims to assess and analyse the current attitudes towards change and readiness for change amongst employees within the organisation sample population, with reference to the recovery plan but also with reference to any change initiatives that employees see fit

Conner (1993) suggests that understanding in advance about how people may feel to a particular change initiative will allow leaders to tailor the message so that employee's fears and resistance to change are addressed Therefore, should the study discover various factors that contribute to resistance to change within the organisation, different change strategies may be adopted by the change agents and addressed in subsequent change initiatives

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature review will consist of a thorough review of the related and associated research and literature available on the phenomena of change management, however as the change management literature is quite extensive, the research will focus on three particular areas of change management, which is based upon a combination of three intact instruments of change, that is, organisational commitment, attitudes towards organisational change and change readiness

The first section of the literature review includes a general overview of change management and will involve theoretical research both traditional and modern and will outline the different models and theories of change management and how they have developed over time Various theorists and their work will be analysed to establish a fit with the research topic The review of the literature will also seek to determine why resistance to change can hinder an organisations success of the change process Miller, Johnson & Grau 1994 & Vakola & Nikolaou 2005 outline that *"Positive attitudes towards organisational change are critical to the success of change initiatives, as they increase employee cooperation during the change process and prevent resistant behaviours such as hostility and fear"* Previous studies will be reviewed to analyse and determine the factors and antecedents of employee resistance to change

Historical theories will be looked at to find the areas of possible relevance to the research topic and then identifying within each area who the key authors are, and what are the ideas, theories, and the most significant findings that have made a difference to the ways of thinking in the discipline

Most research on organisational change focuses on attitudinal responses to change or readiness to change (Chreim 2006) As organisational commitment, attitudes towards organisational change and change readiness are the main subjects of this study, the second section of this section is devoted to the theoretical models of each In particular the 'affective, normative and continuance commitment' model developed by Meyer and Allen (1997), the 'readiness for change' model developed by Holt, Armenakis, Field and Harris (2007) and the 'officer attitude model' developed by Durmaz (2007) The three models combined reveal a strong relationship between employee commitment, attitudes towards change and change readiness Furthermore the theories provided support the rationale for using a combination of the instruments which are used in the methodology and administration of a questionnaire utilised in this research

Organisational Change

Organisational change has been described as a "*movement toward a goal, an idealized state or a vision of what should be and movement away from present conditions, beliefs, or attitudes*" (Rothwell, Sullivan & McLean, 1995, pg 9) This definition is the most appropriate definition to apply to the current research being undertaken

One of the earliest inferences to change was that described by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus (c 535-475 BC) as change being "the only constant" However, the traditions of change management arise from psychology whereby change management can be utilised to assist people dealing with traumatic emotional events like the death of a family member The practical side of change management stems from the engineering and business fields It is a convergence of an engineer's business improvement process and the psychology of the

human factor of change. Therefore change management can be a two tired approach involving the process' and structures and the human resources or people element.

In the 1940s, Kurt Lewin developed the three phase model where changes in human behaviours occur; *unfreezing*, whereby individuals and organisations become motivated to change, the *moving* stage consists of making the necessary change and the *freezing* stage is reached when the change becomes permanent. Lewin proposed that change happens when those forces restraining change are reduced rather than when those forces driving change are increased.

The increased popularity of change management in a business context began in the 1980's under the concept of business process reengineering, by authors such as Jeanenne LaMarsh who developed an organisational change model. Also In 1980 William Bridges wrote about human adaptation to change in his book titled "managing transitions".

McKinsey consultant Julien Phillips first published a change management model in 1982 in the journal *Human Resource Management* as in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Critical Components of Change (Phillips, 1982)

- Arenas, i.e. product-markets
- Distinctive value to customers (sustainable competitive advantage)
- Resource acquisition, enhancement, allocation

- Basic business skills e.g., development,
- Manufacturing, marketing
- Managerial skills e.g. strategic planning executional follow-through, people development

New Strategic Vision   New organisational skills (capabilities)

Political Support

- Board
- Senior Managers
- Employees more broadly
- Distributors, customers
- Other stakeholders

Peters and Waterman (1982), who were leaders in the field of organisational effectiveness, state that successful organisations are those that continually adapt their structures, strategies, systems, products and cultures They emphasised the need for continuous adaptation in their McKinsey 7-S framework

Subsequentely Kotter (1990) developed an 8 stage change management process model that suggests that a step by step approach which involves employees and change agents in the process, will create a buy-in situation from all stakeholders impacted by the change Kotters 8 step change management process is illustrated below in Figure 2

Figure 2 Kotter (1995) – 8 Step Change Management Process

1 Create a Sense of Urgency
↓
2 Form a Guiding Coalition
↓
3 Create a Vision
↓
4 Communicate the Vision
↓
5 Empower others to Act on the
↓
6 Create Quick Wins
↓
7 Build on the Change
↓
8 Institutionalize the Change
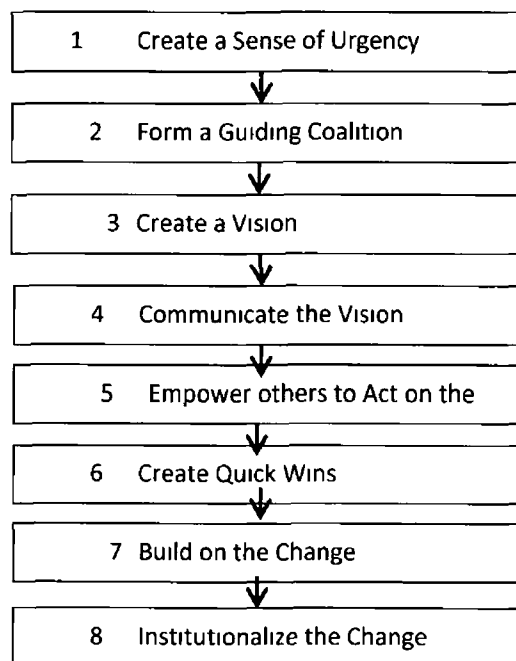
Various models and methods have been developed to deal with the change process, however these methods often depend on the change that is required The theory differentiates between two main categories of change, incremental and transformational change This is also known

as 'radical change', 'discountiunous' or 'major' change Starck (1999) outlines that incremental change does not challenge exisiting assumptions and culture, it uses existing structures and processes and is therefore low risk but is also slow On the other hand, transformational change aims at changing existing structures, the existing organisation and the existing culture The theory also differentiates between change that is iniatiated from within the organisation, namely proactive change and change that is forced from the external environment, reactive change

The above models are mainly focused on the process of change, and are models to assist managers in implementing change and overcoming limitations to change Langer and Thorup (2006) found evidence that the *"right approach to organisational change was communication and storytelling, appreciative inquiry and strategic change communication teams to create the right involvement and enactment of organisational change "* Involving employees in the change that is to occur is a crucial aspect of managing change effectively and is widely agreed amongst theorists and academics alike

The most broad model of organisational change, which incorporates many of the facets found within individual models of change, is that developed by Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) in which they identified five themes common to change efforts, as follows, *content* issues which deal with the nature of the change, *contextual* issues, which deal with the forces and internal and external conditions, *process* issues, which are concerned with the actions taken in implementation of the change, *criterion* issues which are concerned with the outcomes that are assessed in organisational change initiatives and finally *affective and behavioural reactions* to change Practitioners and scholars agree that it is the human system (people and climate) that determines success or failure of the change initiative One of the most common obstacles to organisational change accordingly to Beer & Nohria (2000), amongst others, is a dysfunctional corporate culture Other cognitive models describe how individuals react to

and perceive change as it happens These models will be outlined further in the section to follow namely, 'attitudes towards change'

Jaffe et al (1994) describe how when employees are not prepared appropriately for the change, management is likely to come across denial and resistance to organisational change Szabla (2007) states that *"many researchers emphasize that the main obstacle to organisational change achievement is human resistance "* Any change initiative can cause confusion amongst employees, it may be the fear of the unknown, new patterns, new rules or new technology It is widely agreed that the process is important which includes on-going communication, participation and involvement of employees in the change, coaching and training and advertising of early successes at this point, is crucial in the process of change However in order for success to happen and continue, this involves a change m the behaviours of employee (Stark, 1999, Dopper and Lauterburg, 2000)

It is agreed that the human relations climate provides an excellent matrix in which readiness for change can be nurtured That is, a climate and culture of belonging, trust and cohesion that can be achieved through participation, support and open communication (Jones et al , 2005) This assumption is consistent with a number of researchers such as O'Connor (1992), who found that organisational cultures with flexible structures and supportive climates were conducive to establishing a positive attitude towards change

Bouckenoghe, Devos and Van den Broeck (2008) developed a human relations change climate model with the following ten dimensions, (1) quality of change communication, (2) participation, (3) attitude of top management towards organisational change, (4) support by supervisors, (5) trust in leadership, (6) cohesion, (7) politicking, (8) emotional readiness for change, (9) cognitive readiness for change, and (10) intentional readiness for change Similarly in this study, the researcher will utilise these dimensions of change, categorised into

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three sections, organisational commitment (input variable), attitudes towards change (process variable) and readiness for change (output variable)

Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment can be defined as the degree that an individual in an organisation accepts, internalises and views his or her role (Jans, 1989) In order to be committed to an organisation an employee must internalise the values and goals of the organisation, have a willingness to help the organisation achieve its goals and retain a desire to remain part of the organisation

There is a general consensus amongst theorists and academics alike, that in order to develop a culture that is accepting toward change, commitment from employees is an essential component Theorists have considered participation as the most effective method for achieving commitment to change from employees As change requires learning and developing new skills, behaviours and attitudes, it requires a certain amount of effort from employees (Alas & Vadi 2004) Therefore if an employee shows a high level of commitment towards the organisation, it indicates an employee is more willing and open to change within the organisation

Organisational commitment has also been defined as "*a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation, and a definite desire to maintain organisational membership*" (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974)

The commitment model developed by Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), theorised an individual's attachment to the organisation in an overall sense and assessed attitudinal

commitment, or the connection between the individual's values and that of the organisation

The model depicted that organisational commitment was distinguished by (a) "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization"

For the purposes of this research, commitment in parallel with organisational change has been described to the participants of the primary research methodology (questionnaire) as follows, *"Commitment to change refers to the mind-set that an individual has toward the implementation of a change initiative Employees can be committed to the organisation and other things such as change initiatives, leaders, or organisational units Commitment can be measured by wanting to change, having to change and needing to change In other words, employees can feel bound to support an organisational change because they want to, have to, or need to"*

The most widely acclaimed model of commitment is that which will be utilised in this study, namely 'The affective, normative and continuance commitment' model developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) The 3 component model dominates organisational commitment literature

The three components of Meyer and Allen's model can be seen as 'mind-sets' and include, affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment

In Meyer, Stanley Herscovitch, and Laryssa Topolnytsky (2002), study entitled' *Affective, Continuance, and Normative Commitment to the Organization A Meta-analysis of Antecedents, Correlates, and Consequences'* they assess the (a) relations among affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization and (b) relations between the three forms of commitment and variables identified as their antecedents, correlates, and consequences in Meyer and Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model In this study they

found that the three components of commitment are *"related yet distinguishable from one another as well as from job satisfaction, job involvement, and occupational commitment"*

They also found that all three components of commitment were negatively associated with turnover Affective commitment had the strongest association with employee and organisational outcomes, such as attendance and performance and continuance commitment was extraneous to this

The three types of commitment are independent and are experienced at different levels by all individuals of the organisation (Meyer and Allen 1997) However, it is a combination of the three types of commitment that makes up an individual's overall commitment to the organisation These three components of the Meyer and Allen model of commitment are described as follows,

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment can be described as the employees' positive emotional attachment to the organisation It reflects commitment based on emotional ties the employee develops with the organisation primarily via positive work experiences

Normative Commitment

Normative commitment can be defined as when an individual commits to, and remains with an organisation because of feelings of obligation, or a moral obligation to stay with the organisation

Continuance Commitment

Continuance commitment on the other hand has to do with one's awareness of the gains and losses that are associated with leaving the organisation Employees whose commitment is in the nature of continuance will remain in the organisation because they have to

Allen and Meyer (1990) have stated, *"Employees with strong affective commitment remain because they want to, those with strong continuance commitment remain because they need to, and those with strong normative commitment because they feel they ought to do so"* (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p 3) Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin & Jackson (1989) also state that affective commitment may correlate positively and continuance commitment may correlate negatively with job performance

Research has also found that organisational culture seems to influence commitment to some degree, particularly in terms of the shared values necessary for affective attachment to the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990a, Bolman & Deal, 1991, Morgan, 1997, Schein, 1985, Wheatley, 1999)

Attitudes towards Change

It is widely accepted amongst researchers and literacies that individual attitudes toward organisational change, emerges as one of the most pervasive factors in individual resistance to change In 1976 Elizur and Guttman described attitudes toward change as a person's cognitions about change, affective reactions to change and behavioural tendencies toward change The concept is also exemplified as a scale ranging from strong negative attitudes (e g cynicism about organisational change, resistance to change) to strong positive (e g , readiness for change, openness to change) These facets are referred to under various other

terminological phrases throughout the literature on change management, however readiness for change is described in the section below

