A Communicative Identity

A qualitative study of an organisation’s creation and communication of their identity

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Abstract

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Both as leader and employee you need a perception of the organisational identity. The purpose of this thesis is to identify leaders’ perception of using communication to develop and implement the organisational identity with the employees and also to identify how the internal work with the organisational identity can contribute in making the employees good ambassadors for the organisation. Data has been gathered through qualitative interviews with four leaders at a future large organisation. By connecting and analysing the empirical findings with relevant theories we came to the conclusion that the leaders’ percept the communication as vital and that they consider creating the foundation of the organisational identity as their responsibility. They value co-creation and an open communication with the employees. We make the conclusion that ongoing communication is essential for including employees in the development of the organisational identity and in making these good ambassadors.

Key words: Communication, Strategic Communication, Leadership Communication, Organisation, Identity, Organisational Identity, Social Construction, Internal Communication
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Definitions

Organisation X

Our thesis has been based on empirical findings collected at a future large organisation. Due to our choice to keep the respondents’ names anonymous we also made the decision not to mention the organisation’s name. Therefore, the organisation we study will be referred to as Organisation X throughout our thesis.
1 Introduction

This introduction outlines the background of our subject and how our thesis came to be. We will also present former research made on the subject and finally a discussion that will introduce our research questions and purpose. Finally we have included a description of our limitations and focus that lingers throughout the thesis.

The identity of an organisation can be compared to the identity of a person. The identity is born and grows in relation to the environment around the organisation, and because of the continuously changing environment the experience of the identity is developed and changed as well. (Almqvist & Fritz, 1995: 263)

Almqvist and Fritz (1995:262) also define how you need an idea and a conception of what the organisation’s identity consist of and what the organisation will offer their environment, both as an owner, leader and as an employee. What is the organisation’s reason to exist? What is the organisation’s mission in the context where it is active in? What is the identity of the organisation?

As a leader you have a decisive role to play in the work with the identity, in particular to communicate the identity so it is received and understood by the employees. How a good leader communicates is vital for the leadership. Organisations today become more and more aware of the importance of communication and how a good working communication within the organisation can be essential for its success. Through communication we create meaning, both for ourselves and for others - it creates a community (Blomquist & Röding, 2010:116).

Employees also play a part in the communication of the organisational identity. They are important messengers and ambassadors both during working hours and during spare time. The employees’ part of the organisation is especially clear in the expanding service sector, where the employees’ communication and ability to live the identity is crucial for the customers’ experience. (Falkheimer & Heide, 2011:248)
We have during our education gained considerable interest in management and internal communication, which is also why we have chosen these to be two of our main subjects together with organisational identity. We would like to discover four leaders’ of a future large organisation perception of how the identity through communication can be conveyed in the best way to the employees from the leaders and further on through the employees in their role as ambassadors.

To receive a more concrete and realistic connection to the topic we have initiated collaborations with four leaders within Organisation X. We consider this collaboration to increase our understanding and knowledge concerning the topic and will in the end contribute to a more interesting essay.

1.1 Object of Study

The data presented in this part is collected from personal communication through interviews with four leaders of Organisation X. You will find a more detailed description of these subjects in the later chapter concerning methodology.

Our object of study is a project that in the future will become a large organisation consisting of a theme park and resort. The reason behind starting up this theme park and resort is the lack in the market for this kind of entertainment industry. The future theme park and resort is planned to consist of up to 200-400 acres, with two-three hotels and between 1000-1500 employees working full time when it is off-season, otherwise it might be up to 3000 employees depending on the demand.

Organisation X wants to be the destination for everyone from families to business people and will offer something for everyone. Some of the values that will linger in the organisation are:

- Excitement, something that is quite powerful
- Uniqueness, they will be something new
- Openness, they want an open and friendly culture and share this culture
- Innovation, they always want to move forward
The resort and theme park will be too large to have all its facilities in-house. The directors estimate that many of the hotels and restaurants will be outsourced and this will both increase and disable the managing conductivity.

Distribution of management inside Organisation X:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEO</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIR. HOSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COFS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Chief Financial Officer) (Chief Operations Officer) (Technical Director) (Director Hospitality) (Chief of Staff)

At the top there will be a CEO followed by five members of the board and they will give each other guidance. This is how the leaders at the moment can describe the first line of the managing distribution within the future theme park and resort. Further, we will study their perception of the future completed Organisation X.

1.2 Former Research

During our research we have worked our way through several books that is related to our subjects - communication, organisational identity and leadership - and have found that the following three studies provide a good angle of entry to our study.

Sara Von Platen studied in her doctoral thesis how internal communication and processes of creation of meaning contribute to how employees perceive an organisational change. She notes that organisational identity is an important aspect of the interaction and orientation of the organisation’s overall goals (Von Platen 2006:51). She also refers to Kärreman & Alvesson, that the identity has during a long time been perceived as something stable and consistent (Von Platen 2006:44). This is linked to a traditional view of reality and is perceived as something that management creates and communicates to members of the organisation (Heide, 2005:171). Von Platen differentiates her study by selecting a focus on organisational change. Even so, much of the theory she adds is valuable for our thesis.

"The Communicative Challenge" (Translation by authors) is a study made by Charlotte Simonsson (2002). Her thesis is a description and analysis of the leadership and the communication between managers and employees (Simonsson, 2002:11). Simonsson
(2002:258) documents how the difference between words and practices can lead to frustration and disappointment among managers and subordinates. If leaders do not act like they teach a risk occurs that the employees’ trust and loyalty is being reduced (Simonsson, 2002:258). The approach of Simonsson’s study is more broad and general than ours, but we believe that many of the assumptions she describes has importance in the parts in our study that are related to leadership.

Another study that we have read is Mats Alvesson and Ivar Björkman’s (1992) “Organisational Identity and Organisation Building” (Translation by authors) that is a part of a larger, loosely cohesive research that aims to develop culture theoretical understanding of organisations. They consider that you need to create an organisation, not just formally establish one. You need to enhance those tendencies that is related to a powerful organisation and anchor the organisation as a term and identity with the members of the organisation, and maybe also with others. (Alvesson & Björkman, 1992:14)

These different studies that we have taken note of concerns our study’s different subjects and have acted as a good entry point for us. From the research we have made, a similar theme as ours was nowhere to be found. Many studies have touched on the various subjects but not in the combination that we have chosen to do; which is developing and implementing the organisation’s identity together with communication from a management perspective. Together with our empirical research we would like to explore four leaders’ perception concerning this specific subject in a future large organisation.

1.3 Problem Discussion

Leaders are becoming more and more aware of the importance of internal communication and the work with it is becoming more prioritized (Quirke 2011: XI). When leaders are working with larger groups of staff the possibilities of acting as coach and manage a leadership based on dialogue and participation is made difficult (Simonsson, 2005:112).

Organisation X has a strong vision for the project – the feelings that will be delivered, what will be offered, how the resort will look like and further on. We have noticed that everything that is conveyed at the moment has its focus on the external communication, which is why we
have chosen to focus on the internal. Because the organisation has a strong focus on their external communication, and therefore also value this part of the communication, we consider our choice of subject as relevant since it contributes to building a good foundation of the external ambient picture of the organisation. Considering the large scope of the project we question what the leaders’ perception of the internal work with the company’s identity will look like and how this will be developed and implemented together with the employees. And for the internal communication to contribute to a good external picture towards the visitors, through the employees as good ambassadors, we consider it essential that the leaders are aware of this importance. Because the organisation is in a very early phase we started to question how they will define themselves as who they are – their identity. We figure that this needs to start in-house and be conveyed outwards.

1.3.1 Research Questions

What is the four leaders’ at Organisation X perception of using communication to develop and implement the organisational identity with the employees?

- How do the leaders’ perception of the internal communication of the organisational identity contribute in making the employees good ambassadors for the organisation?

1.4 Purpose

1.4.1 Main Purpose

The main purpose with our bachelor thesis is to increase the understanding and knowledge around the importance of the leader’s role in the work with developing and implementing the company’s identity to the employee. We consider this possible by generalising the data gathered through our research. We would like to identify the leader’s perception of their own active role with communicating the identity to the employees within this huge theme park and resort and how this will contribute to make the employees as good ambassadors for the organisation.

