



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources and
Agricultural Sciences

Internal communication and its effects on the environmental CSR commitments of organisations

– The employees' perspective

Ulrika Lindstam

Internal communication and its effects on organizations environmental CSR commitments of organisations

- The employee's perspective

Ulrika Lindstam

Supervisor: Lars Hallgren, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,
Department of Urban and Rural Development

Examiner: Lotten Westberg, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences,
Department of Urban and Rural Development

Credits: 30 HEC

Level: Second cycle (A2E)

Course title: Independent Project in Environmental Sciences - Master's thesis

Course code: EX0431

Programme/Education: Environmental Communication and Management – Master's Programme

Place of publication: Uppsala

Year of publication: 2016

Online publication: <http://stud.epsilon.slu.se>

Keywords: internal communication, organization, CSR commitments, horizontal communication

Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Urban and Rural Development

Abstract

Internal communication is conducted between employees when they interact and exchange information. The communication keeps an organization going and is able to produce an outcome. Therefore, internal communication is essential for any organization in order to be able to achieve their commitments. This study is aimed to describe how environmental CSR commitments are affected by the horizontal internal communication within an organization.

In order to answer this has a qualitative research approach been used with semi-structured interviews. The horizontal internal communication is studied at an international consulting business where employees have participated in interviews.

The study shows that environmental CSR commitments of the organization are affected by staff defined environmental aspects in different and sometimes contradicting terms. Different understanding and opinions within the organization have resulted in inefficient and restricted horizontal internal communication. Discordant staff has in turn also affected the priority of environmental aspects within team activities. Employees are not on the same side in how environment should be included in team activities which lead to situations where employees choose not to bring up environmental aspects because they know it's going to cause resistance from other peers.

Division and resistance also make the horizontal integration weak between units in the organization which aggravate cooperation in the horizontal internal communication. This is evident in different team activities team folder where names on documents and subfolders often are confusing and it takes time for employees to find information. Aggravation of cooperation also occurs in and around meetings when information doesn't reach employees who need it. However, cooperation is facilitated in situations where employees help each other to find information. Relations are important for cooperation but today many employees in the organization communicate without any acquaintance. The cooperation would gain from having more diverse experiences of communicating with each other, which also the interviewees agree on.

Keywords: internal communication, organization, environmental CSR commitments, horizontal communication

Foreword

I want to thank the people that have supported and helped me through this study. All help have been appreciated and foremost I want to thank my supervisor at SLU, Lars Hallgren at the department of Urban and Rural Development for good consultations.

Great thanks to my contact person in the organization that helped me to develop the idea of the study and to find employees that could participate in the interviews.

Last but not least I want to thank the employees at the organization who wanted to participate and be interviewed in this study, without you this study would not been possible to perform.

Uppsala, May 2016

Ulrika Lindstam

Table of contents

Abstract

Foreword

Tabel of content.....	5
1 Introduction.....	7
1.1 Background.....	7
1.2 Aim.....	8
2 Concerning corporate social responsibility.....	9
3 Theories.....	11
3.1 Internal communication and its importance in organizations.....	11
3.2 Corporate communication.....	12
3.3 Cooperation in organizations.....	13
3.4 Communication across subunits.....	14
3.5 Communication channels.....	14
3.6 How the theory is used in the study.....	15
4 Method.....	17
4.1 Qualitative research approach.....	17
4.2 Semi-structured interviews.....	17
4.3 Sample.....	19
4.4 Interview execution.....	19
4.5 Data treatment and analysis.....	19
5 Results and discussion.....	21
5.1 Communication between units.....	21
5.2 Employee's interpretation of corporate communication.....	22
5.3 Priority of environmental aspects.....	23
5.4 Cooperation.....	24
5.4.1 Relationships.....	25
5.4.2 Information system Portalen.....	26
5.4.3 Meetings.....	27
6 Conclusions.....	29
References.....	30
Appendix 1.....	33

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

People have changed their view on organizations in the past decades, which have resulted in a society that demands transparency in management of organizations (Cunningham et al., 2010). Organizations have answered to this and increased their transparency with implementing corporate social responsibility (CSR) document, where stakeholders can take part of organizations environmental, social and ethical responsibilities (Arvidsson, 2010). But in order to successfully reach good organizational performance of CSR commitments the internal communication is crucial (Smith et al., 2008).

The world is facing environmental problems as global warming, air pollution and contamination. This is nothing new and something we hear more or less every day. This has caused severe threats towards the planet and its environment. Therefore it's important to deal with human actions within society. (Cunningham et al., 2010) At the same time global environmental problems escalated, there has been technological development which has made the world dramatically smaller. This has affected all parts of the globe but especially been beneficial for organizations. (Dicken, 2011) Organizations are created by people's own interests or advantages in situations where they realise that the best way to achieve their goals are through collective work and not individually (Abrahamsson et al., 2005). Organizations have developed together with the technology which has resulted in many organizations being active on an international level. This has resulted in changed production, consumption and transportation patterns all over the globe. (Dicken, 2011) People's awareness of environmental and social situations on earth has increased during the 21st century (Cunningham et al., 2010), and raised many questions for these organizational patterns among the public. For example organizations' relationship with other organizations, work conditions and affects on society and the environment (Dicken, 2011). This has created public mistrust and caused substantial pressure on organizations when it comes to environmental, social and ethical responsibility.

Many organizations have answered to this public demand and started to be more transparent about their responsibilities towards environmental, social and ethical activities through CSR document (Arvidsson, 2010). CSR is said to be voluntary commitments that organizations take on beyond external regulations (Idowu et al., 2013). According to the European commission (2016) CSR is defined as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impact in society". In an organization to fully meet their CSR they need to have a process where social, environmental, ethical, human rights and customers concerns are integrated in their operation of the business (European Commission, 2016).

For organizations to achieve their CSR commitments the internal communication is an important part (Smith et al., 2008). Internal communication is an important process within

organizations. It's what produces, maintains and reproduces the organization, in other words it keeps the organization floating and going. (Johansson, 2003) This study refers to internal communication as a complex social process of interactions between people where information is created and exchanged. With efficient and structured internal communication organizations can reach success of implemented CSR commitments (Borca et al., 2014).

