The impact of participative communication on organisational cultural change: Two local government cases of change

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The Impact of Participative Communication on Organisational Cultural Change: Two Local Government Cases of Change

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Management

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2015
Abstract

Managing change is of critical importance in organisations. Communication during the change process has been the subject of considerable and highly contested academic and managerial debate. In this study, *The Impact of Participative Communication on Organisational Cultural Change: Two Local Government Cases of Change*, communication during the change process was closely examined to see how, if at all, participative processes impact upon the adoption of change. As a result of this research a ‘Ladder of Employee Participation in Change Management’ was developed, to better understand the nature of participative communication and provide clarity for change practitioners who develop change communication plans.

This study asked the question: ‘How does participative communication impact on change management receptiveness?’ It looked at the type and style of communication deployed during change, how it was disseminated, how it impacted on employees, and the overall effectiveness of the change management strategy. The study drew on Public Relations constructs of dialogical, two-way symmetrical communication, as well as participative decision-making processes, and analysed data obtained from two change management case studies in the local government sector. A mixed-methods approach was used for collecting data by means of interviews and a culture-assessment tool.

This research adds to existing knowledge by providing a clearer understanding of the nature of participative communication during the change management process. The ‘Ladder of Employee Participation in Change Management’ will be of particular interest to change practitioners, who will find it a valuable tool for developing communication plans that align with change processes and enable dissemination of unified messages across the entire organisation.
Acknowledgements

This project would not have been what it has become without the consent of the two case study organisations and all the participants involved. For your contributions I am extremely grateful.

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Chapter One
Introduction

Communication has been blamed for the failure of many change management programs (Elving, 2005; J P Kotter, 2007; Salem, 2008), yet it has also been praised for facilitating successful change. So how can managers use communication to increase the likelihood of success when an organisation is undergoing change? The central intention of this thesis is to increase understanding of how communication impacts and can be used to support change management receptiveness. This study is undertaken in the local government sector of Western Australia, a sector experiencing considerable pressure to change, and as such has the potential to provide relevant and helpful insights.

Central to this conundrum is the complexity of change management and communication, often diluted by generalised references and the inconsistent use of both terms. Change management ostensibly covers all organisational change processes, however, there is currently no valid change management framework which addresses the spectrum of change scenarios, management approaches and indicators of success. Moreover, change terminology is used inconsistently in the literature, so one particular change management process may not be relevant to all scenarios.

The term ‘communication’ is also used arbitrarily in relation to change management, where it is said practitioners and managers leading change processes ‘communicate and consult with employees’. However as this study indicates, the exact nature of the communication needs to be understood in order to determine how it impacts on successful change; and importantly, for successful results to be repeatable. To this end, this study is particularly interested in the idea
of ‘participative communication’, as participation in change processes has been linked to greater acceptance of changes by employees (Coch & French, 1948; Pardo-del-Val et al., 2012). In this study, participative communication is defined as communication processes which actively engage employees in two-way or dialogical interactions about change processes.

While previous studies (Frahm & Brown, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Nelissen & van Selm, 2008; Salem, 2008; Torppa & Smith, 2011) considered aspects of communicating change, the topic of ‘participative communication’ is still largely under-researched by academia and remains the domain of change management practitioners and ‘how to’ guides. This presents a challenge for managers implementing change and researchers who are attempting to increase the pool of knowledge on the subject.

In refining the focus of this study further, it considers participative communication approaches as they apply to change management. In terms of change management, this study had a broad approach to the type of change process being implemented, but anticipated that the change process would impact the culture of the organisation. This cultural impact is anticipated, as is the case with transformational change, were culture is targeted as part of the organisational change process. However impact on culture can also be an unintended consequence of change.

The literature review covered concepts of change management, participation, and communication to gain an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the current study. Central to the research was dialogical, two-way communication drawn from the Public
Relations field, and participative decision-making associated with the field of management (J. Grunig, 1992; Kent & Taylor, 2002). The literature review also included studies which addressed specific areas of change management communication and resistance to change.

Finally, the link between organisational culture and communication was examined (Salem, 2008) within the context of a learning organisation, a type of organisational culture capable of operating in and adapting to high levels of change, and where dialogue and participative processes are commonplace (Frahm & Brown, 2006; Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008).

The literature revealed a lack of clarity in the change management area, particularly where change and communication are concerned. This project investigated how organisational change is communicated, with a particular focus on participative communication, and drew on dialogical, two-way communication and participative decision-making constructs which have previously been linked to successful change and dynamic learning organisations. Thus far academic studies have reported inconsistent results in relation to participative communication and change adoption (Frahm & Brown, 2007; Pardo-del-Val et al., 2012).

1.1 Purpose of Study and Research Questions

This study posed the question: How does participative communication impact on change management receptiveness? Its purpose was to increase our understanding of how communication impacts on support for change during change management. The research questions were:

- How was change communicated during the change management process?
- How did communication impact on participants in the change management process?
- How did participants react to the change management process?
- How do participative communication practices relate to organisational culture?

The conceptual framework outlined in Figure 1 proposes that communication and, more specifically participative communication processes, be further studied to understand their impact on receptiveness to change. This conceptual framework evolved throughout this thesis and is revisited again in the Methodology Figure 8 and Discussion Figure 13 and Figure 16. Figure 1, below, suggests that communication is designated either 'participative' or 'general' communication and infers that general communication adopts less participative practices. The ideals of participative communication are drawn from the work on dialogical communication (Kent & Taylor, 2002), four models of public relations (J. Grunig, 1992) and participative management (Pardo-del-Val et al., 2012). The conceptual framework indicates that the change takes place in the constant presence of organisational culture.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.**
The following section outlines some of the key terms referenced in this study.

1.2 Definition of Terms

*Participative communication* encompasses theories of dialogic (Kent & Taylor, 2002) and two-way symmetrical communication (J. Grunig, 1992). These two-way relational models of communication describe a balanced and authentic exchange of communication. In this study, it is defined as communication processes which actively engage employees in two-way or dialogical interactions about change processes. In a practical, organisational sense it describes the communication between a manager and employee, where both take an active role in contributing to communication through understanding, discussing and solving issues (Frahm & Brown, 2003; Kent & Taylor, 2002).

*Change management* is a term used to describe a ‘shift in behaviour of the whole organisation to one degree or another’ (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992, p. 11). Burnes (2009) suggested organisational change could be enacted at individual, team, departmental or organisational level.

*Transformation* is a change management expression that describes the ‘step-by-step process of restructuring an existing organisation – removing what does not work, keeping that which does, and implementing new systems, structures, or cultural values where appropriate’ (Head, 1997, p. 5). It may also be linked to a planned process of organisation-wide strategic and cultural change (Burnes, 2009). In the context of this study, transformational change has been linked to a process of organisation-wide, cultural change.
Ansoff (1990) described *resistance to change* as ‘a phenomenon that affects the change process, delaying or slowing down its beginning, obstructing or hindering its implementation and increasing its cost’.

*Culture* is the ever-present orientation system that is typical of a nation, organisation or group (Strøbæk & Vogt, 2013) and within an organisation, is reflected as the values, beliefs and behaviours shared by employees (Hoogervorst, van der Flier, & Koopman, 2004).

*Learning organisation* is the term used to describe an organisation that operates with a high degree of dynamism. A learning organisation focuses on facilitating constant learning and adapting to ‘continually transform itself’ (Pedlar, Burgoyne, & Boydell, 1991). For the purpose of this study, learning organisations are characterised as having a supportive learning environment, concrete learning processes, and leadership that reinforces learning (Garvin, et al., 2008).

### 1.3 Methods and Case Study Selection

This study used a mixed-methods, two case-study approach. This approach was ideal as it allowed the research questions to be answered and the comparative analysis enabled deeper insights to be drawn. The study was retrospective in nature, with participants being interviewed following the implementation of the change process. As such the participants were able to reflect fully on the change approach, and their reactions to the change process. The combination of the both qualitative interviews and a quantitative culture diagnostic tool revealed valuable deep level insights of the lived experience of change to be underpinned with an empirical diagnosis of organisational culture, adding valuable dimension to the data.
Specifically, a culture assessment (OCAI) was completed by participants from both organisations to identify the current and preferred cultures. Additionally, iterative, semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers, responsible for leading the change process, and employees. The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis.

The case studies were both drawn from the local government sector in Western Australia, allowing meaningful comparisons to be made. Within each case participants volunteered their involvement in both the culture survey and the interviews. In Western Australia, local government reform has been on the political agenda for a decade, so these cases presented an ideal opportunity to conduct a purposeful study. As part of its strategic goals this sector is on the brink of transformative change, and a culture change is the likely outcome regardless of the intent of the change process.

1.3.1 Local Government

Local government is the third tier of government within Australia’s federated structure (federal/state/local), and while not acknowledged in the Australian constitution, plays an important role in providing for the democratic management of local municipalities. Local government has traditionally looked after the infrastructure requirements of a specific geographical area, such as roads, waste, and more recently, leisure and community centres, parks and libraries; all primarily funded by rate payments from local property owners (Kelly, Dollery, & Grant, 2009; Western Australian Local Government Association, 2012)

In the face of increasing expectations and responsibilities, particularly in health and human services, local government costs can no longer be met by traditional funding sources. In
recent years, local government reform has seen amalgamations between bordering municipalities, most notably in Queensland and Tasmania, and it has been on the agenda in Western Australia for much of the past decade (Prasser, 2007). Some rural shires in WA have amalgamated in an effort to achieve greater efficiencies, and as a result, local government entities have reduced from 142 in 1997 (Dollery, Byrnes, & Crase, 2008) to 139 at the present time (Western Australian Local Government Association, 2014). Perth’s metropolitan area comprises 30 local councils; however in 2013 the WA State Government announced plans to consolidate these to 14 local councils ("Perth local councils fund forced mergers," 2014).

Most studies on local government reform focused on size and scale efficiencies of operations (Dollery et al., 2008; Marshall, 1998). While some efficiency can be achieved through human resources reform, this was not the central focus of reform initiatives. Human resource management practices have changed significantly in public sector organisations over the last 10 to 15 years, yet local government has not achieved the same level of change (Aulich, 1996). In Western Australia, particularly in Perth, this is now firmly on the political agenda and the local government organisations in these case studies provided a unique and appropriate opportunity for investigating change communication. Moreover, the findings could have immediate practical application for those leading change in the local government sector.

The public sector, a term inclusive of Commonwealth, State /Territory and local governments sectors, is not generally driven by the commercial forces of private enterprise, however it is not immune to resource efficiency and service delivery pressures. Crawford and Helm (2009) reviewed changes in public sector management practices, starting with traditional,
bureaucratic, top-down styles of management to ‘new public management’ – a more strategic approach that promotes greater collaboration with end users. While local government cannot be directly compared to the cases in Crawford and Helm’s (2009) study, the findings are indicative of trends for public funded organisations to adopt new management approaches. This thesis and study is most concerned with ‘how’ change is communicated, and to a lesser extent the type and driver of the change process. This project is not studying the adoption of ‘new public management’ by the local government. The catalyst of the change is not the focus of this research project. What ‘new public management’ signifies is the increased likelihood of change in the sector, and the relevance this study has in being able to support change leaders.

Interestingly, Crawford and Helm’s 2009 study also highlighted the value of project or program management to improve public sector outcomes. This approach aligns with that driving the strategic change experienced in Case Study Two. Again, the main focus of this study is ‘how’ change is communicated, and the impact of that communication in gaining support for adoption of change, rather than a focus on the types or driver of the change process.

**1.4 Thesis Overview**

Chapter 1 provides background and a context for the project. Chapter 2 examines the literature review in relation to change management, participation, communication, communicating change, resistance to change, and workplace culture. The case for further study of communication related to organisational change is argued.
Chapter 3 describes the methodology for this project. It outlines the selection of paradigm, methodology and methods; before detailing the methods used in this mixed method, two-case-study project and presenting an analysis of the data. Finally this section defends the rigour and quality of methodology used in the project.

Two cases of change were examined – both had occurred in the previous two years – so interviews were of a retrospective nature. Each organisation invited their staff to complete an OCAI culture assessment; and a number of managers and employees volunteered to participate in semi-structured interviews.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the results from each case study. The first case study involved an amalgamation between two organisations, while the second implemented strategic and cultural change within the organisation. Both chapters contain three sections. Chapter 4 focuses on the background of each case, including information about the organisation and the change scenario in order to provide a context for the remainder of the chapter. Chapter 5 starts with the culture assessment results from the OCAI survey, while the final section outlines the predominant themes in relation to how change is communicated, participatory practices, the influence of leadership, consequences of change, management intent and employee awareness. This section also includes passages of text from the transcriptions to give a voice to the interview participants.

Chapter 6 is a discussion chapter and compares the results of the findings before proposing a typology for communicating change in organisations.
Chapter 7 concludes the thesis with a description of the key findings and the value of the Employee Ladder of Participation in Change Management as a significant contribution to the research, before acknowledging the limitations of the study and making recommendations for future research.
2.1 Introduction

This Literature Review aims to solidify understanding of the change management communication area as it relates to the research questions posited: *How does participative communication impact on change management receptiveness?*

This study’s purpose was to increase understanding of how communication impacts on support for change during change management through considering the following research questions:

- How was change communicated during the change management process?
- How did communication impact on participants in the change management process?
- How did participants react to the change management process?
- How do participative communication practices relate to organisational culture?

Change is an integral part of modern workplaces however the understanding of change management processes, and how communication relates to effecting change is unclear. By (2005) argued that the lack of a valid change management framework hampers the efforts of academics and practitioners to better manage organisational change. He encouraged empirical study in this area, in order to develop a framework against which the type of change, the
approach used and indicators of success can be measured. He also recommended that change management studies include ‘identification of critical success factors’ (By, 2005, p. 378). Since communication has often been blamed for the failure of change programs, it could be logically argued that communication is a critical success factor in change interventions. But what exactly constitutes effective change management communication?

This literature review examined change management in relation to participatory communication as a means of activating change in the workplace. Employee participation has been widely acknowledged to increase employee commitment and decrease resistance to change. An initial review of the literature revealed the key themes in change management: participation, communication, communicating change, resistance to change and workplace culture, all of which were explored further to provide a background for this study. The assertion that participative communication improves receptiveness to change is considered in the final section of this literature review, as well as its resonance with learning organisation principles.

As both case studies for this project were in local government, pertinent details have been provided in the introductory chapter (Chapter 1), and the literature review takes into account relevant information on public sector management related to change management and communication. A summary of the research included in this review is provided in Table 4. The understanding gained through reviewing the literature enabled the conceptual framework for the study to be further developed in the introduction of the Methodology (Chapter 3).
2.2 Change Management

Change management is defined by Kanter et al. (1992, p. 11) as ‘the shift in behaviour of the whole organisation, to one degree or another’. There are many reasons why organisations need to change. External pressures often impact (or threaten to impact) and change is required for the organisation to adapt or transform and remain viable. In essence there are two different world views on how change is approached. The first suggests change is part of normal business life and organisations need to continuously adapt to remain relevant. This view aligns with learning-organisation philosophy which is addressed at the end of the literature review. The second suggests change is managed as a project, to be undertaken when an organisation needs to reposition or react to a situation (often a crisis) which threatens to impact on the organisation’s prosperity (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002).

By’s (2005) comprehensive critique of change management argued that change management lacked a credible framework. He observed a variety of change management practices, often at odds with one another. Academics have categorised change in several ways in an attempt to better understand and deal with it. These include: complexity, scope, pace, scale and whether change is episodic or continuous (By, 2005; Pardo-del-Val & Martinez-Fuentes, 2003; Salem, 2008; Weick & Quinn, 1999). The following section provides background on how organisational change has been categorised and how change management approaches aligned with different types of organisational change. This is followed by an outline of Burnes’ (2009) ‘Framework for Change’, against which each of the case studies in this project has been described. Burnes’ Framework for Change identifies the characteristics of different types of change scenarios and aligns them with common management approaches, not as a prescriptive tactic but as a best-fit approach, providing choice for change managers. However,
the framework still lacks an assessment component to determine the effectiveness of the project (Burnes, 2009).

Salem (2008) categorised change according to complexity using the terms first order and second order change. First order change was best described as simple changes which may be part of an ongoing improvement process, such as making changes in a particular department to improve efficiencies. Pardo-del-Val and Martinez-Fuentes (2003) categorised this under the scope of change which regarded first order changes as evolutionary. Evolutionary changes describe smaller changes (e.g. departmental) aimed at improving results in one area without making major organisational changes. First order, evolutionary change has also been described as continuous, incremental change (Pardo-del-Val & Martinez-Fuentes, 2003).

Similarly, Weick and Quinn (1999) asserted that continuous change was characteristic of organisations described as evolving and self-organising. They described change in such organisations as a pattern of endless modification, which aligns closely with the first-order world view of change, where it is part of everyday life and organisations need to constantly adapt. This type of change was typically implemented at small-group team level (Pardo-del-Val & Martinez-Fuentes, 2003), although Weick and Quinn (1999) recommended adoption as a whole-of-organisation approach to change. By (2005) also espoused continuous change processes, whereby employees and managers constantly adapt, as the ideal approach.

Second-order change was described as more significant, aimed at re-defining an organisation’s functions and goals (Salem, 2008), and was often described as transformative, strategic, or revolutionary (Pardo-del-Val & Martinez-Fuentes, 2003). Such changes can be
likened to significant organisational re-visioning and restructuring that is intended to meaningfully alter the way the organisation works (Pardo-del-Val & Martinez-Fuentes, 2003).

Weick and Quinn (1999) classified second-order change as *episodic* or *continuous*. Their position suggested episodic change was akin to larger episodes of planned change, followed by relative quiet, before the onset of another change intervention. This suggests the entire organisation is impacted by a planned program of change intended to re-define the business as a whole. In a sense Weick and Quinn’s reference to episodic change is aligned with the second-world view, where change is undertaken as a project to help the organisation reposition itself (1999).

(Senior, 2002) detailed further categories of organisational change, and provided a useful construct for describing types of change and change processes experienced by organisations. These categories considered the pace of change (*rate of occurrence of change*), the driver (*catalyst for the change*), and whether the change affected the whole organisation or only part thereof (department) (*scale of the change*) (By, 2005).

In terms of *rate of occurrence*, there are several ways in which academics described the occurrence of change. Fast or slow-paced change was one option, while continuous or episodic change was another. Change can be experienced as a constant reframing of the environment, with small incremental alterations to address changes in the environment (By, 2005; Weick & Quinn, 1999). This is aligned to first-order change. At the other end of the spectrum is discontinuous or episodic change, which suggests change is addressed through planned episodes or interventions followed by periods of relative stability (By, 2005; Weick
Kurt Lewin was a significant psychology and management theorist who developed much of his work around the time of the second world war. His leadership and change management theories are considered seminal works. Lewin’s change management work focused on resolving social conflict and understanding how group behaviour could be changed. Four theories underpin the ideals of organisational development or planned change, these include: field theory, action research, group dynamics and three step change. Field Theory (also known as force field analysis) suggested change was complex however by understanding the individual and group forces supporting or resisting change, change process could be better navigated. Lewin asserted that identification of these opposing forces enabled organisations to plan what forces to strengthen or diminish to bring about change (Linstead et al., 2009). Lewin’s action research theory, encouraged a better analysis of the problem before deciding on the changes and acknowledged the necessity that is individual recognition of a need to change was required to bring about group change. Group dynamics advises that behaviour change needs to be focussed at a group level and benefits form the desire to conform, but also acknowledged that members of the group needed to consider changing their own behaviour (action research) (Burnes, 2004). Perhaps Lewin’s most widely acknowledged approach to organisational development or planned change is his three –step model. In his model change is described as ‘unfreezing, moving and refreezing’. This three-step process is considered central to many change management programs, and proposes changing individual and organisational behaviour by ‘unfreezing’ them from operating in their comfort zone; adopting
the changes required, and then ‘refreezing’ the organisation along with the new operational processes (Torppa & Smith, 2011).

The literature on change asserts that planned change or an organisational development approach is usually associated with stable work environments (By, 2005). However, planned approach to change does have limitations and many regarded Lewin’s work as too simplistic and reliant on upper management to drive them. Additionally, others asserted a prescriptive process did not serve all situations (Torppa & Smith, 2011) and planned change did not always translate effectively into whole-of-organisation change (Burnes, 2009). Confusion about change management terms does exist as the term ‘planned change’ has also been used to describe ‘strategic change’ suggestive of large-scale, organisational change; while organisational development change is traditionally focused on changing small-group behaviours.

Senior’s (2002) second category, considers the driver behind the change process or catalyst for change. Management is usually the driver of a planned process, which favours Lewin’s three-step approach in a top-down process (Torppa & Smith, 2011). In episodic change, managers have a sensemaking\(^1\) role (Weick & Quinn, 1999), while employees often drive emergent change (a bottom-up process) following recognition of how processes can be improved (Burnes, 2009). Recognising that change is required and the ‘tipping point’ or catalyst for change became known as a ‘bifurcation point’. This ‘epiphany’ or ‘aha’ moment is essential for transformational change, as it is at the bifurcation point that organisations consider alternatives to the way they’ve traditionally operated and behaved (Salem, 2008).

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\(^1\) Sensemaking is an idea drawn from social and organisational psychology principally by Karl Weick. It is a process where people take complex information, processing it so it is more easily understood and can be communicated explicitly to become a catalyst for action (Ancona, 2012)
A final classification of change is *scale of change*. Change can be a department-wide change or an organisation-wide event (By, 2005). Transformational change is often associated with whole-of-organisation change, while continuous improvement is usually undertaken as a way of adapting processes in a single department (Burnes, 2009). Since each individual set of circumstances has different characteristics, the need for a deeper understanding of organisations’ change requirements is essential to ensure the most effective approach.

Different types of change require different approaches. Burnes (2009) attempted to encapsulate the predominant organisational-change approaches into the framework depicted in Figure 2. This framework indicates that organisations who fit the criteria in the left-hand categories (Q1 and Q4) generally need to change their culture (attitudes and behaviours); and those who fit the criteria in the right-hand categories (Q2 and Q3) generally need to change their structure.

![Figure 2. A Framework for Change.](Burnes, 2009, p. 410).
The target of the change process may be whole-of-organisation (top half of the framework) or smaller scale, i.e. departmental, teams or individuals (bottom half of the framework). Small-scale change generally occurs in stable environments, whereas larger scale change is often a reaction to more turbulent (possibly an external) stimuli. Tsoukas and Chia (2002) argued that larger-scale change is a result of organisations’ inability to adapt to a more continuous style of change.

According to Burnes (2009), change in an organisation’s culture, attitudes and behaviour are more likely achieved through a slower, sustained, participative approach. A ‘whole-of-organisation culture transformation’ is an example of a Quadrant 1 (Q1) change. In contrast, changes to the structure (Quadrant 2) are generally achieved with a directive approach and at a faster pace. Quadrant 1 (Q1) represents continual, transformative or emergent change, involving constant realignment with the operating/external environment. Burnes (2009) recommended an emergent (bottom-up) approach to culture change, inclusive of employee collaboration, and warned that a directive, top-down approach was unlikely to work. Both Burnes and By (2011) highlighted the ethical dilemma of those leading of emergent change, as it was reliant upon the ethical discretion of managers (Burnes & By, 2011).

A sense of urgency caused by a crisis or turbulent environment, is regarded as an important catalyst for change (J P Kotter, 2007). Salem (2008) suggested cultural transformation processes (Q1) benefitted from turbulence, such as a change in leadership or high staff turnover, as this type of change needs a clear bifurcation point or big enough catalyst to trigger and sustain the change process. In Quadrant 2 (Q2) a turbulent environment which results in structural change may also achieve some level of cultural change, albeit by chance rather than design.
In Quadrant 2 (Q2) change activity is indicated at a whole-of-organisation level. Changes to structure and processes may result from a reaction to a crisis, such as the loss of a major contract, and would necessitate a rapid and decisive change to ensure the organisation remained profitable and sustainable. Burnes (2009) suggested this type of change is best delivered as a management directive. It was also recognised that such change usually precipitated a shift in the distribution of power within the organisation, causing the change to become political.

Mergers and acquisitions refer to the amalgamation of two organisations. This type of change has been described as akin to a ‘cultural crisis’, and because organisational norms change, can be experienced as both ‘threatening’ and a ‘crisis’ by employees (Strøbæk & Vogt, 2013). This aligns with a Quadrant 2 (Q2) change because it affects the whole organisation and focuses on changes to structures and procedures. Larsson and Finkelstein (1999) retrospectively examined several mergers. They reported that the most successful in terms of attaining synergies between the two amalgamating bodies were those with the greatest ‘combining’ potential, and those that had undertaken an integrated consultation process during the amalgamation process to gain employee support for the merger. The study identified ‘integration’ as a critical factor in achieving organisational synergy post merger (Larsson & Finkelstein, 1999).

Implementation of a new accounting software package is an example of a Quadrant 3 (Q3) change. Burnes (2009) suggested there were two possible approaches to this type of change process, in which the selection of the desired process was usually determined by the culture of the group or organisation. In a highly bureaucratic culture it is likely that this type of change
will be driven by management, using a directive, top-down style of communication. In contrast, Burnes (2009) recommended ‘Kaizen’, a Japanese approach to continuous improvement, which favours a consultative, collaborative, possibly bottom-up approach, where a team is brought together to determine what structural changes are necessary to improve performance (Burnes, 2009; Hellriegel & Slocum, 1980). An example of this could be self-managed work teams.

Quadrant 4 (Q4) suggests departments, teams or individuals are targeted for a change in attitude or behaviour. An example of this might be improving the customer service responsiveness of an IT department. Burnes (2009) recommended a planned, organisational-development approach that uses training and development to achieve attitudinal and behaviour change, was most appropriate.

Burnes and By (2011) claimed that collaboration, where managers and employees worked together to analyse operations, was at the heart of Lewin’s planned or organisational development approach to change. However, more recent adaptations of Lewin’s organisational development approach have become less participative and arguably less ethical (Burnes & By, 2011) as the term ‘organisational development’ has become more widely interpreted.

In concluding this section, it is evident that change is a constant fixture (Elrod II & Tippett, 2002), caused by external forces (technological, economic, political, socio-cultural) impacting on the local and global environment, which in turn impact on organisations (Linstead, Fulop, & Lilley, 2009). While academics challenge practitioners to accept a contemporary change
perspective that embraces continuous change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002), organisations continue
to address change with episodes of planned change-management activity (unfreezing, moving
and refreezing). Several authors alluded to a link between episodic change and the high failure
rates of change processes. Salem (2008) asserted change failed as much as two-thirds of the
time; Kotter (2007) reported a 70% failure rate for change management programs; and Elving
(2005) suggested more than half failed. Stroh and Jaatinen (2001) warned against ‘cosmetic’
change processes, because they were only capable of delivering short-term results. These
authors stated that such superficial change was unfulfilling for employees, as was supported
by Torppa and Smith (2011) who observed employees had become cynical about change
management programs and suffered from change fatigue after a series of unsatisfactory
change projects. This arises when one change project fails to gain traction and another is
needed to address its shortcomings. Poorly conceived change-management approaches
coupled with inadequate organisational change communication (Lewis, 2006; Nelissen & van
Selm, 2008) are frequently blamed for change management failures (By, 2005; Frahm &
Brown, 2003).

Elving (2005) proposed change communication that creates a sense of community within an
organisation will engender increased organisational commitment and a shift in culture. He
claimed that organisational change did not necessarily result in cultural change, but that
cultural change always resulted in organisational change (Elving, 2005). Elving further stated
that the extent to which change can be embedded in an organisation is often affected by the
strength and type of organisational culture. Salem (2008) indicated failure of planned change
processes can be attributed to a lack of commitment to changing the organisational culture.
This supports the belief that a participative approach (where managers and employees work
together to decide and implement change) has the potential to shift and increase employees’ commitment to the organisation. Research in this area has been hampered by the complexity and time involved in deeply embedding culture. This was acknowledged by Kotter (2007) who cautioned change agents against celebrating successful transition too early, and encouraged them to allow sufficient time to pass for changes to become entrenched in the organisation’s culture.

The complexity of change management is widely acknowledged, and in the absence of a validated organisational change framework, practitioners continue to grapple with defining and addressing change situations. Since communication is such a critical factor in bringing about successful change, it was a key focus of this study. Later sections of this literature review examine the interrelationship of participatory processes, communication, and culture in a changing environment.

2.3 Participation

While traditional management theory stems from a systematic approach favoured during the industrial revolution in the early 1900s, participative management is a more recent approach. Max Weber was considered the father of bureaucratic organisations, where workplace procedures and standardisation were central to efficient management (Samson & Daft, 2009). In contrast to this, more recent management theorists have promoted participative styles of management. These stem from the democratic ideals of the 1930s, when management scholars began to recognise the social aspect of the workplace and ‘free will’ of employees (Samson & Daft, 2009). From this era the seminal work of Coch and French (1948) reported the results of an action research study where factory workers were more likely to change their behaviour if they were active involved in planning how the change would occur. These ideas
were further developed in the 1980s, when a model for participative decision making was developed by Vroom and Jago (1988).

Today employee participation is regarded as an important tool in change management processes, as reduced resistance and increased employee commitment have been linked to successful change outcomes (Pardo-del-Val, Martinez-Fuentes, & Roig-Dobon, 2012). Scholars in this area add the caveat that while employee participation appears to bring benefits, there is little empirical evidence of increased efficiency and productivity. The next section discusses participative decision making and participative management drawing on a framework for citizen participation in the urban planning arena.

The difficulty of defining the benefits of employee participation is due mainly to the many and varied guises and definitions of ‘participation’ (Shetzer, 1993). Participatory management has been defined as ‘a style of management where managers share with the rest of the members of the organisation their influence in the decision-making process’ (Pardo-del-Val, et al., 2012, p. 1844). Hespe and Wall (1976, p. 413) defined participatory decision making as ‘the involvement or influence of one group of individuals in decision-making processes which are customarily the prerogative or responsibility of a different group… usually a group of organisational superiors’. In addition to reduced resistance to change and increased employee commitment, researchers contend that the benefits of participatory management practices include increased creativity and innovation, better decision making, improved learning capability and increased job satisfaction (Pardo-del-Val et al., 2012; Parnell & Crandall, 2001).
By way of an example, a quantitative study conducted in the food service industry found participative (rather than directive) techniques in the management tier useful in gaining support for the implementation of organisational strategies and improved financial outcomes (Ogbeide & Harrington, 2011). Importantly, organisations with greater participatory practices across all levels of staff outperformed those with less participative approaches. These results appear to support participative processes in implementing organisational improvement strategies, but because it was a quantitative study, it did not provide the required depth and detail to understand how participative processes can be used to elicit a positive response.

Leadership activity has a major influence on the success of participative management. Parnell and Crandall (2001) concluded that effective management was largely reliant on a manager’s inclination towards participative decision making. Where managers believed participation led to their own diminished power, or they viewed participation as a ploy rather than a longer term strategy or practice, they would be less likely to engage staff in shared decision making (Parnell & Crandall, 2001). These authors also identified organisational culture and a belief in the benefits of participatory management as important factors. Put simply, it is difficult for a manager to practice or implement participation in an unsupportive environment. Their study provided some insights into practice, and recommended that organisations embark on participative management processes to identify suitable managers and use them to drive the culture change, while educating others who are less convinced about participatory processes (Parnell & Crandall, 2001).
The Parnell and Crandall (2001) study described how leadership impacts on the implementation of participative processes. Leadership and the inner workings of the organisation contribute to an understanding of organisational culture. Butler and Fitzgerald (2001) examined the use of participative processes in the development of information systems in a large organisation, where the aim was change management since the intention was for the organisation to adopt new information system processes. Although unusual for quantitative methodologies, their study highlighted the complexity of participative approaches, having been impacted by the involvement of external stakeholders (unions). A significant learning from this study was how organisational culture impacts on participatory processes.

Pardo-del-Val et al. (2012) conducted a quantitative research study on the effect of participative approaches on change management. Their literature review suggested participation in change processes achieved greater commitment to the change process; and in turn greater support (less resistance) for the change. However, their study reported the opposite as a positive correlation was found between participative processes and resistance to change. A quantitative approach was used, whereby surveys were sent to managers in 1800 Spanish companies that met the research criteria, however the study provided little in the way of understanding the participation processes and relied on each individual manager’s interpretation of participatory management and change processes. Employees’ interpretation of the participation processes may have yielded different perspectives. In their summation, Pardo-del-Val et al (2012) indicated participation processes may heighten awareness of change in an organisation, consequently raising questions from employees and highlighting potential issues. This may be interpreted as resistance by some managers, when in fact it

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2 Managers may also have considered only one ‘participatory’ aspect. The communication of change in a larger program would entail multiple communication actions and many different types of communication. This scenario is explained in the Communicating Change section of this review.
signifies a deeper level of involvement in the participation process. Bryant (2006) would argue negativity in this context could be ‘voicing’, in an attempt to make the workplace better

Pardo-del-Val et al. (2012) indicated participation was a complex process comprised of varying levels of engagement. They contended that ‘doubtful’ participation was no substitute for ‘effective’ participation, and suggested employees would be cynical of a change process that turned out to be a mechanism for reducing resistance rather than a genuine attempt to implement change.

To this end, Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation was developed to encourage more ‘enlightened dialogue’ in urban planning processes (Arnstein, 1969). Each rung on the ladder indicated a heightened level of participation – starting with ‘manipulation’ on the first rung, up to ‘citizen control’ on the highest. For practitioners, a key aspect of participation in change management processes will be to determine how participatory interventions can best be incorporated in an effective and meaningful way. Arnstein’s ladder provides some insights into change management practices and can be used as the basis of a framework for participative processes.

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3 Voicing will be raised in the ‘Resistance to change section of this review.
Participative management is a complex area which has evolved significantly over the last fifty years. While there is anecdotal and some empirical evidence to suggest that participative techniques aid the adoption of new workplace strategies, there are a number of studies that indicate the opposite. Further examination of participatory approaches will provide the basis of valuable new research to better understand the spectrum and nature of participation. Importantly, this will provide change practitioners with guidelines on how best to incorporate participatory approaches to promote a positive attitude towards change.

### 2.4 Communication

A simple, linear definition of communication is the transfer of information from one person to another. It involves a source or sender, message, medium, and a target audience or receiver (Hoogervorst et al., 2004). Shannon-Weaver’s Model of Communication depicts the message
in the presence of ‘noise’ or distraction to indicate that the intended message is usually disrupted in some way. In reality communication is more complex and defined as ‘the process by which people interactively create, sustain and manage meaning’ (Dainton, 2011, p. 2). Berlo’s Model of Communication best depicts the complexity related to change management ("Communication Theory - All about theories for communication," 2014b). Daneci-Patrau (2011) suggested communication was a ‘two-way process – it is a mutual exchange of ideas, feelings and opinions’. The purpose of communication in the workplace is to influence the work of employees, create a better understanding, reduce misunderstandings and build trust between employees and management (Daneci-Patrau, 2011) and to change employees’ behaviour (Hoogervorst et al., 2004). Participative communication has been raised in several sources in relation to terms such as dialogical, consultative, two-way, symmetrical, feedback, input and constructive.

Dialogue is considered one of the most ethical forms of communication. The ideal of dialogical communication is drawn from several fields including psychology, philosophy and relational communication (Kent & Taylor, 2002).

![Shannon-Weaver’s Model of Communication - Simple Linear Communication](http://communicationtheory.org/shannon-and-weaver-model-of-communication/)

"Communication Theory - All about theories for communication," 2014a).
According to (Kent & Taylor, 2002) dialogue is a process which endeavours to value the other party rather than just recognising them as a means to an end. Daneci-Patrau (2011) suggested that managers collaborate with employees to achieve greater organisational efficiency, better understanding of their staff, improved enthusiasm, self-reliance, satisfaction, development of interpersonal and collegial relationships, and engagement in the change processes.

A framework for incorporating dialogical communication into public relations practise was proposed in a seminal paper by Kent and Taylor (2002). It offered suggestions on how dialogical communication might be practiced across organisations when communicating with external and internal audiences. In their study, dialogical communication was regarded as superior in reducing ambiguity, and capable of building relationships, because it is based on honesty, trust and positive regard. Kent and Taylor (2002) described participants as equals in dialogue, each striving to attain a shared understanding. They further proposed that a consensus reached through compromise is suggestive of an inequality in power and could therefore not be considered a genuinely dialogical process.

The dialogic concepts outlined in Kent and Taylor’s paper are still to be empirically tested. One difficulty of analysing dialogical communication is that it relies on integrity: a manager can claim to be engaged in dialogue without genuinely engaging in the process. Furthermore, the integrity associated with employing each of the rungs on Arnstein’s ladder can pose a challenge for researchers when selecting a rigorous approach for the study of dialogical communication, because judgement is required to determine whether the communication meets the criteria of dialogical communication.
Kent and Taylor’s (2002) theoretical framework was based around five tenets of genuine dialogue: commitment, mutuality, propinquity, empathy and risk. Commitment relates to the authenticity or integrity associated with the use of dialogue by an organisation. Mutuality acknowledges the link between the organisation and the public or stakeholders and recommends collaboration between internal and external stakeholders. Propinquity indicates a spontaneous exchange between the organisation and its stakeholders, while empathy refers to a willingness on the part of the organisation to put itself in the shoes of its stakeholder and viewing the issues that affect them from a different perspective. The final tenet, risk, signals an understanding of how dialogue can lead to unpredictable and unplanned outcomes. (Kent & Taylor, 2002, pp. 30-32) suggested these tenets be embedded as fundamental values in organisations by developing the interpersonal skills of employees, ensuring communication channels allow for feedback, and valuing dialogue within organisational processes. Their work built on the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) (J. Grunig, 1992; L. A. Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002) study, which identified characteristics of exceptional communications departments and outlined their impact on organisational effectiveness. Their study proposed four models of public relations – these are outlined below in Table 1. Four Models of Public Relations. Grunig (1992, p. 289) was of the opinion that two-way symmetrical communication was the most effective and ethical in delivering long-term outcomes. He described two-way communication as an exchange of information or dialogue; and symmetrical communication as a balanced exchange between two parties. Two-way symmetrical communication uses ‘research and dialogue to manage conflict, improve understanding, and build relationships with publics’ (J. Grunig, 1992, p. 39). While the four models of public relations have a broader organisational application, criticism of two-way

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4 ‘publics’ and ‘stakeholders’ are terms used in public relations to describe the various internal and external audiences targeted with communication.
Symmetrical communication includes the difficulty and appropriateness of constantly communicating in such a consultative manner. Grunig (1992, p. 19) suggested the use of all four models of public relations communication was the most practical approach. Of the four models, two propose two-way communication, lending weight to the theory that dialogue is a powerful form of communication, capable of building relationships and moving organisations towards their mission.