Bouckenooghe (2009) noted in his review study on 'Change recipients' attitudes toward change', that before the 1990's 'the majority of research on attitudes towards change originated from a negative psychology view' This, he continues to state, stems from a view that 'change recipients automatically resist change' Therefore in his review study he advocates 'an alternative avenue of research with a stronger focus on positive attitudes (i e readiness for change, commitment to change, openness to change etc) Bouckenooghe also noted that of all the antecedents, attitudes toward change can be classified under three major categories (1) what's the work environment under which change occurs (i e , context), (2) how is the change being dealt with (i e , process) and (3) what type of change does it involve? (i e content)

Attitudes towards change can also be associated with receptivity to change, readiness for change, trust in management, communication of the change and training for organisational change This model created by Durmaz (2007) in his study on organisational change in the Turkish police force, is the model and one of the constructs used in the online survey in this research The study by Durmaz assessed the factors influencing employee attitudes towards change

Receptivity to change can be defined as the willingness of an employee to receive new change ideas in the organization and his/her beliefs in the effectiveness of change programs (Becker, Billings, Eveleth & Gilbert, 1996) Trust in management as defined by Mayer, Davis & Schoorman (1995) is the willingness of an employee to be vulnerable to the actions of competent authorities

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Communication of organisational change is the extent to which an employee receives the necessary information about organisational changes within the company (Durmaz, 1997) Training for organisational change is the extent to which an employee feels he/she receives necessary training about organisational changes (Durmaz, 1997)

Durmaz uses the definition of attitudes towards organisational change as defined by Alreck & Settle (2004), as "the beliefs and feelings of an employee about organisational change and his/her likelihood to take action based on these beliefs and feelings" In this study, Durmaz found that *receptivity* was the most influential variable in predicting officer attitudes Commitment to the organisation and demographic factors were not found to be significant contributors to the model

It is widely agreed that organisational communication is vital to ensure a successful change initiative Elving & Bennebroke Gravenhorst (2009) stated that 'organisational change initiatives often fail as a result of poorly managed change communication and may result in rumours, resistance to change, the exaggeration of negative aspects of change and ultimately a crisis A common theme within the literature on communication of change is that the organisaiton should publicise early wins and successes of the change The literature also conforms to the statement that training of the change will eliminate fear and uncertainty Training and education before the implementation of the change, to explain the logic of the change will prevent fear and anxiety about the change Kotter & Schlesiger (2008) state that *"few organisations can be characterised as having high levels of trust between employees and managers, consequently, it is easy for misunderstandings to develop when change is introduced"* Employees also expect to be treated fairly and they need to feel trust in management

Miller, Johnson and Grau (1994) stated that a positive attitude toward organisational change is critical in preventing failure of any change initiative

Many popular change models (e g , Kotter, 1995) suggest that employees' feelings, intentions and thoughts about change (i e , attitudes) should be determined before an organisation can proceed with planning and implementation of change It is believed that employees' positive attitudes toward change are essential to successful organisational change implementation (Yousef, 2000a, 2000b)

Theorists including Senge *et al* (1999) and Doppler and Lauterburg (2001) state that successful change requires *"an inner shift in peoples' values, attitudes and behaviours which means peoples' basic ways of thinking"* Marshall and Conner (1996) state in this context that change initiatives must be translated to implications for each individual who will be affected

Readiness for Change

The most commonly referred to, negative attitude toward organisational change is referred to as 'resistance to change' Coch and French (1948) describe resistance to change as '*a combination of an individual reaction to frustration with strong group-induced forces*" They also outline how resistance to change manifests itself in various ways such as, grievances, turnover, low efficiency, restriction of productivity and aggression against management Watson (1969) describes a preference for stability, habit, persistence, selective perception and retention, conservatism, tradition, self-distrust and insecurity Reasons for resistance to change are outlined by Kotter and Schlesinger (1979), such as, people focusing on their own interest and not those of the organisation, misunderstanding of the change and its

implications, belief that the change does not make sense for the organisation and low tolerance for change.

Denst and Goldbert, in there paper entitled *'challenging "resistance to change"*, describe it as *'employees not wholeheartedly embracing a change that management wants to implement'* and go on to state that in their research, they have found few or no instances of employees resisting change. They backup their research with previous research undertaking by Kotter (1995) in which he observed more than 100 companies in a decade and reported that when organisations attempt a major change, the employees often understand the new vision and want to make it happen, but there are obstacles that prevent execution.

Oreg (2003) developed a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of resistance to change, which theorised resistance to change as an individual dispositional inclination to resist change and individual's general resistance tendencies. This four-facet model included routine seeking, emotional reaction, short-term thinking, and cognitive rigidity.

In contrast the term 'readiness for change' is described by Armemnakis, Harris and Mossholder (1993) as a precursor of resistance to change in that management need to identify gaps that may exist between their own expectations about the change initiative and those of other members. If significant gaps are observed and no action taken to close those gaps, resistance would be expected and therefore, change implementation would be threatened.

Holt, Armenakis Field and Harris developed a scale that would assess and gauge the readiness for organisational change at an individual level (which is one of the instruments used as part of the survey in this research) In their development of this scale, more than 900 organisational members from the public and private sector participated in the different phases of the study, with the questionnaire being tested in two separate organisations. The results showed that, readiness for change is a multidimensional construct influenced by beliefs among employees

that (a) they are capable of implementing a proposed change (i e , change-specific efficacy), (b) the proposed change is appropriate for the organisation (i e appropriateness) and (c) the leaders are committed to the proposed change (i e management support) and (d) the proposed change is beneficial to organisational members (i e , personal valence) This change model, which was used in the survey questionnaire in this research assesses readiness for change in terms of change confidence, need for change, personally beneficial and organisationally beneficial

Change confidence or self-efficacy is an individual's perceived capability to perform in a certain manner or attain certain goals (Bandura, 1977) Armenakis et al (1999) state that this perception has an effect on the organizational change readiness, as the change participants would consider the proposed change to be more achievable

Holt, Achilles Armenakis Feild and Harris (2007) define need for change or as they sometimes refer to as 'discrepancy', the extent to which one feels that there are or are not legitimate reasons and needs for the prospective change They outline that 'personally beneficial' also termed 'personal-valence' is the extent to which one feels that he or she will or will not benefit from the implementation of the prospective change, and define organisationally beneficial, or 'organisational-valence' as the extent to which one feels that the organisation will or will not benefit from the implementation of the prospective change This model, assess' and gauges readiness for organisational change at an individual level Assessment of employees' readiness for change is an important element before implementation of organisational change

Bourckenooghe, Devos and Van der Broeck distinguish three dimensions of readiness to change emotional readiness for change, cognitive readiness for change and intentional readiness for change They believe that such a multidimensional view of readiness for change

will be better able to capture the complexity of the phenomenon and lead to a better understanding of relationships between readiness and its antecedents Bernerth, 2004 described readiness for change as a condition where the organisations environment and members' attitudes are prepared for change

Throughout the literature, readiness for change is usually considered in conjunction with methods for reducing resistance, however the literature is sparse in describing and defining how any organisation can tell when employees are 'ready for change' However, Holt, Armenakis, Harris, and Field (2007) outlined that readiness occurs *"when the environment, structure, and organizational members' attitudes are such that employees are receptive to a forthcoming change"*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to investigate employee responses to organisational change, to examine the attitudes towards change and to assess the willingness to change amongst employees within the case study organisation. To do this, a mixed methods approach was taken, to explore organisational commitment, the attitudes towards organisational change and employees' readiness for change. This included research through both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Quantitative human resource data was obtained via the organisations Human Resources system and data was collected through an online questionnaire distributed to a random sample population within the organisation. Semi-structured interviews with management and employees were also untaken. A focus group session with 4 voluntary participants took place in the Sligo offices during a visit from the researcher.

Research Design

Based on the nature of the research questions, RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3 a quantitative approach was taken to collect data using a web-based questionnaire designed on the online survey tool, survey monkey. Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) noted that the survey is the most frequently used method to collect data on a phenomenon that are not directly observable, such as the concepts of interest in this study (commitment, attitudes towards organisational change and readiness for change). In the administration of the questionnaire a cross-sectional approach was used because this allowed for efficient data collection from a large number of individuals at one point in time (Gall et al, 2003). The advantages in using an online questionnaire in this research, was to target a range of employees from different business units and different

locations throughout the country in a cost effective, efficient manner and in line with modern technological resources However one disadvantage is that questionnaire and in particular the questionnaire used in this research, did not provide for the gathering of additional qualitative data, such as additional comments, nor further exploration of any other components' other than the ranking of statements within the questionnaire To overcome this, a mixed methods approach was undertaken to allow for a more qualitative analysis of the research topic through the conduct of semi-structured interviews with managers of the organisation and a focus group session undertaking with a targeted sample of employees This allowed for a more descriptive approach, which is commonly used when the purpose of the study is "to portray an accurate profile of persons, events, or situations" (Robson, 2002, p 59)

The online questionnaire was used as a means of assessing the research questions, RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3 outlined in the section above However, the qualitative research was also used to support the findings of the questionnaire and to determine commonalities within each of the methodologies According to Crano (2002), quantitative designs "offer a clearer path to understanding the true strength of the variables that affect (or define) a construct than the less formalized narrative approach" (p 332)

The data obtained from the organisations' human resources system, also enabled analysis and provided a demographic overview of the organisations population, including average length of service, gender breakdown and other relevant data This data will be analysed and presented via excel format and visuals through the use of bar charts and graphs The data will be core to setting the context of the subject organisation

Online Questionnaire

The online questionnaire administered in this research was a combination of three intact instruments namely, 'The Affective, Normative' and Continuance Commitment Questionnaire' developed by Meyer and Allen (1997), the 'Readiness for Change Questionnaire developed by Holt, Armenakis, Field and Harris (2007 238) and 'The Officer Attitude Survey' developed by Durmaz (2007 168)

A combination of the three instruments was used to ensure validity and reliability of the questionnaire results and to ensure a thorough investigation into the three topics that form the framework of the literature review section of this research, 'Organisational Commitment', 'Attitudes towards Chang'e and 'Readiness for Change' These three questionnaires are academically proven and are valid and reliable The data obtained from the survey was quantifiable and statistical analysis was conducted to determine the level of commitment amongst the employees within eircom, the attitudes toward organisational change and the readiness for change amongst employees within eircom The data also enabled the researcher to determine if and which of the demographic variables (gender, age, business unit, length of service, hierarchical level, and geographic location) could be related to employee commitment and readiness for change within the organisation

As described by Alrect & Settle (2004), socio-demographic characteristics are commonly used in survey research because different demographic groups can often hold quite different beliefs, thoughts and perceptions on important matters and such characteristics are helpful to recognize people who behave in similar ways

Sample, Population and Participants

The sampling used in the online questionnaire was a mixture of a cluster sample and a stratified sample The population (entire employee listing), was divided into several clusters, each representative of the population These clusters were determined by business units However, one of the clusters included a stratified sample, whereby, all employees from that business unit were selected A simple random sample was selected from the other cluster

The reason for choosing this type of sample population was that there was an inherent interest from the organisation's management (sponsors of this research) to target a particular business unit for participation, namely the 'Transition and Exit Management' business unit, which includes the majority of displaced employees within the organisation The organisation was interested in obtaining the data collected from this sample of the population The other cluster included a random sample of employees from within the other business units of the organisation

For this study, obtaining such a sample required the complete listing of employees within the 'Transition and Exit Management' business unit and a complete listing of employees obtained via an extract from the organisational human resource system The remaining random sample of employees chosen from the employee listing was selected by the HR Operations Delivery Manager with observation from the researcher

In addition, the researcher needed to ensure that the sample population had access to a web-based survey, as due to the nature of the business, a large amount of employees, namely field technicians are not office based and some have limited or no access to the internet

A total of 295 employees within the organisation were contacted to participate in the online survey Of which, 210 are displaced staff within the 'Transition and Exit Management'

business unit However, 103 of these displaced employees are currently assigned on projects within the Group Technology business unit

The remainder 85 participating employees were from varied business units, including central services, consumer and small business and group technology and are located in various offices throughout the country The potential respondents for the study came from a variety of levels within the company including employee (non-supervisory), non-supervisory/team leader, manager and senior manager/director levels (n = 295) 86 employees responded to the questionnaire, (n = 86) Of the 86 responses, 74 (86%) were fully completed

The participants who contributed to the semi-structured face-to-face interviews were, Carol O'Donovan, the HR Operations and Service Delivery Manager and Des O'Donnell, the Head of Operations and Systems within the Transition and Exit Management business unit

The employees that participated in the focus group session, were 4 voluntary participants located in the organisations HR & Payroll Shared Services Centre in Sligo

Questionnaire Response Rates

Of a total of 295 email invitations sent, 86 individuals responded of which 74 were fully completed, giving an overall response rate of 25 08% Details of responses are shown in Table 2 This response rate is in line with the response rate obtained by Oreg (2003) and Hersovitch and Meyer (2002) in some of their studies on resistance and commitment to change

<u>**Table 2**</u>
Questionnaire Response Rates

Population Sample	Total Participants (n)	Respondents (r)	Finished Surveys	Response Rate
Complete Sample	295	86	74	25 08%

Data Collection

Data was collected using an online questionnaire tool hosted by surveymonkey com This allowed for collection of individual-level data on organisational commitment, attitudes towards change and readiness for change The online questionnaire was composed of a combination of three intact instruments namely the Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment Questionnaire developed by Meyer and Allen (1997), the Readiness for Change Questionnaire developed by Holt, Armenakis, Field and Harris (2007 238) and

The Officer Attitude Survey developed by Durmaz (2007 168) and contained 61 statements in total

