

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout this study, the Process of Inquiry has been described as a systematic study of experience that leads to understanding and knowledge (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005:4-5). Furthermore, this knowledge and understanding is acquired through an objective quantitative process in the organisational domain, otherwise known as the Scientific Scholarship, and in the communication domain, by means of individual subjective responses, referred to as the Humanistic Scholarship (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005:7-8). These two approaches, as previously explained, are in conflict with each other, and as a result, the corporate communication discipline, has been subjected to the challenges mentioned in Chapter 2. In an attempt to address some of these challenges, authors have addressed certain areas, which include helping communication practitioner's to develop communication strategies, as well as identifying various ways in which to measure their communication efforts. Nonetheless, the research conducted in this study, continues to reflect that these challenges still exist in practice, while the literature attempting to create synergy between the two approaches, in an organisational context, is limited.

In an attempt to uncover these challenges, the problem statement in Chapter 1 describes that the purpose of this study, is to explore how performance measurement tools, in the form of KPIs, can be developed for corporate communication, in order to align its strategic significance with the rest of the organisation. Additionally, these tools have to be able to capture the intangible value created by corporate communication quantitatively, and in so doing, still represent the tacit contributions of the discipline. The IT industry was selected due to its negative reputation (Melendez, 2004:05), which might be addressed by effective communication. To focus on the problem statement, this study extensively explored literature and turned to industry as well, to discover how this could be done.

To initiate the findings of this study, it is imperative to understand what the purpose of corporate communication is in an organisation, before determining the measurement thereof. Without understanding 'what' to measure, the 'how' will not become perceptible and measurement efforts will be wasted.

7.2 REVISITING CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

From the previous chapters important similarities have been established, between what theory perceives corporate communication to be, and what industry perceives corporate communication to be. Despite this, small but vital gaps do exist, between the ideals of theory and the ideals of industry. These vague differences could be an additional reason why corporate communication has struggled with the identity crisis mentioned in Chapter 2 (Hutton *et al.*, 2001:248; Steyn & Bütschi, 2004:5; Steyn & Puth, 2000:3). For measurement purposes, this difference in focus implies, that because the ‘what’ has remained uncertain, the ‘how’ has naturally been difficult to determine. This clarifies why there has been such a struggle in understanding how to measure corporate communication. Pinpointing some of the gaps is deemed necessary, before the process of determining corporate communication measurement, can take place.

7.2.1 Defining the purpose of corporate communication

Returning to the definition of communication, theory states that it is the exchange of meaning between a sender and receiver, which may produce feedback (Argenti, 1998:3; O’Rourke IV, 2004:22; Steyn & Bütschi, 2004:3). In an organisational context, this transactional process occurs at various levels in an organisation, including the intrapersonal, interpersonal, organisational, as well as a mass or public level, and it takes place between numerous stakeholders (O’Rourke IV, 2004:24-25). Literature expands that the sharing of meaning should ideally occur in the form of two-way symmetrical communication, where both the organisation and stakeholders are in a position to send and receive information equally (Grunig & Grunig, 2001:14).

Moving to the definition of corporate communication, theory clearly indicates that the discipline cannot be equated to marketing. This is because marketing is concerned with sending and receiving messages to only one stakeholder group, namely customers, and furthermore, it is concerned with areas broader than communication, such as product designs, the price of the product, and the distribution of the product (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2003:3; Marx *et al.*, 1998:514). Literature does equate corporate communication to PR but prefers the term corporate communication, due to the stereotyped association with the expression PR (Argenti, 1998:47; Hutton *et al.*, 2001:248; Steyn & Puth, 2000:2-3). Lastly, literature defines corporate communication as being the management function of strategic

mutually beneficial relationships, between an organisation and all the stakeholders on whom its success or failure depends (Marx *et al.*, 1998:4; Rensburg & Ferreira, 2004:11; Sandin & Simolin, 2006:6). To summarise, the essence of literature's understanding, is that corporate communication is seen to manage the exchange of meaning, between the organisation and all its stakeholders.

Turning to the ideas of industry, communication was defined as 'creating understanding'. Although confusion existed in the actual term, corporate communication was clearly described as being the custodian of communication between an organisation and its stakeholders. In being the custodian, it was understood that the corporate communication department was responsible for the 'ownership' of *certain* areas of communication, while it supported the rest of the organisation in the remaining areas of communication, where it was not the responsibility of the communication department to communicate.

Elaboration on these differences is important. Although somewhat similar in the approach to understanding corporate communication, the purpose of corporate communication is different. The term *manage* is defined as 'controlling or being in charge of', whereas the term *custodian* is defined as 'a person who takes care of or looks after' (Cowie, 1998:756,294). In terms of organisational communication, the corporate communication department, according to theory, is supposed to control and be in charge of the organisation's communication. Practically, where communication departments consist of 3-35 employees in an organisation the size of up to 45 000 employees, it is not possible for the communication practitioners to control the communication at every level (ranging from interpersonal to mass / public communication), that takes place between each employee and the stakeholders encountered on a daily basis. The majority of the time the practitioners are not even aware that the communication is taking place. For this reason, identifying areas of communication that the communication department should 'take care of', and supporting the rest of the areas, appears to be more logical and realistic, than attempting to manage all the communication that takes place in the entire organisation.

Certainly, communication has to be managed. However, should this management be the responsibility of the communication department? Arguably, literature has categorised the corporate communication department as a support function, but explained that the

management of communication should still be conducted by the communication function. Literature expands that in order for this management to take place, communication must be represented on the strategic level in the organisation (cf De Villiers & Crous in Marx *et al.*, 1998:347; Hamrefors 2004:1; Rensburg & Cant 2003:61; Steyn & Bütschi, 2004:7; Steyn & Puth, 2000:19). Although this standpoint seems logical, it is not reflected in the research conducted in this study. Only a small number of organisations had strategic representation, and this occurred in larger organisations. Moreover, where there is strategic representation, the communication department's purpose is that of the custodian of communication, and not the managers of communication. The viewpoint of these organisations is that the people who are communicating, should also own the management of the communication. This is where the concept of employee engagement surfaced. An example of a manager communicating to his / her staff would remain his / her responsibility. In addition, a financial person would be responsible for communicating with the creditors or debtors. Where the communication department would take ownership of certain types of communication, such as mass communication or communication disseminated through specified media, the responsibility of communication in general, still remained with each employee.

The communication department simply cannot control all the communication, which takes place simultaneously on a daily basis. This is especially true when the communication department is not represented on a strategic level, to enforce the management of the communication. The above symposium ushers the discussion to the second important gap between the theorised and practised forms of corporate communication.

7.2.2 Defining the place of corporate communication

Literature encourages corporate communication to maintain a presence on the technician, management and strategic levels of the organisation (Argenti, 1998:54). In motivating the strategic focus of corporate communication, literature explains that the support nature of corporate communication has resulted in it being subjected to the chain of command from various other disciplines. This ultimately effects and misdirects the focus of the communication conducted (Rensburg & Cant, 2003:58; Steyn & Puth, 2000:228). Industry reflected similar arguments describing how corporate communication's focus changed when reporting to HR, financial or marketing directors. Moreover, respondents explained

how this affected the resource availability, which became problematic to the communication department.