Table 1. *Four Models of Public Relations*  
(Harrison, 2011, p. 87)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Press Agentry/Publicity</th>
<th>Public Information</th>
<th>Two-way Asymmetrical</th>
<th>Two-way Symmetrical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Propaganda</td>
<td>Dissemination of information</td>
<td>Systematic persuasion</td>
<td>Mutual understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of communication</td>
<td>One-way; complete truth not essential</td>
<td>One-way; truth important</td>
<td>Two-way; imbalanced effects</td>
<td>Two way; balanced effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Little; usually press cuttings and other inputs</td>
<td>Little; readability, readership surveys</td>
<td>Formative; evaluation of attitudes</td>
<td>Evaluative; evaluation of understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where practised</td>
<td>Sports, theatre, product and service promotion and marketing</td>
<td>Government, non-profit organisations, large companies</td>
<td>Competitive business</td>
<td>Regulated business and flat structured companies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like Arnstein’s ladder, Grunig’s four models also represent various layers of participation, from manipulation to tokenism and genuine empowerment (Arnstein, 1969; L. A. Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). The receiver of communication in a two-way symmetrical example is equally empowered as the sender, and is consistent with Kent and Taylor’s ideal of genuine dialogue (Kent & Taylor, 2002). While Grunig’s four models of public relations emerged out of a major study, these models have not been extensively tested since the early 90s, particularly in relation to change management. Consequently, the area of dialogical or participative communication as it relates to change management has remained largely untested.
Both Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation and Grunig’s Four Models of Public Relations can be described by Social Exchange Theory (SET), which underpins the interactions between two participants (individual or organisation) and suggests when both parties engage there is an exchange of psychological or social resource (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This resource is often described as ‘power’ of one over the other. The equity or inequity of this exchange will determine the satisfaction of both parties and influence their ongoing relationship (Shetzer, 1993). In terms of Arnstein’s ladder, SET suggests the organisation relinquish some (or all) power to the citizen if the exchange (participation) occurs in partnership and results in the citizen being empowered by the exchange. In Grunig’s model, the receiver of two-way symmetrical communication is similarly empowered in the exchange. It therefore follows, that when managers engage favourably with employees in a participative process, employees recognise the transfer of power in the form of increased trust and in turn, become more supportive of the manager or exhibit increased commitment to the organisation. Conversely, if the exchange is unfavourable, it results in distrust and lowered commitment. Importantly, prior exchanges influence future exchanges and either build on the perception of the experience (think ‘social capital’) or diminish it (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

The purpose of this section was to ground the study in communication theory relevant to organisational change, starting with the most simple and progressing to more complex forms of communication.
Communication is rarely a one-off occurrence, so Social Exchange Theory was introduced as it underpins communication theory. SET acknowledges the constructive nature of communication which builds on prior experiences, so an appreciation of this fundamental criterion is essential in the context of organisational change. The communication models outlined above provided the basis for examining the communication in the case studies described in this thesis.

### 2.5 Communicating Change

Communication is considered integral if change management is to be supported by employees. Kotter’s (2007) popular book, *Leading Change*, describes communication as one of eight important factors necessary for successful transformation. Lewis (2006) also claimed communication was the main determinant of successful change management, while Gilsdorf (1998) suggested communication breakdowns were the cause of many mistakes in change
programs. While communication is frequently recognised as an important factor in change management programs, there is little empirical evidence or practical advice available to organisations who wish to implement enhanced change-management practices through improved communication (Frahm & Brown, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Nelissen & van Selm, 2008).

Communication is a complex area. An examination of the literature revealed two predominant schools of thought on change communication: Instrumental (instructive or programmatic) and participatory (constructivist). Frahm and Brown (2006) believed an instrumental approach is more closely aligned to monologic communication theory, best described as a linear model of communication (sender-message-receiver-feedback-interference). This is similar to the Shannon-Weaver Model of Linear Communication in the previous section (Figure 5). An instrumental approach communicates the required behaviour change in a ‘top-down’ manner from managers to employees (Frahm & Brown, 2006). Russ (2008) added that this type of communication was aimed at gaining compliance and a positive attitude towards the change. Kotter (2007) claimed that such a simplistic style of communication, delivered in a ‘one-off’ manner, was ineffective in changing behaviour; while (Invernizzi, Romenti, & Fumagalli, 2012) stated that information provision alone was inadequate in change management situations. There is some agreement amongst researchers that simple communication strategies are not sufficiently sophisticated to effect change, and a more collaborative approach is needed.

Elving (2005) proposed two purposes for change communication: the first is to inform employees about the change process and its potential impact on their roles and jobs. The second is to help create a community. Elving suggested change communication had the
potential to increase employee commitment and create a stronger sense of allegiance to the change process and the post-change period. His conceptual framework (Figure 6) illustrates the impact of both on the effectiveness of organisational change.

Figure 6. Elving's Conceptual Model of Communication during Organisational Change. (Elving, 2005).

As outlined in Section 2.3, it is likely that change processes include many communication actions and use multiple mediums to communicate. These may include both instrumental and participatory processes. A participatory or constructivist approach is widely recommended as an alternative way of communicating change, and has been linked to change management success in previous studies. This approach is genuinely participative when change managers and employees collaborate and talk as equals with the intent of understanding the problems facing the organisation (Frahm & Brown, 2007; Russ, 2008). Such an approach involves dialogic communication, whereby a solution evolves from discussion to understanding, and aligns with Grunig’s two-way symmetrical communication (J. Grunig, 1992). Frahm and Brown (2007) concluded that employee involvement increased receptiveness to change management programs, and recommended a focus on dialogic communication to facilitate
this. Importantly, Russ (2008) contended both communication approaches could exist within a change management process and were not mutually exclusive.

It is common for a variety of communication mediums or channels to be used during a change management process, including face-to-face, intranet, memos, newsletters, emails and workshops (Torppa & Smith, 2011). More broadly, communication can be categorised as written, verbal or electronic (Daneci-Patrau, 2011). Written communication is regarded as less susceptible to misinterpretation although it is not ‘two way’ and offers little opportunity for clarification between parties. Verbal communication can be either formal or informal. Formal verbal communication takes place at meetings and information sessions and may have a two-fold purpose of informing and obtaining the opinion of others. Informal communication between employees and managers are spontaneous conversations that happen in the workplace. As previously outlined in this review, Kent and Taylor viewed this ‘propinquity’ as a tenet of genuine dialogue (2002).

Torppa and Smith (2011, p. 65) used a formal communication plan, consisting of face-to-face communication, mediated formats, and a variety of media, to implement changes in an organisation. It is unclear if communication in this case study was monological or dialogical (or a mixture of both); however the results indicate that the communication plan assisted in achieving adoption of the change. These authors reported employees were more supportive of change when (a) they believed change was necessary (sometimes referred to as ‘felt-need’) (Burnes & By, 2011, p. 242); (b) when change processes were designed appropriately; (c) were able to be implemented; (d) was supported by leaders; and (e) when employees felt they would ultimately benefit in some way (Torppa & Smith, 2011, p. 71). On a more practical
note, change practitioners and authors, the Larkins, recommended communicating change in ‘chunks’ of information (1998), using appropriate channels for different types of messages (Larkin & Larkin, 2005).

The use of a communication plan supports Kotter’s (2007) assertion that employees need repeated and consistent communication about change. He recommended that organisational change be regularly communicated through formal and informal channels, and emphasised the importance of consistent communication, demonstrated through both words and actions, in effectively communicating the organisation’s direction or vision. Frahm and Brown (2007) supported this theory and suggested further that change needs to be communicated through as many formal channels as possible, including whole-of-staff meetings, weekly reports, intranet and newsletters.

Employees are willing to provide input into change management processes, particularly when they believe the information is valued by management (Lewis, 2006). In Lewis’ quantitative study, the input of employees was linked to success of change management programs (2006). The findings indicated that planned communication tools, such as newsletters and information sessions were less effective, and the author proposed they be replaced with opportunities for two-way communication (dialogue) to clarify, negotiate and achieve a shared understanding. The ideal of shared understanding can take time – Nelissen and van Selm’s (2008) quantitative study even found employees became more positive about change the longer they survived the change management process. Their study clearly illustrated that dialogue contributes to positive change in an environment where managers and employees are ‘co-producers’.
A retrospective study of data from three change management case studies allowed Salem (2008) to identify seven factors that hamper change communication efforts. These included: (a) insufficient information; (b) inability to identify with the organisational change; (c) distrust towards change managers; (d) lack of tension-releasing humour; (e) managers with poor interpersonal skills; (f) avoidance of the issues; and (g) a tendency to detach from the organisation. The first factor, *insufficient information*, hampered change when employees received inadequate information. This was also identified by Kotter (1996), who lamented the lack of effort to communicate the organisational vision compared with other organisational information. Insufficient information makes it difficult for employees to understand the need for change, and as workplaces are social settings, Salem (2008) suggested employees undertake sense-making activities to help understand the message. This is consistent with the organisational grapevine becoming a source of information (Frahm & Brown, 2006) and employees using gossip and a ‘constructivist approach’ to make sense of and build on limited pieces of information using a ‘join-the-dots’ approach (Frahm & Brown, 2006, p. 380; Tukiainen, 2001). The importance of employees receiving detailed information about change was reinforced by these studies, where the absence of communication led to employees filling in the gaps with assumptions. Simply put, when employees felt they didn’t know enough about the impending changes they were less likely to feel included and be supportive. Salem (2008) criticised the organisation for not engaging in dialogue to achieve transformational change.

The second factor was a disconnection from the organisation felt by employees. The identity of individuals is partly framed by their workplace, the team they work in, and the role they fulfil in an organisation. Organisational change can cause an employee to feel disconnected
when they are unable to visualise their continued fit within the organisation. Remedial strategies include involvement in strategic planning processes (Salem, 2008) and working collaboratively to achieve new workplace practices and procedures (Strøbæk & Vogt, 2013). Salem cautioned that failure to align employees with the organisation’s vision meant they could regress and adopt old and familiar ways (Salem, 2008).

The third factor was trust. The need for trust takes on greater significance during times of change when employees feel vulnerable. Trust builds goodwill, and when employees distrust change managers they react with ‘fear, scepticism, cynicism and wariness’ (Salem, 2008, p. 340). Salem’s studies reported increased trust between employees and managers where there was greater collaboration around change processes. Cynicism and politicking was evident in one of the three cases, where employees were uncertain about how managers would act. Interestingly, Salem observed that when change was attributable to an external force (e.g. changes in legislation), a greater distrust for the process was likely, which was difficult for managers to overcome (Salem, 2008).

Distrust can build when change communication is inconsistent, insufficient or absent, and particularly when explicit and implicit communication are inconsistent, and implicit communication unintentionally sends messages that conflict with those an organisation conveys explicitly. This contradiction causes confusion for employees trying to make sense of change. (Hoogervorst et al., 2004) also claimed consistent communication is more likely to lead to changes in employee behaviour.
The fourth factor was identified as a lack of tension-releasing humour and refers to tension which negatively affects the change process. Humour was recognised as a way of releasing tension and helping people to adjust in times of change. Humour is productive when it creates unity and releases tension; and destructive when it is sarcastic and cynical. Salem purported productive humour had a role in uniting people during workplace change.

The fifth factor that could adversely affect change was poor interpersonal skills. This is an ability in people to demonstrate empathy for others by drawing from personal experience, and in the context of organisational change, an ability to adapt communication to suit different target audiences. The ability to relate to others using informal communication was seen as an important way of disseminating and addressing change issues (Invernizzi et al., 2012), and supports Kent and Taylor’s (2002) five tenets of genuine dialogue. People with limited interpersonal skills find it more difficult to communicate, and it can therefore be more difficult for receivers to make sense of the information.

The sixth factor was unresolved conflict. While conflict was considered to be negative, particularly when aggressive; unresolved conflict was deemed worse, even to the point of being destructive when organisations avoided disagreements and conflict during change. Salem (2008) viewed conflicts as an opportunity to positively engage in the change process and help employees make sense of the differences between the old and the new.

The final communication factor which affected change adoption was an ‘inappropriate mix of loose and tight coupling’, which Salem (2008) labelled disassociation between the employee and the organisation (or other employees and/or leadership), suggesting employees aligned
with their ‘old’ behaviour because they hadn’t been encouraged to engage with the ‘new’. He described this as employees ‘sheltering’ in the old culture until they felt safe enough to re-emerge, as a way of avoiding the impact of change by those who did not genuinely support the change process.

All of Salem’s examples highlighted the importance of communication by way of focussing on communication shortcomings during failed change initiatives. Implicit in the many examples was the need for employees to be engaged in the change process, and even to be protagonists for change (Invernizzi et al., 2012; Salem, 2008). Moreover, the use of dialogical communication was a common factor in Salem’s examples. While his work was the result of a retrospective study of three data sets, it nevertheless provided an excellent synopsis on which to build this and future purposefully-designed studies of change management communication.

Kellet (1999) analysed dialogic communication theory related to contradictory arguments in a change management study comprised of conversations and group discussions. This qualitative study analysed a change process in a primary school. It considered dialectical oppositions or arguments as the cause of underlying tension and organisational dysfunction. His study provided a plausible example of how conversational dialogue can assist in developing shared meaning for shaping change (Kellett, 1999). However, since it examined only face-to-face communication, the study did not give a balanced view across the full range of communication initiatives used in change management scenarios.

Dialogic communication and consultative processes were used in Frahm and Brown’s (2007) case study of employee commitment to organisational change, aimed at analysing the
communication processes in an organisation that was metamorphosing into a *learning organisation*. The results of the study showed inadequate interpersonal skills in the new CEO in relating to the organisation’s employees, coupled with existing communication practices, rendered the goals unrealistic and ultimately unachievable. The study afforded important insights into the use of consultative and dialogical processes, and raised awareness of the importance of organisational readiness for change. It suggested organisations prepare by engaging an adequately skilled manager, encouraging employees to undertake open and dialogic communication, and establishing communication channels such as meetings, intranet and newsletters (Frahm & Brown, 2007).

Change management literature consistently acknowledges communication as an important component of successful change. However, participatory processes have received mixed reviews as some studies, many of them quantitative, were unable to verify the benefits of participatory communication during change and failed to provide a deep understanding of how participative approaches are implemented in practice. It is hoped that this much-needed understanding will be addressed with future purposefully-designed studies of change management communication based on rich detail about lived experiences rather than statistics. Such research will provide valuable insights and beneficial guidance for managers implementing change processes.

### 2.6 Resistance to Change

Much has been written about resistance to change in the change management literature, where it is described as ‘equivalent to standing still’. It has also been defined as ‘a phenomenon that affects the change process, delaying or slowing down its beginning, obstructing or hindering
its implementation, and increasing its costs (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1990). There are two resistance-to-change scenarios. The first is when employees or subordinates wish to continue with the status quo rather than change (Bryant, 2006), and the second is when employees slow down the change process, making it inefficient, costly and time consuming (Bryant, 2006; Pardo-del-Val & Martinez-Fuentes, 2003). In general terms, resistance to change is usually exhibited by passive or active behaviour. Active resistance has been described as voicing disapproval or concerns about change, resigning from the organisation voluntarily, or sabotaging the change process. Examples of passive resistance include evading responsibilities, rebelling and absenteeism (Larsson & Finkelstein, 1999). As a result of Bryant’s (2006) study, the active resistance of ‘voicing’ has been examined more closely later in this section.

Several sources of resistance were identified in a Spanish study (Pardo-del-Val & Martinez-Fuentes, 2003) which concluded the strongest amongst these were strongly-held values, different interests of employees and managers, blockages in communication, organisational silence and gaps in capabilities. This quantitative study surveyed only managers, and as such provided a limited perspective. In contrast, Bryant’s (2006) qualitative study interviewed employees, and provided a deeper perspective and multiple views on the change process. This study indicated that managers often misinterpret employees’ voiced concerns when they view this as resistance and are inclined to respond negatively. In her study, managers associated the ‘voicing’ of concern with negative behaviour, even when employees indicated it was well intentioned and came from a desire to improve the workplace (Bryant, 2006).
Resistance to change could be the result of unpreparedness on the part of change managers to sufficiently anticipate the valid concerns of those affected by changes (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). These authors indicated that the interpretation of resistance to change had evolved in practice, and claimed that the original translation of Lewin’s work viewed it as a systems problem, where organisations were insufficiently resourced or skilled to adopt the changes (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). This emphasis no longer reflects the modern understanding of this phenomenon, where resistance is suggestive of psychological defiance by employees. Indeed, some academics suggest resistance to change can be a reaction to change, simply because organisational change has a reputation for being negative, unhelpful and poorly planned (Pardo-del-Val & Martinez-Fuentes, 2003).

Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) recommended a number of approaches for addressing resistance to change. These included education, participation, facilitation, negotiation, manipulation and coercion. Much of the literature supports participative communication during change, crediting it with decreased resistance to and improved adoption of change. However, other studies purport the opposite. A Spanish study reported no real correlation between participation and resistance, and found participation increased resistance in situations of fast or radical change (Pardo-del-Val et al., 2012). These authors pointed out that resistance to change should not be considered negative, as resisters may ‘voice’ potential issues when participative techniques are used, that if heeded, could result in improved outcomes. This study used a quantitative survey to gain responses from managers. It should be noted that the narrow sample was acknowledged as a shortcoming of the study (Pardo-del-Val et al., 2012).
Managers have an important role in communicating change processes and encouraging positive staff behaviour. Bryant and Stensaker’s (2011) study highlighted the double-edged sword of middle management, who were expected to act as change agents while being personally impacted by the change. Parnell and Crandall’s (2001) review of the literature indicated managers often resisted change because it can reduce their power and/or change the way they manage employees. Klein (1984) found that managers did not feel targeted by employee change programs, and that they were focused on subordinate staff.

Change is a common occurrence in government and priorities shift accordingly. In a qualitative study of Australian public sector senior managers, responses to change were categorised as ‘active adaptation’, ‘passive mal-adaptation’ or ‘active mal-adaptation’. Each category was described in terms of behaviour that supported or opposed change. The study characterised active adaptation as participative communication and collaborative problem solving; particularly evident in managers with a strong sense of the organisation and its role in serving society. Passive mal-adaptation was attributed to managers who felt a loss of control in their roles and wanted to avoid making changes. Their response was to ‘just do their job’ and survive the change process until they could leave. Salem (2008) observed similar behaviour when employees sheltered until the change process had passed. Finally, active mal-adaptation was described as enforcing change through management authority, micro-managing, and controlling (Matthews, Ryan, & Williams, 2010).

Resistance to change has become a catch cry for organisations inclined to place it in the ‘too-hard’ basket. The term has become synonymous with negatively-perceived responses to change. Another, more positive approach to addressing resistance, ahead of change
implementation is the idea of change readiness. Change readiness is purported as an indicator of change adoption (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993). Recent work in the area has resulted in a quantitative tool which can be used in workplaces to assess change readiness ahead of a change implementation process. The purpose of assessing change readiness is that it allows gaps to be identified and possibly addressed ahead of change management processes (Holt, Harris, Armenakis, & Feild, 2007).

Researchers have advocated for further scrutiny of resistance to change, to determine whether it is genuine resistance or the result of poorly conceived processes, and whether it is psychological resistance or employees engaging and voicing their concerns. Given the variety of views on resistance to change, the challenge in this study was to delve further into stories of resistance in order to better understand their cause and nature, as these insights can potentially guide managers towards improved outcomes.

2.7 Workplace Culture

Culture is a complex phenomenon and has been defined as ‘a set of embedded communication practices that distinguishes one group from another’ (Salem, 2008, p. 334); ‘a social control system’ (O'Reilly, 1989, p. 12); an ever present ‘orientation system that is typical for a nation, organization or group’ (Strøbæk & Vogt, 2013); and as the values and beliefs shared by employees (Schein, 2010). These values, norms and beliefs guide behaviour within an organisation (Hoogervorst et al., 2004). Trompenaars and Hampden Turner (1997) suggested culture is communicated in many ways, including language, gestures, facial expressions, clothing, status, symbols and rituals. In an organisational sense, culture can be expressed as ‘work routines, management decisions, how members of an organisation communicate, how
criticism, problems and errors are dealt with, and how much is invested in selecting new team members and required competencies’ (Strøbæk & Vogt, 2013).

Organisational culture can impact on an organisation’s ability to change. Some organisations can adapt quickly and decisively to a changing environment, while for others, culture is an impediment to change. To achieve transformational or cultural change ‘old practices and customs need to be replaced with unwavering new communication behaviours’ (Salem, 2008), which need to be communicated by managers to employees as consistent words and behaviour (Hoogervorst et al., 2004).

As a result of their study on resistance to change, Pardo-del-Val and Martinez-Fuentes (2003) recommended change managers consider how the organisational culture fitted with the change plans prior to implementation. They claimed it assisted with aligning employee and management interests and provided an impetus for continued discussion.

An organisational culture diagnosis could aid the adoption of participatory decision-making processes. Parnell and Crandall (2001) suggested the decision to adopt participatory practices in an organisation is often influenced by the prevailing organisational culture. In simple terms, it is easier to implement a participatory style of management in a culture accepting of participatory processes. Their research identified four elements that influenced a manager’s use of participatory processes. These were outlined in Section 2.2 and include organisational culture, a belief that participative processes can improve organisational effectiveness, management commitment to the process, and the managers’ desire for control. The prevailing implication is the adoption of participatory practices is more likely when there is management
Clampitt (2010) suggested culture affects an organisation’s bottom line, how it analyses and solves problems, responds to change, employee motivation and customer satisfaction. Learning organisations epitomise continuous change and participative communication, and are described as organisations where ‘employees create, acquire, and transfer knowledge – helping their company adapt to the unpredictable faster than rivals can’ (Garvin, et al., 2008, p. 109). Pedlar et al. (1991) defined a learning organisation as one that ‘facilitates the learning of all its members and continually transforms itself’. They viewed the benefits of learning organisations as adaptability and a capacity to innovate in response to a changing environment.

In their conceptual paper, Stroh and Jaatinen (2001) asserted communication and relationship management were key factors in helping contemporary organisations change. They suggested participation was important to build transparency and trust, and unlock information from within organisations. Many of their ideas parallel Senge’s definition of a learning organisation:

Change is seen as a continuous process of learning and experimentation to adapt and align to the turbulent environment; small-scale changes over time can lead to larger changes in the organisations; managers should create a climate of risk taking and empower employees through participation to
manage the change process; managers should create a collective vision to
direct the change process; their key activities should be information
gathering, communication and learning (Stroh & Jaatinen, 2001, p. 158).

A recent study aimed at identifying the culture alignment of learning organisations compared
the results of two tests on 140 participants from two organisations (Fard, Rostamy, &
Taghiloo, 2009). One assessed culture using the Competing Values Framework; and the other
tested learning organisation development. The Competing Values Framework diagnoses the
dominant culture mix from one of four types: competitive, bureaucratic, participative and
learning cultures (see Table 2) (Fard et al., 2009). The research reported a positive correlation
between learning organisation development and organisations with participative and learning
cultures (Fard et al., 2009). The findings align with this study, which also reports a negative
relationship between learning organisation development and bureaucratic and competitive
organisational cultures, suggesting continual change processes may be less successful in
organisations where these cultures are dominant (Fard et al., 2009).

It is important to compare the Competing Values Framework used by Fard et al. with the
work of its authors, Quinn and Cameron (2006). The latter identified four types of culture as:
the Hierarchy, the Team, the Adhocracy and the Firm. In recent times, the most accepted
version of this cultural framework is that of Hellriegel and Slocum (2007), which identifies
the four types of culture as: Bureaucratic, Clan, Entrepreneurial and Market. The
Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), a tool used to assess organisations
against the Competing Values Framework, identifies the four types of culture as Hierarchy,
Clan, Adhocracy and Market. Table 2 indicates how these terms align.
Table 2. Aligning the Competing Values Framework – Culture.
Adapted from Fard et al., 2009; Hellriegel & Slocum, 2007; OCAI online, 2011; Quinn, 1988.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competing Values Framework – Culture Types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture labels according to OCAI online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhocracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Firm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7.1 Background on Culture Types according to OCAI

The following descriptions are drawn from OCAI online reports (OCAI Online, 2012) (Appendix 5), which rely heavily on Cameron and Quinn’s work (2006; Quinn, 1988):

![Figure 7. Four Cultures - Competing Values Framework.](OCAI online, 2011)

2.7.1.1 Clan culture

‘A very pleasant place to work, where people share a lot of personal information, much like an extended family. The leaders or heads of the organisation are seen as mentors and perhaps even parent figures. The organisation is held together by loyalty or tradition.
Commitment is high. The organisation emphasises the long-term benefit of human resources development and attaches great importance to cohesion and morale. Success is defined in terms of sensitivity to customers and concern for people. The organisation places a premium on teamwork, participation, and consensus.’

Table 3. OCAI Culture Types.
(OCAI Online, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Adhocracy</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Hierarchy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Facilitator, mentor, team builder</td>
<td>Innovator, entrepreneur, visionary</td>
<td>Hard driver, competitor, producer</td>
<td>Coordinator, monitor, organiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Drivers</td>
<td>Commitment, communication, development</td>
<td>Innovative outputs, transformation, agility</td>
<td>Market share, goal achievement, profitability</td>
<td>Efficiency, punctuality, consistency and uniformity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory for Effectiveness</td>
<td>Human development and participation produce effectiveness</td>
<td>Innovativeness, vision and new resources produce effectiveness</td>
<td>Aggressive competition and customer focus produce effectiveness</td>
<td>Control and efficiency with appropriate processes produce effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Strategies</td>
<td>Empowerment, team building, employee involvement, Human Resource development, open communication</td>
<td>Surprise and delight, creating new standards, anticipating needs, continuous improvement, finding creative solutions</td>
<td>Measuring customer preferences, improving productivity, creating external partnerships, enhancing competitiveness, involving customers and suppliers</td>
<td>Error detection, measurement, process control, systematic problem solving, quality tools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7.1.2 Adhocracy Culture

‘A dynamic, entrepreneurial and creative place to work. People stick out their necks and take risks. The leaders are considered innovators and risk takers. The glue that holds the organisation together is commitment to experimentation and innovation. The emphasis is on being on the leading edge. The organisation's long term emphasis is on growth and acquiring new resources. Success means gaining unique and new products or services. Being a product or service leader is important. The organisation encourages individual initiative and freedom’.
2.7.1.3 Market Culture

‘A results-oriented organisation whose major concern is getting the job done. People are competitive and goal-oriented. The leaders are hard drivers, producers, and competitors. They are tough and demanding. The glue that holds the organisation together is an emphasis on winning. Reputation and success are common concerns. The long-term focus is on competitive actions and achievement of measurable goals and targets. Success is defined in terms of market share and penetration. Competitive pricing and market leadership are important. The organisational style is hard-driving competitiveness’.

2.7.1.4 Hierarchy Culture

‘A very formalised and structured place to work. Procedures govern what people do. The leaders pride themselves on being good coordinators and organisers who are efficiency-minded. Maintaining a smooth-running organisation is most critical. Formal rules and policies hold the organisation together. The long-term concern is stability and performance with efficient, smooth operations. Success is defined in terms of dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low cost. The management of employees is concerned with secure employment and predictability’. (OCAI Online, 2012). The following table provides a summary of the research considered and studies reviewed.
Table 4. *List of Relevant Research.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher/s</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Brief results/findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Bryant &amp; Stensaker, 2011)</td>
<td>Qualitative – examination of the literature on the roles of middle management during change processes.</td>
<td>Used the theory of negotiated order and how it could be used to further understand the many roles middle managers play during organisational change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Burnes &amp; By, 2011)</td>
<td>Qualitative - review of leadership and change literature. Article</td>
<td>The article examined the role of leadership in organisational change and the place for ethics in organisational change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(By, 2005)</td>
<td>Qualitative – examination of change management literature.</td>
<td>The article developed analysed current change management practices and argued the case for developing a new change management framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Daneci-Patrau, 2011)</td>
<td>Qualitative – a review of literature on the function of communication in organisations</td>
<td>The article outlined the current communication functions, including the use of traditional and new communication mediums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dent &amp; Goldberg, 1999)</td>
<td>Qualitative – examination of literature on employee resistance to change</td>
<td>Argued that ‘resistance to change’ has become the much used ‘too hard basket’ for barriers that hinder change. Dent and Goldberg argue that the term has evolved and needs to be refocused with Change managers re-defining resistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Eirod II &amp; Tippett, 2002)</td>
<td>Qualitative - examination of literature on change theories as they relate to the human reaction to change.</td>
<td>Change approaches showed commonalities with Lewin’s 3-phase process and a period of ‘degradation’ at the commencement of the change process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Elving, 2005)</td>
<td>Qualitative - examination of literature on communication during organisational change.</td>
<td>Development of a model to guide communicating change that considered both communicating to inform and communicating to create a community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Garavan, 1997)</td>
<td>Qualitative - examination and critical review of literature on learning organisations.</td>
<td>Recognition of unanswered questions around learning organisation theory and a call for researchers to validate the concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Garvin, et al., 2008)</td>
<td>Article</td>
<td>This HBR article provides a quantitative assessment instrument for determining learning organisation status, which has been developed and tested on business executives attending Harvard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Guidroz et al., 2010)</td>
<td>Report / Article</td>
<td>This article describes a process for integrating organisational culture change and leadership development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hoogervorst et al., 2004)</td>
<td>Essay / Article</td>
<td>This article examines the notion of implicit communication in the workplace and suggests employees can become cynical when implicit communication is not consistent with explicit communication. The authors highlighted the importance of consistent communication in change management situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Kent &amp; Taylor, 2002)</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Theory of dialogical communication (an ethical form of communication) proposed for Public Relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Kitchen &amp; Daly, 2002)</td>
<td>Qualitative – examination of literature on change, change management and internal communications</td>
<td>Considers the contribution communication makes to successful change processes ahead of an empirical study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher/s</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Brief results/findings</td>
</tr>
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<td>------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Shetzer, 1993)</td>
<td>Qualitative – examination of literature on employee participation to develop a theoretical framework</td>
<td>This considered Social Information Processing theory and aimed to use it as a framework for discussing employee participation that considered the multiple perspectives of change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Stroh &amp; Jaatinen, 2001)</td>
<td>Qualitative – examination of management theory as it relates to change and communication.</td>
<td>Proposes an approach to communicating that strategically involves employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tsoukas &amp; Chia, 2002)</td>
<td>Essay / Article</td>
<td>The authors assert that continuous change is a normal part of organisational life and encourage academics and practitioners to consider change as continuous rather than episodic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Weick &amp; Quinn, 1999)</td>
<td>Essay / Article</td>
<td>The authors compared continuous and episodic change, highlighting the different characterisations of both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Bryant, 2006)</td>
<td>Qualitative – Interviews with employees who had been through a change process</td>
<td>This study considered an employee’s use of ‘voice’ in reaction to change and found that voicing may be confused with resistance in organisational change scenarios.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Butler &amp; Fitzgerald, 2001)</td>
<td>Qualitative – Interviews with employees on two project teams</td>
<td>This study aimed to understand the contribution participative processes can make to the conceptual stages of information systems. The findings of this project were affected by the underlying way of doing business (culture) as the organisation was large and institutional and internal processes were often influenced by union activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Frahm &amp; Brown, 2003)</td>
<td>(From a conference paper) Qualitative – case study of a single organisation Participant observation, focus groups, and document analysis.</td>
<td>The conference paper outlined the results of the study (below) and related it to Public Relations constructs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Frahm &amp; Brown, 2007)</td>
<td>(Same study as above) Qualitative – case study of a single organisation using surveys, focus groups, archival data and participant observation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Frahm &amp; Brown, 2006)</td>
<td>(Same study as above) Qualitative – longitudinal case study of a single organisation using surveys, focus groups, archival data and participant observation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Invernizzi et al., 2012)</td>
<td>Qualitative – case study at Ferrari motors. Interviews, document analysis and observation.</td>
<td>This case study considered the role of strategic communications during a change process at Ferrari. Using entrepreneurial organisational theory (EOT) as a framework it considered the four components of strategic communications (aligning, energising, visioning and constituting) and discovered that an integrated approach to these assisted in change in the case of this case study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Kellett, 1999)</td>
<td>Qualitative – case study - ethnographic notes from video taped conversations and dialogue sessions during a formally planned change process.</td>
<td>Found dialectic oppositions in conversation were useful in framing conversations about change and moving people forward in the change process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher/s</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Brief results/findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Matthews, Ryan, &amp; Williams, 2010)</td>
<td>Qualitative – semi structured interviews of managers in two public sector organisations that had experienced significant change.</td>
<td>Statements were categorised into adaptive and maladaptive responses to change with the study suggesting some managers were not appropriate choices of change managers and a greater effort to address maladaptive responses to change is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Salem, 2008)</td>
<td>Qualitative – This study considered the results of three 'merger &amp; acquisition' case studies.</td>
<td>The author described seven communication behaviours that commonly lead to failure of change management processes. These included: Insufficient communication, local identification, global distrust, lack of productive humour, poor interpersonal and communication skills, conflict avoidance and an inappropriate mix of lose and tight coupling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Strøbæk &amp; Vogt, 2013)</td>
<td>Qualitative – Focus groups held with employees of three counties which were amalgamated into one.</td>
<td>The study used the individuals' responses to gain an understanding of the emotional/social impact of change processes and related these to the achievement of cultural synergies post merger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tukiainen, 2001)</td>
<td>Qualitative – retrospective examination of responses to two questions from two organisational questionnaires administered five years apart (1988 &amp; 1993)</td>
<td>Development of an ‘agenda’ model of communication as a means of analysing ‘culture’ of the communication system and communication climate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quantitative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher/s</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Brief results/findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Fard et al., 2009)</td>
<td>Quantitative – senior employees from two different organisations completed two established surveys, one that assessed learning organisation status and one that assessed cultural framework of an organisation.</td>
<td>Learning organisations are most likely to have a culture described as a learning culture or a participative culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Larsson &amp; Finkelstein, 1999)</td>
<td>Quantitative – cases surveys were coded against 500 merger and acquisition case studies.</td>
<td>The study considered the success of the mergers, the ‘combining effect’ of the two organisations and the amount of integration. The study found integration is an important enhancer of synergy post merger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Lewis, 2006)</td>
<td>Quantitative – self report (web based) questionnaire across several organisations</td>
<td>The results suggested employees preferred to be engaged in a dialogic process of change, rather than be subjected to a ‘campaign style’ communication of change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nelissen &amp; van Selm, 2008)</td>
<td>Quantitative – surveys of employees at the time of the change process and at a later date to reflect on the process.</td>
<td>Employees became more positive the longer they survived the change process. Employees who were satisfied with the way the organisation communicated were more positive about the change process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ogbeide &amp; Harrington, 2011)</td>
<td>Quantitative – surveys of organisations in the food service sector.</td>
<td>Participative processes gained support for change adoption of new business strategies and financial outcomes, particularly amongst management and frontline staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pardo-del-Val et al., 2012)</td>
<td>Quantitative – surveys sent to managers in 1800 Spanish companies gaining 86 valid responses from managers and middle managers who had been through a recent change process.</td>
<td>This study considers the data from the 2003 study above. It reported no significant correlation between participation and resistance. However when the characteristics of change were analysed more closely the following findings were determined: (a) Participative practices during fast change increase resistance; (b) Participation practices during radical change increases resistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher/s</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Brief results/findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Parnell &amp; Crandall, 2001)</td>
<td>Quantitative – a refinement of an instrument that assesses the likelihood of a manager’s participative decision making.</td>
<td>The study refined and tested the propensity for participative decision making (PPDM) scale previously developed by Parnell and Bell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Torppa &amp; Smith, 2011)</td>
<td>Quantitative – a survey in a single organisation following an announcement of change.</td>
<td>Employees were more receptive and engaged with organisational change when they felt it was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(L. A. Grunig, et al., 2002)</td>
<td>Qualitative &amp; Quantitative – Study conducted in 300 organisations across USA, Canada and UK. Mail surveys sent to multiple participants from organisations. Multiple long interviews and observation assessments (across many levels of the organisation) within 25 of the 300 participating organisations.</td>
<td>Identified characteristics common in effective organisations as they relate to public relations and communications. These include having a strategic focus; building long term, strategic relationships with stakeholders; and having the head PR person on the organisation’s executive. This study also suggested excellent PR departments favour two-way symmetrical communication over press agentry when developing communication plans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.8 Conclusion

‘Change is a phenomenon that occurs within communication’ (Ford & Ford, 1995, p. 542).

This thesis examined the existing literature on change management and communication to determine whether the proposed research questions could be adequately answered. The review discovered that communication has been anecdotally linked to success or failure of change management processes, however there is a lack of academic research that unanimously supports this, making it difficult for practitioners to know how to better implement effective communication programs. This was consistently lamented by researchers.

While participative communication for change management lacks a formal framework, the review found a number of theoretical constructs appropriate to relational communication practices that could have application in change processes. These include Arnstein’s Ladder (Arnstein, 1969); participative management/participative decision-making (Pardo-del-Val & Martinez-Fuentes, 2003; Pardo-del-Val et al., 2012) and participative communication,
including the ideals of dialogical communication proposed by Kent and Taylor (2002); the Four Models of Public Relations Communication proposed by Grunig (1992); and a constructivist approach (Frahm & Brown, 2006).

Participative communication practices are regarded as a logical way to influence change within the research studies considered. However, there is a lack of qualitative research that considers the ‘how’ questions, essential for informing the practice of change communication, such as the human response to different change communication approaches. Of the studies that used a qualitative approach, few considered the input of both managers and employees as a means to understanding multiple views on change and communication. For these reasons it is recommended that a qualitative study be undertaken to consider the integration of communication and change management research, and provide multiple perspectives of change.

The review also found links between participative practices and organisational culture; the inference being culture is an underlying factor which pre-determines an organisation’s communication style, in turn influencing the outcomes of change processes. Continuous change was acknowledged as a constant in contemporary organisations and those with a culture that embraced instability (such as learning organisations or adhocracies) (Fard et al., 2009). Learning and participative cultures were identified by Fard et al. (2009) as being capable of ongoing learning and adaptation. Again it should be noted that there is little empirical analysis in this area, and the available research doesn’t provide a full picture of participative communication practices undertaken by these organisational cultures.
A study that plausibly links the types of communication that enhance receptiveness to change, and conversely, the types of communication that deter the adoption of change, would allow the relationship between participative communication and change management receptiveness to be more fully investigated. This study begins the process by providing some insights into the relationship between participative practices and organisational culture, in a quest to potentially link culture types to an organisation’s ability to change and adapt. At the very least it provides clues about the communication preferences of particular cultures. This research has the potential to assist change managers with their development of more effective communication programs to enhance adoption of change.

The literature review explored the subject in the context of the research questions to determine current knowledge and gaps. The following section outlines the most appropriate approach to answering the research questions, and defends the methodology selected for this project. The chapter commences with an outline of the paradigmatic and methodological options for the purpose of this project and details the research design used. Finally, the case specifics related to the selection of case studies are documented, before outlining the data collection techniques and data analysis processes.
Chapter Three
Methodology

3.1 Introduction
This study aims to increase the understanding of how participative communication impacts on support for change during change management processes. Having established, in the literature review, a need for empirical research in this area, it is now appropriate to re-state the research question as the various paradigmatic and methodological options for this project are considered.

Research Question: How does participative communication impact on change management receptiveness?

Existing knowledge indicates this is a complex and wide-ranging area. To provide a focus and contextual framework, the following questions focused the study:

- How was change communicated during the change management process?
- How did communication impact on participants in the change management process?
- How did participants react to the change management process?
- How do participative communication practices relate to organisational culture?

This first half of this chapter introduces the research design and methodology used to address the above questions. An outline of the broad intent of the study precedes a rationale for the methodological paradigm underpinning the project. This is followed by a detailed description and discussion of the methodological processes. The chapter argues the case for adopting a two-case study, mixed-methods approach as an acceptable line of enquiry for answering the
research questions, since it allowed for comparative analysis and enabled deeper insights. With these aspects addressed, the second half of the chapter details the operational management and specific methods used to collect data in this study. The mixed-methods approach used interviews to gain valuable insights into employees’ lived experiences of change, and an organisational culture diagnostic tool (Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument) to provide the empirical evidence in answer to the research questions.

The literature review highlighted a scarcity of empirical research on how participative communication enhances receptiveness to change. It is only through understanding how communication impacts on people who are experiencing change management that change managers can align their communication to more effectively persuade stakeholders of the benefits of change. Most of the literature reviewed adopted a quantitative approach (Fard et al., 2009; Lewis, 2006; Nelissen & van Selm, 2008; Torppa & Smith, 2011) and took a simplistic view of the types of communication used (‘what’ instead of ‘how’ questions). The relatively few studies that adopted a qualitative approach typically relied on secondary data, and examined literature and theory as the basis for proposing new concepts or theory. The only exception to this was Tukiainen (2001) who retrospectively analysed existing data from an organisational survey.

Frahm and Brown (2006) offered major insights, particularly related to the selection of methodology, however their planned implementation was hampered by their case selection, which resulted in a misalignment of the findings with the aims of the learning organisation. Through the use of a qualitative investigative technique, this study sought to provide fresh perspectives on how change is communicated, and how communication can be used to stimulate positive dialogue and in turn translate into more successful outcomes.
As indicated in the introduction, the conceptual framework for this study (Figure 8) was developed throughout the thesis. Following information gained through the literature review, this framework has developed to indicate the theoretical constructs underpinning the participative communication elements of the project.