Approval of the combined questionnaire and invitation email was gained from the director of people services prior to distribution Upon gaining the organisations commitment to participate in the study from a representative/research sponsor (usually a director or executive level employee), an email containing a link to the survey and a request for participation was sent to the cluster and random sample of 295 employees

The survey was designed into four parts, the first section contained 6 demographical questions, namely, gender, age category, range of tenure with the organisation, (both age and length of service questions provided 5 year brackets for clearer visuals and representation of ranges), hierarchal level within the organisation (from a choice of 4 levels within the organisation), and business unit (from 7 of the business units within the organisation)

The second part of the questionnaire (questions 7-28), relates to organisational commitment, and the complete affective, normative and continuance commitment questionnaire developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) was used Commitment was described on the questionnaire as, *"Commitment to change refers to the mind-set that an individual has toward the*

implementation of a change initiative Employees can be committed to the organisation and other things such as change initiatives, leaders, or organisational units Commitment can be measured by wanting to change, having to change and needing to change In other words, employees can feel bound to support an organisational change because they want to, have to, or need to" This definition allowed for a description of the concept of organisational commitment, and employees were asked to rate each the subsequent statements in relation to their employment within the eircom group, indicating the extent to which they agree or disagree with each of the statements (utilising choice buttons in a 7 range likert scale, from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree') The reliability of this scale is good, with a Cronbach alpha of between 0 77 to 0 88 for the affective commitment section, 0 65 to 0 86 for the normative commitment section and 0 69 to 0 84 for the continuance commitment section (Fields, 2002 51)

The third part of the questionnaire (questions 29-42), relates to attitudes towards change and was composed from a number of items from the 'Officer Attitude Survey' developed by Durmaz (2007 168) Attitudes towards change was described on the questionnaire as, *"This is where an employee considers whether their values and goals, not the company's are in line with the organisation In other words, the attitude and mind-set of employees towards the change"* Employees were again asked to rank the subsequent statements in relation to their employment within the eircom group, indicating the extent to which they agree or disagree with each of the statements (utilising choice buttons in a 7 range likert scale, from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree') The Cronbach alpha for officer attitudes towards organisational change is 0 75, receptivity to change is 0 72, readiness for change is 0 72, commitment to the organisation is 0 78, trust in management is 0 74, and communication of organisational change is 0 82 The training for change scale presents a reliability of 0 67

The fourth and final section of the questionnaire (questions 43-61), relates to change readiness and was made up of a number of items from the 'Readiness for Change Questionnaire' developed by Holt, Armenakis, Field and Harris (2007 238) Readiness for change was described on the questionnaire as, "*Change Readiness is a cognitive precursor to the behaviours of either resistance to, or support for, a change effort Readiness for change can include the need to change, capability to change, personal valence (in our best interest to change), principal support (those affected are behind the change), and appropriateness (desired change fits the organisation)*" As with all sections employees were asked to rank the subsequent statements in relation to their employment within the eircom group, indicating the extent to which they agree or disagree with each of the statements (utilising choice buttons in a 7 range likert scale, from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree')

The 'Readiness for change questionnaire' includes of a number of constructs including appropriateness (discrepancy and organisational valence) having a reliability of 0 94, personal valence with a reliability of 0 66, change efficacy having a reliability of 0 82 and leadership support having a reliability of 0 87 (Holt et al , 2007 251)

Cronbach alpha is a measure of internal consistency, i e it measures the extent to which a respondent answers items in a consistent manager (Gall et al,, 2003) Cronbach's alpha scores of 70 or greater are generally considered to be acceptable (Nunnelly, 1970)

The questionnaire did not refer to a particular change management initiative within the eircom group, or the eircom recovery plan, as outlined in the organisational context section above The reason for this was that the researcher thought it may have restricted the responses

provided and the overall analysis The researcher had decided to leave it up to the employee to rate each of the statements based on their own experiences of change within the company in general, as the organisation has undergone various changes recently

A copy of the online survey administered can be found in appendix I or on the hosted website details of which can found in appendix I The online survey tool contained a data collection feature that eliminates the need to record the data manually

In regards the qualitative data collection, semi-structured, face-to face interviews with two managers within the HR department and Transition and Exit Management departments were undertaken The interviews took place in the eircom group headquarters at Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8 The interviews were recorded and were 18 04 minutes duration in respect of the interview with the 'HR Operations Delivery Manager' and 13 22 minutes duration in respect of the interview with the 'Head of Operations and Systems, Transition and Exit Management' The recording of the interview allowed for the researcher/interviewer to concentrate on the questions being posed and due to time-constraints eliminated the need for scribing during the interview The questions poised were semi-structured, in that the interviewer had a series of pre-defined questions in hand, however the questions were not adhered to rigidly and this allowed for a more open discussion The interviewer did not however react or reply to the responses during the interview, to allow for impartiality It should however be noted that the researcher is currently a contracted employee within the organisation

The focus group session held with employees of eircom, was also recorded and scribed These recordings can also be listened to by scanning the QR barcode with a QR barcode reader, or via the hosted site, details of which can be found in appendix II

Data Analysis and Procedures

There were various means of data analysis techniques employed in the research data obtained from the organisational human resources data, online questionnaire results, the semi-structured interviews and the focus group session

First the quantitative statistics (e g averages, percentages and trends) were analysed from the data obtained from the company's Human Resources system This data was a download from the organisations SAP HR System, into an excel spread sheet, and pivot tables and graphs were created in which to easily analyse and present findings (See appendix III) This provided basic information and demographics of the subject organisation to allow for a better understanding of the organisations demographics and characteristics

The data obtained from the online survey questionnaire was analysed via the automatic collection and retention of the results through the use of the online survey tool surveymonkey com The tool allows for download of results in excel format, which shows response count and response percentage of each of the 7 likert scale choices (1= strongly, 7 = Strongly Agree) for each of the statements poised The tool also allows the results to be presented m various visual forms such as bar charts, pie charts, column, line and area charts These charts will provide visual and percentage responses to each of the statements in the questionnaire

The data was exported to Microsoft excel and then analysed by simplifying the survey data further This was done by combining the 7 point likert scale response categories into three nominal categories, positive, neutral and negative Each statement response was then analysed against the section category, i e question 7-14 are questions related to 'affective

commitment', of these 8 questions analysing 'affective commitment', the questions were categorised into a positive or negative question, then each of the total responses to each statement were categorised into positive, neutral and negative and given a score, 1 for overall agreement of a positive statement, 0 5 for neutral agreement to a positive or negative statement and 0 for overall agreement to a negative statement and vice versa, the sums were added up and divided by the number of statements in each section, to provide an overall result – positive, neutral or negative Finally a percentage is calculated to give an overall percentage of how much employees in general agree with the category statements This analysis can be found on the hosted site, accessible via the QR code or website details available in appendix II

The tool also allows for 'cross tabs' to be conducted This allows for a more in-depth analysis and provides the ability to sort and analyse per group of respondents i e responses can be viewed per age profile per tenure and any other demographic questions answered in section one of the questionnaire, demographical section

In order to analyse RQ2 *What are the attitudes toward organisational change amongst employees within eircom*' responses to each statement will need to be analysed to provide generalisations, for example the first question in this section of the questionnaire 'attitudes towards change' statement 20 states *"Most of the initiatives that are supposed to solve problems in this organisation do not do much good"* With this statement, the higher the number of responses of 'Strongly Disagree', the more positive the attitude towards organisational change is

In contrast to inverted questions as above, statement 30 *"I am quite confident the organisational change initiatives will have the desired effect"*, the higher the number of ratings of 'Strongly Agree', the more positive the attitude towards organisational change

Individual and overall results and analysis of these statements in section four of the questionnaire, will allow for a general answer to RQ1 and RQ2

Likewise, individual and overall analysis of each of the statements in section five 'readiness for change', will allow for a generalisation to be made to answer RQ3 *"How willing/ready for change are employees within eircom?"*

A qualitative analysis of the responses obtained from the semi-structured face to face interviews with management and the focus group session will also be presented This will be in the form of simple descriptive analysis and will allow for an insight into management views and opinions of change within the organisation and their opinion and perception of employees commitment, attitudes and readiness for change within the eircom group The qualitative analysis of management perceptions will be compared with employee perceptions and attitudes gained from the questionnaire results and focus group and comparisons made and discussion around the similarities and differences amongst employees and management Both the two semi structured interviews and the focus group session outcomes/responses are presented and analysed in tandem and are compared and contrasted in parallel with the literature review

Limitations

There are a few limitations of the study Firstly, limitations may exist in terms of the sample population selected for the distribution of the online survey questionnaire This sample population was chosen by the Director of People Services, due to an inherent interest of the selected population This majority sample of the population is a particular section of the overall population, whom are 'displaced' staff and are in the 'transition and exit management' business unit Therefore, the overall results could not be generalised amongst the complete

population sample (all employees of the organisation), as due to this groups' particular employment circumstances and experiences within the organisation, their views and opinions may be deemed to be different to those of the general population If generalisations were made, this could be considered as unreliable or a biased sample compared with a random sample choice amongst the organisation population

Other limitations are the fact that respondents may have different perceptions and understanding of 'change' within the organisation and because a specific change initiative was not specified this may have resulted in the statements rated in accordance with various change initiatives However, this limitation as outlined in the overview of the 'eircom recovery plan' section above was intentional and can also be deemed as a positive research strategy The limitations of the questionnaire is that it did not allow for any comments or additional information or opinions to be submitted by participants, other that the rating of the 7 point likert scale statements As described by Durmaz (2007) in relation to his questionnaire, which formed part of the questionnaire used in this study *"such a predefined instrument may not be appropriate or perfect to measure all real situations or behaviours, how each officer perceives events, situations, and change efforts in the organisational context can never be evaluated thoroughly while developing a survey"* This was overcome through the use of a mixed methods approach namely the semi-structured face to face interviews with management and the focus group session conducted with employees based in the Sligo office

As with all questionnaires there may be an element of response biases, which may risk the validity of response Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005, Emreuter, 1933, Lenski & Leggett, 1960) outline that there may be *'a tendency to give socially desirable responses'*, and these are the most foreboding bias' in attitude surveys However in order to overcome this, the researcher outlined that the responses of the questionnaire were anonymous and confidential as no names or other personal details that could potentially identify respondents, were asked

The online survey and focus group outcomes/responses may also be limited due to the fact that employees were aware that the results were to be shared with the organisation (although no names are provided of the participants of the questionnaire or the focus group session) This may have led employees to be not as forthcoming with their responses to the topic of change management within both the questionnaire and focus group session

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This section reports on the findings from the analysis of the data obtained via the mixed methods approach Firstly the findings and discussion section below, will present the findings in terms of the overall general findings, the findings from the analysis of the personnel data obtained from the human resources system within the organisation, the findings from the online survey questionnaire administered to 295 employees (n =295, r=85) within the organisation and finally the findings and discussion of the semi-structured face to face interviews with management and the focus group session conducted with 4 employees within the organisations' HR shared service centre based in Sligo

Findings and Discussions

An analysis and manipulation of the data obtained via an excel download of personnel information form the HR SAP System, showed a total headcount of 5702 employees This is broken down into sub-company, eircom = 4833, eircom Northern Ireland & UK = 51, Meteor = 670 and Phone watch = 148

The analysis of the data shows the hierarchical structure as outlined in Table 3 below, -1 being the highest level within the organisation, i e the CEO This shows a fairly flat organisational structure, with 42% of the organisation at level 5 which is an operational employee (non-supervisory position) Levels 2-3 are supervisory/team leader/management levels, while level 1 is senior management/director level which accounts for just 1% of the organisations population

Table 4 outlines the length of service ranges which shows that the organisation has a very high level of employees with long tenure in the organisation 38 76% of employees within the

organisation have between 30 and 34 years' service And the average length of service is 23 5

years This is much higher than the EU average, as a study among 14 EU countries, in 2000,

showed the average job tenure was 10 6 years Shortest average tenures have been recorded in

the UK (8 2 years), followed by Denmark, the Netherlands, and Ireland, with average tenures

under 10 years (Auer and Cazes 2003) However, this very high length of service was

expected due to the history and characteristics of the organisation

Table 3
Hierarchical Level within eircom Group

Level According to reporting line	Total	Percentage %
-1	1	0%
0	12	0%
1	69	1%
2	305	5%
3	964	17%
4	1680	29%
5	2383	42%
6	288	5%
Grand Total	5702	100%

Table 4
Length of Service within eircom Group

Length of Service Range	Total	Percentage %
0-4	930	16 31%
5-9	422	7 40%
10-14	649	11 38%
15-19	107	1 88%
20-24	114	2 00%
25-29	329	5 77%
30-34	2210	38 76%
35 or more	941	16 50%
Grand Total	5702	100%

Table 4 also outlines that there is a large number, 16 31% of employees (nearly next to that of

the highest percentage range of employee length of service), that have just 0-4 years' service

This finding shows that the organisation has recruited and retained a high number of

employees within the last four years This is in line with the organisations current strategy and the eircom recovery plan to modernise the organisation through talent acquisition

The findings of data pertaining to that of employees leaving the organisation in the past two years show that a total of 2,088 employees left the organisation with the past two years Of these employees, the average length of service at the time of leaving was 21 47 years The findings also show that the primary reason for leaving, other than resignation/natural turnover was leaver opportunities which includes voluntary severance packages/redundancies This figure also shows that the eircom recovery plan ('the change initiative) and the goals and strategy's therein, m terms of modernisation is being achieved Leaver opportunities are provided as part of the eircom recovery plan in order to replenish the organisation with fresh talent and to offer incentives to those who have long tenure with the organisation (some of whom maybe seen as less skilled on today's technological equipment and new ways of working) to leave the organisation The leaver opportunities are also offered to the displaced staff within the organisation Over the past 2 years, 55 displaced staff from the 'Re Start, Transition and Exit Management Unit', have left the company

Table 5

Reason for Leaving within eircom Group (2 Year Profile)

Reason For Leaving	Total
Unknown	2
Death	20
Dismissal	1
Expiration of Contract	27
Ill Health	30
Leaver Opportunities	1389
Normal	10
Resignation	577
Termination of Contract	32
Grand Total	2088

Further findings are analysed and presented, including graphs and bar charts which can be

obtained via the QR code or web link hosting the complete results and analysis of the research data, details of which can be found in appendix II.