In spite of this notion, few IT, as well as medium to small sized organisations, in the research of this study, embraced the viewpoint of conducting communication on a strategic level. Where the place of corporate communication was not perceived as being strategic, communication was seen as output-orientated activities, where publicity had to be attained for awareness purposes, or tangible forms of communication had to be created for sales purposes. The reason for this perception is simple; the leaders of the organisation did not see the value of spending time and money championing the role of communication within their organisation. From industry, it was evident that, whether there were communication executives or not, if the CEO bought into the concept of communication, then communication was regarded highly. Where this did not happen, communication was seen as something that had to be done, rather than something that could provide intangible value. Additionally, it was mentioned how the role of communication would change as new leaders were appointed. This suggests that simply representing communication on a strategic level is not going to solve the challenges that face the discipline today. Something else clearly has to be done to campaign communication on every level of the organisation; the solution might lie with the performance measurement model of the organisation.

A final difference worth noting, relates to the technician level of the practitioners. The research conducted in this study, indicated that corporate communication departments (with strategic representation) outsourced the majority of the technician activities to consultancies. In some cases, even writing was outsourced, leaving only the material for internal communication to be developed by the communication practitioners. The role of the communication practitioners was therefore to project-manage these activities. This put the communication department in the position to manage the communication they were responsible for, and to provide the communication support to the other areas of the business where it was needed. Once again, from a practical point of view, this approach is realistic, especially as communication practitioners are often not trained, during their schooling, how to be specialists in the development of art works for various forms of tangible communication.

7.2.3 Revisiting the goals, functions and activities of corporate communication

Where literature highlighted several goals, including sales, new business, image enhancement, and the dissemination of positive messages (Sandin & Simolin, 2006:8); the fundamental goal of corporate communication was to manage the multitude of stakeholder relationships, to achieve mutual benefit for both parties (Hallahan, 2000:503). Industry on the other hand, indicated that different organisations had diverse goals for corporate communication. Reported in Chapter 6, the intangible value created by corporate communication, ranged from minimising poor organisational communication to assisting with stakeholder behaviour change; however, the underpinning goal of corporate communication was to be an effective support function. Returning to the concept of performance measurement, logically the performance measurement tool should be able to determine whether these goals have been achieved or not.

Furthermore, depending on the goals for corporate communication, the functions of corporate communication as a department would become apparent. In both theory and practice, media relations were pertinently evident as a major function of the communication department. Other functions that were concurred by both theory and practice, included internal communication, CSR, crisis communication, image and reputation, as well as industry relations with concern to partners and suppliers (Argenti, 1998:1-244). Functions, named by literature, that did not feature in industry, but that were considered part of the communication department's support role, included corporate advertising and advocacy, marketing communication (promotion), assistance with investor relations, assistance with government relations, and integrated stakeholder communication (Argenti, 1998:1-244). From the research conducted in this study, it was evident that the communication departments had varying degrees of responsibility and ownership in latter functions, which was dependant on the organisational context and leadership style.

A function mentioned by Rensburg and Ferreira (2004:21) that featured in the research of this study, as a goal rather than a function of the corporate communication department, was to obtain feedback. Where Rensburg and Ferreira (2004:21) elucidate that the perceptions and expectations of various stakeholders should be researched by the communication department, industry explained how external companies or consultants conducted research on behalf of the organisation, and that the communication department was only responsible for improving the provision of feedback. The only form of

environmental scanning identified by the respondents of this study included the 'media watch', where practitioners worked through various media on a daily basis, and summarised information that was relevant to their organisation in their daily communication.

Additional functions identified in industry, but not elaborated on in literature, were e-media (termed as multimedia by Macnamara (2002:12)), events, media production, reception, telephony and administrative support. Daily activities identified by industry included meetings, managing people, obtaining information, budget control, and environmental scanning in media. The reason for stating these viewpoints is to illustrate that literature might have an inflated or idealistic view of what corporate communication should be doing in an organisation. From a practical point of view, practitioners are occupied with the daily activities that most managers would have to work through, to survive in the organisation. In coping with meetings, budgets, 'red-tape' and other additional challenges, practitioners have had to be creative in their approach to what is expected of them, and what they are capable of doing. An example of this is the appearance of the administrative support function, where practitioners have a team, based in the communication department that provides administrative support to all the practitioners, in an attempt to minimise the administrative load that the practitioners have.

Regarding reception and telephony, the research conducted in this study, highlighted the importance of including first line communicators into the communication function. This interesting perception maintained that receptionists, call centre operators, and switchboard operators are people that stakeholders would communicate to on a regular basis, and that they would most likely be one of the first employees that the stakeholders encountered, when contacting the organisation. For this reason, these employees were either categorised into the communication department or worked closely with them, especially for messaging purposes. Incidentally, Cutlip *et al.* (1994:80) as well as Rensburg and Cant (2003:62) recognise the position of secretaries as having a 'frontline' function in influencing an organisation's image. This is also associated with the fact that they are the first point of contact. Although the inclusion of secretaries in literature has to do with the hierarchy of the communication department, industry has embraced and expanded this concept and built communication functions around it. As highlighted in Chapter 6, an organisation made

it the responsibility of the receptionists (considered as part of the communication's team), to do site inspections to ensure that the image of the physical building was maintained. Moreover, call centres were given messages from the communication department to use in there telephone conversations. It is important to emphasise that despite the fact that Cutlip *et al.* (1994:80) as well as Rensburg and Cant (2003:62) made mention of these frontline employee positions, other authors have not encapsulated this notion at all.

According to the perceptions of literature and industry, there are clearly, to some extent, discrepancies regarding the goals, functions and activities of corporate communication. Markedly, although basic guidelines are adhered to, different organisations make use of corporate communication for different purposes, and the intangible value created as a result, would differ for each. Imperative to the discussion of performance measurement, the tool that measures corporate communication, should address its goals, functions and activities relevant to the organisation, and that these should be determined by the purpose of corporate communication in that organisation. Evidently, it becomes clear that the performance measurement tool for corporate communication would need to be customised for each organisation. Consequently, in order for the measurement to be accurate, the organisation would need to determine what the purpose and role of the corporate communication function serves in that organisation. The measurement tool would then need to measure whether this is being achieved, and that would determine the intangible value contributed by the corporate communication department. This realisation guides the discussion towards the findings of performance measurement in literature and industry.

7.3 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Literature claims that performance measurement assesses the organisation's strategy by monitoring the achievement of objectives and activities (Kaplan & Norton, 2004:10; Ritter, 2003:44-48; Robson, 2005:138). Industry does not differ in this outlook and also concurred that performance measurement should remain quantitative for reporting and benchmarking purposes. Although both literature and industry identify the need to measure qualitatively, it would appear that some organisations (especially smaller organisations), still struggle with the qualitative concept. Despite this, it can be assumed that considerable growth has already taken place in the area of performance measurement and that senior managers are realising the need to measure other areas of the business, apart from the financial

component. In organisations where performance measurement models were customised, the presence of multiple criteria, including intangible assets, were guaranteed.

7.3.1 Organisational performance measurement models

The types of organisational performance measurement models employed in industry, appeared to resemble that of the Balanced Scorecard. It was explained that the Balanced Scorecard was found to be easier to implement than other performance measurement models. Additionally, where the Balanced Scorecard was not employed in its original form, in an organisation, personalised renditions following the same concepts were incorporated.

Both literature and industry highlight important aspects about performance measurement models, and these viewpoints are in agreement with each other. Amongst other things, the success of performance measurement systems and models, require the support and buy-in of the senior managers. The notions continue that performance measurement systems and models should flow from the vision and strategy of the organisation, measure all levels of the organisation, provide information on which to base decisions, and attempt to establish continual improvement (Kaplan & Norton 2004:10, Robson, 2005:141; Sim & Koh, 2001:18; Tangen, 2004:727). Respondents in this study explained that the performance measurement model or system should be as uncomplicated as possible to ensure that implementation is successful. For this reason, the assistance of computer-aided software applications was recommended by both literature and industry in aiding the employment of the model (Hasan & Tibbits, 2000:442).