Internal communication can flow in several ways within an organization. These are vertical, diagonal, lateral or horizontal. (Altinöz, 2008) Horizontal internal communication allows organizations to carry out and fulfill their tasks (Altinöz, 2008). In order to fulfill CSR commitments there need to be visible and accessible information about them for the employees. This can be achieved through corporate communication. (Arvidsson, 2010) Corporate communication starts with the superiors who send messages to employees. This means that the communication is vertical but essential for larger organization so all employees have a clear and united understanding. Without corporate communication the horizontal internal communication can be inefficient. (Welch et al., 2007) Moreover, it's the horizontal internal communication that contributes to a prosperous climate within organizations (Altinöz, 2008). According to Collier et al. (2007) the main part of the responsibility lies with the employees to implement ethical corporate behaviour which is necessary to achieve CSR commitments. But how employees create and exchange information will benefit or aggravate the internal communication (Welch, 2012). Weak internal communication can result in work inefficiency, which is a real concern for organizations (Welch et al., 2007). Therefore, the internal communication is important and affects both performances and commitments in organizations (Welch et al., 2007; Borca et al., 2014).

1.2 Aim

The aim of this study is to describe how environmental CSR commitments are affected by the horizontal internal communication within an organization.

The aim will be fulfilled through answering the following questions:

- How is environmental aspects prioritized in horizontal internal communications within an organization?
- How does the horizontal internal communication facilitate or aggravate cooperation?
- How does the interpretation of corporate communication about environmental CSR commitments affect the horizontal internal communication?

Empirically the horizontal internal communication is studied at an international consulting business in Uppsala. The organization consists of several subsidiary companies that together have over 10000 employees. As a consulting business every subsidiary company is specialized within a certain expertise. To complete each consulting mission is the needed expertise from the subsidiary companies put together into a team.

2 Concerning corporate social responsibility

Organizations behaviour and management of their business have never been questioned as much as it is today. Humans have consumed natural resources and contaminated the environment for a long time. Not until people noticed that contaminations and pollutions are able to move through air, soil and water from one location to another it got attention. People started to understand that distance to the source didn't matter. (Cunningham et al., 2010) Through alarming reports have scandals as increasing consumption and pollution, companies exploitation of child labour and vast management bonuses been known all over the world (Arvidsson, 2010). People are nowadays aware of what is happening in the world and have knowledge about environmental and social problems (Cunningham et al., 2010). The awareness of these scandals has resulted in mistrust in how organizations are managed (Arvidsson, 2010). This has resulted in CSR policies and commitments where organizations review how they manage their business for external as well as internal stakeholder. CSR have made organizations more transparent to their surroundings. (Kolja, 2010)

The concept corporate social responsibility (CSR) has historically been around for a long time but it's during the 21st century the concept has developed and become more used in society (Carroll, 1999). CSR can be said to be voluntary commitments that organizations take on beyond external regulations (Idowu et al., 2013). According to Idowu et al. (2013) and Kolja (2010) the concept CSR is overlapping several other concepts as corporate citizenship, business ethics, social and environmental responsibility and sustainability just to mention a few. Therefore, the concept is contested and authors do not agree on how CSR should be defined (Kolja, 2010). This study will refer to CSR in line with the European commission's description because the European commission has a close cooperation with stakeholders in managing the CSR file and follow the development in society. The European commission (2016) defines CSR as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impact in society". For organizations to fully meet their corporate social responsibilities they need to have a process where social, environmental, ethical, human rights and customers concerns are integrated in the operation of the business. (European Commission, 2016)

Motives for organizations to take on CSR commitments can be very different. CSR can improve organizations reputation in its surroundings. (Kolja, 2010) Many organizations want to satisfy their customers and stakeholders and prevent to get negative statements from media or intervention from government (Idowu et al., 2013; Arvidsson, 2010). Good social reputation can prevent negative statements and instead inform stakeholders of the organization that their investments are something good for society. Another motive is that a good CSR is likely to be rewarded by both current and future employees. If a good climate is created through ethical commitments among employees it will build trust in an organization. In turn trust leads to dedicated employees, job satisfaction and higher productivity which lead to higher profitability. The last motive is that organizations adopt

CSR policies to gain financial profit. If an organization successfully creates a good climate for the employees and a good social reputation it will result in positive effects about their reputation. In the long run will a good reputation increase financial aspects. (Kolja, 2010)

For an organization to be able to show the public that they are taking social responsibility through CSR commitments, the commitments need to be communicated to the employees (Arvidsson, 2010). Employee's perceptions of CSR commitments affect organizations corporate performance. When the understanding of CSR commitments is aligned among the employees, the chance is bigger that others will see the organization as effectively executing CSR. (Lee et al., 2013) The employees also need to be motivated and committed in order to collaborate and perform CSR commitments effectively. Organizations can ensure motivation and commitment among the employees by embedding ethical cooperation within the organizations culture. This is achieved through well corporate communication from the superiors. (Collier et al., 2007) If CSR commitments are not well handled within organizations it can affect the organizational performance negatively (Arvidsson, 2010).

3 Theories

In this paragraph the theories of the study will be presented. The theories are chosen in an attempt to clarify the research questions of this study whilst helping to explain a situation of horizontal internal communication within an organization.

3.1 Internal communication and its importance in organizations

Within an organization internal communication is an important process. To separate internal communication from an organization is more or less impossible since it's the communications that produce, maintain and reproduce the organization. (Johansson, 2003) Despite internal communication is essential for an organization to reach success and there is no specific definition of the concept (Johansson, 2003; Goldhaber, 1989). Authors refer to internal communication in different ways which give the concept a wide range of meanings. However, there are some features that most of the perceptions have in common. First, internal communication is a complex open system that influences its environment and the other way around. Second, internal communication involves flow of messages and their direction, purpose and media. Third and last, internal communication involves people and their attitudes, relationships, feelings and skills. (Goldhaber, 1989) This study will refer to internal communication as a complex social process of interactions between people where information is created and exchanged.

To achieve successful internal communication it's important to understand the purpose of an organization. (Borca et al., 2014) Organizations are created by peoples own interests in situations where they realise that the best way to achieve goals will be through collective work (and not individual). There are many different definitions of organization that can be used. To ease the process towards a definition four common features can be identified about organizations. First, organizations are established to reach goals. Second, organizations are social units put together by positions that work together. Third, organizations are structured deliberately and carefully coordinated. Fourth, organizations exist as a small part in a larger social surrounding. (Abrahamsson et al., 2005) Therefore, the definition of an organization in this following study is: organization is a structured social unit that design goals and commitments that a group of people work together in order to achieve.