Respondent demographic analysis

An analysis of the demographics' of the sample population respondents showed the following;

Gender:

75.3% (64 respondents) are male, while 24.7% (21 respondents) are female. This gender breakdown is in line with the organisations overall population gender breakdown as outlined in Table 1 in the 'staff data' section above of this research.

Are you male or female?
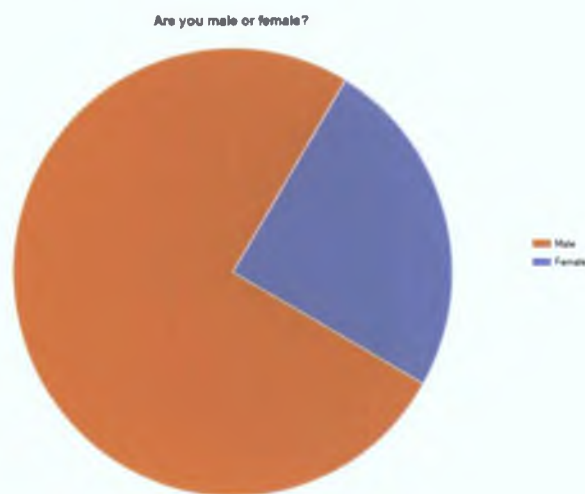
Age:

The majority of participants/respondents were between the ages of 50 and 54.

Which category below includes your age?
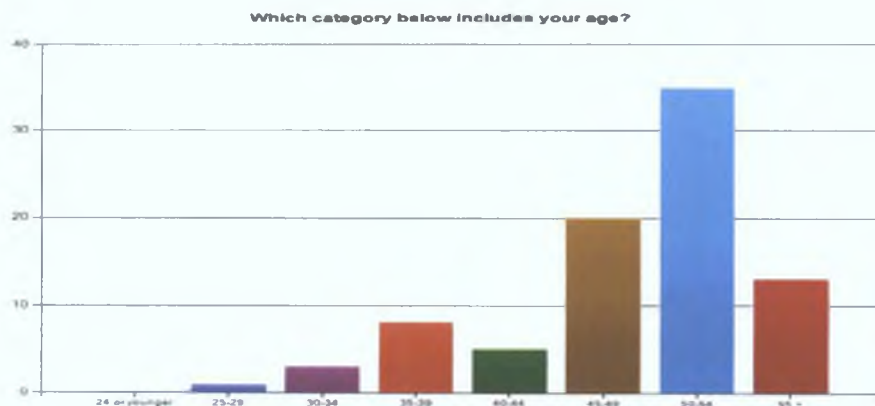
Length of Service

The sample population of respondents surveyed is somewhat representative to that of the total population, as seen in the chart below, 45.9% of respondents have between 30-34 years' service within the organisation, the overall population having 38.7% in this category. This may be slightly higher amongst the sample population, due to the cluster sample chosen in which the majority of participants are within the 'transition and exit management' business unit, which by its very nature has a high tenure amongst its member, compared to other areas of the business.

Year Range	Response Percent
0-4 Years	5.9%
5-9 Years	5.9%
10-14 Years	7.1%
15-19 Years	3.5%
20-24 Years	4.7%
25-29 Years	8.2%
30-34 Years	45.9%
35 or more	18.8%

Hierarchical Level

The majority of participants (65.5%) are of the employee (non-supervisory) category.

What is your level within eircom?
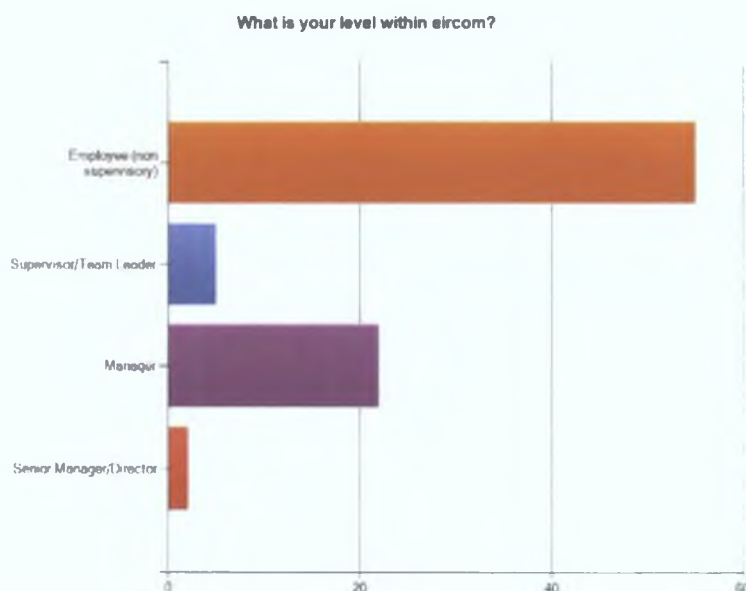
Business Units

The group technology business unit was amongst the highest level, (42 9%) of respondents The transition unit participants accounted for 16 7% of respondents, however, it must be noted that members of the transition and exit management business unit, may be assigned to other business units provisionally on project assignments The bulk of which are assigned to the 'Group Technology' business unit

Locations

Respondents of the online survey were from a broad mixture of the organisations' locations throughout Ireland The majority however, 38 6% accounted for those located in 'Dublin City Centre', which includes offices based in 1 Heuston South Quarter, Telephone house and Cumberland house Further location details including a visual chart can be found on the hosted site available by scanning the QR code in appendix II or by clicking on the hosted site link

Organisational Commitment within the eircom Group

In analysing the online survey data obtained in relation to 'organisational commitment', as outlined in the methodology, 22 questions in the survey related to organisational commitment These 22 questions regarding organisational commitment contained 8 questions on 'affective commitment', 6 questions on 'normative commitment' and 8 questions on 'continuance commitment' The results were as follows,

Affective Commitment

Of the 8 'affective commitment' questions, just 3 results showed positive correlations overall. This was further analysed at just a 38% positive correlation. As outlined in the definition, affective commitment can be described as the employees' positive emotional attachment to the organisation. It reflects commitment based on emotional ties the employee develops with the organisation primarily via positive work experiences. This result shows that respondents display a moderate emotional attachment to the organisation however they generally have a desire to remain with the organisation. The question in this category that had the highest correlation was the first question in this category, '*Q7. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with the organisation*', of the 82 responses, 30 respondent's (36.6%), 'agreed' with this statement, and 23.2% (19 respondent's), stating they 'strongly agree'.

Questions 9, 10 and 11, had quite negative correlations. These questions included, 'I *do not feel like "part of the family" at my organisation.*' With 23.2% (19 respondents') stating they 'agree' with this statement. However, in contrast to this, 22% (18 respondents), stated they 'disagreed' with this statement. This shows a strong divided opinion from employees on '*feeling part of the family*'.

Normative Commitment

The results of the 'normative' commitment, "*when an individual commits to, and remains with an organisation because of feelings of obligation, or a moral obligation to stay with the organisation*", shows a low/negative association, with an overall relationship of just 25%.

The question with the highest negative association was Q18, 'I *would feel guilty if I left my organisation now*', 39 7% (31 respondent's) disagreed with this statement, however Q15 '*I owe a great deal to this organisation*', showed a positive correlation

Continuance Commitment

There is a very positive association of 'continuance commitment' amongst the sample population In contrast with normative commitment in which employees feel they remain with the organisation because they 'ought to', continuance commitment is when employees remain with the organisation because they 'have to' This is an employee's awareness of the gains and losses that are associated with leaving the organisation Employees whose commitment is in the nature of continuance will remain in the organisation because they have to Some of the question responses which support this are, Q 23 '*I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up*' 35 9% (28 respondents), 'disagreed' with this statement, while 28 2% (22 respondents) 'strongly disagreed' with this statement Reasons for this strong continuance commitment amongst employees could be financial reasons and maybe associated with the external environment i e the current economic climate and few opportunities for alternative employment

An analysis of the qualitative data obtained via the semi-structured interviews shows that management agree that employees must be committed to the organisation, in order for the organisation to achieve its goals and objectives The HR operations service delivery manager, commented that "*For me personally commitment really is around what the role that you are fulfilling and how satisfied you are within that role and also your commitment to the organisation as well, you have to be committed to what the organisation is trying to achieve, if you're not, then you're not going to be committed within your role*"

The Head of Operations and Systems within the Transition Exit management unit, felt that eircom employees were highly committed, stating that "*I generally feel that the vast majority of people are committed and want to do what's right, you must remember, that the tenure, the average tenure at eircom is very high and wouldn't be in line with average industry, so people have an infinity to the company, its nearly like their family*"

The findings based on management opinion and employee opinions show that there is a certain level of commitment to the organisation As defined in the literature review, "*Commitment can be measured by wanting to change, having to change and needing to change In other words, employees can feel bound to support an organisational change because they want to, have to, or need to*" This corresponds with the findings of the online survey which show that both management and employees realise the *need* to change and seem committed to the organisational change mainly because they have to This is also supported by a statement from an employee which shows the understanding that there is a need to change and that employees feel compelled to change, "*we all know the economic situation in this country at the moment, and you know everyone is struggling, big companies, different types of companies are struggling so everybody knows that well if you fall behind that somebody else there ready to move in and take over your customers so I think that everybody is aware of that and they know the cash has to come in, you have to do the work, I think people are committed*"

As previously defined in this research, Jans (1989), describes organisational commitment as "*the degree that an individual in an organization accepts, internalises and views his or her role In order to be committed to an organisation an employee must internalise the values and goals of the organisation, have a willingness to help the organisation achieve its goals and retain a desire to remain part of the organisation*"

There is a consensus that once employees are been communicated to and involved, they will feel committed As described by one employee *"I think that everybody is aware of that* (economic situation) *and they know the cash has to come in, you have to do the work, I think people are committed"*

Upon carrying out this particular research, analysing the organisational characteristics, and from a review of the available literature, it can be declared that organisational commitment is usually higher amongst those with a longer length of service, particularly within an organisation such as eircom that was previously a civil servant and semi-state company that has been privatised The results of the online survey also show that employees particularly show a strong level of 'continuance' commitment, meaning they feel they 'need to' stay with the organisation for financial or economic reasons

In a recent research paper, entitled "The Impact of Large-scale Employee Share Ownership Plans on Labour Productivity The Case of Eircom" (McCarthy & Palcic, 2011), the writers outlined that *"A common aim of ESO (Employee Share Ownership Schemes) is to help align the objectives of employees with those of firm management and allow employees to observe their individual contribution to firm performance through shared information and financial returns (*Sesil, Kroumova, Blasi and Kruse 2002, Blasi et al 2004*) However, to fulfil this objective, it is important for managerial philosophy to demonstrate a commitment to employee participation Management must be proactive in encouraging a sense of ownership among employees through the provision of information and the allocation of decision-making authority* (Gianaris 1996, Blasi et al 2003a, Kaarsemaker and Poutsma 2006) Therefore, the fact that the majority of employees within the organisation are part of the ESO, this may be attributed to the commitment levels within eircom and in particular continuance commitment, as the nature and objectives of ESO's in general and within eircom, was to ensure employee commitment to the organisation

The findings of research question one (RQ1), 'How committed are employees within eircom?' are that, broadly speaking, eircom employees are committed to the organisation Both management and employees agree that in general, the majority of employees within the organisation are committed but as the online survey results show, mainly because of 'continuance commitment', because they have to

Attitudes of eircom staff toward Organisational Change

The 'employee attitudes' section of the online survey, assessed employees attitudes towards organisational change in terms of receptivity to change, readiness for change, trust in management, communications of organisational change and training for organisational change The findings of the online survey, were that in general, employees had a positive attitude towards organisational change, this is shown in the responses such as Q31 which states '*I would support and do my best for any change initiative which I believe as beneficial to this organisation*', in which 63 2% of respondents 'agreed' with this statement and 23 7% 'strongly agreeing'

Receptivity to change, Q32 '*Most changes in our organisation make my work more effective and efficient*', was found to be neutral Readiness for change attitudes in this particular section of the survey, showed quiet a positive relationship with 30 3% of respondents 'agreeing' to Q35 '*My managers are committed to making the change effort a success* '

Employee attitudes toward 'trust in management' was quite positive overall also, as shown by the responses of Q37 '*In this organisation, competent authorities convey the reasons for the changes in all aspects*', having its highest ranking in the 'slightly agree' category, but in contrast to this, 18 4% disagreed with this statement This shows differences of opinion amongst employees in regards trust in management Further investigation into the response's

to this question, in the form of cross tabulations, showed that of those within the 30-34 years' service range, 66 7% strongly disagreed with this statement, however those with 35 years' service were much more in positive (44 4% 'agreeing') in terms of trust in management