1.4.2 Construction Purpose

- One of our construction purposes is to identify the leaders’ at Organisation X perception of the importance of communication of the identity within an organisation.
The second construction purpose is to identify the leaders’ at Organisation X perception of their own active role in communicating the organisation’s identity to the employees.

The third construction purpose is to identify how the employee can work as a co-creator and how this affects the employee as an ambassador for the organisation?

1.5 Limitation and Focus

Our study falls under strategic communication as subject which according to Falkheimer & Heide (2007:15) is an interdisciplinary field of knowledge. From a traditional perspective you can find two basic starting points for practitioners and researchers. Either one chooses an organisational perspective, which means that strategic communication processes is related to their significance to organisational effectiveness, leadership, culture and democracy. Or one start from a societal perspective, which means that communication processes are analysed from their significance for the public attitudes or behaviours, advocacy, democracy and culture. We will start from an organisational perspective on the ground that we will study the leader’s perception of communication and identity within the organisation and not their effect on the society externally.

One limitation we have chosen to make is to only study the making of an organisation’s identity within the organisation and how this will be implemented to the employees and further on to the resort’s visitors, and therefore chosen not to study how the organisation can profile itself towards future consumers. This is justified by the simple fact that we want to question the internal communication and not the external, even if the external communication is affected.

We have chosen to only focus on Organisation X’s future work with the organisation’s identity, and therefore limited ourselves from focusing on the organisation’s profile and image. We are aware of that an organisation’s work with profile, image and identity goes hand in hand with each other, as you can tell from the model down below:
The choice of focusing on the work with the identity is justified with the reason that the identity has a more internal basis than the other two subjects. We would like to point out that our work has been done with these two subjects in mind. Down below another model is shown that defines our choice of direction:

Figure 3. Model of Target for Strategic Communication (Falkheimer & Heide, 2007:135)

We have also chosen to focus our work from a leadership perspective, this because Organisation X for the moment only consists of directors and boardmembers and therefore no employees.

A final limitation that is important to keep in mind is our choice of not focusing on the organisational culture in that magnitude that might be expected. Our reasoning for this is the great extent that organisational culture means. The culture of an organisation is much more inclusive than the identity, and can be viewed as a framework in which the identity is created and influenced. That is why it is mostly common to regard the organisational identity as a part of the organisational culture. (Heide, 2005:171) This argues for our choice of limiting ourselves to mainly focusing on the organisational identity. We would like to emphasize that
the organisational culture is far from being excluded in our study. Like the theory mentioned, the organisational culture is setting the framework for how the organisational identity is built up and will therefore be taken into consideration in several parts of our thesis.
2 Methodology

The methodology will contain our approach - which methods we have chosen and the configuration of these. It also includes how all of our information is gathered, how we have chosen our primary data and our secondary, what theories we are using and how they affect our work. Finally the chapter describes our subjects of study and the critics and ethics that we have had in mind while writing the thesis.

2.1 Approach

There are two different ways to go when choosing the approach for the essay, the deductive and the inductive one. They relate to how the researcher will use the data. It is called the deductive method shoulder when the main focus is the theories and the hypotheses are created based on these and later on compared with empirical data (Wallén, 2008:47). When doing the opposite, using the inductive method, you collect the empirical data first and are then comparing it to the theory, further you draw general conclusions within the theories (Wallén, 2008:47).

Using the inductive way seems more exploring in a subjective point of view. Patel och Davidson (2009:23) address some disadvantages with this method: perhaps the theories are not enough to explain the empirical data because the data is too specific for the situation and that it is easy for the author to influence the outcome through their own experiences and expectations.

Because our essay is based on its empirical data and then compared with the theories, our focus suits the inductive method shoulder. The essay’s empirical data is mixed with theories and hypotheses are created concerning our thoughts about what is the best for our study. Merriam (2011:72) refers to both Riley and Patton when she explains that whether you are doing a deductive or inductive case study there are always some theories that lingers as a
start-up point for the study. Sometimes you get the idea to the study through different theories and they will follow throughout the whole thesis.

The subject of our thesis arose from researching former studies and theories. A review of the theories can do a lot - to make some guidelines in which way to go but also help with constructing your research questions (Merriam, 2011:75).

There is also a third way of approach - abduction (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008:55). We will try to go deeper in our research, which qualifies our thesis as abductive to some parts. Alvesson & Sköldberg (2008:55) explains that abduction is used mostly when conducting a case study and contains compounds of the inductive and deductive method, however it is not the same as the two others. The abduction is affecting the interpretation of words, said and written, and combines the two. It makes it possible to go deeper in the research instead of just touching the surface (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2008:55).

2.2 Quantitative versus Qualitative

We chose to distinguish the quantitative from the qualitative methods. In easy terms Backman (2008:33) explains the difference: the quantitative methods uses mathematical terms and statics while the qualitative method instead uses words. Backman (2008:33) points out the importance that these two methods can be mixed - as well as numbers can be used in both, so can words.

Bryman & Bell (2005:591) also distinguish these two methods. They explain the quantitative method as being more of a deductive setting. The qualitative method has got an inductive point of view - it emphasize with words when analysing and creates relations between the phenomenon.

Our thesis will have a qualitative point of view. The attitude in a qualitative method is more engaged with a cultural, social and an individual concept (Backman, 2008:54). It involves and allows the writer to interpret things that happens in the real world instead of doing measurements. As a substitute of asking objective questions you ask the interviewee to interpret his/her surrounding, this is done with older experiences and knowledge in mind.
2.3 Case Studies

Backman (2008:55) mentions that qualitative methods usually use case studies to receive a result for the analysis. He explains that a case study involves an examination of a phenomenon in its real environment. Backman (2008:55) addresses that there can be some difficulties with defining the identity of a real case. It usually starts by defining one or a few research issues in a special context, which leads to a review of a specific group, feature, organisation or event. Yin (2009:4) defines a case study as allowing the investigator to keep in mind the complete and meaningful characteristics of organisational and managerial processes.

Backman (2008:55) also talks about three different starting points for case studies - explanatory, exploratory or descriptive. Merriam (2011:23) explains that case studies are a good choice when one examines a phenomenon that is present. It includes observations and systematic interviews and is exceptional because of its handling of different kinds of empirical data such as interviews, documentations, observations and different artefacts’.

To start a case study you need access to the primary data, which can be interviews, documents or observations (Yin, 2009:26). Yin (2009:26) declares that if there is access to more than one participant you have a case study. A good thing with doing a case study instead of any other is that a case study does not require a specific method in gathering data and information (Merriam, 2011:24). All different ways are effective whether it is tests, surveys or interviews.

We have conducted a case study on the future Organisation X in its real environment. Through good contact with the leaders of the future organisation we have gained access to all information necessary for our study.

2.4 Data

There are many ways to gather data when using a qualitative method, for example qualitative interviews, focus groups, language-based approaches and collections and analyses of text and documents (Bryman & Bell, 2011:389).
Because this thesis essentially is based on inductive methods, the data have been gathered through face-to-face interviews with the leaders of our object of study.

The interview question, created by us, belongs to the qualitative category. There are different ways to create interviews, some can be structured and some can be unstructured and the in between - semi-structured (Patel & Davidson, 2011:75). Our interviews have been semi-structured, in order to gain as much information as we possibly could. Using semi-structured methods leaves the interviewee with the opportunity to answer more openly (Patel & Davidson, 2011:76). The use of fully unstructured questions is for the one that does not know what they are looking for (Merriam, 2011:88). It will help the person to get to know the case more and produce questions for the next interview. Merriam (2011:88) explains that when using a qualitative method, the less structured way is the one to choose, but she also mentions that a total unstructured interview is hard to perform.

The questions for a semi-structured interview are prewritten with no certain answers, this leaves room for some unprepared questions (Merriam, 2011:88). When we used this method we created more of a conversation than an interview. We got the interviewee to share its experiences and knowledge and made at the same time sure that we did not ask any leading questions. The purpose with the interview is to not influence the respondents in their answers, but to encourage them to think for themselves (Merriam, 2011:88).