The main objective with internal communication is to inform employees about the organizations commitments and goals so these can be achieved (Borca et al., 2014). Internal communication can flow in three ways within an organization. These are vertical, diagonal and lateral. Vertical communication goes either from superiors to subordinates or the other way around and the communication goes through different hierarchal levels. Communication from superiors often intends to inform subordinates about the organizations goals and policies but also to evaluate the subordinate's performance.

Communication from subordinates intends to inform senior managers of what is going on at subordinate levels. (Altinöz, 2008)

The second communication flow is diagonal and occurs between superiors and subordinates of different functional units. This kind of communication helps different units in an organization to understand each others responsibilities, but also facilitate cooperation. This communication is very useful for organizations working in teams, which then help participants to produce useful results. Diagonal communication makes it easier for team work to see issues from different perspectives which could give a more full analysis of a situation. (Altinöz, 2008)

The third communication flow is lateral or horizontal communication which occurs on a daily basis between people on equal levels in the organization and develops from functional relations. Horizontal communication appears most often within or between work groups or between group members from different units. The goal of horizontal internal communication is organizational coordination and problem solving, which will lead to more efficient internal communication. The communication also helps out with developing functional relations among employees. (Altinöz, 2008)

Without horizontal internal communication an organization can not carry out their activities in a more efficient way (Altinöz, 2008). An efficient and structured internal communication helps organizations to reach success of their activities. (Borca et al., 2014) One way to assess effectiveness of internal communication is by looking at meaning, messages and media. Meaning is about understanding, involvement and commitments and how this might influence behaviour. Messages refer to organizational strategy and objectives send throughout the entire organization. Media communication is channels that are used. (Walker, 2009)

3.2 Corporate communication

In order for an organization to achieve effective internal communication the employees are essential. Employee's way of thinking and acting will affect the commitments of an organization and therefore it is important to make them feel that they are important and valuable. (Borca et al., 2014) This can be achieved through corporate communication which is a part of internal communication. Corporate communication starts with superiors who send messages to the employees about for example objectives or commitments. This means that the communication is vertical but essential for a larger organization so the employees have a clear and united understanding of the organizations needs. (Welch et al., 2007) It also gives preconditions to an effective horizontal internal communication. Employees need to have directions in order to know how to work and in which direction. (Borca et al., 2014) Without this management it's likely that the horizontal internal communication will not be efficient enough (Welch et al., 2007). Corporate internal communication has a value in that it treats the employee's to attain the objectives and commitments of the organization. (Abdullah et al., 2012) Lack of communication can result in misunderstandings between employees, therefore it is crucial for superiors to communicate with the employees (Ince et al., 2011). In order to facilitate communication both from managers to employees and between employees, different kinds of platforms can be provided within organizations. This also helps to motivate the employees to be committed to the organization and its objectives. (Borca et. al., 2014) In order for this internal communication to work well between employees cooperation is an important aspect (Tjosvold et al., 2003).

3.3 Cooperation in organizations

Cooperation helps organizations to achieve their goals and commitments in an efficient way. It involves supportive, helpful and integrative actions which will lead to strong interpersonal relationships and to help the team or organization to succeed with a task. In other words cooperation is when people work well together and create relationships that help them to succeed with their tasks. When people cooperate and are interested in each others success their actions are likely to be more effective. People also start to understand when their goals with work tasks are related with other peoples goals within an organization and their own work will benefit from helping others to succeed. The result is when one succeed others can succeed. It is when employees first exchange their abilities and discuss their differences cooperatively they all can benefit by working together. (Tjosvold et al., 2003) Benefits that can be received out of cooperation within organizations are among others accurate communication, mutual support and assistance, division of labour, open discussions and identification of problems (West et al., 2003). Cooperation also contributes to effective participation which results in more discussions about different issues (Tjosvold, 1998). Strong cooperative team productivity comes from the individual's freedom of expression which contributes to a high quality of the team work and productivity in the organization. Cooperative work can also lead to integration of organizational members and gain their commitment if a rich and rewarded environment is provided. (Tjosvold et al., 2003)

Managing cooperation in an organization is not easy. Employees are often asked to work together as a team across disciplinary boundaries. (Leung et al., 2003) At the same time diversity can make a cooperative organization more productive (Joshi et al., 2003). To achieve cooperation every employee and leader in an organization or team need to be on the same side. This means that they all have to choose to work cooperatively with each other and develop ways to assist each other and deal with inevitable conflicts. (Tjosvold et al., 2003) The importance of knowing each other and each organizational member's role will lead to improved internal communication. Things that can distract this in organizations are for example change of staff. Change of staff can affect the horizontal internal communication between employees especially when working together during a longer time. It breaks the continuity in the work and important information can be left out. (Lloyd et al., 2003) Through collaboration managers and employees can deal with cooperation by developing some reinforced ingredients, as positively related goals, open interactions, mutually support and both individual and team success. Everyone in a cooperation should feel that they are mutually bound together with the others and the feeling "are in this together" should be established. Other demands that essential for an organization to work cooperatively are that employees have to be respectful and sensitive to each other so strong trusting relationship can be developed. (Tjosvold et al., 2003) With this comes responsibility which is essential in organizations collaboration towards commitments. Employees need to take responsibility for their behaviour and actions within the organization and make sure that ethical corporate behaviour is conducted in the every day work. (Collier et al., 2007)

The opposite of cooperation is competition which means that people see their goals separated to others with no connection. With this kind of thinking people often conclude that they are better off when others act ineffectively. These people also keep information and ideas to them selves just to win the competition which can stop other people from effective actions. This can result in hostility among employees and restricted communication. (Tjosvold et al., 2003)