The attitudes towards the communication of organisational change, within the survey responses were very positive, the results showed a 67% positive relationship with this matter, particularly in terms of accessing information pertaining to a particular change, with Q39 'I know how to access necessary information (i e competent department/staff, internal phone number or internet address) about the changes in my organisation', having an 'agree' response of 50%

Training for organisational change showed a slightly negative but mixed response, with the majority of respondents disagreeing that 'This organizations' head office arranges seminars or workshops in order to train personnel about the changes in this organisation' However, as previously seen there was conflicting views with slightly fewer employees agreeing with this statement When this result was further analysed, it was found that the majority of employees that disagreed with this statement were between the ages of 50 and 54, which may have some significance in terms of the training expected and training tailored (or not) to this age category

The attitudes of eircom staff toward organisational change were also apparent from a management perspective via the semi-structured interviews with management and an employee perspective via the focus group session with employees

Management and employees are aware that the organisation is going through a lot of changes and there is an agreement amongst management and staff that the changes are necessary

As outlined in the literature review, practitioners and scholars agree that it is the human system (people and climate) that determines success or failure of the change initiative and that one of the most common obstacles to organisational change according to Beer & Nohria (2000), amongst others, is a dysfunctional corporate culture In this research it has been found that management define the culture in eircom as being 'slow' The HR service delivery operations manager stated that "*I find that in eircom things move a bit slow and I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that we do have a very strong union environment in here which is obviously supporting the employee, so that tends to slow things down a little bit There is a lot of changes that have been happening over the last number of months and I think they probably have moved with pace but in other organisations they probably would have moved a bit quicker*" And when asked to describe the culture in eircom, the head of HR operations and systems within the transition and exit management business unit stated "*Bureaucratic Ok, slow, and in a lot of instances, hard to get things done I don't think that's always the employees fault, but it's a very very complex organisation, from a HR perspective, and from an organisational perspective It's a complex organization, so it is hard to get things done*"

However, both management and employees agree that nothing stands still, with one employee stating that "*Well I think in general people know that nothing stands still in this life and you either go with it or you don't and if you don't go with it, your lost really, you have to Everything changes so it does*"

The research findings discovered that broadly speaking both management and employees agreed that the level of communication of the change initiatives within the organisation is good, in so far as two way communications between the corporate management team and employees is available The HR operations service delivery manager stated that "*Yes I mean I think employees are aware of who they can talk to, we have helplines out there Any form of communication that goes out in relation to any changes, there is always a helpline there is*

always an email address and people are not shy about using those, or other means to get their questions across and they will be very vocal with regard to getting answers to those questions as well so if there are questions coming in, there needs to be a quick turnaround with regard to getting back to people with answers" This corresponds with the results of the online survey

It is also supported by employee 3 who stated that, *"Well I would think, since the current Chief Executive, I think a lot has happened since he took over, I think he really opened up the channels of communication What employee would have access to a CFO or Chief Executive or whatever, and he made himself available by phone or by email so if people wanted to discuss things, they were given access, so from that point of view, there were a lot of changes I think, going back in time, it was more, you wouldn't be communicating with the top layers, it wouldn't have filtered down It would have been all layers, whereas he kind of made himself available I think that was a good thing in the company, people really felt that they were part of something, that they could pose a question or a challenge or whatever they wished"*

Although the findings indicate that employees generally have a positive attitude towards top management and feel they have been regularly informed on any change initiative and have access to corporate management, both management and employees alike agree that there are 'process' issues in terms of implementation of the change and training of the change implications As defined in the literature review, *process* issues are concerned with the actions taken in implementation of the change Bouckenooghe (2009) classifies attitudes toward change under three major categories (1) what's the work environment under which change occurs (i e , context), (2) how is the change being dealt with (i e , process) and (3) what type of change does it involve? (i e content) Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) in their 5 point model, also identify *process* issues, as being concerned with the actions taken in

implementation of the change There is an agreement that there could have been improvements in the way the change was dealt with or communicated (i e the process) in respect of the eircom recovery plan With management admitting that *"Were there any major gap? Yeah, there were gaps You can only have so much in place where you think you have thought of everything but there will be places and things that will crop up that hadn't been thought out properly"* This relates to employee 4's opinion that *"they hadn't it thought out at all It still isn't thought out properly I think, because there is still things there that they don't even know if it's, like every nine days you should have your day off, that's not the way it works at all because they never thought about the people on sick leave properly or the people on annual leave or people on TIL (Time in Lieu), you know they never thought it out, properly at all"*

Readiness for change amongst eircom staff

The readiness for change section of the online survey, which were items adapted from the readiness for change questionnaire by Holt, Armenakis, Field and Harris (2007 238) contained a number of constructs that were measured, this included, change confidence (2 statements), need for change (3 statements), personally beneficial (8 statements) and organisationally beneficial (6 statements) The results showed a hugely positive association with change confidence, with 39 5% agreeing that they '*do not anticipate any problems adjusting to the work I will have when this change is adopted*' and 47 4% disagreeing that '*I am intimidated by all the tasks I will have to learn because of this change*'

The results also showed that the majority of employees agreed there is a need for change, with 38 2% agreeing that '*There are legitimate reasons for us to make this change*' However,

the sample population feel that they will not personally benefit from the changes with 28 9% 'strongly agreeing' and 28 9% 'disagreeing', that is a total of 57 8% rejecting that '*The prospective change will give me new career opportunities*'

The results showed that in general, participants agreed that the changes would be 'organisationally beneficial' As the results show higher levels of perceptions that the change is organisationally beneficial when compared to perceptions that change is personally beneficial, suggests that these participants may be less likely to support change As supported by Erez & Kanfer, (1983) and Erez et al, (1985), this is usually because of employee perceptions that the organisation is more likely to benefit from the change than they are

Having analysed the qualitative research, in terms of the semi-structured interviews with management and the employee focus group, it can be reasonably stated that employees within the organisation generally have a readiness and willingness for change It also appears that employees are probably less resistant to change than they may have been previously, due to the nature and extent of the changes taking place within the organisation It seems apparent that recently employees have become accustomed to change, as the organisation has had numerous change initiatives implemented over the past number of years including re-structuring, cost reductions and modernisation

As outlined in the literature review, Kotter and Schlesinger (1979), describe resistance to change as "*people focusing on their own interest and not those of the organisation, misunderstanding of the change and its implications, belief that the change does not make sense for the organisation and low tolerance for change*"

This seems not to be the case in eircom, as employees understand the change and its implications and believe that these changes make sense for the organisation Employees seem

to see the need for change and the urgency for change, with employee 2 stating "*I would definitely think it as radical because of the examinership process that was a big big thing to happen within the company I think The first in the country, telecoms going into examinership, so that was a big big change for everybody in the company*"

This ties in with the literature review and Kotter's 8 step change management process, which outlines the first step in change management as 'creating a sense of urgency' Kotter states that this is probably the toughest step in the 8 step model, stating that "the greatest enemies of urgency are complacency and false urgency In fact success in itself often leads to complacency Employees seem to be aware of the urgency due to the recent examinership of the organisation

As found in the review of the literature, readiness for change can be nurtured and as outlined by Jones et al (2005) a climate and culture of belonging, trust and cohesion can be achieved through participation, support and open communication

As there seems to be a culture of belonging within the organisation and employees are satisfied with communication within the organisation, there is a willingness and understanding of the need to change To refer to one of the intact instruments being used in this research, the 'readiness for change questionnaire developed by Holt, Armenakis, Field and Harris (2007 238), one of the statements (Q 45 of the online survey), poses '*There are legitimate reasons for us to make this change* The results show that employees highly agree that there are legitimate reasons to make this change Question 46, states that "*No one has explained the reason why the intended changes must take place*", the majority (25%) of respondents disagreed with this statement, showing that they are aware and understand the reasons for change Responses to these two items show the respondents understand the need

for change and they understand why the changes must take place, which shows that there is little, but some resistance to change amongst the sample population

Readiness for change is defined as the employees' beliefs, attitudes and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organisations ability to successfully complete the intended change (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993 681) The findings show that the sample of employees, agree that the changes are very much needed and that they are confident of the organisations and its people's ability to successfully complete the intended changes

Conclusion

It can be seen that despite a high level of commitment within the organisation and a readiness for change, that the process of change is very important in determining the levels of resistance to change and employees attitudes towards the change Employees and management alike feel that planning is a very important part of the change management process and if the intended change is not thought-out well enough, this has, and will lead to employee confusion It is widely agreed among academics and theorists that the change process is very important which includes on-going communication, participation and involvement of employees in the change, coaching and training and the advertising of early successes is crucial in the process of change It is also agreed that any change initiative can cause confusion amongst employees, it may be the fear of the unknown, new patterns, new rules or new technology

Both management and employees within eircom agree that there is a high level of commitment within the organisation This may be due to the particular characteristics' and history of the organisation, i e that it was once a semi-state organisation, whereby employees joined the organisation with the mind-set that it was a civil servant 'job for life' The

characteristics and demographics of the organisation, with 39% of the organisation having between 30 and 34 years' service, or to put it another way, 68% having over 25 years' service, may indicate that employees have a sense of belonging to the organisation, see it as their family and therefore have a strong emotional attachment to the organisation The current economic situation within Ireland may also contribute to the high levels of continuance commitment within the organisation Meyer and Allen's (1984) affective, normative and commitment model, which (1984) proposed that a distinction be made between affective and continuance commitment, with affective commitment denoting an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization and continuance commitment denoting the perceived costs associated with leaving the organisation This continuance commitment is high amongst employees within the organisation, as many feel there would be huge costs associated with leaving the organisation The focus group session suggested that employees were not uncertain about their future with the organisation, and were comfortable knowing that if they stayed with the organisation, they were guaranteed a good pension This suggests employees perceive a (financial) cost associated with leaving the organisation

The researcher concludes that the continued success of the organisation is dependent on getting the behavioural change that is required to optimise the new structures in place, however the attitudes towards organisational change are quite positive and readiness and willingness to change is there amongst employees, due to the sense of urgency and a commitment to achieve the organisations goals and objectives and the fact that employees are accustomed to organisational change There is however, very little theory to support whether employees whom are accustomed to experiencing organisational change are less resistant to further change initiatives

Recommendations for the organisation

The following are recommendations for the organisation to take into consideration, following this research and analysis Firstly, as it has been found that both management and employees feel the change 'process' may be improved in terms of planning, it is suggested that specific details of the change programme need to be pre-empted and further attention given to the roll-out phase of any change initiative in order to avoid confusion and uncertainty As mentioned by employees and management, there were significant gaps in the roll-out of the eircom recovery plan and some of the details were not considered in advance which created confusion and anxiety amongst employees Although it has been found that employees have a voice in the decision and formation stages of the change initiative, through the trade union alliances, it is suggested that the organisation involve the employees themselves in the planning and implementation stages of the change initiative As outlined by Armstong (2003), "Involvement in the change process gives people the chance to raise and resolve their concerns and make suggestions about the form of the change and how it should be introduced The aim is to get 'ownership', a feeling amongst people that the change is something that they are happy to live with because they have been involved in its planning and introduction - it has become *their* change" Also, as the research has discovered that there is a high level of commitment within the organisation, it is suggested that the organisation use this level of commitment to their advantage, by involving employees in the planning and roll-out of the change, in order to realise the change, considering both employee and the organisations goals and objectives are aligned, as suggested by this commitment within the organisation

Secondly, the organisation must ensure fair practice in the implementation of a change, as these are shown to have significant associations with employee commitment to change As

outlined by employees with the focus group session, the most important thing to ensure employee 'buy-in' and to ensure employees are more satisfied in the workplace is respect and fair practice The change needs to be seen as fair and just, and employees need to feel respected This suggestion is in line with the theory which states that organisational commitment correlates strongly with the various forms of organisational justice Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) argue that organisations wanting affectively committed employees must demonstrate their own commitment by providing a supportive work environment Among the things they can do to show support are to treat employees fairly and provide strong leadership Management can promote fair implementation processes in many ways, for example change agents can encourage employees to share their views and feelings about the change This can be done through the use of dialogue sessions, interviews etc , rather than relying on the unions to convey employees' views and opinions in the actual roll-out and implementation stages Although union involvement at negotiation stage is crucial, it is suggested that employees themselves are included in the planning and implementation stages

Secondly, the instrument used in this research can be used to provide valuable information regarding the areas for improvement that may need to be addressed in the design of further change implementation strategies By carrying out research and gathering information on employees as part of a change initiative, potential improvements or issues can be identified early and employee opinions and attitudes can be taken into account Other instruments or surveys can be used or considered to measure these types of employee perceptions

It is also recommended that the organisation continues with its successful communications strategy The research has found that both management and employees are very satisfied with the quality of communication during change initiatives' and the availability of senior

management Employees feel they are sufficiently informed on of the progress of change at all stages and that two way communication between the senior management team and employees is sufficient

Recommendations for future research

Future research carried out within the organisation could concentrate on the relationship between trust and fairness and the success of change In particular, the results from this study showed that fairness and trust was important to employees and this could be an area of concern for the organisation It is possible that the measurement in this research, using three intact instruments, may not cover all areas that are related to change, such as, employee's emotional, cognitive and intentional readiness for change As outlined by Jones (2001) change is largely a cognitive process, one that can be derailed at any stage by various types of resistance

This particular research was also limited in that the majority of the participants were from a particular business unit and were 'displaced' staff whereby their positions no longer existed This did not allow for generalisations to be made in terms of the online survey findings, therefore it is recommended that further research conducted within the organisation should include a complete representation of all employee categories and business units

A longitudinal study of the attitudes to organisational change and readiness for change, would allow for a comparison of any changes that may occur within the organisation over a period of time and may allow for a more thorough understanding and a comparison of contextual issues This may also make it possible to compare the extent to which external forces have an impact on employee commitment, attitudes towards change and readiness for change, i e research carried out during times of economic prosperity as opposed to recessionary times It

would also be valuable to explore the different levels of commitment and the various

perceptions and attitudes under various leadership and ownership of the organisation

In regards the research design, the inclusion of personnel from different areas of the business

from different lengths of service and a focus group which includes more employees, may

make for an interesting study

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APPENDICIES

Appendix I – Online Questionnaire

1. Welcome

Confidential Survey for Student Undertaking Research

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating the nature of change and employee responses to organisational change. I am a masters student in Human Resource Management at National College of Ireland, and I am conducting this research as part of my Thesis submission.