![Diagram of Participative Communication Framework]

**Figure 8.** Developing the Conceptual Framework.

The purpose of this study was to increase knowledge and understanding of how communication during change management processes impact on support for change. As such, the study is of an exploratory nature, and its findings have the potential to further develop change management communication theory. The research has also achieved a practical outcome in the form of a ‘Ladder of Employee Participation during Change Management’, which provides guidance for change managers on the reactions of employees to different change communication processes.
3.2 Research Paradigm

This section aims to outline the variety of paradigmatic options available for this study, particularly the pragmatic paradigm selected. The mixed-methods, two-case-study approach selected for this study uses both deductive (quantitative) and inductive (qualitative) approaches and is most closely aligned with the ‘pragmatist’ or mixed-methods research paradigm. This approach guides the researcher to select methodology based on its ability to best answer the research questions (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Wahyuni, 2012). The next section explains why the pragmatic paradigm offered a logical methodological line of attack for this study.

Researchers must remain true to a particular research approach (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Wahyuni, 2012) which, once selected, will dictate how to collect, analyse and describe the results. Research projects are designed in the context of various world views, in order to determine the best paradigmatic fit, and each paradigm traditionally prescribes a particular methodology typology. The two main approaches are deductive and inductive. Deductive describes a scenario where the literature leads to a hypothesis and the current research aims to confirm this – most often associated with scientific or quantitative research. The other approach is inductive, where the data leads the researcher to describe patterns based upon which a conceptual framework or theory is proposed. This type of research is most often aligned with ethnographic or qualitative research (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005).

Over the last 80 years academic research has been largely defined by one of two world views: positivism and subjectivism. These two main approaches or paradigms are at opposite ends of the spectrum. Positivism is the ‘cleaner’ scientific style of research which focuses on reality and ‘hard’ facts, traditionally the domain of statistics and quantitative research. At the other
end of the spectrum is the ‘messy’ subjectivist approach, which is used more widely in the social sciences where it is recognised that people layer their own opinions, beliefs and understanding of phenomena. This provides rich, experiential data and is the domain of qualitative research. Every research study should be considered against the main research paradigms in the spectrum (positivism, post-positivism, pragmatism, interpretivism, constructionism and subjectivism) and four research philosophies (ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology) to ensure the research is true to the selected approach. The selected paradigm will steer the researcher’s choice of research methodology. Specifically, ontology looks at the nature of knowledge and how researchers’ perceive reality; epistemology refers to the development of knowledge and how researchers should generate credible knowledge (Wahyuni, 2012); axiology relates to the ethics and values of research, and methodology is the model underpinning the research process (Wahyuni, 2012).

In considering the ontology for this study, and given the research questions were designed to seek understanding of human reactions to change, a subjectivist approach was most appropriate, as change is highly variable and cannot be viewed as a well-defined ‘object’ (objectivist approach). People construct their own meanings of change experiences, so change management communication research subscribes to subjectivist views of ontology. Maylor and Blackmon (2005) and Wahyuni (2012) regarded subjectivist ontology as most appropriate for studying everyday social phenomena and accordingly, this was deemed an appropriate approach for examining reactions to change communication.

Some might argue the study could conform to a post-positivist approach, however this tactic was not adopted as this study was retrospective in nature. Participants were asked about their
recollection of change (and change communication) that had occurred in previously conducted change process. As such the findings are reflective. A post positivist approach suggests the research occurs in real time and the researcher can act as a manipulator with a modified experimental / interventionist approach (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011; Mertens, 2009). As the ability to intervene was not an option in this study, a pragmatic, rather than post positivist approach was adopted.

As the study was aimed at gaining a human perspective on cultural change management, particularly the impact of communication on the change management process, an interpretivist approach was used to gain an understanding of the human experience as the most appropriate epistemological paradigm for this study.

Another area of particular interest to the researcher was gaining an understanding of cultural alignment in communication processes. Due to the difficulty of qualitatively determining organisational culture, a culture diagnostic tool, OCAI, was included in the methodology. In epistemological terms, this objectivist element provided a validated, quantitative, culture assessment tool. OCAI was developed by Cameron and Quinn (2006) and uses ipsative scoring to assess the organisation’s cultural make-up against the Competing Values Framework. The tool also has a prescriptive aspect in identifying significant gaps between current and preferred cultures (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) argued for the inclusion of a qualitative methodology to support and expand on qualitative findings, which validates the inclusion of the OCAI survey in this project.
The addition of a cultural survey added depth of understanding to this study. Its absence would have rendered the study less meaningful, as the cultural aspect added greater expression and significance to the qualitative information. Had the study remained true to an interpretivist approach and used qualitative data to diagnose organisational culture, the project would have been a much larger undertaking and beyond the scope of a Master’s dissertation.

Research that draws from both epistemological philosophies (positivism and interpretivist), will benefit from a mixed-methods, methodological approach. The mixed-methods or ‘pragmatic’ paradigm is a more recent approach, and was adopted for this study because of the superior insights that can be gained from using two methods rather than a single one. In this instance, qualitative research was needed to ‘uncover humanistic research findings’ (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), while the quantitative component provided an additional lens for gaining a richer understanding of the human perspective of change communication. ‘When dealing with human research, soft relativism simply refers to a respect and interest in understanding and depicting individual and social group differences and a respect for democratic approaches’ (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).
Table 5. Possible Paradigms.
Adapted from (Lincoln et al., 2011; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Mertens, 2009; Wahyuni, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Post-positivism</th>
<th>Interpretivism</th>
<th>Pragmatism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
<td>External, objective and independent of social actors.</td>
<td>Objective. Exist independently of human thoughts and beliefs but interpreted through social conditioning. Critical realist. Reality, but imperfectly so.</td>
<td>Socially constructed, subjective, may change, multiple, varied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
<td>Only observable phenomena can provide credible data/facts. Focus on causality and law-like generalisations, reducing phenomena to simplest elements.</td>
<td>Only observable phenomena can provide credible facts. Focus on explaining within context or contexts. Researcher manipulates and observes in a dispassionate manner</td>
<td>Subjective meanings and social phenomena. Focus upon the details of situation, then reality behind these details, subjective meanings and motivating actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Axiology</strong></td>
<td>Value-free and etic. Research is undertaken in a value free way. The researcher is independent of the data and maintains an objective stance.</td>
<td>Value laden and etic. Research is value laden. Research is biased by world views, cultural experiences and upbringing</td>
<td>Value bond and emic. Research is value bound, the researcher is part of what is being researched, cannot be separated. Subjective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodology</strong></td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Quantitative or qualitative. Modified experimental or manipulative Interventionist.</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selection of the pragmatic paradigm to underpin this project is justifiable for several reasons. As outlined in the introduction, this study is of an exploratory nature since there is currently no theory to test with an objectivist research approach. A deductive approach, where a hypothesis is made and tested, underpins the positivist paradigm. Furthermore, the pragmatic paradigm suggests researchers develop the questions first and then apply a research methodology that best answers the questions. In this study, the research questions ask ‘how’
and are designed to elicit a greater understanding of the topic area, thus making a pragmatic approach with an interpretivist element most appropriate.

The goal of any study is to contribute meaningful knowledge to the field, and the pragmatic approach outlined above provided the methodology most likely to meaningfully address the research questions. The quantitative and qualitative aspects have been discussed separately in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 in the context of the research methods selected. The final Discussion chapter draws together the significant findings of the study (in line with the pragmatic paradigm) and describes key findings as ‘warranted assertions’ (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 15).

3.3 Research Methodology
This section outlines the strategies being used to implement this research project. As previously indicated, this research used a two-case-study approach to develop an understanding of the lived experience of change communication. This mixed-methods approach enabled the researcher to use a penetrative style of questioning to explore participants’ perceptions (interpretivist-phenomenological, qualitative) of the change processes, together with comparative data (two case studies) from a well-trialled questionnaire to provide baseline data about the organisational cultures (positivist, quantitative). In this section, the selected approaches are outlined before the design specifics of the project are described later in the chapter.

There are several recognised genres in the qualitative field including symbolic interactionism, ethnography, hermeneutics, action research, content analysis and poetic enquiry. The genre
selected for this project was phenomenology, which ‘focuses on concepts, events, or the lived experiences of humans’ (Saldana, 2011, p. 8). According to Patton (1990), the phenomenological approach is grounded in social science philosophy and focuses on how people experience and interpret phenomena. Ideally, the researcher should not be a participant in the phenomenon under examination to prevent biasing the data. This research project was concerned with how employees experienced communication of change, and whether the change communication affected their feelings and actions. Bryant (2006) recommended qualitative methodologies for studying organisational events such as change management because they offer rich, deep insights into how employees experience change. Phenomenological methods can include various techniques, content analyses, observations, unstructured and semi-structured interviews to collect and analyse a quantity of data and identify patterns and themes which describe the lived experience of the phenomena (Saldana, 2011).
Table 6. *Pragmatic Paradigm (Mixed-Methods Approach)*.  
Adapted from Maylor & Blackmon, 2005; Saldana, 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Approach (Underlying Logic)</th>
<th>Pragmatic Paradigm (Mixed-methods Approach)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deductive/Scientific (Quantitative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontological Approach</td>
<td>Objectivism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher’s Role</td>
<td>Objective – the researcher is independent, removed from collection of data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>Quantitative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Techniques</td>
<td>Survey, validated instrument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis Techniques</td>
<td>Statistical analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describing the Data</td>
<td>Graphs and tables, objective accounts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Valid instrument.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A positivist (quantitative) element was incorporated to provide additional support for the project’s qualitative findings (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). One prerequisite of the positivist approach is an independent researcher who is not a participant in the process under examination (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005). Sound quantitative techniques can be replicated to deliver standardised results, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the research as generalisable results can be reported. Quantitative methods include techniques such as experiments and surveys that provide statistical data (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005). In this thesis, a quantitative study in the form of a pre-existing cultural assessment provided a framework for describing the cultural make-up of the organisation, which led to a deeper understanding.
Case studies are considered a definitive unit of study whereby data is collected. Wahyuni (2012) claimed case studies allow for deep investigation and are appropriate for studying contemporary phenomena. Maylor and Blackmon (2005) contended that a case-study approach is appropriate when the study is of an exploratory nature, when the researcher has little control over the phenomenon being studied, and when there are time and budget limitations. Patton (1990, p. 54) suggested case studies were advantageous in providing in-depth detail of a specific program or scenario, but these phenomena could not be assumed the same for other cases. While a case study process is not considered an appropriate approach for developing theories that can be generalised more broadly, it is nevertheless valued as a process of deeper-level investigation (Saldana, 2011). A multiple-case-study approach is useful for comparing data to determine common or distinctive experiences as they provide greater transferability, especially where case studies adopt multiple methods and there is access to multiple sources (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005; Patton, 1990; Saldana, 2011). This is the case in this study.

**Figure 9.** Mixed-Methods Multiple-Case-Study Approach.

A mixed-methods, two-case-study approach was adopted for this project to provide robust results able to withstand rigorous challenge. In addition, the two-case-study approach strengthens the research findings, which is particularly important for local government sector
from which both cases were drawn. Wahyuni (2012) argued that a more comprehensive understanding was gained through comparative data when a multi-site, multiple method, multiple case-study approach was used. The approach used in this study is most like those used by Frahm and Brown (2006, 2007) and Kellet (1999).

3.4 Research Design

Having addressed the research foundations for the project, this section aims to introduce the operational detail of the research design. A broad overview of the research plans is provided with an indication of how the plans will help address the research questions. With these plans outlined in this section, the remainder of the chapter will provide detailed descriptions of the methods deployed.

Two different organisations, both operating in the same local government sector, participated in this study. Both organisations were large (more than 100 employees) and had been through a change management process in the last two years. In line with the phenomenological approach, data was collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. To enhance the validity of the process, multiple informants were interviewed, comprising at least two managers and four employees in each of the two case studies. In this study, the term ‘manager’ is used to identify a person tasked with leading the change process in some way, while the term ‘employee’ is used to identify a person with no responsibility for leading the change process. Bryant (2006) suggested that the inclusion of employee insights in such studies added breadth to learnings and key findings could therefore be regarded as suggestive of new change management approaches. In both cases interviews were conducted after the
change process had been implemented (although Case Study 2 was an ongoing project), so insights gained were largely reflective rather than real-time reactions. Quantitative techniques enabled a broader assessment of the organisation’s culture through the use of the Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI). Cultural make-up is an indicator of an organisation’s management style (including its communication norms). Data were collected for this study using the OCAI, which assesses organisations against the Competing Values Framework. Initially it was collected to enable selection of the case studies prior to the second stage of the research (interviews). After only two cases met the requirements of the study, this quantitative aspect took on a support role, to provide greater depth of understanding to the qualitative data. Importantly, this tool provided an accessible method for determining prevailing culture while also indicating the degree of harmony or angst between the current and preferred culture. The tool allowed a greater number of participants to inform the study. Inclusion of the OCAI also provided an opportunity to compare with the results of previous studies and add to the body of knowledge on organisational culture, learning-organisation status, dominant communication processes, and receptiveness to change.

Had the study not been retrospective in nature, a quantitative change readiness assessment would have been an interesting source of data for this study (Holt et al., 2007). However, as the researcher only became acquainted with the organisations once they had implemented the change process it was not an appropriate tool to deploy.

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5 The initial methodology also indicated the use of document scanning and content analysis, more aligned to a hermeneutic approach to research. Both organisations verbally indicated a willingness to provide documentation, however were not forthcoming. To address this gap, participants were asked to recall the specifics of how change was communicated, and this provided some clues as to the effectiveness of the communication used.
In view of the mixed-methods approach, an outline follows on how each research question was addressed by the research design. Questions 1 to 3 drew on the interviews, and as such a qualitative methodology where thematic analysis enabled examination of the underlying issues of communicating change. The first question explored the type of communication that was used throughout the change management process, and examined whether the communication was monological or dialogical; whether the process was constructive and consultative; if there was two-way communication; if the communication was planned or ad hoc, formal or informal, face-to-face, verbal or written. The second question was designed to explore participants’ feelings and emotions about the change management communication. Of interest was whether the recipient felt engaged, threatened or informed; if the impact was immediate, gradual or changed throughout the process; and whether their attitude was positive, neutral or negative. The third question built on the previous two and was aimed at identifying the specific reactions that resulted from the communication and determined the communication practices that led to these responses.

The final question, 4, used a quantitative approach, using the OCAI tool and assessment, while drawing on the qualitative findings of this study to explore organisational culture and its relationship to change in the workplace. The literature suggested that organisations with learning (adhocracy) and participative (clan) cultures have superior communication practices, including the use of dialogic communication.
Table 7. Research Approach

How does participative communication impact on change management receptiveness? The purpose of this study is to explore how communication during change management impacts on the adoption of change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Methodology &amp; Instrument</th>
<th>Data anticipated</th>
<th>Potential to inform purpose of the study</th>
<th>Contribution to Learning Organisation Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How was change communicated during the change management process? (ACTION)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Interviews Manager, Employee</td>
<td>Descriptions of the communication process, Examples of the communication process, Descriptions of change management process, How was it evolving, Descriptions of the strategic end-point, facilitators and barriers, etc.</td>
<td>This question considers the action of the communication, in a recognisable sense, this is the impact of the changed management process on an individual. Communication is important in this phase because it is the medium in which the change is to be transmitted. How is the way the message is being transmitted? Is it too specific or too general?</td>
<td>Being qualitative research it is important not to be too specific about the expectations and risk leading the data. The qualitative question has the potential to provide some important insights into the impact of communication that is used in communicating change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do communication impact on participants in the change management process? (PROCESSING)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Interviews Manager, Employee</td>
<td>Descriptions of feelings, emotions, attitudes towards the change management process, Perception of the change management process, How were they perceived?</td>
<td>This question considers the processing and impact on the individual receiving the message. How do they feel? Did the way they feel change over time? Did they feel different emotions or attitudes during the process?</td>
<td>As this study proposes interviews being conducted with managers and employees it has the potential to provide two sets of data. The Manager can speak to the 'interchange' of the communication and the employee to the 'impact' of the communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did participants react to the change management process? (REACTION)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Interviews Manager, Employee</td>
<td>A judgment on the engagement in the change management process, Suggestions for improvements, change that could be made to the communication or change management, How did they react, how did they want to react, Did something prevent them from demonstrating their true feelings? Did their reactions change over time? Did they feel receptive to the communication?</td>
<td>This question considers the reaction to the communication by the individual. How did they react, how did they want to react, Did something prevent them from demonstrating their true feelings? Did their reactions change over time? Did they feel receptive to the communication? Was it adopted or rejected?</td>
<td>Does the organisation most strongly align to Adhocracy or Clan cultures? How could their communication preferences be described? Are their employees more accepting of change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much do collective cultural values contribute to organisational culture?</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument</td>
<td>The OCAI results are reported against the competing values framework. The report indicates both the current culture (as perceived by the individual) and their preferred culture.</td>
<td>Initially this assessment was to be conducted on several large organisations to inform the selection of study organisations. The results of the study will enable the research to be conducted in two different cultural settings, so that the communication approaches may be compared and contrasted. As only two cases meet the criteria the data then supported the qualitative data.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Initially the culture analysis was to be used to select two case-study organisations from the possible five\(^6\). The two organisations were from the same industry sector, thereby providing an opportunity for case comparison.

Table 7 summarises the planned research approach as included in the research proposal. In subsequent sections the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research design have been separated.

### 3.5 Selection of Case Studies

To find two appropriate case studies, several organisations were approached through the researcher’s own networks. Organisations advertising ‘change management’ roles on the recruitment website: [www.seek.com.au](http://www.seek.com.au) were also contacted, the logic being that organisations recruiting change professionals were undertaking change. Following an initial approach, seven organisations participated in a briefing meeting and received detailed information about the research project. These included a state-based utility, several organisations in the resources sector, and two local government organisations. All of these organisations met the criteria for participating in the study:

- A large organisation with more than 100 employees,
- Currently implementing or had been through a change management process in the last two years; and
- Where 20 staff were able to complete the OCAI assessment.

\(^6\) Three organisations participated in the OCAI assessment; however one did not reach the minimum participation level (20 completions). As a result the decision was made to exclude them from the subsequent data collection.
In terms of the change management process, this study was not descriptive about the type of process being implemented. Instead the focus was on how change was communicated. The decision to avoid being prescriptive about the change process was made for several reasons, including: the nature of the study was retrospective and the interviews were conducted after the implementation of the change process to enable participants to reflect on their experience of change; the lack of change management framework meant that change terminology is not always defined consistently by practitioners, limiting the study to specific change approaches or a real-time experience of change would have impacted on the ability to secure case study organisations and ultimately on the progress of the project.

The initial intention was to recruit several organisations; however a decision was subsequently made to focus on only two, because while a few organisations offered to take part in the study, they could not provide the necessary access to meet the criteria of a case study. Moreover, the willingness of the two local government organisations to participate provided the study with an interesting opportunity to conduct a comparative multiple-case study, while also enhancing the construct validity (Yin, 1994) or credibility (Guba, 1981) of the study.

Greater success was achieved where the researcher was able to contact a senior person in the organisation (for instance the CEO). All organisations indicated a willingness to be involved, however for some the research was outside their core business and therefore not a priority. The organisations in the resources sector were in a state of flux and representatives indicated they were either too busy to obtain support for participation in the project or were concerned about the negative affect potential redundancies may have on the data. Initially three
organisations agreed to be part of the project; one of these was from the resources sector. However, this organisation did not meet the benchmark minimum of 20 staff completions of the OCAI survey, nor did any staff indicate a desire to be interviewed. This was unfortunate as the resources sector may have provided some unique insights into real-time change and perhaps a more adaptive culture not otherwise evident. The remaining two organisations therefore provided the case studies for the second stage of the research (interviews).

As it turned out, these two cases allowed for examination of two different types of change within the same local government sector. Being on the brink of considerable change, the feedback was able to offer insights of immediate value. Wahyuni (2012) cautioned against selecting a case study approach as a means of obtaining findings that can be broadly applied or be representative of all organisations. Barbour (2008) suggested that an interrogative approach to case-study selection provided an opportunity for ‘instructive comparisons’, allowing the researcher greater generalisability of the study’s findings. While the two local government organisations were not sought out as case studies, the instructive comparison they provided increased validity, so that some key findings can be generalised across the sector (although still not more broadly for all organisations).

Case Study 1 focused on an amalgamation of two shires (A & B), while in Case Study 2, the focus was on whole-of-organisation, cultural and strategic transformation. By their very nature both cases impacted on organisational culture. It is interesting to note that at the time of the research the local government sector in Western Australia was on the brink of considerable change, and several amalgamations had been proposed in the Perth metropolitan area. The study therefore offered relevant insights to change managers working in this environment.
3.5.1 Selection of Participants

Participants in both organisations volunteered their involvement. Several completed OCAI questionnaires and participated in interviews. Interview participants were drawn from two employment categories: managers and employees. For the purpose of this study, a manager was defined as someone in a leadership role and leading or sponsoring the change process; while employees had a ‘follower’ or subordinate role. In both case studies managers who had no role in leading the change processes were considered employees or subordinates, to enable an appreciation of the differences between the intent of management and their impact on employees.

A requirement was for all interview participants to have been employees at the time of the change process (and not employed subsequent to the initial implementation of the change process). Participation was solicited through emails sent by the researcher and senior staff in the organisation, and also through posters displayed in the lunch areas of both organisations. The participants were unknown to the researcher and the interview location had not been visited by the researcher prior to the interviews taking place. Participant data is contained in Appendix 1 and has been used to tag transcriptions and Nvivo coding, providing an audit trail and thus enhancing the chain of evidence and construct validity of the study (Yin, 1994, p. 98)

Table 8. Completion of Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OCAI survey completions</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The employment categories used for participants (managers and employees) enabled examination of their different perspectives of the change process (Saldana, 2011). It also allowed the researcher to draw further insightful comparisons and run dependability checks (triangulation of sources) across the two case studies (Patton, 1990), while speaking to the intent of the managers who led the change processes and interpretation of employees. Two managers and at least four employees per case study were interviewed - this is discussed in further detail in the next section.

Each interviewee was allocated a unique participant number which was coded to the data as it went through transcription, coding, analysis and reporting in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis. This code made it possible for the researcher to identify the organisation, employment category and interviewee number for each participant, while maintaining their anonymity. This audit trail also enhanced the studies’ chain of evidence and construct validity (Yin, 1994, p. 98). Participant numbers are contained in Appendix 1.

To ensure construct validity and credibility of the research, each participant was sent a synopsis of their transcript and given an opportunity to see the full transcript or reframe the synopsis where it didn’t accurately represent their opinions (Guba, 1981; Yin, 1994). One participant made a slight modification to the emphasis in the synopsis, while all other participants indicated satisfaction with the synopsis or did not respond to the letter. An example of the verification letter is contained in Appendix 3.

### 3.5.1.1 Qualitative Sample

All staff (managers and employees) in both organisations were invited to participate in the interviews. In each instance, staff had either been involved with and/or were affected by the
change management process. While random sampling was not employed, all employees were invited to participate and the researcher did not influence the decision of participants to be interviewed, thus researcher bias has been mitigated from the selection of participants. Only employees who were not employed at the time of the change process being implemented were excluded from the study. All participants volunteered their involvement and can therefore be considered ‘willing’ candidates (Shenton, 2004). The researcher was able to meet with all volunteers, so no staff members were excluded from the interviews.

Table 9. Completion of Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously indicated, two managers and a minimum of four employees were interviewed in each case study, in order to achieve two different perspectives across at least six participants. Saldana (2011, p. 34) indicated that up to six participants was appropriate for gauging a broader spectrum in a case study while Gray (2014, p. 24) suggested 5-15 interviews were appropriate in a phenomenological study. In addition, using two case studies provided additional perspectives and strengthened the credibility of the study, offering greater transferability and dependability (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005; Shenton, 2004).

Some interesting demographic information was also collected in the interviews – this is shown in Tables 10 and 11. In Case Study 1, all but one participant were female. While all employees experienced change, the staff in Shire B were impacted more; staff in Shire A
played more of an observation role. The table below provides further information about participants.

Table 10. *Case Study 1 - Participant Breakdown*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Shire A</th>
<th>Shire B</th>
<th>Observer</th>
<th>Direct Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Case Study 2, those interviewed (7 in total) were all managers (or above). Two senior employees (Executive Director or above) fulfilled the ‘manager’ criteria for this study. The remaining five were considered employees for the purpose of the study, although one had more knowledge of the change processes having held a human resource role in the organisation. Of the five employee interviews conducted, two were long-term employees who had risen through the ranks, while three were relatively recent appointments, although they had been appointed prior to the change process being communicated and implemented.

Table 11. *Case Study 2 - Participant Breakdown*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Case Study 2</th>
<th>Recent Appointment</th>
<th>Old Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.1.2 *Quantitative Sample*

In both organisations all staff were invited to participate in an online survey and in all instances participants volunteered their involvement. Participation in the survey was anonymous; the researcher was not provided with information or raw data about individuals.
Table 12. Completion of OCAI Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCAI Survey Completions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 Data Collection Methods

As previously stated, mixed methods, multiple cases, and multiple sources of data strengthened the credibility and construct validity of the data in this study (Guba, 1981; Yin, 1994). While it cannot claim to have achieved the same level of veracity as ‘triangulation’ which encompasses three methods of data collection, the use of two methods drawn from multiple sources significantly strengthened the key findings of this project (Saldana, 2011). This study used semi-structured interviews and a culture assessment survey as the two methods of data collection. The data collection techniques and operational processes used in this project are detailed in the following section, thus enhancing the external validity or generalisability of this study (Guba, 1981; Yin, 1994).

3.6.1 Pilots

A limited pilot study was conducted to test the data collection tools selected for this project. The qualitative interview process was tested on a colleague who had recently experienced a workplace change when his department was restructured and some employees were made redundant. The interview was conducted in a coffee shop, and while the questioning went well, the venue proved to be a poor selection as background noise made the recordings difficult to transcribe. This led to the use of meeting rooms and offices for subsequent interviews.
The quantitative tool was also tested when developing the initial methodology for the research project. The OCAI website allows individuals to complete a one-off test and have the individual results sent to their personal email. Five friends and colleagues of the researcher completed this assessment and provided their personal results to the researcher for analysis and discussion.

The limited pilot confirmed the tools were appropriate for the study and allowed procedures (such as venue selection for interviews and an initial qualitative coding guide) to be refined.

3.6.2 Qualitative (Interviews)

This project used semi-structured interviews as the primary qualitative data-collection tool. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews are central to phenomenological data collection, as they directly solicit the views of participants (Saldana, 2011). In many phenomenological research studies, interviews are the only data collection tool used. In this study, the use of semi-structured interviews is justified, as the rich descriptions and perspectives provided are sufficient for answering the research questions (Saldana, 2011).

Semi-structured interviews based on the central questions (outlined below) were conducted with at least two managers and four employees from each of the two organisations. Like all phenomenological research, the interviews were free-flowing, and allowed ideas to emerge and be explored. The open ended nature of the interviews was consistent with case study research as it allowed participants to express their own opinions and beliefs, even to propose their own ideas (Yin, 1994). Yin (1994) suggested that where the respondent provided information as described, they could be considered an ‘informant’ to the study, which supports Shenton’s (2004) assertion that credibility of the study is enhanced when willing
informants provide data. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain a detailed description of
the subjective experience of the types of communication used during the change process, its
impact on participants, and their response to the communication. Interviews generally took
between 30 and 80 minutes, depending on the amount of information the participant was able
to provide. In order to address the reliability and confirmability of the processes, details
questions are outlined below and in the appendices, to ensure the process could be repeated if
necessary (Guba, 1981; Yin, 1994). The format for interviews with employees was as follows:

• Introduction
• Icebreaker – Tell me a little about the organisation; how long have you been working with
  the organisation; what is your role?
• Your organisation has recently made changes. How would you describe what happened?
• How do you feel about the proposed/implemented changes?
• How did you first hear about the changes? Describe how the changes have been
  communicated since that first time? (Was there evidence of a formal communication
  plan?)
• Describe the level of involvement or consultation you experienced
• If you could provide feedback to management on the change process, what 3 pieces of
  advice would you give?
• Conclude and request contact be made if any additional information is recalled after the
  interview.

The format for interviews with managers was as follows:

• Introduction
• Icebreaker – Tell me a little about the organisation; how long have you been working with the organisation, what is your role?

• Your organisation has recently made changes. How would you describe what happened?

• What happened during the change management process?

• What forms of communication were used? Was a formal communication plan used?

• Which had the most impact?

• How interactive was the process?

• If you could make three changes to the communication process what would they be?

• Conclude and request contact be made if any additional information is thought of after the interview.

A full list of questions for managers and employees can be found in Appendix 7. Further questions were added to explore and probe the participants’ recollections.

The logistics for conducting interviews was undertaken by the researcher who contacted each organisation with a block of time when they could be visited. To reduce time delays between each interview, a period of 3 to 7 working days was allowed. The opportunity to participate in an interview was promoted to all employees through emails and posters displayed in lunch rooms. After participants had contacted the researcher, they were sent an email providing background information on the project, including a confidentiality statement and consent form.

Each interview lasted between 30 and 80 minutes. Interviews were conducted in the workplace of the organisations being studied. In most instances the venue was selected by the
participant, usually an office, interview, or meeting room that provided a minimum of
distraction. The interview commenced with the researcher asking the participant to complete
the consent form, answering any questions, and giving a verbal assurance that the
participants’ anonymity would be preserved. Interviews were recorded (with the permission
of the participant) using primary and back-up digital recording devices. These digital files
were later transcribed by the researcher and then manually coded for themes. The
transcriptions were reviewed and themes were identified that described the process,
interpretations, opinions and emotions that resulted from the change process. The coded
transcriptions were analysed using NVivo software. Each transcription was cross referenced
with thematic tags, and organisation and participant data to ensure a clear audit trail.
Following transcription, each participant was sent a synopsis of their interview as part of the
verification process – this rigorous approach assisted the researcher in becoming familiar with
the data. These processes improve the credibility and construct validity of qualitative and case
study data (Guba, 1981; Yin, 1994).

As neither organisation was experiencing a ‘real-time’ change process (although Case B was
continuing to embed culture) it was not possible to observe meetings, so the data were derived
from reflective interviews.

3.6.3 Quantitative (OCAI – Culture Assessment)

A survey was used as the quantitative data collection tool to diagnose the organisation’s
current and preferred culture. Initially it was intended to identify two cases with different
cultures for the interview stage. When insufficient participation was obtained, the OCAI
assessments were used as a supplementary form of data to provide a verifiable and valid
diagnosis of culture that informed the study. The purpose for including this culture assessment
tool was to establish the cultural make-up of the organisation in order to support and add meaning to the data collected in the interviews. The cultural assessment also indicated the degree of harmony or angst between the current and preferred culture. This provided insights into the level of cultural change desired by participants.

The OCAI, an established culture assessment tool also used by Fard et al. (2009), formed the quantitative component of this study. It assesses the organisation’s culture against the Competing Values Framework which describes culture as a mix of four typologies: clan, adhocracy, hierarchy and market cultures. The OCAI was used to make an assessment of the organisations’ current and preferred working culture as perceived by the individuals completing the survey. The survey was an online self-completion assessment that took approximately 10 minutes to complete. See Appendix 4.

The online software for the OCAI instrument is available through http://www.ocai-online.com/. On purchasing access, the researcher was provided with a unique URL hyperlink which was emailed to all staff in both organisations. Participants were invited to complete the survey through the link. Once each survey received 20 completions it was closed and a report generated through the site. An example of the report can be found in Appendix 5. Closing the survey in both instances coincided with the conclusion of interviews.

The invitation to complete an online survey was disseminated to all employees by email and posters displayed in lunch rooms. An email containing access to the unique URL for the survey was sent to all employees in each organisation. The email included background information on the project, including a confidentiality statement, and a statement indicating ‘implied consent’ when participants clicked on the unique URL and commenced the survey.
In all cases the participants completed the online survey through www.OCAI-online.com. The researcher was independent of this process and received no raw data, only the final reports.

3.7 Data Analysis
3.7.1 Qualitative

Qualitative data is by nature ‘messy’ research because the researcher aims to collect as much information and perspective on the topic in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the area (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013; Wahyuni, 2012). This project was no different – hours of recorded interviews became coded pages of transcription and then manuals of reports developed from NVivo (“QSR NVivo 10,” 2012).

A systematic approach was used to organise and manage the data. The researcher’s notebook was central to the organising system, whereby each participant’s unique code and digital file codes were noted, along with occasional notes made during the interviews. To preserve anonymity, all information in the notebook was de-identified. Once interviews were completed, the digital files were transcribed, personal information was removed by the researcher and then manually coded for themes. The transcriptions were reviewed and answers to each of the questions were compared in a cross-case analysis approach (Patton, 1990). From these themes were identified that described the process, interpretations, opinions and emotions that resulted from the change process. The thematic coding process is outlined more fully in the next paragraph and the coding nodes are included in Appendix 9. The coded transcriptions were analysed using NVivo software. Each transcription was cross referenced with thematic tags, and organisation and participant data to ensure a clear audit trail. The transcriptions were then entered into NVivo software ("QSR NVivo 10," 2012) for analysis.
The researcher used a process that thematically coded the transcriptions in several different ways and at several different levels. The code book is in Appendix 9. Initially the coding was based on key words, then more broadly the actions, attitudes, information and other themes identified during a review of each transcription. As the coding progressed it became more sophisticated and fine-tuned. Key words were sometimes grouped into themes based on information about communication processes, techniques, impressions, attitudes and actions of the receiver; and examples of leadership activity, change processes and participation. These were refined and consolidated throughout the coding process under the following key themes: communicating change, consultation and participation, leadership, consequences of change, management intention and employee awareness. In the results section, a bolded font has been used to highlight the use of key terms. Finally the information was coded in a way that informed each of the research questions, and this detail is provided in the Discussion chapter.

The thematic coding process distilled the ‘shared meanings’ uncovered patterns of insights to become the essence of understanding the experienced phenomena (Patton, 1990) - in this case the essence of change management and communicating change. In order to maintain rigour during the manual coding process, the first stage concluded only when coding of the first five interviews had been reviewed to ensure that transcripts did not exclude interrogation based on a more developed code book. After completing the first stage of manual coding, the researcher re-read each interview transcript, coded further, and immediately thereafter completed a reflective writing exercise to distil the main impressions of each transcription. This reflective writing process was also used in the case studies, after the full range of interviews from each case had been re-read.
The same rigour was applied when the transcriptions were finally coded in NVivo. Some sections of text were particularly dense with information, and where this occurred, NVivo made it possible for single passages of text to be tagged with multiple codes. This allowed the researcher to identify instances where sections of text had multiple codes and meanings, and where these patterns repeated with the same identifiers. NVivo also enabled the data to be segmented by case and employment category so that differences and commonalities between manager and employee interviews (and different cases) could be explored. This analytical gymnastics helped unearth the interrelationships between different pockets of information, and provided a deeper understanding of the change communication processes that took place in the two organisations. Further manipulation in NVivo generated reports that provided the basis for the findings and for selection of the sections of text used in the Results chapters.

3.7.2 Quantitative

In comparison to the qualitative component of the project the quantitative section was relatively easy to organise and analyse. As is typical of quantitative tools, the data analysis takes a more predictable path, and as the OCAI tool was a pre-existing instrument that had been validated, the process was relatively simple. The data in this study were analysed using the online OCAI software tool, which compares the organisation’s culture to the Competing Values Framework. Since this analysis was completed using a commercially available tool, the researcher did not have access to the raw data.

The analysis provided by OCAI described the current and preferred cultural make up of the organisations. These descriptions were provided in the form of tables, a graphic representation...
based on the Competing Values Framework, and accounts from the composite report. A copy of the OCAI report for each case study has been provided in Appendix 5. An example of the Competing Values Framework is shown below.

Figure 10. Graphic Depiction of Competing Values Framework.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological plans for the project. The mixed-methods, two-case approach was intended to provide greater understanding of the lived experience of organisational change. Its particular focus was to understand how communication can gain support for change. Used together, the two tools provided a comprehensive picture of both organisations and enhanced understanding of how they implemented change. Furthermore, the fortuitous development of access to two organisations from the same, local government, sector, enabled the study to draw comparisons that would not otherwise have been possible. The qualitative, phenomenological methodology, achieved largely through the interviews,
dominated the study and provided substantial and complex data from which to answer the research questions. The value of the quantitative aspect, which used the OCAI survey to determine the cultural make-up of both organisations, should not be underestimated, as it served to underpin and strengthen the qualitative findings; taking on significance not expected at the start of the project.

### 3.8.1 Credibility of the Research

One of the key objectives of this chapter was to demonstrate the rigour in planning this research project. There are several constructs to assist researchers in planning quality qualitative and case study research. Yin (1994) referred to construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability for case study projects, while Patton suggested rigorous techniques heightened the ‘validity, reliability and triangulation’ of a project (Patton, 1990, p. 461). Shenton (2004) recommended qualitative projects conform to Guba’s four constructs of qualitative research: credible, transferable, confirmable and dependable.

This study adopted Guba’s (1981) four constructs in defending its data collection and analysis, but has also referred to Yin’s (1994) case study work. In terms of credibility, this research project adopted a methodology consistent with the paradigmatic typology for a pragmatic/mixed-methods research project and the descriptions have clearly outlined how the research was conducted. As far as the organisations and participants are concerned, while the researcher was not known to either of the organisations involved, she was not unfamiliar with the culture of public sector organisations in Western Australia. The OCAI culture assessment assisted in obtaining a deeper understanding of the organisations’ cultural make-up and provided an additional level of familiarity with the organisation (Shenton, 2004).
From a scientific viewpoint the use of a validated, pre-existing culture assessment tool provides foundation that claims made are accurate and reliable. When coupled with the phenomenological approach, where the researcher’s neutrality is reflected in the data being unbiased. To support this, chapters 4 and 5 provide a comprehensive and objective account of the findings.

While the study falls short of triangulation of methods, the use of two methods is enhanced by the multiple sources (both cases and multiple informants in managers and employees) provide added strength to the data (Guba, 1981; Yin, 1994). Participants’ verification of their own feedback also augments the rigour of the findings (Guba, 1981). The multiple sources of evidence, chain of evidence and ability for informants to review their interview data also supports Guba’s (1981) credibility and Yin’s (1994) standards of construct validity.

Participants or informants were not randomly sampled, however their selection was not purposive either. Rather all employees were invited to participate, and thus self-selected their involvement. As willing informants feedback from participants was considered an honest reflection of their thoughts and feelings as they agreed to participate of their own free will (no inducement was promised). This process has reduced the chance of researcher bias in the sample. Questioning during the interviews was iterative, open-ended and designed to be probing in order to clarify the participants’ perspectives and query any contradictions. In addition the questions also sought insights and opinions from the participants, justifying Yin’s ‘informant’ title (1994, p. 84).
As required of a Masters dissertation, this project was a collaborative approach between the researcher and supervisors throughout the piloting, planning and re-framing of the project. Feedback from peers was also sought during the study. The student researcher was the only researcher involved in conducting interviews, which reduces the possibility of researcher procedures impacting on the results. Further credibility has been provided by the inclusion of sections of text from the transcriptions (including a participant audit trail) in Chapters 4 and 5.

In analysing and presenting the data in the following chapters, the researcher has identified only reasonable thematic patterns and only drawn key findings when the data is consistent across both case studies and prior research described in the literature reviewed for the study (Guba, 1981). In an approach consistent with the pragmatic paradigm these key findings have been referred to as ‘Warranted Assertions’ (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Lesser findings have been identified by the term ‘Inferred finding’ which ensures that this information is not over-claimed, but presented as possible topics for further research. As such, the Discussion chapter contains a congruent link between the key findings and the existing literature (Shenton, 2004).