In groups of people working together in organizations there is a variation of perspectives on how to understand the reality, therefore it should be expected that there are some communication problems (Johansson, 2003). When people misunderstand each other it

often leads to meta-communication. Meta-communication is defined as information about information. Meta-communication can occur in several ways. Written texts often have a message with an explanation. For example if a picture is the message there is also often information or instructions to explain the picture. Meta-communication also occurs verbally. However, written language often involves more meta-communication since it's hard to emphasise certain words as when speaking. Meta-communication is not only information communicated, it also imposes behaviour. The information is communication with the content of the message and the behaviour refers to how the message should be interpreted. Together the message and behaviour create a relationship between communicating parts. The better relationship between people the more carefully they consider the content in the message. Weak relationships are instead characterized by constant struggle where the content of the message become less and less important. (Watzlawick et al., 2007)

3.4 Communication across subunits

Cooperation is also tested in an organization when it comes to collaboration across activity networks. Activity networks are made up by different units within an organization where members of the network share work priorities and help each other in their activities. Within activity networks there are always a level of differentiation between individuals no matter of the size of the network. This can easily cause segmentation in a complex organization but does not necessarily need to be so. Collaboration within activity networks can raise issues concerning priority, relative authority, operational methods and influence. (Blackler et al. 2003) This means that horizontal integration across expert networks can be difficult to achieve. For example shared understandings or shared infrastructure of units that build collaboration can sometimes act as a barrier towards other units and close collaboration. (Dougherty, 1992) Weak ties between subunits make the sharing of knowledge more inefficient when the exchanged knowledge is complex. Weak ties can also be beneficial in the sense that employees search for useful information in other units and can therefore speed up a project if the exchange of knowledge is not complex. If search and exchange of information take a long time it's likely that the knowledge sharing affect the performance in the organization. Large organizations with several units are complex and make the search process for knowledge difficult. Even if it takes time it's important for employees to spend time with employees from other units in order to build relationships which will help the exchange of complex knowledge. (Hansen, 1999)

3.5 Communication channels

An important issue to make horizontal internal communication effective in project teams is to have knowledge about how to exchange information (Abdullah et al., 2012). This demands everyone in the organization to have knowledge about available communication channels and to use the right communication channel to the right the message. (Smith et al., 2008; Welch et al., 2007)

Today many organizations have reduced the use of printed communication and replaced it with computer-mediated communication (CMC). CMC is a communication channel that has emerged through technology development of computers in the end of the 20th century, and has become very useful and practical in organizations. CMC does not only provide easy accessible information but also platforms where several other communications channels can be used. The most common communication channels with computers are e-mail, video conference and intranet. E-mail is very common and thoroughly used within organizations. It is easy to use, quick and can reach several recipients at the same time very

fast. (Smith et al., 2008) Compared with face-to-face recipients get time to carefully consider their answer without being caught unaware (Lloyd et al., 2003).

Another communication channel that has become very useful in large organizations is video conferences. Video conferences are used to keep networks in touch with each other within an organization and often works as a supplement to face-to face communication. (Smith et al., 2008) When it comes to dispersed workforces video conference is a useful substitute (Smith et al., 2008) and saves money and time (Miller, 2009). Due to the time lapse it can be hard to hear who is talking and when (Smith et al., 2008).

Intranet is the third most used communication channel within CMC according to Smith et al. (2008). Intranet can provide vast opportunities depending on it's construction. For example, it can provide news, information, employee service and much more. Some intranets are also connected with a phone system where employees can phone each other without a physical phone. (Miller, 2009) One important feature with intranets is that the storage of information is endless (Smith et al., 2008). This makes it possible to post documents, that others can pick up and use when needed. Intranet is a collaborative tool that easily can appear within virtual teams that only communicate through technology. (Miller, 2009)

It's important to remember that there is no right communication channel and it all depends on the environment, message and receiver (Lloyd et al., 2003). To succeed and send appropriate messages that are useful and in right format can benefit the internal communication. If employees feel that inappropriate messages are conducted it can accidentally damage internal relationships. (Welch, 2012) Therefore the language in the message is also something to be considered. Many organizations or parts of organizations often have their own in house language and can be hard for others, who are excluded from the community, to understand. The use of language should therefore be very thoughtful which can make a huge difference in the communication. (Smith et al., 2008)

3.6 How the theory is used in the study

The theories above have been chosen because they could help to describe how horizontal internal communication affects CSR commitments. From these theories the aim have been reformulated and defined into three sub questions that first are going to be answered and then will give answer to the aim. The theories are applied as follows.

Corporate communication

Corporate communication is essential for horizontal internal communication to work well (Borca et al., 2014). Without corporate communication it's likely that horizontal internal communication get inefficient (Welch et al., 2007). This theory is relevant because it explains why it's important for employees to be united within organizations that have commitments. This study has looked at how employees interpret corporate communication from higher levels of the hierarchy in the organization in order to see how united the staff is and how their interpretation affects the horizontal internal communication.

Cooperation and communication across subunits

Cooperation help organizations to achieve their commitments in an efficient way (Tjosvold et al., 2003). The investigated organization is divided into several units that work together in different team activities. Cooperation within these networks can be hard to achieve since they involve levels of differentiations between individuals which can cause segmentations (Blackler et al. 2003). Through well working cooperation among others accurate communication and mutual support can be received (West et al., 2003). This study has

looked at factors within the organizations horizontal internal communication that both facilitate and aggravate cooperation. The theory communication across units will help to understand why cooperations can be difficult in complex organizations with several units and many employees.

Communication channels

Knowledge about how to exchange information through communication channels are important for an effective horizontal internal communication (Abdullah et al. 2012). Communication channels need to be adapted to the message, receiver and environment in order for information to be delivered successfully (Welch, 2012). This theory is applied in order to explain the complexity of the horizontal internal communication work within the organization. The study has looked at how employees use and exchange information through different communication channels.

4 Method

4.1 Qualitative research approach

This study is conducted from a real life situation in a specific organization. A phenomenon about internal communication has been identified and the purpose of this study is to seek understanding of how the horizontal internal communication works in this organization. To get a good understanding of the internal communication that is a dynamic and flexible social process, it is good to have a research approach that is not limited for any kinds of data that can be collected. Therefore this study is conducted with a qualitative research approach. According to Silverman (2015), qualitative research approach is about verbal interpretations of real life situations. Within qualitative research a phenomenon is described in a specific context where processes or meanings are interpreted. Qualitative research understanding of a specific case is sought. (Silverman, 2015)

With a qualitative research approach it is possible to investigate and understand all aspects of internal communication since the approach is not limited to variables that can restrict explanation of a whole context. A quantitative research approach would not be able to get the necessary information in order to analyse the whole context of internal communication. Quantitative research is often used when investigating causality between many variables that can be measured (Cresswell, 2014). These kinds of researches often formulate theories that try to understand why something varies (Silverman, 2015).