The purpose of this study is to investigate change within eircom, with a focus on, employee commitment to the organisation, employee attitudes towards change and employee readiness/resistance to change.

The results of this study will be used within my Thesis and will also allow for a better understanding of change within eircom. The results will be shared with the organisation. However, the information provided is confidential and anonymous as I will not ask for your name or other information that may disclose your identity.

I would greatly appreciate your input to assist with my research. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this research, you can contact me at: niamhken@gmail.com.

I look forward to receiving your response. Thank you for your participation.

Yours Sincerely
Niamh Kenny

2. Demographics

1. Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

2. Which category below includes your age?

- 24 or younger
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55 +

3. How many years are you employed/working in eircom?

- 0-4
- 5-9
- 10-14
- 15-19
- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35 or more

4. What is your level within eircom?

☐   6

5. What is your Business Unit?

☐   6

Change Management within eircom Group

6. What is your main geographical work location?

⚪ Other

⚪ Dublin City Centre (General City centre including 1 Heuston South Quarter, Telephone House, Cumberland house etc)

⚪ Dublin West (Citywest campus and surrounding locations including Parkwest, Kingwoods, Bianconi Ave, 4050 Citywest, Bluebell etc)

⚪ Limerick City (Roches Street and surrounding urban areas)

⚪ Cork City (Churchfield and surrounding urban areas)

⚪ Cork County (Mallow Exchange, Mallow AEH and surrounding urban areas)

⚪ Galway City (Mervue and surrounding urban areas)

⚪ Sligo (Rathedmond and surrounding urban areas)

⚪ Portlaoise (Knockmay and surrounding urban areas)

3. Commitment

Commitment:

Please answer the following questions in relation to your employment within the eircom group indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements.

Commitment to change refers to the mind-set that an individual has toward the implementation of a change initiative. Employees can be committed to the organisation and other things such as change initiatives, leaders, or organisational units.

Commitment can be measured by wanting to change, having to change and needing to change. In other words, employees can feel bound to support an organisational change because they want to, have to, or need to.

7. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with the organisation

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐

8. I enjoy discussing my organisation with people outside of it

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐

9. I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐

10. I think I could easily become attached to another organisation as I am to this one

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐

11. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐

12. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐	⊐

13. This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

14. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation.

Stongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

15. I owe a great deal to this organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

16. I would not leave my organisation right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people of it.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

17. This organisation deserves my loyalty.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

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4. Commitment

Commitment:

Please answer the following questions in relation to your employment within the eircom group indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements.

Commitment to change refers to the mind-set that an individual has toward the implementation of a change initiative. Employees can be committed to the organisation and other things such as change initiatives, leaders, or organisational units.

Commitment can be measured by wanting to change, having to change and needing to change. In other words, employees can feel bound to support an organisational change because they want to, have to, or need to.

18. I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡

19. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡

20. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡

21. Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡

22. It would be very hard for me to leave my organisation right now, even if I wanted to.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡

23. I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡

24. One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

25. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

26. Right now staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as desire.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

27. It would be too costly for me to leave my organisation right now.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Netural	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

28. One of the major reasons I continued to work for this organisation is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice - another organisation may not match the overall benefits that I have here.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

5. Attitudes towards Change

Attitudes towards Change:

Please answer the following questions in relation to your employment within the eircom group indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements.

This is where an employee considers whether their values and goals, not the company's are in line with the organisation. In other words the attitude and mindset of employees towards the change.

29. Most of the initiatives that are supposed to solve problems in this organisation do not do much good.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

30. I am quite confident the organisational change initiatives will have the desired effect in my organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

31. I would support and do my best for any change initiative which I believe as beneficial to this organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

32. Most changes in our organisation make my work more effective and efficient.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

33. Organisational changes improve our organisation's overall efficiency.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

34. Our senior managers encourage all of us to embrace organisational changes.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

35. My managers are committed to making the change effort a success.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

36. My colleagues support organisational change efforts.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

37. In this organisation, competent authorities convey the reasons for the changes in all aspects.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

38. I am thoroughly satisfied with the information I receive about the changes in my organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

39. I know how to access necessary information (i.e competent department/staff, internal phone number or internet address) about the changes in my organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

40. I believe that the information transmitted about the changes in this organisation explains why change is needed.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

41. This organisations head office arranges seminars or workshops in order to train personnel about the changes in this organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

42. I consider myself adequately trained about the changes in this organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

6. Change Readiness

Change Readiness:

Please answer the following questions in relation to your employment within the eircom group indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements.

Change Readiness is a cognitive precursor to the behaviours of either resistance to, or support for, a change effort. Readiness for change can include the need to change, capability to change, personal valence (in our best interest to change), principal support (those affected are behind the change), and appropriateness (desired change fits the organisation).

43. I am intimidated by all the tasks I will have to learn because of this change.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

44. I do not anticipate any problems adjusting to the work I will have when this change is adopted.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

45. There are legitimate reasons for us to make this change.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

46. No one has explained the reason why the intended changes must take place.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

47. I am suspicious about the reason for the change initiatives to take place.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

48. When this change is implemented, I envision financial benefits coming my way.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

49. This change will disrupt many of the personal relationships I have developed.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐	⌐

50. The prospective change will give me new career opportunities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡

51. When this change is implemented, I don't believe there is anything for me to gain.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡	⌡

7. Change Readiness

Please answer the following questions in relation to your employment within the eircom group indicating the extent to which you agree with each of the statements.

Change Readiness:

Change Readiness is a cognitive precursor to the behaviours of either resistance to, or support for, a change effort. Readiness for change can include the need to change, capability to change, personal valence (in our best interest to change), principal support (those affected are behind the change), and appropriateness (desired change fits the organisation).

52. People tend to pretend they agree with the changes, but in reality do not allow them to be introduced.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

53. It is common to continually change direction, not giving continuity to what was already done.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

54. My future in this job will be limited because of the intended changes.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

55. The intended change makes me question my future employment with this organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

56. I think the organisation will benefit from this change.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

57. The organisation is going to be more productive when we implement this change.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J	_J

58. When the intended change is adopted, we will be better equipped to meet our customers' needs.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slighly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃

59. This change will improve our organisations overall efficiency.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃

60. This organisation will lose some valuable assets when we adopt this change.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃

61. This intended change matches the priorities of our organisation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃	⌃

Appendix II – Interviews & focus group audio and script and questionnaire results analysis.

Audio available for download by scanning the QR barcode below or by clicking on the following link: https://www.box.com/shared/18346cabc48504321330

Semi structured Interview – Change Management with eircom Group

Interviewer: Níamh Kenny

Interviewee: Carol O'Donovan, HR Operations Service Delivery Manager

Date: 04th August 2012

Location: eircom Headquarters, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8

Opening to Interview:

Níamh: Good morning Carol.
Carol: Morning Níamh.

Níamh: I'm speaking to Carol O'Donovan, who is the HR Operations Service Delivery Manager for eircom group. So Carol, as your aware I'm currently undertaking my Masters in HR, and as part of my Masters, I am doing my thesis on Change Management and specifically I'm basing it on change management here in eircom. So, if I could ask you a few questions in relation to your experience as a HR Operations Manager here in eircom, that'd would be great. So I have a number of questions here that I'll just run through if you don't mind and if you can tell me from your point of view.

Start of Interview Questions

Niamh	So Carol, in relation to change management, do you think at the moment the organisation is going through small incremental changes, or radical change?
Carol	Well I think the, HR, eircom in general are going through radical changes There are changes throughout all of the different business areas not just in HR itself but also in Group Technology we've had two different restructuring there, wave1 and wave2 We've also had restructurings within Wholesale, we've also had restructuring within eircom business and there's future restructuring to come down the road so I would say its radical changes that were going through
Niamh	Ok, so it seems there's a lot going on at the moment, so what is your role in change management within eircom?
Carol	Well our role really as part of the HR Operations Team really is to make sure the back end of all these changes are done, so if there is changes' going on in any part of the business, we have to ensure we get all of the right data so we can update SAP We need to ensure that the 'who works where' which is our people directory and that drives all of the org charts, are up to date, so it's our role really to ensure that the changes the business want to make are implement at the back end So when you go onto comet which is our intranet, when you go onto any of the, into the org charts that everything is up to date, that cost centers are changed, job titles are changed, managers are changed, all that type of thing, it's our business to ensure that's done efficiently and effectively
Niamh	Ok and just in relation to the eircom recovery plan specifically, when do you recall first having heard about the proposals for the eircom recovery plan and how has the organisation and you yourself being involved in the eircom recovery plan
Carol	Well I suppose we would have heard about it through a communications from our CEO, Paul Donovan, would have informed us on the, how eircom was performing and that radical change was needed There was a lot of talk around reduced working hours then the official announcement came out that there was going to be reduced working hours but this would be the form of a nine day fourth night, which really meant that people were taking a 10% reduction, but it was really around the 10% reduction in hours as opposed to pay reduction Our involvement, really from an operational perspective would have been in around making sure that we had a template in place for managers to use in order for them to ensure that their people were getting the correct time off in regard to the 9 day fourth night and that template needed to be updated in six monthly segments and it needed to ensure that any holidays any bank holidays that were there, any carry over leave was input into the spreadsheet because that calculated the number of days that someone may actually be taking off So there was a huge amount of effort on our part to ensure that the 9 day fourth night template was fit for purpose, tested and rolled out to the business and

again we were involved in the communication around the 9 day fourth night and actually making sure that managers knew how to use the actual template itself That would have been our main involvement with the 9 day fourth night

Niamh	And just in terms of communication of the eircom recovery plan In your opinion how rigorous was the planning in relation to communication and was enough attention paid to the planning process?
Carol	I think the planning was rigorous because it had to be, there was a lot of people impacted with the reduced working hours There was a lot of attention paid to the planning of it in so far as our perspective with regard to the 9 day fourth night template That ensured that people were fully aware of the days they had off and when they were going to take them Were there any major gap? Yeah, there were gaps You can only have so much in place where you think you have thought of everything but there will be places and things that will crop up that hadn't been thought out properly I suppose, one of those would have around holidays and how they were going to be treated and the fact that if you took annual leave on the nine day fourth night, your annual leave did not contribute to your worked up day basically, so it meant that if I was on two weeks holidays, that I wasn't going to get a day off the week I came back, I had to work up nine days but if I had carried forward leave that did count as part of your worked up day So there was a little bit of confusion around that, that communications wasn't done as well as it should be, but that was picked up then at, when it was brought to light and further communications went out about it
Niamh	Ok so do you think overall messages got through to people and do you think people felt involved in the eircom recovery plan?
Carol	Yeah I mean the messages went out, there was a lot of communications on comet, there was a lot of communications around the country, the CEO and senior managers went out to the different offices around Ireland There was major communications that went out Did people feel involved? They felt involved in the sense that they were being communicated to, did they have involvement upfront when it was actually happening, no they wouldn't have Having said that, their unions would have been representing them and the unions would have been heavily involved in the discussions around how it was going to work, so from that perspective yeah they would have been involved, but they may have felt that they weren't as involved as they would have liked to have been
Niamh	So just on that point Carol, do you think, how important is employee involvement for decision making within the organisation?
Carol	It is important that the employee's point of view is put across and I suppose that is why we have so many unions within the organisation They work on behalf of the employee, so any changes that we make anything that's happening within the organisation, the unions are always consulted There is a consultation process there

Niamh	So do you feel employees have a sway with change management within eircom?
Carol	They do, yes absolutely
Niamh	And just in terms of hierarchy structure, do you think it's easy for employees to confront you with their questions?
Carol	Yes I mean I think employees are aware of who they can talk to, we have helplines out there Any form of communication that goes out in relation to any changes, there is always a helpline there is always an email address and people are not shy about using those, or other means to get their questions across and they will be very vocal with regard to getting answers to those questions as well so if there are questions coming in, there needs to be a quick turnaround with regard to getting back to people with answers
Niamh	What do you feel this organisation can do to make employees more satisfied in the workplace?
Carol	I suppose, based on some of our surveys we have done, people are quite satisfied with their roles within the workplace They are very satisfied with management There is a lot of opportunities within the workplace and really it's up to the individual themselves to make sure they are satisfied and happy with what they are doing, there's plenty of opportunities, there is always roles been advertised within the recruitment space All opportunities within any part of the business are always put out there internally before it goes external So if people are not happy within their particular remit There are always opportunities to progress into a different department or even progress within their own department, through training and development
Niamh	Ok and just in terms of the current challenges that eircom is facing in terms of its debt and its recent examinership, how do you think the plans for the future have been affected by these challenges?
Carol	I think the examinership has actually been quite good for the organisation It's put us on a more solid footing, we have lost have our debt, which is great We are more focused now and what we need to do and what the challenges are going forward We know the areas of the business that we need to get into and I think the burden of half the debt being gone, allows us to be more focused on what we need to do going forward
Niamh	Do you think people in the organisation feel, uncertain about the future here in eircom?
Carol	I don't think they do, I think they see that management has tried their best to get us out of a very serious situation We have managed to save, get rid of half the debt, we can see a proper structure now, the five pillars that we have just introduced, so people understand now were we are actually going now for the future
Niamh	Do you think employees feel secure about their jobs?