While some qualitative research projects are criticised due to their perceived lack of generalisability (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005). Shenton (2004) discussed the difficulty for qualitative researchers to claim transferability, as it is usually not appropriate to generalise the findings of qualitative research to larger populations. In an effort to enhance the transferability of the research, the results chapters provide a descriptive background to each case study organisation (without compromising the anonymity of organisations and
individuals) so practitioners may decide whether the scenarios are reasonably comparable to their own (Guba, 1981).

This study has however benefited from its multiple case study design, providing a further element of external validity (Yin, 1994). Particularly due to their comparative nature, as both case studies were drawn from the same industry sector. Yin (1994) suggested evidence of multiple case studies might be more vigorously claimed and the researcher reservedly claims the distinctive findings of this project may offer some transferability to the local government sector. In addition, key findings have only been claimed in the Discussion where they are also supported by the literature, thus enhancing the external validity or generalisability of the study (Yin, 1994).

With regard to confirmability, while the study falls short of the three data-collection methods required of triangulation, it does include mixed methods, multiple cases and multiple sources of data. Moreover, the detailed descriptions provided in the methodology assist the reader to more fully understand the study, while the audit trail from transcription through to results, provides clarity on how the researcher interpreted the data (Guba, 1981; Yin, 1994).

Finally, the dependability construct relates to the ability to repeat the study. In this case, the provision of a detailed methodology, examples of data collection tools, use of an audit trail and a detailed description of the data-gathering procedures, makes the study reasonably repeatable for another researcher (Guba, 1981).
The next two chapters report the findings of each case study. Both of these chapters commences with a background on the change process, before detailing the results of the culture assessments. Finally, the major themes raised during the interviews are outlined, using excerpts from interviewee transcriptions to highlight particular themes and key findings.
Chapter Four
Results of Case Study 1

4.1 Case Study 1: Amalgamation

Chapters 4 and 5 introduce the two case studies in this research project. These results chapters aim to present the data and provide detail about each case with minimal interpretation from the researcher. Interpretations and key findings will be developed in the Discussion, chapter 6.

In this chapter, the details of Case Study 1, where the focus was on a local government organisation that had undergone an amalgamation (merger), are outlined. Chapter 5 presents a closer examination of Case Study 2, a local government organisation that had been through a whole-of-organisation, cultural and strategic transformation. This chapter opens with background information about the amalgamation process in Case Study 1 and the results of the OCAI culture assessment are also provided. The remainder of the chapter outlines the themes identified in the interviews with managers and employees.

A number of themes emerged from the manual coding of the transcriptions (see Appendix 9). These were refined and consolidated throughout the coding process under the following key themes: communicating change, consultation and participation, leadership, consequences of change, management intention and employee awareness. Within these themes, a bolded font has been used to highlight the use of key terms. While many interesting aspects emerged from
the interviews, the researcher focused on the key findings which would ultimately help address the overarching research question: *How does participative communication impact on change management receptiveness?*, by informing the answers to the four research questions:

- How was change communicated during the change management process?
- How did communication impact on participants in the change management process?
- How did participants react to the change management process?
- How do participative communication practices relate to organisational culture?

In order to report the findings consistently and preserve the anonymity of the organisations involved, some key terms in the transcriptions and quotes have been changed. For instance ‘transition team’ (the group charged with operationally implementing the change), has been used consistently in the remaining chapters. This will ensure that organisations cannot be identified by terminology. Where quotes are used they are set apart from the main text by the use of a different and smaller font. The position of the participants (manager or employee) has also been indicated after each quotation, along with the unique participant number which provides an audit trail, adding rigour to the construct validity of this project (Yin, 1994). See Appendix 1 for participant information.

### 4.1.1 Background

Case Study 1 investigated the merger of two neighbouring shires. Shire A was urban while Shire B was a sparsely populated rural shire. The outcome of the merger was amalgamation of the administrative and management functions into Shire A’s offices, with a satellite office set up in Shire B’s offices, located approximately 100 km from Shire A. The satellite office’s capacity to manage the business of the local community had been reduced and it essentially fulfilled a customer service role. While the amalgamation was voluntary, it was encouraged...
and supported by the WA state government, who contributed significant funding towards the cost of merging the two entities. Several interviewees were of the opinion that the amalgamation was inevitable and delays would have resulted in reduced support (funding).

The lead time was less than five months, so a transition team of employees was formed to manage the operational aspects of the merger. One manager reported that little planning had been undertaken to manage the human element of the change and that a preliminary culture assessment had not been completed.

Some employees interviewed expressed the view that the merger was more of a take-over. Several Shire A employees were cynical about the stated motivations, suggesting it had more to do with the state government’s funding. They suggested that the funding, along with the prospect of being a larger shire post-merger were the ultimate goals, rather than a genuine desire to work together. In contrast, participants from Shire B were of the opinion that the merger was important for the long-term viability of their area and was the right decision.

One manager indicated the funding allowed positions to be backfilled when employees were seconded to internal transition teams, who were responsible for managing the financial and operational aspects of the merger. Consultants such as lawyers, were also contracted with the funding. For many in Shire A the change had no real impact, yet some participants recognised and acknowledged the considerable impact of the change on the staff in Shire B, and there was a great deal of empathy at an employee level.
A number of recurring themes were identified in the interviews. These are outlined more fully in later sections.

**4.1.2 Cultural Assessment**

All staff members were invited to complete an online culture assessment survey. Twenty-one people in Case Study 1 anonymously completed the survey. The OCAI tool compares culture to the Competing Values Framework where the four main categories of culture are described as: clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy.

The OCAI assessment identified a mix of cultures in Case Study 1. The ‘hierarchy’ culture was the dominant or more evident (39.31 points), followed by ‘market’ culture (28.37), ‘adhocracy’ (16.96) and ‘clan’ (15.37 points). The mix of cultures can be viewed as positive in that it may allow organisations to respond more effectively to change as compared with single-dominant-culture organisations, where greater effort may be required to change the culture because people are set in their ways. Case Study 1 showed a mix of cultures with a preference for (hierarchical) planning and procedures (see Appendix 5).
In Case 1 ‘clan’ was the preferred culture, suggesting a desire for more of a ‘people’ focus, while the move away from ‘hierarchy’ indicates a desire for less formal structures. Cameron and Quinn (2006) suggested an organisation should take action to address workplace culture where results indicate a difference of greater than ten points between current and preferred cultures. In this study, the difference is greater than ten points in three areas: clan (+28.04), hierarchy (-15.52) and market (-13.91), and indicates there is an appetite for a significant shift towards a more people-focused (clan) culture. This would explain the incongruence or disconnect between current behaviours and the way people would like to be working.

Figure 11. OCAI Culture Profile - Case Study 1.
The Competing Values Framework considers six aspects of an organisation: dominant characteristics, organisational leadership, management of employees, organisational glue, strategic emphases and criteria for success. For each aspect, the predominant current culture was equally divided between ‘market’ and ‘hierarchy’, although ‘clan’ culture was preferred in all aspects. Graphic depictions of each aspect are included in Appendix 6.

Table 13. OCAI Culture Scores - Case Study 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Adhocracy</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Hierarchy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Characteristics</td>
<td>18.81</td>
<td>10.71</td>
<td>19.52</td>
<td>50.95</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39.05</td>
<td>21.90</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>20.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Leadership</td>
<td>13.90</td>
<td>16.71</td>
<td>43.81</td>
<td>25.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38.10</td>
<td>20.71</td>
<td>12.86</td>
<td>28.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of Employees</td>
<td>16.43</td>
<td>11.71</td>
<td>40.67</td>
<td>31.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41.67</td>
<td>18.10</td>
<td>12.86</td>
<td>27.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Glue</td>
<td>10.24</td>
<td>22.14</td>
<td>19.29</td>
<td>48.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46.19</td>
<td>15.95</td>
<td>19.29</td>
<td>18.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Emphases</td>
<td>11.67</td>
<td>24.29</td>
<td>24.05</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45.95</td>
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<td>11.76</td>
<td>21.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49.52</td>
<td>12.62</td>
<td>11.67</td>
<td>26.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The OCAI survey indicated this organisation’s dominant characteristics were governed by formal systems and procedures (hierarchy, 50.95). The considerable incongruence between current and preferred cultures (>10 points difference) suggested a need for change and a clear preference for a people-focused culture (there was a move away from ‘hierarchy’ (-30.19 to 20.71) and towards ‘clan’ (+20.24) and ‘adhocracy’ (+11.19)).

In relation to organisational leadership, the OCAI survey indicated that leaders in this organisation were hard drivers, competitive and singularly focused on results (market, 43.81)
rather than team builders or mentors (clan, 13.90). The incongruence (>10 points difference) between ‘market’ (-30.95 to 12.86) and ‘clan’ (+24.19 to 38.10) in the leadership aspect, suggested a desire for a shift in leadership style. Similarly, the management of employees aspect signalled a match with the market-driven leadership style. Staff had high workloads and there was a strong focus on achieving targets (market, 40.67). ‘Hierarchy’ (31.24) also influenced this aspect, with employees expressing assurance for their safety and predictable employment. Again, there was incongruence in the current and preferred cultures aspect (>10 points difference) with a preference for ‘clan’ culture (+25.24 to 41.67) and a move away from ‘market’ culture (-27.81 to 12.86), suggesting a desire for more familial management of employees.

Formal procedures and directions (hierarchy, 48.33) were the organisational glue that ensured this organisation ran smoothly. Again, there was incongruence (>10 points difference) with a ‘clan’ culture (+35.95 to 46.19), based on dependability, reliability and shared esteem, highly desired, and a move away from ‘hierarchy’ (-29.76 to 18.57). Efficiency, control and smooth operation associated with bureaucratic organisations (hierarchy, 40.00) were viewed as the main strategic emphases, while ‘adhocracy’ (24.29) recognised the need for new resources and addressing new challenges. Once again there was incongruence (>10 points difference), with a leaning towards a new cultural mix; a greater emphasis on relationships (clan +34.29 to 45.95) and a move away from ‘hierarchy’ (-18.43 to 21.57) and ‘market’ (-12.29 to 11.76) as strategic foci.

Finally, the organisation defined success in terms of reliability (hierarchy, 39.76). Other influences were ‘market’ (22.86) which suggested a need to be relevant in the marketplace, and ‘clan’ (21.19), indicative of an organisation concerned with human resources, team
building and staff commitment. The difference between current and preferred cultures was greater than 10 in three areas, suggesting a new cultural mix was highly desired, particularly true for ‘clan’ culture (+28.33 to 49.52) with a move away from ‘hierarchy’ (-13.57 to 26.19) and ‘market’ (-11.19 to 11.67) cultures.

Table 14. *OCAI Culture Congruence - Case Study 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Adhocracy</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Hierarchy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dominant Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>+20.24</td>
<td>+11.19</td>
<td>-1.19</td>
<td>-30.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational Leadership</strong></td>
<td>+24.20</td>
<td>+4.0</td>
<td>-30.95</td>
<td>+2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management of Employees</strong></td>
<td>+25.24</td>
<td>+6.39</td>
<td>-27.81</td>
<td>-3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational Glue</strong></td>
<td>+35.95</td>
<td>-6.19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-29.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Emphases</strong></td>
<td>+34.28</td>
<td>-3.58</td>
<td>-12.29</td>
<td>-18.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criteria for success</strong></td>
<td>+28.33</td>
<td>-3.52</td>
<td>-11.19</td>
<td>-13.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Case Study 1 the degree of incongruence between current and preferred cultures was very high. Of the 24 differences, 15 were greater than 10 points. Cameron and Quinn suggested that incongruences greater than 10 points meant change was desired. Of the 15, five were in the 10-20 range, six were in the 20-30 range, and four were over 30, indicating a strong desire for cultural change. This may also explain why employees in the organisation voiced feelings of disengagement and frustration. A full OCAI assessment can be found in Appendix 5 along with OCAI graphs in Appendix 6.
4.2 Communicating Change

This study used a phenomenological approach to gain an understanding of the lived experience of change. The following sections present the contents of almost five hours of interviews conducted with nine people in Case Study 1. Interviews were transcribed and manually coded by the researcher before being entered into NVivo for further coding and analysis. Identifying features were removed or changed to ensure the anonymity of participants and the organisations.

The time from making the decision to amalgamate to merge date was less than six months, so a transition team was established to manage the amalgamation. Its focus was primarily operational; to ensure the legal and financial aspects of the amalgamation were in place. The majority of costs associated with implementation of the change process were covered by funding from the state government.

In this case a common underlying theme was cynicism about the merger and the motivations for it. Consider the following statement from a Shire A employee:

‘To me it felt a lot like a takeover ...because to me an amalgamation is like taking on some of both parties’ ways and I don’t feel that really happened...’ (Employee 1.2.2)

Personnel who made up the transition team were mainly from the financial and legal departments. Managers admitted in hindsight that a more cross-functional team would have been more appropriate. This lack of cross-functional representation and feelings of exclusion from the process were raised as a criticism by several employees, who felt a sense of distrust and cynicism towards the transition team and the organisation as a whole. One employee said:
“...probably not having somebody from the different aspects of the organisation on their transition team....” (Employee 1.2.1).

Another said:

“Both parties need to be in the transition team, not just mostly one organisation” (Employee 1.2.4).

Exclusion from the process was expressed by various participants as the following quotes illustrate:

“Well we had a transition team who just holed up in this building here...” (Employee 1.2.3);

“We here at (Shire B) weren’t involved in the transition team as such” (Employee 1.2.4);

“...unless you were on that transition team I don’t think you were involved at all” (Employee 1.2.2);

“So (Shire A) had a transition team who were organising all the amalgamation type stuff... as far as being involved with the amalgamation, staff here (Shire B), from my understanding had none” (Employee 1.2.4); and

“It was just all done by a set team. The only involvement I had was testing the databases when they were first merged” (Employee 1.2.2).

These examples demonstrate that employees felt the process was not participative or engaging.

Some employees indicated they first heard about the planned amalgamation through local media. Such comments were generally delivered in a cynical or critical way, giving the impression that staff were overlooked and not considered a priority:

“Probably the newspaper – basically I find out most things in this organisation through the newspaper (laughing)” (Employee 1.2.2); and

“There was stuff in the press and there was a bit in shire documentation, but other than that I don’t think it was very interactive at all” (Employee 1.2.3).

When interviewees were asked to recall the ways the amalgamation plans were communicated, several mentioned newsletters and emails:

“What I remember back then was the use of the newsletters. I don’t personally remember other forms of communication standing out” (Employee 1.2.6);
“I was cool getting all the newsletters and finding out all the goss from everyone else…” (Employee 1.2.6);
“I remember there was a number of newsletters that came out quite regularly” (Employee 1.2.6);
“…I took notice of the emails because you read that and ask questions…” (Employee 1.2.1); “I think it would have been through email probably” (Employee 1.2.2);
“Bits of information on the internet, oh and email occasionally” (Employee 1.2.3);
“I think emails were probably the worst, I mean newsletters were fine but emails were the worst because in some respects I think they tended to confuse some people” (Manager 1.1.1); and
“Emails – if you are busy you don’t read emails properly” (Employee 1.2.1).

Some interviewees indicated their line manager provided them with information about the amalgamation or they received information in a meeting. For example:

“Through my team leader I’d say I found most of it. I don’t remember too many full staff meetings or information sessions with all staff” (Employee 1.2.2);
“My manager at the time was very open; he’d go to a meeting and come back and he’d say ‘this is what these bastards have said – rah, rah, rah’….” (Employee 1.2.1);
“I think (manager’s name) was giving us as much information as he could give us” (Employee 1.2.4);
“There were a couple of stuff like conference things that happened” (Employee 1.2.1); and
“We were just told what was happening. There was no great impact…” and “(manager’s name) at (business unit) would have told us at a staff meeting. I am pretty sure it would have been at a staff meeting she told us” (Employee 1.2.7).

Staff in Shire B were most greatly impacted by the changes. Managers who supervised these staff indicated they had held workshops and conducted meetings:

“Well we had workshops; like this is a small office, I don’t just sit in me office and don’t walk the talk. I tried to pass on the minutes of the transition meetings” (Manager 1.1.2); and
“And we did go out there and speak to them” (Manager 1.1.1).

Participants had the impression that, while personal, the communication was essentially one-way (monological). In the rare instances where a two-way conversation or discussion took
place it was mostly two-way asymmetrical communication, and the organisation was not genuinely listening to the employee or willing to change the outcomes.

One employee indicated their line manager withheld information about the change management process which caused a great deal of frustration:

“If you didn’t have a manager that was very forthcoming in what was going on you really didn’t know anything anyway, like our manager at the time wasn’t very forthcoming in what was going on so you were kind of always left in the dark” (Employee 1.2.1).

In other instances a manager indicated there were times when they were not sure of the latest plans and therefore could not pass on information. In the majority of instances, interviewees also recalled face-to-face communication and meetings with line managers to deliver information about change. While those receiving this communication were more positive, there was still the impression they were being told (monologic) rather than being given an opportunity to discuss. This caused uncertainty for staff who felt they could be affected by the changes. Those with uncommunicative managers hinted at distrust towards the manager.

Some participants could not recall communication about the amalgamation and stated:

“I don’t remember, there may have been, but it doesn’t stand out in my mind” (Employee 1.2.6);

“I honestly can’t think of anything. It was almost like it was happening in another world; like it didn’t have that much impact on me” (Employee 1.2.3); and

“Nothing really stands out in my mind about how we heard about it all” (Employee 1.2.7).

Many interviewees took the opportunity to express their preferred approach to change management communication. In most instances a more personal and participative approach was desired, as indicated by the following quotations:
“Well I think the communication that has the best impact in any situation is personal – face-to-face, and you know, call a meeting within the directorates or something for all staff” (Employee 1.2.2);

“Face-to-face has got to be better. Take the time to go and see the people” (Employee 1.1.1);

“I do like the personal approach, I do like people telling you what is going on” (Employee 1.2.6);

“Communication - maybe more communication. Chalk and Talk or whatever” (Employee 1.2.4);

“I’d like to be included in small group discussions. And backed up by some written information” (Employee 1.2.3); and

“It could definitely have been communicated better; more get togethers of the actual staff before” (Employee 1.2.5).

According to one manager, the transition team’s plan for the amalgamation process didn’t prioritise the communication aspect of change as much as it should have.

“There was actually a project plan and in all honesty I don’t think we stuck to it. ... I think we just ran by the seat of our pants and then went ‘Oh shivers, we should have communicated that’...” (Manager 1.1.1); and

“We issued a newsletter month to month, though I think we slipped up on some of those to be perfectly honest, um I think we were too busy doing and in all honesty you know there’s a weakness” (Manager 1.1.1).

For this particular manager a key learning was that change management processes should be supported by a communication plan with multiple communication channels. More face-to-face communication was also recommended as these quotations indicate:

“Start earlier. Stick to a communication plan – have a really robust communication plan; and if you started earlier it should help” (Manager 1.1.1);

Communication, recognise the impact on staff early. Deal with the potential impact early. Have someone walking around ‘OK what do you think? How is it going? You are in the picture’ because that person is going to get more out of the informal (conversation), I mean that is the other thing go and see the people face-to-face. Face to face for staff wise has got to be best and more regular meetings with our staff. (Manager 1.1.1); and

“The emails, I don’t think they worked. We should have done more one on ones or face-to-face – that is the best way. In hindsight that’s the best way. The newsletters are a good interim thing” (Manager 1.1.1)
Employees also indicated they would like greater involvement and access to the big picture view of the change management process:

“Maybe how the process is going to unfold” (Employee 1.2.4); and

“I think it would have been nice to have had an opportunity to have some involvement” (Employee 1.2.3).

Many felt the organisation didn’t sell the change and as a result, employees didn’t always understand the purpose and benefits of the amalgamation. Some employees felt they could not explain to others what the benefits of the amalgamation were supposed to be. This low level of employee buy-in created cynicism about the motivations for the amalgamation, as can be seen from the following quotations:

“I think it would have been really good to have included all the staff in what was happening, with information, and possibly to let us know what the advantages actually were for the organisation and the region” (Employee 1.2.3);

“I couldn’t tell you exactly what the advantages are for us being amalgamated with Shire B” (Employee 1.2.3); and

“They’re so different from us. I thought that we wouldn’t have benefited from amalgamating with them. I felt they might think they are not benefiting very much from joining us” (Employee 1.2.6).

One manager also indicated that selling the change was a shortcoming of the communication:

...How well they’d actually sold it to them, where they had said “this is a great idea, we are amalgamating” you know, I couldn’t actually find things where they had said, ‘we really believe in this, we think you should believe in this’. (Manager 1.1.1)

The use of informal communication through the workplace grapevine was evident during the change process. A number of staff commented, as follows:

“There is always a lot of rumour and innuendo with amalgamation and that is why I took notice of the emails... I never got involved in any gossip and any of that sort of stuff... the rumour and innuendo will get you every single time. And that is where it falls down” (Employee 1.2.1);
“Finding out the goss from everyone else...” (Employee 1.2.6); and

“...because it was unknown... there were still concerns about whether our guys had their job, and you know the rumours were running around...”. (Manager 1.1.2)

Managers who led the amalgamation for Shire A also acknowledged grapevine communication existed and indicated that it impacted positively on the amalgamation process by highlighting when an issue had been overlooked. The following comments from participants elucidate:

“Some of the operational teams would say ‘I’ve been talking to (Shire B) and they think such and such’ and in all fairness to Shire B, they’re obviously intelligent people, they would raise things and we’d go ‘oh yeah, thank you, we forgot about that’ ...” (Manager 1.1.1); and:

I think it was fairly active. We would hear things from Shire B and that sort of thing. Some things you’d hear and you’d go ‘What? No! I don’t think so’ .... And sometimes if people did go out there they would get more information than what we would have if we had done a formal type of thing. There wasn’t too much of it, but yeah it did help in some ways and I think it just plugged a gap. In a way if we had been more active on the communication then we wouldn’t have had the grapevine sort of thing. (Manager 1.1.1)

Symbols and artefacts are known to provide evidence of culture. The following quotes acknowledge some of the symbolic attempts that were made to merge the organisations:

“It does feel different, the logo changed. I reckon that was really special. In the prior amalgamation they just threw it out the window and they created a whole new one...people kind of lost their identity. I thought it was really appropriate to amalgamate the two logos into what we have now... It tells the two sides to the story, so that was very good” (Employee 1.2.6); and

(On amalgamation date) “we had our bus and went out to Shire B and Shire B came in and we met on the middle of the road and there was people and photographs and then we went to Shire B and had a BBQ lunch and then we came back to Shire A and had a thing here as well” (Employee 1.1.1).

Throughout the interviews Shire B staff indicated maintaining their local identity had been an important discussion point in planning the merger, as indicated by the following quotes:

“One of the main concerns for (Shire B) was local identity, local workforce, maintaining a place manager...” (Employee 1.1.2);
“One of the things that went was the local number plates. And we fought against that because that was part of our local identity” (Employee 1.2.5); and

“...and there was a lot of people afraid that we would lose our local identity...we can’t lose our local identity, the town is still here. But, they have to understand that over there (in Shire A) too” (Employee 1.2.5).

As far as **branding** was concerned, the organisation’s logos (on corporate documents, signage etcetera) were a source of frustration for some participants. For some interviewees from Shire A, where little impact was felt, it was the only sign that the two organisations had merged:

“The biggest thing that affected us was the practical implementation of a new name and logo. Things like getting the new stuff in really didn’t happen very quickly...we still don’t have a new style guide for example...” (Employee 1.2.7).

Whether it was the act of uniting the organisation or a symbolic message of unity is not clear, however the message was positively accepted by employees.

The **vernacular** or turn of phrase used in organisations can also be regarded as symbolic. Throughout the interviews, the wording and statements used by people from both shires suggested a **power-play** between the two organisations. The use of language that indicated dislike or distrust signalled an ‘us and them’ attitude between the two organisations. In some cases the statements were empathetic but condescending at the same time, as the following quotes illustrate:

“...but they have to understand that over there (in Shire A) too” (Employee 1.2.5);

“We don’t have too much to do with them out there” (of Shire B) (Employee 1.2.6);

“I feel like I now work for (new amalgamated name), but hang on we’ve got (town name), that’s right – what’s the difference?” (Employee 1.2.3);

“...so all of a sudden we were dumped with (Shire B) and not really wanting it” (Employee 1.2.2);

“Really I don’t think there are too many of them that care about (Shire B) really, it is just too far away” (Employee 1.2.1);
“Some of the managers didn’t realise – ‘oh we’ve gotta go out there?’” (Manager 1.1.1);
“I’ve seen one lady from Shire B....” (again no name) (Employee 1.2.3);
“I think we maybe had one or two visits from them out here” (Employee 1.2.4);
“...and we did go out there and speak to them...” (no use of names... suggestion of one-way communication and being told) (Manager 1.1.1);
“It was all ‘we have to do it Shire A’s way’ – can’t do it Shire B’s way anymore” (Employee 1.2.6); and
“I didn’t really have too much of an opinion, other than I’d never been to Shire B, I have never been to Shire B” (Employee 1.2.7).

Other, more empathetic, comments included:

It would have been a huge impact on them, compared to us. They had to start all the new and different systems and the library lady I know had to start doing things our way, not her way, which is tricky when you have been doing there for 20 years or whatever, So yeah, I think maybe not so much us – I don’t know what we could have done (interviewee used no names and exaggerated information – Shire B library officer had worked for 7 years). (Employee 1.2.7)
“...poor Shire B people are coming to terms with this bureaucracy that is driving them mad” (Employee 1.2.1);
“The people at Shire B got totally left out – they had no idea....” (Employee 1.2.1);
(about email) “I think they tended to confuse some people especially like the (Shire B) people” (Employee 1.1.1); and
“They are so different from us” (Employee 1.2.6).

4.3 Consultation and Participation

A number of comments were made about the lack of consultation and exclusion from the amalgamation process. As discussed in the previous section, the transition team was not cross-functional, and a number of employees suggested this limited its ability to make good decisions about policies and procedures. The following comments illustrate:

(about the make-up of the transition team) “You’re not going to get each field if you don’t put one person on to do that sort of thing...they need to be a bit more diversified ....well you need someone from here and... someone from there – who do different sorts of jobs” (Employee 1.2.1);
(regarding Shire B’s Australia Post box) “I’ve had to fight for the post box (at Shire B) because they were going to close that and I said ‘I am also the library and licensing and I still need
those things to come to me. If you close our letterbox I won’t get those things”. (Employee 1.2.5); and

I think more communication with the people that do the day-to-day work of the organisation you know, they’re the people that deal with public every day and they have... general feeling of what is out there, like us (business area) officers we are talking to people every day and we are hearing their concerns... So they could probably get good ideas from people on the lower levels. (Employee 1.2.2).

The following quotations from an employee who felt their input could have improved the change outcomes:

I did go out to Shire B after we did amalgamate and a gentleman came into the counter and asked about a town planning scheme amendment and they had no information on it out there. So I rang and spoke to someone in town planning – and they said “oh yes, it is on our planning drive (computer) and it is not on the public drive”. ...I thought no wonder they are feeling so ripped off ... it was embarrassing for them. (Employee 1.2.1);

They could have asked, and the thing was too, if you didn't have a manager that was very forthcoming in what was going on you really didn’t know anything anyway....and then you get told “this is how it is going to be” and you go “well that is not going to work”... then they try it and it doesn’t work; but you are not allowed to say “I told you so” but you can look (laughs). (Employee 1.2.1);

And then they decided that all the building applications would be lodged at Shire A and they (Shire B) would be left out of it – which I thought was really (pause) stupid... I said “look I think that is really stupid because you are going to the Shire B office and having to put the application in a box to come to Shire A... wouldn’t it be better if we sent a building surveyor once a fortnight or when they had a couple of applications?” So they tried their thing and it didn’t work, so they ended up sending a building surveyor out to Shire B every few weeks. (Employee 1.2.1); and

And they said oh yes, it is on our planning drive and I said, well that’s helpful are these people out here supposed to answer these questions if they can’t get onto the planning drive and it is not in a public drive. There were little things like that and I thought no wonder they are feeling so ripped off... I said to to my line supervisor: ‘does anyone send these to Shire B’? Does this actually go to the Shire B – and she said ‘probably not’ (Employee 1.2.1).

Of the employees not included, many voiced a sense of exclusion or disengagement and being on the periphery of the process:

“It was almost like it was happening in another world” (Employee 1.2.3);

“The people at Shire B got totally left out – they had no idea – when I went out there for day – they had no idea” (Employee 1.2.1);
“In the lead up I felt like we were going along for the ride, as were all the staff members that weren’t actively involved in the transition team…so purely on a spectator level prior...” (Employee 1.2.6); and

“I think it’s just overall, not specifically that changed, I tend to feel like I am on the periphery of this organisation that just revolves around – absolute bobbing along... just on the edge of it. You know, that is how it makes me feel” (Employee 1.2.3).

There was an apparent desire for participation and inclusion in the process of change as evidenced by these quotes:

I think it would have been really good to have included all staff in what was happening, with information and possibly to let us know what the advantages actually were for the organisation and the region. And yeah, I think it would have been nice for an opportunity for involvement. (Employee 1.2.3); and

If they want to make sure they are getting through to the audience they need to ask the audience what they need to do to get through to them...it’s increasing inclusivity...people want to be heard... but I think consultation first would be my first step. (Employee 1.2.6).

Other comments included:

“So just tell me what you are going to do, and what is going to happen and ask for more input” (Employee 1.2.1); and

“...with a few changes and maybe at the start, getting everyone involved in it might have been better” (Manager 1.1.2).

The following comment indicates that the process needed to be genuinely participative in order to be valued by employees:

“And you get people coming along and they don’t discount what you have to say but they don’t really listen” (Employee 1.2.5).

4.4 Leadership

The role of leadership in delivering change has been the subject of many academic texts. In Case Study 1, a number of comments on leadership were noted. Interestingly, only one person commented on the current CEO’s dynamism as a leader. Most interviewees mentioned
leadership in reference to their line manager or head of department. The following comments highlight the positive regard and trust some staff had for their line managers:

“My current manager is much more approachable and much more interested in what is going on in the day world of his team, he doesn’t hide anything from us” (Employee 1.2.1);

“I just left it to her because she was such a confident person and I just had complete faith in her that she had the ability to do what had to be done” (Employee 1.2.2); and

“He defended us” (Employee 1.2.5).

Interviewees in Case Study 1 also provided examples of poor communication and dissemination of information by leaders, as the following quotes illustrate:

I think it starts up high. It starts at the top level and has to filter down. But you have to have managers and supervisors and directors and the CEO that will filter that down and be open and transparent about it. …when you’ve got a manager who has got control issues – you’ve got no hope. (Employee 1.2.1); and

Just ensure that information that they think is being fed to the lower levels, just ensure that is getting to them, because the way it works now is the CEO meets with the Directors, the Directors meet with the managers, and the managers are then supposed to relay to who they manage. Three or four levels down. It is not getting there – it is not getting there’. (Employee 1.2.2).

The lack of communication and dissemination of information was commented on in a few interviews in Case Study 1; often with a sense of frustration and disillusionment.

Change management programs are sometimes led or facilitated by an external consultant. In Case Study 1 it was predominantly led by an internal transition team who did not adequately address the human aspects of change. In hindsight the managers admitted this was a shortcoming:

It’s from a human perspective that is something that has to start right as soon as it is decided. Or you would bring someone in every two weeks, or even every month… just to walk around the place and go “how’s it going?” That is what you need to do. ... And to recognise the loss to the smaller community was huge; to us it wasn’t huge. (Manager 1.1.1); and
Change management for staff would need to start a lot earlier, right from just about day one, you know, two groups coming together “we are thinking about amalgamating” – “right let’s get our staff involved” bring the right people in. .... I’d strongly recommend you bring in an independent person, qualified with a good background, because they are brilliant. (Manager 1.1.2).

4.5 Consequences of Change

For some staff, particularly those in Shire B, there was little certainty about the future. Initially there were concerns that some staff would be made redundant, since much of the administrative function for Shire B was absorbed by Shire A. Later there was resistance to learning new roles and systems. Below are comments from Shire B staff who acknowledged the uncertainty and resentment towards the changes that were taking place.

The change management side of it I was pushing it for quite a while... because it was unknown... there were some concerns about whether the guys had their job, and you know the rumours were running around ... their psychological impacts and that sort of thing; we didn’t do a lot of work on that. (Manager 1.1.2);

To me it felt like a takeover ... it was just more a takeover than an amalgamation – because to me an amalgamation is like taking on some of both parties’ ways and I don’t feel that really happened... (Employee 1.2.2);

...When we got into the amalgamation and there was really the issues starting to show up, Shire A, through their employee assistance scheme had funding ... for a couple of meetings out here with a psychologist, and he worked with us, with the staff and that was good and that sort of work should have started early, well before. (Manager 1.1.2); and

“There was quite a large negative impact, but it only came out at the last few weeks” (Employee 1.2.2).

Despite Shire B accepting that amalgamation was the best strategy for the future, the change process nevertheless had consequences. These impacts were not immediately recognisable as illustrated by the following:

“We recognised that it was something and we should have figured it out, I think we thought well ‘You wanted to come with us! – it’s not forced”’ (Manager 1.1.1); and

“I think that was the interesting thing that came out of it; that everyone was affected by amalgamation in some form or another” (Manager 1.1.1).
For some the amalgamation was a non-event, particularly employees from Shire A. The following comments were made by these participants:

“It was just like a non-event almost” (Employee 1.2.3);

“Operationally, from our team’s perspective it wasn’t like on (amalgamation date) everything changed” (Employee 1.2.6);

“Well, we were sort of just told what was happening and there was no great impact on us” (Employee 1.2.7); and

“I don’t think it would have affected the Shire A staff too much apart from the extra workload” (Employee 1.2.2).

As an aside, very few of the transition team interviewed for this case study remained working for the organisation. The following observation was made by one of the managers:

I think the change management there was pretty bad. They came together as a team and worked really well, and had a lot of interest and were passionate about it, and then when it was finished they were just thrown back in, and some of them went back to a desk that wasn’t there anymore- it had been moved, and that type of thing. So I don’t think it was handled very well – my opinion again – I don’t think their Director handled that really well, I think that should have been, they should probably have been counselled, because the impacts on them was enormous. (Manager 1.1.2)

It became apparent in the interviews that the organisation had focused on the operational aspects of amalgamation and underestimated the impact of the human aspect on the change process. The following comments were made by managers:

There was an expectation that we have knocked off, and came back on (amalgamation date) that everything would be honky dory, and it just doesn’t work that way because you have got the human element there and the change management and that sort of thing wasn’t really well done. (Manager 1.1.2);

“Just little things, but boy do they add up, They add up considerably and it’s that on top of the human aspect is quite incredibly trying” (Manager 1.1.1);

And so you can do all your reporting etc., etc., that sort of thing. But I think ultimately out of all of this, and I am sure you are quite well aware of this and so is everyone, that it is the human factor that is the key, whereas the operational ‘haven’t got a seal’ – well we won’t be sealing anything this week... (Manager 1.1.1); and

And you know there is a lot of documentation out there about how you do it (manage change) ...you just gotta make sure that you bring your right people in, involve everyone, cause they are the ones. (Manager 1.1.2).
Shire B staff generally enjoyed **improved working conditions** and remuneration as a result of the amalgamation. However, a number of Shire B staff indicated this windfall came with a **loss of status**: some felt their skills were devalued, while others lamented it was difficult to maintain their skills if they were not using them. The following quotes explain:

“My role changed dramatically, basically I haven’t got the contact with the councillors I used to, but there is a lot of stuff I am still doing... lost a bit of authority, that type of thing” (Manager 1.1.2);

“(Shire A) were fighting tooth and nail not to relinquish to us any authorisation to do anything” (Employee 1.2.5);

“To me it was like we’d gone from the right to do things, to no right at all - like we couldn’t even order stationary. The secretary would have to ring up (Shire A)” (Employee 1.2.5);

I lost a lot of my control over my job. I had people coming in and telling me that I had to do this, and I have to do that, I have to change this... and it sculpted out a huge proportion of my job. ...And you get people coming along from Shire A... but they don’t really listen because that was your job, but it is no longer your job, because we are doing your job. (Employee 1.2.5);

I was going over to Shire A twice a week and that was giving me satisfaction because I was actually getting working and working hard. Then come back out here and it was more relaxed ....less satisfaction I suppose with my job... I don’t do as much as I used too. I’ve taken on another person’s job now. (Employee 1.2.4);

Sometimes I feel yeah, I am being short changed, not being able to do what I used to do, but I am getting paid more, and I am not as stressed...I feel I am losing some skills I had and I could go and get those skills by moving jobs, but my pay wouldn’t be as good. (Employee 1.2.4);

I did lose a few things, and we adjusted. The staff from Shire A, to start with were awesome, and again it was a case of they had no idea what it was like for us over here. We wear five hats, over there they wear one and only do one job, so to start off with they came and scalped the place, they took anything to do with permits, anything to do with legal documents, they took all those and they took all the main paperwork and then it was their ringing and saying ‘where is this?’ and we couldn’t look it up, because they took it over there. (Employee 1.2.5); and

Well I think a lot of (Shire A) staff don’t understand that we wear lots of hats out here; and we have a broader knowledge than what some of them have. (Employee 1.2.4).

Staff from Shire A showed empathy and concern for staff at Shire B, because of the way they perceived their treatment throughout the amalgamation process. One staff member coined the
term ‘professional guilt’ to describe how they felt, having been relatively unaffected by comparison to the treatment Shire B staff received. The following quotes illustrate:

“It would have been a huge impact on them compared to us, they had to start all the new and different systems…” (Employee 1.2.7);

“I think the Shire B staff would have really felt let down by the process” (Employee 1.2.2);

“When I went out to the Shire B office to meet them I was very concerned that they knew nothing. I thought that was very unfair” (Employee 1.2.1); and

I felt for the staff in Shire B after the amalgamation because you know, they had a lot of responsibility and doing a lot of stuff, and all of a sudden they just became more or less customer service officers, because there wasn’t much more – it was all sort of taken away from them. (Employee 1.2.2)

Some employees felt undervalued and provided examples of how they resisted or undermined the organisational effort. This is possible either as an overt (active) expression of undermining or a passive lack of involvement, sometimes referred to as ‘white-anting’ or covert undermining that is difficult to detect. The following quotes explain:

“I’ve pretty much just ignored it and just sort of got on with what I have to do - and didn’t really pay much interest at all... I’ll just get on with it with anything whatsoever” (Employee 1.2.1); and

I am happy that we are having a change leadership next year, only because at the moment it is not an organisation I want to work for... I’m just here now because I’m waiting for something to change, but you know, but I think there are some people like me... so yeah, unless something is done. (Employee 1.2.3).

The final example was not as easily captured in a quote. The role of an employee, who was greatly impacted and concerned about her long-term future, was to train others in the organisation. This participant conducted the training, but the impression was they didn’t explain everything fully so that the trainee would fail, resulting in a competence power play from which the trainer emerged as the expert in the area. This employee also described shortcutting the system rather than follow organisational procedures. In Shire B there may have been a culture of undermining bureaucratic process.
Post amalgamation, some employees expressed frustration, disillusionment, concern, wariness and uncertainty about their workplace, yet many were hopeful improvements could be achieved. Their comments displayed a strong desire for improved organisational culture, such as:

“We’ve created an organisation that we haven’t addressed the cultures and so really even though we are a large organisation, my personal opinion is we need to move forward and create its own culture” (Manager 1.1.1);
“We need to look at working across teams I think” (Employee 1.2.3);
“We need to put in some program to actually bring people together” (Manager 1.1.1);
“Trying to build a bit of unity” (Manager 1.1.2); and
“I think it needs to be pulled together into an organisation that is moving forward supporting each other...actually knowing where we are going” (Employee 1.2.3).