4.2 Semi-structured interviews

In this study semi-structured interviews are chosen as method in order to gain as detailed information as possible about horizontal internal communication. Semi-structured interviews give the interviewer a more broad discussion with the interviewees compared with for example a questionnaire according to Flowerdew et al. (2005). This means that this kind of interview structure will give the flexibility for further questions during the interview. To use interviews as a method do not provide directly facts but rather a representation of a person's experiences (Silverman, 2015). This will affect the collected data of this study and the data and result will be weaker rather if situations about horizontal internal communication were interpreted directly without any part between the interviewer and the experienced situations. At the same time the purpose with the interviews is to get the interviewees to speak about their experiences of the horizontal internal communication in the organization. Data and information conducted in interviews are something that the interviewer together with the interviewee conducts in a research (Alvesson, 2011). This perspective will also be adapted in this study. At the same time the interviewer of this study therefore will influence the collected data. How the questions were formulated and how the interviewer act as a person has affected the interviewee and the data. Another risk with

lower structured interviews, as semi-structured, is that the interviewees can get into the wrong unproductive directions which can be time consuming and make it hard to structure the empirical result (Alvesson, 2011).

If structured interviews were used the questions would be set with purpose to keep consistency during the interview (Silverman, 2015) which often is used in quantitative methods (Halvorsen, 1992). With structured interview questions there would be less flexibility for further understanding of the horizontal internal communication and its context which could be negative for the whole study in this case because important data will be lost.

The interviews of this study follow a structure with a beginning, middle and end. The interview guide (see appendix 1) is constructed with a neutral beginning of a few background questions followed by the middle section that invite to conversation about the organizations internal communication. The interview is ended by asking if the interviewee want to add something. According to Alvesson (2011) semi-structured interviews can be divided into a beginning, middle and end. The beginning is where the interviewer try to establish a collaborative relation and the interviewees is warmed up. This is usually done by asking neutral questions as background etcetera. A beginning with neutral questions helps to contribute to a more explorative middle part. The middle part is best started with a well delimit theme and when the interviewer is motivated ask more in depth or follow-up questions. The typical end of an interview is to ask if the interviewee want to add something. (Alvesson, 2011)

The interviews in this study have been structured so the interviewees can express their experiences through storytelling and not answers. This means that a conversation was conducted where the interviewee and interviewer together talked about the interviewee's experiences of the organizations horizontal internal communication. According to Alvesson (2011) it's often insufficient in qualitative research to ask clear and well structured questions that easily can be understood with context-free meaning when the purpose is to explore complex and often personal matters. Therefore only one start question was conducted in order to begin the conversation followed by questions adapted to the interview situation in order to get as detailed information as possible. The start question is also formulated as an invitation for the interviewee to talk about a specific work case in order to give more details and in depth information about the organizations horizontal internal communication. In this way also space is given to the interviewees so they can talk about what they think is important of horizontal internal communication. This interview technique that is open and flexible follows by that no interview will be identical but rather adapted to the context of the situation and aspects brought up.

According to Silverman (2015) it's important to consider how to establish understanding with the respondents during interviews. During the interviews the language in the question formulation has been adapted after how the interviewer thinks the interviewees will receive the questions. Furthermore, according to Alvesson (2011), there is no set of specific words that can explain an experience and objective reality can never be expressed through language. When words are used there are millions of words that can be used for explanation of an experience which highlight a problem with representation. During the autumn 2015 I the interviewer and researcher of this study did an internship at this organization. During that period I got familiar with parts of the culture and use of language within the organization. This can be an advantage since the language and representation of experiences can be difficult.

4.3 Sample

The sample in this study is conducted in order to get a good qualified data, which means that interviewees from different parts of the organization are chosen so different perspectives of the horizontal internal communication can be covered. According to Flowerdew et al. (2005) sample in qualitative research is selected to be illustrative along with the aim in the research. Therefore the interviewees are often chosen with a theoretically motivated decision (Flowerdew et al., 2005). It is important to choose interviewees in order to get both variation and depth so the whole social category that is aimed to address can be covered (Alvesson, 2011). This also means that the researcher need to think critically about the parameters of the population that is of interest when choosing the sample (Silverman, 2015). To use a snowball effect to recruit interviewees to this study would not be the best option since it is important that different parts of the organization participate in order to get a good understanding of the whole context of the horizontal internal communication. Therefore all interviewees are chosen selectively and asked via mail if they want to participate in this study. To find the right persons to interview an employee at the organization has helped out.

Furthermore, because the sample is not randomly picked from a register with employees in the organization it is not possible to make statistic generalizations of the findings in this study. To make statistic generalizations is more important in quantitative researches where the purpose often is to say that the findings are not unique for this people, according to Bryman (2012). This means that the same kind of research can be conducted with another sample and get the same result (Bryman, 2012). This study could be done in another organization but since internal communication is a social complex process dependent on a specific context in form of people that create the communication and surrounding environment the findings would not be the same.

4.4 Interview execution

The interviews in this study have been accomplished at the interviewee's work place in a smaller room in a calm environment, in order to contribute to a more relaxed conversation where the interviewees can speak openly (Flowerdew et al., 2005; Alvesson, 2011). All interviews have been accomplished face to face and in Swedish since all of the interviewees have Swedish as their mother tongue. The interviews have also been recorded on the approval of the interviewees in order for the interviewer to be able to engage in the conversation and to capture accurate details (Flowerdew et al., 2005). Duration of the interviews has been from 30 minutes to one hour.

4.5 Data treatment and analysis

This study has conducted 12 interviews in order to have time for good transcription and analyse. All collected data from the interviews are transcribed and concentrated as soon as possible after each interview in order not to miss any details. If something is blurry on the recording the chance is much bigger that the interviewer will remember the situation and that all data can be used. To use and transcribe collected data from interviews can be time consuming (Halvorsen, 1992). This implies that the number of interviews that can be carried out needs to be restricted. A compromise to this can be only to transcribe the most significant parts of the interviews and summarize the content of what's been said. At the same time the researcher can miss interesting parts by being guided to much from earlier interviews. (Alvesson, 2011) Parts of the data from the interviews are not relevant for this study and therefore not presented in the results and discussion.