Carol	Yeah I think they do, it probably depends on which business organisation you are in No one likes to hear that there is a re-structuring going on Having said that, there are always opportunities in other areas of the business that people can, if they are displaced, they have the opportunity to apply for other roles, there is also a good redundancy package there as well, so employees in general feel fairly secure about their positions within the organisation
Niamh	Just going back to the eircom recovery plan How confident would you be that the predicted outcomes of the eircom recovery plan will be realised?
Carol	I would be fairly confident that they would be, we are into our last 6 month phase of the 18 month programme and so far we have made significant savings, the nine day fortnight has actually proved to be very successful, a lot of people liked the idea, initially they didn't but it has sort of grown on them and they like having their day off once a fourth night and I would say at the end of it all once everyone goes back to normal working hours, I would say a lot of people will be looking to retain their nine day fourth night
Niamh	Overall, in terms of the culture here in eircom, how would you describe the culture, 'the way things are done around here'?
Carol	The culture, I suppose, I have come from multi-nationals and the cultures of the multi-nationals are very different than eircom I find that in eircom things move a bit slow and I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that we do have a very strong union environment in here which is obviously supporting the employee, so that tends to slow things down a little bit There is a lot of changes that have been happening over the last number of months and I think they probably have moved with pace but in other organisations they probably would have moved a bit quicker
Niamh	Ok, so in terms of the culture you've just described, how does this act as a barrier or an enabler to change?
Carol	Well it acts as a barrier because a I say we have a very strong union environment here and so the unions can dig their heels in if they are not happy with what is proposed and they can often turn around what your proposing to do, turn it around to suit them, so you may have to radically alter your plans
Niamh	And in your view what is the most important thing for keeping staff committed?
Carol	For me personally commitment really is around what the role that you are fulfilling and how satisfied you are within that role and also your commitment to the organisation as well, you have to be committed to what the organisation is trying to achieve, if you're not, then you're not going to be committed within your role
Niamh	And what are the barriers for change in the organisation?

Carol	Again, I suppose it's back to the point earlier on around, you have the union culture but you also have to have the willingness to change Within some parts of the organisation you may not have that willingness to actually make the change because it might be so radical that they don't feel there is going to be an advantage to doing it So I think the culture, could be a barrier for change
Niamh	What is important in your view, to make people ready for any change management initiative in the organisation?
Carol	I think communication is very important I think people need to be made aware exactly of what is going on in the organisation, especially around the financials, I think they feel senior management did a good job over the last twelve months in actually detailing it to the employees how serious the debt was and how it was restricting us as a company in moving forward and I think that's important, I think if people understand why they need for change and it's a good enough reason they would row in behind it
Niamh	What do you think is the general perception amongst employees in the organisation with regard to change?
Carol	I think in general people see the change happening, some people will say, well why are we doing it and others will say I'm glad that's happening But I think a lot of people will say, why are we doing it? I think that would be the general perception within half, more than half the organisation
Niamh	Why do you think they have that perception?
Carol	Because, I suppose, again, it's back to the culture, back to the type of organisation that it is, where it's come from, it was semi-state then it was privatised I suppose a lot of the, there is still the legacy with semi-state within the organisation that would have the view of why do we need to change anything, sure were grand the way we are
Niamh	Well that's great Carol, so thanks for your time in answering my questions Thank You
Carol	Your very welcome thanks Niamh

Semi structured Interview – Change Management with eircom Group

Interviewer	Niamh Kenny
Interviewee	Des O'Donnell, Head of Operations and Systems, Transition and Exit Management, Group HR
Date	04th August 2012
Location	eircom Headquarters, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8

Opening to Interview

Niamh	Hi ya Des
Des	Hi ya Niamh, How are you?
Niamh	Good thanks how are you? Des, are your aware I'm currently undertaking a Masters in HR and as part of that I'm doing a thesis on the topic of Change Management so if you don't mind I'll just go through a few questions, if you wouldn't mind answering from your experience here in eircom, as Head of Operations and Systems and considering you have a long tenure here in eircom, so if you don't mind I'll just go through a few questions
Des	Ok, that's no problem Niamh

Start of Interview questions

Niamh	So firstly, Des, in relation to change management do you think the organisation is going through small incremental changes or radical change at the moment?
Des	Ok to answer the question I suppose I'll reflect back on some of the change programmes, that I have been involved in, and I've been involved in many change programmes in the last 15 years
I would consider the changes that we are currently seeing as incremental changes rather than radical changes Changes in the past I have been involved with, involved new ways of working, different methodologies for working, centralisation and whole workforce or work management impacts on how work is distributed to the field technicians which are vast majority of our employees, so to answer the question, I'd say were going through incremental changes at the moment I don't know whether I'd refer to them as small or not, but they are incremental rather than one big large radical change plan
Niamh	And specifically, what is your role in change management within the organisation?
Des	Ok, previously I was involved in, implementing the change, being involved in the planning, implementing the change and then being responsible for whether or not it was successful or not My current role as Head of Operations in Transition and Exit Management in group HR is slightly different, whereas we deal with the fallout from the change programme So people are made surplus from their roles however because of agreements and the contracts they have they can't be just sacked, so we have an area called transition and exit management and that's actually dealing with the people as they become surplus So what we do is, help them through that change, and then we up skill them or try to up skill them where necessary and then help them undertake a job search and seek a new role We've dealt with approximately, in the past 18 months, 360 surplus staff of which 54% of them have either left the company or found permanent suitable roles within the company That figure of 54% is in line with industry best practice, so for example, Deutsch Telecom, would be probably something in the region of 42%

Niamh	That's great Des and just in terms of the 'eircom recovery plan', when do you recall first having heard about the proposals for the eircom recovery plan and how were you involved yourself in the implementation of the eircom recovery plan?
Des	The first time I heard about the eircom recovery plan was from an acting CEO, when he got a lot of senior managers into a room and asked them would they take a pay-cut So that's when I first heard about it and that was probably 2 and half years ago and then when you volunteered to take a pay cut, and it was voluntary process, however you were required to roll it down to managers within your team at a certain level and get them to take pay cuts and introduce the different aspects of changes within the eircom recovery plan However, the overall recovery plan does involve changes in work practices, a 9 day fourth night and stuff like that
Niamh	Whom do you see at the main facilitator and advocator for the implementation of the recovery plan?
Des	I think first of all there has to be a group message and that's really important that it's clear and seen to be supported from the top and then it has to be supported from within the management group, right down throughout from senior manager down to the first line manager that's dealing with an actual technician or ordinary worker (sorry I don't mean an ordinary worker), but really needs to be frontline led and supported right throughout the management or otherwise it will fail and I can tell you that from experience
Niamh	Ok, so leading on from that Des, how would you rate the communication of the eircom recovery plan?
Des	I think the communication was extremely good in this instance, all stakeholders were involved, from employee, to management, to the trade union alliance and in fairness everybody got in behind it because it was so important to save the company
Niamh	And do you think people liked the way the change was managed? Were they satisfied with the communication strategy?
Des	People really were clear on what was required, like in all change programmes people hear what they want to hear so I don't know whether or not people would be pleased with the way the change was implemented
Niamh	And just in general within eircom, how important is employee involvement for decision making and any change initiatives that happen?
Des	Ah it is absolutely imperative If you don't have employees involved in change you can forget it about, it's not something that you can just push in, you have to get people involved, they have to understand and then you bring them along with the change Otherwise, you're doomed for failure

Niamh	So would you say that employees have sway in change management within the company
Des no,	No I don't think they'd have a sway in it, The Trade Union Alliance, they haven't got a sway in it
Niamh	Just in terms of the hierarchy structure here, do you think it's easy for employees to confront you personally with their questions in relation to change management or any change initiatives that happen?
Des	I operate an open office, so I like to touch base with people, talk to people and let them know that I'm always available, if they want to talk to me or they have any questions
Niamh	And just going back to the current challenges that eircom faces at the moment in terms of its debt and recent exit of examinership, do you think the plans for the future have been affected by these challenges?
Des	Absolutely, and the question specifically relates to the examinership and I think it absolutely has, in a very, very positive way because it reduced the debt to a more manageable level that the company can sustain
Niamh	Do you think the people in the organisation feel uncertain about the future in eircom?
Des	Yes, I think there is a little bit of an unknown, because not only are we going through the whole recovery plan, the debt restructuring, were modernising the organisation and as well as the that, as a company, the products that we sell and the way we market ourselves is changing radically So people are unsure as to what's happening Our products are different, were changing from a fixed line business to a modern Telco that provides triple quad play over fibre
Niamh	Ok, and do you think the employees are committed to the organisation?
Des	I think there is an awful lot of commitment within the employees to the organisation I generally feel that the vast majority of people are committed and want to do what's right, you must remember, that the tenure, the average tenure at eircom is very high and wouldn't be in line with average industry, so people have an infinity to the company, its nearly like their family
Niamh	And leading on from that, how would you define the culture here in eircom, 'the way we do things around here'?
Des	Bureaucratic Ok, slow, and in a lot of instances, hard to get things done I don't think that's always the employees fault, but it's a very very complex organisation, from a HR perspective, and from an organisational perspective It's a complex organization, so it is hard to get things done
Niamh	Ok, so you've probably answered the next question there, so how does the culture act as a barrier or an enabler to change?
Des	Oh a barrier to change No we have gotten change in don't get me wrong But I think the change that we need is radical change, rather

	than, going back to the very first question, incremental change. I think it's radical change.
Níamh:	And in your view, what is the most important thing in keeping staff committed?
Des:	Involvement and communications.

| Níamh: | In your view what is the most important thing for 'change readiness' in the organization? So getting people ready for change and the 'buy-in' from employees? |
| Des: | It's all around communications, it's all around people being informed, it's all around people understanding what's driving the change, and why the change is needed, and then how it will impact them. People will go along with a change programme provided they understand what it's about, if they don't understand what it's about and it's just sort of foisted on them, they won't buy into it. |

| Níamh: | So what do you think is the general perception out there amongst employees regarding change within eircom? |
| Des: | I think we've gone through so much change down through the years that there's a lot of apathy and people, ah here we go again, ah here we go again, sure it won't' affect me sure I'm used to it, and in fairness employees in eircom are used to it. Even myself, I am so used to change. If you could take the experience of change that eircom have gone through and put it into other organisations, huge, huge experience under different CEO's. |

| Níamh: | Is there anything you would like to add to that Des, maybe just from your years of experience, anything in relation to change management that you think maybe useful or helpful for me? |
| Des: | You know you can pick up the text books and you can read them, but in my view and the experience that I have, it really is around planning it and knowing what you want to do from an organisational perspective. And not letting that leak until such times as your plans are solid and once your plans are solid to have a steady communications and involvement with the staff particularly senior, middle and first line management, if they're not involved they won't buy into it, and then the communications will suffice. |

| Níamh: | So you don't think an employee should be involved in the planning stage? |
| Des: | In the strategic stage, absolutely not. However, so for example if you're going from a distributed model to a centralized model, you have to have the strategy for that in place first. And once you have the blueprint, certainly then you have to involve the employee, from the guy that's doing the day to day business, right through, because they know what's happening, they know what'll work and what won't work. |

| Níamh: | That's great Des, thanks for your time today. |
| Des: | Absolutely no problem. |

Focus Group

Purpose: *To find out what employees think about 'Change Management' in eircom group.*

Facilitator: **Níamh Kenny**

Session Site: **HR Shared Service Centre, Sligo**

Date: **Wednesday 15th September 2012**

Opening to Interview:

Níamh: Hi everyone, thanks a million for coming today and participating in this focus group session on change management in eircom. If we can get the session underway, I will ask a few questions and if you can give me your own opinion and how you feel about change within eircom.

Start of Interview Questions:

Níamh: So firstly, I'd like to ask if you think the organisation is going through small incremental changes or radical changes at the moment?

Employee 1:   I would say they are fairly radical changes.

Employee 2:   I would agree with that.

Employee 1:   No it certainly feels there are a lot of things happening, the restructuring and that, even within our own office here in Sligo, we feel there is definitely changes going on.