Importantly, both literature and industry validate that the performance measurement system or model does foster a culture, and is effective when implemented with a credible reward initiative (Robson, 2005:145). Industry emphasises the importance of a credible reward system. If rewards are not allocated as originally expected, employees become demotivated and their performance becomes minimal. Emphasis needs to be placed on this comment, especially as literature does not elaborate on it. Where comments made by respondents, in this study, highlighted how employees were driven by bonuses and monetary incentives, it seems logical that inconsistencies in providing these incentives would alter the expectations of the employees. In other words, as seen from industry, the success of the performance measurement systems relies heavily on the ability to reward the employees. Rewards that are not provided create gaps in the employees'

expectations, this disconfirms trust levels, and it ultimately results in a lack of employee drive. There are of course other means with which to reward employees, which do not rely on monetary compensation. Industry mentioned employee recognition as well as receiving remunerated time away from work, in the form of an afternoon off. These methods are also recommended, but the emphasis is on the fact that the reward system should be consistent, and deliver when promised.

It has become evident, from the above, that performance measurement models and systems have started incorporating HR concepts, such as performance appraisals, reward systems, training and skills development programmes, self-evaluation and peer-evaluation systems, promotions, transfer programmes and more (Seang, 2003:4). This is an important development as the intangible value of people in an organisation has been realised.

Noted in both literature and industry, is that IT organisations as well as smaller originations typically do not utilise performance measurement models or systems (T-Systems, 2004:5). Both sources do advise, however, that organisations begin to establish a measurement model in the early stages of the development, especially in an IT organisation where change occurs rapidly (Robbins, 1987:11). The performance measurement model should be able to adapt to the changes, and benefit the organisation during insecure macro economical forces.

From the above discussion, it appears that organisations employing performance measurement systems or models are following the recommendations of literature. The notion, however, remains, “What gets measured gets managed” (Puth, 2002:92).

7.3.2 Corporate communication measurement

The belief in literature is that practitioners and executives deem it impossible to measure the real impact of corporate communication, due to its intangible nature (Macnamara 2002:5; Ritter, 2003:44; Simmons & Watson, 2006:1-14). From industry, it is clear that consultants do not conduct research, unless the client has requested it or unless there is sufficient budget and planning done. Macnamara (2005:5) warns about this approach and teaches practitioners about employing the best practice models of evaluation to assist in evaluating their communication efforts. Despite this, the consultants interviewed in this

study, as well as the internal communication practitioners, were not aware of these best practice models, and commented that they did not believe in using a model that is designed to suit all circumstances. According to the respondents, measurement was conducted as needed and according to the purpose of the measurement.

Additionally, literature highlights that measuring tools used by the market, in the communication industry, are focused on measuring tangible outputs (such as media analysis), which undermines the intangible value that corporate communication brings to an organisation (Gorpe & Saran, 2005:3; Macnamara, 2002:5; Phillips, 2001:227; PR Influences, 2003c; Watson, 2005:1). For this reason, Hallahan (2000:509) observes that communication is becoming increasingly asymmetric. In the organisations where communication is a fully functional department, represented on all three levels (strategic, managerial, and technical), and has buy-in from the CEO or board of directors, these statements do not hold true. The findings from research indicated that communication was measured according to the outcomes required for both the department and individuals. In some cases, these were tangible outputs and in other cases, these were intangible outcomes. The example of the intangible value, namely offering advice to other divisions, was measured by a client review meeting. What is fundamentally evident from this situation is that these organisations embedded communication into the daily performance measurement system used by the organisation. These systems ensured that unique 'evaluation models' were developed to evaluate every communication campaign endeavoured into. An example of this was the 'tick sheet' mentioned by and respondent in this study. Importantly, the results of the evaluation tools were integrated into the performance measurement system, and formed part of the performance measurement process for the individual, the department, and the organisation.

From the above, it would seem that the best practice evaluation models are appropriately suited for consultants (Macnamara 2002:5). The results of the best practice models may be utilised as a form of accountability, and enable the consultants to achieve competitive advantage. This is especially influential if the results can be integrated into the performance measurement models of the internal communication practitioners. This approach would be beneficial to both parties, in organisations where the function of corporate communication is to project-manage their suppliers and consultants.

Alternatively, in situations where the organisational performance measurement model does not integrate corporate communication as a function, and does not specify methods of evaluation for communication campaigns, the best practice models may be employed, to obtain the evaluation results, required for each communication campaign. Once again, the underlying point here is that the results must be fed back into the measurement tool, used by the rest of the organisation, otherwise the results will not make sense to the decision makers, and the efforts of communication people will not be realised.

7.3.3 Integrating communication in performance measurement models

Considering that the above section, communication measurement, has discussed industry's ability to integrate corporate communication in the performance measurement model, a discussion surrounding this may be elaborated on.

Highlighted in Chapter 1, the Organisation Theory attributes the survival of organisations with their capacity to remain open systems (Robbins, 1987:11). In addition, an open system approach extends the life-cycle of the organisation (Robbins, 1987:16). The life-cycle is influenced by the organisation's ability to communicate, and the ability to measure its performance (Robbins, 1987:16). Industry corresponded in its comments about an organisation's success and its ability to communicate. Comments were also made about the need to measure and reward any important endeavour, with which the organisation wished to have success. Considering both viewpoints as well as the aforementioned statements of the corporate communication's support function, it can be deduced that a goal of an organisation could be to gain the ability to communicate, and that the corporate communication department's outcome should assist with this. Additionally, these exercises should be measured in the performance measurement model and rewarded accordingly.

Something worth considering at this point in the discussion is whether the measurement of communication should cease at the communication department. Grunig and Grunig (2001:22-23) established that communication should be measured on a programme level, a functional level, an organisational level and a societal level. This implies that the measurement of communication should extend from the communication department to the entire organisation. Industry's explanation of corporate communication's custodian role, is

in line with this concept, especially as the communication practitioners cannot control all the communication that occurs throughout the organisation all the time. For this reason, it would make sense for the performance measurement model to measure the communication efforts of the corporate communication department, as well as the communication efforts of the organisation. In this way, the intangible value of communication may be captured, as well as the ability for the corporate communication department to facilitate the organisation in its ability to communicate.

In literature, Ritter (2003:48) as well as Vos and Schoemaker (2004:2) have ventured down the road of developing evaluation models that align corporate communication and the organisation with an organisational performance measurement model. Both these models are based on the Balanced Scorecard and contribute significantly to the situation corporate communication faces today. Where Ritter (2003:48) provides guidelines as to developing a corporate communication scorecard, Vos and Schoemaker (2004:2) have set communication perspectives. Although these models award the communication department the opportunity to measure their efforts with the same tool that the rest of the organisation, the fundamental gap involves the inability to measure the organisation's ability to communicate.

Hamrefors (2004:16) explains that an outcome of the organisation should be to obtain the ability to communicate. It is for this reason that the entire organisation, including each employee, should be measured according to his or her ability to communicate. Measuring the communication department alone, will not provide the organisation with the information needed to determine whether the organisation has attained the ability to communicate. These notions imply that communication (in general) may be able to be ingrained into a performance measurement model. Considering this assumption from a KPI perspective, it could be said that the organisation should have a communication KPI, as should each department and individual in the organisation. This coincides with literature's expectation that KPIs should be reinforced on every level of the organisation (Seang, 2003:9).