Each transcript have been analysed after the main themes in the interview guide, which is based on the theory chapter, in order to identify similarities and differences in the horizontal internal communication in the organization. After the result of the interview material is analysed together with the theories about internal communication in order to get a more nuanced picture about the organizations horizontal internal communication. According to Alvesson (2011) categorization and interpretation of the interview material is vital. Through categorizing and sortation the researcher will get an overview of the material that can be helpful for finding patterns and produce results. At the same time it is necessary to carefully and critically assess the material in order not to take for granted blocks of knowledge production about social reality. Interviews may not necessarily reflect the feelings of a person's, experience or thinking. (Alvesson, 2011) During the study the organization has changed their CSR policy, but has not affected this study.

5 Results and discussion

The investigated organization is build on several subsidiary companies (further on called units) were each subsidiary is expert in a specific profession. The organization works in teams which means that people from different subsidiaries with different expertise are put together into a team to deliver consulting services. The persons interviewed in this study come from different subsidiaries and work or have worked in the same team activity with some of the other interviewees. Each team activity the persons have been interviewed about involves around hundred employees or more from the organization. This means that the interviewees only work with a part of these projects and the result will not cover all horizontal internal communication in the projects.

5.1 Communication between units

In almost every team activity within the organization there is more than one unit involved. All interviewees have been interviewed about a team activity where they are or have been working with peers in several other units. Since several units moved together to one location the relation between the employees in different units have improved and have resulted in better cooperation according to some interviewees. One interviewee expressed *“Since we moved here to the same location we are more like one organization, and the more time we spend together it gets easier to cooperate”*. Because of this the interviewees have created a larger circle of contact within the organization. Therefore the employees also have more knowledge about others competence in the organization, especially in the same office. Despite, it’s hard to know what other units are doing. The internal horizontal communication between the units is most of the time good according to some interviewees. However, according to another interviewee there is optimism among employees in many team activities that a number of people from different units should cooperate perfectly. This person says *“in many team activities employees are optimistic about, that 15 persons are put together and they should solve this”*. Employees from different units want to fulfill different goals within a team activity depending on the work they are doing. Therefore it can be challenging to meet all goals within a team activity.

According to Leung et al. (2003) it’s not easy to manage cooperation when employees are put together across disciplinary boundaries. Cooperation has improved according to the interviewees, but there are still tensions between employees that could be reduced. In groups of people working together in organizations there is a variation of perspectives on how to understand the reality, therefore it should be expected that there are some communication problems (Johansson, 2003). Several units in the organization have moved to the same location and will help the employees to create and strengthen their relationships with other peers. Even if it takes time it’s important for employees to spend time with each other even from other units in order to build relationships to help the exchange of complex

knowledge (Hansen, 1999). The content of messages become more considered and friendlier when there are good relations between the employees (Watzlawick et al., 2007).

During the interviews it was brought up that there is a feeling of a culture among the employees where it is ok to say that they do not understand something. This interviewee says *"it's definitely a culture where it's ok to say that you don't understand"*. At the same time there is another interviewee that experienced resistance from employees in other units when asking questions in order to understand, especially when they don't have any relation to one another. This person expresses *"some are very helpful ... and some are very condescending therefore it can be nervous when contacting someone I never spoken with before"*. Since it is an uncertainty about what kind of person you will meet some employees don't understand the information rather than facing an awkward situation where they are seen as less valuable. Cooperation and horizontal integration across expert networks can be difficult to achieve since shared understanding or infrastructure within a unit can build barriers towards other units (Dougherty, 1992). In some situations teams with employees seem to work better together. Situations where cooperation not work so well can be because of weak or no relationships are established between the employees. Weak bonds between units can make sharing of knowledge inefficient according to Hansen (1999). This could explain why employees feel resistance from other units.

Within activity networks there are always levels of differentiation, no matter of the size, which easily can cause segmentation (Blackler et al. 2003). Several interviewees express that there are segmentation and internal competition between the units. Because of segmentation employees have to work harder to get the information they need and sometimes they choose not to bring up a subject when they know it's going to be resisted. Another interviewee feels it's hard to access information when other units are main responsible for the team activity. Internal competition between units shows when there's not a clear line of what each unit should work with in an activity and some of them want to do the same thing.

Opposite of cooperation is competition. When competition develops people tend to keep information and ideas for them selves just to win the competition which can stop other people from effective actions. (Tjosvold et al., 2003) Both segmentation and competition between the units tending employees not to share information. This restricts the communication and can result in hostility among employees (Tjosvold et al., 2003), although there is no sign of hostility yet among the employees. Segmentation can also be seen within the organization when it comes to environmental aspects.

5.2 Employee's interpretation of corporate communication

Interviewees that both think cooperation between units are good and interviewees that think it's less good agree on that environmental aspects is looked at in very different ways between the units. Depending on which unit the employees work in the perception is different of how environmental aspects should be treated in team activities. A few interviewees think there is common thinking among the employees and one interviewee feels that the organization try to inspire environmental interest among the employees. However, most of the interviewees express that there is not much common thinking or reflection of how to deal with environmental aspects cooperatively. There is no clear request from the organization about how the employees should work with environmental issues and sustainability. According to most of the interviewees, the information that the employees take part of is quite general. An interviewee says *"the information is so general which makes it difficult to work in the same direction, the interpretation is very different"*.

Most interviewees therefore feel that a lot of responsibility is on the employees themselves to find a way to embrace environmental aspects in team activities.

Since the meaning of environment is different between the units it shows that the staff do not have a united understanding of environment. The employee's way of thinking and acting affect the organizations commitments (Borca et al., 2014). According to Welch et al. (2007) it's essential to have a united understanding of environment among the employees in order for the horizontal internal communication to not become inefficient. It occurs in the organization that there is unclear communication about what work each unit should do. One interviewee expresses *"sometimes there can be an unclear line about which unit or units that should work with what, two units may want to do the same thing therefore it can be hard to decide which unit that should do the task"*. It happens that unclear communication result in double work which contributes to that one of the units has to reproduce their work and adapt to the other. In other situations it happens that team members not forewarn that they can't finish their work in time which create tensions. When tensions emerge team members from time to time have to work harder to get information. This is two examples of when inefficient horizontal internal communication occurs between the units.