4.6 Management Intention and Employee Awareness

Managers commenced the merger process with their eye firmly on the formal outcomes to be achieved by the amalgamation deadline. The organisation had a bureaucratic culture profile and this focus is consistent with that intent. In addition, the transition team’s focus was on the operational outcomes of the amalgamation, and didn’t take the time to consider the human aspects of change management. In hindsight managers agreed a greater effort was needed to communicate and engage staff through the change process, and may have lessened the negative affects felt by staff members. Employees were aware of the amalgamation from the various communications. Most indicated they could have been more involved and contributed specialist knowledge of their areas.

4.7 Summary

This study sought to answer questions about how change was communicated in workplaces and to gain a deeper understanding of employee reaction to change communication. The
evidence which emerged from Case Study 1 indicates the organisation was in a state of unrest. The culture analysis revealed a concerning disparity between the current and preferred cultures, possibly exacerbated by two culturally different organisations merging in the first place.

In this chapter the key themes of communicating change, consultation and participation, leadership, consequences of change, management intention and employee awareness, as they relate to this case, are outlined. The interviews revealed that the change process was largely managed by an internal transition team and focused on the operational aspects of the change. Its composition was criticised by employees for lacking cross-function representation to ensure all areas contributed to the process. Communication about change was predominantly formal and impersonal (email and newsletters) which some employees found helpful, but others either couldn’t recall or found unhelpful. Employees also commented favourably on information received from line managers and on the active grapevine.

Some employees expressed a sense of exclusion from the change process, primarily due to the transition team not being cross-functional and the lack of engagement and information about the amalgamation. The lack of communication theme also dominated the ‘leadership’ and ‘management intention and employee awareness’ sections.

Managers acknowledged that they didn’t fully appreciate the human aspect of change. This area was frequently identified as a shortcoming in the Consequences of Change section. Some in the organisation viewed the change as a ‘non-event’, but for many of those interviewed the
change impacted significantly on their work satisfaction. Importantly, there was great
empathy on the part of many employees for those most affected.

The following chapter outlines the findings from Case Study 2. Thereafter, Chapter 6
(Discussion) provides insightful comparisons between the two case studies and the
information derived from the literature review. Finally, the research questions are addressed.
Chapter Five
Results of Case Study 2

5.1 Case Study 2: Culture Change

This chapter introduces the second case study in this research project. Both results chapters aim to present the data and provide detail about each case with minimal interpretation from the researcher. Interpretations and key findings will be developed in the Discussion, chapter 6.

Chapter 5 outlines Case Study 2 and focuses on the experiences of a local government organisation that underwent a whole-of-organisation cultural and strategic transformation. This chapter begins with background information on the cultural and strategic transformation in Case Study 2 and details the results of the OCAI culture assessment. The remainder of the chapter discusses the themes that emerged from the interviews with managers and employees after manual coding of the transcriptions (Appendix 9). These were refined and amalgamated through the coding process under the following key themes: communicating change, consultation and participation, leadership, consequences of change, management intention and employee awareness. Within these themes, a bolded font has been used to highlight the use of key terms. The researcher focused on the key findings which would ultimately help address the overarching research question; *How does participative communication impact on change management receptiveness?*, by informing the answers to the four research questions:

- How was change communicated during the change management process?
- How did communication impact on participants in the change management process?
- How did participants react to the change management process?
How do participative communication practices relate to organisational culture?

In order to report the findings consistently and preserve the anonymity of the participating organisations, some key terms in the transcriptions and quotes have been changed. For instance, transition team, COP\textsuperscript{7} and MET\textsuperscript{8}, have all been changed and used consistently in the remaining chapters. This aids the reader while ensuring the anonymity of the organisations who used identifying terms. Where quotes are used they are set apart from the main text by the use of a different and smaller font. The position of the participant (manager or employee) has also been indicated after each quote, along with the unique code for the participant, to provide an audit trail, adding rigour to the construct validity of this project (Yin, 1994). See Appendix 1 for participant information.

5.1.1 Background

The second case study examined a whole-of-organisation cultural and strategic transformation (herein called ‘transformation’) undertaken by a shire. The transformation was intended to improve the organisation’s strategic outcomes by refocusing on external outcomes (such as providing better services for ratepayers, residents and businesses), rather than the internal machinations of the work. The process was also aimed at pushing responsibility for decision making to lower levels within the organisation.

For many, the change process appeared to have started with the arrival of a new CEO. Senior managers had recognised that the organisation was not functioning efficiently and had already commenced a process to review their leadership styles with 360-degree reviews, and

\textsuperscript{7} COP - Cultural Optimisation Process

\textsuperscript{8} MET - Motivating, Encouraging and Thoughtful – these were the organisational values
implement a preliminary organisational culture assessment prior to the arrival of the new CEO. In particular, one Executive Director had already started to restructure his business unit. In the interview, he indicated this had positively prepared his team for the changes ahead, lowered resistance to change, and brought about positive modelling. This study concentrated on implementing the transformation alongside the organisation’s new strategic plan following the appointment of a CEO. The process had been largely implemented at the time of the study, but was nevertheless ongoing because it continued to embed changed cultural behaviours, adjust and review.

In terms of its structure, the organisation was led by a CEO. The CEO’s role had both an internal and external focus: externally it linked directly with the elected mayor, councillors and ratepayers. In Case Study 2, the CEO was also the most senior staff member on the organisational chart, with four executive directors reporting to the CEO, each responsible for managing one of four business units within the shire. There were two further levels of managers below the CEO and executive directors, these being: executive managers and managers (who operated at a tactical level). While the organisation appeared to have a hierarchical structure, one of the aims of the transformation was to push decision-making further down the line. This was intended to stimulate service delivery by removing work avoidance or ‘buck-passing’ by lower-level staff, and reduce the inclination of senior staff to micro manage. Moreover, it freed up senior employees to focus on the strategic direction of the organisation. According to senior managers, the organisation’s leadership team attempted to create a learning culture throughout the process and was tolerant of mistakes.

A number of recurring themes were identified from the interviews. These are outlined more fully in the sections following the Cultural Assessment results.
5.1.2 Cultural Assessment

As in the previous case study, all staff members were invited to participate. Twenty-four people anonymously completed the survey in Case Study 2.

In this case study the OCAI assessment identified a mix of cultures, with two dominant cultures; ‘clan’ being the most influential (33.06 points) closely followed by ‘hierarchy’ (32.50). ‘Adhocracy’ (17.48) and ‘market’ (16.97 points) cultures were also evident but less dominant. Quinn and Cameron (2006) considered a mix of cultures positively as it improves the adaptability of organisations compared to a single-dominant culture, where it may take greater effort to change the culture because people are set in their ways. In this instance, there was a mix of cultures with a preference for a people-friendly environment with planning and procedures. A full copy of the OCAI reports can be found in Appendix 5.
Importantly, both the preferred and present cultures in Case Study 2 were ‘clan’, suggesting a congruence and preference for a people focus. The move was away from a ‘hierarchy’ culture (-12.5) suggesting a desire for less formal structures. Much more congruence is evident between present and preferred cultures in Case Study 2. The other three culture types all had less than ten-point differences: ‘adhocracy’ (+8.28); ‘clan’ (+5.97) and ‘market’ (-2.11).

Once again the six aspects of the Competing Values Framework (dominant characteristics, organisational leadership, management of employees, organisational glue, strategic emphasis,
criteria for success) were considered. For each aspect, the dominant current culture was shared between ‘hierarchy’ and ‘clan’, and as in Case Study 1, ‘clan’ was preferred in each instance. Graphic depictions of each aspect are included in Appendix 6.

Table 15. OCAI Culture Scores - Case Study 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Adhocracy</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Hierarchy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dominant Characteristics</td>
<td>31.88</td>
<td>15.71</td>
<td>18.88</td>
<td>33.54</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39.17</td>
<td>25.42</td>
<td>16.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisational Leadership</td>
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<td>17.29</td>
<td>18.54</td>
<td>33.75</td>
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<td>41.04</td>
<td>25.21</td>
<td>10.21</td>
<td>23.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of Employees</td>
<td>37.50</td>
<td>15.83</td>
<td>18.13</td>
<td>28.54</td>
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<td>42.29</td>
<td>25.42</td>
<td>12.92</td>
<td>19.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Glue</td>
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<td>17.71</td>
<td>20.63</td>
<td>32.50</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.83</td>
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<td>Strategic Emphases</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Criteria for success</td>
<td>37.50</td>
<td>16.04</td>
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Shaded: Current dominant culture
Shaded: Preferred dominant culture

The current culture profile identifies ‘hierarchy’ (33.54) as the dominant characteristic, with ‘clan’ (31.88) also prominent. Significantly, the preferred culture profile suggests participants wanted an ‘adhocracy’ (+9.71) and ‘clan’ (+7.29) culture rather than a ‘hierarchy’ (-15) culture; resulting in ‘clan’ scoring the most for Dominant Characteristics (39.17) in a preferred cultural scenario.
‘Hierarchy’ and ‘clan’ also have the greatest influence over the Organisational Leadership aspect. Leaders in the organisation were perceived as coordinators and organisers (‘hierarchy’ 33.75) as well as parent figures and mentors (‘clan’ 30.42). Again, the preferred culture profile for this aspect showed a reduction in ‘hierarchy’ (-10.21 to 23.54) and an increase in ‘clan’ (+10.63 to 41.04), a significant move and strongly suggestive that the organisation preferred a coach, mentor and parent figure as its leader. Importantly, participants also indicated a preference for the desired leader to be innovative and occasionally take risks (‘adhocracy’ +7.92 to 25.21).

The current and preferred culture for the Management of Employees aspect was quite congruent, requiring no urgent attention (<10 points). Here the trend was for increased teamwork and consensus (‘clan’ +4.79), as well as for innovation and freedom in decision-making (‘adhocracy’ +9.58). A reduction in predictable, stable relationships (‘hierarchical’ -9.71) was also evident.

Policies and rules underpinned the smooth operation of the organisation (‘hierarchy’ = 32.50) and there was evidence of a sense of loyalty and support for the organisation (‘clan’ = 29.17). As in previous aspects, there was a swing towards ‘adhocracy’ (+11.87) and ‘clan’ (+6.66); and away from ‘hierarchy’ (-16.87) and ‘market’ (-1.67) cultures. At -16.87, the shift away from hierarchy in this aspect was the most significant change identified for this organisation. The desire for cultural change in this organisation was much lower than in Case Study 1. With regard to the Strategic Emphasis aspect, ‘hierarchy’ (33.33) again dominated, with a focus on reliable and consistent operations. There was also a strong leaning towards developing and involving people (‘clan’ 31.88). The results showed a desire to move away from a culture
with a hierarchical emphasis (strongly -14.79) and towards ‘adhocracy’ (+5.42), followed by ‘clan’ (+4.79) and ‘market’ (+4.58). For this change to be realised, ‘clan’ (36.67) influences would have to be strongest on the strategic focus of the organisation.

As for Management of Employees, the Criteria for Success aspect was highly congruent. The current and preferred cultures were consistent and required little, if any, attention. ‘Clan’ was the most dominant characteristic in both current and preferred culture (37.50 and 39.17 respectively), which means that the organisation defined its success according to how the team worked together (clan) and the achievement of consistently efficient performance (hierarchy).

Table 16. OCAI Culture Congruence - Case Study 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>Adhocracy</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Hierarchy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dominant Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>+7.29</td>
<td>+9.71</td>
<td>-2.00</td>
<td>-15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational Leadership</strong></td>
<td>+10.62</td>
<td>+7.92</td>
<td>-8.33</td>
<td>-10.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management of Employees</strong></td>
<td>+4.79</td>
<td>+9.59</td>
<td>-5.21</td>
<td>-9.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational Glue</strong></td>
<td>+6.66</td>
<td>+11.87</td>
<td>-1.67</td>
<td>-16.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Emphasis</strong></td>
<td>+4.79</td>
<td>+5.42</td>
<td>+4.58</td>
<td>-14.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criteria for success</strong></td>
<td>+1.67</td>
<td>+5.21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-6.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Case Study 2 the degree of incongruence between current and preferred cultures was low, indicating that little attention was required. Of the 24 differences, only six had more than a 10-point difference. Cameron and Quinn (2006) asserted that incongruences of more than 10
points means change is desired. Unlike Case Study 1, none of the six instances of 10+ point differences exceeded 20 points, suggesting that the organisation had largely achieved the cultural change desired by participants. A full OCAI assessment can be found in Appendix 5 along with OCAI graphs in Appendix 6.

5.2 Communicating Change
This study used a phenomenological approach to gain an understanding of the lived experience of change. The following sections detail the contents of the almost four-and-a-half hours of interviews conducted with seven people in Case Study 2. Interviews were transcribed by the researcher and manually coded, before being entered into NVivo for further coding and analysis. Identifying features were removed or changed to ensure the anonymity of the participants and organisations.

The change process was enacted in a top-down process whereby cultural change was aligned to a larger structural and strategic shift. The strategic plan was initially announced to staff through a roadshow held at three different times over two days to maximise attendance. This comment from a manager explained the process:

We also were developing our plan for the future...or strategic plan, we had a look at structure... I wanted to focus on programs so programs are outcome areas... In the past we’ve had all this focus, but no aligning it in the structure. And by programming it we were going to break down the silos. So previously all the silos were based on technical competence, so we decided to get rid of technical competency statements and get into the outcomes structure. (Manager 2.1.2).

A comprehensive program was undertaken to implement the cultural change. Starting at the top, coaching was provided for executive directors, principally delivered by a consultant organisational psychologist, who made the leadership team aware of the importance of their roles as coaches and mentors to their teams. The psychologist assisted leaders to develop
relationships with staff members, modelling **consistent behaviours** and focusing on program outcomes, as the following quotes illustrate:

“We are very mindful that our behaviour as a group has to be in line with our values. ...But the most effective method I believe is through modelling the correct behaviour and our directors modelling that behaviour to their staff and encouraging the staff” (Manager 2.1.2);

“We have a good saying: ‘dead fish rots from the head’, so the executive and directors have to be singing from the same hymn sheet, so we have to believe what we are selling” (Manager 2.1.1); and

“Talking heads is not effective – I think it is really direct behavioural; I mean observing direct behavioural change and reinforcing that” (Manager 2.1.2).

At the Executive Director level, **checking** each other’s behaviour and mentoring each other was practiced, as these quotes indicate:

“We are very mindful that our behaviour as a group has to be in line with our values. And if we are not we have to be honest with each other” (Manager 2.1.2); and

Have we got resistance? Yes, I have seen resistance; I’ve heard I had lip service... Where we have seen that now we have drawn that to their attention. We have addressed the issue through our corporate coach and either forced it underground or it has been dealt with. (Manager 2.1.2)

After the executive directors had been coached in the new cultural direction, a transition team was established to undertake a similar process of learning **new cultural behaviours**. This ‘cultural optimisation process’ (COP) equipped them with new knowledge which they took back to their teams, and gradually became their cultural coaches and ambassadors as a means of gaining traction for the change process. This transition team differed slightly from the more common strategy of embedding ‘change champions’ or ‘circles of influence’ within the workplace. In Case Study 2 the transition team was a cross-functional, multi-level group, comprised of one Executive Director (who acted as a guide) along with employees from a variety of different levels across the four directorates (not always the leader of the team). Fifteen people were inducted into a transition team at a time – each transition team worked through a COP for a 6-8 week period and had a specific goal to produce something for the
As the transition teams completed their duties, they inducted the next group of employees into the successive transition team. The following quotes illustrate:

“The ultimate outcome for every transition team is the delivery of something at the end of it. They are learning through the process... and by doing that they become cultural change advocates for the organisation” (Manager 2.1.2);

“The CEO brought in this consultant. I have not been able to work with him, but he worked through the Executive Director level and they really got this kind of stuff, and now they are pulling people off the floor and they’ve got a special group (transition team) – so I think the CEO is doing everything he can to introduce people to the concepts of change” (Employee 2.2.3); and

“So 30 people infiltrating the organisation and talking to colleagues about values and the new changed culture in the organisation is far more powerful” (Manager 2.1.2).

At the time the interviews were conducted the organisation had just commenced a formal mentoring process whereby executive directors mentored the executive managers. This was intended to gain further traction for cultural change and ensure the flow of communication through the organisation.

When interviewees were asked to recall the types of communication used to advise them about the cultural change, most indicated the information had come from a staff meeting or their manager. The following comments were made by employees:

“Usually the directors will go back to their areas and tell them what happened at a shire meeting or at their strategic management meetings and these are the key points” (Employee 2.2.1) and:

We have regular staff meetings here (business unit) and I still update people on things that are happening that they may not be aware of. Our Executive Director and Executive Manager will come down and reinforce the message as well. They’ve been really positive that way... even the CEO’s been down a couple of times to have a cup of tea and talk to staff. (Employee 2.2.4)

These comments demonstrate a considerable effort to pass information on through the organisation in a personal way, which contributed to gaining buy-in and support for the

9 The first transition team developed a statement of organisational values and presented it in a roadshow to all staff, role playing behaviours consistent with the values.
program. Managers provided insights on the use of informal personal communication to communicate workplace changes as the following quotes illustrate:

“This is a mixture of a whole range of things – it is meetings scheduled, plus ad hoc discussions, and people coming into us” (Manager 2.1.1);

“The staff in certain locations don’t act, or aren’t that responsive in big teams. But individually they will tell you anything” (Manager 2.1.1); and

The biggest thing is trying to get all, everyone on the same page, and it’s a struggle... Funny enough I would say it is harder to get our operational people to be aware of more of some of this, but in fact we have just done a staff survey and it indicates that they are perhaps more on board than some of the staff are. (Manager 2.1.1)

The following quotes suggest there were issues with filtering information down to staff, especially amongst employees who were uninitiated in COP. On the ways cultural change information was communicated to a manager:

They’re not... well this is where some of the problem comes from. This is what up here believes is going on; and down here is what’s really going on and sometimes that information is not getting through. (Employee 2.2.2);

I’m at a reasonable level in terms of managing so I would expect that there is a lot more participation and buy in, that as they are trying to influence from the top, but there is not that. (Employee 2.2.2);

You know there has always got to be someone here, so not everyone gets the same message and I know they have tried to have the same meeting two or three times to allow people to get to these things. But there are some who just never go. (Employee 2.2.4); and

I know we would go to meetings and the CEO and the Directors would tell us things and there was a lot of dumbfoundedness, people didn’t know what it was that they were – what we were changing to. (Employee 2.2.4).

Managers recognised this as a shortcoming but believed the process would yield a consistent approach across the organisation. The following quote illustrates:

It is the people outside the transition team groups, potentially don’t see the value of it, but the advantage of the transition team is members have been trained as cultural change leaders and so, what is happening instead of cultural change being driven by the executive, which is five members, it is being driven by 15, now 30 members. (Manager 2.1.2)
Managers in this organisation recognised **consistency** was the key to effective communication about change and directors initiated ‘**Key Messages**’ to formulate and disseminate consistent information to the organisation, as the following quotes indicate:

The aspect of consistency it was one of the keys. The directors came up with ‘Key Messages’ and it is almost like a rehearsal that when they have a meeting, or have made a decision, they would actually take the time to talk about what they were going to say... So you didn’t have three people saying three different things from the same outcome, by directors being on key, They would then get their managers to use the same approach... (Employee 2.2.1); and

Once they sort of realised the need for that and applied it they then did the same thing in their areas so whatever this silo was hearing, that one was hearing the same thing. So it has been the key all the way through. (Employee 2.2.1)

Managers indicated that discussion was another benefit of the ‘Key Messages’ initiative, because all parties had to listen to one another, and use input from others to collaborate and formulate the key messages. Managers focused on making an effort to develop relationships and engage staff, as evidenced by these quotes:

The engagement process for me starts when I come in in the morning and instead of by passing every staff member in the whole of the section I make sure I say good morning to every one of them. And just by their acknowledgement... you can see it and then you would ask them another question... and then they start opening up... you have to be believable to them. (Manager 2.1.1); and

There are lots of things that happen that aren’t necessarily formal, there are those conversations in the corridor, there are those acknowledgements that happen when people have done something right. When we catch them doing something right, so it’s we’ve adopted an approach of rapid feedback, rather than waiting for staff meetings. (Manager 2.1.2)

The above examples provide evidence of managers using informal methods of engaging and gaining buy-in from employees.

In Case Study 2 the change management program was not accompanied by a formal communication plan. However, the organisation’s communication was based on a **personal approach** and **consistent messages**:
We had regular meetings with the staff about our intention and the organisational restructure... but not as frequent meetings as we should have, in fact that came through in our first survey... that communication was an area where the Executive was short. (Employee 2.2.1);

I book weekly meetings with my direct reports and then every fortnight we have the next level down... through the whole process we are on the same page... So they have meetings with their own staff and groupings down at the depot and engage in de-briefs and convey the same messages. (Manager 2.1.1); and

There has been a whole range of different ways that we have engaged staff, they were... all aware that we were going through a change process. We used the same terms across the whole organisation. (Manager 2.1.1).

Participants talked about the results of a staff survey which indicated communication was an area in need of improvement within the organisation. This was addressed as part of the ongoing change process:

We had regular meetings... but not as frequent as we could have had. In fact that came through on the first survey... the communication was an area the executive was short on. I don't think we fully appreciated until probably the first year because there were still sort of rumblings of ‘people weren’t being informed’ so what we did (whole staff meetings) on probably a three monthly basis... there is also a structured approach to communication at (other) staff meetings... (Employee 2.2.1)

In Case Study 2 the organisation made a considerable effort to sell the change. Some participants indicated the enthusiasm of the leadership team was infectious, while managers indicated the consistent messaging, positive behaviours and focus on organisational values assisted with selling the idea of change. ‘Key Messages’ was significant in this area. The following comments were made by interviewees:

I think I can genuinely say... and have done at operational meetings or planning meetings... that I am excited about where we are going...so it is not so much saying ‘here is the plan for the future...here is our new core values’... it is more about displaying them I guess, genuinely being excited about them. (Employee 2.2.5)

Other comments included:

“Getting people to believe is probably the biggest part of the learning exercise” (Manager 2.1.1); and
“We have a good saying ‘dead fish rots from the head’ so the executive and directors have to be singing from the same hymn sheet, so we have to believe what we are selling” (Manager 2.1.1).

Few comments, like this one, gave the impression that the move towards a cultural change was not understood by employees:

“I know we would go to meetings and the CEO and the directors would tell us things and there was a lot of dumbfoundedness, people didn’t know what it was that they were – what we were changing to” (Employee 2.2.4).

Compared with the previous case study there were few indications of an active grapevine in the organisation. The only evidence of gossip was in regard to a close relationship between a manager and a director in which the latter gave the former, a friend, advance information. As indicated earlier in this section, this organisation was committed to transparent processes and timely communication, both of which may have contributed to a lack of gossip on the part of employees who had no need to piece information together.

In Case Study 2 organisational values were clearly understood. The first transition team developed a values statement for the organisation. These values were: ‘Motivating, Encouraging and Thoughtful’ (MET)¹⁰ and were constantly talked about by staff. An agenda item in staff meetings referred to ‘MET moments’, and MET became part of the organisation’s vernacular – everyone knew what it stood for. The following quote elucidates:

We launched our values. So MET: Motivating, Encouraging and Thoughtful... We developed our core values and a sheet with all of those core values and what that actually meant in real terms to people. We actually worded it up “what does Motivating mean...”...and we basically went out and sold this to, on a roadshow to all the different areas of the organisation. (Manager 2.1.1).

Others commented as follows:

¹⁰ MET value names have been changed to preserve the anonymity of the case study organisation.
“The staff meetings all have a component of reporting on the achievement of MET values: ‘So have we had any MET moments?’ so it is encouraged to talk up the values of the organisation” (Manager 2.1.2);

“They understand what the values are of the organisation” (Manager 2.1.1); “We all talk the same language” (Manager 2.1.2); and

“So we are on the same page and all striving to push the whole area forward” (Manager 2.1.1).

During interviews the researcher noted with interest the consistent use of vernacular associated with cultural change processes and values; words such as values, behaviour, consistency, MET, engaged, conversation, positive, relationships and key messages were used frequently in the interviews.

5.3 Consultation and Participation

In Case Study 2 there were fewer comments relating to a lack of consultation than in Case Study 1. This may be due to the emphasis on personal communication to inform and involve employees in Case Study 2. Employees who commented on a ‘lack of consultation’ in Case Study 2 had not been through COP, or the transition team, or had previously commented on an uncommunicative relationship with a supervisor, possibly an Executive Manager who had not been through COP either. Such comments included:

“They kept us informed but only after the decisions were made” (Employee 2.2.4);

I don’t think they have been involved in the decision making process. They have been asked, consulted, but you might find that the feeling is that consultation was rudimentary and not necessarily taken on board as much as possible, so more facilitating role rather than decision making on where we will go. (Employee 2.2.5);

He is very difficult to meet with, and there are no meetings that he initiates to communicate what’s going on... I am trying to drive with the change, be more involved in the strategic stuff, if we communicate with the whole town about an issue, then allow the customer service people to be involved in seeing what’s going out. So we can know. They can then take off their local government hat and read that as a customer or a ratepayer. (Employee 2.2.2); and

“Displaying the behaviours expected of this culture, but you didn’t like actually get to have a say in what the new culture should be” (Employee 2.2.5).
People who felt excluded from the change process voiced an underlying resentment towards the process or the manager when employees felt they were not being genuinely heard by managers, as the above examples also indicate.

In this case study a number of overt, personal and participatory processes were used to deliver messages about a new organisational culture. An example of this was when the transition team and COP gave employees the opportunity to shape the organisational culture through their involvement and learning in the program. The process was grounded in conversation and discussion between participants and negotiation was required to reach an outcome. Throughout the process participants engaged with and supported the change.

Another example of participative communication was when a manager related the story about a staff member who was trying to work cross-functionally and encountered resistance, which caused frustration and resentment. He encouraged the staff member to open up discussion with the other party concerned in order to reach an understanding and find a solution, thereby encouraging negotiation to achieve a win-win situation.

In other cases managers used two-way, asymmetrical communication, where dialogue can be misconstrued as consultative, but in truth the decision has been made and the receiver’s input cannot influence the outcomes. One manager described a group of employees who were cynical about management interventions because previous ‘false’ discussions of other issues had not influenced decisions and outcomes for their areas.
5.4 Leadership

Much of sections 5.1.3 and 5.1.4 could have been appropriately inserted into this section on leadership for Case Study 2. The managers interviewed (2) were extremely articulate in describing the desired outcomes and the processes for creating the required changes. They demonstrated clarity and unwavering commitment to continued and ongoing implementation and exhibited personal accountability for their actions and behaviour.

The organisational change was largely driven by the CEO, with a leadership style consistent with the organisation’s culture and values. All the employees interviewed held the CEO in high regard. Interviewees indicated they were inspired by his enthusiasm for creating a new work paradigm, and most indicated he was an open and approachable person. Comments about the CEO included:

“The key to it is having a CEO like (name) who is open, whereas the previous CEO was very much isolated” (Employee 2.2.1);

“I’ve got to admit the CEO is brilliant ...he is approachable... so he did break down the barriers with a lot of staff” (Employee 2.2.4);

“He has met everybody and he remembers everybody and what they do and I think he is awesome compared to our old CEO” (Employee 2.2.4);

“When I first started there was still a lot of uncertainty for everybody, I must admit I found (CEO’s name) to be a breath of fresh air, he was really involved and he really wanted to know his people” (Employee 2.2.4);

The CEO is really awakening everyone’s passion... it is a bit infectious – you sort of think that is going to be awesome when it is done like that. We probably didn’t get the feedback in the past that we get now from the CEO, in keeping everybody informed. (Employee 2.2.4); and

I said ‘just go up and talk to him (the CEO) about it’ and they looked at me all strange and they did it and they went and had a chat to him – and came back shaking their head. I said ‘what’s the problem?’ and they said ‘well I have been here five years and I never ever met the previous CEO. (Employee 2.2.1)

The interviews also provided insights into the effort made by leaders in modelling behaviour consistent with the organisation’s values as this quote indicates:
“We are very mindful that our behaviour as a group ... the most effective method I believe is through modelling the correct behaviour and our directors modelling that behaviour to their staff and encouraging the staff” (Manager 2.1.2).

Criticism was levelled at how communication flowed and filtered through the organisation, with some employees indicating that executive directors and executive managers were less proficient in displaying behaviours and passing on messages of change. **Blockages in information** dissemination caused frustration as illustrated in this quote from an employee:

“...the next week she came to me and said ‘I need to talk to you, because what you did that day wasn’t very MET, motivating encouraging or thoughtful’. And I said ‘oh God, I didn’t think I had even done that’ but obviously I had if she had been affected by it. (Manager 2.1.2).
As the above example shows, the practice of openly discussing values meant all staff could be held to account. The following extract indicates how a manager coached his team to negotiate win-win situations (two-way symmetrical communication):

We try to foster... open discussion about and asking what the others needs are? Then to understand to what your needs are and together working through options of actually getting some form of improvement or buy in from each of the groups. So it is trying to encourage that sort of negotiation to get things across the line. (Manager 2.1.1).

In the second case study training and development was used extensively to ignite the cultural change program. This commenced with the executive directors because it was felt they had been working in silos when they needed to work cross-functionally, and the training was expected to facilitate a shift in operational culture. An external consultant was engaged to conduct extensive sessions for executive directors and those on the transition teams, and to provide individual coaching sessions with some employees. This consultant worked with people until they were ready, and then encouraged them to independently continue their personal and professional development. He became very popular after word spread about his sessions and people wanted to become part of the select group chosen to do them. The next comments clarify:

I think if (consultant name) could have done a series of open, come along and I’ll be doing half day seminars so you may not be a part of the inner little inner circles, but you can still get the big picture along the way. (Employee 2.2.3);

I know they worked with a consultant or a facilitator for the upper level, but that wasn’t offered all the way through the organisation, it is slowly happening now, but that’s a lot of hindsight work going on. And even then only small numbers of staff from each business unit are involved. (Employee 2.2.4); and

The CEO brought in this consultant. I have not been able to work with him, but he worked through the Executive Director level and they really got this kind of stuff, and now they are pulling people off the floor and they’ve got a special group (transition team) – so I think the CEO is doing everything he can to introduce people to the concepts of change. (Employee 2.2.3)
In this instance, the use of a consultant was embraced by the organisation and managers who spoke highly of its contribution to a dramatic shift in culture. However, employees who did not engage in the COP felt excluded from the process.

5.5 Consequences of Change
The impact of change on employees in Case Study 2 was not as acute as the hurt and loss of status felt by employees in Case Study 1. The impression was that after some initial uncertainty most employees felt engaged by the process. There was some criticism of the organisation by those who felt overlooked (particularly for the transition team and COP), and employees who were committed to change but were blocked by uncommunicative line managers expressed frustration. Most of the participants interviewed ‘just got on with it’ and were optimistic and hopeful about the future.

The change process was not without its casualties. Many employees resigned, some of them long-term employees, and for the remainder, the changes were often unsettling as explained in these quotes:

“And where the people haven’t fitted into the new organisation they have either gone, or been encouraged to go” (Employee 2.2.1).

Especially seeing the number of employees resigning, every Friday there was at least a person, who was being farewelled and with significant time in the organisation, 15 years one person, another person 14 years... and they were very vocal people and passionate about I guess the (organisation) because they’d had more than one CEO under their belt, so there was a whole attitude that all this change was, why was it necessary, what were we trying to achieve? (Employee 2.2.2); and

I am not sure where we really have to make some decision over other people’s alignment... and I don’t think I want to be in that position. I think it is self-determining... I don’t want to have a cookie cutter approach. I want individual personalities to shine. But I don’t think alignment with the values and the culture of the organisation will thwart individuality... If you apply some True North (Covey) values, you just do your best. It is a matter on inculcating those values into what you are doing. (Manager 2.1.2)
5.6 Management Intention and Employee Awareness

In this case study it was evident that the managers had a clear understanding of the process they were leading their staff through. They could articulate their plans and vision, and many employees bought into the process and understood the new culture. Newer staff interviewed (employee level) described a new type of recruit the organisation employing. They were enthusiastic about the opportunity but indicated some frustration at the lack of traction and progress. The old reports were complimentary about the quality and fresh approach of the newer appointments. At times the longer serving employees expressed mixed feelings about the change – positive and optimistic in one sentence and cynical the next. When probed by the researcher, it was evident that a small proportion of employees didn’t wholeheartedly share the vision. In these instances it was often where communication was blocked (they had previously mentioned a line manager withholding information) or where staff were uninitiated in COP as they had not yet been part of a transition team. Staff reported feeling overlooked because they hadn’t been included, which caused resentment. This comment was made consistently by interviewees who held customer service roles, as they believed they should have been prioritised for transition team inclusion since they interfaced with the public and were best positioned to deliver the new approach to customers.

On the whole the majority of interviewees articulated an awareness and understanding of the new culture, if not a growing affinity for it. This sense of comfort with the current culture was reinforced by the OCAI culture profile, which indicated little difference between current and preferred cultures.
5.7 Summary
This study sought to answer questions about how change was communicated in the workplace, and employees’ reactions and responses to change communication. The evidence from Case Study 2 suggests the organisation was largely united and had a clear purpose. The culture analysis showed a reasonable alignment between current and preferred cultures with a preference for ‘clan’.

In this chapter the key themes of communicating change, consultation and participation, leadership, consequences of change, management intention and employee awareness were explored as they related to the case study. The interviews revealed the change process was managed by the organisation’s leadership team, with support from an organisational psychologist, and ongoing development of change ambassadors through to the transition team. The transition team approach was particularly interesting as it had a revolving door, a cross-functional composition and provided dedicated training (COP).

Communicating change was done through leaders who were mentors, coaches and guides, consistent with a ‘clan’ culture. Central to the method of communicating change was a focus on informal, personal communication, the use of consistent messaging, and selling the benefits. It was interesting to note the use of organisational vernacular by these employees.

Many of the channels used for communicating change demanded that employees and managers participate in the process, whether it was forming key messages, using roadshow staff meetings to maximise participation, or working together on the transition team to develop a set of values for the organisation.
Leadership played an important role in communicating change to the organisation. A great effort was made to develop leadership alongside the project, by working with the organisational psychologist and COP. The majority of employees held the CEO in high regard, but some indicated their line managers didn’t always disseminate messages or adopt behaviours consistent with the standards demonstrated by the CEO.

The consequences of change were not as severe in this change management process. Most interviewees were positive about the process, although some indicated concern about the number of people who had left the organisation earlier in the change process. Management was clear about the direction they wanted the organisation to go in, and most employees interviewed were supportive of the changes. In many areas of this case study there was a high level of unity and goodwill towards the organisation and between management and employees.

The following Discussion chapter more fully explores the findings of this study, drawing on the comparisons between both cases and information from the literature review, before addressing the research questions.
Chapter Six
Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the findings of the two case studies while also referring to the literature review in Chapter 2 to respond to this studies’ central research questions. The study set out to improve understanding of how participatory communication practices impact on the implementation of change in organisations. This study has provided useful insights enabling each of the research questions to be addressed later in the Discussion. A key outcome of this research was the development of a communication typology, which will also be detailed in the closing pages of this chapter, and will assist practitioners to better manage organisational change.

The Results chapters (4 and 5) provided background on each case and objectively presented the findings of the case studies. In this Discussion chapter, the key findings from the two cases are interpreted in further detail. The processes of change management and change communication are often difficult to dissect. Some of the findings came from a review of the actual change management process itself to provide a context for the change communication that took place.

This Discussion chapter is structured with an introduction which outlines the research questions, developing conceptual framework and provides an overview of the key findings of the research as they relate to each of the four research questions. The background provides details of each case including a greater interpretation of the types of change experienced,
cultural underpinnings and management intent of each organisation. The next section (6.3) outlines the approach taken to answering each of the research questions, before each research question is addressed (6.4-6.7). Once each of the research questions are addressed, each theme explored and the key findings presented the overarching research question is addressed (6.8), before outlining the development of the communication typology (6.9): ‘Ladder of Employee Participation in change management’.

This study aimed to gain deeper understanding of the change management field and how participative communication might impact on change processes. The overarching research question was: **How does participative communication impact on change management receptiveness?** As the study intended to increase understanding of how communication impacts on support for change, the secondary research questions were:

- How was change communicated during the change management process?
- How did communication impact on participants in the change management process?
- How did participants react to the change management process?
- How do participative communication practices relate to organisational culture?

The insights obtained from this study go further than simply answering the above research questions. To address each of the key findings in a logical way they were assigned to the research questions as shown in Table 17.
Table 17. Research Questions, Key Themes and Findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How was change communicated during the change management process?</th>
<th>Communication plans and formulating change messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did communication impact on participants in the change management process?</td>
<td>Engage &amp; Empower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominant mediums of communication</td>
<td>Warranted Assertion: Change management communication is more willingly accepted when delivered personally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Warranted Assertion: Organisational change is supported by employees when a trusted leader personally communicates information about the change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blockages in communication</td>
<td>Inferred Finding: Communication blockages, caused by managers withholding information, leads to frustration and distrust in employees for the change process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did participants react to the change management process?</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition teams</td>
<td>Inferred Finding: Cross-functional transition teams are more likely to receive support from employees as they are representative or all and therefore perceived as being better positioned to inform change processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to change</td>
<td>Warranted Assertion: Resistance to change (in passive and active forms) is more evident in cases where change communication is less participative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernacular</td>
<td>Inferred Finding: Employee and management's use of a consistent vernacular may be a tool for recognising culture shift and support for change processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapevine</td>
<td>Inferred Finding: When employees can access information about change from a trusted manager or colleague, they are less likely to seek the information from other sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do participative communication practices relate to organisational culture?</td>
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• Warranted Assertion: A considered communication approach to change management increases understanding and affinity to change processes.  
• Inferred Finding: Dialogical discourse in developing communication messages increased understanding and support of the change process.  
• Warranted Assertion: Change management communication is more willingly accepted when delivered personally.  
• Inferred Finding: Communication blockages, caused by managers withholding information, leads to frustration and distrust in employees for the change process.  
• Warranted Assertion: Open and engaging communication promotes a positive attitude towards the change processes and reduces the negative impacts of ‘resistance to change’.  
• Inferred Finding: Employees are more supportive of change when they are engaged and have a comprehensive understanding of the vision for the future.  
• Warranted Assertion: Resistance to change (in passive and active forms) is more evident in cases where change communication is less participative.  
• Inferred Finding: Employee and management's use of a consistent vernacular may be a tool for recognising culture shift and support for change processes.  
• Inferred Finding: When employees can access information about change from a trusted manager or colleague, they are less likely to seek the information from other sources.  
• Inferred Finding: Organisations dominated by a clan culture respond more favourably to a personal and engaging change management communication approach.
The insights detailed in the Results chapter enabled the conceptual framework for the study to be further developed in Figure 13. This illustrates the complexity of communication, particularly participative communication, in the data analysis, using the Shannon Weaver Model of Communication with additional communication keywords identified through the thematic analysis contained in the Results chapters. A final conceptual framework has been included at the end of this chapter.

![Figure 13. Developing a Conceptual Framework. With inclusion of an adapted Shannon Weaver model from ("Communication Theory - All about theories for communication," 2014a).](image-url)
The next section examines the change processes before reviewing each of the research questions.

6.2 Background

The changes experienced and the change management processes used in both cases were quite different. In Case 1 the change was intended to address a merger of two entities, it had a rapid onset, was episodic or incremental, and resulted in a transformation that affected the whole organisation. Some areas were more greatly impacted by the change than others. An examination of the process against Burnes’ (2009) framework places this case study in quadrant 2, since the change was targeted at the whole organisation and focused on structures, processes and a ‘bold-stroke’ approach. The term ‘bold stroke’ describes a major organisational change, usually as the result of a crisis (Kanter et al., 1992). Such change is usually driven from the top down and impacts on all levels of staff. It is implemented quickly, without consideration for changing culture, and does not rely on organisational support for success. This type of change is consistent with the approach used in mergers and acquisitions, and stands in opposition to Larsson and Finkelstein (1999), who suggested integration be a focus to give cultures a chance to merge and achieve synergy. While the decision to merge was made internally, an external stakeholder, the state government, also played a part in the impetus for change by providing an attractive incentive. In terms of direction, the communication in this change process was largely directive and from the top down.

According to Burnes’ framework Case Study 2 falls into quadrants 1 and 2, since the change was targeted at the whole organisation and focused on culture and structures (Burnes, 2009). Initial changes were achieved quickly, however new cultural behaviours were embedded over a longer period of time. Burnes’ framework identified ‘emergent’ change as the most
appropriate approach; often related to continuous change. The process used in Case Study 2 was more closely aligned to an organisational development or planned approach, and may have occurred because the organisational culture had not yet evolved to the point of continuous adaptability. Moreover, this method is consistent with an organisational development approach, because it took place in a stable organisation and was largely implemented to address behaviours in groups. Communication was predominantly from the top down (Linstead et al., 2009). The change had a steady onset, and forward-planning enabled benchmark research to be conducted at milestone intervals to measure progress and any shift in culture. The decision to implement changes was made and driven by the senior leadership group, who made an effort to plan and benchmark the project. The changes affected the whole organisation, although management levels may have been impacted more severely. Following an initial, intense change process, a slowdown was anticipated while staff became more familiar with the new strategic plan and culture in the workplace. In this change process most of the communication was driven and endorsed by senior management, with some opportunities for employees to engage, inform the process of change and shape the new culture.

To a large extent the drivers of the change processes dictated the approaches. Case Study 1 could be considered an extreme operational change since it was effectively mandated and implemented within a short timeframe. This may explain the more directive and pragmatic approach. In Case Study 2, the drive for organisational change was internally motivated by senior management, and while it had set objectives, there was no finite deadline. It was also recognised that cultural change would drive organisational change. In terms of planning the process was far more sophisticated, attributable to the guidance of external consultants, and
represents an example of organisational leadership recognising its strengths and limitations and investing in the process to ensure a positive outcome.

In both cases a significant shift in organisational culture was a clear outcome of the change process, although only Case Study 2 considered this issue from the outset. It set out to redefine the culture as part of a larger, strategic re-engineering of the organisation. The culture change was enacted through visioning, articulating new values and aligning behaviour to these principles. In contrast, the first case study did not consider the impact of amalgamation on the culture of the organisation, despite recognising that two starkly different cultures were merging. They anticipated difficulties and a culture shock, yet there was little attempt to address these issues as part of the operational change process. This shortcoming was acknowledged by a manager who suggested following up the amalgamation with a culture change process to unite the two organisations.

Exploring the impact of change communication inevitably compels the researcher to think critically about both the communication style and the effectiveness of the change process selected. The focus of this study was on how communication mediated the receptiveness of employees to subsequent organisational change. It was not intended to determine which of the two case studies was most successful in improving operational efficiencies. Measuring the success of change implementation is difficult because there are multiple indicators of achievement. The use of inappropriate change methodology may impede the desired operational outcomes for an organisation even with perfect communication, which begs the question: Was one process more successful than the other in these two case studies? It could be argued that Case Study 1 deployed a change process which merged two organisations. A
year after the official merger the organisation was operating as one, with a few odd teething
problems as procedures were being updated. The amalgamation was described as something
akin to an arranged marriage. There was evidence of cynicism about the union and questions
about the motivation behind it. A comparison between the two case studies shows that Case
Study 1 exhibited symptoms of failure and dysfunction, evidently linked to a sense of distrust
on the part of many staff interviewed. Managers, who led the change process, expressed their
regret about this situation. Strøbæk and Vogt (2013) indicated mergers and acquisitions could
be compared to a cultural crisis and were often viewed as threatening by employees,
heightening their vulnerability.

In Case Study 2 the organisation’s strategic and cultural focus was realigned. Concerted effort
left the majority of staff positive about the organisation. This organisation also encountered
issues associated with settling people into a new way of doing business, but without inflicting
the same degree of human suffering as in Case Study 1. Another notable point was the great
respect for the CEO and the senior leadership team indicated by the majority of interviewees.
Staff appeared to understand the change process and the reasons for its implementation. It can
therefore be concluded that changing people’s behaviour was central to this change process,
and considerable thought and planning had gone into developing communication capable of
achieving behaviour modification.

The current culture was identified as a key determinant of the change communication
approach and how leaders engaged with employees. While this is unsurprising, it may prove
to be a key factor in effecting change, particularly when aligned with strategic and cultural
processes. It may also be pertinent to amalgamations and mergers where potential conflicts
between current and future cultures are sometimes overlooked (Larsson & Finkelstein, 1999). Elving (2005) theorised that organisational change may not result in cultural change; but cultural change will always result in organisational change. In these two cases change undoubtedly impacted on organisational culture; however the culture change was not always harmonious. Greater scrutiny of cultural characteristics ahead of change may provide useful insights for those leading change processes on how best to communicate and reassure their staff. This will be particularly useful where there is a greater disparity between current and preferred cultures.

6.3 Responding to the Research Questions

Having summarised the insights and background to the change management process for each case study, the following sections serve to answer the research questions posed throughout this thesis. First, the predominant themes are explored. As expected with qualitative research, and given the overlapping nature of change management communication, some of the themes could easily inform the answers to more than one question. To address this the researcher assigned each theme to the research question it most strongly related to and simultaneously indicated in other sections where else the theme would apply.

In outlining each theme, the researcher reviewed the findings of the two case studies and the literature before indicating whether it confirmed, extended or contested the literature and current theory. Where the evidence was particularly strong (evident in both case studies and the literature), and in keeping with the language of the pragmatic paradigm, the findings have been reported as a ‘warranted assertion’ (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), moreover, this enhances the credibility of the research by not over-claiming the findings. Lesser findings
have been referred to as an ‘inferred finding’ and both types of findings are highlighted in bold text. In some instances the evidence does not warrant a key finding, however, discussion of the themes are provided for consideration of how they may stimulate further research. Finally, advice on how each finding can be incorporated into practice is offered for change managers.

After addressing the four research questions the discussion responds to the overarching research question: How does participative communication impact on change management receptiveness? Amendments to Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation are proposed to extend its use for analysing participative communication within organisations in a change context. Finally, the chapter concludes with suggestions for further study in this area.

6.4 How was change communicated during the change management process?

This question was central to the research, and as expected, both organisations communicated change in a variety of ways. A specific focus of this study was to look at the nature of ‘participative’ communication; however the researcher also noted other interesting communication features in both case studies. The following section describes the findings in relation to communication plans and formulating change messages; predominant mediums of communication; leadership and communicating change messages; and blockages in communication.

6.4.1 Communication plans and formulating change messages

Those leading the change process in both case studies agreed that a greater emphasis on planned communication would have improved their change management processes. In Case
Study 1, where the change was hurried and communication often disseminated as an afterthought, one manager indicated a greater effort could have been made to plan and execute messages in a timely manner. She said:

“There was actually a project plan and in all honesty I don’t think we stuck to it. ... I think we just ran by the seat of our pants. AND then went ‘Oh shivers we should have communicated that’...” (Manager 1.1.1).

In the second case study, while there was no formal communication plan, senior management was committed to an approach for developing and delivering consistent messages during the change process. The following quote illustrates:

The aspect of consistency it was one of the keys. The directors came up with a ‘Key Messages’ process and it is almost like a rehearsal that when they have a meeting, or have made a decision, they would actually take the time to talk about what they were going to say... So you didn’t have three people saying three different things from the same outcome, by directors being on key. They would then get their managers to use the same approach... (Employee 2.2.1)

Despite the use of Key Messages a staff survey criticised communication, and since then it had become a greater focus in the organisation.

The Key Messages approach used in Case Study 2 meant that most were knowledgeable about the project. They were able to communicate the key points consistently, even without a formal communication plan. Another benefit of the Key Messages approach was the discussion the executive were involved in. They were required to listen and use one another’s input to formulate the messages. This collaboration exemplifies dialogical communication and is a good example of Grunig’s two-way symmetrical communication or ‘Partnership’, the sixth rung on Arnstein’s ladder (J. Grunig, 1992) (Arnstein, 1969) where neither party has more communication power than the other.
In Case Study 1 the Key Message approach did not exist and one manager indicated the need for a greater effort to sell the change. He stated:

(...)how well they’d actually sold it to them, where they had said ‘this is a great idea, we are amalgamating’ you know, I couldn’t actually find things where they had said, ‘we really believe in this, we think you should believe in this. (Manager 1.1.1)

One employee commented on not feeling knowledgeable enough about the change process to explain it to a third party:

“I couldn’t tell you exactly what the advantages are for us being amalgamated with Shire B” (Employee 1.2.3).

These examples demonstrate how people have difficulty formulating messages when they do not fully understand the changes taking place, with the result that it increases distrust. On the other hand, in Case Study 2 there was consistent use of vernacular (which is addressed later in the Discussion) and employees appeared confident to communicate the changes taking place around them.

The evidence from these two case studies indicates that a planned communication approach, whether it is a formal communication plan or another approach understood within the organisation, is advantageous in delivering change messages. This supports the quantitative findings of Torppa and Smith (2011), which indicated a communication plan assisted in increasing change adoption. They reported employees were more supportive of change when they believed it was required. This may be the result of having articulated the change frequently enough that employees have become more confident about communication around the issue. It is also in alignment with the quantitative work of Nelissen and van Selm (2008) who reported employees were more supportive of change processes when they were satisfied
with the communication. These authors went further to suggest there were benefits in using a group strategy to formulate key messages. As the findings of both case studies concur with the literature, this study reports the following key finding:

- **Warranted Assertion:** A considered communication approach to change management increases understanding and affinity to change processes.

An inferred finding is also offered since the evidence from one case study and the literature review was suggestive of the following:

- **Inferred Finding:** Dialogical discourse in developing communication messages increased understanding and support for the change process.

Practitioners should consider developing a formal communication approach to align with the planned change to ensure that communication remains a priority throughout the change process. Using two-way, symmetrical communication (genuine discussion) to formulate messages is likely to enhance the clarity of messages delivered by the organisation.

### 6.4.2 Predominant Mediums of Communication

In this section, channel and communicator mediums are considered. Russ (2008) contended several types of communication were likely to be used simultaneously. This confirms the findings of this study, which provides examples of a broad spectrum of communication in both case studies ranging from instructive to participative. In both cases most of the communication was formal and non-participative. In Case Study 1 communication can be characterised as predominantly formal, with little use of participative communication. Employees in Case Study 1 recalled the use of emails and newsletters as the main methods of
disseminating information about the amalgamation. This formal style of communication is consistent with a ‘hierarchy’ culture. According to Cameron and Quinn (2006) a hierarchical culture is one which aims for stable, efficient operation, and is often considered impersonal. In view of this the culture and communication style appear to be consistent.

As outlined in the literature review, emails and newsletters are consistent with an instrumental, top-down, monological, non-participative style of communication. They are also typical of a less familial workplace, as formal communication is consistent with a bureaucratic organisation (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). While emails and newsletters were the dominant communication medium reported by interviewees, some also recalled receiving information from their line managers and meetings.

In both case studies, personal and face-to-face communication was appreciated by employees, even when it was one-way (monological). To some extent this supports Lewis’ (2006) suggestion that planned communication tools, such as newsletters and information sessions be put aside in favour of opportunities for two-way communication (dialogue), capable of clarifying, negotiating and achieving shared understanding. While face-to-face, monological communication does not embrace dialogue, the personal nature of the exchange elevated the experience for employees.

Dialogue was noted in both cases. Examples of two-way conversation or discussion were cited by participants that were in fact two-way asymmetrical (not genuinely consultative) (J. Grunig, 1992). In these instances, employees indicated there were occasions when they felt the organisation was not listening or willing to change the outcome. Another example was
given by an interviewee in Case Study 2, whose team had engaged in dialogue over a particular issue. This team had become cynical about senior management interventions because their input was not reflected in the decisions and outcomes. This is an example of Social Exchange Theory and a constructive view of communication, where each dialogic communication involves a power transfer, and is the result of previous communication providing a foundation for the next encounter.

The above examples of communication can be likened to the rungs of ‘Manipulation’, ‘Therapy’, ‘Informing’ and ‘Consultation’ on Arnstein’s ladder (1969). The first two rungs suggest a preference for the illusion of participation, with the aim of educating or convincing citizens that change is appropriate rather than truly engaging them. In most instances communication was described as not being participative, and of a more a monological style (one-way communication) in which the receiver has no influence (J. Grunig, 1992). The next two rungs suggest tokenistic participation where dialogue is asymmetrical.

In contrast, Case Study 2 used a greater variety of communication mediums to deliver the organisation’s change messages. Both formal and informal communication was evident and face-to-face communication was a frequent occurrence during the change process. This was particularly relevant because it demonstrated the desired behaviour and cultural shift the organisation was moving towards. One manager related a situation where a staff member was trying to work cross-functionally and met with resistance from other teams which caused frustration and resentment. The manager encouraged the staff member to open up discussion with the other party involved to increase understanding, find solutions, and secure buy-in through negotiation aimed at win-win outcomes. According to Cameron and Quinn (2006),
this more familial style of communication is consistent with a dominant ‘clan’ culture. Communication often took place informally, usually between employees and their line manager; this participative approach is representative of two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical communication (J. Grunig, 1992) and demonstrates willing and spontaneous communication described by Kent and Taylor (2002) as having the ability to develop relationships. Good interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to others are highly valued in managers and widely associated with change achievement (Invernizzi et al., 2012). As outlined in the literature review, more sophisticated communication mediums, such as face-to-face and participative techniques, are regarded as more effective for changing behaviour (Kotter, 2007).

This study provides a qualitative perspective on the quantitative assertions of Lewis (2006), Torppa and Smith (2011), and Nelissen and van Selm (2008). Since the findings of both case studies and the literature review concur, this study reports the following key finding:

- **Warranted Assertion: Change management communication is more willingly accepted when delivered personally.**

Practitioners should heed Lewis’ advice to replace formal communication with face-to-face or personal communication.

### 6.4.3 Leadership and Communicating Change Messages

When this study commenced, the role of leadership in communicating workplace change was not a central focus. However, the interviews consistently highlighted this area as significant in activating workplace change. Importantly, the interviewees regarded both senior and middle
management as having an important role in delivering messages about change. In the interviews, the role the Case Study 1 CEO played in communicating the amalgamation process was scarcely referred to by participants. On the other hand, there was considerable admiration for the CEO in Case Study 2, who was regarded as an enthusiastic, passionate and approachable leader with a preference for personal, face-to-face interaction.

The role of leaders in communicating change was an important finding in this study. In both case studies most employees indicated a preference for receiving information directly from their line manager, with the implication that the information was more credible when this person was trusted. Employees provided examples of line managers conveying information personally. Some cited examples of spontaneous discussion on a particular issue, suggestive of Kent and Taylor’s tenet of propinquity, which infers genuine dialogue and engagement (2002). They commented positively on situations where this occurred as a personal conversation – face-to-face and informal; although departmental staff meetings were also a source of information. It should be noted that this leader wasn’t a direct manager in all cases, but a line manager of the employees’ direct supervisor. The managers interviewed supported the change, confirming the findings of Torppa and Smith (2011) who suggested employees were more supportive of change when it was supported by leaders. The following quote illustrates:

“My manager at the time was very open; he’d go to a meeting and come back and he’d say ‘this is what these bastards have said – rah, rah, rah’…. “ (Employee 1.2.1).

In Case Study 1 the above example was the exception, since the majority of communication was monologal and formal. This also highlights the role of a trusted manager in influencing employees’ perceptions of change. Where communication about change was delivered
personally by a trusted manager, the information was more credible and appreciated. An example of a more genuinely participative discussion was provided by a manager in Case Study 1, who talked about ‘workshopping’ or ‘chalk and talking’ in relation to the change process. Staff members provided unprompted confirmation of this manager’s openness; their comments indicate trust in the manager and goodwill towards him for his efforts. Parnell and Crandall (2001) suggested that only leaders with a good propensity for using participative management strategies should be used in the change process, and that others should be similarly educated.

A few employees indicated their immediate supervisor was not good at disseminating information and/or was non-communicative, suggesting those leading change processes should be carefully considered for change processes. Employee 1.2.1 made the following comment:

“If you didn’t have a manager that was very forthcoming in what was going on you really didn’t know anything anyway, like our manager at the time wasn’t very forthcoming in what was going on so you were kind of always left in the dark”.

The second case study provides a good example of purposeful communication from those leading change processes. In this instance the senior executive believed it was important to display behaviour consistent with the organisation’s values. At the most senior level, the group discussed how meeting outcomes would be communicated to staff, and when preparing Key Messages, ensured that meeting outcomes and other relevant information was communicated in a consistent way by managers to their units. This reinforces Karp and Helgo’s (2008) findings that reported changed vernacular was a sign of collaborative understanding.
Consideration should be given to the double-edged sword of change communication for middle managers, who are often expected to act as change agents while being impacted by change themselves (Bryant & Stensaker, 2011). In this study there was an example of a leader who may have felt this burden. Managers who were not fully committed to change and didn’t engage with employees caused frustration, and in turn this affected how employees supported the change. The following quote explains:

“I try and initiate meetings when I can but I just... He is very difficult to meet with, and there are no meetings that he initiates to communicate what’s going on and I think compared to other directors some is really missing in the whole – making us a feel part of the team” (Employee 2.2.2).

This study provided insights into the role of leadership in communicating change messages which align with the work of Torppa and Smith (2011), who suggested employees are more supportive of change when it is endorsed by leaders. They also concur with the assertions of Bryant and Stensaker (2011) who recognised the double-edged sword for middle managers when they are expected to act as change agents while also being impacted by change. Both case studies support the idea of manager-communicated change, however greater insights were gained from the second case study where there was a much greater emphasis on personal communication during the change process. Since the findings of both case studies and the literature review concur, this study reports the following key finding:

- **Warranted Assertion: Organisational change is supported by employees when a trusted leader personally communicates information about change.**

Practitioners should consider communicating change messages in a more personal way through the organisation’s network of managers for the communication to be more credible.
This is subject to two caveats: line managers need to be trusted by employees and a managers’ support of the change program needs to be visible. Careful consideration of who should lead change processes during is advised, coupled with leadership assessments to determine whether they are trusted by employees. If this requirement isn’t met an alternative should be appointed. The integrity associated with accurately communicating an agreed-upon message was also an important factor for leadership in Case Study 2. Organisation leadership made a considerable effort to mentor those involved in leading change and jointly develop consistent messages for dissemination to their teams.

6.4.4 Blockages in communication

It is appropriate to acknowledge that there were times when participants indicated information wasn’t being communicated. Such blockages in information occurred in two ways: when communication was not prioritised by the organisation and when managers did not pass information on to their direct reports. The literature review indicated that cases where managers blocked information were sometimes consistent with a lack of support due to a perception of diminished authority (Parnell & Crandall, 2001). Examples of managers blocking communication were found in both cases, as evidenced by the following quotes:

If you didn’t have a manager that was very forthcoming in what was going on you really didn’t know anything anyway, like our manager at the time wasn’t very forthcoming in what was going on so you were kind of always left in the dark. (Employee 1.2.1)

On the ways cultural change information was communicated to a manager:

They’re not... well this is where some of the problem comes from. This is what up here believes is going on; and down here is what’s really going on and sometimes that information is not getting through. (Employee 2.2.2)
The impression given by employees was that communication blockages were frustrating, caused a negative attitude towards their manager and more broadly, distrust of the change process. Both organisations acknowledged blockages in information as a shortcoming in their change processes. The impact of non-communication or blockages is further described in addressing the next two questions. At this stage, and based on the evidence from these two case studies, the following inferred finding is offered:

- **Inferred Finding:** Communication blockages, caused by managers withholding information, leads to frustration and distrust in employees towards the change process.

This is a highly recommended area for further research, but until then, practitioners are advised to test ways in which communication messages filter through to the broader organisation.

The complexity and diversity of change communication was evident in both case studies. Broadly speaking one organisation prioritised communication; their change processes had a more sophisticated and personal approach and employees were generally supportive of the change. In the other organisation, communication was often deployed as an afterthought; it tended to be formal and impersonal and employees were more cynical about the change process. The results of these styles of communication are further addressed in the next sections.
6.5 How did communication impact on participants in the change management process?

When studying change management communication, it is difficult to dissect the impact of the change from the impact of the communication. This section aims to focus on the impact of communication but refers to the impact of change as a means of providing context. In considering the impact of communication, it was decided to look at the two opposing themes of engagement and disengagement, and then discuss the role of transition teams in engaging employees in workplace change.

Understanding the impact of change communication on employees is essential to any investigation into managing change. Many previous change management studies concentrated on the management perspective; for this reason the current study sought to bring new insights and understanding by providing the perspective of employees.

6.5.1 Engage and Empower, Disengage and Distrust

In real terms, the change process in Case Study 1 impacted on employees in several ways. It created uncertainty – a lack of job security and satisfaction, tighter controls on work activity, and role changes requiring less expertise, all gave rise to stress and a perception of diminished authority. Such are the impacts of change. For many employees, the impact of communication left them feeling disengaged, undervalued and disillusioned with the change process. Their lack of knowledge, consultation and control over the process made them feel disconnected from what was happening in the organisation. Comments about not feeling genuinely involved or excluded serve to illustrate their feelings of frustration and disconnection. For example: “It was almost like it was happening in another world” (Employee 1.2.3); and “The
people at Shire B got totally left out – they had no idea – when I went out there for day – they had no idea” (Employee 1.2.1).

The comments of many employees in Case Study 1 had negative connotations, which could be partially attributed to the emotional stress of job uncertainty and falling job satisfaction. In the second case study, employees were also impacted by the changes. Again, these caused uncertainty, since there was pressure to behave in a culturally consistent way at work and employees were aware of the importance of toeing the line. This caused employees to review their ways of working and acting at work, and to view their previous expertise in the light of a new, less familiar paradigm. In Case Study 2 the change communication was positively received for the most part. Employees exhibited a degree of knowledge about the change process as they had received their information from trusted and respected sources within the workplace. The following quote illustrates:

I think I can genuinely say... and have done at operational meetings or planning meetings... that I am excited about where we are going... so it is not so much saying ‘here is the plan for the future... here is our new core values... it is more about displaying them I guess, genuinely being excited about them. (Employee 2.2.5)

It was conceded that there were initial rumblings of discontent as people felt uncertain about their roles, but the majority of those interviewed appreciated the open and communicative style of communication from the management team. Many long-term employees were positive about the changes and envious of the fresh approach demonstrated by new employees. This echoes the findings of Nelissen and van Selm (2008), who suggested employees become more positive about change the longer they survive it. It is however uncertain whether this change in attitude is a result of the new dispensation or because many of the detractors had left the organisation at this point.
The empowerment experienced by many employees in Case Study 2 acknowledges the positive impact when employees are engaged in symmetrical communication. The organisation’s leadership was responsible for encouraging empowered communication. This was clearly illustrated when a manager encouraged an employee to negotiate a win-win outcome:

We try to foster...open discussion about and asking what the others needs are? Then to understand to what your needs are and together working through options of actually getting some form of improvement or buy in from each of the groups. So it is trying to encourage that sort of negotiation to get things across the line. (Manager 2.1.1); and

I said: ‘Just go up and talk to him (the CEO) about it’ and they looked at me all strange and they did it and they went and had a chat to him – and came back shaking their head. I said ‘What’s the problem?’ and they said ‘Well I have been here five years and I never ever met the previous CEO. (Employee 2.2.1)

The first example shows how empathy and encouragement were used to engage and empower employees in the communication process; and importantly, that the manager trusted the employee. Kent and Taylor (2002) acknowledged empathy as a core component of dialogical communication. In this case it suggests willingness by the organisation to put itself in the shoes of a stakeholder or employee, and understand the issues affecting them from a different perspective. These authors further suggested this style of dialogical communication was superior in reducing ambiguity and building relationships. They regarded it as an ethical form of communication since it was based on honesty, trust and positive regard (Kent & Taylor, 2002).

While the efforts at open communication in Case Study 2 were widely acknowledged by participants, there were occasions when employees experienced communication blockages. Such blockages have been discussed previously and as stated, were most often caused by non-communicative managers.
This study provides a qualitative perspective on the conceptual assertions of Kent and Taylor (2002). It appears employees were more positive about change when communication processes were open and transparent, and discussion was engaging and dialogical. In situations where communication was blocked or not forthcoming, employees were more negative and cynical, and disengaged from the organisation. As the findings of both case studies and the literature review concur, this study reports the following key finding:

- **Warranted Assertion: Open and engaging communication promotes a positive attitude towards the change process and reduces the negative impacts of resistance to change.**

This highlights the importance for practitioners to maintain open communication and have managers assist with delivery of change messages.

### 6.5.2 Transition Teams

The role played by transition teams was raised by participants in both case studies. ‘Transition team’ is the generic term used in this study to describe the internal project management team appointed to troubleshoot and steer the organisation through the change process. In other change processes these teams are referred to as ‘change champions’ or ‘ambassadors’ who act as spokespeople for change in the workplace. While they have a role to communicate information about the changes, their composition can deliver a message of exclusion to other employees. In both case studies those not involved with the transition teams were less
engaged with the change process, and in some cases, those participants were negative and cynical about the process.

In Case Study 1 criticism was levelled at the transition team because of its operational focus. It was also frequently noted by interviewees that the make-up of the team was not cross-functional, and as a consequence they felt further removed from the process because their area was not represented. The criticism was mainly that the transition teams were not skilled to make the best operational decisions, causing distrust of the change management process. Exclusion from the transition team was also noted by employees in Shire B who made several comments about this in the interviews, along with examples of how procedures could have been improved by a more consultative process. It is likely that this voicing (Bryant, 2006) was interpreted by managers as resistance.

In the second case study the transition team was made up of cross-functional, multi-level staff, and operated in part as a training program and in part as a change management project team, since the transition team had undergone a ‘cultural optimisation process’ (COP). Case study 2 also differed in that the transition team had a revolving door and members served for approximately a three-month period before inducting the next transition team. This increased the number of people engaged in the process as observed by Manager 2.1.2:

“So 30 people infiltrating the organisation and talking to colleagues about values and the new changed culture in the organisation is far more powerful”.

During their time together on the transition team, members were required to enact change or enhance the culture in some way (COP). This initiative allowed transition team members to actively influence the change process and the organisation to benefit from employees’
improved understanding of the change. In Case Study 2 the reasons given for the cross-functional composition of the transition team included enabling more insightful decision making and assisting with information being communicated to every department in the organisation. Despite all efforts to engage as many staff as possible in the transition team in Case Study 2, there were nevertheless criticisms, particularly where the customer service teams were concerned. For example:

“I’m at a reasonable level in terms of managing so I would expect that there is a lot more participation and buy in, that as they are trying to influence from the top, but there is not that” (Employee 2.2.2).

The exclusion of frontline staff from the process is contrary to the findings of Ogbeide and Harrington’s (2011) study of hospitality businesses. They found businesses with greater participatory practices, including frontline staff involvement, outperformed those with less participative practices. This further supports the previous finding which highlighted the importance of open and engaging communication.

Employees appeared to be more positive about the transition teams when they had a cross-functional composition, suggesting that employees felt better represented by someone with a voice, who was able to engage in dialogue on their behalf. Based on the concurrence of the two case studies, this research alleges the following finding:

- **Inferred Finding:** Cross-functional transition teams are more likely to receive support from employees as they are more representative of all and therefore perceived as being better positioned to inform change processes.
In practice it may not be possible to include all employees in a dedicated program. However, organisations should ensure that the function and purpose of transition teams are clearly articulated, and that they are charged with the responsibility for communicating information to the rest of the organisation on a regular basis.

**6.6 How did participants react to the change management process?**

The previous section outlined the organisational intent and employees’ impressions of the communication approach. This section considers the actions which resulted in either support or dissent over the change, capable of derailing the process or achieving successful outcomes respectively. Both case studies provided evidence of reactions ranging from engagement and support to actions that can be described as passive aggressive. Some of these were overt while others were more surreptitious. Throughout the interviews a range of responses to change were noted. The following section highlights five of these: engagement, active and passive resistance, vernacular and grapevine.

**6.6.1 Engagement**

The purpose of change management is to improve an organisation by moving employees into new ways of working. Therefore, a major goal of change communication and change management is to ensure people accept and support organisational change. This section discusses how employees in the case studies engaged or disengaged with the change process.

The second case study provided evidence of support for the change process on the part of employees. In fact, all interviewees indicated their support for the CEO and the vision of the organisation. The following two quotes, one from a manager and one from an employee,
explain the value of leading by example when it comes to changing behaviours in an organisation:

“We are very mindful that our behaviour as a group has to be in line with our values. And if we are not, we have to be honest with each other” (Manager 2.1.2); and

I think I can genuinely say... and have done at operational meetings or planning meetings... that I am excited about where we are going... so it is not so much saying ‘here is the plan for the future...here is our new core values’... it is more about displaying them I guess, genuinely being excited about them. (Employee 2.2.5)

A few examples were raised of interviewees checking one another’s behaviour, and where this was not consistent with organisational values it was brought to the colleague’s attention.

The following quote illustrates:

Have we got resistance? Yes, I have seen resistance; I’ve heard I had lip service ...Where we have seen that now we have drawn that to their attention. We have addressed the issue through our Corporate Coach and either forced it underground or it has been dealt with. (Manager 2.1.2).

This in itself is a significant action in the adoption of the change. Supportive behaviour was particularly evident in employees who had been through COP and demonstrates a deeper understanding of organisational change and vision when delivered through an organisational development program. The approach included training, as well as personal and professional development, which in turn resulted in a stronger commitment to the changes. Importantly, most interviewees expressed a desire to be included in a transition team or have some access to COP. The organisational development approach is based on the work of Kurt Lewin (Burnes, 2009), who associated planned change and organisational development with stable work environments, incremental change to address behaviours within groups, and a top-down style of communication.
In contrast to this, the first case study provided several examples where employees felt excluded and uninformed about the change process, and made comments which suggested they felt disengaged from the organisation’s future direction. For example:

“...Unless you were on that transition team I don’t think you were involved at all” (Employee 1.2.2); and

... Only because at the moment it is not an organisation I want to work for...I’m just here now because I’m waiting for something to change, but you know, but I think there are some people like me...so yeah, unless something is done. (Employee 1.2.3)

Disengagement resulted when employees were not included in the process but had a valuable contribution to offer. They felt overlooked and unrecognised for their expertise. This quote provides a good example and demonstrates ‘voicing’ which is further discussed in the next section:

And then they decided that all the building applications would be lodged at Shire A and they (Shire B) would be left out of it – which I thought was really (pause) stupid... I said ‘look I think that is really stupid because you are going to the Shire B office and having to put the application in a box to come to Shire A... wouldn’t it be better if we sent a Building Surveyor once a fortnight or when they had a couple of applications’, so they tried their thing and it didn’t work, so they ended up sending a building surveyor out to Shire B every few weeks. (Employee 1.2.1)

In the first case study there were many comments to indicate staff wanted to be more involved in the change process but weren’t given the opportunity, such as:

I think it would have been really good to have included all staff in what was happening, with information and possibly to let us know what the advantages actually were for the organisation and the region. And yeah, I think it would have been nice for an opportunity for involvement (Employee 1.2.3).

As indicated in the ‘management intent and employee awareness’ sections of the results, managers intended to communicate change plans and even engage employees, however this was not always actioned. In the first case study, regret was expressed in hindsight at not better engaging staff in the change process. In the second case study, managers worked more deliberately to engage employees, and when employees were engaged, there was greater support from employees.
However, this engagement was not universal in the second case study, and comments were made about customer service personnel not being prioritised for participation in COP. This was potentially a risky decision, because some of these staff members felt aggrieved by having been overlooked and undervalued. To some extent this highlights the value and importance of mutual, positive regard between employees and the organisation in making an employee feel valued (Kent & Taylor, 2002).

The evidence from this study supports the work of Bryant (2006) and Dent and Goldberg (1999), and suggests employees are more supportive and engaged with the change process when they understand the vision, change plans, and feel included, recognised and valued. Conversely, when employees feel excluded from the process they may display ‘voicing’ behaviours which can be misinterpreted as resistance to change, or worse, malicious behaviour to disrupt the process. These are discussed further in the following section. Since the findings of both case studies and the literature in the area are not yet fully developed, the following inferred finding is offered with a recommendation for further research:

- **Inferred finding: Employees are more supportive of change when they are engaged and have a comprehensive understanding of the vision for the future.**

For practitioners, this means that employees are more positively engaged when the vision of the organisation is implicitly understood, and that an organisational development approach, whereby employees undertake a deeper level of personal learning, leads to greater support and commitment.
6.6.2 Resistance to Change

Resistance to change is often raised as a change management phenomenon. Both case studies identified a number of examples of active and passive resistance, but these were more evident in Case Study 1.

6.6.2.1 Active Resistance - Voicing and Departing

Several examples were provided of interviewees voicing their opinions about change processes, particularly new procedures. An example of this was given in the previous section, where an employee expressed concern about a building application procedure. In that particular instance the advice was belatedly followed.

Bryant (2006) suggested that when employees raised issues or problems with the intent of improving processes or outcomes, such statements may be misinterpreted as resistance to change. Dent and Goldberg (1999) indicated resistance to change is a result of change managers underestimating the valid concerns of those affected by change. In the aforementioned example the comments were well intentioned and aimed at improving the process, however initially they were perceived as resistance to change. In this instance the advice was not heeded until the procedure failed.

Another form of active resistance is leaving the organisation. Case Study 1 provided examples of disgruntled interviewees who considered leaving if there was no change. Several interviewees in Case Study 2 also expressed concerns about the number of employees who had resigned rather than submit to the change process.
Sabotage is another form of resistance. The first case study provided a good example of undermining behaviours which could be considered sabotage, however according to the definition of ‘resistance to change’ by Larsson and Finkelstein (1999), it was less overt and has therefore been included in the section on passive resistance.

### 6.6.2.2 Passive Resistance - Ostrich and Undermining

In Case Study 1 several examples of ‘ostrich’ behaviour were observed by the researcher. These occurred where employees who were less affected by the amalgamation process simply focused on their work, believing they couldn’t be criticised for doing their jobs as the following quote illustrates:

“I’ve pretty much just ignored it and just sort of got on with what I have to do - and didn’t really pay much interest at all…I’ll just get on with it with anything whatsoever” (Employee 1.2.1).

The inference from those who indulged in ‘ostrich’ behaviour was clear – they were waiting for the changes to pass before re-engaging. This suggests a desire for maintaining the status quo and is considered a form of resistance to change because it is not supportive of the organisation’s direction (Bryant, 2006). It also echoes a passive mal-adaptation response as identified by Matthews et al. (2010), although these authors’ work examined responses from managers and not employees. Passive mal-adaptation was observed in the reactions of managers who felt a loss of control in their roles and wanted to avoid change. Their response was to just do their job and get through the change process until they could leave. While the actions of organisational ‘ostriches’ can be counter-productive to organisational effort, an assertion in this instance would be premature, as the finding is based on one case study alone.

In Case Study 1 there was some evidence of active undermining of the organisational effort, particularly by one employee, although this was considered passive resistance because it was
subversive. This employee was greatly affected by the change process and described avoidance strategies and manipulation during the interview. For example, when required to brief other staff on their roles (so it could be undertaken when they were on leave or required at meetings and training), this employee chose not to provide full details so that the tasks could not be carried out competently, thereby setting the trainee up to fail and the trainer to be viewed as the expert in the area. In another example an employee took shortcuts rather than following organisational procedures. It is likely that there was a culture of undermining bureaucratic processes at Shire B, giving rise to a power play. Since it is passive and covert, this type of undermining is difficult to detect.

A further example was given in Case Study 2, where a unit manager outlined his strategy to avoid important meetings, thereby undermining the organisation’s initiatives to communicate consistently to all staff. The following quote illustrates:

“You know there has always got to be someone here, so not everyone gets the same message and I know they have tried to have the same meeting two or three times to allow people to get to these things, but there are some who just never go” (Employee 2.2.4).

This type of behaviour would be a concern in any area of the organisation; in both instances they involved customer service employees who are the frontline interface between the organisation and external stakeholders. In the second case study, comments were made about the low regard given to customer service roles for participation in COP, a potentially risky decision which caused some customer service employees to feel undervalued and overlooked. This highlights the value of mutual, positive regard between employees and the organisation to make employees feel valued (Kent & Taylor, 2002), and suggests that frontline customer service staff be included in transition teams, as they are the primary contact between the organisation and external stakeholders.
The cautionary tale for practitioners is that divisive activities are often difficult to detect and are counterproductive to the organisational effort. Such situations could be personality driven and difficult to eradicate completely from an organisation. For change managers an awareness and understanding of how to manage and influence different personalities is therefore essential.

The above examples highlight the importance of implementing change through a systematic approach in which stakeholder analysis is one component. Communicating change doesn’t necessarily stop with the organisation’s staff; it also impacts on the organisation’s external stakeholders. While the latter is not within the scope of this study, prioritising the flow of information, and the inclusion of staff who interface with external stakeholders should be given consideration.

These findings were evident in both cases, and consistent with the findings of the literature review, suggest that resistance to change can occur in passive and active forms. Interestingly, there was greater evidence of resistance and more malicious resistance in the first case study, indicating greater resistance when employees are less engaged in communication about change, and conversely, greater support when employees are engaged with the process. This lends weight to assertions that engaged communication reduces change management resistance (J P Kotter, 2007) and accordingly, the following assertion is offered:

- **Warranted Assertion:** Resistance to change (in passive and active forms) is more evident in cases where change communication is less participative.
Practitioners must remain vigilant to recognise the signs of resistance and should proactively seek to implement well-conceived processes through a considered, systematic approach to communication, all the while looking out for issues that can potentially cause resistance. More participation by employees in the change process may reduce resistance to change and enhance buy-in.

6.6.3 Vernacular

In both case studies there was evidence of an organisational vernacular or turn of phrase. This is indicative of the individuals’ affiliation with the organisations’ change processes. Their statements also provided clues to an underlying groundswell of opinion that some interviewees would not have been comfortable to express in a more direct way.

In Case Study 1 many participants used ‘us and them’ vernacular when they talked about the two amalgamating groups in the organisation. While their comments comprised a mixture of mildly derogatory and empathetic remarks, the language used revealed a deep divergence in the amalgamated organisation. The following examples clarify:

“We don’t have too much to do with them out there” (of Shire B) (Employee 1.2.6);

“…So all of a sudden we were dumped with (Shire B) and not really wanting it” (Employee 1.2.2); and

“…poor Shire B people are coming to terms with this bureaucracy that is driving them mad” (Employee 1.2.1).

Larsson and Finkelstein (1999) acknowledged mergers and acquisitions were prone to ‘we versus they’ tensions and viewed this as a sign of resistance to change.
Organisational vernacular was also evident in the second case study, particularly amongst those who had already participated in COP. These participants were articulate and demonstrated great fluency and confidence in explaining the direction of the organisation. The following quotes from a manager and an employee illustrate:

“There has been a whole range of different ways that we have engaged staff, they were ... all aware that we were going through a change process. We used the same terms across the whole organisation” (Manager 2.1.1); and

I think I can genuinely say... and have done at operational meetings or planning meetings... that I am excited about where we are going... so it is not so much saying ‘here is the plan for the future...here is our new core values’ ...it is more about displaying them I guess, genuinely being excited about them. (Employee 2.2.5)

In this instance a warranted assertion would be premature, since the findings from both case studies are not fully developed. The following inferred finding is therefore offered together with a recommendation for further research:

- **Inferred Finding: Employee and management’s use of a consistent vernacular may be a tool for recognising a culture shift and support for change processes.**

Practitioners could consider the use of organisational vernacular as a litmus test of organisational culture more broadly, or to test for individual and/or group indoctrination and affiliation during the change process.

### 6.6.4 Grapevine

In Case Study 1 several interviewees indicated there was an active grapevine in operation during the amalgamation process. Frahm and Brown (2006) suggested grapevine activity was consistent with a constructivist approach, where it is used to fill gaps when information is missing in change communication. In this study the grapevine proved to cause uneasiness and had both a negative and positive influence as the following quotes indicate:
“...because it was unknown ... there were still concerns about whether our guys had their job, and you know the rumours were running around...” (Manager 1.1.2); and

“Some of the operational teams would say ‘I’ve been talking to (Shire B) and they think such and such’ and in all fairness to Shire B, they’re obviously intelligent people they would raise things and we’d go ‘oh yeah, thank you, we forgot about that’...” (Manager 1.1.1).

Case study 1 also revealed some cynicism and hostility towards the change process, usually in reference to conversations with colleagues rather than a direct comment by participants. In Bryant’s view this could be considered voicing to colleagues rather than voicing to management. The following quote explains:

And they said oh yes, it is on our planning drive and I said, well that’s helpful are these people out here supposed to answer these questions if they can’t get onto the planning drive and it is not in a public drive. There were little things like that and I thought no wonder they are feeling so ripped off... I said to my, to my line supervisor, ‘does anyone send these to Shire B’? Does this actually go to the Shire B – and she said ‘probably not’. (Employee 1.2.1)

In contrast, little grapevine activity was reported by interviewees in Case Study 2, although there was some evidence of gossip in the organisation. Management endeavoured to be transparent with information and made an effort to ensure messages were passed onto employees. This appears to support Frahm and Brown’s (2006) assertions that a grapevine network becomes more active when there is uncertainty, as it fills the gaps in available information. The following inferred finding extends this theory based on the limited grapevine activity in Case Study 2:

- **Inferred Finding:** When employees can access information about change from a trusted manager or colleague they are less likely to seek the information from other sources.
For practitioners, the detrimental impact of organisational gossip will be alleviated if information is freely available, and both employees and managers are actively involved in delivering and receiving credible change messages. Practitioners may also be in a better position to predict issues by listening to the voicing that takes place in organisational gossip.

This study sought to obtain insights into ways of communicating change that will assist in gaining support for the change. The findings up to this point are discussed in the context of the culture assessment before the overarching question is addressed.

6.7 How do participative communication practices relate to organisational culture?

This section looks at the relationship between culture and communication practice. It considered the results of the OCAI surveys and drew on the findings of the interviews with managers and employees. In both case studies, change processes impacted greatly on the culture of each organisation: in Case Study 1 the merger of two organisations foisted two very different cultures on each another without any empirical understanding of the implications; and in the second case study, a more sophisticated and focused approach was used, as shifting the culture was central to the change process. In both case studies, the current culture appeared to have a major influence on the way the two organisations communicated, while the preferred culture indicated how the employees would like to be communicated with.

In Case Study 1 ‘hierarchy’ was the dominant influence on the current culture. During the change process the organisation used communication befitting a bureaucratic organisation: formal and impersonal, often monological, and from the top down. In case study 1 no culture
assessment was conducted, however the different cultures in the two organisations was acknowledged. Post the change, when the culture assessment was undertaken as part of this research project, the results indicated that a bureaucratic culture existed, although those who completed the survey indicated a desire for a ‘clan’ culture. The OCAI survey also reported a large incongruence between current and preferred cultures – this lack of alignment may have exacerbated the disconnection from the organisational change process.

In Case Study 2 the ‘clan’ and ‘hierarchy’ sectors were dominant influences on culture. Importantly, current and preferred cultures were greatly aligned, meaning those completing the survey were comfortable with the current culture and desired little change. During the change process the organisation used communication typical of a people-focused organisation, and whilst a top-down (more bureaucratic) style of communication was evident in Case Study 1, there was a greater variety of communication approaches in Case Study 2, with more engagement, informal, personal and often consultative interaction. Relationship-building processes were favoured.

In Case Study 2 a cultural assessment was undertaken prior to and periodically during the change process. This allowed employees to provide feedback and the organisation to track culture shifts. Throughout the interviews the majority of participants articulated an awareness and understanding of the culture, if not a growing affinity for it. This sense of comfort with the current culture could explain why the OCAI culture profile indicated little difference between current and preferred cultures, and supports the findings of Nelissen and van Selm (2008), who believed that employees became more positive about change the longer they survived it.
As previously indicated, both organisations preferred a similar culture; ideally a dominant ‘clan’ culture. ‘Hierarchy’ was also a big influence on culture, placing the major influences on the internal half of the Competing Values Framework. Since the core business of both organisations was administration in local government, it raises the question: ‘is a more external focus appropriate for these organisations? The sector had experienced a long period of stable operation within a constant external environment, and may have allowed a more internal focus to develop. As indicated in the Local Government Background section, recent moves in public sector management recommended engaging strategically with end users of services to better provide for the sector’s customers. (Crawford & Helm, 2009)

In terms of industry comparisons, the culture profile for ‘public administration’ indicates a dominant ‘hierarchy’ culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2006, p. 78). A public administration study using a sample of 451 people also indicated a dominant ‘hierarchy’ influence, and as in Case Study 1, the preference was for a ‘clan’ culture (OCAI Online, 2010). A further comparison was found in the OCAI results from Yolo County, which also indicated a current dominant ‘hierarchy’ culture with a preference for ‘clan’ culture (Fox, 2013). The findings of the cultural assessment of the two local government organisations in this study therefore appear to be consistent with others in the industry. While Case Study 2 results indicated a dominant ‘clan’ culture, the ‘hierarchy’ culture was also a major influence (clan = 33.06 points; hierarchy = 32.50 points).
Shifting an organisation’s culture is widely accepted as a difficult achievement, yet Case Study 2 appears to have succeeded in this considerable challenge through enacting standards and modelling behaviours that instilled the new culture in employees and managers and embedded it within the organisation. This focus on behaviour change is consistent with an organisational development approach, and connects far more strongly with individuals as it requires cognitive processing. For employees, talking or reading about desired organisational changes is unlikely to deliver the desired results.

As this research is based on a two-organisation case study, it is difficult to make any claims of a communication or culture typology. It is however of interest that the small differences in culture translated into a big difference in communication styles. For instance, Case Study 1, with a dominant ‘hierarchy’ culture used more formal, impersonal and monological styles of communication, while Case Study 2, which had ‘clan’ and ‘hierarchy’ as dominant cultures, utilised more face-to-face, familial, dialogical communication.
The OCAI results indicated both organisations had a preference for ‘clan’ or a more familial style of culture, suggesting that both organisations had a preference for and responded more favourably to personal and engaging styles of change communication. As a result, the following inferred finding is offered:

- **Inferred Finding: Organisations dominated by a clan culture respond more favourably to a personal and engaging change management communication approach.**

Further research needs to be conducted to determine whether personal and engaging styles of change management communication elicit consistently favourable outcomes. Such research could consider the change management communication in organisations where other cultures dominate, in order to develop a change management communication typology. From a practical perspective, change managers could do some benchmark testing by conducting a pre-change culture survey and comparing this throughout and at the conclusion of the change process to provide further insights.

The next section discusses the overarching research questions and the purpose of the study before proposing modifications to Arnstein’s Ladder to adapt it to situations employee participation in change processes.
6.8 How does participative communication impact on change management receptiveness?

This research was aimed at addressing the overarching research question so as to better understand how participative communication impacts on change management receptiveness. It examined how change was communicated within two organisations, its impact on employees, and the reactions elicited by the change. It also considered the relationship between participative communication and culture.

Within the study there was significant evidence of participative or relational communication. Two aspects appear to be important in this type of communication. The first is personal (or face-to-face) delivery and the second is dialogue. Employees appeared to value personal delivery of change communication, even when it did not allow for true dialogue or two-way symmetrical communication. In this context communication with small groups or individuals was also valued. Face-to-face communication in large group presentations was no longer considered personal communication, but rather a monological lecture, and was less appreciated by employees. Personal communication from a trusted manager was valued most by employees. Genuine dialogical or two-way symmetrical communication was preferred; employees were more receptive to personal, dialogical interaction, and often cynical about monological interaction. Employees were cynical when they suspected managers were using two-way asymmetrical communication, some admitting that this cynicism was a reaction to previous consultative processes which had been named ‘mock consultations’ as they had no influence on the outcomes. This highlights the constructive nature of Social Exchange Theory in underpinning communication, and should be heeded by change managers insofar as an
awareness that for employees, messages build on previous communication experiences and for managers, a personal commitment to delivering consistent change messages is essential.

Feeling genuinely engaged by the way the change was communicated was also important in gaining the support of employees. In both case studies employees were keen to understand the reasons for change and how it was to be implemented. Authentic communication of change information raised employees’ confidence and empowered them; employees indicated that understanding the change and its benefits (selling the change) along with details about how the change process would be implemented assisted in gaining their support. This supports the research of Torppa and Smith (2011) who indicated employees were more supportive of change when they believed it was required, when the process was designed appropriately, and it was possible to implement the change.

Exclusion of employees from the process of change communication caused disengagement and resentment (also for those who were engaged in the process e.g. transition team members). In Case Study 1, where information was generally directive and impersonal, there was little opportunity for employees to engage with the change process. There was also more evidence of gossip within the organisation in Case Study 1, which confirms Frahm and Brown’s (2006) findings that employees will use a constructive approach to fill the gaps and make sense of incomplete information.

For those leading change, selecting the right style of communication is important, as different communication styles imply different values of engagement. Employees could tell when they were being genuinely engaged in participative communication and ‘mock’ participation was
treated with cynicism. Nor was monological communication (formal, impersonal and one-way) appreciated.

Both the public relations models for communication presented by Kent & Taylor (2002) and Grunig (2002) are underpinned by genuine integrity when operating at the most ethical level (dialogue and two-way symmetrical communications). In an internal change management context this integrity would suggest the organisation aimed to build relationships and understanding with employees because they are valued, and is a different endpoint to the justification for developing participatory practices as part of the change management process. Currently many practitioners would engage in participatory practices because it is expected (tokenism), or as a means of persuading employees to support organisational goals. Participation could best be described as a continuum, starting with a monological, directive style on one end of the spectrum, to a tokenistic or mock participation process on the other.

6.9 Ladder of Employee Participation in Change Management

To assist in understanding the abovementioned spectrum of participation, a Ladder of Employee Participation is proposed for change management. This is based on Arnstein’s ladder, dialogical communication theory, the four models of public relations, participatory decision making, learning organisations, and insights gained from this study (Arnstein, 1969; Bryant & Cox, 2013; Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008; J. Grunig, 1992; L. A. Grunig et al., 2002; Kent & Taylor, 2002; Linstead et al., 2009; Pardo-del-Val et al., 2012; Parnell & Crandall, 2001).
Arnstein’s Ladder for Citizen Participation outlined a typology of engagement techniques used in urban planning in the United States (Arnstein, 1969). This was proposed in 1969 but still remains an insightful model today. The examples Arnstein used illustrate the disdain citizens experienced when dealing with city officials, and does not conceal the opinion of the author. In adapting the model for a Ladder of Employee Participation in Change Management, this researcher has attempted to present the model more objectively; hence some of the rung labels have been changed in an attempt to keep the broad intent of each consistent with Arnstein’s, while at the same time drawing on the literature and the findings of this research. (Development of the Ladder can be found in Appendix 11).

This model will be useful for academics and practitioners as a typology of change management communication: for academics to identify and evaluate change management communication cases, and for practitioners to scrutinise change management communication plans and processes for genuine engagement. It challenges practitioners to evaluate their motivations for communicating change, whether it is tokenistic, persuasive, or a genuine desire to engage employees, and urges them to choose the more ethical options on the higher rungs.

Before outlining each rung of the ladder, it is important to acknowledge that change communication is multi-layered and complex. Most change situations require communication through multiple media and channels, each with different levels of engagement.

When considering the typology, it is important to view both the incidents of communication and the complete communication approach used during the change processes.
Organisations that predominantly use the bottom three rungs may believe they are allowing employees to participate, but are really using ‘mock participation’ tactics as a means of gaining employee support. On the other hand, an organisation that uses the higher rungs of consultation and collaboration, demonstrates genuine engagement with its employees. This authentic level of support is more closely aligned with dialogical communication and two-way symmetrical communication espoused by Kent & Taylor (2002) and Grunig (1992) respectively. At the highest levels these epitomise the integrity of the sixth and seventh rungs, ‘collaboration’ and ‘delegated power’, as both employees and management have equal power and the communication is considered genuine. Put simply, they communicate with each other
because they value each other’s input. This research suggests the more genuine the dialogical communication, the more likely it is for the change process to be supported.

The proposed Ladder of Employee Participation outlines a typology of participation for engaging employees from the lowest rung, where the purpose is simply to provide one-way information to employees, to the eighth rung, which allows empowered employees to exert some control over the change process. Rungs one to five suggest employee participation in the process is tokenistic, while rungs six and seven suggest participation is more genuine and collaborative. The eighth rung, ‘employee control’, may be considered aspirational, however it is suggestive of a learning organisation where employees and teams are easily able to adapt and respond to change, and as such it is a justified inclusion. Implicit in the transition from one rung to the next is a growing level of trust in employees, and the employer’s recognition and value of their input. Also implicit in the transition through each of the eight levels is increased legitimate participation (as opposed to mock participation) and increased levels of enlightened dialogue (genuine two-way symmetrical communication).

The first rung on the Ladder of Employee Participation is ‘information’. On Arnstein’s ladder the first rung is ‘manipulation’. It was described as an illusionary form of participation because citizens were not genuinely engaged, and the message may not have conveyed the full truth. An urban planning example provided by Arnstein described a series of meetings which were held to prove that grassroots consultation had occurred, but where the proposed program had only been discussed in vague terms (1969). In an organisational change situation this level is called ‘information’ because it highlights the lowest form of change management communication, characterised by one-way directives from management to provide limited
details about the change and less opportunity for employee engagement. This communication may be face-to-face, a lecture, presentation or whole-of-staff meeting, or it could be more impersonal, such as newsletters, emails or static websites. In terms of the Four Models of Public Relations this would best be described as ‘publicity’ or ‘propaganda’. There were many examples of various information rungs throughout the case studies, including the use of newsletters and emails in Case Study 1. In Case Study 2, employees reported that a whole-of-organisation meeting was held in a roadshow format at the start of the change process. While the ‘information’ rung has a role in change communication, this study suggests it is to underpin and support the change communication process and is best used as part of a plan that also uses higher rungs.

Arnstein indicated that the first two rungs, ‘manipulation’ and ‘therapy’ could be interchanged. He elected to label the lowest rung on the ladder ‘manipulation’, suggesting simplicity and lower engagement are less valued than more engagement (possibly more manipulative) ‘therapy’, the implication being ‘manipulation’ is simple and more ethical, while ‘therapy’ is simple, more engaging but less ethical. Arnstein’s (1969) explanation of the rungs was often cynical and The Ladder of Employee Participation endeavours to be more objective in its description of the typology. The lowest rung on the Ladder of Employee Participation is ‘information’, the simplest form of communication and engagement; while the second rung, ‘education’, reflects a slightly more engaged communication process. The inference of both rungs 1 and 2 on both ladders is that communication may not provide full, accurate or honest details.
In Arnstein’s ladder, the second rung, ‘therapy’, was described as an untruthful form of communication, where the influence of a third party, such as a psychologist or field expert, can manipulate a citizen’s perspective. Arnstein referred to this as ‘group therapy masked as participation’, since a third party could be engaged to persuade citizens, for example when a group of tenants was encouraged to ‘adjust their values and attitudes to those of the larger society’ (Arnstein, 1969), the inference being it achieved the organisational outcomes without addressing the underlying problem. In the Ladder of Employee Participation, the second rung, ‘education’, is a more objective term and suggests employees were engaged in predominantly one-way, but possibly two-way asymmetrical communication. The communication is aimed at educating, advising and persuading, with only limited opportunity for employee feedback. Linstead et al. (2009) also identified education as having potential for reducing resistance to change. Consistent with Arnstein’s second level, is once again the suggestion that messages of communication may not contain full details. In the Ladder of Employee Participation, there is also a suggestion of third party endorsement, where the actions of an external expert, such as a psychologist, can be effectively used to engage with employees and challenge their perspectives. Arnstein contended this manipulative action, while aimed at addressing resistance, often avoided the real problem. This could be related to an organisational development approach whereby a third party is contracted to educate and challenge employees, at the same time encouraging personal change that brings about organisational change. Here the integrity of the process needs to be considered, since the use of an organisational development approach only to gain support for change could be considered tokenistic, however, as part of a larger and more collaborative process which uses higher-level rungs, it could be considered a genuinely participative process.
The assessment aligns with Bryant and Cox’s (2013) recent re-examination of organisational development. They suggested that the traditional interpretation or organisational development process often failed to appreciate the many and varied reactions to change, and examined two other stratifications of organisational development: posthumanist and new OD, which are further discussed in a later section. Bryant and Cox (2013) asserted that traditional organisational development focussed on changing employee behaviour; its purpose being to gain compliance with organisational standards of behaviour, thereby encouraging employees to suppress inconsistent emotions at work. These authors indicated that the shortcomings included a top-down approach because it didn’t allow employees to help solve problems (Bryant & Cox, 2013).

In Case Study 2 an organisational development approach was used in the form of COP. This process was intended to develop change ambassadors who exhibited culturally appropriate behaviour in the organisation. Some might consider the approach holistic as it considered the personal development of employees, while others might regard it as an indoctrination process, seeking to reduce resistance to change without truly valuing collaboration with employees.

The third rung on the Ladder of Employee Participation is ‘appeasing’. In Arnstein’s ladder the third rung is labelled ‘informing’, which could be described as providing employees with information, mainly in the form of news media, pamphlets and posters. Arnstein gave an example where citizens were invited to a planning meeting to be briefed on a project, however when a group of attendees asked a question, they were provided with a lengthy, technical response that left the citizens feeling intimidated. In this instance, the communication was not dialogic, but rather tokenistic, and more about the appearance of participation than a desire for
genuine participation. In the Ladder of Employee Participation the third or ‘appeasing’ rung is described as monological or one-way communication. There may have been instances of one-way communication with a feedback loop, or two-way asymmetrical when questions were asked, but since the intention was to avoid engaging participation was once again tokenistic. Both case studies provided examples of this type of ‘appeasing’ participation process, where some managers were unable to respond to questions at the level of detail desired by the employees. The first three rungs on the ladder represent the lower-order communication processes.

The fourth rung on the Ladder of Employee Participation is ‘seeking’. This is the first of the middle-order rungs, where participative communication starts to emerge. On Arnstein’s ladder this fourth level was termed ‘consultation’ and was associated with the organisation’s efforts to obtain information from citizens, often through the use of surveys and meetings. Once again the impression is one of tokenistic participation, because while providing evidence of participation, there was no assurance that citizens’ contributions would be considered. Arnstein observed cynicism amongst citizens as a result of futile surveys. In the Ladder of Employee Participation, this fourth level is termed ‘seeking’ and represents the organisation ‘seeking’ information from employees. This could best be described as mock dialogic or two-way asymmetrical participation if the intention is to collect but not use the information obtained from the survey data. The integrity of the process therefore needs to be considered; if other types of communication used were on higher-order rungs, the ‘seeking’ behaviour is likely to be genuine. If, on the other hand, the communication used was on the lower-order rungs only, it would be considered manipulative or tokenistic. It should be noted
that Case Study 2 employees undertook a number of surveys, the results of which allowed the change process to be modified.

The fifth level on the Ladder of Employee Participation is ‘consultation’. On Arnstein’s ladder the fifth level is ‘placation’ and refers to a level of engagement where citizens were invited to participate or advise on committees. Such involvement was considered tokenistic if officials still held all the power or right to veto (Arnstein, 1969). In the Ladder of Employee Participation, ‘consultation’, the fifth rung, is interpreted as a genuine step towards engaging employees since the process is more personal and allows two-way asymmetrical communication to occur. According to Grunig (1992) and Kent and Taylor (2002), the communication is still considered asymmetrical rather than symmetrical, since genuine dialogic communication only occurs between equals. In both case studies, the use of transition teams enabled a selected group of employees to participate in the consultative process, consistent with the fifth rung. This research also suggested the transition team composition should be cross-functional in order to better represent all areas of the organisation.

The sixth rung on the Ladder of Employee Participation is ‘collaboration’. In Arnstein’s ladder the sixth rung is ‘partnership’ and refers to a situation where citizens negotiated shared power with officials and played a part in determining the outcome of a project. In an urban planning context, partnership was usually demanded by angry citizens, however in the Ladder of Employee Participation it is initiated by those leading change. This sixth level of collaboration suggests two-way symmetrical or dialogic communication and participative decision-making, and a genuine intent to engage employees in the change processes. Managers engaged with employees because they valued their contribution and knowledge.
Pardo-del-Val et al. described participative management as ‘a style of management where managers share with the rest of the members of the organisation their influence in the decision-making process’ (2012, p. 1844). This aligns with the sixth rung. In Case Study 2 an example of such a collaborative process was the Key Messages approach used by senior management.

The sixth rung also aligns with Bryant and Cox’s (2013) notion of ‘new OD’. In ‘new OD’ the dialogic process is valued through understanding the many reactions to change and providing possible solutions for workplace problems. It is also considered a more authentic and genuine exchange when the dialogue helps to improve planned changes. Implicit in this collaboration is equality of both employee and management (Bryant & Cox, 2013).

The seventh rung on both the Ladder of Employee Participation and Arnstein’s ladder is ‘delegated power’. Arnstein refers to a situation where citizens had gained the majority of power and accountability for the program, often achieved through citizens setting up a separate organisation. In terms of the Ladder of Employee Participation the ‘delegated power’ rung is typified by the most genuine levels of dialogic or two-way symmetrical communication (J. Grunig, 1992; Kent & Taylor, 2002). There is genuine engagement and trust between those leading change and employees. Aspects of COP provide the best examples of this from the case studies. Each group of employees (transition team) that worked through COP was expected to collaborate to produce something of value for the organisation. For one team it was a set of organisational values. This team worked independently of senior management and had been delegated the power and authority to complete the project. In more generic terms this rung also represents the idea of self-managed work teams or groups of
employees who work together towards a common goal, and who complete all aspects of their work without supervision. Self-managed work teams frequently generate high levels of innovation and creativity, and as has also been suggested, can respond and adapt more quickly to change (Cheney, 1991).

The highest rung on the Ladder of Employee Participation is ‘employee control’. This eighth rung is labelled ‘citizen control’ on Arnstein’s Ladder and refers to an urban planning model in which citizens had achieved decision-making power and accountability. In terms of the Ladder of Employee Participation, this was the point where employees, rather than managers, led the change process, in all likelihood aspirational as there were no examples of ‘employee/citizen control’ in either case study. This is consistent with the first worldview of change, where change is part of everyday life and organisations need to constantly adapt. Continuous change and modification is characteristic of self-organising and evolving businesses (Weick & Quinn, 1999). It is also reflected in the ideals of learning organisations, where, in order to remain competitive, employees are required to make quick decisions about work processes, outcomes and work adaptations in response to the changing environment. This can also occur within cooperative and self-directed work teams.

The Ladder of Employee Participation provides a practical description of the participative engagement to be deployed during change processes. The research indicated personal communication and dialogical processes were beneficial in gaining support for change processes. The challenge for change management practitioners is to develop a communication program to run alongside the change management processes, and then to examine the communication against the Ladder of Employee Participation in Change Management, where
the higher order rungs indicate genuine participation and a process more likely to gain employee support.

Table 18. *Ladder of Employee Participation in Change Management.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rung</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Employee Control</td>
<td>Employees are empowered with the direction of their workplace and work together to determine change processes and the benefits from these changes. (Learning Organisation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Delegated Power</td>
<td>Employees are mostly empowered to determine the desired change outcomes and processes. Communication is personal, dialogic and consultative. Employees are accountable for the program and rewarded accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Employees have a representative role on a transition team. There is greater transparency and mutual input into the design of the change communication and processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Engaging employees in consultation through representation on transition teams. Seeking information through employee feedback/surveys. Information gained is used to determine ways to persuade employees to go along with a pre-determined outcome, rather than considering their input and being willing to change the outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Seeking</td>
<td>Input and information through employee feedback/surveys. Information gained is used to determine ways to persuade employees to go along with a pre-determined outcome rather than considering their input and being willing to change the outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Appeasing</td>
<td>Pseudo dialogue as employees are permitted to ask questions about the change – responses may be intimidating/inaccessible. One way asymmetric with two-way asymmetric elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Employees are educated about the workplace change. Advantages and disadvantages are provided. A third party expert may be used to endorse the process. One way communication – Directives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Employees are informed of workplace change through directives from management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final ‘Developed Conceptual Framework’ in Figure 16 incorporates the Ladder of Employee Participation in change management, in order to illustrate how more participative communication processes can assist in gaining support for change. Conversely, the framework also illustrates how less participative processes, represented by the lower three rungs, can result in resistance to change.

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This Discussion chapter brings together the findings of the case studies and the literature review with each of the research questions. Where consistent findings emerged from both case studies as well as the extant literature, a warranted assertion has been made, while inferred findings have been offered where the evidence was not supported by all data sources.

The Ladder of Employee Participation in Change Management proposition is the most important contribution of this study to academic research. This typology of participative communication processes, as they relate to change management situations, is the result of consolidated research findings from both case studies and the literature review. As such, it is
reflective of the local government sector in Western Australia and has potential for expansion in the public sector and in organisations with a similar cultural make up. Broader generalisations across enterprises cannot be assumed. The typology offers a useful framework for practitioners who lead change in local government, however its application must be guided by a number of factors, including type of change, change process selection, driver of change, culture of organisation, leadership and existing communication approaches.

The next chapter concludes the research and outlines the limitations of the study, followed by recommendations for further research.
Chapter Seven
Conclusion

This two case-study project sought to provide greater understanding of the lived experience of organisational change, with a particular focus on participative processes in communicating change as it aimed achieve greater clarity around the question: **How does participative communication impact on change management receptiveness?** Previous research reiterated the importance of communication in supporting organisational change processes. This study focused particularly on the role of participative communication, drawing on the participative management area (Pardo-del-Val et al., 2012) and considered the relational aspects of communication by drawing on two public relations communications theories: (a) Kent & Taylor’s dialogical communication theory, and (b) Grunig’s two-way symmetrical communication theory from the Four Models of Public Relations. The findings confirm the importance of engaging employees in communication and change processes to gain support for organisational change. Additionally this study proposes a typology of this communication in the Ladder of Employee Participation in Change Management.

This project considered four research questions:

- How was change communicated during the change management process?
- How did communication impact on participants in the change management process?
- How did participants react to the change management process?
- How do participative communication practices relate to organisational culture?
In answering the first research question: ‘How was change communicated during the change process?’, the core findings of this study confirm that those leading change are more likely to gain support for organisational change if a personal, engaging and collaborative approach is adopted for communicating. In addition, the findings support the use of a planned communication approach and reinforce the importance of the role of leaders in gaining support for organisational change.

In answering the second question: ‘How did communication impact on participants in the change process?’: The findings of the study suggested open and engaging communication resulted in a more positive attitude and reduced the likelihood of change resistance. The third question sought to understand employee reactions to change; and the research findings supported the assertion that less participative approaches to change communication were more
likely to increase resistance to change, conversely, when people were actively engaged with the change process, they better understood the plans and were more supportive.

The findings relating to participative communication and organisational culture suggest organisations dominated by a clan culture respond more favourably to personal and engaging change management communication approaches. This finding was considered an ‘inferred finding’ cultures dominated by market and hierarchy cultures were not evident in this study.

In addressing the overall research question: *How does participative communication impact on change management receptiveness?* This project asserted that participative communication approaches were associated more with support for change management processes, while less participative approaches, or those avoiding consultation, were more likely to meet with resistance. This research has implored that the intent of the communication needs to be genuinely engaging as employees were cynical about mock engagement strategies.

In an attempt to illustrate the participation options when engaging employees in change management communication the Ladder of Employee Participation in Change Management was developed. This was the most important contribution this project makes to academic research and is based on an adaptation of Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation. This typology provides a platform for examining how employees are engaged in the change management process. The ladder charts the level of engagement, starting from rung 1, a monological, directive, and one-way form of communication, and progresses to rungs 5 and 6, where consultative, collaborative, two-way communication occurs; and finally rungs 7 and 8, which represent an enlightened state in which employees effectively drive the change process. The latter will be considered unrealistic and aspirational by many, however others will
suggest it correlates strongly with the ideals of learning organisations and promotes employees as a resource capable of solving work-related problems.

This research supports and re-states communication as a priority when implementing organisational change. Further, it argues the case for a coordinated and considered approach to change communication. In terms of implementing change communication, this study provided deeper insights into how communication aids change and found participative communication more effective in gaining support for change processes. A communications’ specialist in a change management team might now argue the case for more participatory, engaging and higher order communication processes as part of the change management plan. Moreover, this study has further developed the understanding of participative communication.

The research findings provide clues for many practical applications to enhance change communication and support the adoption of change in the workplace. Development of a communication plan or communication approach that complements the change management process is one recommendation. The enlightened Key Messages initiative in one of the case study organisations is such an example, as it epitomises two-way symmetrical communication and underlines how collaborative communication can enhance ‘sense-making’, increase understanding of change, and improve consistency.

The mixed-methods, two-case approach provided a deep level understanding of the lived experience of organisational change necessary to address the research questions. The methods used included a quantitative culture assessment instrument (OCAI) and qualitative method - semi-structured interviews with employees and their managers, who led the change process. These methods provided a comprehensive picture of both organisations and enhanced
understanding of how change was effected. Initially it appeared that the qualitative component would dominate the research, however the OCAI results proved immensely valuable as a verification point and provided additional foundation to the data. Additionally, the OCAI might become a useful tool for practitioners wishing to understand the operational culture of an organisation ahead of implementing a change process. Thematic analysis was used to better tease out the keys to communicating change contained in the interview transcripts, providing rich insights that helped address each of the research questions.

Ensuring the validity of research is a key concern for students. This project has considered and conformed to a number of protocols to ensure the rigour of the research can be asserted. Guba’s key constructs of credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability, along with the work of Yin, Patton were considered when planning this project. The fortuitous development of both case study organisations being drawn from the local government sector provided a comparative element, not usually expected. This aided the study in strengthening claims consistent across both cases and the literature.

The research provided many valuable insights, but as with all research projects it has limitations. To ensure integrity in the way the research is interpreted and applied, its limitations are acknowledged below.

The study provided a retrospective view of change management processes, so only those employees who survived the change were interviewed. This may have biased the results as Nelissen and van Selm’s (2008) study indicated that employees become more positive about change the longer they survive it. To address this issue the researcher encouraged interviewees to accurately recall how they felt at the time the change process took place.
While it is possible that some had a favourable impression of change, it was also evident that some provided valuable and explicit examples of how they interpreted the change at the time is was communicated.

The retrospective nature of the study also impinged on the researcher’s ability to achieve triangulation of the data. In an ideal world, interviews and the OCAI survey would be supported with additional data from observations of the change management processes (e.g. meetings or facilitated sessions) or an audit of communication material during the change process period. Unfortunately these opportunities were not available. The study nevertheless achieved a level of confirmability through its examination of multiple cases, and its use of multiple sources of data and data collection methods.

Gaining access to a range of organisations to participate in the study proved difficult. As with all qualitative research the claims cannot be generalised to organisations more broadly, and accordingly, the findings of this research cannot be considered representative of all organisations experiencing change processes. However, given that both case study organisations were from the local government sector in Western Australia, the findings may have some relevance for other local government organisations in Western Australia.

The Discussion and Conclusion chapters outlined the key findings of this project This knowledge raises further questions; and so recommendations for further areas of research are outlined below. The major contribution of this research is the Ladder of Employee Participation in Change Management. While the two case-study organisations had similar cultures, it would be interesting to test this typology in other organisations, particularly those with different cultural dominances (adhocracy and market) or operating in different sectors.
Development of a change management framework is needed and a model linking change management effectiveness (operationally) and change management communication effectiveness could potentially advance the development of change management methods.

Additionally, the role of leadership in delivering change communication messages was consistently brought to the researcher’s attention. While this was not a central focus of this study, it could prove to be an interesting area for further research, using a symbolic interactionism approach.

Consideration of the dominant communication practices as they relate to readiness for change may deepen our understanding of culture change and communication processes. This would also further change readiness work and potentially provide helpful practical advice to practitioners.

One of the key themes in reaction to change communication was the vernacular the interviewees used to describe the change process. This is also recommended as an area for further research, to establish whether vernacular is a reliable indicator of culture, culture strength or change affinity.

The retrospective nature of this study limited the observations and ethnographic evidence that might otherwise have been achieved to better understand employees’ reactions to change communication messages. A further study in this area will increase the body of knowledge on resistance to change.

At the heart of this project was a desire to provide useful insights for organisations embarking on change. When employees react negatively to change messages it detracts from the
organisation’s efforts, and in turn contributes to high failure rates of change processes as reported in the literature. This study confirmed the important role played by communication in engaging employees in changes processes. Furthermore, it suggests personal and participative communication is better received and elicits supportive responses to change processes.

‘Change is a phenomenon that occurs within communication’


‘Change in organisations is the shifting of identities and relationships accomplished by communication’

(Karp & Helgo, 2008, p. 89).
References


## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Interview participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant number</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Amount of impact</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Type of role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1</td>
<td>Case 1 - Amalgamation</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Unassigned</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Strategic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2</td>
<td>Case 1 - Amalgamation</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Direct Impact</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Strategic &amp; Customer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1</td>
<td>Case 1 - Amalgamation</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Onlooker - minimal impact</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Specialised administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2</td>
<td>Case 1 - Amalgamation</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Onlooker - minimal impact</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Specialised administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.3</td>
<td>Case 1 - Amalgamation</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Onlooker - minimal impact</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Specialised administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.4</td>
<td>Case 1 - Amalgamation</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Direct Impact</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.5</td>
<td>Case 1 - Amalgamation</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Direct Impact</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.6</td>
<td>Case 1 - Amalgamation</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Onlooker - minimal impact</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Specialised administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.7</td>
<td>Case 1 - Amalgamation</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Unassigned</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>Case 2 - Culture change</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Unassigned</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Strategic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>Case 2 - Culture change</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Unassigned</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Strategic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>Case 2 - Culture change</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Unassigned</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Specialised administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>Case 2 - Culture change</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Unassigned</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3</td>
<td>Case 2 - Culture change</td>
<td>Employee</td>
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<td>2.2.4</td>
<td>Case 2 - Culture change</td>
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<td>2.2.5</td>
<td>Case 2 - Culture change</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Unassigned</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the unique participant number, the first digit indicates the case study organisation (1 or 2); the second number indicates the employment status (manager or employee) and the final number is the interview number.
Appendix 2. Organisation and interview consent form samples

Organisation Information letter and consent form
Appendix 3. Verification sample letter

(Date)

(Participant Name)
(Address provided on consent form)

Re: Change Management Communication – Research – Interview

Dear (Name),

Last November you participated in an interview with me where we discussed the amalgamation of (Case Study One) and the impact of these changes, if any, on the workplace.

I wanted to write to you again to express my appreciation for your participation in the interview. I have recently completed transcribing all of the interviews and I am currently working through them to identify major themes.

At a recent meeting with my research supervisors, we decided it would add weight to the study if we could verify the information gathered in the interview stage. This would enable me to confirm your inputs, while also inviting you to contact me if you wished, to add any further detail.

The following is one paragraph summary of the main areas addressed in your interview.

(a 6-12 line synopsis of the main points made during the interview)

What to do next:
- If you are happy with the summary you do not need to do anything further.
- If you wish to make any changes OR would like to provide further information please contact me on 041 991 5375 or at k.turton@ecu.edu.au

I would like to emphasise again that your involvement in this interview has been confidential.

Thank you again for your involvement in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Katie Turton
Student Researcher (Masters)
Faculty of Business & Law
Appendix 4. OCAI questions

Directions and Questions, copied from http://www.ocai-online.com/
Also available in:

Directions
- Assessing each aspect, you divide 100 points among four alternatives. Give a higher number of points to the alternative that is most similar to your organization and less or no points to the alternative that is least similar to your organization.
- Take the assessment in one go, without interruption.
- Do not open new windows or tabs during the assessment except for support.
- If you wish to navigate, use the horizontal navigation bar and do not use the browsers’ Back or Forward button.
- If you do interrupt the assessment do NOT close your browser. Just move on after the interruption.
- You are not allowed to register again with the same email address. Instead use a different email address.
- If you need assistance, contact support.

Question 1: Dominant Characteristics - now

| The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves. |
| The organization is a very dynamic entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick out their necks and take risks. |
| The organization is very results-oriented. A major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented. |
| The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do. |

Question 2: Organizational Leadership - now

| The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing. |
| The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking. |
| The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus. |
| The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency |

Question 3: Management of Employees - now

| The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation. |
| The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness. |
| The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement. |
| The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships. |

Question 4: Organization Glue - now

| The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high. |
The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.

The glue that holds the organization together is an emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.

The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.

Question 5: Strategic Emphases - now

The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.

The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.

The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.

The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control and smooth operations are important.

Question 6: Criteria of Success - now

The organization defines success on the basis of development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.

The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.

The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.

The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical.

Thank you for completing the first part
Thank you for assessing the "current culture". You can now proceed to the second part and focus on the "preferred culture".

Concentrate on the desired situation for a moment. If you could perform magic, how would you like your organization to be, to think, to speak, and to behave? What is needed for future success? What trends and developments, challenges, and opportunities lie ahead?

Question 1: Dominant Characteristics - preferred

The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.

The organization is a very dynamic entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick out their necks and take risks.

The organization is very results-oriented. A major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented.

The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.

Question 2: Organizational Leadership - preferred

The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.

The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.

The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.
The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.

Question 3: Management of Employees - preferred

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Style</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork, consensus, and participation.</td>
<td>The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.</td>
<td>The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.</td>
<td>The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.</td>
<td>The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 4: Organization Glue - preferred

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glue Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.</td>
<td>The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.</td>
<td>The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.</td>
<td>The glue that holds the organization together is an emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.</td>
<td>The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 5: Strategic Emphases - preferred

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Emphasis</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.</td>
<td>The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.</td>
<td>The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanence and stability. Efficiency, control and smooth operations are important.</td>
<td>The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control and smooth operations are important.</td>
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Question 6: Criteria of Success - preferred

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<th>Criteria of Success</th>
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<td>Development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.</td>
<td>The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.</td>
<td>The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical.</td>
<td>The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Send data
That’s it! You can submit your ratings to have your personal profile calculated for current and preferred culture.
Appendix 5. Full OCAI culture assessments

Report

Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument

December 8, 2012

Case Study 1
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The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI)

**OCAI-questionnaire**

The participant is asked to divide 100 points over four alternatives that correspond to them four culture types, according to the present organization. This method measures the mix of or extent to which one of the four culture types dominates the present organizational or team culture. By taking the test a second time, this time dividing the 100 points over the same alternatives according to what the test taker would like to see in the company, the desire for change can be measured.

The questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

Test takers will judge the six dimensions of their organization:
1. Dominant Characteristics
2. Organizational Leadership
3. Management of Employees
4. Organization Glue
5. Strategic emphases
6. Criteria of Success
The results

From Quinn and Cameron's extensive research it was found that most organizations have developed a dominant culture-style. An organization rarely has only one culture type. Often there is a mix of the four organizational cultures.

Conflicts within the Competing Values Framework may be caused by the fact that the values and the corresponding organizational cultures compete with each other. This is because organizations can spend their money, attention and time only once.

Quinn and Cameron found that organizations which are flexible in their structure are most effective, which sometimes leads to contradictions within the organization. The 'best' organizations can handle competition within this framework well.

Every culture type works best in the activities domain corresponding to that particular culture type. So sometimes there is no ultimate 'best' organizational culture, although a specific type may be better than others in particular situations.

The Competing Values Framework

From a list of 39 indicators of effectiveness within the organization, two important dimensions were discovered by statistical analysis.

Cameron and Quinn came up with four quadrants, corresponding to the four organizational cultures that differ strongly:
- Internal focus and integration vs External focus and differentiation
- Stability and control vs Flexibility and discretion

To the left in the graph, the organization is internally focused (what is important for us, how do we want to work) and to the right, the organization is externally focused (what is important for the outside world, the clients, the market).