Another underlying principle, that motivates the concept of measuring communication throughout the entire organisation, is presented in the Organisation Theory's Strategic-Constituencies Approach (Robbins, 1987:31-49). This theory states that the organisation

should identify strategic relationships that can assist the organisation in its performance and survival. This theory proposes that a successful organisation is one that satisfies the demands of those constituencies (or stakeholders) who support the organisation's continued existence (Robbins, 1987:38). The research conducted for this study also presented a situation where the communication department assisted senior managers in identifying five key leaders as strategic stakeholders. Relationships were developed with these strategic stakeholders in an attempt to benefit the organisation. Robbins (1987:42) explains how operationalising this theory decreases the chance that the organisation ignores, or severely upsets, a stakeholder group, whose power could significantly hinder the organisation's operations. By integrating communication in the performance measurement model, that measures the communication throughout the organisation, the strategic stakeholders for each success area of the organisation, can be identified and ownership of the communication for that relationship, can be assigned. In this way, the organisation would be in a position to identify strategic stakeholders at all levels of the organisation, and would be able to be proactive in the dealings with the communication to each stakeholder group. This theory is significant in the notion of measuring the organisation's ability to communicate, because it attempts to measure the most important areas of communication or presents a platform from which to initiate the measurement of communication in the most fundamental areas of the organisation.

In creating a communication culture, it was stated by both literature and industry, that a culture can be fostered by the performance measurement model of the organisation (Robson, 2005:145). By formalising the communication, and reinforcing it with the performance measurement system, each executive, manager and employee is sensitised to the need to communicate. In integrating communication into the performance measurement system, a culture can be established, where communication is embraced and valued. From the research conducted in this study, a respondent employed in a large IT organisation, stated that the culture was one of communication, because of the pace at which things changed, and since everything was measured. Developing a communication culture, according to literature and industry, encouraged communication and led to less of a centralised approach to communication (Robson, 2005:140). The result of a communicating culture builds top-down communication as well as bottom-up communication (Hartman, 2002:19). Examples of this are situations where ideas, developed by senior managers, are implemented, due to effective communication.

Conversely, ideas conceptualised by employees are communicated to top management and in so doing, reach the decision making table.

Another aspect that fosters culture is the leadership of the organisation (Robson, 2005:145). Where communication is embedded in a performance measurement model that evaluates the senior managers as well, it may encourage communication awareness to initiate from a board level. From there communication awareness could be driven, by the senior managers, to every division, as the performance measurement model cascades through to every person in the organisation.

From the above, it can be stated that developing key performance indicators for corporate communication should not only focus on measuring the communication efforts of the communication department, but also measure the communication efforts of the organisation, departments and individuals. This will provide the organisation with the correct information in determining whether the ability to communicate is being achieved. This can be done by creating KPIs, on every level of the organisation, for communication to strategise constituencies. Furthermore, linking the KPIs to the performance measurement model may reinforce a communication culture, which will ultimately encourage the organisation to communicate.

7.3.4 Drawing communication measurement ideas from IT related movements

Ironically, the IT industry, known for its lack of effective communication (Melendez, 2004:5), has some advanced ideas of measuring communication. From the research conducted in this study, a respondent mentioned how the communication department had become responsible for mapping the communication workflow for business processes related to the ISO 9000 standards. The respondent explained how beneficial it was to identify each step of the communication process, because it specified who had to be communicated to, with what it was in connection with, and where the communication would follow. Additionally, the respondent commented how this procedure broke down complicated processes, allowing everyone involved to understand what was expected from them, especially from a communication point of view. This exemplar brings an entirely different perspective into the idea of measuring communication, which has not been

elaborated on in literature. Approaching the measurement of communication from this point of view, applies post-structuralism in the way that the structure of each business process is broken down, to make sense of it and define it positivistically. In the IT world, this is known as Business Process Management (BPM), where the business processes of an organisation are precisely defined, streamlined, automated and measured with the use of KPIs (FlowCentric, 2005).

An example of a simple process is schematically provided in Figure 7.1, to illustrate hypothetically, how this study's respondent would have broken down the business processes, pertaining to the ISO 9000 standard. Notice must be taken that this workflow diagram incorporates an alternate business process that is a lot less complex than the ISO 9000 standard; however, the same principle is applied (FlowCentric, 2005).

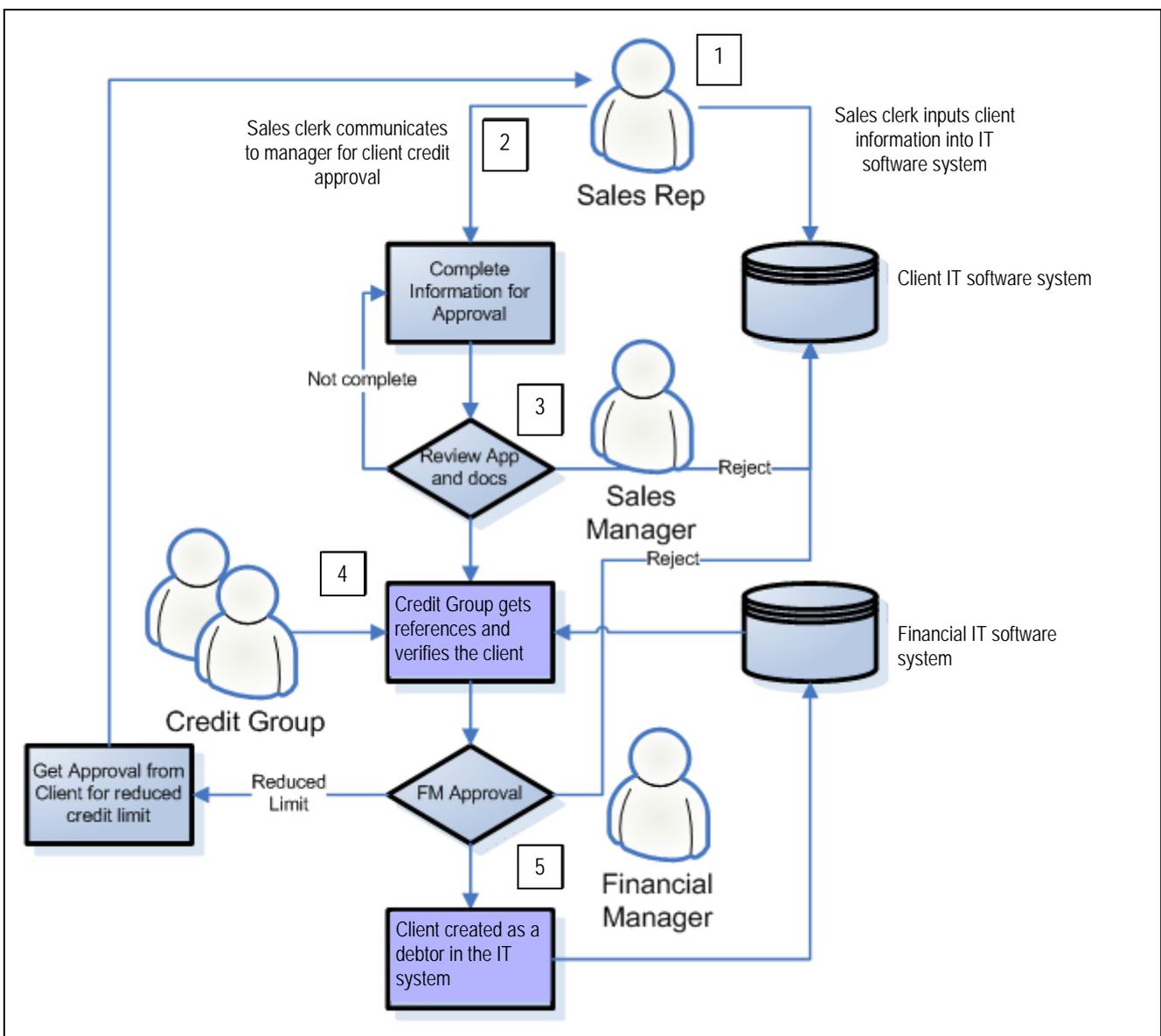
In this example, the entire process relating to the approval of a client's credit application is broken down. The purpose is to ensure that credit, awarded to clients is controlled throughout the organisation. This will validate whether the organisation is in a financial position to allow clients to pay on credit, and verify whether the clients have a proven credit reference. Moreover, the process ensures that each person who should be notified is communicated to timeously, and that the software applications are updated simultaneously. This process pursues the following steps:

1. The process initiates with the sales clerk (referred to as the sales rep in the diagram) who inputs the details of the new client into the software application. In this way, client information is available to the rest of the organisation.
2. From here, the sales clerk completes a 'request for new debtor' form and sends it to the sales manager for approval. This serves as the communication to the manager informing him that a client wishes to purchase on credit.
3. The sales manager either approves or declines the application, or sends it back to the sales clerk, if the information is not complete or up to standard. This is an extremely important step as the quality of the communication is determined here. As mentioned by a respondent in Chapter 6, a qualitative means of measuring communication could be done through 'quality checks' performed by managers. This step of the process has been an example of that. To continue with the process, if the request is approved by the manager, it is sent to financial department (credit group) for additional information

to be encapsulated. If rejected, the information is inputted into the IT system with the client details, where all sales clerks will be informed about the rejected client, who may not apply for credit purchases with the organisation.

4. At the credit group, the client is verified by means of references, and a credit limit is determined, which is then communicated to the financial manager.
5. The last step is where the financial manager either approves or declines the credit limit, which in both cases is inputted in the IT system, notifying the relevant people. Alternatively, the credit limit can be adjusted, in which case the sales clerk is notified to tell the client.

Figure 7.1: A workflow example highlighting the communication process of a business process



Adapted from: FlowCentric Solutions (2005)

Flow diagrams graphically depict the process from the start to the end, and in doing so, the communication responsibilities become apparent. This is because every activity would typically need some form of communication, while moving from one person to the next for approval or modification. Additionally, FlowCentric (2005) explains that the concept of BPM is to provide an IT solution that automates the entire process (and the communication thereof), to ensure that the relevant people and software applications are communicated to, where and whenever needed. More importantly, KPIs can be created for each step of the process so that a KPI dashboard may be calculated continuously, in order for managers to see where bottlenecks in the process occur (Bauer, 2004).

The reason for including this workflow aspect into this discussion is to highlight how the value of effective communication has already been identified in movements such as BPM. Furthermore, linking communication KPIs to KPIs identified in these processes will greatly enhance the ability to measure communication on every level of the organisation. For this reason, it can safely be said that it is possible to measure the value of communication, especially when broken down into separate business processes. The value of communication may be seen in the way it assists with optimising each activity, for example, the person responsible had taken ownership and ensured that communication (with the correct message to the correct people) occurred timeously, and that duplication of communication was avoided. This decreases the time that the entire process took to complete, and as a result, the cost of the entire process was minimised. These outcomes ultimately result in ROI, which is what most senior managers desire to see (FlowCentric, 2005). Moreover, if the communication department approached communication processes in the same way as BPM addresses business processes, areas where communication may be lacking can be identified, allocated a KPI and measured. In this way, communication can be entrenched into every process of the organisation.

Incorporating the above in the development of KPIs for communication employs the notion of employee engagement, mentioned by industry in the research of this study. By identifying who would take ownership of what communication, elements of communication relating to a staff member will be assigned and other elements will be assigned to the communication department. Both groups will then be measured accordingly. By empowering employees to communicate, the goal of developing an organisation, that has

the ability to communicate, may be realised. This supports the argument presented in the research of this study that the communication department cannot possibly take the responsibility for the entire organisation's communication.

7.3.5 Measuring communication with or without a communication department

The Organisation Theory, as discussed in Chapter 1, explains that organisations go through patterns of predictable change as they grow. This is referred to as the organisational life-cycle. Relevant to this study is the type of communication conducted at each stage of the life-cycle. Initially in the entrepreneurial stage, communication is not formalised and is seldom actively managed (Robbins, 1987:16). Ironically, as resources are stretched to cope with the growth, little attention is awarded to communication, especially internally. As the organisations evolve, the communication becomes increasingly difficult to control and standardise, and in an attempt to do so, communication is suddenly centralised (Robbins, 1987:17). Robbins (1987:73-75) explains that while centralised structures attempt to increase the control over activities, it limits the ability to be adaptive, which threatens the organisation's ability to remain an open system.

A number of IT organisations in South Africa are entrepreneurial organisations that provide services to niche market segments (T-Systems, 2004:5). These organisations are typically small to medium in size, because most of the larger IT organisations are owned internationally. It is common to find that the smaller IT organisations are stretched in their resource capabilities (T-Systems, 2004:5), and industry revealed that they do not have communication departments to assist in their communication to strategic stakeholders. Additionally, respondents interviewed in this study, indicated that the internal communication, in the smaller IT organisations, is considered ineffective and problematic.

The Balanced Scorecard is known for its adaptability and flexibility in adjusting to any industry or organisational size and structure. As mentioned in Chapter 4, where the Balanced Scorecard does not sufficiently contend with the organisational environment, it is customised to suit the organisational context, keeping the principles of the performance model the same (Ahn, 2005:9-10; Kaplan & Norton, 1996:333). Despite the fact that small IT organisations may not have corporate communication departments, they still need to

focus actively on their communication, to grow and survive (Robbins, 1987:16). For this reason, development of KPIs that integrate communication, into the performance measurement model on every level, should be endeavoured, regardless of whether the organisation has a communication department or not. As the organisation matures and is in a position to employ a communication department, the systems and procedures will be in place to ensure effective communication, and the communication department can step into the position of a support function from the start. The organisation can then also obtain and maintain the ability to communicate from an early stage of development. In addition, the culture will have cultivated where communication is formalised, decreasing the need for a centralised structure in the later years (Robbins, 1987:16).

7.4 DEVELOPING KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR COMMUNICATION

It is clear from the above, that KPIs can be created for the corporate communication department and practitioners, as well as communication in general. This is an important concept to embrace when developing KPIs. Understanding this allows the discussion to award attention to the development of KPIs.

Theory and practice corresponded in their viewpoints on developing KPIs, however, Chapters 4 and 6 presented KPIs that differed considerably in their appearance. Both literature and industry preserve that KPIs are rationalised, and result in an outcome. In other words, the KPIs should indicate what an organisation, division, team or individual should achieve, after a given period (with the sufficient resources), that adds to the development of the organisation as a whole. Besides, KPIs could follow a quantitative or qualitative approach, depending on the outcome to be achieved (Howe, 2004:46; Ritter, 2003:45; Seang, 2003:9). From the research conducted in this study, it was noted that qualitative KPIs were inclined to feature in the senior levels of the organisation, and the quantitative KPIs had the propensity to be operationally focused, featuring in the employees' scorecards.

Furthermore, KPIs are to be presented on all levels of the organisation, and these are to be limited to approximately five per level to ensure successful achievement. Moreover, KPIs have to be measurable and allocated a time-period, additionally KPIs may be weighted according to importance (cf Harrison, 2006a; Howe, 2004:46; Neely *et al.*, 1997:1140; Ritter, 2003:45; Seang, 2003:9; Sinclair & Zairi, 1995:55). Over and above

these aforementioned guidelines, industry referred to the fact that KPIs should stretch the organisation, division or individual but remain reachable. This ensures that growth takes place, and that employees are challenged but not overworked. In addition, on an individual level, industry linked KPIs to the job specifications or descriptions of the employees, to ensure they spent their efforts in the areas where they were supposed to do so.

From the above guidelines, it appears relatively simple to develop KPIs, however examples featured in Chapters 4 and 6, illustrate how that KPIs of organisations differ considerably. The reason for this is that KPIs are dependant on the organisational context, the strategic objectives of the organisation, the purpose for which they were written, as well as the leadership style of the organisation (Ritter, 2003:56-58). Fundamentally, authors agreed that KPIs have to be compiled from a performance measurement model or system that is strategically aligned to the vision and goals of the organisation (Cullen *et al.*, 2003:7; Kaplan & Norton, 2004:10; Seang, 2003:2). Consequently, a set of KPIs cannot be created and simply implemented in an organisation. For this reason, this study cannot develop a set of corporate communication KPIs, which can be slotted into the performance measurement model of different IT organisations. The most prominent reason is that IT organisations employ different models or systems of performance measurement, and would have different strategic goals and contexts. The process of developing KPIs, however, remains the same, and this is where this study suggests a means, by which IT organisations can develop their own corporate communication KPIs that are, customised to suit their environment and has the impact needed.

As established, the two most important criteria for conceptualising KPIs are the fact that it has to be custom-developed for every organisation, and that it needs to be grounded in an organisational performance measurement model or system. Seang (2003:2) explains that not just any performance measurement model or system will be adequate for the development of KPIs. The first reason is highlighted in Chapter 4, where it is argued that performance measurement models need to be able to measure intangible assets. The second reason is noted from the research conducted in this study, where industry declares that the performance measurement model has to include a credible reward system, in order for it to be effective. For this reason, models such as the Balanced Scorecard are ideal for developing KPIs.

By utilising the Balanced Scorecard as an example, it is recommended that communication be entrenched in the performance measurement model and reinforced with communication KPIs.

7.5 THE INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION BALANCED SCORECARD

Having taken the above analysis into consideration, recommendations surrounding corporate communication's issues of measurement (concerning strategic alignment and intangible value), might be addressed, by entrenching communication into the actual performance measurement model of the organisation.

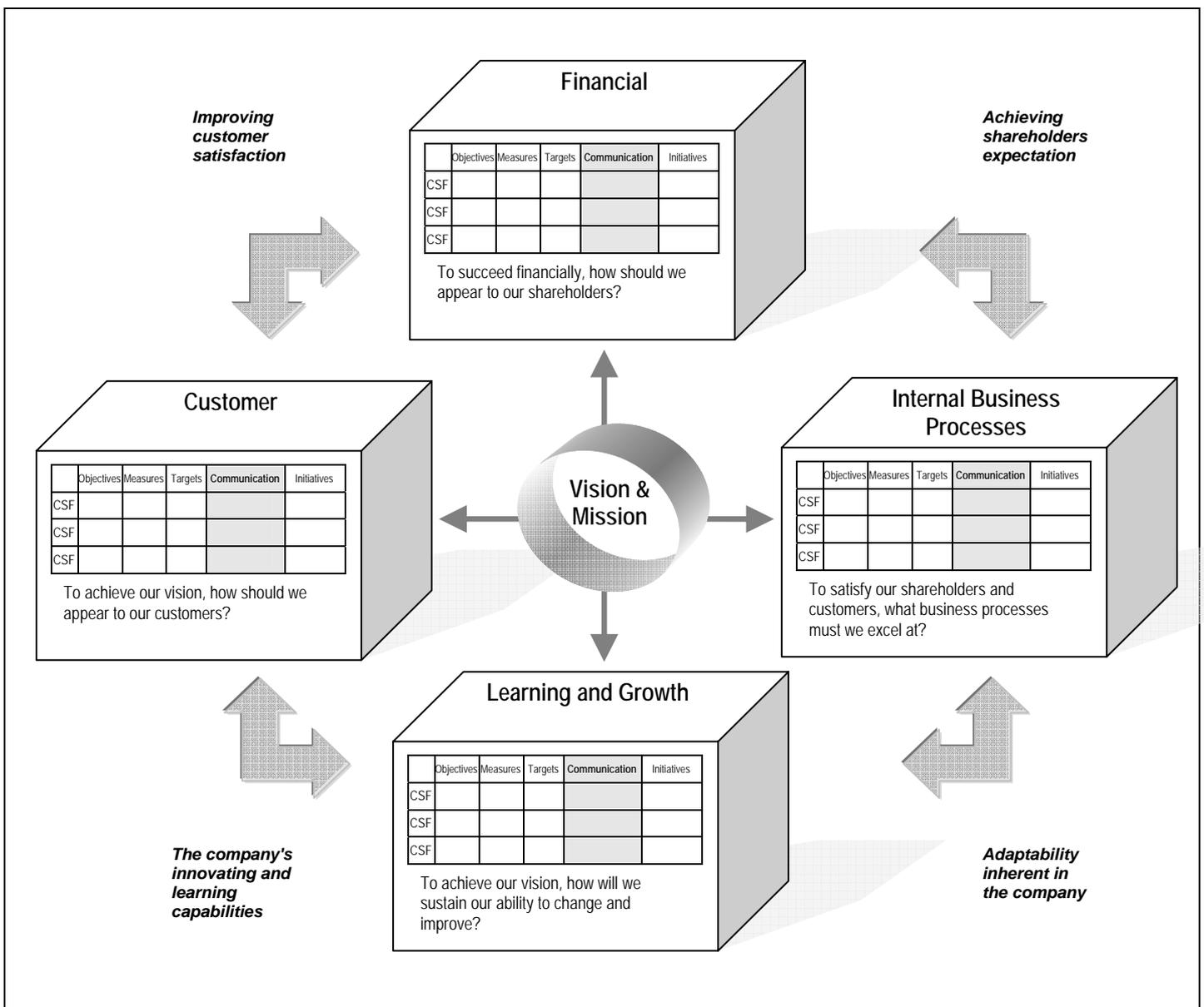
Due to the popularity of the Balanced Scorecard, it has been used in this study to demonstrate how integrating communication in the performance measurement model might be accomplished. The concept is to take a performance measurement model, such as the Balanced Scorecard, and introduce a communication aspect that is embedded into the corporate, divisional, and individual scorecards. As described in Chapter 4, the Balanced Scorecard consists of four perspectives, and each of those perspectives has a CSF that would determine the strategic objectives of that area of the business. Within each CSF the Balanced Scorecard ascertains what objectives, measures, targets and initiatives will be needed for each CSF. Ownership is awarded, and the strategic objective along with its activities and measurement, is cascaded through all the divisions down to each employee, and reinforced with KPIs.

In the Balanced Scorecard, communication can be entrenched by inserting a communication column in between the target and initiative columns represented in each perspective. An illustration of this is provided in Figure 7.2.

In this study, this proposal is referred to as the Integrated Communication Balanced Scorecard or the ICBS recommendation, because communication is integrated into the Balanced Scorecard in all perspectives and on all levels of the organisation. By doing this, the question surrounding the communication for that specific CSF, within that specific perspective is, "What communication should take place within this objective, around the specified activities, to be able to reach that target, and how will it be measured?" In this

way, the communication surrounding that specific CSF is determined. The communication column should address who needs to be communicated to (target audience), what must be communicated (message), how frequently must the communication take place, what media or processes need to be employed, and who is going to take responsibility for the communication. The role of the KPIs is to measure the outcome of the communication surrounding that specific CSF, and should be included as one of the set of KPIs surrounding the achievement of the CSF. As the CSF is cascaded down the different levels of the organisation, so the KPIs (in terms of determining the outcome) will be created specifically for each department or employee's role.

Figure 7.2: The Integrated Communication Balanced Scorecard



Adapted from: Kaplan and Norton (1996:9)

7.5.1 Practical examples of the Integrated Communication Balanced Scorecard

A hypothetical example in the financial perspective of an IT organisation could be that the strategic objective of the organisation is to strengthen its financial position by 20% in the following year. The corporate CSF factors surrounding this strategic objective have been identified as the need to increase share sales by 10%, and the need to increase market share by 10%. Each of these CSFs would have their own objectives, targets, initiatives (or activities) and means of measurement. The communication column would therefore address the communication surrounding each CSF. Firstly, it would determine who would need to receive the communication. In the both the CSF of increasing share sales and market share, the target audience would be potential investors and customers respectively. As a result, the senior manager of the department responsible for investor relations would take ownership of the communication to the potential investors, and the senior manager of the marketing department would take ownership of the communication to potential customers. The senior manager of the communication department would take ownership of ensuring that the support needed to assist both departments, in communicating to these stakeholders groups, occurs. Additionally, the senior manager of communication will be in the position to provide advice to the other departments. The communication KPIs surrounding each CSF would relate to the communication outcome wished to be achieved. In both CSFs of each department, the change of behaviour will be the ultimate outcome of the communication, where potential investors buy shares, and potential clients buy products or services.

Continuing with this example, logically, the departmental scorecards would reflect these CSFs and further define in greater detail, who should receive this communication. In the CSF for increased market share, the obvious target audience would be potential clients; an IT organisation may identify their partners as a target audience in this CSF, because sales are typically made through partners. Partners would need to be reached to encourage repeat purchases in new solutions with existing clients or to penetrate new markets by the attraction of new clients. Although marketing officially owns the communication in this CSF, the channel managers need to become involved as well. The communication department would therefore assist the marketing department as well as the channel managers in sending messages about initiatives aimed at increasing market share. Newsletters, for example, can be written by the communication department, but the information required for writing the newsletters need to come from the marketing

department and channel managers. The channel managers will also be responsible for sending the newsletter to each of their partners, and obtaining feedback from them. In terms of KPIs, the marketing department will have the overall KPI of change in behaviour, and this is measurable by sales. It is for this reason that initiatives to obtain sales should be created and managed by the marketing department. The same principle applies for increasing share sales.

On a lower level, the channel managers will have a KPI dealing with the outcome of the communication to partners. This KPI could be linked to a specific KPI in the job description of each channel manager. For example, a communication outcome could be the partners' awareness of activities and happenings in the organisation. This ties in with the channel manager's normal KPI (specified by the job description), revolving around disseminating information and receiving feedback from partners, so that they are knowledgeable on the available training, new products / solutions, partner meetings, and company events throughout the year. The measurement of this KPI is conducted by a partner audit, where partners rate the performance of the channel manager, in information dissemination. In the case of the communication KPI, partners can rate the degree, to which the communication efforts from the channel manager helped the partner attain more sales. Additionally, feedback should be measured, where the communication KPI measurement would test how the partners' feedback was communicated back to the organisation. In doing this, the communication aspect does not deviate from the channel manager's job specification to keep partners informed, importantly however, it ties the communication surrounding this aspect, back to the strategic objective of increasing the financial position of the company. In this way, the channel managers become sensitised to his / her communication role in the bigger picture, and the addition of unnecessary KPIs are minimised.

The communication representative at each level will be able to advise the organisation or division on what should be communicated, how frequently, through what media, and how the measurement of it could take place. Where applicable, the communication department may even take ownership of an initiative, such as a partner event, aimed at disseminating the messages. Once again, communication practitioners employed to organise and manage events are simply performing the activities identified in their normal KPIs; however, the partner event and the messaging to the partner event will be tied to the

strategic objective of attaining market share. The same measures used to evaluate the effectiveness of any event can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the partner event.

Where this integrated communication approach makes a difference, is in the thinking of communication. This thinking is drilled down to every individual, in the same way that the channel manager had to focus on the communication conducted with each partner. Similarly, every employee would have to have some type of stakeholder relationship, where the communication thereof, becomes the responsibility of the individual. These could range from internal to external stakeholders and vary in the degree of importance. Encouraging communication sensitivity like this will sensitise people who are not inclined to communicate effectively (such as some engineers, financiers, IT practitioners and managers, who stereotypically regard communication as irrelevant to their fields of expertise). Where this sort of formalised communication becomes extremely beneficial is when communication to stakeholders, that seem insignificant, is identified and improved. Where a financial manager is responsible for debt collection, the financial manager frequently communicates with debtors and in most cases, the communication is unpleasant and unrewarding for both parties. This financial manager needs to understand his / her role in the CFS of this strategic objective, aimed at increasing the financial performance of the company, to ensure that the image built up by the other departments is reinforced, even to this end. For this reason, the entire communication process surrounding the acquirement of new clients, the provision of IT solutions or services, the retrieval of payment, and the follow-up communication, should be mapped out, to ensure that every person understands their role in the process.

By integrating communication in every perspective of the performance measurement model, communication will be addressed in different areas of the business. This will result in a strategic objective with CSFs for each perspective, and consideration will be awarded to the communication surrounding it. If the Learning and Growth perspective encourages employees to obtain qualifications, a communication consideration would be whether the managers of those employees report on the qualifications obtained, and whether these people were formally congratulated for their efforts. In this way morale is increased by public recognition and the efforts of employees are communicated and noted throughout the organisation. In this case, a hypothetical example would be that the manager would

7.6 MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

This study presents various implications, especially to managers in the communication discipline as well as managers in the business management discipline. Considering the implications for communication managers, this study provides evidence that the intangible value of communication can be measured. Additionally, the study provides practical examples of how this can be done.

7.6.1 Management implications to communication managers

From a communication manager's perspective, it is evident that all the communication practitioners should be aware of what the organisation expects of the communication department, whether a performance measurement model exists in the organisation or not. This is because, determining the purpose of the communication department (e.g., support function), reveal what value or outcomes will be created from fulfilling the purpose. Communication managers should ensure that they establish a means to measure the outcome (or value) created, and this can be done by breaking up the outcome into various forms of evaluation, which should relate to the functions and activities identified to achieve the purpose of the department. For this reason, every tangible contribution should be recorded such as event evaluation, newsletter evaluation, and intranet evaluation. In addition, every intangible contribution should be noted and measured qualitatively, by the stakeholder group to whom the intangible contribution was provided. For example, media relationships should be measured in terms of the expectation of the journalists. Similarly, this will apply to 'internal clients' to whom support and advice was provided, and this should continue with other stakeholders, of whom the communication department has been awarded ownership.

The most crucial managerial implication for corporate communication managers is that the results of every form of evaluation must be integrated into the performance measurement system, or communicated to the senior managers. KPIs are the most likely form of result to attract the attention of leaders. Where organisations do not have a performance measurement system, these results should be communicated in weekly or monthly management meetings, where the communication manager will need to take the initiative to integrate the happenings with the rest of the organisation. Where a communication budget is not awarded for research and measurement, communication managers will once

again have to utilise their own initiative, in finding creative ways by which to evaluate. This could even be conducted informally, where stakeholders are casually questioned about their satisfaction levels.

The final message to communication managers is that in the role of championing this young discipline, the only way in which corporate communication will be noticed, is by measuring its success. Where this is not being done by the leaders of the organisation, it is up to the communication managers to manage and measure communication efforts.

7.6.2 Management implications to business managers

The implications to business managers concern the fact that leaders will need to change their mindsets considerably, concerning corporate communication and the competitive pressures of today's macro-economical forces. This study has repeatedly highlighted how the importance of 'soft / tacit' aspects, in organisational performance, has surfaced (Seang, 2003:4). Leaders that are aware of these changes, and have spotted the trend, may be in a better position to adjust to the aforementioned pressures. In an attempt to become an open system organisation, leaders and practitioners will have to test whether they communicate effectively, rather than use their 'gut feel' (Gorpe & Saran, 2005:11-17; Phillips, 2001:227). This study provides a platform, from which leaders can determine whether their communication, as well as the organisations communication, is optimised. In addition, business managers will also be able to determine if the corporate communication department is aiding the organisation with its ability to communicate.

Another managerial implication is that organisations that do not have corporate communication departments, can begin the process of effective communication, by following the principles associated with developing communication KPIs, as a means to integrate communication into the performance measurement system of the organisation. Moreover, this can be conducted in an organisation of any size or structure.

It is imperative that the communication component be in a position where it will encourage co-operation. Recalling the example provided by a respondent from this study, the leaders of an organisation had identified that communication was a problem area in the

organisation. Research then confirmed the results and highlighted the areas that needed to be addresses. Communication was, accordingly disproportionately weighted in the performance measurement system to ensure results. The weighting of 12 out of 20 ensured that it had a strong enough impact to be taken seriously by everyone on every level of the organisation. It is evident that for something as tacit as communication in the workplace, drastic measures have to be taken, before it is deemed important enough to receive attention. The elevation of communication to the level where it is noticeable by everyone might be the only way in which the importance of communication and successively the importance of corporate communication will be understood.

7.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As explained in Chapter 5, a limited number of respondents were interviewed in this study due to the restricted target population. Although the length of the interviews did provide the depth needed for the study, a larger sample size could have been beneficial to the study. Furthermore, findings illustrated how corporate communication was greatly influenced by the size of the organisation. It might have been beneficial to include internal practitioners from small, medium and large organisations in the sample size.

Continuing with the sample size, the target audience for the subgroup internal communication practitioners had to be opened to practitioners that were not employed in an IT organisation. While the information gathered from these respondents was helpful for the provision of examples where successful communication departments operate and are measured, greater insight into the workings of more IT organisations could have been advantageous. Additionally, the samples were only collected from the geographical region of Gauteng. Although the majority of the head offices reside in this area, the cultures and operations of South African organisations based in different regions could have added further depth to the results of the study.

Although the qualitative exploratory approach was extensive and informative, in a field where limited literature exists, a quantitative component, extending the findings of the research would have been beneficial, and is a limitation to the study.

In the data analysis process, the use of a thematic content analysis could have limited the data interpretations, as non-verbal cues, such as body language and hesitations were not incorporated in the analysis.

Subjectivity could also have limited the study, especially concerning the generality of the results. In this study's qualitative exploration, the transferability accounted for the generality (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:276). Theoretical ideas were researched in contexts wider than the IT industry, and the findings relating to the Balanced Scorecard, allow the results to be transferred to other contexts.

7.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As indicated above, this study was limited to a qualitative inquiry. Future research could test and expand the findings of this study by conducting quantitative research. Quantitative research testing with the incorporation of communication KPIs in the performance measurement model, such as the Balanced Scorecard, would be profitable to the body of knowledge. Alternatively, even more performance measurement models can be investigated, to determine how to encompass a communication component that will lead to the development of KPIs. Furthermore, the research could be expanded to other industries and organisational sizes.

Hypotheses that could be considered during the research could include whether the communication component of the performance measurement model correlated with the end goals of the organisations, especially goals such as the organisation's ability to communicate. Additionally, it could be determined whether the communication component in the performance measurement model, caused or correlated with the increased performance of the communication department. Another aspect for correspondence could be related to determining whether the communication KPIs integrated with the performance measurement system assisted in minimising the challenges addressed in Chapter 2. Specific reference should be made to the problem associated with the lack of measurement from communication practitioners' and consultants. It would also be advantageous to determine whether the communication component cultivated a culture of effective communication.

Future research concerning corporate communication measurement should integrate aspects such as organisational, employee, and management communication into the bigger picture, by drawing from disciplines such as HR and strategy management, or general business management. Moreover, the concept of employee engagement may be explored in a communication context. This will assist communication practitioners to think broader, and help them to see the bigger picture.

A further consideration would be around the training of business management schools. Students should be taught about the organisation's ability to communicate, in courses such as MBAs. The notion of measuring this communication by means of incorporating communication into performance measurement models should be encouraged, and this will ensure that managers will begin to manage communication actively. This will empower future leaders to value communication and the role that corporate communication plays, and teach them how to employ the concept to benefit their organisation. The South African environment will especially find this beneficial, because multitudes of cultures are required to work together in one organisation.

7.9 CONCLUSION

The world of performance measurement has changed significantly, especially concerning incorporating intangible assets, becoming innovative, being dynamic and attending to the 'softer / tacit' issues of an organisation (De Waal, 2003:669; Seang, 2003:5). Additionally, the world of communication in an organisational context has been encouraged to become objective in its approach to measurement, and strategic in its purpose (Steyn & Puth, 2000:6). Drawing from the premise of the Social-Scientific Scholarship, as a process of inquiry (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005:8), organisations will need to observe and interpret the communication patterns of their stakeholders. Simply using financial and qualitative means to interpret the performance of an organisation is not enough. Furthermore, corporate communication, as a subsystem of the organisation, has to adjust to the objective approach, to be able to interact with the network of interdependent systems comprised in the organisation (Robbins, 1987:10).

Communication forms the basis of the relationships, especially in terms of trust (Sandin & Simolin, 2006:4). If there is no communication, a relationship cannot transfer meaning, and cannot create benefits for the relationship. According to the Social Exchange Theory,

when the costs become greater than the benefits, the relationship will not be pursued by the parties involved (Hallahan, 2000:503). This implies that organisations wishing to survive in a world may have to focus on developing strong and loyal relationships through effective honest communication.

To conclude, developing KPIs for communication that can integrate into the performance measurement model or the organisation might seem idealistic and unattainable to the businessperson, especially as the focus is to ensure that the organisation survives and makes a profit. A person who manages what they eat can lead a more fulfilling and successful life, because meals are planned and consist of the correct nutrients, which keep the body in a healthy physical condition that will be able to cope with the stresses of the day. As essential as eating is, it can be taken for granted and junk food can be administered in the place of nutritious food. In the same way, communication in an organisation is just as essential and needs to be planned and managed on a continual basis. Where the effects of bad eating habits are only visible over a long period; so are the effects of mismanaged communication only visible in the long term, when this continued mismanagement, leads to the downfall of the organisation. Remaining with the notion that, “What is not measured does not get managed”, measuring and managing the communication of the organisation will lead to a more effective communication department, and the strategy (rudder) that steers the ship will be strong enough, to withstand the external forces.

In 1987, Robbins (1987:398-406) correctly predicted that organisations of the future would have increased technology, be in the position to simultaneously centralise and decentralise their structure, have flatter structures, allow people to work from home, find larger and innovative organisations, see them expand to international contexts, and merge with other business disciplines. Just as these predictions seemed unlikely, the forecast that communicating organisations will succeed above those who do not have the ability to communicate seems improbable. However, should Robbins' (1987:398-406) predictions continue to materialise; the communication in organisations will continue to become more complex, forcing leaders to evaluate their communication effectiveness. Measuring communication by means of the performance measurement model is a means by which the leaders of an organisation can face the communication challenge, and hopefully,

embrace the ability to communicate and ensure that when the entire organisation communicates, it does so with excellence.