A more united understanding of environment could be achieved through corporate communication which help employee's to attain the commitments of the organization (Abdullah et al. 2012). Several interviewees think that the environment is an important part that should be considered more from every employee in all team activities, but also that environmental aspects can be involved more in all team activities. This shows that there is willingness within the organization to cooperate about environmental aspects but the corporate communication that can unite the employees understanding are to scarce.

According to one interviewee it is stated in the organization that it's necessary to work with the environment what this person feels is understood among other employees. Some other interviewees experience there are common thinking about the environment. This could mean that between some units there is a common and united understanding of environment. But in order to analyse how and where that understanding exists further data about each units is required.

5.3 Priority of environmental aspects

Environmental aspects are often subordinated other objects in team activities. Aspects as infrastructure, money or the functionality of the solution, as where the railway should go, often have higher priority than environmental aspects. Two of the interviewees states *"time and money goes first, then we have to consider the environmental aspects as well"* and *"it's rare that the environment get to restrict the functionality"*. Interviewees have experienced that it's sometimes difficult to have influence in other subjects. In some cases there is not even possible to discuss environmental aspects because decision of for example the functionality of a railway is already made and not negotiable. This means that other subjects need to accept the decision and work from the situation as good as possible, even if it means tremendous effects on the environment. In these situations there are often limited space to present an environmental viewpoint. Despite, the interviewees agree that all kinds of environmental issues most of the time get space for discussion in every team activity. At the same time interviewees experience that some employees are more open for environmental discussions than others and that environmental aspects meet resistance from some employees. To which extent environmental aspects are discussed in a team activity also depend on the activity itself and how much environmental aspects are affected. When there are environmental aspects that need to be considered in a team activity from the beginning because of regulations they are more prioritized. Some team activities, mainly

the larger ones, have a structure from the beginning which includes environmental aspects. When the environment is included from the beginning it's easier for environmental aspects to influence on other subjects because decisions are not made yet. There is also an experience among the interviewees that the larger a team activity is, with more units involved, the harder it gets for environmental aspects to be prioritized. They also experience that environmental aspects often are forgotten.

Employees from different units lack united understanding of environment seems to affect the horizontal internal communication of how environmental aspects are prioritized within team activities. Different perspectives on environment have resulted in different opinions about how it should be included in team activities and could therefore be a reason of why environmental aspects not always are discussed or are discussed very limited. Environmental aspects can be forgotten because there are no clear corporate communication that guides the employees and therefore it is only prioritized when needed by some employees. In order to know how to work, and in which direction, employees need guidelines (Borca et al., 2014). There is a clear separation between the employees in what direction they should work with environment. In order to get a united staff and well working horizontal internal communication cooperation is an important aspect (Tjosvold et al., 2003).

The interviewees experience several indications that cooperation not is optimal. These indications are:

- A difficulty for environmental aspects to influence other subjects.
- Sometimes its even impossible to discuss environmental aspects.
- Personal resistance from other employees concerning environmental aspects.

According to Blackler et al., (2003) collaboration within activity networks can raise issues concerning priority and influence. Therefore horizontal integration across expert networks can be difficult to achieve (Dougherty, 1992). The horizontal integration between units in team activities can be weak since there are issues concerning priority and influence when it comes to environmental aspects. To achieve good cooperation in a team all involved have to choose to work cooperatively with each other (Tjosvold et al., 2003). Here it gets clear that some employees choose not to cooperate from time to time. The employees need to find ways to assist each other between the units and prevent resistance in order to gain great cooperation within the organization as whole (Tjosvold et al., 2003).

5.4 Cooperation

Cooperation involves supportive, helpful and integrative actions which will lead to strong interpersonal relationships and to help teams to succeed a task (Tjosvold 2003). The employees assist and support to each other with information can be seen through communication of different channels that are available in the organization. Through the communication channels, e-mail and Lync, employees easily can reach other peers when needed especially when working in different locations. E-mail is a fast way to communicate and can reach several other peers at the same time. It's often used when peers want to inform others about new information or where it can be found. It's not possible to save messages via e-mail which, according to a few interviewees, are restricting and complicate cooperation of information exchange that occur by e-mail. Employees that have met or communicated at earlier occasions answer each others e-mail to a larger extent. The other communication channel Lync is web-based communication where meetings, phone calls and chatting can take place. The phone over Lync is often used when the interviewees need information urgent. In Lync the employees can mark their status so others can see if the person is available, in a meeting or occupied. Half of the interviewees experience huge

advantage of sharing computer screen via Lync. This helps the understanding of messages. They can also hand over the steering of the computer to someone else to show how something is done. One interviewee sees an advantage with chatting on Lync. This person says *"I like to use the chat because I can see if the person is available and if so I can write a message"*.

More than half of the interviewees also report that they ask the nearest peers around them when they need information. Many of these interviewees think that it is an advantage to have several disciplines within the organization collected at the same office, and that the most effective way of communicating is to sit next to each other. What communication channels the interviewees prefer to use often depend on the situation. When addressing people they have spoken with before several of the interviewees think of what kind of situation it is and the information they are going to exchange and adapt communication channel after that. The thought of who or whom that is addressed are often present at the interviewees but subconscious, it goes automatically.

It's clear that team members help and support each other to find the right information. Employees take help from each other to contribute to strong interrelationships which are important for cooperation in the organization (Tjosvold et al., 2003). By e-mail the employees get time to carefully consider their answer without being caught unaware (Lloyd et al., 2003). The communication channel Lync keeps networks within the organization in touch (Smith et al., 2008) and make the communication to flow with no interruptions, since they often have team members in different locations. When sharing screens employees can show what they talk about. This can be seen as a supplement to verbal communication (Smith et al., 2008) that help interpretation of others messages. In this way the employees understanding of each other will be better.