At the top of the graph, the organization desires flexibility and discretion, while at the bottom, the organization wants the opposite values: stability and control.
The four culture types

1. The clan culture

A very pleasant place to work, where people share a lot of personal information, much like an extended family. The leaders or heads of the organization are seen as mentors and perhaps even parent figures. The organization is held together by loyalty or tradition. Commitment is high. The organization emphasizes the long-term benefit of human resources development and attaches great importance to cohesion and morale. Success is defined in terms of sensitivity to customers and concern for people. The organization places a premium on teamwork, participation, and consensus.

Leader Type: facilitator, mentor, team builder.

Value Drivers: commitment, communication, development.

Theory for Effectiveness: human development and participation produce effectiveness.

Quality Strategies: empowerment, team building, employee involvement, Human Resource development, open communication.

2. The Adhocracy Culture

A dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative place to work. People stick out their necks and take risks. The leaders are considered innovators and risk takers. The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to experimentation and innovation. The emphasis is on being on the leading edge. The organization’s long term emphasis is on growth and acquiring new resources. Success means gaining...
unique and new products or services. Being a product or service leader is important. The organization encourages individual initiative and freedom.

Leader Type: innovator, entrepreneur, visionary.

Value Drivers: innovative outputs, transformation, agility.

Theory for Effectiveness: innovativeness, vision and new resources produce effectiveness.

Quality Strategies: surprise and delight, creating new standards, anticipating needs, continuous improvement, finding creative solutions.

3. The Market Culture

A result-oriented organization whose major concern is getting the job done. People are competitive and goal-oriented. The leaders are hard drivers, producers, and competitors. They are tough and demanding. The glue that holds the organization together is an emphasis on winning. Reputation and success are common concerns. The long-term focus is on competitive actions and achievement of measurable goals and targets. Success is defined in terms of market share and penetration. Competitive pricing and market leadership are important. The organizational style is hard-driving competitiveness.

Leader Type: hard driver, competitor, producer.

Value Drivers: market share, goal achievement, profitability.

Theory for Effectiveness: aggressive competition and customer focus produce effectiveness.

Quality Strategies: measuring customer preferences, improving productivity, creating external partnerships, enhancing competitiveness, involving customers and suppliers.

4. The Hierarchy Culture

A very formalized and structured place to work. Procedures govern what people do. The leaders pride themselves on being good coordinators and organizers who are efficiency-minded. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is most critical. Formal rules and policies hold the organization together. The long-term concern is stability and performance with efficient, smooth operations. Success is defined in terms of dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low cost. The management of employees is concerned with secure employment and predictability.

Leader Type: coordinator, monitor, organizer.

Value Drivers: efficiency, punctuality, consistency and uniformity.

Theory for Effectiveness: control and efficiency with appropriate processes produce effectiveness.

Quality Strategies: error detection, measurement, process control, systematic problem solving, quality tools.
How to utilize the OCAI

Organizations use the OCAI for different reasons:

- The OCAI will provide you with an impression of what the staff considers important. In that sense it can be used to gauge whether employees are content.
- The OCAI can also be used as a zero measurement preceding any company changes. Once these changes have been made, a second assessment can be performed.
- The OCAI helps to improve internal communication if different cultures are mapped between different departments or locations.
- The OCAI is a useful tool in mergers or reorganizations.
- The OCAI can also be used if there is a high staff turnover or absence through illness.

Cameron has stressed the use prior to mergers: measuring organizational culture should precede any merger in the same way as a financial analysis. The feasibility and, after targeted interventions, the success of the merger depend on it.

Measuring organizational culture has some major advantages:

- People become aware of the current and of the preferred culture. Where are we now and where do we want to or have to go? This can generate momentum for change.
- It is easier to predict which measures of change will turn out to be effective. Management will get more grip on change.
- Resistance to change can be anticipated; it will not happen completely unexpectedly.
- It offers starting points to encourage employees and thus use their energy and creativity that leads to more support for change.
- It is the basis for a step-by-step, systematic change plan.
- Successful, lasting change revitalizes everyone; the organization will be given new momentum leading to [causing] all kinds of positive effects.
- The OCAI assessment is the first intervention to initiate change.

Discussing the outcome, dialogue and awareness are very important, as stressed by Cameron & Quinn. It will initiate the mental process required to bring about lasting change: intentions will turn into behavior and actual change is a fact.
Results

Case Study 1

Above you will find a diagram or profile of Case Study 1 (21 participants). The cultural profile is a mix of the four cultural archetypes. The red lines represent the current culture and the blue lines represent the preferred culture. From this we can deduct the following:

The dominant culture

The strength of your culture is determined by the number of points awarded to a particular cultural type. The higher the score, the more dominant the cultural type. Research has shown that strong cultures correspond with homogeneity of efforts, a clear sense of direction, an unambiguous environment and services.

The extent to which a company needs a strong, homogenous culture (instead of a varied, balanced mix of cultures) often depends on the environment: is the environment complex, how flexible should the organization be in order to respond effectively to a changing situation? If a culture is strong, changes will require more efforts.
In this case we see the following:
The dominant culture is the type that scored highest, in this case hierarchy culture (39.31 points); structure, procedures, efficiency and predictability. Followed by market culture (28.37 points); result-oriented, production, goals and targets and competition. Third is adhocracy culture (16.96 points); a dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative place to work. The clan culture is present as well (15.37 points); a very pleasant place to work where people share a lot of themselves and commitment is high.

Conclusion: apparently there is a mixture of cultures where an evident emphasis is placed on procedures and planning.

Discrepancy between present and preferred culture

Look at the difference between the current and the preferred culture. Red represents the current culture, blue represents the preferred culture. Differences of over 10 points are especially relevant and should induce the company to take action. This discrepancy yields important information about any preferred changes; which direction should the organization move in?

NB As Kim Cameron stated in an interview, if the difference is less than 10 points, this doesn't mean no action is required.

In this case we see:
The largest preferred difference can be seen in clan culture, with an increase of 28.04 points: the focus on people could be considerably more. Subsequently hierarchy culture with a decrease of 15.52 points could be less focused on formality. Market culture decreases with 13.91 points and adhocracy culture increases with 1.37 points.

The dominant culture in the preferred situation becomes clan culture, followed by hierarchy culture, adhocracy culture and market culture.

Cameron & Quinn stick to the principle that urgent action is required if the difference is higher than or equal to 10 points: this is valid for clan culture (+28.04 points), hierarchy culture (-15.52 points) and market culture (-13.91 points).

Cultural Congruence

Congruence on the six aspects means that strategy, style of leadership, reward system, management of employees and organizational characteristics are based on the same values, and fall into the same cultural quadrant.

Research shows that successful organizations often have a congruent culture. They experience fewer inner conflicts and contradictions. Cultural incongruence will often stimulate an awareness of the necessity of change. It will take a lot of time and debate; it leads to differences in values, views, targets and strategies.

Sometimes the incongruence specifically occurs between different departments or people. It may be interesting to assess these separately.
Dominant Characteristics

For this aspect hierarchy culture scores highest: 50.95 points. The dominant characteristics are formalized and structured where procedures govern what people do. The other cultural types have respectively scored as follows: market culture (19.52 points), clan culture (18.81 points) and adhocracy culture (10.71 points).

The point difference between the current and the preferred situation is greater than, or equal to, 10 in three out of four culture types. A new mix of culture types is highly desirable. Hierarchy culture decreases with 30.24 points, clan culture increases with 20.24 points and adhocracy culture increases with 11.19 points. Market culture decreases with 1.19 points.
Organizational Leadership

How do employees perceive the leaders or head of the organization, how do they behave? The leaders are considered to be hard drivers, producers and competitors (market culture: 43.81 points). And they have more qualities: coordinators and organizers (hierarchy culture: 25.57 points). They are also considered to be innovators and risk takers (adlocracy culture: 16.71 points). Leaders are least considered to be mentors and parent figures (clan culture: 13.90 points).

Both in market culture and in clan culture the point difference between the current and the preferred situation is greater than, or equal to, 10 (-30.95 and +24.19 points respectively). Adlocracy culture increases with 4.00 points. Hierarchy culture increases with 2.76 points.
Management of Employees

Hard-driving competitiveness, high demands and achievement are important: management of employees match the market culture with 40.67 points. Secondly we see hierarchy culture (31.24 points): security of employment, conformity, predictability and stability in relationships. Teamwork, consensus and participation score 16.43 points (clan culture). Individual risk taking, innovation, freedom and uniqueness are least prevalent, adhocracy culture scores 11.71 points.

Both in market culture and in clan culture the point difference between the current and the preferred situation is greater than, or equal to, 10 (-27.81 and +25.24 points respectively). Adhocracy culture increases with 6.38 points, this also requires attention. Hierarchy culture decreases with 3.86 points.
The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important (hierarchy culture: 48.33 points). Next we see commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge; adhocracy culture scores 22.14 points. Third we see an emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment. Aggressiveness and winning are common themes (market culture: 19.29 points). Finally we see loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high; clan culture scores 10.24 points. Both in clan culture and in hierarchy culture the point difference between the current and the preferred situation is greater than, or equal to, 10 (+35.95 and -29.76 points respectively). Adhocracy culture decreases with 6.19 points, this also requires attention. Market culture remains the same.
The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control and smooth operations are important. These are strategic emphases according to hierarchy culture (40.00 points). Second with 24.29 points we find adhocracy culture. Emphases are on acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued. Third we see competitive actions and achievement. Attaining targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant (market culture: 24.05 points). Finally we see human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist (clan culture: 11.67 points). The point difference between the current and the preferred situation is greater than, or equal to, 10 in three out of four culture types. A new mix of culture types is highly desirable. Clan culture increases with 34.29 points, hierarchy culture decreases with 18.43 points and market culture decreases with 12.29 points. Adhocracy culture decreases with 3.57 points.
Criteria of Success

Finally, the criteria of success. What are the definitions of success in the organization, and which criteria are used to determine how successful the organization is? The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical (hierarchy culture; 39.76 points). Additionally, success is determined based on winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key (market culture; 22.86 points). Next, the organization values development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment and concern for people (clan culture; 21.19 points). Finally, the organization is considered successful based on having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator (adhocracy culture; 16.19 points).

The point difference between the current and the preferred situation is greater than, or equal to, 10 in three out of four culture types. A new mix of culture types is highly desirable. Clan culture increases with 28.33 points, hierarchy culture decreases with 13.57 points and market culture decreases with 11.19 points. Adhocracy culture decreases with 3.57 points.
Congruence

In conclusion, after closely studying all six aspects, we could postulate that the current working culture is not very congruent. Out of 24 differences, 15 are larger than or equal to 5 compared to the average culture, of which 4 larger than or equal to 10. For example, market culture at Organizational Leadership deviates with 15.44 points and hierarchy culture at Management of Employees deviates with 13.74 points which requires attention. In most aspects (4) hierarchy culture is the dominant culture type.
Appendix OCAI-questionnaire

Dominant Characteristics
A. The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended clan culture. People seem to share a lot of personal information and features.
B. The organization is a very dynamic entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick out their necks and take risks.
C. The organization is very results-oriented. A major concern is getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented.
D. The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.

Organizational Leadership
A. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.
B. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.
C. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.
D. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.

Management of Employees
A. The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation.
B. The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.
C. The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.
D. The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.
Organization Glue

A. The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.
B. The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.
C. The glue that holds the organization together is an emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.
D. The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.

Strategic Emphases

A. The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.
B. The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.
C. The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hats off targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.
D. The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control and smooth operations are important.

Criteria of Success

A. The organization defines success on the basis of development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.
B. The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.
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D. The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical.
Report

Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument

December 18, 2012

Case Study 2

OCAI online
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## Appendix OCAI-questionnaire

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The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI)

OCAI-questionnaire

The participant is asked to divide 100 points over four alternatives that correspond to them four culture types, according to the present organization. This method measures the mix of or extent to which one of the four culture types dominates the present organizational or team culture. By taking the test a second time, this time dividing the 100 points over the same alternatives according to what the test taker would like to see in the company, the desire for change can be measured.

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From a list of 39 indicators of effectiveness within the organization, two important dimensions were discovered by statistical analysis.

Cameron and Quinn came up with four quadrants, corresponding to the four organizational cultures that differ strongly:

- Internal focus and integration vs External focus and differentiation
- Stability and control vs Flexibility and discretion

To the left in the graph, the organization is internally focused (what is important for us, how do we want to work) and to the right, the organization is externally focused (what is important for the outside world, the clients, the market).

At the top of the graph, the organization desires flexibility and discretion, while at the bottom, the organization wants the opposite values: stability and control.
The four culture types

1. The clan culture

A very pleasant place to work, where people share a lot of personal information, much like an extended family. The leaders or heads of the organization are seen as mentors and perhaps even parent figures. The organization is held together by loyalty or tradition. Commitment is high. The organization emphasizes the long-term benefit of human resources development and attaches great importance to cohesion and morale. Success is defined in terms of sensitivity to customers and concern for people. The organization places a premium on teamwork, participation, and consensus.

Leader Type: facilitator, mentor, team builder.

Value Drivers: commitment, communication, development.

Theory for Effectiveness: human development and participation produce effectiveness.

Quality Strategies: empowerment, team building, employee involvement, Human Resource development, open communication.

2. The Adhocracy Culture

A dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative place to work. People stick out their necks and take risks. The leaders are considered innovators and risk takers. The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to experimentation and innovation. The emphasis is on being on the leading edge. The organization’s long term emphasis is on growth and acquiring new resources. Success means gaining
unique and new products or services. Being a product or service leader is important. The organization encourages individual initiative and freedom.

Leader Type: innovator, entrepreneur, visionary.

Value Drivers: innovative outputs, transformation, agility.

Theory for Effectiveness: innovativeness, vision and new resources produce effectiveness.

Quality Strategies: surprise and delight, creating new standards, anticipating needs, continuous improvement, finding creative solutions.

3. The Market Culture

A result-oriented organization whose major concern is getting the job done. People are competitive and goal-oriented. The leaders are hard drivers, producers, and competitors. They are tough and demanding. The glue that holds the organization together is an emphasis on winning. Reputation and success are common concerns. The long-term focus is on competitive actions and achievement of measurable goals and targets. Success is defined in terms of market share and penetration. Competitive pricing and market leadership are important. The organizational style is hard-driving competitiveness.

Leader Type: hard driver, competitor, producer.

Value Drivers: market share, goal achievement, profitability.

Theory for Effectiveness: aggressive competition and customer focus produce effectiveness.

Quality Strategies: measuring customer preferences, improving productivity, creating external partnerships, enhancing competitiveness, involving customers and suppliers.

4. The Hierarchy Culture

A very formalized and structured place to work. Procedures govern what people do. The leaders pride themselves on being good coordinators and organizers who are efficiency-minded. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is most critical. Formal rules and policies hold the organization together. The long-term concern is stability and performance with efficient, smooth operations. Success is defined in terms of dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low cost. The management of employees is concerned with secure employment and predictability.

Leader Type: coordinator, monitor, organizer.

Value Drivers: efficiency, punctuality, consistency and uniformity.

Theory for Effectiveness: control and efficiency with appropriate processes produce effectiveness.

Quality Strategies: error detection, measurement, process control, systematic problem solving, quality tools.
How to utilize the OCAI

Organizations use the OCAI for different reasons:

- The OCAI will provide you with an impression of what the staff considers important. In that sense it can be used to gauge whether employees are content.
- The OCAI can also be used as a zero measurement preceding any company changes. Once these changes have been made, a second assessment can be performed.
- The OCAI helps to improve internal communication, if different cultures are mapped between different departments or locations.
- The OCAI is a useful tool in mergers or reorganizations.
- The OCAI can also be used if there is a high staff turnover or absence through illness.

Cameron has stressed the use prior to mergers: measuring organizational culture should precede any merger in the same way as a financial analysis. The feasibility and, after targeted interventions, the success of the merger depend on it.

Measuring organizational culture has some major advantages:

- People become aware of the current and of the preferred culture. Where are we now and where do we want to or have to go? This can generate momentum for change.
- It is easier to predict which measures of change will turn out to be effective. Management will get more grip on change.
- Resistance to change can be anticipated; it will not happen completely unexpected.
- It offers starting points to encourage employees and thus use their energy and creativity that leads to more support for change.
- It is the basis for a step-by-step, systematic change plan.
- Successful, lasting change revitalizes everyone; the organization will be given new momentum leading to [causing] all kinds of positive effects.
- The OCAI assessment is the first intervention to initiate change.

Discussing the outcome, dialogue and awareness are very important, as stressed by Cameron & Quinn. It will initiate the mental process required to bring about lasting change: intentions will turn into behavior and actual change is a fact.
Case Study 2

Results

Above you will find a diagram or profile of (24 participants). The cultural profile is a mix of the four cultural archetypes. The red lines represent the current culture and the blue lines represent the preferred culture. From this we can deduce the following:

The dominant culture

The strength of your culture is determined by the number of points awarded to a particular cultural type. The higher the score, the more dominant the cultural type. Research has shown that strong cultures correspond with homogeneity of efforts, a clear sense of direction, an unambiguous environment and services.

The extent to which a company needs a strong, homogenous culture (instead of a varied, balanced mix of cultures) often depends on the environment: is the environment complex, how flexible should the organization be in order to respond effectively to a changing situation? If a culture is strong, changes will require more efforts.
In this case we see the following:
The dominant culture is the type that scored highest, in this case clan culture (33.06 points): a very pleasant place to work where people share a lot of themselves and commitment is high. Followed by hierarchy culture (32.50 points): structure, procedures, efficiency and predictability. Third is adhocracy culture (17.48 points): a dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative place to work. The market culture is present as well (16.97 points): result-oriented, production, goals and targets and competition.

Conclusion: apparently there is a mixture of cultures where an emphasis is placed on a people-friendly working environment where coworkers and teamwork are important.

Discrepancy between present and preferred culture

Look at the difference between the current and the preferred culture. Red represents the current culture, blue represents the preferred culture. Differences of over 10 points are especially relevant and should induce the company to take action. This discrepancy yields important information about any preferred changes: which direction should the organization move in?

N.B. As Kim Cameron stated in an interview, if the difference is less than 10 points, this doesn’t mean no action is required.

In this case we see:
The largest preferred difference can be seen in hierarchy culture, with a decrease of 12.15 points: the focus on formality could be considerably less. Subsequently adhocracy culture with an increase of 8.28 points could be more focused on innovation. Clan culture increases with 5.97 points and market culture decreases with 2.11 points.

The dominant culture in the preferred situation remains clan culture, followed by adhocracy culture, hierarchy culture, and market culture.

Cameron & Quinn stick to the principle that urgent action is required if the difference is higher than or equal to 10 points: this is valid for hierarchy culture (-12.15 points).

Cultural Congruence

Congruence on the six aspects means that strategy, style of leadership, reward system, management of employees, and organizational characteristics are based on the same values, and fall into the same cultural quadrant.

Research shows that successful organizations often have a congruent culture. They experience fewer inner conflicts and contradictions. Cultural incongruence will often stimulate an awareness of the necessity of change. It will take a lot of time and debate; it leads to differences in values, views, targets and strategies.

Sometimes the incongruence specifically occurs between different departments or people. It may be interesting to assess these separately.
For this aspect, hierarchy culture scores highest: 33.54 points. The dominant characteristics are formalized and structured where procedures govern what people do. The other cultural types respectively scored as follows: clan culture (31.88 points), market culture (18.88 points) and adhocracy culture (15.71 points).

Most prominent: hierarchy culture should decrease considerably, as indicated by the preferred cultural situation. Hierarchy culture would score 16.88 points. With a decrease of 15.00 points compared to the current culture, this is definitely a point of interest. Adhocracy culture increases with 9.71 points which requires attention and clan culture increases with 7.29 points, this also requires attention. Market culture decreases with 2.00 points.
Organizational Leadership

How do employees perceive the leaders or head of the organization, how do they behave? The leaders are considered to be coordinators and organizers (hierarchy culture: 33.75 points). And they have more qualities; mentors and parent figures (clan culture: 30.42 points). They are also considered to be hard drivers, producers and competitors (market culture: 18.54 points). Leaders are least considered to be innovators and risk takers (adhocracy culture: 17.29 points).

Both in clan culture and in hierarchy culture the point difference between the current and the preferred situation is greater than, or equal to, 10 (+10.63 and -10.21 points respectively). Market culture decreases with 8.33 points, this also requires attention. Adhocracy culture increases with 7.92 points, this also requires attention.
Management of Employees

Teamwork, consensus and participation are important: management of employees match the clan culture with 37.50 points. Secondly we see hierarchy culture (28.54 points): security of employment, conformity, predictability and stability in relationships. Hard-driving competitiveness, high demands and achievement score 18.13 points (market culture). Individual risk taking, innovation, freedom and uniqueness are least prevalent, adhocracy culture scores 15.83 points. The difference between the current and the preferred situation does not exceed 10 points in any of the culture types. There is no obvious necessity to introduce a new mix of culture types. Both adhocracy culture, hierarchy culture and market culture require further attention with an increase of 9.58 points, a decrease of 9.17 points and a decrease of 5.21 points. Clan culture increases with 4.79 points.
Organization Glue

The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important (hierarchy culture: 32.50 points). Next we see loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high: clan culture scores 29.17 points. Third we see an emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment. Aggressiveness and winning are common themes (market culture: 20.63 points). Finally we see commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge: adhocracy culture scores 17.71 points. Both in hierarchy culture and in adhocracy culture the point difference between the current and the preferred situation is greater than, or equal to, 10 (-16.88 and +11.88 points respectively). Clan culture increases with 6.67 points, this also requires attention. Market culture decreases with 1.67 points.
The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control and smooth operations are important. These are strategic emphases according to hierarchy culture (33.33 points). Second with 31.88 points we find clan culture. Emphases are on human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist. Third we see acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued (ad hoc culture: 22.29 points). Finally we see competitive actions and achievement. Attaining targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant (market culture: 12.50 points). Most prominent: hierarchy culture should decrease considerably, as indicated by the preferred cultural situation. Hierarchy culture would score 17.08 points. With a decrease of 14.79 points compared to the current culture, this is definitely a point of interest. Ad hoc culture increases with 5.42 points which requires attention and clan culture increases with 4.79 points. Market culture increases with 4.58 points.
Finally, the criteria of success. What are the definitions of success in the organization, and which criteria are used to determine how successful the organization is? The organization defines success on the basis of development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment and concern for people (clan culture: 37.50 points). Additionally, success is determined based on efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical (hierarchy culture: 33.33 points). Next, the organization values having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator (adhocracy culture: 16.04 points). Finally, the organization is considered successful based on winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key (market culture: 13.13 points).

The difference between the current and the preferred situation does not exceed 10 points in any of the culture types. There is no obvious necessity to introduce a new mix of culture types. Both hierarchy culture and adhocracy culture require further attention with a decrease of 6.88 points and an increase of 5.21 points. Clan culture increases with 1.67 points and market culture remains the same.
Congruence

In conclusion, after closely studying all six aspects, we could postulate that the current working culture is congruent. None of the measured issues exceed a point difference of 5 when compared to the average culture. In most aspects (4) hierarchy culture is the dominant culturetype.
Appendix OCAI-questionnaire

Dominant Characteristics

A. The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended clan culture. People seem to share a lot of personal information and features.
B. The organization is a very dynamic entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick out their necks and take risks.
C. The organization is very results-oriented. A major concern is getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented.
D. The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.

Organizational Leadership

A. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.
B. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.
C. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.
D. The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.

Management of Employees

A. The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation.
B. The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.
C. The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.
D. The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.
Organization Glue

A. The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.
B. The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.
C. The glue that holds the organization together is an emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.
D. The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.

Strategic Emphases

A. The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.
B. The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.
C. The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.
D. The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control, and smooth operations are important.

Criteria of Success

A. The organization defines success on the basis of development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.
B. The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.
C. The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.
D. The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical.
Appendix 6. OCAI Graphs
Appendix 7. Interview questions

Interview Questions – Employee

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Background & Introduction:

- Tell me a little about the organisation, how long have you been working with the organisation, what is your role.
- Your organisation has recently made changes, how would you describe what happened?
- How do you feel about the proposed / implemented changes?
- How did you first hear about the changes? Describe how the changes have been communicated since that first time? (Was there evidence of a formal communication plan?)
- Describe the level of involvement or consultation you experienced.
- If you could provide feedback to management on the change process, what 3 pieces of advice would you give?

Thank you for your time, if you think of anything else that may be useful or you think I should know about please contact me on 0419915375 or by email.

Interview Questions – Manager

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Background & Introduction:

- Tell me a little about the organisation, how long have you been working with the organisation, what is your role.
- Your organisation has recently made changes, how would you describe what happened?
- What happened during the change management process?
- What forms of communication were used? Was a formal communication plan used? Which had the most impact?
- How interactive was the process?
- If you could make three changes to the communication process what would they be?

Thank you for your time, if you think of anything else that may be useful or you think I should know about please contact me on 0419915375 or by email.
Appendix 8. Transcription example

The transcriptions were reviewed and answers to each of the questions were compared in a cross-case analysis approach (Patton, 1990). From these, themes were identified that described the process, interpretations, opinions and emotions that resulted from the change process. The coded transcriptions were analysed using NVivo software, see Appendix 9. Code Book and Appendix 10. Nvivo coding example. Each transcription was cross referenced with thematic tags, and organisation and participant data to ensure a clear audit trail.
If you could make three changes to how the amalgamation was communicated could you tell me what they might be?

Um, I would ensure that there was weekly email updates. Um, divided meetings stuff like that, and yeh I would get – it would just have to be very open and transparent for me to be happy. It would just have to be. And have, yeh just the smaller council, like the one, it seemed just to be forgotten. And I, it was sort of um, and even now and I ring up and sort of say ‘it’s from the civic centre and I was just wondering if you have got a certain certificate’.

‘well youse people took everything’ and that sort of shit, you know it is just like, ‘Um, ok – but I didn’t – cause I didn’t wasn’t working in this department at that time.’ Youse people took everything – you took everything – you left us with nothing you know the whole – that sort of thing – and that sort of - you get to the point when you just don’t want to deal with them, when they’re like that. BUT I understand why they’re like that – you know I can understand why.

It was sort of like ‘ok, thank you – have a nice day’

If you provide some feedback to your managers about how to implement a change like this if they had to do it again

OK I have a different manager now though

Well let’s make it say: at the time I would have said to my manager…. Or my current manager is like this…… – so I would say to him – or this is what feedback I would give.
My current manager is much more approachable and much more interested in what is going on in the day to day world of his team, much more, he doesn’t hide anything from us – he is actually dependant on our input – so um, the manager back then had huge ownership issues um, liked to close the door – like to be um – in control. So I would imagine would be the word. In control, was a matter of, it meant we had I staff meeting – and he banged his fist on the desk and said ‘well I’m the manager, and this is how we are doing this’ that sort of thing – you know and then a couple of months later in a meeting – just sitting there and he’s like ‘what and no one has got anything to say’ and like ‘really’, you know, so um that sort of attitude that’s never going to cut it, um – my current manager would never do that. Like he would never bang on the desk – he gets cranky but, there is never any of that – um, but people it was the ownership issue that came with it and the control factors – that were little bit difficult to handle then. And then all of sudden it like ‘we are going out to _____ for the day’ but this is how it is going to be ‘But it is really busy here? Why do I need to travel an hour out there and spend two hours and then an hour back, when it is already decided? I’m really busy – like I’ve got a lot stuff happening and rah rah rah – so just tell me what you are going to do and what is going to happen and ask for more input.

Were you glad you went out to _____ even though...

Oh yeh, I was, I was glad, but I felt really bad for them when I was out there and we argued pretty much all the way out and all the way back, but, yes it
Interview highlighted the contradictions between passive aggressive resistance that occur in the face of change. Interviewee clearly felt a loss of us as a result of the merger. She felt she hadn't been consulted or informed and she was fault with many of the procedures. In a smaller organisation joining larger organisation the layers of bureaucracy increase. Sometimes the layers stifle the timeliness of communication, or just don't fit in the smaller environment. Again this interview highlighted the wealth of skills that individual employees have in a smaller work environment. Anonymity is also important and roles who interconnect with many of the organisation's stakeholders. Again there were changes to the employees' job and this had a perceived loss of status/power/numbers. The 'pull back' or resistance is even in the criticism of others' bureaucracy and also an unwillingness to share information. Underhand/White eating?

The language used was emotive and showed a real insecurity about who she was and the role she played in the office/organization. The importance of a trusted leader was again highlighted. From an external perspective, it is important to consider the organisation's sensitivities in promoting/influence about changes.
employee was a great logical unit centre!

Employee felt they were very committed to the change, despite very little involvement and lack of communication. They were concerned with how their office would be treated in the corporate structure and recognised that rewards would have the biggest impact on these employees. Interviewee coined the term 'Professional Guilt' to describe this feeling.

Interview questions the fit - very different cultures being amalgamated, one rural and one urban. They acknowledged that the geographical distance between the two offices created some impediment to integration in a traditional face-to-face setting.

They felt the initiatives in combining the corporate branding and joining the two offices in a single office to sense were appropriate and helped unite the two organisations.

In terms of the communication, this employee appreciated the newsletters, as they were 'a reader'; couldn't recall any face-to-face communication, but would have appreciated it and would recommend it in the future. They acknowledged the 'grapevine' in communicating information about the amalgamation, but recognised that many didn't read information that was sent to them.

This person's advice was to involve staff in deciding the type of communication channels.
Appendix 9. Code Book

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Appendix 10. Nvivo coding example

so the culture — well we need here is, we need here to put in some program to actually bring people together. You know, it is still, there are still a lot of cultures around and it’s um, I think because of the last amalgamation — not the one, but the previous one — that in my mind hasn’t been dealt with and needs to be dealt with before the internal organisation,

so I suppose we’ve been sort of looking from the outside, because we don’t have too much to do with them out there, we’ve been sitting here watching how it has panned out, but we know, I mean we know that staff here, or at least how we run things here, we need to do more for them out there, I mean it is not to do with, we’ve got 10,000, you know, 37,000 people over here and you know 500 over there, it is not to do with the fact that it is about that inclusivity, they need to feel that they are part of us. They are part of us. But, I think it is easy for us to pretend that you know, that this town an hour away isn’t part of, really, captured in how we run things and how we see ourselves and stuff, so I think that that’s what I am trying to get at,

what you are trying to do is trying to build a bit of unity,

I think it needs to be pulled together into an organisation that is moving forward supporting each other, um actually knowing where we are going, why we are going there and how we can achieve what we need to achieve, in a better way. So I suppose we need to have some consolidation and some good systems. And we need to be able to know that we can make decisions that we can start on a process and finish it without having to wait for five lots of knock backs, so yeah, it’s in the decision making at the moment is like — I can’t do half of the things I could be doing because that’s not how it is done. So yeah,

My opinion needs, or needed the amalgamation to try to bring it more into the 21st century. Um, it still does, and it needs to bring in the policies more so than personalities and specially the OHS issues, it needs to be pushed a little bit more. Specifically the outside, because I’m an occupational health and safety person as well. You need, especially the outside staff, they just don’t want to, sometimes — that is all I’m saying I don’t. (That’s fine). There’s been a negative with that, because to me, we need more OHS and I was hoping that we would get more of it from other — and it just doesn’t seem to have happened. I don’t know whether that is because of , and or they not is doesn’t seem to be happening, it will be interesting to see what happens after the New Year.

I think to break down those barriers is between, between teams that can work together that can work together.

Some of the operational teams would say you know I’ve been talking to and they say such and such and such and in all fairness to they’re obviously intelligent people they would raise things and go oh yeh, thank you we’ve forgot about that. So that was really good. Even though it was word of mouth that came back and you’d go of shivers yeh, that is a very good point — we’ll try that.

in my role I actually help make sure that the council agenda items go onto the council agenda and so I do see the council minutes from time to time so I’ve possibly seen a few things when you are scrolling through that not everyone else would have seen,

there is always a lot of rumour and innuendo with amalgamation and that is why I took notice of the emails — because you read that and ask questions. I never got involved in any of the gossip and any of that sort of stuff.
the rumour and innuendo will get you every single time. And that is where it all falls down. As soon as the rumour and innuendo starts and you can have as many staff meetings and you can send as many emails as you want, but you are always going to have that little faction of people that are not going to want it, that just thrive on that drama of upsetting people and all that sort of stuff, and they’re the ones that need to be, um, like I alluded to, pinpointed and stopped and usually they are not hard to pinpoint.

I was cool getting the newsletters and finding out all the goss from everyone else. That wasn’t a problem.

But I think in the background there was a couple of stirring just going around, but why I say stirring is just because I know who puts it in and who doesn’t put it in the community and you know what I mean, and I’ve always maintained that just paying rates doesn’t make a community.

because it was the unknown, because it was our staff right up to May there was still concerns about um, whether the guys had their and you know the rumour were running around.

I think it was I think it was fairly active. We would hear things that from and that sort of thing. Some things you’d hear, you’d go, ‘What, no, don’t think so.’ Yes we would things and even sometimes if people did go out there they would get more information than what we would have if we had done a formal type of thing. Yeh there was, there wasn’t too much of it, but yeah it was help in someways but um and I think it just plugged well it didn’t plug a gap, but in a way it did in a sense that is perhaps we’d been more active on the communication then we wouldn’t have had the grapevine sort of thing.

honestly is the key- and having it filter down and not Chinese whispering. And that is where the minutes are very good – because everyone can read it and look at it and go. It is not and so and so told me, because that just goes to crap and you don’t want the hangover for 5 years, like, like we’ve got now. You really don’t.

Nodes Human Aspect Human Aspect Emotional or Human perspective that needs to be managed.

I think the [redacted] staff would have really felt let down by the process.

Start earlier

Stick to a communication plan - have a really robust communication plan
And if you started earlier it should help. Recognise the impact on the staff,

Even today I still remind them the impact has been enormous. Um, but with a few changes maybe at the start, getting everyone involved in it, it might have been a bit better.

I suppose we’ve been sort of looking from the outside, because we don’t have too much to do with them out there, we’ve been sitting here watching how it has panned out, but we know. I mean we know that staff here, or at least how we run things here, we need to do more for them out there, I mean it is not to do with, we’ve got 10,000, you know, 7,000 people over here and you know 500 over there, it is not to do with that is about that productivity, they need to feel that they are part of us. They are part of us. But, I think it is easy for ourselves and stuff, so I think that’s what I am trying to get at.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hierarchical Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number Of Sources Coded</th>
<th>Number Of Coding References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The impacts well no one really knew, but when we started, when we got into the amalgamation and there was really the issues starting to show up, the city through their um, their employment assistance scheme had funding there to get change management people in and we got a guy in for a couple of meetings out here, a psychologist, and he worked with us, with the girls and that was good and that sort of work should have started early, well before.

we had a fair bit of time, um I think there was a lot to do, but we didn't really spend a lot of time on the changes, the change management side of it. I was pushing it for quite a while, about um, because it was the unknown, because it was the unknown, because it was our stuff right up to May there was still concerns about um, whether the guys had their job, and you know the rumours were running around... so there was a lot of workshopping meetings held here, but the actual impacts, the psychological impacts and that sort of thing, we didn't do a lot of work on that.

when I went out to office to meet them, I was very concerned that they knew nothing, I thought that was very unfair and um they would say oh what are we doing – we don't know what we are doing and you know all that sort of stuff

There is an expectation that we have knocked off of the 30th of June and we came to work on the 1st of July and everything was bony dry, and it just doesn't work because you have got a human element there and... the change management and all that sort of thing wasn't really well done.

There was a bit of rumbling and mumbling for a while, but that is the normal thing that you can go through, and you know I wasn't going to go out there and pull people up all the time. I had a fair little um, um you know, tool box meetings or something like that, so I'd say well let's shut the door for half an hour and we'd all come in here and I'd say look I've basically got a feeling that this is what are thinking and we talk about it, blah blah blah, and we go through it that way. So I tried to make sure that it wasn't threatening, and that's and that's when we probably started when we were getting that consultant in, there was a reason for it and um, yeah, but I think, I think it is a people thing...

just little things, but boy do they add up, they add up considerably and it's um that on top of the human aspect is quite incredibly trying

And so you can do your reporting, etc etc, that sort of thing. But um yeah all those - I think ultimately out of all of this and I am sure you are quite well aware of this and so is everyone that it's the human factor that is the key, whereas the operational 'haven't got that, that's a shame the seal - well we won't be 'sealing' anything for a week because we don't have one. Things like that like that

change um, unless it is fear, it is the uncertainty and what is going... go on next, and even when people are being held by the hand and taken along. It, it, no one really knows what is going to hit them and when everything changes, so I suppose um, doing some work to try to um, to try and figure out what peoples fear are, like you know in what area of they worried about, um would be helpful as well, and then you could focus on on trying to arh, I don't know, to try and sort of deal with those as it comes up, because otherwise like in my experience, if you don't (whispering) people just put their little barriers up, they don't listen anymore, anyway that's what I reckon.

I did lose a few things, and we adjusted, the staff from um to start off with, were awesome, again it was case of, they had no idea, what it was like for us over here. We wear five hats, over there they wear 1, and they only do one job, so start off with they came and the place, they took all um, they took anything to do with permits, anything to do with legal documents, they took all those sort of things to stock all the main paperwork, and then it was their office ringing and saying 'what's this' 'what's this' and we couldn't because they took it over there, and we'd say to them 'but you took it' 'Oh but we don't know where it is'.

Because it is really on your staff.

But the other thing, I know it, it's a people industry local government, and that has got to be in the forefront, you know there is a lot of local industry, that has got out there, about how you do it and all that sort of thing. But you know, um, you just gotta, make sure that you bring the people in, involve everyone, cause they are the ones.
Appendix 11. Ladder of Employee Participation in Change Management –
development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Employee Participation</th>
<th>Delegated</th>
<th>Consultative</th>
<th>Directive</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Programmatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Participation</td>
<td>Delegated</td>
<td>Consultative</td>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Programmatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Change</td>
<td>Delegated</td>
<td>Consultative</td>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Programmatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Delegated</td>
<td>Consultative</td>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Programmatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for Participation</td>
<td>Delegated</td>
<td>Consultative</td>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Programmatic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Delegated</td>
<td>Consultative</td>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Programmatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Delegated</td>
<td>Consultative</td>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Programmatic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Employee Participation</th>
<th>Purpose of participation</th>
<th>Personal/Impersonal</th>
<th>Micrologic/Dilemmatic</th>
<th>Directive/Consultative</th>
<th>Group/Enact Taylor</th>
<th>EG from cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>To achieve evidence of participation</td>
<td>Often impersonal; surveys; meetings; public hearings</td>
<td>Can be genuine or Veblen dialectic</td>
<td>Largely directive</td>
<td>Two-way symmetrical</td>
<td>Transition teams; Employee surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing</td>
<td>One-way; less voice</td>
<td>To ensure acceptance of participation - gain support of the project without too many difficult questions</td>
<td>Often impersonal; media releases; meetings; inquiries</td>
<td>Monologic; scene taken at face</td>
<td>Directional</td>
<td>Public information; two-way and one-way symmetrical; facilitate business; explain a defend itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapy</td>
<td>必须说明它可以是最低级别，也可能是最高级别</td>
<td>To control perception of participation - explain to citizens why it is happening</td>
<td>Personal 'group therapy'</td>
<td>Modally dialectic</td>
<td>Two-way symmetrical</td>
<td>Workplace presentation to persuade/convince; Psychological - 2-way endorsement (exemplary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulation</td>
<td>Educate participants - participation is illusory/described (off show)</td>
<td>Appearance of involving citizens; explanation without empathy; explain what is happening</td>
<td>Can be personal; Gain awareness and educate</td>
<td>Monologic</td>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Publicity, 1-way communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The table outlines various levels of employee participation and their associated characteristics, purposes, and strategies.*