Ekström & Larsson (2000:68) points out the importance of having pre–knowledge about the information you are looking for. To make questions before doing the interview is essential to receive a good interview and this is important for both the interviewer as well for the interviewee. When making a semi-structured interview you of course have some main subjects you want to be covered by the interviewee’s answers, therefore it is important to have these written down on an interview guide (Bryman & Bell, 2011:467). To get a good flow in our interviews our questions did not have any specific order; they were asked in the order that suited the interview best.

Merriam (2011:96) mentions the importance of saving all data that is collected and declares three different ways to register all interview information. The most inefficient one is to write
down everything said after the interview is done, which of course is hard because there is no way to remember all that have been said. Another way is to take notes while interviewing, but this makes it hard to keep up with the talking haste. The third one is to record the whole interview, which is the one that is preferred for most researchers. A mix of writing and recording is also preferred. Sometimes the interviewee does not agree with being recorded so there is no option but to write (Merriam, 2011:96).

Our data have been recorded at the same time as we took notes during the interview. We took notes to get the highlights of the interview on print during the discussion, this in case of a major failure of the recording. Recording the information makes it easier to go back and make sure that we did not miss anything of value.

2.5 Selection of Data

We chose to select our data from the interviews through a thematically point of view. This was done by collecting data that could affect and be of value for our research questions and that also seems mutual for all the subjects. Dalen (2011:84) explains that a thematically selection is when all the interviews has been transcribed and you start to select your data after some kind of theme that is dependent on the research questions. You determine which subjects that are recurrent throughout the different interviews - the more frequently different topics accrue, the more important they are.

2.6 Reliability and Validity

Bryman and Bell (2011:394) address the importance of reliability and validity to make sure the research consists of good quality.

Östbye et al. (2003:40) explains the two concepts as:

Validity is availability and how the data that is collected through theories and if it is relevant according to the research questions. Reliability is the quality of the data and the process work done to the empirical data.
Patel and Davidson (2011:102) define two differences in the validity, simultaneous and content validity. The content is founded within theoretical frames to make sure that for example the right questions are asked and that they are valid for the study. They compare the validity to an instrument - you make sure that the instrument contains the right equipment to get the right sound. For an essay this means to produce the right terms, which later on leads to valid interview questions. The other way, the simultaneous, means to create a similar exam. It can be a pre-interview or using another way to exam the same thing and make sure that the both exams have the same outcome. The last one is used when the data consist of statistics and excludes personal impacts.

Validity refers to the issue of whether or not an indicator that is devised to gauge a concept really measures that concept (Bryman & Bell, 2011:159). The validity is also a way to secure that the object you are going to examine really is the object that you do exam (Patel & Davidson, 2011:102).

The reliability is a review of the outcome and a secure way to evaluate that the person who answers your question is as objective as he/she can be. There are always some issues that have an influence; Patel and Davidson (2011:103) calls these true value and error value. They clarify that the error value is something we cannot influence. When you use statistic to secure the reliability the outcome is more trustworthy. Securing the reliability when dealing with people is not as easy, but by structuring the interview questions and making sure that the observation is influenced as little as possible you are creating a larger reliability. It is possible to increase reliability by letting someone outside the project exam the interviewees and the interviewer. By recording and saving the interview this someone gets an opportunity to exam the reliability after the interview has taken place (Patel & Davidson, 2011:104).

Patel and Davidson (2011:103) address that in a qualitative method the meaning of validity and reliability changes. Because there are people involved, the responses can vary if you ask the same question on two different occasions. This does not mean that the reliability is bad - the interviewee might just change its opinion. Instead you put focus within the answers and look if they are valuable and address the subject in a wide way. In this qualitative method the reliability is more similar to the validity.
To make sure that our essay contains good reliability we have recorded and transcribed the interviews and all the material have been saved so that anyone who wants to examine the interviews will be able to do so. If it is used in the same situation and with people in the same position, this study is going to be repeatable. But as mentioned, the value lays in what is said and that the information is useful. Through validating the questions and making sure that the interviewees are the right ones, before collecting the primary data, we secured our essay’s validity. Doing this also made sure that we examined what we intended to examine in the first place. We also tried to find the theories’ original sources and to use the latest research there was to find.

2.7 Selection

We have done four different interviews, where all of them were performed in a face-to-face surrounding. The four interviews lasted for about 45 minutes up to an hour and a half. They were set in an environment where the subjects felt most at ease and in a calmly place to make sure that there would not be any interference. All the interviewees received information about our study a month before and we also reminded the subject’s right before the interviews to make sure that they knew the context.

2.7.1 Founder and Key Spokesman for Several Companies

The subject studied at Navy College at the age of 15 and served in different countries for 25 years. After the service in the Navy the subject started up its own company that focused on diplomatic consulting. Following that the subject also has been working with global marketing and with consulting in building submarines in Malaysia. In this thesis this subject will be referred to as: ”The Founder”. The interview was held on the 17th of April.

2.7.2 Marketing Director

The subject has a degree in Human Resources and is at the moment doing a master degree in Business Administration and has worked with marketing in entertainment companies such as Walt Disney, MTV and Universal. The subject worked as a region director for human resources for Walt Disney and worked with 23 different countries and handling employees in 11 of those countries. In this thesis this subject will be referred to as: ”The Marketing Director”. The interview was held on the 19th of April.
2.7.3 CFO - Chief Financial Officer
The subject has a double bachelor degree in Professional Accounting and Human Resource Management. It worked in a large firm with tax accounting and currently has its own company in accounting where it works as managing director. In this thesis this subject will be referred to as: ”The CFO”. The interview was held on the 18th of April.

2.7.4 Chief of Engineering and Technical Director
The subject studied at University Military Academy Westpoint and graduated in Systems Engineering. Later the subject worked ten years in the US Army as an infiltrary officer, which included leading people, or more specifically - soldiers. The subject started its own company seven years ago within the engineering business. In this thesis this subject will be referred to as: ”The Technical Director”. The interview was held on the 17th of April.

2.8 Critic
Merriam (2011:138) mentions the aspect of time when doing a study, something that can limit the research. For this thesis there has been a time limitation of eight weeks.

Bryman & Bell (2011:408) talks about the critics towards a qualitative research; it is subjective and can be impressionistic. They mean that it is easy for the authors to implement their own thoughts and values into the written words, and because it can be influenced it will increase the difficulties to reproduce the study. This is something that we have kept in mind and always tried to not interfere with our own thoughts and values, but we realise that it is impossible to completely exclude.

Some critic towards case studies is that it can be hard to gain all information that is necessary, explains Yin (2009:185). He also talks about different stages of completion. One is that with logical argument or with evidence, verify the analysed material to prove that the periphery has been reached. Secondly, all material used is vital for the investigation even if all the information found cannot be used - the information used has to be relevant. Thirdly, there has to be enough data available to complete the research - it cannot be finished if there is not
enough information to reach a conclusion (Yin, 2009:186). Most of all Yin (2009:188) emphasize that the evidence leading to a conclusion is crucial for the case study. You have to be able to prove that what the conclusion reached is true.

By reading multiple theories and having good connection with our subjects it has been easier to make sure that we gathered all the information that we needed. If there has been something we felt we missed, we have contacted our subjects once again to get some follow-up answers.

Merriam (2011:78) points out some critic against theories, such as if they are up to date and the quality of the source. We have tried to always find the newest theories there is, although we sometimes had to go way back to some original sources. Merriam (2011:118) declares that the hard thing is to get the information that is needed through documents; there is not always a study or a scientific page written with the exact information that you require. This is something that we kept in mind even though it is something you cannot affect. We have looked at multiple sources to get as wide information as needed.

It is important to realise that it is people’s perceptions and interpretations as well as ours that is fundamental in this thesis. Merriam (2009:234) talks about the ethical critics of making subjects anonymous. This can reduce the credibility of the thesis. We considered this but came to the conclusion that because both the names and gender are irrelevant for the study, this should not affect the credibility.

We have taken in consideration the fact that there might be some cultural differences between different organisations and Organisation X. We have not put any effort into this, because we could establish from our own opinion that it has not any impact or relevance in our thesis.

2.9 Ethics

Researchers must always be true with the results that they bring. They can never falsify, plagiarize, distort or deceive. Science can only be accepted if the researcher is open with all
the material to let others have the opportunity to analyse and repeat the study. (www.vr.se¹)

Research ethics concerns the relationship between the task and the mission and takes in consideration to protect the different participants and subjects who is affected by the research. (www.vr.se²)

To protect the subject in this thesis we have chosen to make all the participants anonymous. We also chose to leave the organisation’s name unrecognisable to make it impossible to trace the subjects through this.

The Science Foundation (Vetenskapsrådet) has created a few roles when it comes to ethics in researching and having subjects for gathering data for the research. They have four main demands, which are fundamental for researchers (www.codex.vr.se³):

The information demand: the researcher has to inform the subject what their participation contributes to and what purpose of the study is; the participation is voluntary and they have a right to cancel it; information that can influence the subject’s participation has to be revealed (www.codex.vr.se⁴).

The requirement of consent: the subject has its own right to define the participation; whether it considers time, effort or conditions they can always call of the participation without any consequences; there has to exist consent from the subject that is being used and without any pressure on them (www.codex.vr.se⁵).

Confidentiality obligations: collected data concerning the participated subjects has to be kept confidential, there should not be any way for an unauthorized person to find out who the subjects are or find out anything of their personal information (www.codex.vr.se⁶).

¹ http://www.vr.se/etik/expertgruppforetik.4.44482f6612355bb5ee780001147.html, 2012-04-27
² http://www.vr.se/etik/oredlighetiforskningen.4.9232d81081e742f7e800049.html, 2012-04-27
³ www.codex.vr.se/texts/HSFR.pdf, 2012-05-09
⁴ www.codex.vr.se/texts/HSFR.pdf, 2012-05-09
⁵ www.codex.vr.se/texts/HSFR.pdf, 2012-05-09
⁶ www.codex.vr.se/texts/HSFR.pdf, 2012-05-09
Use requirement: the subjects’ information can only be used for this thesis only. The information cannot be borrowed or used in commercial purposes or in other non scientific purposes (www.codex.vr.se⁷).

⁷ www.codex.vr.se/texts/HSFR.pdf, 2012-05-09
3 Frames of Reference

When presenting our frames of reference we introduce the theories and concepts this thesis is based on. We have chosen to categorize the theories in four different subjects, concerning communication, organisation, identity and leadership. In the end of the chapter you will find a short summary that concludes our choice of reference.

3.1 Communication

Heide et al. (2005:17) looks upon communication as strategically essential when creating an organisation and for this organisation to be able to exist. Communication is the factor that creates value for us and others (Blomquist & Röding, 2010:116). It creates community through sharing thoughts, expectations or any interactions.

3.1.1 Social Construction

Heide et al. (2005:17) explains that there was no value in a communication process before the fifties and that it was in this time it became its own phenomena. Before, communication was something that just happened inside the organisation no matter what the organisation did or who worked there. Today, scientists refer the communication as social systems and organisations would not be able to survive without it (Heide et al., 2005:18). Even a whole organisation can be perceived as a social construction - something that is created and kept alive through words, symbols and the actions of its members. The organisation and its formal structure do not exist separately from the human interaction - it exists because of the interaction, which leads to a constantly evolving organisation (Von Platen, 2006:33). The communication defines our perception - how we see things, how we interpret what we see and what we think will happen in the future (Heide et al., 2005:19). Communication is therefore vital to create value (Quirke, 2008:10).
3.1.2 Internal Communication

Everything must start at home - if the employees do not know what the organisation stands for, how will somebody on the outside understand it? (Erikson, 2008:71) There is a fine line between what is internal and what is external when it comes to communication (Falkheimer & Heide, 2011:36). Usually these two influence each other - what is said on the inside will have an impact on the outside and vice versa. Von Platen (2006:33) explains that communication can be patterns of action that has the ability to create, sustain but also to dissolve organisations. Heide et al. (2005:19) talks about the leader’s responsibility of making sure the goals will be achieved, which means that the communication issue is crucial for both leaders as well for employees. Heide et al. (2005:17) refers to Chester Barnard, “The Function of the Executive”, and according to him it is crucial that each member of the organisation accepts the goals and translate these in to action.

3.1.3 Transmitting Communication

A model that is mentioned by Heide et al. (2005:35) is The Sensemaking Process, also known as The Culture Metaphor. This metaphor is represented of the importance of the communication within the organisation. Instead of having the communication depending on the organisation’s actions, it is the opposite - the organisation is depending on the communication to survive. In The Sensemaking Perspective the members are seen as actively co-interpreters because they interpret their surroundings and take actions according to the interpretation (Von Platen, 2006:34).

There are some aimed information paths for leaders (Strid, 1999:55). They are the formal gatekeepers and the link connecting the organisations’ different facilities. There is a lot depending on the information that is spread throughout the organisation.

3.2 Organisation

In the modern organisational theory the organisation is considered as a matter of common beliefs and meanings (Alvesson & Björkman, 1992:24). Alvesson and Björkman (1992:24) also refer to Weick when describing that a condition for organisational actions is that the individuals relate themselves internally and to their environment in a similar way. Heide et al.
(2005:94) defines that it is important for humans to have a unity to others; the difficulty is the common lack of communications between the different units and groups.

3.2.1 Organisational Communication

Heide et al. (2005:53) refers to Philip Tompkins who claims that:

"Communication and organisation should be conceived as synonyms: Communication constitutes organisation rather than being something contained within the organisation”

Researchers has presented three different processes on how to communicate, two of which are presented below:

- The Interpretive Perspective

The Interpretive Perspective is all about creating meaning when using communication. The communication is an on-going process which, according to researches, defines life in the organisation. (Heide et al., 2005:55)

- The Classic Perspective

Organisations are seen as machines and are rational and instrumental units (Heide et al., 2005:50). The communication is compared with the transmission process (Heide et al., 2005:51).

As mentioned, later perspectives consider that the organisation is created through communication, while the earlier perspective believes that communication is just something created by the organisation. (Heide et al., 2005:51, 53)

3.2.2 Centralisation versus Decentralisation

When an organisation is centralised the decisions and communication starts high up, by the board or owner. There is usually a small amount of people who makes the decisions. Communication and decisions is created in the centre of the organisation and then transferred through the organisation with as minimal change as possible. (Quirke, 2011:82)
A decentralised organisation on the other hand is trying to make all decisions closer to the end costumer. The employees get more responsibility and managers have frameworks to help them receive some clarity. The managers make their own priorities within the framework and deal with these on their level and then have monthly, weekly or daily report to the higher levels. The managers’ with higher positions do not interfere unless it is necessary. (Quirke 2011:82)

Usually there is a mix of these two, some of the larger decisions are made in the centre of the organisation but lower management have some framework to handhold and are therefore left alone to make closer decisions by themselves. (Quirke 2011:84)

3.3 The Identity of an Organisation

Almkvist and Fritz (1995:270) clarifies that if you should be able to define your target customer and its needs, you also have to define who you are and in which context you live and will live in. You have to give yourself an identity.

According to Cheney and Cristensen (referred to in Heide, 2005:169) the organisational members must be aware of the organisation’s identity, otherwise it will be difficult to communicate a consistent message to the world. The organisational identity serves as a glue that links members of the organisation together and serves as a starting point for how an organisation understand and create meaning in reality (Cheney & Christensen; Cheney, Christensen, Zorn & Ganesh; Weick referred to in Heide, 2005:169-170). Almqvist and Fritz (1995:270) say it is a must to focus on the relationships which is necessary to build and maintain - these relationships becomes a part of the company’s identity. If it exists a unity around beliefs concerning direction and goals, both now and forward, this will result in employees perceiving their job as meaningful. Almqvist and Fritz (1995:270) mean that this way, you work to create trust in each other and to overcome the feeling of ”us” and ”them”. The company receives an identity, both externally as internally, that becomes the unifying factor of the included interest parties (Almqvist & Fritz, 1995:270-271).
3.3.1 Organisational Identity versus Organisational Culture
Organisational identity and organisational culture are both about shared values in organisations, which is why they partially overlap each other (Von Platen, 2006:53; Heide, 2005:171). As mentioned in the previous part, concerning limitations and focus, it is mostly common to regard the organisational identity as a part of the organisational culture just because the culture of an organisation is much more inclusive than the identity, and can therefore be viewed as a framework in which identity is created and influenced (Heide, 2005:171). Because identities are formed in relation to others, they are more aware and ductile than cultures (Von Platen, 2006:53).

3.3.2 The Creation of an Identity
Almqvist and Fritz (1995:274) describe how the identity is created within an organisation with three points. The first concerns a relationship and connectedness between the interest parties in the community of values around the organisation’s existential conditions of current and future periods. The second matters differentiation, which means the constant creation of differences - it is important for an employee to be distinguished and separated in the organisation and outward to the world. The third and last focuses on the mental constructions - the affinity and difference we see and experience is created in the minds of people and in relation to others.

3.3.3 A Changing Identity
Gioia, Schultz and Corley (referred to in Heide, 2005:171-172s) locates the organisation’s identity as a quite changing and dynamic phenomenon that is constantly tested, redefined and changed by the members of the organisation. The identity is changed by the organisation’s attempts to adapt to environmental changes and to changes in the organisation’s image.

3.3.4 The Individual in the Organisation
There is always some dynamic between different social identities within an organisation, this because differences is central in creating and maintaining identities (Von Platen, 2006:46). If the individual identify themself with the organisation, they take part of the values that the organisation consists of. Ashforth and Mael (referred to in Heide, 2005:170) adress that a
social identification also leads to individuals feeling loyal towards an organisation which means larger commitment.

Gioia et al. (referred to in Heide, 2005:172) consider that the concept organisational identity is a socially constructed phenomenon. From this perspective the organisational identity is the result of the management’s communication about essential values and the organisational member’s interpretations and construction. Identities are thus not something that an organisation has, the identities exist in the mind of the members and therefore the organisational identity is a social identity (Von Platen, 2006:50). Because identities are formed socially, it is possible for management to influence their employees in these aspects (Von Platen, 2006:62). Smirchich and Morgan (referred to in Hellgren & Löwstedt, 1997:121) mentions that this kind of leadership assumes that it is not possible in today’s complex organisations to steer the organisation in every detail. Management has come to concern the concept ”management of meaning”.

3.4 Leadership and the Communication

To lead in today’s society is less and less to direct and control using rules and material sanctions, and more affecting the employees’ perception of their own work and the organisation (Heide et al., 2005:23). The leader has an essential role in creating an organisational culture and to influence the communication climate within the organisation (Erikson, 2008:224). In the global world the soft power - such as the leader’s inspiration – becomes much more important at the expense of the hard power (Erikson, 2008:225).

Leading an organisation is very much about communicating (Simonsson, 2005:97). Many researchers today emphasize the strong connection between leadership and communication. They emphasize the leader’s role in creating shared goals, visions and values along with developing an understanding for happenings within the organisation (Heide et al., 2005:22).

Alvesson and Ydén (referred to in Simonsson, 2005:99) quote: ”The influence of ideas takes place through communication, it is thus in the communication between people that leadership is allocated and exercised.” (Translation by authors)
According to Simonsson (2005:111-112) the leader’s individual personality, attitude, ability and knowledge is of great importance for how he or she communicates with the employees. The leadership and communication is also shaped by other components and organisational conditions such as structure and culture. When a leader is working with larger groups of staff, the possibilities of acting as a coach and to manage a leadership based on dialogue and participation are made difficult (Simonsson, 2005:112).

3.4.1 The Leader and the Creation of Meaning

During the 1980’s, theories starts to emerge about an Idea Based Leadership, where the key is to create meaning and understanding; leadership is about creating meaning of the work and what is going on within the organisation (Simonsson, 2005:99).

Von Platen (2006:61) describes how the concept ”meaning makers” remind of transmission where the leader transfer values to their employees. She means that this creates an inaccurate image of the common process that creation of meaning is. It is possible to question if not the leader more often should regard themselves as one of many ”meaning makers” and not as one separate. You can find great similarities between the thoughts of the leader as a creator of meaning and communicative leadership. This kind of leadership is based on linguistic methods, such as praise and argumentation to motivate the employees.

3.4.2 Two New Perspectives of Leaders

- The New Perspective – Leaders as ”Transformers” and Visionary Heroes

The new focus of this perspective, compared to the aged, is mostly composed of the view of the leader as a ”manager of meaning”. The leader influences the employees’ ideas and perceptions of happenings within and outside their organisation. The view of the organisation as a machine has given way to the view of the organisation as a cultural phenomenon. (Falkheimer & Heide, 2011: 238-239) Communication has become a much more central part than in earlier perspectives of leadership. The influence of ideas, attitudes and perceptions takes place through communication, and the communication becomes the leadership’s primary tool. (Falkheimer & Heide, 2011:239) Leadership works more as a monologue which reminds us of transmission of communication. The leader mediates and creates meaning for the employees, rather than together with them (Falkheimer & Heide, 2011:240).
The Post-Heroic Perspective – Leadership as a Collective Process

This perspective highlights the importance of creation of leadership in a mutual interaction between members of the organisation (Falkheimer & Heide, 2011:241). Leadership is seen as a collective process rather than as an one-man show. This is called distributed leadership, and is not focused on one person but rather as something distributed within the whole organisation (Falkheimer & Heide, 2011:241). The power and authority of the leaders depend on that the employees act in line with what the leader decide and advocate (Falkheimer & Heide, 2011:243). This perspective emphasize the shared leadership and the starting point constitutes that the leadership consists of an activity or function rather than a formal position (Falkheimer & Heide, 2011:243).

Falkheimer and Heide (2011:236) describes how the focus between these two perspectives is moved from the leader as an individual to the relationship and communication between the leader and the employee. Without a close, relationship including dialog you cannot create a "co-leadership" (Falkheimer & Heide, 2011:236). While The New Perspective of leadership highlights the communication as an important tool the Post-heroic Perspective sees communication as constitutive (Falkheimer & Heide, 2011:244).

3.5 Summary

- Organisation = Communication: Organisations are socially constructed - the organisation and its formal structure exists because of the interaction which leads to a constantly evolving organisation
- The Sensemaking Process represents the importance of the communication within the organisation, the organisation is depending on the communication to survive
- The Interpretive Perspective is about creating meaning while using communication
- The internal and external communication influence each other, what the organisation do or say on the inside will have an impact on the outside and vice versa

To be able to define your target customer it is important that you define who you are and in which context you live and will live in - give the organisation an identity. The identity of an organisation works as the glue that links members of the organisation together and serves as a starting point for how organisations understands and create meaning in reality. If it exist a
unity around the organisation’s direction and goals this will result in that the employees perceive their job as meaningful.

Organisational identity and organisational culture are both related to shared values in organisations and is therefore partially overlapping each other. The culture is seen as the framework in which identity is created and influenced - you can regard the organisational identity as a part of the organisational culture.

The organisational identity is the result of the management’s communication about essential values and the organisational member’s interpretations and construction. The identities are formed socially and therefore it is possible for management to influence their employees in these aspects. Management has come to concern the concept “management of meaning”.

Leading today is about affecting the employees’ perception of their own work and the organisation - the soft power becomes much more important at the expense of the hard power. The leader has an essential role in creating an organisational culture and to influence the communication climate within the organisation. Idea Based Leadership is about creating meaning of the work and happenings within the organisation.

The New Perspective of Leadership emphasize that the leader mediate and creates meaning for the employees, rather than together with them. The Post-Heroic Perspective of Leadership emphasize that leadership is a collective process rather than as an one-man show.
4 Summary of the Empirical Findings

In this chapter a summary of our empirical findings is being presented. We have created general issues to more easily sum up the subjects’ answers. The chapter is structured after the categorisation in the previous chapter, frames of reference, and the general issues is presented followed by an interfusion of the subjects’ answers.

4.1 The Leaders’ Association of Good Organisational Communication

What do the leaders at Organisation X associate with good organisational communication?

Both the CFO and the Technical Director consider good communication being when everyone (staff, suppliers, partners and clients) gets what the organisation is doing and what the organisation stands for. The CFO emphasizes the importance of face-to-face communication while the Technical Director underlines that if everybody understands the vision, mission and values and communicate that, you can label it as good organisational communication.

“You should be able to ask any staff member of the organisation about what their organisation is about and what they are trying to do.” (Personal communication, 120417)

The Founder together with the Marketing Director expressed that if you are able to cover all different pieces of the organisation with your communication you can consider that as good organisational communication. The Marketing Director mentions that you achieve good organisational communication if you constantly keep the information flowing and are making sure that the message is clear and understandable and not ambiguous, “insure that communication is a continuously cycle and not just a one-time thing” (Personal communication, 120419).
4.2 The Leaders´ Appreciation of Communication

*How do the leaders at Organisation X value communication in their role as leaders?*

The leaders are coherent over the importance of communication in their role as leaders. The CFO and Marketing Director expressed that communication is vital, without communication you have nothing. The Marketing Director also stress that if you do not have good communication skills you will not be very successful. The Founder emphasized the importance of being able to talk the talk, if you can show your employees that you are one of them and not like management they will be able to be more open. The Technical Director urges that communication is important in terms of how you address people, how you make things happen and how you sell ideas and visions.

4.3 The leader’s view of their own creation of value

*What are the leaders‘ at Organisation X perception of themselves in creating value for the employees?*

The CFO considers it important that everyone knows the vision, mission and value and that this message is repeated. The leader have to treat the staff the way the leader want the staff to treat the customers. The staff needs to feel that they are a part of the journey and the staff need to be empowered.

The Marketing Director considers it important to be able to bring out the best in people and make them aware of that they are valuable. As a leader you need to create a culture with good values and act on them. The Technical Director recognises that five people cannot make this happen on their own and believes that it is essential that the values goes all the way down, from directors, to managers, to supervisors and to staff. "*We are talking about empowerment; we want people to embrace the values as theirs*". (Personal communication, 120417)
4.4 The Leader’s View of the Employees’ Creation of Value

*How do the leaders at Organisation X look upon the employees’ role in creating value at work?*

The creating of sense is both a top-down and bottom-up approach, the management has to create an environment where the employees can realise and achieve their goals. The Technical Manager also made it clear that if an employee understands that the organisation is trying to be the happiest place on earth it creates an easier solution to an upcoming problem with a customer. If the employees start to feed back better ways of doing business, you can give those incentives for them making the business more efficient and you get better outcomes. Also the CFO and the Marketing Manager emphasize how that the staff is the ones that does the work and they will know the best way to do something.

The subjects talked about how they want to encourage the staff to come up with ideas for making the company a better and more successful one, they will listen to ideas and if they are good for the company there might be rewards. The CFO consider that creating the values is a two-way thing, but everyone wants different things and not everyone can be pleased but the management needs to create what they see, “*there must be an identity in the beginning, which will be created by management*” (Personal communication, 120418). The Technical Director also confirms that they want to have representative input but are realistic to know that you would get a lot of different ideas, the goal is to please the majority.

The Technical Director: “*Regardless if it is a big or a small company, the challenge is still the same; you want people to have that sense of ownership and the principles that we are building for organisation X is no different, everyone brings something to the table.*”

(Personal communication, 120417)

The Marketing Director shared a metaphor of how you cannot move a ship without a steering wheel, you need someone that keeps the ship moving. As captain you give direction but the staff is the crucial key that keeps the ship going forward. And if the employee does not believe in the product you are trying to sell, you are doomed. The Founder considers it
difficult to have the employees as co-creators of what the organisation stands for; management has to make the values manageable so they can follow them through.

4.5 The Leaders´ Perception of the Employees as Ambassadors

*How do the leaders at Organisation X look upon the employees’ role as ambassadors and communicating what the company stands for?*

Because of the Technical Manager’s background in the military the subject reckons everyone as an important part and if you cannot incorporate everybody then you cannot build a culture – if management figures the theme park and resort to be the "happiest place on earth", you have to get that through to your staff. If visitors experience that feeling, you have succeeded in communicating that.

The Technical Manager explained that concerning this theme park and resort you can break down the jobs into customer interfacing jobs; those that come in direct contact with the customers, and those that are making everything supportive behind it.

"Essentially not everyone is going to have client contact, but if you take a disher as an example: if the disher does not recognise his part in "the happiest place on earth" and does not do his job very well so that the plates that the food is served on is dirty, then the customer interfacing colleague has to deal with the customers. Everyone needs to understand that they are an important part of the chain while the interfacing with customers is the number one thing." (Personal communication, 120417)

The Technical Manager also made clear that what the employees tell their friends and family members is crucial - are they good ambassadors? "Everyone should be a valuable member of the team, regardless what job they do." (Personal communication, 120417)

The CFO stated that the managers will never be seen, which is why the staff is everything – they are the ones meeting the customers and they are the ones that will see and hear everything. If they as managers take really good care of their employees, then they will take
really good care of the customers which will lead to the customers return - we will stand for something good and it is up to the staff on the floor.

Both the Founder and the Marketing Director emphasize the importance of the employees as ambassadors. The Marketing Director stressed the value in word-of-mouth as the best marketing there is. The Founder made clear that it is the employees that have to pass the experience to the visitors and make them come again, “management cannot be out there” (Personal communication, 120417).

4.6 The Leaders’ Association of Good Leadership

What do the leaders at Organisation X associate with good leadership?

The Marketing Director and the CFO clarifies that as a leader, it is important to be able to listen and that your staff can lean on you. Both the CFO and Technical Director emphasizes the importance of setting an example as a leader, you have to walk the talk - if you are not prepared to have your sleeves rolled up and actually do things, you cannot expect others to do so either.

The Founder answered the question with asserting that a leader needs to understand the limitations and capabilities of the staff, you need to know this to be able to work around them. The Technical Director lined up a variety of qualities that is considered important for leadership. Some of these were to know yourself, constantly trying to improve and seeking to understand more. The subject argues that it is not good to micro manage the staff, you take away their sense of ownership and they do not know how to work when the leader is not around. That is why it is important to communicate and articulate the vision to the team and them being able to come up with their own solutions.

4.7 The Distribution of Managers and the Communication

How will the distribution of managers and communication appear within the future theme park and resort?
The Technical Director explained that what they are looking for as CEO is leadership, someone that is able to coordinate with the board and assure that all the different areas is operating. The subject said that you generally operate in different areas but sometimes you need to work together to achieve the goal, together with milestones and communication.

The Marketing Director stated that they would like to have an open organisation where the manager’s doors are always open. According to the CFO they want a flat organisation to make the ways of communicating easier, and this instead of a hierarchical structure that they consider is a more common distribution of managers.

Both the Technical Director and the CFO said that even if they want a flat and open organisation where everyone is entitled to their opinion, they do realize that they need to have strong managers. When dealing with thousands of employees you have to come up with something that fits the most, not everyone will always be satisfied so they have to look after the mass and not the individual. The Founder stated that they are aware of that there will be some parts of the organisation that they will not be able to control in the same extension like the outsourced organisations. But they can influence them so they can try to create a unity throughout the whole organisation.

The Marketing Director considers that the communication flow inside the organisation has to be a continual ongoing process and not only a onetime thing for a particular situation. It has to be worked with all the time and they have to make sure that their message has reached everyone, which is why all the distribution channels are needed. The Technical Director said that because they, the members of the board, have experiences from leading, the main thing for them is to implement the things they know is working and the things they have learned from earlier mistakes.
5 Analysis and Discussion

*During this part, including analysis and discussion, we will link our frame of reference with our collected empirical data. By analysing and discussing these two sections we will be able to present answers to our construction purposes by identifying:*

- the leaders’ perception of the importance of communication of the identity within an organisation
- the leaders’ perception of their own active role in communicating the identity to the employees
- how the employee can work as a co-creator and how this affects the employee as an ambassador for the organisation

With the leader’s unified response that communication is everything, we can conclude that the leaders’ at Organisation X perception of communication belongs to the Sensemaking Process and perspective. We consider that this invites the employees to a continuous interpretation which later on leads to delivering the organisational identity as a message with the external communication.

Everything must start at home, according to Erikson (2008:71). If the employees within the organisation do not know what the organisation stands for, how will someone on the outside understand it? This conclusion is fundamental for our analysis and we fully agree with the words of Erikson. Just like Falkheimer and Heide (2011:36) puts it - today you cannot draw a line between the internal and external communication. The employees are affected of the outside as well of the inside and the turn-out of the communication reflects this. The Sensemaking Process that is disclosed by Heide et al. (2005:35) defines the organisation dependent on the communication to survive. As Von Platen (2006:34) describes the Sensemaking Perspective, the members are seen as actively co-interpreters because they interpret their surroundings and take actions according to their interpretations. This is why we
consider all the internal work to be fundamental when creating an identity for the organisation - an identity that also creates the base where the message to the outside is created.

What we can tell from the empirical research and the leaders’ at Organisation X answers, the organisation is aiming to create a as much decentralised structure as possible. When Quirke (2011:82) describes the typical decentralised organisation he is talking about the decision making process taking place closer to the end costumer. This we believe is what Organisation X is aiming to do - to divide the decision making at the various facilities with the help from frameworks created by higher management. Based on the theory that Quirke (2011:82) describes, we interpret the future distribution of managers within the theme park and resort to be a mix of the centralised and decentralised structure which we consider being the best solution for this kind of organisation. Within a large organisation that Organisation X is going to be we consider that it is important to be able to make quick decisions, but it is also important that there is a unity throughout the whole theme park and resort. That is why it is a good thing when the bigger decisions are made in the centre and the smaller everyday-decisions are made across the organisation. When decisions is being made on every level we consider it important with ongoing communication, and the pursuit of creating a flat organisation where the manager’s door always is open creates a good picture of that. We can connect this to what Almqvist and Fritz (1995:270) refer to – the need of building and maintaining necessary relationships which becomes a part of the organisational identity. By working with relationships you create trust, and this leads to erasing the feeling of ”us” and ”them”. This we can relate to what the Founder of Organisation X consider important, you have to be able to ”talk the talk” to create a more open relationship with the employees and make sure that the communication is on the same level.

According to Quirke’s (2011:82) definition of a decentralised organisation the employees receives more responsibility and this we connect with Von Platen’s (2006:61) description of the concept ”meaning makers”, that has a lot of similarities with communicative leadership. If the leader is successful in communicating the vision to the staff and opens up for the employees input, we consider this being the result of a communicative leadership. This can help the organisation to motivate the employees. Our subjects value the employees’ sense of ownership and this we interpret as the employees’ way of differentiating themselves within the organisation. According to Von Platen (2006:46), differences are central in creating and
maintaining identities and if employees identify themselves with the organisational identity they also take part of the values within it.

A perspective described by Gioia et al., (referred to in Heide, 2005:172) sees the organisational identity as a socially constructed phenomenon. As some of the leaders described, they realise that management has to create the foundation of the organisational identity and then invite the employees to co-create what the organisation stands for. This concurs to Gioia et al.’s (referred to in Heide, 2005:172) perspective that sees the organisational identity as a result of management’s communication and the member’s interpretations and constructions. Von Platen (2006:62) agrees with the claim that the identity is formed in a social conduct, and therefore she consider it possible for management to influence their employees in those aspects. It is no secret that when you are working with larger groups of staff the communication becomes more difficult but all the more crucial. Simonsson (2005:112) describes how the possibilities of acting as coach and to manage leadership based on dialogue and participation is made difficult. This is something that we consider as one of the obstacles for Organisation X when they in the future have become the large theme park and resort that they want to be. But the Technical Director’s answer indicates that regardless if it is a big or small company, the challenge is the same. They want people to have that sense of ownership and the principles that they are building for Organisation X is no different – everyone brings something to the table. The Technical Manager also consider that the representative input to be important but are realistic and says that if you ask everyone for their opinion you will receive a lot of different answers. But considering the director’s awareness we consider this to facilitate the internal everyday work with the organisational identity.

Blomquist and Röding (2010:116) described communication as the factor that creates value for us and others, and if Organisation X keeps the communication as a continuously cycle, as one of the directors described it, this will contribute to the organisational identity. This is also addressed by Heide et al. (2005:55) as the Interpretive Perspective of communication. This perspective points out communication to involve creation of meaning. Communication, according to this perspective, is seen as an ongoing process and defines life in the organisation. We relate this to Von Platen’s (2006:53) description of the identity as formed in relation to others and therefore very ductile. This confirms the importance of the ongoing
communication and also emphasizes the importance of the leader’s role in this process. As the Marketing Director mentioned, if you do not have good communication skills you will not be very successful. This also relates to what Simonsson (2005:111-112) says, that the personality, attitudes and knowledge of the leaders is important for how the leader communicates with the employees. This is reinforced by Erikson (2008:224), who says that the leaders essential role is to create and influence the communication climate within the organisation. The Technical Director mentioned the importance of communication when addressing people, how you make things happen and how you sell ideas and vision. This we can interpret as equivalent with the researcher’s present description of the leader’s role – it is important that the leader creates shared goals, visions and values (Heide et al., 2005:22).

If we take all the information gathered concerning the leadership in the future organisation and puts this in relation to the two perspectives of leadership that is described by Falkheimer and Heide (2011:238-243), The New Perspective and The Post-heroic Perspective, we can conclude that the leadership will be characterised by a mix of these two. The distribution of the leadership in Organisation X is more similar to the second perspective, though there will not be one centre of the leadership but instead distributed within the whole organisation - not to every member but to supervisors and managers around in the organisation. We noticed, concerning the creation of meaning within the organisation, a mix between the two perspectives. As mentioned above the leaders realise that they have to create one identity for the organisation in the beginning, which corresponds to the first perspective where the leader is described as a manager of meaning. But when the subjects also talk about the importance of the employees’ input and the open relationships, together with the ongoing communication, this rather corresponds to the second perspective which describes the creation of meaning as a collective process. We can note a mix of the two perspectives in this aspect. Because the subjects described the communication as an ongoing process and not a one-time thing and because the importance of the two-way communication, the future leadership concurs with the second perspective, while the first perspective advocates the communication more like a monologue. We also noticed the mix in the way the subjects look upon communication. In one aspect they consider communication to be the primary tool to use within the organisation - which complies to the first perspective, and in another aspect they see communication as constitutive - which complies to the second perspective.
We believe it very common to be able to think that one organisation will fit into one specific perspective, but in this case it is clear that it does not. Either way, we consider this mix to be necessary for the large organisation that Organisation X is going to be. We realise that it is impossible to belong fully to one perspective and to be able to relate the organisation to theories demands that you are open for a mix. Considering the many facilities that will be included within the future theme park and resort we consider it necessary for the leadership to be distributed around the organisation. If there would only be one centre of leadership the risk of the employees feeling lost in the organisation might occur and they might not feel like they are a part of the organisational identity. With supervisors and managers around the organisation it is easier to create relationships and build something for the employees to relate to. This also facilitates the everyday decision making. At the same time, also because of the size of the future organisation, it is important to have a bit of centred leadership that keeps track of the organisation as a whole.

Heide et al. (2005:19) describes how the communication defines our perception - how we see things and how we interpret what we see. This is why we believe that the ongoing communication of values contributes in both developing and implementing the organisational identity. Why we chose to use the words ”developing” and ”implementing” is because what we described above, the leaders have an initial picture of the organisational identity but later on this identity will be developed together with the employees’ perceptions and interpretations.

Alvesson and Björkman (1992:24) disclose how the modern organisational theory considers the organisation as a matter of common beliefs and meanings, which we see as a result of the ongoing communication and interpretation. Karl E. Weick’s (referred to in Alvesson & Björkman, 1992:24) argument that organisational actions requires that the individuals relate themselves internally and to their environment. We consider this confirming the importance of the leaders creation of the communication climate within the organisation. Hellgren and Löwstedt (1997:121) describes that the perception of our identity is important for our perception of the meaningful elements in different events and if we relate this to the Technical Director’s saying about how everyone needs to understand that they are an important part of the chain we can conclude that these are consistent with each other. We believe that if the leaders take their responsibility seriously and constantly try to use communication as a tool to
create relationships and an open communicative climate this will lead to that the employees can differentiate themselves within the organisation. If they adapt the message that the organisation is wishing to send as theirs (just like one of the leaders described), we are convinced that this will lead to satisfied employees and in the end they will turn out to be good ambassadors for Organisation X. As the Marketing Director stressed, good ambassadors are the best marketing tool there is.
6 Conclusion

In this chapter we present the answers to our research questions. This is presented by chosen and specified data from the analysis and discussion with answers to our questions. We have also created a compatible model to verify our conclusions. At last we will give recommendations on future research.

6.1 Research Question

What is the four leaders’ at Organisation X perception of using communication to develop and implement the organisational identity with the employees?

The leaders believe that communication is vital. They possess The Sensemaking Process and Perspective while communicating which helps them to get their employees to interpret what is communicated and later on deliver what they stand for, the identity, to the visitors.

By striving for a as much decentralised organisation as possible and believing in the fact that keeping the doors open at all times is the winning formula, they create relationships between the management and the staff, which is crucial for the organisational identity. When doing this, the line can be erased between management and staff and instead of a feeling of “us” and “them” a “we” will take place. Leaders have to be able to “talk the talk”, they believe in the employees’ ownership as an opportunity to differentiate themselves within the organisation. This leads to the creation of the identity and the participation of the values within it.

The leaders are aware of the fact that the foundation of the identity is their responsibility, but the development is a co-creation between both management and staff. The organisational identity will be a result of the interpretations of the communication within the organisation. The importance of the employees’ input and the open relationships, together with the on-
going communication and two-way communication will result in a good organisational identity.

Pointers from the leaders’ at Organisation X perception of how to develop and implement the identity:

- communication is everything
- a decentralised organization
- open relationships
- “we” instead of “us” and “them”
- “talk the talk”
- two-way communication

- ownership
- co-creation
- right personality, attitudes and knowledge
- ongoing communication

6.1.1 Subquery

How do the leaders’ perception of the internal communication of the organisational identity contribute in making the employees good ambassadors for the organisation?

The internal communication is fundamental when creating an organisational identity. The work with the internal communication creates the base where the message reaching the external environment is created. It is also important to maintain a unity throughout the whole future theme park and resort. To reach this it is essential that the organisation is characterised by ongoing communication which concurs with The Sensemaking Process where communication is vital to survive.

With the ongoing internal communication characterising the organisation, the leaders opens up for the employees’ input, which is an important part because they are the ones facing visitors and experiencing things that management does not. The ongoing communication process also contributes to successful communication of the vision from the leaders to the employees’ and later on to the visitors. Just like Gioia et al. describes it, the organisational identity is the result of management’s communication and the member’s interpretations and constructions.
Because of the leaders’ awareness of the importance of communication, the internal everyday work with the organisational identity will be facilitated. By having the right personality, attitudes and knowledge and ongoing communication processes this will contribute to the understanding and agreement of the organisational identity. It is important that the leaders creates shared goals, visions and values and that they are aware of that communication is the most important tool to be able to do this.

6.1.2 Model

The model explains how the leaders create the foundation of the organisational identity and communicates this to the employees throughout the organisation. When employees meet the organisational identity they interpret it and because of the ongoing internal communication they become co-creators. The internal work - how the leaders communicate the foundation of the identity and how the employees interpret the organisational identity - determines what will be communicated to the external environment – the organisation’s visitors.

(Tollstoy & Thornsäter)
6.2 Future Research

One of the areas we consider interesting to create future research around is storytelling. This is a subject we have taken into consideration during our work with this thesis but that we decided to be too broad to include. But though we consider storytelling to be a very useful tool when communicating, spreading and developing an organisational identity, this would be an interesting area to continue researching. An attractive area would also be to look into the work with storytelling at an organisation in the start-up phase. Stories are often something developed with time – how can you use this when you do not have any history? An as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, identity is one part of three – you also have the image and profile. This is another aspect to take into consideration – how can storytelling attribute when converging these three parts?

A further aspect important to research is the relationship between the organisational culture and organisational identity. We have not been able to include such a big part of this feature as we may have wanted. This because the subject organisational culture involves a much broader area than we felt was useful in our thesis. But it is an interesting view, to gain deeper knowledge of the connection between the culture and identity and how this might affect the employees.

A third area we consider worth researching is the internal aspect of building relationships between employees and leaders and the value of more personal and informal communication, in relation to the formal communication. How important is the relationship between the leaders and employees for the organisational values and identity? This is a subject we have included to a smaller part in our thesis, but we consider this to be something worth a much bigger part or even a whole thesis.
7 References

7.1 Literature References


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Attachments

Attachment 1

Introduction of Study
(a copy of the email sent to the respondents before the interview)

We would like to describe our focus for the interview tomorrow, so you have some points to keep in mind during the interview.

The main purpose for our study is to gain deeper knowledge concerning you as leaders’ perception of the communication within an organisation as a strategic tool when constructing and anchoring a start-up organisation's identity to the employees. Another purpose for our study is to determine your perception of your own communicative role in this sensemaking process.

With identity, we mean the organisational identity which works in the same way as the personal identity. It's about how we define and perceive ourselves – the self-image. Identity can be seen as organisations realities and unique features that appear in both the internal and external images that are communicated.

We also think it's important that you understand that we will focus our study on the perceptions of the future theme park, and not on the current project that is working towards this.

If not everything is clear right now, it will be so tomorrow! And if any questions occur before the interview, please email them!

Yours sincerely,
Johanna and Zara
Attachment 2

Interview Guide

Presentation of the study (Presented in the beginning of each interview)

We are doing a study with its main purpose to gain deeper knowledge concerning leaders’ perception of organisational communication as a strategic tool when constructing and anchoring a start-up company’s identity. We will also study the leaders’ perception of their own communicative role in this sensemaking process.

With identity, we mean the organisational identity which works in the same way as the personal identity. It is about how we define and perceive ourselves – the self-image. Identity can be seen as organisations realities and unique features that appear in both the internal and external images that are communicated.

Presentation
- Name
- Education
- Former work experience
- Current position in the project
- Future position in the project

Leadership
- Describe yourself as a person
- Describe yourself as a leader
- Which qualities do you associate with leadership?
- Decisive
- Kind
- Empathic
- Strict
- What do you associate with a successful leadership?

(That you have power, respect, good relations with the employees, an effective organisation, good communication)
- What is your perspective of yourself as a leader in creating value for your employees at work?
- It is obviously easier to create relations and commitment as a leader in smaller organisations, but how do you as a leader view the opportunities to create relations and commitment in larger organisations, where the personal contact can’t be taken for granted? Like the future theme park

Communication
- What do you associate with good organisational communication?
- Describe a situation when you believe your communication skills are the most successful:
  - When transferring a message
  - When delegating
  - When you discuss a message across with another leader
  - When you discuss a message across along with an employee
- How do you value communication in your role as a leader/ or how do you think leaders should evaluate communication in their role?
- How do you personally prefer that information should be spread? (Email, personal meetings…)

Description of the project
- What is the reason behind starting up this theme park and resort?
- What will be the size of the theme park and resort, how many employees?
- Will the various facilities within the resort be their own businesses or owned by Organisation X?
- What is the vision for Organisation X, who do you want to be?
- What will distinguish the theme park and resort, what will be unique?
- What would you like to convey to the customer?
- What will the resort be characterized by, what values?
- What will you bring forward when marketing the theme park and resort, any catchwords or phrases?

- Who is your target audience? The world? Local?
- Do you have any idea of how the distribution of managers will look like?
- What is your perception of the communication within the future theme park?

Employees
- How do you look upon the employee’s role in the communicative and sensemaking process?
- Concerning the identity, how do you look upon the employee as a co-creator of what the organisation stands for, who you are?

(In general: Are you open to collaboration with employees on a deeper level than just daily tasks, that is, that employees are co-creators of organisational goals, values and then also the identity? Or is that something that the management should decide, and on a later stage based on this create meaning for the employees?)

- Organisation X: As we understood it, the theme park and resort will be very large with several different facilities including, clubs, restaurants, etc. Do you consider it important to put off time and effort to establish a unity throughout the whole theme park as an organisation? (And this so that the visitors experience a consistent picture of Organisation X.)

Identity
- The values you described earlier in the interview, do you consider these to be fundamental to the organisation? And that this is something that should be reflected both inside the organisation as well as externally?

- How do you look at the employee’s role in communicating what Organisation X stands for? (Important?)