Níamh:	So would it be radical changes compared to what you've seen over the past number of years?
Employee 2:	I would definitely think it as radical because of the examinership process, that was a big big thing to happen within the company I think. The first in the country, telecoms going into examinership, so that was a big big change for everybody in the company.
Employee 3:	The last two years the changes have been radical.
Níamh:	And how do you feel about these types of changes? Do you embrace the changes? Are you happy about the changes, are you bit anxious? Are you anxious about your position in the company or the working you're doing?
Employee 1:	Personally, I'm not concerned about the future, were here so long that were still moving along and you only have to see the amount of incentivised exists the packages that are going on all the time and there's one on at the moment, so no, I wouldn't be concerned personally your just going along with it.
Employee 4:	And I'm not concerned either of my future either because the way I look at it is, were secure really, because when we reach pension age of 60 were guaranteed a pension from the company, whereas the new people coming in to the company are in a different scheme and they are people on fixed term contracts and indefinite duration contracts, they haven't the same pension benefits as us, so that's my opinion, that I feel comfortable.
Níamh:	In terms of the eircom recovery plan, when do you first recall having heard about it?
Employee 2:	Back two years ago I would have imagined. When it was first kind of rumoured that something needed to be done, that the balance sheet just wasn't right, that something needed to happen, so I'd say it was about 2 years ago, when the whispers started.
Níamh:	Ok, so in terms of the way it was communicated to you do you think it was communicated well to you, or did you feel left in the lurch?
Employee 2:	No I don't think it was actually, it actually went through the unions, I think the unions really took it over you know. We didn't have any say really.
Employee 3:	I don't think it was thoroughly thought out, the whole recovery plan. I think that they started doing a road show around the country, stopping off at different places, telling the employees what the proposals were

and I think they just learned as they went on, I think there was so much to be done, that when they started to roll it out they didn't have all the answers. It was more complicated than what they initially thought, I think they just thought cut pay and you'll have no consequences. But then it started throwing out different problems for the plan itself, for the recovery, so it was kind of, from that point of view, everyone was confused and nobody seemed to have the right answers, and so it went through that process until things were kind of sorted out and everybody kind of knew then what was happening and you had to accept it then what was happening.

Employee 4:   And I agree with that as well, they hadn't it thought out at all. It still isn't thought out properly I think, because there is still things there that they don't even know if it's, like every nine days you should have your day off, that's not the way it works at all because they never thought about the people on sick leave properly or the people on annual leave or people on TIL (Time in Lieu), you know they never thought it out, properly at all.

Employee 1:   Then the people before the graded staff, when the people on personal contracts, they were on it before us I think and they were given the option whether they wanted to go on it, and you were always wondering, would it work against those people who didn't, you know they didn't want to take the reduction, so we'll probably hear a little bit about it before we went on it.

Employee 3:   And I think a lot of people were aggrieved that it was a basic 10% cut for everybody, it didn't take into account well there's only people earning so much, it was tiered and I think more people would have been happier if we say the less you were earning the less you were contributing and the people that were earning loads of money, well they should have made a bigger sacrifice than the people on the lower pay brackets.

Níamh: So on that point, do you think that employees, opinions weren't valued, employees didn't have a say, really it the way it would work?

Employee 3:   I think it was it was such, it needed to be implemented so quickly, but there wasn't the timeframe there to take everything on board to discuss, it had to be done so quickly and that's why it had to be a quick solution.

Employee 4:   And the unions, it was all the unions, it wasn't the employees at all that got a say, because we were concerned there were so many thousand staff in the company and it was funny how the whole system came out,

the votes didn't tally at all and they say it was over, carried over by such a number, which didn't add up, the figures didn't add up at all.

Níamh: So, just in terms of the eircom recovery plan and other change initiatives that have happened in eircom over the years, do you feel employees have sway in decision making or any change that happens in the company?

Employee 3: Well I would think, since the current Chief Executive, I think a lot has happened since he took over, I think he really opened up the channels of communication. What employee would have access to a CFO or Chief Executive or whatever, and he made himself available by phone or by email so if people wanted to discuss things, they were given access, so from that point of view, there were a lot of changes I think, going back in time, it was more, you wouldn't be communicating with the top layers, it wouldn't have filtered down. It would have been all layers, whereas he kind of made himself available. I think that was a good thing in the company, people really felt that they were part of something, that they could pose a question or a challenge or whatever they wished.

Níamh: What do you think the company or management can do to make employees feel more satisfied in the workplace?

Employee 3: I think one thing, respect for everybody. I think respect for people is very important. I think everyone should be valued, that their contribution and I think it's very important that if people think they are being respected, I think they automatically feel good about themselves and their work and they will contribute if the work has to be done it will be done. But if you feel that there is no respect, I mean where does that leave you?

Employee 1: I think at times it's hard to change things, when you're working out there on the floor and that, and sometimes going to your own line manager it won't change things, it's really an uphill battle, and personally you just get on with it, I think it's hard to change things at times.

Níamh: And how would you describe the culture here in eircom?

Employee 1: Here in Sligo?

Níamh: In the company in general, or here in the office, either?

Employee 2: Here in the office, we all know each other very well, we would get on, you know. But outside that we wouldn't really have much dealings with anybody else you know, only by phone really.

Employee 1:	Me personally, I think, the people that I work with, more so, that yes we definitely get on fine, but that'd be the people that were working with, not necessarily the management.
Employee 3:	I think it's a good thing in an organisation, when you have a good mix of ages as well, because you have the good mix of experience and inexperience and one can work with the other, but I think down here in Sligo now were kind of all of the same age and we haven't the same kind of access to other people in the company that might think differently or were kind of limited here in what we can say about that one because were all….
Níamh:	Do you think people in the company feel uncertain about the future?, considering the examinership and all the changes going on.
Employee 3:	Well isn't it funny, when the company came out of examinership, I just said to myself for the first time ever, I think everybody is a bit more secure now, I think it was great for the company that some of the debt has been written off and I think it's like a new sheet really, it's not as burdened as it was, even though it has a lot of challenges and I think people, it was kind of a good feel factor that everything went well in the process and it did come out the other end and it was kind of favourable for the company and I think that *will stands for us as well* so it does.
Níamh:	Do you think that staffs in eircom are committed to the company? Do you think there is a high level of commitment there?
Employee 4:	Yes
Employee 2:	Yes
Employee 4:	Yes but say that people that have been treated badly they have no respect of the company you know sometimes you get the phone calls and they say, you know you can know by their tone that their not happy, most employees within the company would have. (Respect/commitment)
Níamh:	In your view what is important to make people ready for any change initiative in the organisation. How do you get people on board when you're making these changes, how do you get buy-in from the employees? And what's important to people?
Employee 3:	I think once everybody knows what's happening and why it's happening, that it's been communicated and we all know the economic situation in this country at the moment, and you know everyone is struggling, big companies, different types of companies are struggling

so everybody knows that well if you fall behind that somebody else there ready to move in and take over your customers so I think that everybody is aware of that and they know the cash has to come in, you have to do the work, I think people are committed.
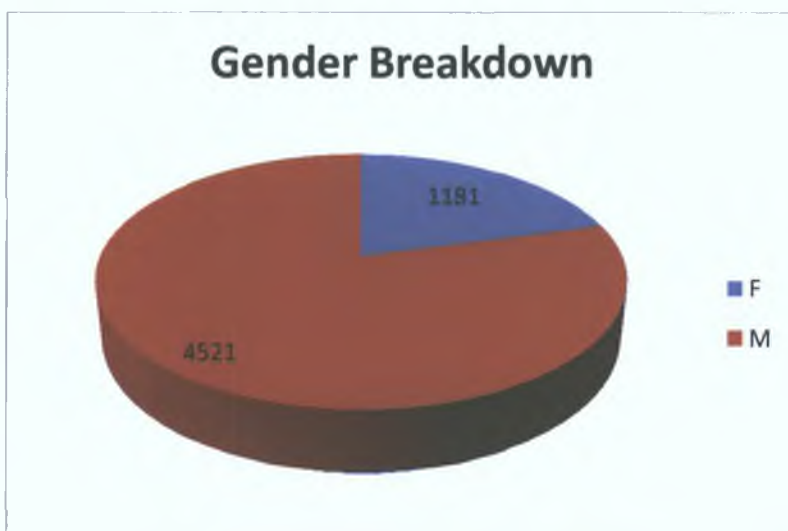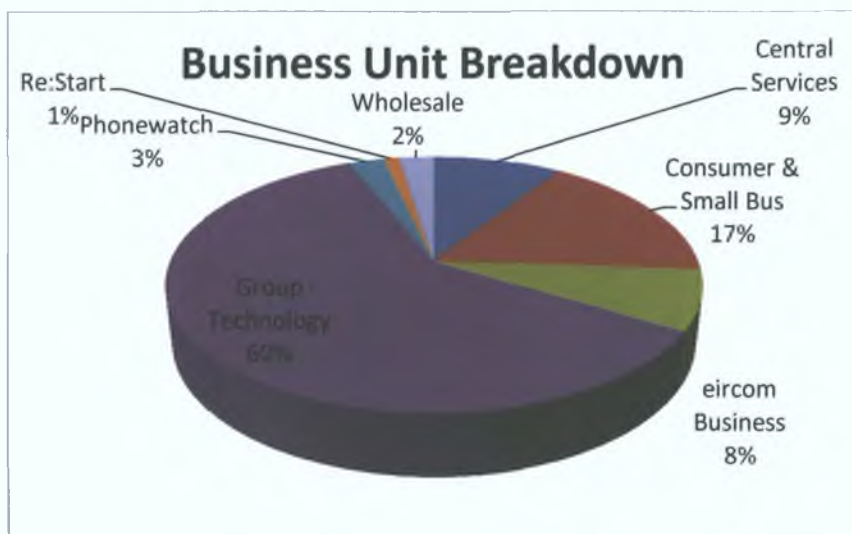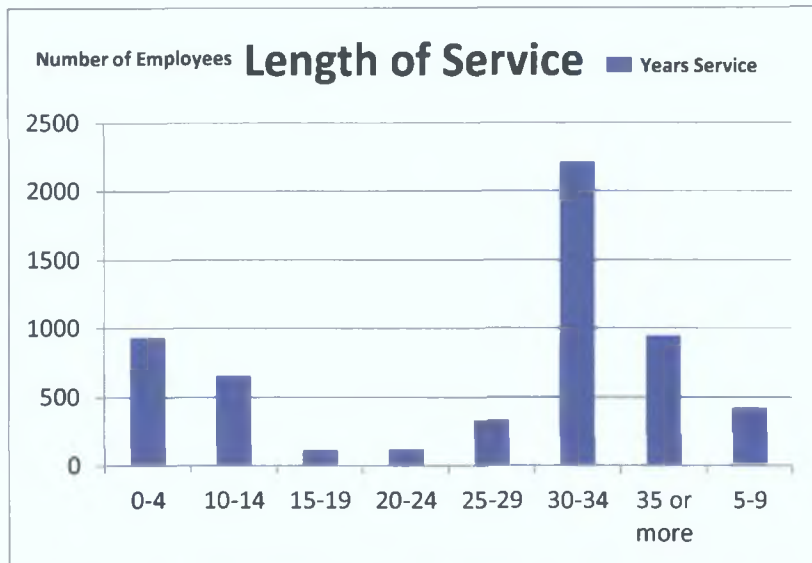
Níamh: And do you think employees are ready for change, that they embrace change or they resist change?
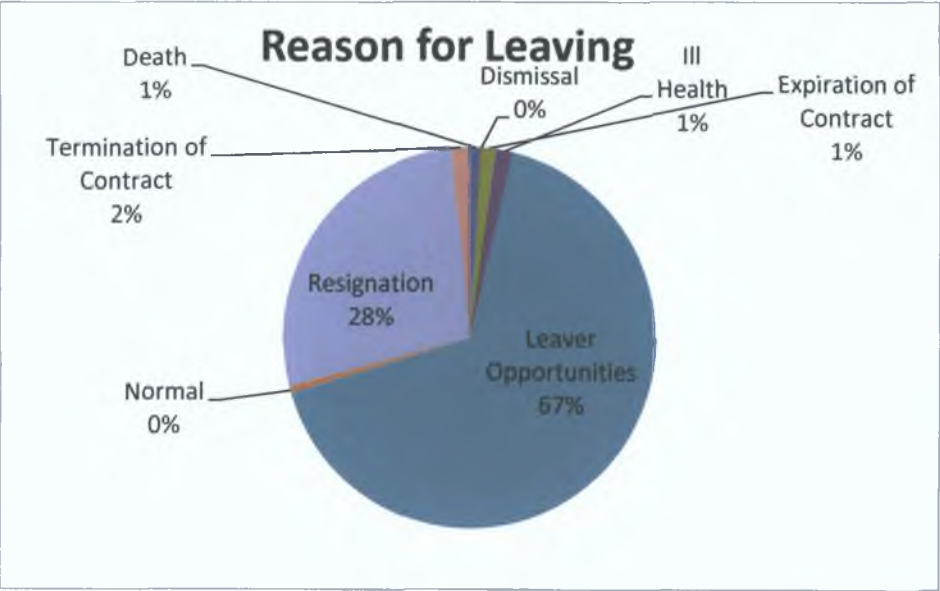
Employee 3:   Well I think in general people know that nothing stands still in this life and you either go with it or you don't and if you don't go with it, your lost really, you have to. Everything changes so it does.

Employee 4:   Yes, I'd agree with that.

Níamh: Do you want to add anything to that? Well that's great guys, thanks a million. That's great.

Length of Service — Number of Employees vs Years Service

Business Unit Breakdown

- Re:Start 1%
- Phonewatch 3%
- Wholesale 2%
- Central Services 9%
- Consumer & Small Bus 17%
- eircom Business 8%
- Group Technology 60%

Gender Breakdown

- F: 1191
- M: 4521

Reason for Leaving

- Death 1%
- Termination of Contract 2%
- Resignation 28%
- Normal 0%
- Dismissal 0%
- Ill Health 1%
- Expiration of Contract 1%
- Leaver Opportunities 67%

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES