Leadership: The Importance of Communication and Sensemaking

"A Study on Internal Communication – Teaching how to talk"

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Statutory declaration

“I declare in lieu of an oath that I have written this master thesis myself and that I have not used any sources or resources other than stated for its preparation. I further declare that I have clearly indicated all direct and indirect quotations. This master thesis has not been submitted elsewhere for examination purposes.”

Date, 20 04 2013

Signature

Philipp Lorenz
TO YOU

as a

FUTURE LEADER

Father/Mother
Boss/Employee
Man/Woman
Young/Old

...to everybody involved in communication
- seeking to be understood
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Looking back on the last months I see many weeks of very intensive writing sessions complementary to the tremendous research I have done. It was a very interesting time full of learning experience but at the same time demanding all my energy in order to finish it in time. I am very proud to announce that I have accomplished one of my biggest projects within the last months in the form of this thesis. Nevertheless it is not only about being proud for myself but acknowledging all the help and support I have enjoyed coming from various persons during these months as well as the overall studying time at the IMC Krems. There were many people who played a very important role during these times and it is only fair to say, that they all contributed in different forms to my success.

First of all I want to thank my girlfriend who was always there for me and gave me the power to continue and finish my studies. She is the driving factor in my life, who motivated me every time she noticed difficulties and is therefore one of the persons who contributed to a high extent to my success. In general I want to mention my whole family who was always backing me up especially my brother who helped me a lot due to his experience. Thanks to my parents who made all my education even possible, I am standing here today, finishing my studies. Without their support, both financial and emotional my life might have looked quite differently.

Finally I want to thank all persons who supported me during the development especially Mrs. Surböck and Mr. Lundgren who, as my coaches, have been my guiders to navigate this thesis in a successful and high qualitative direction. Thank you all!

Philipp Lorenz
ABSTRACT

Communication has always been one of the greatest tools for people to interact with each other. Taking into consideration that the easiness of interacting with people all over the world was never easier, one can see that, today, we have more different channels, languages and ways of how to communicate than ever before. But globalization also means that our communication and understanding is changing. Globalization asks for adaptation of our old and beloved perception of communication, and creates synergies of our understanding, coming from all over the world. As the world is moving and changing, we are moving and sense making plays an important role for us, to recognize and understand what is actually going on around us. Organizations are facing confused employees and leaders do not know how to handle their followers. This change is the reason why communication and its sense making are so to say two pillars for a world of interacting people. I see great importance, causing threats, and at the same time I see opportunities for improvements with these pillars, which organizations, individuals as well as groups should be aware of. To understand the necessity of these pillars, this thesis tries to analyze their importance by relating and presenting their effects to and on people’s interactions. As it is a thesis within the field of business and leadership it will mainly deal with the perspectives of organizations and the people involved. Furthermore it will be tried to narrow down the topic even more, going into detail of internal communication of the modern world, meaning the younger generations using all new methods of communication.

**Keywords**, leadership strategy, sense making, communication, language, emotional intelligence, social intelligence, follower, leader, organizational structure, multiculturalism, communication technology, vision-mission, organizational environment, organizational communication
Thema der externen Kommunikation nicht Thema dieser Arbeit sein. Im Gesamten soll diese Arbeit die Leser anregen bewusst über dieses Thema nachzudenken und dessen Wichtigkeit auch für das private Leben zu erkennen.

Stichworte, Führungsstrategien, sinn-stiften, Kommunikation, Sprache, emotionale Intelligenz, soziale Intelligenz, follower, leader, Organisationsstrukturen, Kulturunterschiede, Kommunikationstechniken, Kommunikationswege, Organisationsumfeld, Interne Kommunikation,
NOTIFICATION

Looking back to many years of studying, I can claim to have learned a lot. Especially during my master studies I developed my perspectives and increased my knowledge to a high extent. Having a profound basis of knowledge to be able to write about such an important topic and looking into a future as a leader it is truly important for me to create a qualitative and interesting scientific paper which is understandable and of importance for everybody. Nevertheless as I am also trying to anticipate the future of communication within this thesis, which includes technical information I would like to notify that I do not have in depth knowledge in technology. The chapter about the future of communication and possible technological devices is solely based upon scientific papers and articles, which deal with the development of the technical industry.

In regard to the thesis it has to be mentioned that this paper will only deal with the internal part of communication in organizations.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CKO – Chief Knowledge Officer

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

HR (M) – Human Resource (Management)

IT – Integrated Thinking

KMS – Knowledge Management System

KT – Knowledge Transfer

LNU – Linnaeus University

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

SM – Sense Making
1 INTRODUCTION

Today’s world is changing faster than ever before. On a daily basis organizations rise while others fall causing a boiling organizational environment. Adaptation is one of the most important duties of today’s organizations in order to survive in this competitive market. It gives these companies the flexibility to react to market changes, and they know, the last one reacting fails. Different organizations have different recipes for success but usually there is one ingredient most of them acknowledge as crucial for success. COMMUNICATION. Although most companies are aware of it’s importance, still many do not see that communication, also through sensemaking (Weick, 1995), represents the skeleton of a good working organization. Organizational communication is split into external and internal communication whereby it has to be mentioned that this paper will majorly concentrate on the activity of internal communication.

Understanding the importance of communication, it is also crucially important to understand the roots of organizational communication. When one looks at organizational structures, in the classical top-down communication, leaders can be seen as the “speakers” who have to transmit the companies messages to all concerned stakeholders in the right and most effective way, including factors like timing, channel, addressees and wording. On the other hand these stakeholders are to be seen as the “speakers” in a bottom-up communication flow. As many of us experienced it in their personal and professional lives, communication skills are extremely important especially when it comes to persons in leading positions as they have many “listeners”.

The importance of choosing the right way of communicating is tremendous. Leaders have to be aware how to communicate tasks, information and knowledge. It is all about how employees perceive their leaders and supervisors. Leaders have to create a shared vision with their employees in order to convince them to put all their effort into work in order to increase efficiency and quality. Studies showed that companies, which are lacking good communication, are less successful than their competition as they have a less effective working environment that causes time inefficiencies (Society for Human Resource
Management, 2008). Subsequently these companies have a hard time to be as flexible and fast reacting as their competitors, having an effective communication system. Through communication companies can develop intensive knowledge exchange and in the end leaders can create a shared understanding of common goals and visions. This activity is about the sensemaking (Weick, 1995) as a leader as well as the sensegiving (Smerek, 2009; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) and is very often given too little attention by leading persons. In my opinion, the ability of sensemaking is the most important ingredient for an effective communication between leaders and followers in order to transform an employee in a follower. As long as employees are not followers and believers of what their management is doing they are only task-fulfillers, meaning that they are not putting all their energy into these tasks. So sensemaking is really important and the very basic to understand the principle of communication and to create a ground of strategic communication within an organization.

Others’ researches show (MetLife 9th annual study of employee benefit trends, 2011; MetLife 10th annual study of employee benefit trends, 2012; Winning, 2006) that loyalty of qualified employees is shrinking due to the easiness of switching to other companies and the working load employees are facing. These studies show that one in three employees is currently planning to leave his/her company till the end of the year. As a result leaders should understand that communication is getting even more important nowadays and leaders should lay focus on a qualitative and intensive communication flow within the whole company to eliminate at least one important reason for people leaving their organizations (Adam Cobb & Peter Cappelli & Deborah Small, 2012; Timothy Keiningham and Lerzan Aksoy, 2009). Some experts (Guffey & Almonte, 2009) say that internal emails and chats, which eliminated most face-to-face meetings, have badly affected the interpersonal relationship between leaders and followers. It is obvious that the world is connected not only personal but also in organizational perspective. Today’s world is interlinked at all places and has never seen faster changes due to this globalization. The great variety the world, it’s people and it’s organizations offer, creates a painful variety of choices for every action and decision. This can also be seen when we look at the size of the “communication-toolbox” leaders have to carry at all time. One part of this toolbox consists of different technological tools which create a big latter of
different channels of communication. Furthermore today’s young and digital
generations, using new technologies, are sharing new and “modern” perspectives
of communication, which could influence the future of communication. When
one looks at different organizations one will recognize that most firms are living a
classical top-down approach of the internal communication. Nevertheless this
approach is lacking the very important part of communication, which can be
seen as a way of continuous feedback for the management. That is the bottom-
up communication flow going from the employees to the management. It enables
the management to learn from their employees for further improvements. Can we
say that the bottom-up approach represents the more important part of internal
feedback as it comes directly from the workers? As these approaches are closely
linked to the overall organizational structure it is also linked to the degree of
formality that is lived by all member affecting the internal communication style
which furthermore affects the openness and receptiveness for improvements. It is
about the managements will to acknowledge employees’ ideas in order to create a
productive environment using their employees’ minds as their greatest resource.
Additionally, the bottom-up approach usually represents a more open
environment that creates a closer relationship between the top levels and the
bottom employees, which can influence the company’s success to a high level,
and represents an important requirement of an productive internal
communication.

As we experienced it over recent years, technology reinvented our understanding
of communication and changed almost all processes related to communication.
With the last 20 years technology opened up a new era of communication by
enabling people to communicate at any time, from any place to any person,
through E-mail, SMS, telephone, fax, video-calls, whereat it has to be mentioned
that E-mail already starts to be seen as “retro” as there are many new systems
like twitter taking over the functions of the before mentioned medias. Companies
try to meet up to new trends in communication and have a hard time following
these as they grow like mushrooms. Companies started using Facebook and
Twitter as a tool for internal communication but also as the channel to
communicate with possible external stakeholders. Technology makes life easier
for all of us and opens us the doors to a bigger audience by often reducing costs
and time compared to the “good, old” techniques. Especially face-to-face
meetings are getting rare as videoconferences conquer internal communication at all organizational levels through time and cost efficiency. Looking at these information it seems that communication is an endless success at all stages. BUT, remembering the fact that communication is the very core of success, maybe this development hides a downside. What if this development causes troubles in the long run? Maybe it could affect people’s skills to communicate personally and through body language using only technological tools. As we can see it everyday, technology is developing and reinventing continuously and longtime studies are very rare. Looking at today’s young generations it could be assumed that smartphones are their living elixir. There are experts (Tardanico, 2012; Muska, 2011; Hanke, 2011) who discovered that our younger generations often choose technological channels to communicate with people, as they feel more comfortable having the distance. Especially negative conversations are communicated through that way, giving people a chance to avoid unpleasant moments. Therefore these experts fear that the younger generations are loosing their abilities to communicate sensible topics in person. In current research the experts refer to this as the “generational gap” (Tardanico, 2012; Muska, 2011; Hanke, 2011). In these times, these generations start their professional lives; subsequently the effects just start to show their consequences in business life. Additionally these analysts found out that, because of different reasons, these young generations, or as some experts refer to them as Millennials, tend to prefer a flat hierarchy causing problems throughout hierarchic organizations.

Seeing all these effects and developments over recent years it is important to analyze this situation in order to understand what the future holds for us and in order to respond to possible negative developments in time. It is important for leaders to be prepared for our future. They have to be aware of the most critical factors, which are necessary to keep up with the highest possible level of effective communication. The art of exchanging information is and always will be crucially important for private and organizational success. It is time for all leaders, to understand what internal communication might look like in future in order to be prepared for fast adoptions. It goes without saying that those companies, being the fastest to react on upcoming changes and being the ones understanding the most important ingredients/needs for internal communication will be the
successful ones. Understanding, what internal stakeholders need in respect to communication and sensemaking is the golden key for a company’s growth.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

As a research question I decided to deal with the topic of the interpersonal requirements of leaders and followers. Therefore the following research question was developed,

- „What are the possible requirements for leaders and followers in order to facilitate productive internal communication?“

1.2 OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSES

After doing some reading, thinking and discussing about this topic and based on the situation presented above, the idea is to achieve following major objectives.

First of all, this research should yield a comprehensive insight into the importance of communication of leaders and followers. It should highlight how communication affects a company and what leaders can influence by playing a communicational role model. It should present also the issue of the relation between leaders and followers, which is a decisive factor for effectiveness. For that different requirements have to be met to create a productive communicative environment. The different ways and tools of how to communicate and how to create an effective communication flow throughout the organization will also be presented to make the picture complete.

Secondly, the thesis will cover the topic of sense making. It will not only present the importance of sense making within a company but also show different possible ways of creating a shared meaning within a company. By doing that it will try to show the effect on the business. Furthermore it will deal with all activities and processes related to creating sense, as it is not a one-way road.

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1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE CONTENT

The introduction will argue for the importance of this topic as well as the research question. Through different arguments and some theoretical information related to the current situation of organizations, the introduction will lead to the research question, which the author will try to answer by this paper. Within the introduction the topic will be explained and the current situation as well as the trends over the last years will be presented in order to understand the objective and importance of this thesis. Furthermore the purpose will be elaborated in order to understand what the reader can learn or gain from this paper. The clear focus as well as the research question will be presented to give the reader an idea of what the thesis will focus on, giving the limitations. It will outline the structure of this paper and give different perspectives on communication.

The second chapter will deal with the overall methodological approaches that have been used to develop this paper. Detailed description of the writing phases are going to be explained as well as an explanation of the process of choosing various sources which was a crucial step in putting together this paper.

Chapter three will be the first starting to analyze different researches about communication within organizations and trying to filter the essence of organizational communication from the perspective of the leader in order to understand its importance. Different communication theories will be presented to establish a basic knowledge of communication. Therefore these theories will be interlinked and compared for their differences. To attain a clearer understanding, a definition as well as the history of communication is illustrated. As this thesis is mainly about organizational communication all kind of tools, techniques and channels of communication are discussed for their advantages and disadvantages. These will be presented not only from the technological perspective but also from the personal angle as personal skills needed for
exchanging information. At the end the author will deal with some of the greatest barriers, which hinder a smooth internal communication flow.

Coming to the second part of chapter three, the topic of sensemaking will be the main topic. Within this part of the paper the author will use some of the approaches from the first part of chapter three but focusing only on the element of sensemaking. Therefore, understanding how leaders can create sense for their employees and recognize what employees are actually asking for. It will show the effects of sense making on organizational success and the behavior of employees. One major focus will be the ability of people and especially a leader to actually create sense for others in the way that they can interpret its meaning in the “right” way, from the senders perspective. This leads directly to the topic of the sender-receiver relationship between two communicating parties. Finally, possible changes in the sensemaking process are presented. Here the author will do his best to link these findings with the generational aspect leading to a possible future outlook.

In chapter four, the detailed methodical techniques and processes of the conducted interviews are going to be presented. It will explain why different methods have been used to conduct these interviews. As the interviews were of major importance, the detailed procedures of those are given to show exactly how the author set up the questions and extracted the information from the experts’ answers. Finally the detailed way of how these findings are linked to the thesis is developed as it is a very important part to give the reader the greatest level of transparency.

In the last chapter, the empirical part is going to be presented. Analyzing the findings, the author will try to present the core findings and the essence of the leader’s ability in communication and sense making. If the findings will present differences in the fields leaders are operating he will also present them as well as trying to describe the possible reasons for these differences. (Cultural, social) In general the author will look for similarities between different employees from the same organization as well as similarities in what they think is really important for communication.
Furthermore through the different interviews, which are conducted per organization, the author is looking for a very objective and outside view on the overall communication-situation within the specific firms. This will give indices of what the major focuses in regard to the internal communication are relevant for each organization. Another part of the analysis will be the search for barriers of a good communication flow and also ideas for improvements, which will give an understanding of the experts perspective on communication.

In the end I will try to present some ideas of how the future of internal communication and sense making by leaders should look like. He will try to give an understanding of what future leaders should take care about in order to recognize changes as early as possible in order to react fast enough to employees demand for sense-making. Within this conclusion the author will present his opinion about the major topics and he will try to answer the research question according to his personal understanding and opinion.

1.4 LIMITATIONS

In general it has to be clarified that this paper is only covering the topic of internal communication. Therefore no chapter will deal with the importance of external communication. Additionally it will be only elaborated from the perspective of organizational communication and not going into detail of private, or any other form of communication. As the major focus is the transfer of communication between leaders and followers also the general information exchange between employees themselves in form of colleague communication, will also be only handled to a very little percentage as this thesis is written in the field of leadership. As communication is one of the most discussed, analyzed and researched topic in business science there exist endless studies covering that topic, from countries all over the world. Coming from Austria, Europe, and another limitation could be that the author is referring to experts and studies from this region as they are more present in this area.
2 METHODOLOGY

As the very first step I had to decide for a topic. It was a long and intensive period where I really tried to come to the most interesting field of research for me. As Strauss and Corbin (2008, p. 21) said “the topic must be relevant for oneself as one is going to deal with it for some time”. This was always in the back of my mind and finally I decided to go for the topic of internal communication, as it was a very sensible topic for me already in my past employments.

Before going into detail about the methodological part itself, it is important to talk about the presence of the author in this paper. As Harwood explained in 2005, he thinks that it is crucially important for authors of social knowledge creating papers to encourage the use of personal pronouns to make the position of the author clear. As it is almost impossible to be objective when writing a thesis (Daudi, 2013) the word “I” will also be used to underline and state the author’s personal view to different issues. Due to the fact that the whole process of setting up a thesis is a quite personal process the author is present at all places but also trying to neutrally present existing theories and ideas as far as it is possible. In general one could say methodology explains the “theory and a grammar of the modes of thinking and acting for knowledge creating” (Arbnor & Bjerke 2008, p.423). To start giving a brief overview on the methodological approach used in this paper the next chapters will deal with the methodological view used in this paper as well as explaining the different methodology related parts of the thesis.

2.1 METHODODOLOGICAL VIEW

Within this thesis the systems view (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2008) will be the driving perspective that will shape this paper. This methodological view is based on the approach of analyzing a part of a system by acknowledging the importance of the influences of the other parts of the overall system (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2008).
In the first part, which consists of many theories and ideas of different experts the author is going to give the most important information about relevant topics of this paper. As this part can be seen as the theory part of this thesis various different communication theories are presented and analyzed to link them to the topic of this thesis.

In the second part, which is about the linkage between these theories and the real life situations, the author includes many personal understandings and comments presenting the importance for today’s organizations. In this part subjective interpretations are given to combine the theoretical knowledge of the first part with the understanding of the author. To make this paper a knowledge creating work, the author additionally has conducted interviews as an empirical source for his interpretations and conclusion.

Understanding the importance of distinguishing between objectivity and subjectivity the techniques and methods of elaborating the thesis will now be presented and explained in detail.

2.2 GENERAL METHODOLOGIC INFORMATION

Before starting the thesis it was important to think about different techniques and methods of how to set up this thesis. It is very important to be aware that different techniques might bring different results although they are dealing with the same topic. As this is also closely related to the fact that the overall „project“ thesis is a very individual process, it was important to find the best way to combine objectivity with subjectivity without loosing the track presenting the most important findings. For me it was much more important to concentrate more on the real life situations with all its interesting facts and information which are necessary to put emphasize on a qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2007) instead of collecting and measuring as well as counting data which exists to create a quantitative picture of this interesting topic (Gillham, 2000). For me the possibility to analyze specific situations via comparing and observing various connections and relations between different findings (Bryman & Bell, 2005) was
the most interesting part which is another reason for choosing the qualitative research method. Furthermore I think that the topic of internal communication especially as I worked with it from a very situational perspective rather asks for a qualitative analysis as it would be extremely difficult to extract useful information in terms of numbers (quantitative analysis) (Strauss & Corbin 1990). Therefore the qualitative approach was much more appropriate as it is useful in empirical researches dealing with “research about people’s lives, their perceptions, behaviors and emotions, and feelings about organizational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interactions between nations” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 26).

In general, the thesis is based on secondary literature, articles and studies about communication. Different theories are compared and proven for their usability in order to filter possible core elements and findings within this field of research to create helpful advices for leaders in organizations. As it was mentioned in the last sentence, the author tried to collect a great variety of material nevertheless focusing on those dealing with leaders communication and sensemaking. As communication is an extremely broad topic that was studied by an endless number of researchers, it is often hard to find the most relevant and adequate material. Having collected material from different sources all over the world, the author tries to interpret and understand the interrelationship between leaders and followers in order to be able to think about possible solutions for improving communication between them as well as to understand followers desire for sense creation especially focusing on the future of communication. As a supplement some ideas of a possible future of (internal) communication are presented to give some ideas of what could await us.

In order to support all theoretical findings the empirical part will consist of interviews with different “experts” telling stories and sharing information about their internal communication experiences. These interviews should create an insight within two different institutions. Firstly interviews have been conducted in the organization Mercedes Wiesenthal Austria to get some information from a very economical oriented business. On the other side some interviews have been done in the institution of the University of Sports Sciences in Vienna giving a different perspective of communication coming from a different professional field.
In the end of this thesis, the most important links between the theory and the empirical part are displayed to give a better understanding of a practical approach. Summing up the most important findings both from the theoretical part as well as from the empirical part the author will conclude with the core essential requirements of effective communication giving tips and guidance for all persons in leading positions as well as following position of how to communicate “correctly” so that barriers and problems can be distorted. As a very final remark the author will present a very personal view into the future of communication.

2.3 METHODOLOGY OF THE INTERVIEWS

In general there are two possibilities to collect data. Either through primary sources or through secondary research (Patel & Davidson, 2003). According to Yin (2003), the major difference between these two concepts is the strength and closeness to the their original sources. Therefore primary data is closer as it is gathered directly from the concerned parties whereat secondary data was originally collected by somebody else without oneself participating in the gathering process as a personal witness. Still, secondary data is extremely important and used by every expert as it can be seen as a collection and also cooperation between all researchers to make each other’s lives easier by sharing knowledge. Merriam (2009) stated that secondary literature is extremely important to build up a general understanding of a topic before going into detail about primary investigations, which can then additionally be related to the already existing secondary data. As Amaratunga et al explained in 2002, such a qualitative research creates an informative picture of specific fields of interest by presenting examples from the real life, represented by the interview experts in this paper.

The importance of qualitative research was also analyzed by Fisher (2007), who explained their potential. He presented them as a great tool to extract in-depth knowledge and a better understanding of specific situations by illustrating them with real life situations. Usually this is done via expert interviews, which was also my way of gathering that information. In 2007, Björn Bjerke, wrote that the
main purpose of interviews, discussions and other conversations is to extract either objective or subjective data, respectively. This was also present in my empirical research as all interviews were guided through a set of fixed questions and still having space for additionally situational adopted questions that could help me to gather more information.

### 2.3.1 GENERAL METHODOLOGY

For this thesis, six Interviews have been done with members of two different organizations. These two organizations were chosen to be from different fields of work to filter possible differences. The interviews are to be seen as qualitative interviews as they were done with key players in these organizations who have a high demand for internal communication.

The interviews had a duration of 40 minutes and 60 minutes. Usually the basic information about the organization like the size, their position, communication structure and the amount of communication used as well as the general procedure of the interview has been discussed in advance. For some general information a quantitative questionnaire has been given to the interviewees dealing with information like, age, gender, name, company size, internal communication flow and some information about their employment history. Therefore the interviewees received a sheet of paper with different questions before starting the interview to give me the possibility to better understand possible backgrounds of the interviewees. (Questionnaire – Annex)

As most of the interviewed persons had a very tight schedule it was quite difficult at the beginning to arrange a meeting for the interview. Especially the interviews with the employees from Mercedes Wiesenthal were twice rearranged. Another time related issue was that some interviews were interrupted one or two times as the interviewed persons had to pick up important telephone calls. As mentioned in the last chapter the reason for the interviews having no prefixed questions was the objective to enhance a free and open interview about their own perspectives of feelings and experiences in respect to the internal communication. Subsequently the interviews are very objective giving the author
a very external view on the internal situation of those companies. The decision for choosing the following organizations will be given in the “pre-interview phase” chapter on the next page.

As it was mentioned before interviews have been done with different persons in different organizations,

University of Sports Sciences, Vienna,

- Barbara Wessner, Project manager, 02.04.2013 – 13,50
- Marlene Hoffman, Group Manager, 25.03.2013 – 18,00
- Christian Lorenz, Department of Sports-Physiology, 25.03.2013 – 17,00
- Stefan Oesen, PhD Student, 03.04.2013 – 18,30

Mercedes Wiesenthal, Austria,

- Martin Heger, Sales manager, 27.03.2013 – 16,00
- Anonym Person – Sales representative, 27.03.2013 – 16,50

These qualitative interviews have been done very openly in order to get the highest level of objectivity possible. At the start of each interview, the interview partners have been informed about the topic of the interview and some frames. The target was to get a very objective understanding of the internal communication of these two organizations through information, stories and examples. In order get even more information and some kind of 360° view different employees have been interviewed coming from different hierarchical levels. In order to collect much data of objective kind without influence the interviews in any distorted direction the questions have been very neutral and open to hinder any direction guiding.
2.3.2 PRE-INTERVIEW PHASE

During the general starting phase it was important to choose the right technique to receive the most relevant information for my empirical part. As I was deciding between those I choose to do expert interviews as they provide a great flexibility regarding the asked information and for the individual interviews. As the time was a crucial factor for me as I started my thesis later than planned this time flexibility was very important for me. Nevertheless it was not the only reason for conducting these interviews, as I personally think face-to-face interviews offer much better information in regard to my topic and offers me the possibility to spontaneously navigate the interview.

The second stage was the important part of choosing the right interview partners who can add many interesting inputs and information about this topic from a very personal point of view. As I already have known somebody working for Mercedes Wiesenthal who told me some interesting stories about the internal communication between the leadership and the employees I was already interested in this company from the start on. Therefore I contacted the management, asking whether they would be interested in offering me the possibility to conduct internal interviews. Within only three days I received a response telling me that they would appreciate supporting me with my thesis. In order to make my empirical research more objective I decided to do the interviews in three companies.

As I am a very active person sport is a very important element in my life. Especially soccer is my favorite sport and I am also playing in a soccer club in Vienna. Therefore it was a very spontaneous idea to combine my economical research with the perspective of an organization with a sports background. As another friend is working as a coordination coach in the soccer club “Rapid Wien”, which is one of Austria’s most successful football clubs I decided to go for this soccer club as my second organization of research. The reason why I did not take my soccer club as an example is that my soccer club is not playing in the official Austrian soccer league but much rather is to be seen as a hobby club. My friend gave me some contact addresses for people who would be interesting for my interviews and so I directly was able to contact them. After a week the first
responses came back telling me that they do not see any problem with conducting interviews, which made me very content, looking forward to a very interesting analysis. Unfortunately all of these interview partners cancelled their interviews in the last second, which was very frustrating for me, as I really liked the idea of analyzing communication and leadership from the perspective of a soccer team. As a reason they explained that their internal problems do not allow them to do interviews at the moment.

The other organization I decided to conduct interviews is the University of Sports Sciences in Vienna. In order to speed up the process I went there directly to ask for the possibility to interview some of their employees, which they approved immediately. Unfortunately this was before I knew that Rapid was going to cancel their interviews. Especially because the major reason for me to take the University of Sports Sciences as a third organization, was to take a company which combine both, economical oriented operations like Mercedes Wiesenthal and a sports based organization in the form of Rapid. For me that was a perfect of three different organizations where I was hoping for many interesting information showing similarities as well as the greatest differences between organizations coming from different fields of business.

So at the end there were only two companies left, loosing Rapid as an interview partner. Nevertheless I was looking forward to very interesting interviews with exciting discussions.

The third and last basic prerequisite for the interviews was the further decision of whom I am going to interview within those organizations. This was for me a quite easy decision and also approved by my coaches in Krems, Austria and in Kalmar, Sweden. As I mentioned before I tried to take unequal companies to not focus on one area only, which was also true for the interview partners within the organization I decided for. It was important to have interviewees from different hierarchical levels to get a broader picture of the general situation within the firm collecting information and experiences from people with different perspectives coming from different internal positions.
2.3.3 SETTING UP THE QUESTIONS

As it was mentioned in the introduction of this chapter the interviews were handled as qualitative interviews letting the interviewees space for their explanations and stories. Still, there was one small part of the interview conducted as a quantitative information collection. Now, both, the quantitative and the qualitative parts of the interviews are presented in the following paragraphs.

Quantitative part,

For these questions the decision was rather easy, as it should just yield to clarify some basic information about the person and his/her communication behavior within the organization. Therefore the following questions were asked on a sheet of paper before starting the actual interview,

• Name, Age?
• Current position in the organization?
• In how many companies did you already work?
• For how long have you been working in your current organization?
• How often do you communicate in your organization? With whom? (daily)
• Which communication channels are used?
• How often do you personally meet your supervisor? (weekly)

Here it was important to find out where and how long they did work, in order to get a feeling how long they could enjoy being part of the organizational climate in order to understand their expertise. The question about the quantity of communication daily used in the organization was interesting to see whether they are aware of their “own” communication they are “performing” daily. Finally the question about the personal meetings they have with their supervisors should give me a feeling about the relationship to their bosses, especially for the questions I was asking later in the “real” interview.
Qualitative part,

When I had to decide for the questions I want to ask my interview-partners it took long time, rewriting the questions again and again, so that they are as neutral as possible and providing as much quality information as possible. This was important in order to understand the most important topics and questions I wanted to deal with and ask questions about. One could say that my questions are generally yielding at two different fields. The first one is about the internal situation of the interviewees in their organizations and the second was to see what their perspective on the relationship between leaders and followers is. Therefore it was focusing on the requirements they found as especially important in this relationship to establish a productive communication environment.

As it was planned to be a very open and qualitative interview, I asked very general questions to let them talk freely. At the very beginning there was one thing important to clarify in order to later on understand what they are telling me. It was the question “What do you understand as communication?”. This was a crucial factor in order to be able to correctly interpret what the interview-partners told me as people have different understandings and perspectives on communication especially when they have not thought about it in detail before.

In the end, I had long lists of relevant questions, which was far too long for a 40 minutes interview. Therefore I started to delete and combine various questions without losing the neutral element of these questions. Finally I had prepared a list of eleven questions, which should deal with the most important topics of my thesis. Additionally I tried to put them in a prioritizing order as I did not exactly know where they interviews would go which was also my intention. To mention it once again as it was an open interviews where I wanted to have people talk about their experiences, these questions where somehow a guidance and not a must. In some interviews I asked only eight questions which seemed to be the most important one as time did not allow for more, having these interview-partners talking so much about their experiences. It was a long process of setting up this question with a good and informative result.
2.3.4 INTERVIEWING

Within this part I will explain the interview process itself to make the information extraction process as transparent as possible, explaining in detail how the interviews have been conducted.

In general all interviews lasted between 39 and 58 minutes and were really interesting as they were very different. In general the content was quite similar but the different perspectives and the different stories were extremely interesting for understanding the organizational situation. In the case of the employees of the University of Sports Sciences in Vienna, all interviews have been conducted in a interviews-for-two situation in a separate room without having any disturbances. In the case of the employees of Mercedes Wiesenthal, the interviews have been conducted in a public area in the cafeteria of Mercedes Wiesenthal.

In all cases we did immediately start with the interviews. First of all I told all of them a short summary of my thesis to make it easier to understand why and what I am actually doing with the extracted information. Furthermore it was important to clarify my intention, which was that they should openly tell me about their feelings and experiences towards their employee-supervisor relationships and about the internal organization situation. Another important point, which had to be discussed at the beginning, was the information for my interview-partners that I could do it the analysis in my thesis anonymously in order to give them the chance to tell me maybe secrets or personal feelings without having other organizational members knowing it. This was extremely important for me as it increased the quality of the information the provided me with.

The next step for them was to fill out the sheet with the quantitative questions taking about five minutes.

Coming to the most important part of the actual interview, I asked all interviewees for their approval that I did record the interview for later analysis which enabled me to better concentrate on what they were telling me during the

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question-answer process without losing concentration on writing down their arguments and stories. This was a great advantage as I could put all my concentration on the interviewees' lips in order to not miss a word that could be of importance for me. It also gave me the chance to observe some non-verbal behaviors that could be interpreted in different ways. It was an extremely interesting process, hearing different stories and experiences of a similar company.

As a final comment I have to say that it was a great experience to get information about similar problems from different perspectives. It was also interesting that some interviewees did actually start thinking about their problems from a different perspective as they were talking. One could actually see that the interview made them think about it, presenting ideas for change, which they were not thinking about it before. After almost every interview they were really thankful and happy about our “discussion” and some even contacted me weeks later to tell me that due to my interviews things changed positively in their organizations as people were starting to think about what they were telling me, making them search for improvements. This fact was great hearing as it showed me that it was not only helpful for me but also important for the others.

2.3.5 LIMITATIONS

As a final methodological part, possible limitations of the empirical part have to be presented.

First of all, the interviews have been conducted with Austrians, which could limit the information for international inputs and differences. Especially communication is often done in different ways, which means that my thesis is majorly focused on “Austrian Organizational Communication”.

Another limitation could be that I did only conduct interviews in two different organizations. If interviews with more companies would have been concluded they could have created a more general picture without having to much influence by only one firm. Also the duration of the interviews had a limit of about 58
minutes. I extracted a lot of information; nevertheless more time could have brought me even more interesting information, giving them the chance to tell me all their stories instead of only the best ones.

As external communication is also somehow linked to the internal communication process it could have been interesting to also discuss this part. Still, I wanted to focus only on the internal part without losing track, therefore this could be of interest for further studies.

Regarding the interviews itself the only limitation I found for the conducted interviews was that the ones of Mercedes Wiesenthal have been done in a public area, which could have been a reason to not mention some information as others could have heard it. Also the interruptions in this public area could have affected the concentration of the interviewees and therefore the quality.

The last point regarding possible limitations is the fact that all interviews conducted with the University of Sports Sciences have been conducted on a first-name base, which could have influence on the given information. This could be true, as the first-name base might have created a more familiar atmosphere that led to more intimate questions about internal problems.

As a final comment to the methodology of this paper I would like to mention that the transparent illustration of all methods and techniques used to conduct this research should enable everyone to conduct the same study reaching similar results. This is strongly related to the reliability this thesis, and any thesis in general should present (Yin, 2003).
3 COMMUNICATION

“You cannot, not communicate!”
Paul Watzlawick

Within the following chapter I am going to present a short summary of the historical background of communication illustrating it with different examples that developed throughout the centuries. Additionally it will be the theoretical chapter dealing with all basic understandings of communication presenting different communication theories to establish a common ground of knowledge about some general ideas of different experts. Therefore different theories including all their specific characteristics are presented and discussed.

3.1 DEFINITION AND HISTORY

Communication is all around us, it is part of our identity and we use it in every interaction. It is done in different ways using different tools and techniques. Nevertheless, the most dominant part is the classical verbal communication; which is also what most people will think about when they hear about communication, but it is also about the non-verbal communication through our body language and our behavior. We can use it to manipulate others, by using different techniques and behaviors. This can be done on purpose or subconsciously. This represents maybe the most effective tool for any situation in the world and allows us a great variety of possibilities to “communicate” by using our experience and knowledge about the outcomes of different ways of transferring a message or meaning to another party. Communication is not only used by humans but in the animal kingdom as well. Some animals have developed a unique way of communicating like the insects that can exchange information through pheromones, which is a secreted that is used to inform members of the same species about specific situations. Therefore there are different pheromones for alarm, food trail, sex and many others. Another example of a very different way of contacting members of the same species is the
communication through vibration that is used by animals like spiders and elephants. Here, the animals stamp on the ground sending vibrations through the ground which can than be encoded by their peers in distance. The “classic communication” through “noises” like dogs, elephant and many other animals, which is hearable for humans, as well as the communication that is out of the hearable frequencies for humans, as bats and wales can be seen as a very similar technique as the human verbal communication. In the animal kingdom, generally messages can be exchanged through “hearing”, “smelling”, “feeling”, “seeing”, “tasting”. At the first sight this seems to be much more than for humans but this is only partially true as humans can also notice communication in all of these categories but only to a very low extent and mostly subconsciously like the pheromones that humans spread. To link the animal communication back to the topic one can see different groups of animals as an organization. A very good example is the bees and the ants that are living in big colonies. As these colonies consist of a very high number of members, it is important for them to communicate effectively. Therefore every member in these colonies is attributed a specific “job” or responsibility it has to fulfill. This can be seen as a great example of an effective community communication in the animal kingdom. There are members responsible for the maintenance of their “home”, others are responsible for the food collection and again others are the “babysitters” of their procreation. This is highly comparable to organizations with different departments in order to split the work up by creating experts in different operational areas.

Having described the very special techniques of the animals as well as those techniques used by humans, one should not forget the importance of written communication. It was essential for the world, to develop as it is today. Thousands of years before Christ, people developed methods to communicate in writing. The Phoenicians developed an alphabet and the Egyptians developed the hieroglyphs in order to send or transmit messages to people far away. Through this development it was possible to exchange information without personal contact. About 800 BC the Greeks used their first pigeons to send messages, which can be seen as the first postal service in the world. These pigeons were used to proclaim the winner of the Olympics. At these times this meant a great advantage in war scenarios and preparation as they could exchange strategies

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over far distances much faster than their enemies. Furthermore the overall communication changed drastically as people suddenly were able to exchange with people over far distances without being forced to actually travel all the way (Moran, 2010).

In the course of time, more and more techniques were developed like the smoke signs by the Indians, the heliographs – sending messages by using mirrors which reflected the sunlight by the Romans, and of course the books which were majorly invented to record and collect knowledge to share it with each other. This exchange of knowledge was extremely important in those times, as it represented the opportunity to learn from other cultures and experiences. This was especially effective, as many books were collections of war experiences and strategies. Very often the contained cases of war scenarios so that externals could learn from these situations to be better prepared for their own battles. Another field were this exchange of knowledge and written down recipes as well as experience collected in books was a very important achievement was medicine. People were able to learn from each other in different fields of knowledge and especially in the field of medicine this saved many people’s lives. The same is true for the agriculture, as many people were struggling with their food production. Again, the different channels of communication created a “global” network, which helped them to share new ideas to let their fields grow (Moran, 2010).

By the time, communication was a commonly used tool in most parts of the world people started to recognize the enormous power communication represented for them individually. In the definition of communication at the end of this chapter, one can read that symbols can also be used to transfer information, and have played an important role in wars. Through symbols people of the same group feel associated and strong as a unit. Today one of the most frequently used symbols is the emoticon, which is mainly sent through SMS replacing our body language. Many leaders in history understood the potential of symbols and made heavy use of it by creating a feeling of commitment and involvement. Additionally they used common salutations to foster this commitment. Hitler was one of the most remarkable and greatest leaders, in regard to his communication brilliance, who has ever existed. He perfectly understood the importance of a multi-communicative system, taking into
account externals (consultants) advices. Being aware of that, he created a culture of strong beliefs and values, its members shared with him. This common culture full of shared values and understandings was the base for his success as a leader. He knew what people needed in the post first world war period and he made use of it. Mentioning his great abilities to attract followers through different forms of “behavior”, it has to be said that he was one of the most dangerous leaders using his power for mass killing trying to eliminate a whole race. The author only illustrates his example to analyze his great ability to attract followers not going into detail about the result of his “work”.

In Burton’s (2005) analysis “The Forest of Rhetoric”, he talks about Hitler’s as follows, “Germany of post-World War I was demoralized and disorganized. Adolph Hitler’s rhetoric was successful not only because of his personal charisma and his mastery of delivery, but because he spoke at the right time, the German people wanted a way out of its economic morass and its cultural shame, and Hitler provided them both with his strong, nationalistic oratory. Had Germany been doing better economically, Hitler’s words would have bounced harmlessly off the air” (Burton, 2005). He had all-important qualities for a communicative genius. Embodiment of his vision, speaking skills, great performance and he was a master in using symbols, like the logo of the Nazis. All these ingredients enabled him to succeed in his plans by having his followers on his side, through communication.

Giving a brief overview about the development of communication I will now come to the topic of internal communication. Living in a fast moving world full of competing organizations effectiveness is the most important word for most organizations. The highly competitive environment nowadays, shows its power every day. Companies cannot allow themselves any kind of error as the competitors are just lurking for their customers and customer’s loyalty is an expensive and hard-to-get “service”. All over the world organizations are spreading and the big players out rule the small firms. Many small businesses and single shops have no possibility to compete and keep up with big organizations and chains. Subsequently many companies expand and the number of employees in those organizations rises. This is one reason why internal organizational communication is getting more difficult as the complexity

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reaches its peak. Leaders are daily confronted with the questions of “how”, “what” and “when” to communicate in order to be as effective as possible.

Searching for a definition of communication one can find an endless number of different experts and also non-experts who are trying to define it. Nevertheless, I decided to choose the one he found in a dictionary, as it is one of the most neutral ones, simply stating the basic idea of communication, highlighting additionally the tremendous importance of the elements of symbols and signs. It explains the basis of communication, having at least two parties who do understand a common “language” consisting out of symbols, signs, gestures, traditions, and behaviors.

“A process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior” (Webster Dictionary)

3.2 COMMUNICATION IN THEORY

"The art of communication is the language of leadership."

James Humes

Understanding communication as the biggest tool/responsibility of a leader for direct interaction with his followers, one can already see, that one can refer to it as a multi-communicative activity. Having additionally learned about the necessity of the parties, the leader and the followers, to play an active role in the leadership process it is easy to see that it is not a one-way communication. Looking at the example of the “double interaction” by Hollander and Willis (1967, p.16), it is obvious that leadership has to be understood as a multiple-communication activity. Communication enables a leader to reach out for his/her followers and communicate his/her vision and mission to them. Subsequently, the process of a communicative interaction usually starts at the leader's side and is followed by “feedback” of the audience, after they received the
message. This feedback, the leader can use to understand, and read the audience’s needs. To communicate a message or meaning correctly or through the right channel, a leader has the choice of using different communication tools. This “box of tools” usually comprises symbols, metaphors, language, and stories (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Pfeffer, 1981; Pondy, Frost, Morgan & Dandridge, 1983) the leader can offer to support and underline what he/she wants to communicate.

Furthermore the leader should carefully prepare the “delivery” by using tools of his/her rhetorical repertoire. Rhetoric is a very powerful tool if it is used wisely, to deliver a message in the most appropriate and strongest way to generate a greater impact on the audience. This can be done through endless techniques and tools and ask for a long an intense rhetorical education. To mention one example speakers can use a word or phrase repeatedly to stress its importance and print it into people’s minds, like Martin Luther King Junior did in his speech “I have a dream” (1963). One could build the structure of the overall speech or message according to the theory of classical rhetoric. Good rhetoric is furthermore dependent on the body language, the voice, gestures and also the appearance of the speaker. As Aristotle insisted it is “like dialectic, a verbal, intellectual tool; through it has artistic techniques and a method special to itself” (Aristotle). The great characteristic about rhetoric is that it can be learned! Aristotle (344 BC) distinguished between three different methods of how to reach an audience. Through logos (logic), pathos (emotions) and ethos (character). The choice of which method to use, is usually dependent on the environment one speaks in and on the message one wants to transmit.

As the circle of leadership, involves a continuous exchange of different perspectives, understandings and perception of the environment, communication is used at all stages. Helping followers to encode what the leader wants to transmit is a continuous process of adopting their realities. Understanding the followers’ frames of references, presents the ultimate leadership “weapon” in order to not only see what kind of sense they make of the leader’s sense but much more to anticipate their “sensemaking” (Weick, 1995), so to say their reaction. To extract that information in order to gain a more detailed view of their frames, communication is crucial. It enables not only the leader to learn from
his/her audience, or more basic to communicate his message, BUT creates the opportunity for followers to communicate their perception of different situations. Using this method as a technique throughout the whole organization in daily business, will lead to a much better understanding of each others frames of references and ultimately to efficiency and effectiveness by fostering the shared meaning (Weick, 1995).

Referring back to the “double interaction” by Hollander and Willis (1967, p.16), it can be seen as an exchange of information between a Sender and a Receiver, represented by the leader and the followers. Still, as we are talking about internal organizational communication this also includes the interaction between the employees themselves. So, internal communication in the business context is a dialogical process between employees and employer and between employees and employees. It is a dual listening process (Hopkins, 2006). Connecting this back to the development of rising numbers of employees in organizations this means that there are hundreds or thousands of senders and receivers who have to codify and encode each other’s messages in the right form, to have the same understanding of its meaning. Exactly this process of creating a meaning which shall be interpreted in the same way by different people with different frames of references (Weick, 2001) is the biggest challenge of internal communication especially for a leader. Weick refers to it as sensemaking and ascribes a tremendous importance to it, especially for leaders. The topic of sensemaking will be presented and analysed in chapter three.

Another theory that has many similarities with the double interact theory, is the communication theory by Charles Osgood (1954). In his model (Figure 1) he describes the communication flow as a very dynamic process of continuous interactions between a source and a receiver, which is essential for a fair and effective communication process. In his illustration he explains the three tasks of each party in this process. First one party has to encode a message, which the other party as a result has to decode. The second step is the process of interpreting the received message according to ones understandings. The last and third step can be seen as a form of response where the party, which had to decode, first has to encode a response, which now the party, which encoded the original message, first has to decode and interpret again.
This process is open-ended as long as the other party is responding to the other one. Finally I will present a theory by Cutlip and Center (1952) that highly concentrates on the importance of the message itself. It deals with the important task of setting up a strong and understandable message through the ingredients being represented by the seven C’s as the authors refer to it.

In the description of their theory of the seven C’s for an effective communication by Cutlip and Center in the book “Effective public relations” (1952, p. 52), the authors describe their basic recipe for putting together an effective message. In the following paragraph the seven ingredients are mentioned and briefly explained.

**Completeness**, It is crucial that the given information present all necessary data and answers possible questions from the message receiver. To support this part even more, additionally information could be given and presented in an extraordinary way.

**Conciseness**, For an effective message transfer, the wording (written or verbal) should be precise, without using ambiguous words and phrases. Repetitions should be avoided and only the most important information should be given to prevent misunderstandings and information overloads. Make it short and simple!
Consideration, By using “you”, the sender can show his/her interest and understanding in the receiver and his/her tasks. Senders should emphasize a positive attitude and expression to foster an optimistic environment.

Clarity, The statement of the purpose of the message has to be clear, avoiding pretentious words. Use familiar words in not too extensive sentences. Structure the message by using paragraphs.

Concreteness, Use figures and facts for your arguments to prove the relevance of your words. Additionally you can stress content through your voice or wording and by giving examples or metaphors for people to remember.

Courtesy, All messages have to be developed in a respectful and non-discriminatory way so that nobody could feel offended by the content. It should be sincere, thoughtful and tactful in respect to the receivers’ understandings and feelings.

Correctness, The right level of language should be used, according the concerned situation. Before sending the message the credibility of the content and all facts and figures have to be checked for their accuracy.

Figure 2, 7 C’s

Source: You Say Too Webpage

When a leader has to create such a message he/she will usually do it in relation to his/her experience meaning that there is no doubt that most leaders are aware of some theories or recipes of how to create a message but they will still develop it according to their past experience. This is also one of the skills a leader should have, to adapt to specific situations or followers to set up the message in the best way for his/her specific audience. Nevertheless there is always a risk of
resistance or of being embarrassed therefore people will stick to their experience in combination to theory which is closely linked to the theory of “The Spiral of Silence” by Noelle-Neumann (1974). In her theory she is talking about the external influence of audiences on their speakers or leaders. She presents her theory in various examples showing that people tend to take over the perspectives and opinion of the mass. This phenomenon comes from the fear of being isolated from the society. Subsequently people who have very different opinions or ways of doing things tend to be silent to not risk a conflict and start to align with the thinking of the mass (also to be found in the theory “Communication Accommodation Theory” by Giles & Ogay, 2007). This matching with others understandings is a very strong phenomenon, which was analysed by many experts (Noelle-Neumann, 1974; Giles & Ogay, 2007; Festinger, 1957).

Coming back to the leaders perspective, Noelle-Neumann argues that due to that process leaders start to hush up sensitive topics and try to communicate in a very neutral way where nobody feel offended. Looking further this development means that leader cannot effectively work on improvements and finally will fail in succeeding. Although Noelle-Neumann was illustrating that this behaviour usually meant a failure for leaders, it is essential to highlight that it is one of the most important tasks of a leader to operate and lead on behalf of the overall organization’s future even if some employees are not happy about his/her decisions.

One of the most famous theories, especially in the middle European region, is the theory by Watzlawick (1996) who was one of the greatest scientists in the field of communication. In his theory of the five paradigms, he explains the most important characteristics of a communication relationship between people. The basic assumption of this theory is the importance of the “connection” between communicating parties that are illustrated by the five axioms. To give a brief summary of the idea of his theory the author is going to present the five different paradigms shortly.

**First Axiom, “You cannot, not communicate!”**

Watzlawick explains in his first paradigm that people, when noticing each other, automatically are part of a communication relationship towards each other. As
one cannot, not act in any kind of way it is impossible to not communicate with each other. As he explains, people are also communicating through ignorance and silence. Therefore, we cannot choose whether we want to communicate with others or not. Subsequently, communication is majorly done subconsciously and through non-verbal behaviour. As an example, if a person is sitting in a room with other persons and is just starring at the ground, the others will understand that that person is not looking for social interaction with them.

Second Axiom, “Every communication is driven through content and the parties relationship, whereat the last is affecting the first.”

In Watzlaw’s opinion people cannot communicate with others, without uncovering their feeling and relationship towards them. Therefore we form our messages so, that the other understands it correctly which already presupposes that we think to know how he is going to interpret it. This is closely related to our relationship towards the other person. This can be supported by different gestures, body language and the tone of the voice. Therefore we choose to talk to those people we prefer in a different way. One example illustrating this fact could be the issue that people will much rather go into a lecture of friendlier professor although they could learn maybe more with another professor. This is also related to the fact that people often have a hard time communicating with persons they don’t sympathised with, as they cannot hide their emotions during the communication.

Third Axiom, “Every communication consists of action and reaction”

This axiom deals with the important behaviour of people to react on specific situations differently. Throughout our life we are collecting experiences from which we are learning. Therefore we develop a kind of register where we can find how we “should” react to various scenarios. One example comes from the area of partnerships. It is the example of a quarrelling couple. The wife starts to niggle which triggers the husband’s reaction to back down again. As a reaction to the backing out of communications of her husband the wife starts niggling again which triggers him to back out again. As one can see it is an endless circle where
both try to put the blame on the other one saying, I am just backing out/niggling because he/she is niggling/backing out.

Fourth Axiom, Human communication consist of analogue and dialogue elements

In the digital communication (non-verbal), very complex knowledge is transferred. Here, logical connections can be described and forwarded to other persons. The analogue communication (verbal) on the other hand is used to transfer messages through special emotional signs and gestures. As the saying goes, “Acting reveals more than words of a person”. A great example that illustrates what Watzlawick is telling us with the fourth axiom is the following. A kiss, parent give to their son can mean either “we love you” or “please leave us alone now”.

Fifth Axiom, “Communication is either symmetrically or complementary”

In a symmetrical communication, both parties try to eliminate any imparity in order to be on a same level. In the complementary communication, people try to show their power and hierarchy being the superior who is communicating on top of the inferior. Very often this complementary communication exist between parties were one is constantly “learning” from the other like in a parent-child relationship. Therefore it is important to know in what kind of “style” one is communicating with another person. If in a symmetrical communication one party wants to out rule the other it can be seen as an escalation phase.

In his theory, Watzlawick talks about many important elements of communication, which have been partially mentioned in other theories. Nevertheless his most important element is the issue that people understand that non-verbal communication exist and should be seen as a supplement to verbal communication. People have to be aware that they are constantly interacting with the people around them even if it is not consciously.
Another model of communication was Aristotle’s model, which is also dealing with the important part of recognizing one’s audience and environment before starting to communicate as the communication-act is strongly influenced by the audience and the occasion. In this model, which was developed more than 2000 years ago, he presented five elements that are necessary to succeed in transmitting a message. The speaker, the speech or message, the audience, the effect and the occasion. In his opinion there can never be a off-the-shelf recipe for a leader to communicate but much rather a collection of tools to use in different situations talking to different people striving for different purposes. As he was also a great rhetorical genius he linked this model to some rhetorical aspects giving people a new perspective of how to look at communication.

In comparison to Aristotle’s Model, Lasswell (1948) developed a very similar model including the same elements but additionally the element of the channel of communicating. He describes that different channels ask for different communication, which has some similarities with the idea of Aristotle. Nevertheless, as mentioned before Aristotle was majorly focusing on public speaking, which narrowed down the channels of communication. Furthermore, Lasswell developed his theory almost 2000 years after Aristotle; subsequently he was already living in a world full of highly developed and different techniques for communication, which extended the range of channels. When it comes to the tasks and responsibilities of leaders, experts often have different opinions. Some ascribe the communication task as the greatest responsibility, others the task of guiding and again others share the opinion that leaders have to only concentrate on the organization’s wealth. In the following paragraphs some examples are presented.

In the article written by Smircich and Morgan (1982), they present three basic ideas a leader, as a central role, has to use to influence a situation in a constructive way. First he/she has to deal with the equivocality, which “permeates many interactive situations”, secondly use the correct interpretive schemes appropriate for the audience and thirdly he/she should embody his message through the use of “appropriate language, rituals and other forms of symbolic discourse” (Smircich & Morgan, 1982, p.269). For these two researchers, it is seen as the very core of an organization which is the middle
man for all departments. Therefore he/she is primarily responsible for the establishment of the corporate culture.

In the article “The five messages a leader must manage” by Hamm (2006), who led a communication boot camp for CEOs for many years he developed a theory of **five messages** a leader must be able to communicate to create a success-oriented organization. He ascribes all communication related processes to the responsibilities of the CEO and accuses them to assume, that everybody shares their perspectives and understandings of internal processes much too often. He explains that communication is often not seen as the topic number one in internal communication although it is part of all business related processes. In the article he brings up the example of the SWAT team where a clear and effective communication can decide over life-or-death. It is a profession where there is no room for a sloppy communication, which should be also understood by leaders. It is crucial for leaders to finally recognize that the exact meaning of their words is not always obvious for everybody. It is not only because of the wording that can be misunderstood but also about the fact that employees need clear definitions by the leaders about simple words like success.

The first message Hamm presents, he describes that a clear **organizational structure and hierarchical** chart is very important but should be used in the right way. It is crucial to not use these charts as a tool to create fear, as people often reflect their status in those, but as tool to structure the organization’s resources in the most effective way. This has to be communicated to give employees a security by an honest and explicit communication about possible changes where people feel uncomfortable. As he says in his article “the organizational chart has nothing to do with politics and everything to do with organizational effectiveness”.

In the second part about **financial results** he tells his experience as a CEO coach, that leaders often only tell their employees to focus on the promised financial results and numbers which often leads to the situation of employees doing everything necessary to do reach them. This means that employees often reach their short-term goals at the costs of the overall long-term goals of the organization. Recognizing this problem leaders have to understand and
communicate that it is much more important to use the results as a diagnostic tool for future improvements, without having their employees being afraid of not reaching their short term goals.

The third element a leader has to be capable of is the sense of his/her job. One of the greatest mistakes leaders do, is their way of abusing their positional power to overrule others and drown out discussion, which creates an environment of frustration for employees. In comparison to these leaders, effective leaders understand that employees are the greatest resource and as long as they feel comfortable and free to share their inputs, the company is on the right successful track. They use their positional power not to dominate but to guide the decision-making process including all internal potentials.

The fourth message leaders have to communicate is about the time management. Overwhelmed by deadlines and tasks, leaders often put all the pressure on their employees without giving them structures or priorities. Most people see time as an enemy as they are lacking it. It stresses them and it hinders them in their operations. Instead of fighting against the issue of time, Hamm recommends handle it as neutral given phenomenon to which one has to react with flexibility. It is only about making the best out of it by using it strategically. Instead of shifting all their task to their subordinates, leaders should acknowledge priorities and communicate those to their employees to take off the pressure to give them the chance to concentrate on less things at a time in order to execute these things with a higher quality. In Hamm’s opinion many leaders miss to keep up with their actual responsibility to support and guide their subordinates.

Coming to the last point Hamm describes as one of the most critical responsibilities, a leader has to define and create a corporate culture. It is the CEO who has to define success and communicate his/her vision to make it understandable for all members of the organization. When this is done in a clear and productive way, people do better know what to expect and what the direction and the CEO is. Powerful tools to create and support an organizational culture are stories people can refer to. What Hamm is recognizing as a basic need of employees is the power of empowerment. This can be done in every situation by
feedback, where the leader can reflect whether his/her employees are doing things right to give them a permanent guidance. Many employees see that as a very fair tool of giving motivation through feedback that in the end creates a comfortable environment of cooperation. Regarding the definition of basic words like success and winning a leader should give clear definitions of what these words mean for him/her. As for the example of “success”, he could clarify that this means 20% market share or maybe 30% year-over-year revenue growth. By giving them clear numbers employees have very clear goals instead of vague aims like “our goal is to be better than XY”, where further details are needed.

Summing up the article Hamm presented the most effective leaders as the ones who recognize the risk of miscommunication asking themselves on a daily basis “what can I do for the organization to prevent confusion? And how can I communicate to prevent misunderstandings?” As we saw it with the theories before, Hamm also ascribes the greatest value to the HOW a message leaders set up are constituted using a very easy-to-understand language. Additionally, he explains that leaders have to understand that they are seen as role models who’s actions are under permanent observation by their employees.

As one can see there are many different theories by different researchers, showing different perspectives and different focuses. Some concentrate on the personal factors and others ascribe the biggest importance to the message itself. Again others argue that it is all about the “how” a message is transmitted and through which channel. All in all it seems to be really important for all experts that leaders overcome their own ego to operate in the best interest for the organization. As François de La Rochefoucauld put this in his great quote “We never listen when we are eager to speak”.

To link this information to the core area of this thesis, organizations, in the following chapter the author will illustrate different organizational communication structures as well as differences in communication itself.
3.3 ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES

“Communication is the exchange of information and the transmission of meaning”
Katz & Kahn (1966)

When one reads about organizational communication he/she will find many different types of communication, which are usually interlinked with the overall structure of the organization. One can always differ between internal and external communication, therefore it is essential to highlight once more that this paper will exclusively concentrate on the internal procedures.

The level of hierarchy within a company also influences the type of the internal communication flow. Usually, a formal communication comes along with hierarchical companies, and flat organizations allow a higher level of informal structure. Therefore I will present the different structures by clustering them into “formal” and “informal”. Within this chapter some examples of various communication flows as well as internal networks influencing those flow will be summarized.

3.3.1 FORMAL

Formal communication deals with the sharing of official information between members through a predesigned channel and chart of flows, very often equal to the organizational chart. It consists of a given organizational structure showing the detailed flows of internal communication. Further details are usually written down in a manual, the organizational chart itself or other policies in order to present the official streams that have to be followed.

Formal Communication very often is split into three types “Downward”, “Upward” and “Horizontal” representing the direction of the information flow. Downward streams are commonly used for instructions, directions and feedback given from the top management to the employees, whereat the upward flow most often asks
for guidance, data and direction needed by the employees or all kind of reports prepared for the management as well as possible improvement ideas presented to the board. The horizontal stream finally, is needed and used by employees in order to cooperate with their colleagues. It could be necessary for the coordination during a project or simply the daily business. Subsequently it facilitates their office work. A very typical direct communication structure can be seen in the “Chain Network” (Jablin & Putnam, 2001; Miller, 2011), which defines a clear flow of information.

To exchange information within these streams one can choose between the verbal form, which is done through presentations, conferences and speeches, or the written form which represents the bigger percentage, done through emails, internal papers, chats and notice boards and also different information systems which are applied.

3.3.2 INFORMAL

Informal communication is compared to the formal one, an open system without a pre given skeleton. It is usually the tool for sharing information based on private or personal interest. It creates a very open and information sharing friendly environment enabling employees to exchange their different feelings, experiences and stories. Subsequently it is an important factor for the development of a relaxed and comfortable working atmosphere.

Typical open communication networks without pre given communication structures, is the “Circle Network”, “Gossip Network”, “Probability Network” and the “Cluster Network” (Jablin & Putnam, 2001; Miller, 2011) which enables every member in the network to share and use all available information on an equal level. This type of communication flow is very effective as it represents the highest level of satisfaction for employees. It is multi dimensional flow, which facilitates a very flexible, and quick response system. It is a great supplement to the necessary formal channel and creates a faster solution-finding environment through the free expression of everybody's ideas. Mentioning also the negative
aspects of intense informal communication, it should be observed and monitored by management as it can create internal disputes and the original sender can often not be identified. Secondly, as a very personal based communication flow it is also the channel through which rumors and unconfirmed information are shared, it will be in the management’s interest to stop possible conflicts.

As a final remark, it is important to understand that informal communication flows within a company should never be seen as a substitute for an ineffective formal one. Informal can be seen as an additional flow which is essential for employees to feel content which is important for their motivation. It is essential to exchange not only business related information but also to share private concerns with trustful colleagues. This part of communication is a driving factor in order to increase the quality of the working atmosphere leading to a higher quality of the organizational results.

Below you can see two charts of classical examples of formal and informal communication in organizations.

Figure 4, Communication Structures 1

Figure 3, Communication Structures 2

Source, Knowledge Sharing

Source, Knowledge Sharing
3.4 SITUATIONAL COMMUNICATION

“Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas or opinions by two or more persons”

Newman & Summer (1977)

After having described the characteristics of informal and formal communication, it is interesting to see in what kind of organizational situations communication ascribes a special role and in how far different situations demand different communication.

When one looks at company intra-communication, one can recognize different situations and scenarios that are asking for different action and various strategies mainly caused through different levels of urgency.

When we compare the communication style of an organization going along with its daily business, to the communication behavior during a phase of change we will recognize a difference. As a change process is a very important situation, which needs a clear coordination of all involved parties, the coordination of the communication during these times can be seen as the topic number one. For a company to successfully go through a changing process it is necessary to keep all members up to date about all required information. People need to be informed about what is going to happen and how it will affect them in order to keep or establish an effective environment, which results in the company’s success. This is not only true for every organizational situation but especially for such a changing phase. “Effective employee communication is a leading indicator of financial performance” (Steward, 2010).

Studies have shown that the most effective employee communication programs provided a 91% total return to shareholders compared to the least effective programs, which only provided about 60% (Between 2002 and 2006). Furthermore those companies which have been implemented a very effective
employee communication program had four times higher rate of employee engagement. (Watson Wyatt Worldwide, 2007/2008)

What is very important in a process of change is also to not only communicate what is changing and how it is going to be changed, but also to state what will stay the same to give the affected parties some points of reference and things they can stick to (Miller, 2009). Mentioning the situation of change within the last paragraphs it is time to deal with another type of situation, which is very similar to the changing process.

It is about communication during crisis. Although one can see many similarities between the crisis situation and the situation of change there are some distinctive characteristics. This comes also from the fact that crisis represents a very extreme example of a change as it represents the highest level of urgency. As one of many definitions explains “Crisis is a time of intense difficulty, trouble and danger, in which important decisions must be made”. This danger a crisis describes for an organization, is the reason why such a situation asks for very clear, concrete and structured communication (Zaremba, 2010). Time plays a highly important role in these times as it is crucial to exactly understand the problem and the impacts on the organization before the management actually can start with the problem solving process and communication. Everything has to be done quicker as the motto during a crisis is “The longer you wait to act, the higher the price” and therefore organizations should do their best to be prepared for a possible crisis to save time. What leaders have to understand is that crisis is not a myth. Crisis has become a part of our daily life. What Zaremba writes in his book “Crisis Communication” in 2010, perfectly illustrates what has been said before, “Crises happen, and when they do organizations must be prepared to communicate effectively and open with their internal and external stakeholders”.

One can see that different situations ask for different priorities when it comes to communication. This is not only true for “situation” but also for the tools of communication. As one can experience it in his/her private life, people communicate differently when they use different tools of communication, as a phone call does not offer the possibility of using ones body language. Within the

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next chapter the most important tools are explained and linked to the specific characteristics the communication takes on when using them.

3.5 WAYS OF COMMUNICATING

In the last sub-chapters the basic types of communication and the importance of an effective communication have been described. In this chapter the oral and written “tools” as well as the individual art of “performing” communication will be presented. As everybody knows, different situations ask for different tools which is closely related to the before gone chapter about adopting the communication type to specific situations. These tools can be split into technical and personal tools whereat the technical tools cover all techniques and method as well as channels used for communication and the personal tools are personal skills usable for the message sender, like rhetoric or human sensitivity. In order to give more structure to this chapter, the author decided to split it into the oral and the written communication with all its characteristics.

3.5.1 ORAL

In general oral communication as the word already reveals, enables the communicating parties to use their oral skills to support their messages. Using ones voice and the variation of its tone can be one of the advantages of an oral communication. Sometimes the voice of the opponent gives us a feeling about his/her mood or feelings. As it is a very direct and personal way of communicating it usually enables a faster response to the opponents words. Furthermore through an oral communication people can make use of pauses or other verbal techniques that cannot be used in a written form. Although rhetorical techniques are also possible in written communication it is rather a tool to be used in oral communication and also a very strong one. As there are many situations and ways to communicate orally the author will deal with the following six types of communication one after each other. Face-to-Face, Interview, Presentation, Telephone, Public Speech and Meeting.
Face-to-Face communication is by far the most important one and usually also the most effective one. Unfortunately it requires a lot of time and resources so that face-to-face meetings have become really rare in today’s competitive business world. Most of the face-to-face meetings have been replaced by email conversations and telephone calls. Face-to-face conversations are very effective as the involved parties have the chance to directly stress possible misunderstandings and it involves the non-verbal communication of body language and gestures that cannot be transferred through other types of communication where they concerned parties do not see each other. As we have learned only 7% of a face-to-face conversation is conveyed by the words and another 38% are transmitted by the tone. The remaining 55% of the information are transferred through the body language, which helps us to recognize the importance of face-to-face meetings. Furthermore a face-to-face meeting includes the physical appearance, which can be used in order to support ones professionalism. This is also true for interviews, presentations, public speeches and meetings, which also give the listener the possibility to observe the opponent.

Nevertheless an interview usually has a pre given structure or guideline of the direction of the dialogue. Subsequently it is not as open as a face-to-face meeting and is typically characterized by a question and answer type of communication. Due this fact, very often the involved parties have the possibility to prepare themselves according to the topic, thinking about possible arguments or questions.

This last point is also true for a presentation. A presentation is usually a formal situation in which the presenter tries to delivers a message, knowledge or information on a specific topic to an audience. As the presenter knows about the topic a long time before he/she can perfectly prepare to deliver a very powerful and strong presentation. This setting can be seen as a face-to-face situation although it is usually monologue until a question and answer round at the end is opened. A great advantage of a presentation is the possibility to use materials to support ones message. As a presenter one can use any kind of supporting material (audio, video, products…) to enhance the presentation.
Although a presentation is very similar to a **public speech** there are still some differences to be found. A public speech is usually very formal with a greater distance to the audience. Speeches are usually used for three purposes (Aristotle), for entertainment, to encourage and to inspire. According to these situations a speaker usually adopts his/her words, rhetorical techniques and message. The presenter also adopts his or her presentation according to the audience, so that the most effective method is used, which includes words, phrases, tone, stories, behavior and much more. Another difference is that at the end of a speech one will usually find no question and answer part but much rather simple applause which at the same time represents a very little feedback compared to the presentation where the audience usually gives very productive feedback from which the presenter can learn for his/her future.

In a **meeting** one can find usually different people with different skills and a chairman who is leading the conversation. In organizations such meetings usually consist of different experts who present their opinion to a specific topic or who present the current situation of their department. In comparison to the presentation and the public speech a meeting includes more the one “speaker” who communicate on a rather equal level compared to a presenter and the audience. A meeting has a clear schedule and topic, which is gone through in order to give an overview to the others. Here it is usually not about convincing others of something but about sharing knowledge. Today the amount of video meetings (conferences) is rising as it often saves time and costs. Subsequently these meetings are always handled time efficient asking all participant for a clear and short formulation that sums up all arguments, which they others can understand.

The last type of communication that was not mentioned so far is the **telephone** conversation, which differs from the others, as it is the only one without physical proximity. This condition asks for different behavior of the message sender. As the important part of the observable behavior of the communicating parties falls away, all communicators have to focus on the verbal part only, as it is with podcasts or voice mails. Here the voice is the only element the opponent can analyze. This means, the focus lies on the wording, the tone of ones voice and the "verbal behavior" (Skinner, 1957). By verbal behavior Skinner understands the
way people are communicating. This includes the rhetorical part but also the way we react spontaneously to our opponents’ words in a conversation, like pauses, astonishment and other characteristics, which can be interpreted over a telephone conversation. As humans are rather visual creatures, we instantly start to picture our opponent even if we do not know him/her. We start to imagine a person that fits to the voice we hear, according to our experiences. Therefore telephone conversations or other audio bases communications often delude our perception. Knowing this, every person should be aware of how he/she is perceived in audio based conversation.

Understanding the characteristics of the six types of oral communication that have been explained in the last chapter the author will now present the most important and most regular used written communication types.

### 3.5.2 Written

When it comes to written internal communication many companies have developed their own structures. The most regular used written communication today includes emails, internal post and chats. Whereat different kind of information can be forwarded through these systems. Letters and reports are very often forwarded through the internal post, as they are rather important and should be given in hard copy and rather formal communication tools as we have heard it in the chapter before. On the other side, we have email conversations that take over the biggest part of written communication. It is usually used as a fast way to send and respond to various issues and can in general be seen as THE informal tool most often used in today’s businesses. A very similar system is the chat, which is nevertheless an even more informal way of communicating. In most companies chats are mainly used to communicate with colleagues or other members on the same hierarchical level. Therefore emails are the most widely used form of written communication for complex issues. Also the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) politic of many companies have been the reason for a rising email conversation, to save paper and the printer ink as long as it is possible.
As it was partially mentioned in the part of the oral communication, written communication is very much dependent on the author's ability to set up a clear and strong message by using different techniques. As the only thing the receiver will find in the message are words, it is crucially important to choose the right wording and the right writing style. As there is only the receiver who will interpret the meaning of the message for him/herself it is the author's task to create a message that can be understood by everybody in the same way, anticipating possible misunderstandings. As it will be explained in detail in the chapter of sensemaking, this is strongly connected to the task of understanding others' frames of references in order to be able to set up the best and most effective tailored message. If the author is aware of how the audience is going to interpret his/her text or notice, he/she will be able to understand parts of their minds giving him the possibility to adjust the message to their understandings.

When we look at the characteristics of a notice, which is a formal tool, we can say that this kind of written communication is usually used when many people have to be given the same information. Therefore it is one of the mass communication tools and demands a careful creation, as it will be seen by many different people. It has to be gender neutral, age neutral and cultural neutral, which seems to be a matter of course and still managers are faced with new situation of accusations. As it is with the frames of references, one cannot always anticipate what other people interpret or understand from a message especially coming from different cultures.

Typically, a notice is very easy to understand and easy to read to prevent any kind of misunderstandings. Very often it consist out of a description of the addressees, the reason, the details of the issue/event and a contact person for further questions. It is a short and simple tool to give hard facts about an upcoming issue/event to a large amount of people.

A report as another example of written communication is a tool to share and forward knowledge about a specific situation of organizations, often prepared by all departments to give the management and the leader an overview of different developments and trends. A report requires a lot of careful research, collection and analysis of the concerned data, in order to summarize the most important
findings. Usually it is structured into a well-organized presentation of the findings, being followed by a conclusion, recommendations and further suggestions. The most important characteristic of a report is the way of putting everything in a nutshell to make the arguments short and simple. As the recommendations and suggestions part is really important, the author who should be an expert in what he/she is reporting has the responsibility to use his writing skills to stress the main points that are important for the company. This should also be done through prioritizing those points by giving clear and strong arguments for their importance. All these facts, especially the issue that it represents important data of the organization makes a report to a very formal tool.

As one can see and most people will have experienced, it is usually more difficult to set up a written message as it restricts people to use their verbal skills to deliver a message. To go further, as we have heard in the part of oral communication, face-to-face meetings additionally offer the possibility to use non-verbal communication to transfer meaning to another person. When it comes to the communication of leaders it is not only important to the communication itself but also the personal characteristics that shape the overall communication they are “performing”. The next chapter will present a few examples of great leadership coming from different areas.

3.6 BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership is far too complex (Patricia Werhane’s “Complexity Leadership Theory”, 2011), as to give a clear universal definition for it but instead the author will provide some directions of what leadership should look like. Leadership can be seen as the process of influencing people to achieve a common goal, sharing a vision with the followers (Weick, 1995; Bryman, 1997). As this thesis is only dealing with the organizational perspective it is about the continuous process of using the organizational human resources to accomplish company targets. For that reason leaders have to be aware of the big picture at all times. Organizational leadership needs three ingredients for existing. A leader, a followers and a situation, that asks for a leadership. Very important to mention
here is that leadership needs followers to allow their leaders to lead them. Next to
that, emotional and social intelligence (Elsass and Graves, 1997) are also two
important skills a leader should have in the way he/she is dealing with his/her
followers. It is crucial for leaders to be able to “handle” their followers, as
Goleman (1995) explained, in order to get back the support from them. Followers
will recognize whether you pretend to be a leader or if you are a real one.
Therefore, as also Philippe Daudi mentioned, during his presentations, leadership
is about how to BE rather than how to DO (Daudi, 2012). As we are talking about
leadership and leaders it is important to highlight at that point the difference
between managers and leaders as people often mix them up.

It is crucial to understand that managers are not automatically leaders. To
simplify it, one can say managers can be appointed but in order to be a leader
you need to have special competencies and skills. Therefore we can say,
“Managers can be recruited and leaders cannot” or as Bennis and Nanus put it in
their book (2004, p. 42), “Managers are people who do things right and leaders
are people who do the right things”. Referring to Shamir and Eilam (2005),
leaders who are appointed to be leaders without showing the before mentioned
crucial competencies and skills, are managers who are put in the wrong position
and usually feel unhappy. Observing various groups, or human formations, one
will recognize that leaders will emerge in every group. What researchers found, in
the theory of social identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Turner, 1982), is that
every member of a group has a special “position” and meaning for the group that
is based on his/her competencies, gender, age, nationality, skills and
personality, which is also true for leaders.

The process of managers to become a leader is very interesting. First they have
only subordinates who are doing their jobs. Here is also the crucial difference.
When managers are doing their job successfully, establishing a comfortable
environment for his/her employees, the first step in becoming a leader is done.
The more important step however is the process of developing employees into
followers. This can only take place when the manager is a person the employees
believe in. When employees are satisfied with their manager giving them
something to believe in and acting as a role model it lies in the employees’ decision
to accept him/her as a leader. As soon as the manager has become a leader, his

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followers are not only doing a job but also performing in the interest of themselves and in the interest of their superior leader. As we have learned throughout our education, leadership only needs three ingredients, a leader, a follower and a situation that calls for leadership, that’s why each ingredient is equally important. Therefore there cannot be a leader without followers and vice versa.

Still another important factor is to understand that managers who have become a leader can easily lose this privilege, given by their subordinates. Different situations, different organizations, different departments, and different environments being shaped through many elements are asking for different leaders. Meaning, a leader of a company X cannot automatically be a leader in company Z as people in the other organizations might seek for a different leadership style. As the leadership style is a very important characteristic of a leader the following chapter is going to give an overview on the most important leadership styles.

3.7 AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

Being confronted with current challenges, and the great amount of different leadership approaches people easily tend to lose the perspective of which approach could be the best for themselves. The great article, “A life-story approach to authentic leadership development” by Shamir and Eilam (2005) presents the most important elements of authentic leadership in a perfectly summarizing way.

Right at the beginning it is crucial to understand the basic terms of authentic leadership. Therefore the author will give a short description of how the authors define the terms of an authentic leader, an authentic leadership and authentic followership in order to create a common understanding of Shamir’s and Eilam’s perspective.
**Authentic leaders** are leaders who have a great self-awareness, do not overestimate themselves, work to their deep values and beliefs without seeking for rewards, status or honor willing to fulfill a mission (e.g. Mandela). They are internally committed to their job and always try to reflect on their performance. As it is stated in the article it is very important to create authentic leader development as it positively affects all the followers (Avolio et al., 2004). These leaders try to be as transparent as possible in order to give people the possibility to have deep insight about them and offering them help as a role model and engaging them with their convictions in order to obtain a “real” authentic followership. Shamir and Eilam mention regarding the difference of Leaders and Managers (non-leaders) that leaders have an internal force for performing whereat managers feel an external force which is a very interesting way illustrating what has been said in the last chapter. Eudaimonically, meaning “being true to one’s true self, is the word Shamir and Eilam are referring to in the article. With reference to the article the authors describe the **authentic followership** as a state where followers share beliefs and values with their leader, support their leader’s ideas, see consistency as well as trusting their leaders due to experience, stories, own judgments.

Concluding, **authentic leaders** ask themselves “Who am I?”, “Is it justified that I am in that position?”, “Do I stick to my values and beliefs?” and **authentic followers** are asking themselves, “Why are we following?”, “What are we here for?”, “How can I contribute to the leadership as a follower?”. Shamir and Eilam share the opinion that authentic leadership, when “applied correctly” and by the “right persons” is the most efficient and effective way of leading followers. They base this assumption on the fact that “real” authentic leaders are personally engaged of their task, having a great Person-Role Merger, and therefore are willing to put more effort into it as if they would “have to” do it. Coming back to the statement of the authors regarding authentic leadership the question one can ask is, what do they authors mean by the “applied correctly” and “right persons”? The answer to that was partly elaborated throughout the last pages where we found that it is crucial that authentic leaders have to be “real” authentic leaders, as the followers will sooner or later recognize, if he/she is only pretending to be authentic. This will also be visible during the process of
establishing followership. What we learned from this article is that authentic or transparent leadership can only exist, if both leaders and followers are authentic and sharing the same values, motives and beliefs about their tasks. Additionally, “real” authentic leaders should recognize that being authentic also offers tremendous opportunities for leaders, as trusting followers are their strongest and most important resource.

Concluding one can say that, if there is a real authentic leadership everybody can see and feel it, and people interested in that kind of leadership will support it with all their strength. Understanding this existing opportunity, leaders should decide wisely before performing a specific leadership style.

3.8 SENSEMAKING

Having established a common knowledge base of communication and leadership the next chapter will deal with the interesting topic of sensemaking. It will not only explain and give a definition of what sensemaking is, but also analyze the linkage to leadership and the importance of leaders to use it as an effective tool for communication.

3.8.1 DEFINITION

„Sensemaking is the process by which people give meaning to experience“

Karl Weick (1995, p.6)

One could say it is about making the experienced understandable by recognizing a „sense“. Karl Weick (1995) used this approach for his organizational studies where he explained that it is about the leaders ability to create an environment that gives sense to people. For that, leaders have to develop a behavior or message that can be encoded by his/her employees in the sense, the leader
wants to, which is highly linked to the sensegiving and sensemaking process (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Weick, 1995). When this is done effectively and constantly, leaders have the possibility to shape and create the organizational culture acting furthermore as a role model for their followers.

3.8.2 SENSEMAKING IN THEORY

As the author was talking about the different perspectives of various people at the beginning of the previous chapter he will now deal with the topic communication and leadership from the angle of sensemaking. As it goes without saying that people often have completely differentiate perspectives to different topics it is import for leaders to understand how to handle such a situation. Therefore, it is a leader’s task to create some kind of a common perspective to which different experts refer to as frame of reference (Weick, 1995). This common perspective by which an organization tries to “frame” the overall viewpoints of employees is referred to as “framing”. Each individual’s perspective can therefore also be seen as a unique frame, which is influenced by different “sources” or “references”. This “Frames of Reference” can be seen as the lens we put on situations. It is the personal perspective by which we analyse the reality. Weick states that reality is “a metaphor” of people’s distinct understanding of what is happening around them (Weick, 2001, p. 188). As every person has his/her own ideas, opinion, experiences and thinking, the frame of reference is a very personal angle by which we are examining our environment. Shaped through people’s lives, frames of references can be adopted if one considers it as more appropriate. This is the process of reframing. As stated above, frames are developed throughout the life; therefore children have very “open-minded” frames of references. For children everything seems to be possible and they do not know restrictions. They are thinking outside the boundaries and have no fear of failing.

One could also refer to frame as the context from which a cue is extracted. It is the stream of experiences, which helps people to notice cues (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988). Weick (1995, p.26) states in his book “Frames help to locate, perceive and identify occurrences in our lives”. Frames do exist in many different forms and shape people’s lives. They exist in the form of ideologies (shared
values, beliefs and norms of a collective), local assumptions (third order control like rules and regulations), paradigms (structures, similarities), collective structures (e.g. behaviour in a specific industry), traditions (actions, beliefs transmitted through generations) and stories (myths, folklore) (Weick, 1995). One example for a myth is the story of the horseman (Lundgren, 2013). During those days, where the story has its origin, it is said that the observers had never seen a horse before. Subsequently they perceived the horse and the person riding the horse as one creature. They could not separate the man from the horse; they only recognized the horseman as a single unit. What this example shows, is that people’s frames of references at this time did not allow them to understand what they were seeing. Therefore to understand and acknowledge our environment and new situations we are facing (interruptions), we sometimes have to reframe or adopt our previous frames, as they would otherwise start to limit our perception. Coming to the third element that closes the circle of sensemaking through cues and frames, the importance of the relation between those elements has to be discussed.

For leader this knowledge and the ability to use it in their daily leading activities, can be seen as the “golden key” for their success. It is an extremely powerful tool to create a productive and successful business environment.

When looking into the future of communication there are some interesting things to be mentioned. From the perspective of a leader, especially looking into the future it is not only critical to understand the basic ideas of communication and the different tools and techniques to be used but much rather to learn to handle communication on a day-to-day basis. In order to be a good leader one has to be observing and analyzing his/her environment for possible barriers, which could hinder an effective and efficient communication process. Especially in organizations were time is a very scarce source, leaders have to focus on a very time efficient but at the same time effective communication flow. On the other side, being observant and sensitive to possible trends not only externally but also internally, leaders can recognize possible competitive advantages or trends at an early phase, to keep up current trends or technological developments. Therefore it is beneficial for a leader, to recognize these changes in time and use them for the organization’s advantage. As we saw over recent time, technology developed
more and more technical advices, which supported communication. Not knowing what the future will bring in respect to the technical field, many leaders replace more and more face-to-face meetings, due to time and cost efficiency, with different technical channels. But is this happening for the cost of communication quality? Will this development continue or will leaders recognize the possibly lost value of face-to-face communication?

Understanding communication as the biggest tool of a leader for direct interaction with his followers one already sees that it can be referred to as a communicative activity. Having additionally learned about the necessity of both parties, the leader and the followers, to play an active role in the leadership process it is easy to see that it is not a one way communication. Looking back on the example of the “double interaction” by Hollander and Willis (1967, p.16), it is obvious that leadership has to be understood as a multiple-communication activity where sensemaking is important. Communication enables a leader to reach out for their followers and communicate his/her vision and mission to the them. Subsequently, the process of a communicative interaction usually starts at the leader’s side and is followed by “feedback” of the audience, after they understood the message. This feedback, the leader can use to understand, and read the audience’s needs. To communicate a message or meaning correctly or through the right channel, a leader has the choice of using different communication tools. This “box of tools” usually comprises symbols, metaphors, language, and stories the leader can offer to support and underline what he/she wants to communicate. Furthermore the leader should carefully prepare the “delivery” by using tools out of his/her rhetorical repertoire. Rhetoric is a very powerful tool if it is used wisely, to deliver a message in the most appropriate and strongest way to generate a greater impact on the audience. This can be done through many techniques like using a word or phrase repeatedly to stress its importance, like Martin Luther King Junior did in his speech “I have a dream”. One could build the structure of the overall speech or message according to the theory of classical rhetoric. Good rhetoric is furthermore dependent on the body language, the voice, gestures and also the appearance of the speaker. As Aristotle insisted it is “like dialectic, a verbal, intellectual tool; through it has artistic techniques and a method special to itself” (Aristotle). The great characteristic about rhetoric is that it can be learned!
Concluding it is crucial to see the importance and the necessity of being capable to understand I in order to start an effective and well structured internal communication system.
Within this chapter all empirically extracted data coming from the interviews is going to be presented and analyzed. As it was described in the methodology chapter the interviews consisted of a quantitative and a qualitative part, which also gives me the reason to split also the analysis part into these two parts. First the quantitative parts as it deals with very general information will be presented, including both companies. After this, the more interesting part of the qualitative questions will be analyzed first for every single interview-partner, then summarizing for each organization and finally as a total of all interviews in order to find similarities and differences according to the theory presented in the theory chapters of this thesis.

4.1 QUANTITATIVE PART

As they were mentioned before, the questions of the quantitative part are not going to be repeated in detail but the core findings are presented to find similarities that could have some important meaning for the results which were found in the qualitative part.

In average the interview-partners were, 32,5 years old, with the youngest being 28 and the oldest 42 years old. In my opinion this is a very good width as it represents rather young people. This is highly linked to the fact that the majority of the interviews have been concluded at the University of Sports Sciences, where many young people are working which was also confirmed by all interview partners of this institution.

When it comes to the position they were working in, I found many different hierarchical levels with different responsibilities. They range from sales manager to project manager, group leader, project responsible, department head to PhD student, which represent quite a variety of different hierarchical levels sharing
their perspectives and experiences with me. In general it was clearly visible that the responsibilities were somehow overlapping at the university of sports sciences whereas the tasks at Mercedes Wiesenthal were clearly defined for each employee.

For me a very important question was about the duration they have been working in this organization so far as this could be an indicator for people who might better understand the internal organizational environment and climate due to their experiences over years. As an average all interviewees have been employed at the respective companies for almost four and a half years. What is important here to mention is also the split of the two different companies as the difference is tremendous. As I found out the university employment life is fast moving which we could see in an organizational average of two and a half years. In comparison to Mercedes Wiesenthal we can see an organizational average of eight and a half years, which shows a high loyalty for this employees. That is also what they told me, they share the perspective that Mercedes has a very low fluctuation compared to other companies they have been working in.

In order to get a general understanding of the interviewees career, although they are rather young, I asked them about the number of companies they have been working in for longer than six months (in order to eliminate internships and other “student-jobs”). In average they were employed in almost three (2,8) companies for a longer period. For this questions there were no major differences between both organizations.

When it comes to the communication behavior questions regarding the amount of communication used in daily profession one could again find major differences between the two firms. In the chart below (Figure 3) you can see the findings to this question. Within this chart the green parts representing Mercedes Wiesenthal and the red parts representing the University of Sports Sciences. What is important to know is that the interviewees could choose between three different answers. They could choose whether they do communicate one to three times (two in the chart), four to eight times (five in the chart) or definitely more then nine times (nine in the chart) per day. What we can clearly see here is that
Mercedes Wiesenthal seems to have much more need for communication on the first sight but this is going to be discussed in the qualitative part later on.

Figure 5, Daily Communication

The next communication related question was asking which communicating channel they are using internally. The interview partners could choose between telephone, email, personal, chat, internal post and intranet whereat the last three were not present in the two interviewed organizations therefore they are not be found in the chart. What we can see in the chart below (Figure 4) is that the personal or face-to-face communication is the most regular used one and as far as I could find out during my interviews, also the most important one for all interviewees as it eliminates a lot of misunderstandings and is furthermore the fastest communication so far the communicating partner is available and in physical near distance.
The last question of the quantitative part yielded to get a first understanding of the relation and contact between the employees and their supervisors. Therefore, the question was “How often do you meet your supervisor for a personal conversation? (Weekly)”. What I found out is that the average number of personal meetings with the direct supervisor is about three times. Nevertheless there were two extremes, having Mrs. Wessner meeting her supervisor only once every two weeks and Anonymous sitting next to his/her supervisor. In these two extremes one could find different advantages as well as disadvantages that are influencing the daily professional life.

Having analyzed the quantitative part it is now time to go more into detail and personal experiences of the interviewees having the so far collected information as a background for possible company specific findings. Therefore I will now switch to the qualitative analysis of the interview, which will hopefully give us a great deep going insight into the interviewees’ experiences and organizational situations.
4.2 QUALITATIVE PART

As mentioned before this analysis will firstly be divided into the two organizations to find possible company specific information and secondly dealing with the overall findings, which can then hopefully be clearly linked, to some theoretical approaches or present new trends of internal communication. One interesting thing that I would like to mention at this point is that all interviews at the University of Sports Sciences have been done on a first-name base as it was their personal wish to do so.

4.2.1 MERCEDES WIESENTHAL

Mr. Heger,

During my interview with Mr. Heger, I could find a lot of interesting approaches and information. Right at the beginning he explained to me that in his understanding internal communication is an extremely important element for a productive communication and a crucial factor for success. What he mentioned is that a company cannot communicate externally as long as it is not able to communicate internally effectively. In his opinion it is a crucial success factor which is dependent on the willingness of every organizational member to communicate. When I asked him about the general communication structure of the organization he explained me that is a very informal and cooperative organization with a very flat hierarchy in general. As he is the sales manager at Mercedes Wiesenthal he is also responsible for a group of sales men. Being a leader for those employees he told me that he is seeing them as colleagues with whom he is creating success for the company. What is really important from what he told me is that the internal communication has to be really fast. As it is a very spontaneous business where customers are standing in front of the sales men, there is not a lot of time to think and react to different situations. Communication has to be often done within minutes, as the customer will leave again otherwise. This is central reason why the climate and the environment have to be a positive and open one. Otherwise the effectiveness would shrink. The automobile-selling industry, especially B to C (Business to Customer) is a
fast moving working field and it would have disastrous effects when the internal climate is not working well. Therefore, it is very important for him as the leader to observe and notice internal problems and disputes in order to abolish them before they affect the business.

As mentioned before decisions often have to be made and approved within some minutes which is also the reason why the most relevant people for the sales are sitting together in the same building which enables them to directly go their by feet for a face-to-face meeting. As this communication channel is the most important one for these operations, Email has only be implemented at Mercedes Wiesenthal in 2002 and needed a long time until everyone regularly used it. Although communication was already well developed they decided some years ago to implement some kind of project groups in order to make the communication even faster. This was achieved through a very clear division of responsibilities in order to eliminate overlapping which is very inefficient. As he explained me, the internal communication between colleagues is a continuous process as all sales men are constantly sharing their experiences with each other in order to learn from failures and problems they experienced with customers. This open communication environment is a crucial success factor and it is also noticeable for me that there is a constant knowledge exchange going on.

When I asked him about barriers that could hinder internal communication he told me that is very important, though sometimes very difficult, for leaders like him, to not only do his own job but also step back from time to time to see the big picture and recognize possible problems. A second very important element is time. As time is very scarce in his position communication is sometimes left behind. Knowing that why he is setting up weekly meetings where he is also asking his employees if they observed or experienced some problems, which they could eliminate or improve. He shares the opinion that his sales men are the most important resource for him and that they often see problems from a much better angle than him. In my opinion this is a great fact that he is not only recognizing his employees as crucially important but also including them in decision-making processes for improvements. Another industry specific problem is the high competitiveness as every sales man wants to sell cars and sometimes it happens that one catches a customer but another one is selling him/her a car.
Here problems are preprogramed and this is the point where he as the leader has to intervene. Related to this he told me what the most important responsibilities of leaders in his opinion are. The most important words he mentioned were “Role model”, “Support/Motivation”, “Practicality”, “Feedback”, “Goal setting”, “ability to accept criticism” as well as “Respect”. Especially in regard to respect he mentioned it is important for him to create a respectful environment without having his employees being afraid of questioning anything. Still he would definitely wish for more employees asking for feedback so that he can see their interest in it. For him the ultimate successful communication is when you have employees not only questioning things but already bringing solutions with them in order to change things.

When we were talking about sensemaking, he told me that this would be always a present for him as the sales business is a very sensible business where sales men are observing every gesture, word and tone of the customers whether they show interest in a car or not. Therefore he seems to be very receptive towards these elements and uses it in his daily business. As a specific example he mentioned that he is often going through some conversations with his employees in advance in order to anticipate possible reactions.

At the end of the interview he highlighted once more that internal communication internally is very important especially with colleagues, no matter if it is business related or private. As those people have to sell products to customers they have to be happy with their jobs otherwise the wont sell anything.

As the very last question I asked all interviewees to tell me the most essential elements of an effective internal communication. What Mr. Heger listed was mutual respect between all parties, precise and clear eliminating possible misunderstandings and a well defined communication culture with a common and fair base.

Anonymous,

As a definition he understands communication as “the process of transmit information to others via different communication channels”. When he was
telling me about the general structure of the internal communication he mentioned almost the same as Mr. Heger. The internal communication is very fast moving, direct as face-to-face, spontaneously and based upon the continuous information and experience exchange of colleagues. Therefore he repeats that communication between colleagues is essential for his business and is for about 80 per cent business related. In the interview for it seemed that he is really satisfied about his job observing his behavior his mimic and his gestures. What we could also see in the quantitative part is that personal communication is the core of his operations. He mentioned that although intranet does exist it is almost only used for information, as it is also a database of all internal information. Nevertheless there are some partners like the one in the spare part office who do not always have time for short personal discussions therefore this is one situation where he is using email. For him it is very important to adapt the communication channel to the communication partner, knowing who is to be reached via which channel the best. Especially when choosing the right way for communicating with one's supervisor it is crucial to decide for the right one. What he suggests here, as it is done that way at Mercedes Wiesenthal, is that it is the supervisor’s responsibility to define it. The effective communication is thanks to the physical situation at Mercedes Wiesenthal very fast and easy. Still the greatest difficulty is to get quick responses from the headquarter. This is one of the reasons why Mercedes Wiesenthal as a independent warehouse is highly autonomous in its decisions as it would not work in another way. As an advantage for such an employee-supervisor relation he thinks that sympathy pays an important role for a personal climate.

When we were discussing about different barriers that could have negative influences on the business operations he illustrated the example of a too flat hierarchy where leaders have problems of delegating tasks to others. This is a very common characteristic of leaders as they often think they can do things better than their employees which results in a total overload for them. Leaders have to learn to trust in their employees and to delegate task to their high potentials. As the importance of a positive relationship between the employee and the leader was mentioned in the previous paragraph it is also worth mentioning that an antipathy can on the other side hinder any internal processes. What I
could learn from this interview is that respect plays a critical element in the relationship between leaders and followers.

What my interview-partner listed as the most important responsibilities he wishes for from a leader is the motivation of employees, the leading activity itself by giving a common direction of where to go. Furthermore a leader has to set clear goals which are also achievable by the employees. All in all a leader has to be available for his/her employees and to act as a role model. A final element, which is extremely important for him, is that leaders have to create a fearless environment where nobody is afraid of asking stupid question as it hinders a learning environment that is crucial for the positive development of an organization.

As we already saw it with the example of Mr. Heger, the last question dealt with the key elements he found as most critical for an effective internal communication. The words he mentioned here were “the speed of communication”, "the preciseness”, and “the mutual communicative intercourse” which he linked to the saying “As you shout it into the forest, so it echoes back!”.

**Summary of Mercedes Wiesenthal,**

What we could see in both interviews is that both interviewees have very similar perspectives and arguments when talking about the same topics. It seems that the organizational culture is quite developed, so that they are sharing a common understanding of how the internal operations are working and how it is communicated. When one looks at the essential elements of a productive internal communication one will see that they are identically for both interviewees. All in all when comparing the answers to the given questions I did not find anything that was inconsistent. From the interviews I have the feeling that at Mercedes Wiesenthal both, the employees as well as the leader are aware of all communication processes and also satisfied with them. It seems that all concerned parties are content with the rather flat and open working climate, which enables a rather friendly atmosphere.

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From what I have heard I was impressed in how far the leader, Mr. Heger, was aware of different topics and theories, and as far as I understood having them in his back mind all the time.

What was really great to see is that both interview partners did share the same understandings of the responsibilities of a leading person, which could be again linked to a very transparent and understanding organization. For me this is maybe the most important element, as it is in my opinion the ultimate goal of an organization to create an environment where leaders and followers share the same understandings of each other’s responsibilities.

What are great advantages for Mercedes Wiesenthal in regard to communication itself are the need and the possibility of face-to-face communication. As face-to-face communication opens up all different techniques of communicating information, it represents a big advantage compared to other organizations where face-to-face communication in the upper levels is hardly performed, due to time or cost issues. What we could learn from this is that they are using the most basic way of communication instead of implementing new techniques over and over again, which we could already see with the example of the Email implementation that took extremely long. As this sales oriented companies are always in direct contact with the customers, there is no need for futuristically technological communication tools.

Concluding, I would say that this organization seems to have a very well structured and transparent communication system which is highly effective and furthermore supported by a very open and friendly relationship between leaders and followers.

4.2.2 UNIVERSITY OF SPORTS SCIENCES

Mrs. Wessner,

When I asked Mrs. Wessner to present me her understanding of communicating she split communication into two fields the business oriented communication
and the social oriented communication. As a general definition of communication she said, “It is the process of communicating content to other persons”.

As the leader of most of the other interview partners in this chapter she represented a special role in my empirical study as she is standing on the other side of the leader follower relationship. She explained the importance of communication through various elements. First of all the most basic and importance number one is simply the process of transmitting information to others like task. Still these tasks have to follow a very practical and professional style so that things are clearly communicated without putting too much emotions into it. In her perspective it should be a rather neutral process in order to communicate business task that have to be done.

What was quite obviously is that she was very task-oriented which could also be filtered through all off her answers. Only at a very late stage she also mentioned the danger of having misunderstandings through different perspectives and wordings, which is an essential reason for her to communicate most task personally. For my understanding Mrs. Wessner had quite problems to put task in the right form without being too technical and without putting too much emotions into it. This might also be a reason why she always tries to clarify upcoming things in person, not using Emails as for her the non-verbal communication is very important.

Generally, she told me, the internal structure within her department and to her employees is very informal having breakfast together and cooking lunch together, which represents a high personal intercourse during the day and a regular opportunity to discuss upcoming issues and problems. Still the overall organizational structure of the University of Vienna is very hierarchical following the old school principles of high power distances. As she told me there is hardly any contact to her supervisor and absolutely no way of being part of any decision-making or developing processes. Still within her department a respectful environment on a first name basis replaces hierarchy. When it comes to the project communication itself she admits that the ideas are coming from her giving her employees the tasks. For me it seemed that there is almost no employee including process within this decision making process. As she is more
specialized in a different field than her employees she often decides on her own how things are going to be executed and does not ask for other's ideas. As she told me “I give them (employees) the task and everybody knows more or less what to do”. What this comment shows me is completely different from the leaders I know so far. In her wording she seems to be rather unsecure confessing that they might not be completely sure about what and how to do but much rather have a ruff idea of what is going to happen.

Analyzing the relationship she has to her own supervisor one can see many unprofessional behaviors. From what she told me, she hardly sees her supervisor nor gets any kind of feedback. On the one hand side she says that could present a high level of trust in what she is during or a high level of disinterest for her work. From the way she was telling it to me I had the feeling she thinks the second is truth, which shows a poor performance by her supervisor. Additionally she mentioned that the legally binding yearly appraisal interviews do not exist. For her everything seems to be very distant and not transparent when we talk about the levels above her. It almost seems that she has no direct supervisor as the contact hardly exists which was also confirmed by all other interviewees.

According to new techniques that have been implemented within the last years, she mentioned that there was no change except the implementation of the intranet, which is obviously used in the same way as with Mercedes Wiesenthal only as a database where different papers and articles can be downloaded.

As the atmosphere is rather friendly for her typical barriers of an effective communication could exist if employees feel some kind of antipathy for each other. In her opinion this is not true for her team as they are not only colleagues but also friends, which highly contributes to good results in business. Still a big problem related to this element is the fact that the University environment is a very fluctuating field of business where people are usually only employed for short times. Therefore it is sometimes difficult to have new people trying to get into the existing community. In order to overcome such a situation she suggests it is important that all people especially the new ones have to be willing to communicate which is also true for any other communicative situation. Also here it seemed to me that she is not a very strong character as a leader who has to
power to change things, which might result from the very flat hierarchy. As the example of new employees coming in she told me that the employees often make it hard for new ones to get in. Still she told me that she sometimes if things did not sort out on their own asks their employees to be a little bit more including towards the newbies.

For my personal understanding it would be THE responsibility of a leader and group manager as she is to sort this problems out right at the beginning, making a welcome round where she is directly introducing the new employee with the exact working responsibilities of him/her in order to eliminate possible misunderstanding, and carefully observing the situation as long as problems occur in order to intervene.

What Mrs. Wessner personally would wish for is that she could better understand what her employees needs are when it comes to support and further details for given tasks. What she also mentioned is that official meetings where problems should be discussed and further steps should be developed the group often start very private conversations loosing the focus and occasion of the meeting. Again here I see a leadership weakness of her, as she seemed to be overstrained to handle her team. Here for me is the question how people without leadership skills can be appointed into a leading position. For me as an external observer this is also resulting from the disinterest of the management of the University of Vienna as it seems that only experts in specific fields are appointed without testing or analyzing their social and leading skills.

What I have heard by almost every interview partner of this organization is that the science is a very competitive environment which sometimes leads to the situation that employees try to do things on their own without asking for help or clarification of task as they are single players to a high extend. Therefore inefficiency occurs when people do have professional overlapping which is the reason why it is especially important to clarify clear responsibilities of each employee in such companies.

When it comes to the requirements and responsibilities between leaders and followers, it was easy to notice that transparency in respect to all decisions and

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goals as well as information available are a crucial topic for her. She perfectly mentioned the importance to share strategies with all employees to help them orient themselves and increase their motivation towards a specific goal. As a leader one has to observe the internal climate to recognize conflicts and tensions, which could badly affect the business. Through the before mentioned transparency she would hope for a common understanding towards different issues. This common culture can furthermore eliminate various misunderstandings that are not only affecting the personal relationships but also the business operations. Still when asking her whether she already tried to discuss these topics with her employees she denied it.

Coming to the last question she decided to go for transparency, face-to-face and regular as the most important elements of an effective communication.

What I would like to mention, as a final remark, as it was partially mentioned before, she seemed to be a very unsecure and cautious leader, which is in my perspective not very effective. For me leader have to be strong personalities even if they create a very informal and friendly business climate they have to be the driving force for any decision looking for the best of the organization. As an external observer who spent only some hours within the company I do not want to generalize things but it seems that she is not “strong” enough to handle her employees. Maybe it would be helpful for her to increase the power distance and the hierarchy to a certain amount in order to gain respect through power.

Mrs. Hofmann,

When we were discussing the topic of communication, Mrs. Hofmann immediately split it into the verbal and the non-verbal part as we could see it in various theories at the beginning of this thesis. Especially within the organization she attributes a great value to the non-verbal communication, as it is a sensible part when talking to others. Communication is hardly dependent on the receptiveness of each party and should when it come to business oriented communication it should follow a very precise and short layout, trying to eliminate and at the same time anticipate possible misunderstandings. Therefore
messages have to be carefully thought through before sending them out to the other person/s.

In general Mrs. Hofmann illustrated the same internal structure as Wessner did, though she is not only directly employed as Mrs. Wessner’s employee but also at Mr. Bachl who is the direct supervisor of Mrs. Wessner. This means that Mrs. Hofmann is working for two different supervisors at the same time. Still she is also often communicating with Mrs. Wessner even when it is actually an issue regarding Mr. Bachl. This is due to the fact that Mr. Bachl is such a busy person and working in many different areas that he has hardly time to care for his employees. This is a rather sad situation as he should be available for them at any time. Regarding her specific responsibilities she immediately mentioned one thing that would be very important for her, but not existing in her opinion. It is about the clear limitations of each employee’s responsibilities. For her this is a problem coming from bad internal communication especially from the leaders. Therefore the employees tried to organize themselves in order to not work inefficiently and on the same things simultaneously. Although it seems to work out quite good here one can see a clear lack of leading force that decides about these issues. It should not only lie in the employees hands to define their own working responsibilities but much rather the one of the leader.

Some time ago when the big project they are currently working on started some new employees were hired in order to support the team. Hofmann shares the opinion that this was quite a new situation for Wessner who suddenly had more employees to whom she should have delegated different tasks which was a big problem for her as she has some difficulties to delegate tasks which could be interpreted as a distrust of the expertise of her employees.

In Hofmann’s perspective, Wessner has some problems with her leading positions not knowing who exactly she should use this position. For me this is a very interesting fact as it was the same feeling I got from my interview with her. What Wessner already confessed in her interview is also a topic of Mrs. Hofmann who told me that her supervisor (Wessner) as she has a very specific education background (molecular biology) often presumes knowledge and understandings which in reality are not existing for her employees coming from the
sport/athletes oriented field. In the end this results in demotivation and anger as they can not fulfill their tasks without asking for more details and other information which is not very easy for people working in this competitive business.

Another important element, Hofmann wanted to tell me is the fact that feedback is simply not existing. Although they had implemented a so-called “Journal Club” in the year 2012, which was also handled as an occasion for feedback, they did not continue with it this year. In her opinion it was a very important and helpful meeting where all employees where updating each other about new achievements and steps in order to create a high level of transparency and in order to constantly observe the limitations of each ones responsibilities. Although this was also very important for all other interviewees nobody did address this topic so far. It seems to be the same situation for all that nobody wants to address topics of change as it could be seen as a negative feedback and therefore nobody is “risking” anything. Unfortunately I have to say this seems to be a very bad working internal communication when it comes to cross-hierarchical topics. As mentioned before Hofmann often uses the communication flow passing by Mrs. Wessner even if the actual task comes from Mr. Bachl. As she mentioned it on her own, she uses this way in order to have some kind of hierarchical puffer if the reactions are of negative kind. What I have learned from all participating members is that their supervisors are not receptive towards new ideas, criticism and indifferences having therefore many unsaid issues being part of their daily professional lives.

In her way, Wessner is a very impulsive and stubborn person who wants to do everything in the way she thinks is the best without giving others a possibility to contribute as she is experiencing it with her own supervisor. Secondly due to stress Wessner is often very direct and subconsciously harsh in her communication without thinking about how it could be received by others. According to the interview with Hofmann this is especially present when she is writing emails, which might be already an indicator for stress. Still it is something Mrs. Wessner seems to be aware off as she touched this topic when she said that she tries to talk everything in person as the non-verbal communication is very important for her. In Hofmann’s professional live it did
happen many times that colleagues where asking each other about how a specific email of information should be understood either due to content-related or emotional-related misunderstandings.

One example for such an situation was taking place after Hofmann handed in a paper with Wessner being not satisfied with the result saying “I will do it myself”. Mrs. Hofmann was not really sure how she should understand this reaction and could not really handle the situation. Was it an aggressive way of telling her that Mrs. Hofmann seems to be unable to fulfill the task or was it a neutral way of telling her “No problem, I can finish it myself”. For Mrs. Hofmann the communication here was very ambiguous. As it was also mentioned in the previous interview Hofmann mentioned that due to the competitive environment in the science and research sector she often tried to solve problems and fulfill task although she was not hundred per cent sure whether she exactly understood the task. This shows us once more that it is crucially important that communication has to be clear and precise in order to keep a high and productive environment. She also shares the opinion that private topics should also be part of colleague conversations as it establishes a very positive and trusting environment that ultimately boosts a positive working atmosphere. With that she also means a very open environment where nobody is excluded and feedback is given and received on a mutual basis without being afraid of criticism.

When she told me an example of good communication all these elements were present. It was the example of her working in a family owned gastronomy. The communication was open, friendly, supporting but also leaving space for criticism and feedback at all times. From her examples I could filter that it is important to try to understand one’s opponent perspective and situation in order to establish the best working communication system.

Last but not least I asked again the last question of the core elements of effective communication. She summed it up as feedback (being receptive for criticism), transparency (fair), and regular so that things are constantly discussed.
Mr. Oesen,

In comparison to Mrs. Hofmann, he did not split communication into the verbal and non-verbal but into professional and private as Mrs. Wessner did. In his opinion communication is about transferring information in an unambiguous way setting a clear scope of work. For him internal communication is highly dependent on the honesty and the practicality leaving emotions out of this area of business acting as neutral business oriented as possible.

To the overall structure of the organization he mentioned the most important advantages he sees as important elements of his position. It was about the flexible time management and the high level of autonomy. He mentioned the weekly meetings as important and helpful for his tasks where achievements are presented. As he is working on a big project for along term it is much rather a weekly adaptation instead of completely new topics, which is one of the reason why his work is rather autonomous.

Also for him conversations between colleagues are extremely important in order to establish a positive climate where colleagues can also share their private topics with each other. As it is within this company he also mentions that a very little power distance between the leader and the followers could lead to internal problems as the responsibilities could overlap. Therefore the most important element is mutual respect of all participating members that is furthermore important for projects where teams have to work together as it is with this company.

Over recent years from what he has heard almost everything stayed the same with the exception of the “Journal Club” which I already described in the interview of Mrs. Hofmann. For Mr. Oesen this was a great occasion for exchanging ongoing topics and updated processes in different projects in order have a feeling about the big picture. Another important aspect of this meetings were the broadening of each others horizons as each employee has his/her own specialization where others could learn from. As we have heard it with Mrs. Hofmann, unfortunately these meetings have been left behind in the year 2012.
As a very visual oriented person it would be important for him to have some kind of calendar which is accessible for everybody in order to see who is doing what at what time as another factor of keeping the big picture. In principle it is about sharing each the information of each ones tasks to not keep others in the dark. As one could already assume here, he is a very transparency focused person, which is a very positive characteristic.

He mentions one example where the lack of transparency led to internal troubles. It was about a meeting were one person was missing and people did not communicate the discussed issues to her. What resulted from that, is that she later on found out about it and felt excluded which caused emotional disputes which would not have been necessary f there would have been a communication system in place where discussed are accessible for everybody.

When I asked him about possible barriers of internal communication he came up with a very interesting example. First of all he split those barriers into structural and personal barriers. As structural barriers he explained that a great physical distance could lead to difficulties but is perfectly solved in his organization. From what he told me, he is very satisfied about the fact that he is sitting almost in the same room with his colleagues with whom he is partially working on same projects which makes the communication extremely fast and easy fostering a continuous information exchange. Furthermore he supports the fact that his supervisor, is only sitting in his office one minute away. Nevertheless what he mentions as the non-plus-ultra of non-verbal symbols coming from his supervisor is the open door of her office. For him this is the greatest message of telling ones employees that one is willing to communicate and open for questions at any time. It is a way of giving employees the feeling of an open communication climate without having the boss locking his/her employees out. For me this is a very good way to foster the goodwill of each member to actively communicate and as we have heard it in the theory chapter, leaders have to actively create such a receptive communicative atmosphere. As a personal barrier he mentioned, emotional communication structures where people often loose the boarders between the professional and the business oriented communication. It is important that stress does not affect the leadership style due to emotions. Here a sterile communication could protect for possible misunderstandings, still he
would always decide for a rather personal climate as the positive effects do usually over rule the negative ones. In the end it should always be the leader who is shaping the internal climate acting as a role model, which is one of his/her responsibilities. Another task of a leader is to always keep an eye on the big picture being a generalist who is holding the strings in his/her hands to navigate the organization in a successful direction.

Very interesting to hear from Mr. Oesen is that, knowing these important elements of a leader, he declares himself as a follower who would not like to be in a leading position due to the responsibilities and pressure coming from above.

Also when it comes to the questions of sensemaking he seems to be very informed and aware of it, trying to use it in daily life. For him it is crucial that the receiver of a message/information does know how it should be understood and how it should be received. It is about thinking about possible reactions of ones opponent and the fact whether the other has the necessary background to actually understand the message.

Although I could see that he had some very interesting thoughts on different leadership topics he also mentioned one example where followers are often doing things wrong. It is about mutual feedback. For me it is great, that he as a follower does see the responsibility of followers to also give back feedback to their leaders. Although he understands that it is often more difficult to communicate feedback, and needs to choose the right place and timing, especially negative feedback to supervisors, he is quite sure about the fact that leaders could greatly learn from it. Still he is not doing it himself and top-down feedback does not exist in his department.

Summarizing his core arguments he chose preciseness, reflecting/feedback, and honesty as the most important elements of communication.
Mr. Lorenz,

As a very deep going definition of communication Mr. Lorenz gave me “the exchange of information on different levels, with the environment, animals or persons, where a sender and a receiver exist. A successful communication per definition is achieved when the receiver correctly interprets the message coming from the sender.” For me this is a very accurate definition of the basic principle of communication and closely linked to the element number one he mentions as most important. UNAMBIGUOUS.

In general he told me the same internal structure we have heard from the others, with the exception that he is responsible for his own department without having colleagues. Therefore he only meets them during lunch but without any business relation. Although they are working for the same leader their tasks are clearly distinguished. The contact to his supervisor Mr. Bachl, who is also the supervisor of Mrs. Wessner, is very rare and often done via the telephone, which reflects what I have learned from Mrs. Wessner before. The power distance is great and the information is only exchanged via the telephone or short five minutes meetings where tasks are given in little detail which sometimes causes misunderstandings for him which we have by now heard by almost every member of this organization. It is easy to see the strings that stretch throughout the whole department.

Having him as the last interview things are starting to get clearer now having all interviewees mentioning the same problems and roots of various problems. Therefore it was very interesting for me to hear what he described as a reason why things are somehow working quite inefficiently. He explained me that Mr. Bachl is a very busy leader who is additionally member of many different clubs, president of different unions and honorary member of associations. Of course this makes many things more understandable but shouldn’t a leader still have the time to actively lead his/her employees? For me it seems to be a very autonomous group of people working on individual project without having a central coordinator who is there to support, guide and help them. Quite the contrary exists. Due to Mr. Bachl’s work overload he is mixing up different projects and the different responsible persons.

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As one example, Mr. Lorenz was called into Mr. Bachl’s office for some update on a specific report. Unfortunately Mr. Lorenz had nothing to do with that report but another employee. Still Mr. Bachl did not admit that he was wrong, and unfair to Mr. Lorenz when he questioned his competences. It was just another “little” issue that was hushed up.

As the leadership, Mr. Lorenz was experiencing was not the best, I asked him for his opinion of the most important task of a leader. Full of energy he told me that a leader should lead through power in an effective direction without harming people’s emotions. It is about delegating tasks as a generalist keeping the big picture in the focus at all times. For task oriented leadership communication it is important to clarify each members responsibility and scope of duties not eliminate overlapping and inefficiencies. As an example he mentioned the situation of a trainer asking his/her students to get balls, banks, mats and a trampoline. If he would simply tell the group to get all these things it would not work out, and if, not very efficiently. Therefore it is the duty of the trainer to tell each single person what he/she should do so that everybody feels responsible for a specific task. When I heard this example by Mr. Lorenz, I could easily identify myself with it as it is something we are experiencing in our daily life. This is once again why he chose unambiguous as the most important element of communication. In relation to ambiguity he mentions the important factor of non-verbal communication like voice, body language, and emphases that could influence the interpretation of all messages. For him this is the reason why emoticons are used in various written messages, to give a text a specific emotional character in order to prevent possible misunderstandings coming from different wordings.

All the arguments presented above do lead to the answer he gave me on the question regarding the important requirements of a leader-follower relationship. For him it is important that it is a rather friendly-social climate with mutual respect instead of a fearful hierarchical climate, though he is working in the second one. It is important to have a fair environment where not only employees, but also leaders can admit mistakes without being blamed. As we learned before within this department leaders seem to be non-receptive to any kind of feedback.
or inputs due to the great power distance where employees are simply people fulfilling their task. Looking into his future, how should he learn and improve his professional skills if feedback is only given when he performed badly. He would wish for a climate where questions are welcome in order to increase the quality of the internal climate and the quality of the results.

All in all it seems to be that nobody cares as long as he/she is not affected but still in my opinion it would be time for change as they are obviously all sharing the same feeling about the same problems.

Summing up his arguments and understandings, he decided to take unambiguous, transparent, and regular as the most critical ingredients of an effective internal communication.

**Summary of the University of Sports Sciences,**

Looking back on the four interviews I have conducted at the University of sports in Vienna, I have seen many different things that should be improved. Still there is one topic standing above all of them. It is the topic of silence. Although I have learned that everybody seems to be aware of the problems and that things should be changed nobody is actively doing something. There was not a single interview where people did not tell me that they would like to have this or that but nobody dares to speak up and open up a discussion. I, was especially disappointed to see that the leaders/ supervisors are either not interested in the internal processes and their complications or seem to be too weak/afraid to actively handle their employees by bringing up different topics which could be sensible.

For me, the only reason why bigger internal conflicts did not develop is the fact that the personal relations between those employees seems to be a very positive one, as they are also very good friends in their private lives.

As we have heard it in the theory (Weick, 1995) it is necessary, in order to have followers, to be a good leader. It is about the leaders responsibility to create and establish a corporate culture people can identify themselves with, but in this

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company I have the feeling the leader, Mrs. Wessner, is more adopting herself to the rest of the department. The only thing where she seems to be rather strict is when it comes to the exact way of how projects are executed. Here I see great potential for improvements in order to create a well-developed team that can use all its resources to work effectively through the usage of a transparent and regular task oriented communication system.

All in all the conducted interviews at the University of Sports Sciences for me, illustrated a perfect example of internal “silence”. Every interview partner explained me about processes which should be improved and other processes which are not working due to different reasons, still all of them rejected to do directly do to their leaders in order to address these topics as they all had the feeling their supervisors would not be interested in their ideas, comments and inputs. Unfortunately I have to say this seems to be true. In my opinion, in order to fix these structural problems they would need an intensive changing process where all parties are working together, transparently so that they can implement a structured, open and receptive communication environment, which is not really existing at the moment but extremely important if an organization wants to improve and create success.

4.3 OVERALL ANALYSIS

As all individual interviews have been analyzed and discussed in the previous chapter, also giving a brief analysis of each of the two companies, this chapter will provide an overall analysis, attempting to find similar phenomena and different examples about the effective and productive communication system according to the existing leadership. Therefore, I am going to compare both organizations and looking for possible examples, which can be linked to the theories presented in this paper.

As one could learn already from the brief summaries in the previous chapter, it was easy to notice that the two companies are quite different, not only in the field they are working in but much rather when it comes to the internal structures.
Mercedes Wiesenthal as a very profit-oriented company seems to have a clear and detailed internal structure and separation of responsibilities. Also the internal communication processes seem to be perfectly managed and understood. From the interviews it is quite obviously that this company is having a very open and democratic leadership style.

When one compares this to the situation at the University of Sports Sciences one will find quite undefined structures where officially everybody can take over another one’s task which leads to many irritations of their area of responsibility. Also communication seems to be hindered by minor but ignored disputes that are obviously tried to be “swallowed” instead of being addressed. Still coming from the interviews I would define their internal communication as a rather autocratic communication being shaped by the autocratic leadership style.

Very interesting is that at the beginning I thought everything is working quite well and people seem to be perfectly happy, but that was only because people did not mention those ignored issues. That shall not mean that this company is making a very bad job when it comes to communication and leadership but much rather that there is place for improvement.

The question about the most important element of an effective communication is of special interest in this chapter, as it is a very important issue for me. In order to understand what the greatest needs for communication are, I summarized those findings as followed.

In the following figure (5) the most important elements of all interviewees are presented and in the following text the five most important of them are presented and explained.
As one can see there are two elements that are sharing the place of the highest level of importance. What the interviewees ranked the most important is, that an effective communication needs a very clear and precise message. Any kind of ambiguity has to be eliminated in order to make processes more productive without having misunderstandings. This is also what I have learned during the more detailed questions with my interviewees. All of them criticized that often leaders communicate too vague and not precise tasks that often causes time-cost inefficiency, as they have to contact their leader for further explanations. Referring back to theory, this could be related to Weick (1995) and his sensemaking approach, as it shows that communication is often understood differently between senders and receivers. It is, again, about understanding each other’s position in order to build up a good working communication system where people can effectively communicate. Still, this might also have something to do with Austrians high level of uncertainty avoidance.

The second element is the importance of an open communication environment, which transparently gives people space for feedback. In the name of all interviewees I would say that they understand the importance of feedback if they do want to learn for their personal development. Without feedback people have a hard time to improve weaknesses. Still this is true for all members, as also leaders need feedback from their followers to improve their leadership style. As I
have seen with the interviews at the University of Sports Sciences they hardly received feedback from their leader but on the other side never gave feedback to their leader.

To mention two more important elements that have been discussed, the regularity of the communication is also important as it creates the possibility of a continuous knowledge and information exchange about ongoing projects, processes or next steps. Going further this could again be somehow linked to the importance of a cooperate transparency.

The last element is the wish for personal communication (Face to Face). What is powerful to see here is that this has not only been mentioned, as an answer to this question but was omnipresent at all stages which was presented before. The organizational culture of face-to-face communication in both organizations is very strong and in my opinion one of the most powerful resource of a company as long as it is doable for an organization.

As the question for the interviews have been very open there was no clear structure and chronology. Still, there where different topics that have been addressed. When I would have to cluster the interviews and the received information I would go for three topics. Communication, Leadership and Sense-Making, which will also be the order that I will follow within the following pages.

4.3.1 COMMUNICATION

What I have learned during my interviews is that Mercedes Wiesenthal seems to have everything under control. In comparison, the University of Sports Sciences is facing various challenges.

Linking these two examples to the theory of Watzlawick, one could say that Mercedes Wiesenthal is clearly communicating through a symmetrical communication structure where people try to work on a equal level without having to much hierarchical distance. The Sports University as another example is has a complementary communication system. Although there everybody tries
to be not only colleague but also friend at the same time which creates a very horizontal structure, the leader, when it comes to business, is very egoistic and non-including, trying to do everything the way she wants to do it without allowing inputs from others. This is not only communication wise contra productive but also a no-go when it comes to leadership, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The only thing both organizations have in common regarding their communication structures is that they are both communicating very informally in a very friendly working atmosphere. Furthermore, what both companies are doing to my satisfaction is that, they are majorly using verbal communication especially face-to-face. Without a question this is also related to the field of business they are working in where fast and personal communication is necessary but also seems to be an important internal culture that is lived and supported by all members. As we have learned in the theory, verbal and especially personal communication is the communication channel which offers us the greatest variety of tools in order to transmit a communication and enables people to minimize the risk of any misunderstandings through the active use of body language, tone and gestures.

Here one can see that also sensemaking is highly interrelated with that part as it is crucial to be able to understand each other’s “sensemaking” in order to communicate in the most appropriate way. Especially when it comes to the development of a message I have learned from the interviews that the content, especially related to its completeness, conciseness, concreteness and correctness is of great importance for people which was also perfectly illustrated by the theory of the seven C’s by Cutlip and Center (1952). As one of my interviewees said, It is all about the content of a message and the way it is communicated.

In order to not repeat myself, the last thing I want to mention is the example of Mrs. Wessner. Although she seemed to be aware of the phenomena that face-to-face communication is only to seven per cent dependent on the content but much rather on the tone and the body language she obviously had problems to use these elements correctly. From the interviews with the other organizational members we have learned that there were many misunderstandings due to a
wrong communication style. Also stress caused her to put forward tasks in a rather degrading way as her followers described it. I personally have the feeling that she has a hard time as the leader to communicate correctly in stressful situations, which has highly negative effects on the internal situation. Therefore as mentioned before I would strongly suggest to implement the “Journal Club” again and monitoring the internal communication with the help of every employee on a regular basis.

4.3.2 LEADERSHIP

Coming to the second topic, the major findings according to internal leadership are presented. As we have learned from the theory, leadership always consists of two parties. As it was also described in the book of Nanus and Bennis (2004) it is the leader and his/her followers, which are non-existing without the other. Understanding each others importance for oneself all organizational members should work as a team accepting and acknowledging others competencies and inputs. Furthermore, there is a great difference between leaders and managers, which was also mentioned by the interviewees. This was a great example as also Bennis and Nanus (2004) said that followers decide whether they want to “follow” a leader, making him/her only then to a leader, or whether followers do only accept their supervisor to be the manager which results in a rather task oriented working environment with no personal engagement to improve internal processes. Unfortunately leaders like Mrs. Wessner, who are experts in a very specific field of work, often have the problem to delegate tasks. Not only that they often have the problem to delegate tasks at all, they do not trust their employees to correctly fulfill given tasks. Another point, which was also mentioned by Mrs. Wessner could be that they trust their employees, assuming that their followers have all necessary information and background knowledge to fulfill their exercises which is often not true as we have heard from Mrs. Hofmann.

As mentioned before, the ultimate goal in my opinion is achieved when all organizational members have the same understanding of each other’s tasks and responsibilities, which has been presented at Mercedes Wiesenthal. This task requires the leaders to be emotional and social sensible to their followers needs
and their frames of references, in order adopt this corporate culture so that it is understandable for everybody without creating emotional inconveniences which was also topic of the two experts in the theory chapter (Elsass and Graves, 1977). As Goleman (1995) said, it is the leader’s task to handle his/her followers and in my opinion Mr. Heger achieved this whereas Mrs. Wessner has major problems doing that. For me one reason could be that the hierarchy is already too flat so that the necessary distance between leaders and followers is not given. During my interviews I also had the feeling that this might be because Mrs. Wessner does not want to be “too” different from her employees as she rather sees them as colleagues.

When comparing the leadership skills of Mrs. Wessner and Mr. Heger I have to say that Mr. Heger has the great advantage of having learned a lot about leadership during his education whereat Mrs. Wessner was simply put into this hierarchical position without having any pre-education or on-site training that could have helped her here.

Here I would like to stress once more that I do not think that it is her only her fault that different problems occur but much rather the fault of the upper levels in that organization. When they hired her or put her in this specific situation, in my opinion, it was their responsibility to check her leading skills. I cannot understand how people can be put into such positions without any prior leadership tests or experience. For me, she is definitely not a leader, which was also approved by her “followers”. Especially the fact that she was all the time using phrases like “maybe”, “I could try”, “maybe I should”, “I guess they do understand what I say”, “I think it would be my responsibility to address …”, “I know I should ….. but…..” gave me the reason to think that she is not only a bad leader but also seem to be overwhelmed and unhappy about her leading responsibility. From my conversation with her I got the feeling that she is also aware that she is not a good leader but in order that her position is asking for it she tries to do her best.

Again, as Bennis and Nanus (2004) would say, she was appointed to be a manager but is not going to be a leader. All these characteristics and information gave me the understanding that the University of Sports Sciences seem to have a

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autocratic leadership system whereat Mercedes Wiesenthal has developed a highly democratic leadership style including high potentials in different decision-making processes and acknowledging each other’s expertise. From all that I have heard Mr. Heger seems to be a “real” authentic leader, which is an essential asset. Also from the interview with Anonymous, I got the feeling that he highly appreciated his leader and was happy about following him recognizing Mr. Heger’s expertise.

All in all one could easily see that the leader-follower relationship worked perfectly at Mercedes Wiesenthal and not really good at the University of Sports Sciences when it comes to business-oriented processes.

In respect to the overall relationship between leaders and followers I think both companies had quite intensive and personal relationships, enabling a good and relaxed communication about personal and private issues which is also very important and a major requirement in the field of business where both companies are operating in being shaped through a very direct and fast communication glow between leaders and followers.

4.3.3 SENSE-MAKING

Unfortunately the ignorance of leadership topics does also not stop here for the University of Sports Sciences. When it comes to sense-making Mr. Heger was aware of the theories and explained me how he is using it in his daily operations and interaction with his followers or colleagues as he refers to them. Compared to this Mrs. Wessner did not show any use or awareness of sensemaking and told me that it is not really present internally.

All in all I experienced two different companies with completely different types of communication showing me good and on the other side bad examples of internal communication. At the University most of the interviewees have never heard about sensemaking before whereat the two interviewees of Mercedes knew the theory and what it meant. Furthermore, both mentioned that it is something that is present in everyday interaction with other people, which for me was the sign
that they understood its importance. Unfortunately this was absolutely not given with the other company especially when it comes to the leader. All members of this organization were sure that it does not exist. Additionally, after explaining them in brief what this theory is about, that it would be not that relevant in the type of business they are working in which is not true at all. Sensemaking is a very deep going process that has to be done actively in order to filter specific signs and make sense out of them. Therefore if people have not even heard about it before it is hard for them to actively “perform” sensemaking.

Especially due to the fact that this organization seems to have misunderstandings more often, being caused either through different wordings or through different behaviors, I thought that this could be of special importance for them. This came also from the fact that I have the strong feeling that apart from their private relationship they are not perfectly aware of the others’ perspectives when it comes to business. I think that many problems result from the fact that they do not really understand each others frames of references as they are working mainly individual and on a competitive level but still quite often on the some overall project. In my opinion, this is exactly the point were the leader should be the intermediate who should foster the interaction and continuous knowledge exchange, so that transparency is given at any time to any person.

Of course it is not only the fault of the leader as mentioned before therefore I also would urge all employees to put more effort into this improvement. I do also think that the fact that most of the organizational members are only employed for one to three years is a barrier for them to put all their energy into the implementation of a better working system as they are leaving rather soon anyhow. Here we come to another point which the leader should be aware of, thinking about possible incentives to encourage the followers engagement to contribute to the improvement of all internal processes especially the relation between the leader and themselves as this is the base of all business oriented interactions.

Having mentioned all problems that I recognized during my interviews I think that my interviews also were important for them as I addressed topics which were subconsciously ignored so far but burning in everybody’s minds for along

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time. What I did hear two weeks ago was a very positive experience I have had with some of the interviewees of the University of Sports Sciences. These interviewees told that my interviews and the inputs I gave through “forcing” people to think about different communication related topics and the transparent interaction between leaders and followers, actually had a very positive effect on the internal climate.

From what I have heard they are already implementing again the “Journal Club” which hadn’t been taking place since the last year. Also the leadership skills in general seem to be of interest for various members now, as I illuminated sensible issues, which they do now want to change. Obviously Mrs. Wessner was grateful for my interview as it opened her eyes towards specific topics. This situation is really interesting for me. Firstly I am happy that the interviews did not only helped me with my thesis to gather empirical data but were also of importance for them as internal processes are finally going to be changed and sensible topics are discussed rather than ignored now. It was my first business oriented experience where I finally contributed as a business consultant just by addressing sensible topics which are of great importance for the internal processes being based on the internal leader-follower and follower-follower relationships.

As a final remark I would like to mention here that without any interaction from my side, this department asked me to visit them again to talk about internal problems and possible improvements that I could suggest having collected various data from organizational members.
Starting the last chapter of this paper I have to say that I enjoyed writing this thesis, as it is a topic, which has been present for me for many years. Since I am a highly efficient person I did understand the importance of an effective leader-follower relation long time ago. Nevertheless I have once more intensively dealt with this topic now, and learned a lot, not only from the theories but especially from the two great examples of organizational internal structures and its communication.

It was a great journey dealing with a highly important and recent topic. In today’s world technology is changing extremely fast and people adopt faster and faster to changes. Therefore, also their needs tend to change faster than some years before. More and more different technologies and systems are developed such as facebook and tumbir. One cannot ignore that this communication industry is booming and social medias and platforms are part of almost everybody’s lives. This was once more proven when a young 26 year old IT (Information Technology) freak sold his self-designed social platform “Tumbir” for more than one billion Dollars. But such super-purchases are happening more and more often as all companies understand the potential of such social networks. Therefore, from the perspective of entrepreneurs, it is time to open our eyes for communication looking for potentially new market niches. As a message to all anti-communication technology fighter out there, I have to tell you that you have lost the battle against the technological development, so instead of running away, I would suggest you to integrate in “our” world, if you do not want to be “old-school”.

To give this paper a good conclusion I will now present you my final understanding of the requirements of a leader-follower relation and the crucial elements of an effective business atmosphere as to my understanding.

After dealing with these topics for quite a long time, I can only suggest once more that it is time for every organizational member to understand the importance of

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internal communication for the organizational success and the individual
development. As it was perfectly described by one of the interviewees, it is
essential to have a good working internal communication system in place, before
starting to communicate externally. If an organizational community is doing a
good job when it comes to internal communication and all related issues their
efficiency level is rising opening up new business opportunities being shaped
through efficiency. It is only a matter of time how long companies with bad
communication structures survive and everybody who has experienced that will
confirm it. Even if such companies do not go bankrupt they will not use all their
potential and opportunities, since weak communication is always time-cost
expensive and cost-intensive when it comes to opportunity costs.

Also sensemaking should become a topic of everybody’s interest especially for
leaders. Of course it is important for every organizational member but in order
that leaders are creating a culture and communicating to a large number of
employees and hopefully followers a well structured and sophisticated
communication process is crucial. It is time that leaders acknowledge the
important parts of communication where not only content is transferred but also
interpersonal elements are analyzed and noticed. All in all it is about the leaders’
responsibility to create and shape a culture, which is understood and accepted
by everybody. Only through this task, people of the same company can create a
common knowledge and understanding base of any business operation. As soon
as people are sharing the same perspectives things are starting to get efficient
and easier. Communication gets easier as people do better understand each
other’s frames of references, which in the end again improves the leader-follower
relation. Through such a shared culture, misunderstandings will shrink and the
easiness of the internal cooperation will rise. When going further, this will lead to
a higher employee satisfaction and a better internal atmosphere that again will
positively affect the overall organizational success.

The last major topic, which was elaborated within this paper, dealt with the
interpersonal requirements between leaders and followers. As not only the two
examples showed us but also the theory taught us at the beginning, the personal
relationship between the two essential parties of leadership is the fundament for
any organizational process. This relationship will always have a great influence

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on the business and it cannot be ignored. Even if people try to establish a neutral business oriented relationship, emotional disputes will arise more often as the interpersonal relation is always present on a subconscious level. Still, too little leaders try to foster their relationships with their employees and high potentials. There are many different ways of creating a better relationship. On the one hand, leaders have the possibility to use simple tools like incentives, rewards, praise, and feedback in order to increase the employees’ satisfaction and their motivation, which usually results in a better leader-follower relation. But on the other hand leaders can make great use out of symbolic activities, like acting as a role model, giving them the feeling to be one big team, sitting in the same boat, sharing responsibility, giving them the chance to present their ideas for changes or improvements. All these factors establish some kind of a trusting and respectful working environment that again has positive effects on their relationship.

All this important elements can also be linked to what my interviewees have told me as important factors of an effective and good leader-follower relation. For most of them the basis consist of mutual respect and acceptance of each others expertise giving each other the feeling of being heard. Including high potential employees into various decision-making processes could also enhance this. From what I have learned during the last months, also including the interviews, it is very important for people nowadays to have a rather flat hierarchy structure. It seems to be a more open and flexible structure where people feel more included instead of just functioning as task fulfillers. Still most of them, also mentioned that a small level of power distance is necessary to keep the efficiency high. As the example of Mercedes Wiesenthal showed us and I have learned, a too flat hierarchy could also create problems as it sometimes make a fast and effective task-oriented communication much harder as the interpersonal and emotional factors coming from a non-existing hierarchy, could represent barriers.

These three topics that have been developed throughout this paper are the elements leaders should focus on, recognizing their potential for the organizational success and their personal achievement. As one could learn from this paper these topics are highly interlinked and could also be seen as different steps, which have to be implemented one after each other.
In my opinion, the first task is to create a fair, open and transparent relationship between a leader and his/her followers. Only then the sensemaking and the communication process can be really efficient. For my personal understanding I would even say that the sensemaking process should be “implemented” as a second step. As it is a very complex and sensible process, this rather means that all participating parties should at least be aware of this topic trying to use or notice it in their daily life, in order to “train” it. Only after understanding the theory of sensemaking one should be able to create perfectly tailored messages for others and interpret their messages correctly. This should arise from the deep going understanding of each other’s perspectives one can establish a better cooperation being shaped through mutual understanding and acceptance.

Concluding, it has to be said that leaders have to understand that this cost and time intensive implementations might need an extraordinary investment, which might lower the revenue in one year, but at that same time will be amortized very soon. It is something that could be seen as a one-time investment as it, if done correctly, could create a completely new corporate culture, flourishing of efficiency shaping all future employees frames of references. No question that this process needs a long preparation having different consultants and it might cost a fortune but will be the organization’s biggest asset in the future.

As we have learned, all this improvements will have a major positive effect on the employee satisfaction, the production and the companies overall success. As mentioned in the very first paragraph of this paper, today’s business environment is changing faster than ever before and only the most flexible companies with the highest efficiency will survive in this competitive market. Therefore, I recommend all organizations to take the chance. Not tomorrow but today!

As I was also mentioning the topic of technology at the beginning of this paper it is also important to conclude what I have learned about this elements. As one could see in the analysis, technology was not a big topic for the two companies as they were working majorly by face-to-face communication which is in my opinion their biggest advantage towards other businesses which do not have the
possibility to do it due to cost-time reasons. Also from what the interviewees said it was interesting to hear that they do there best to ignore as many technological communication channels as possible. None of both companies was using any technology like chats, blogs or any other media except from telephone and email which are still the traditional communication tools. For me, as I personally think face-to-face communication is by far the most effective communication channel, offering all possible elements that can be used to interact and communicate between two parties, it was a great surprise to see that they do invest into this asset. Still, we will see what kind of technological devices to support an effective and fast communication the future will bring.

5.1 LEARNINGS

After having finished this thesis I can look back on a very intensive but at the same time extremely interesting and educating period. As it was already a topic of my interest in my past employments as well as in my private life, there were many things that I have learned and which I can take as an additional asset for my future, both for my professional and my private life. As I always understood the importance of communication and the development of this paper fostered my knowledge, I really hope that I will not forget any of these crucially important elements that are essential for a positive and effective communication process. Maybe I will have the possibility to prove my expertise in this field in my future career shaping a whole organizational environment in a positive direction.

My personal learning regarding the development of the thesis itself, in general consists of two experiences. First, I have learned that it is extremely hard to conduct interviews without guiding them too much meaning without asking questions that are already influencing the answer of the interviewees. Therefore, I have learned a lot when it comes to neutral communication without manipulating the opponent party.

Secondly, I have learned that it is extremely interesting to act as some kind of external consultant for “emotional “ problems in organizations. It was a great experience to be in the position of a consultant collecting information about
emotions, feelings and understandings of different parties in an organization. Especially the fact that one of the two companies even “hired” me for an extra session to talk about their internal problems was tremendous and gave me a lot of insight to their internal processes.

As a very last point I have to say that I have learned a lot about myself. As it was a very individualistic project I had to organize myself effectively. This process was also very interesting, as I have learned a lot when it comes to productivity, spelling and wording. All in all I am grateful and happy that I have finished this paper in a way that makes me proud. I really hope that it will be of interest for many other people who might struggle with their communication systems.
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Figure 2, 7 C’s, downloaded on the 12th May 2013, from the homepage http://www.yousaytoo.com/7-cs-of-communication/4186379

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Figure 4, Informal Communication, downloaded on the 14th March 2013, from the homepage http://robincse.blogspot.co.at/2012/03/what-is-communication.html

Figure 5, Daily Communication – Philipp Lorenz

Figure 6, Communication Channels – Philipp Lorenz

Figure 7, Most important elements of effective communication – Philipp Lorenz
8 ANNEX

8.1 QUANTITATIVER FRAGEBOGEN DEUTSCH,

1) Name,
2) Alter,
3) Position im Unternehmen,
4) Bei wie vielen Unternehmen waren Sie bereits länger als 6 Monate angestellt?

5) Wie lange sind Sie bereits in Ihrem derzeitigen Unternehmen angestellt?

6) Wie häufig kommunizieren Sie intern (täglich)? (Kreisen Sie Ihre Wahl ein)
   1-3  4-8  >9

7) Wie oft kommunizieren Sie mit den folgenden Personen täglich (beruflich)? (kreisen Sie Ihre Wahl ein)
   (Vorgesetzte/r)  1-3  4-8  >9
   (Kollegen)       1-3  4-8  >9
   (Andere? Wer?) 1-3  4-8  >9

8) Welche Kommunikationswege werden mit den folgenden Personen, hauptsächlich genutzt? Vergeben Sie bitte Prozenten so dass die Verteilung am Ende pro Gesprächsperson 100% ergibt.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Telefon</th>
<th>Persönlich</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Chat</th>
<th>Intranet</th>
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<td>Vorgesetzten</td>
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<td>Kollegen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andere? Wer?</td>
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</table>

9) Wie oft treffen Sie Ihren Vorgesetzten zu einem persönlich Gespräch pro Woche? (durchschnittlich)
8.2 QUANTITATIVE SURVEY ENGLISH,

1) Name,
2) Age,
3) Organizational Position,
4) Number of organizations you have been employed at for more than 6 months,

5) How long have you been employed in your current company?

6) How often do you communicate internally? (Daily), (encircle your decision)
   1-3           4-8           >9

7) How often do you communicate with the following persons? (Daily and professionally)
   Supervisor          1-3       4-8       >9
   Colleagues          1-3       4-8       >9
   Others? .................  1-3       4-8       >9

8) Which communication channels do you use with the following persons? Please assign percentages for each channel so that it sums up to a 100% for each group of people.

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<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Personally</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<td>Generally</td>
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<td>Supervisors</td>
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<td>Colleagues</td>
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<td>Others?.......</td>
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</table>

9) How often do you meet your leader personally for a conversation? (weekly)
8.3 QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW FRAGEN

1. Was Versteh Sie unter Kommunikation?

2. Was ist Ihrer Meinung nach das wichtigste Element für eine gut funktionierende interne Kommunikation? Sowohl von Seiten des Managements aber auch von Seiten der Mitarbeiter.

3. Wie würden Sie persönlich die Kommunikation und dessen Struktur in Ihrem Unternehmen beschreiben? Formell oder Informell?

4. Hat die Interne Kommunikation in Ihrem Unternehmen eine Veränderung durchlaufen in den vergangenen Jahren? Wenn ja welche? Zum Schlechteren oder Besseren?

5. Welche Veränderungen würden Sie sich bezüglich der internen Kommunikation wünschen und wie stellen Sie sich die Umsetzung vor?

6. Sehen Sie Hindernisse, welche eine positive Entwicklung oder eine gut funktionierende internen Kommunikation behindern?

7. Was sind Ihrer Meinung nach die wichtigsten Aufgaben einer Führungsperson, hinsichtlich interner Kommunikation?

8. Wenn Sie sich für drei Elemente entscheiden müssten welche essentiell für den Erfolg einer effektiven und fairen Kommunikation sind, welche wären das?

9. Haben Sie das Gefühl Ihr vorgesetzter macht sich detaillierte Gedanken darüber wie und was er kommuniziert? Wählt er die richtige Methode und die richtige Wortwahl, oder ist er/sie eher neutral?

10. Können Sie mir Beispiele für gute und schlechte Kommunikation nennen, welche Sie selbst in Ihrer beruflichen Laufbahn erfahren haben?

11. Sind Ihnen Kollegengespräche wichtig um sich in Ihrem Arbeitsfeld wohlzufühlen?
8.4 QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand as communication? What does it mean for you?

2. What would you define as the most important element for an effective communication? Both, from the employee and the employer side!

3. How would you describe the communication and its structure in your organization? Rather formal or informal?

4. Did you experience a change of communication during the period you have been working for this organization? If yes, did it develop to the better or worse?

5. Do you wish for any changes regarding the internal communication? If yes, how would you imagine its implementation?

6. What kind of barriers do you see for a positive development of a good working internal communication?

7. What do you think are the most important tasks and responsibilities of a leader when it comes to internal communication?

8. If you would have to decide for three essential elements for the success of an effective and fair internal communication, which ones would you choose?

9. When your leader is communication tasks or information, do you have the feeling he/she is making great effort to choose the right channel and technique to do so? What about the wording?

10. Could you give me some examples of good and bad communication, you have experienced during your professional career?

11. Do you see colleague-conversations as a crucial element for a positive working environment?