It's important to remember that there is no right communication channel and all depends on the environment, the message and the receiver (Lloyd et al., 2003). The interviewees try to adapt the communication from the situation most of the time. When they do this it will benefit the internal communication (Welch, 2012). Other benefits the organization receives from this cooperation among the employees are accurate communication, mutual support and assistance (West et al., 2003). However, it is not always easy to know which peer that has which information. Many of the interviewees think that the horizontal internal communication between units could be better if more relationships were established among the employees.

5.4.1 Relationships

The interviewees experience that virtual communication gets better when they have established good relations with other peers. Two interviewees stated *"it's always easier to have met before especially when writing e-mail"* and *"I think it's crucial to establish good contacts in the beginning and aim for some physical meetings so we know each other"*. This helps the communication to be better and easier further on in a team activity. The more the employees know each other the easier it becomes to take contact and ask questions. This gets even more important when some units only take part in an activity for a short time. It happens all the time that team member's work with each other without having met before. Some team activities have physical start meetings while others do not. A few interviewees tell that they always make sure that they have physical meetings when they start in a team activity. One interviewee state *"when I started in this team activity I had physical meetings with some of the peers because we felt it was good to meet in the beginning"*. Today it's often in the end of activities that employees start to create relationships and the communication begin to run smoothly between the team members. People also realize that they need help from each other in order to reach an excellent result of the activity. If employees can't meet physically they prefer to at least have a picture of

people they communicate with. The best way is to talk physically to get a picture of a person. To have a picture of another person makes the communication easier especially at meetings over Lync. The knowledge of how to address someone increases if the people have met before and started to build a relationship.

According to Tjosvold et al. (2003) relationships will help the cooperation and teams to succeed their task. The employees seem to have a willingness to build relationships because they experience the internal horizontal communication to be much better than. Even if it takes time it's important for employees to spend time with employees in other units in order to build relationships which will help the exchange of complex knowledge (Hansen, 1999). When team activities start to run smoothly in the end of an activity it shows that relationship building is not sufficient among the employees. To have knowledge of other peers and organizational roles will lead to improved internal communication (Lloyd et al., 2003). It also means that in situations today where employees don't have relationships the communication is experienced as much harder. Face-to-face communication is useful when new work teams are created so they all can get to know each other (Miller, 2009). This is clearly expressed by the interviewees.

In the end of team activities it also shows that employees start to get interested in each other. This is an indicator that cooperation takes place because employees start to encourage each others actions to be effective (Tjosvold et al., 2003). When employees cooperate they also understand that their goals are related with others and that their own knowledge will help others to succeed. It is when employees exchange their abilities and discuss their differences cooperatively they all can benefit by working together. (Tjosvold et al., 2003) However, when it comes to information in team folders and meetings it seems harder for the employees to cooperate.

5.4.2 Information system Portalen

The organization has a web-based information system called Portalen. In this system each team activity has its own folder (further on called team folder) where all information in the team is gathered. All employees in a team should have access to the team folder where they can search for and upload information. But it occurs all the time that employees don't have access to the team folder. The access can during a team activity change for members and results in the folder they reached two days ago now are blocked. When the access to folders is poor temporary folders can be created. This creates extra e-mail with links where these can be found. It creates uncertainty about which document is the latest version, and the risk that something gets wrong is quite big.

Most part of the interviewees thinks it's difficult to find information in the team folder because of the amount and missing structure of folders. One interviewee expressed "*It's incomprehensible*" another "*It's difficult to get a good structure of the folders there can be so many documents and subfolders*". Some interviewees think that there is a clear structure of the folders, but documents are not always uploaded or found where they are said to be. A few interviewees experience that there's some structure of how to name folders but not enough. One interviewee thinks that the team folder works well and says "*the team folder is on the server and there I have my own subfolder with my own stuff, and then there is basic data and maybe in other places but what I need is in my subfolder. Then there is some common folder where finished reports are placed ... and this is here and that is there. It's clear.*". However, most often the interviewees don't know which folders to look into or where to find information. The overall experience is that team folders do not have any or a very poor structure of the folders, which make the whole system very confusing.

There is scarce information about how to structure, name or use folders in the team folder according to the interviewees. Employees want to start working as soon as possible which

lead to that everyone starts to name document and folders after what they think is best. This gets confusing for other team members that need to ask other peers in order to find information which is time consuming. Interviewees experience that some team members from different units only think of their unit in the team and don't care about the others who need the information. A side affect of the naming is that employees don't know which version they should work with. When employees don't know which version is the latest they often do double work.

Employees who don't have access to the team folder and the naming of both folders and documents are confusing and can be seen as unsupportive actions according to Tjosvold et al. (2003) and that the employees don't want to cooperate. This will not gain the team activity to succeed. Large organizations with several units are complex and therefore make the search process for information difficult (Hansen, 1999). Because of the confusing naming it shows that the search process of information are difficult and that employees need to ask other peers. According to Watzlawick et al. (2007) meta-communication emerge when employees try to interpret the names on folders but don't understand and try to solve the situation by speaking to other peers about the problem. Since many team activities often include many members it can be hard to have good relationship with everyone. Non relationships between employees can result in that team members don't care about the content in the message when they conduct folder names. Often there is some knowledge among the employees about what kind of competence there is in the same office which makes the search of information easier. To have knowledge about employee's roles, which they have to some extent in this organization is, according to Lloyd et al. (2003), important for the cooperation and help the internal communication to be more efficient. If search and exchange of information take a long time it's likely that the knowledge sharing affect the performance in the organization (Hansen, 1999).

5.4.3 Meetings

When meetings take place there are often one or a few team members participating over Lync and the others are in a conference room. There is usually one source or the computer that absorb sounds from the conference room which results in a bad speaker sound for those on Lync. Members on Lync often need to complain that they can't hear, and sometimes nothing is done about it. One interviewee expresses *"you have to comment that we don't hear anything and sometimes even when we do so nothing gets better"*. Several interviewees also experience that information gets lost in these situations because of the bad sound and not reach all meeting members. Some interviewees feel unmotivated and that it's pointless to stay in meetings in these situations. It also happens that the people in the conference room drop the context of the meeting and discuss other things. According to interviewees it's also difficult to see when someone wants to speak. This makes it difficult to participate on Lync and leads to that people on Lync feel more like observing instead of participating in the meeting.

To solve these situations a few interviewees said they prefer to ask questions, if possible, right away at the meeting but there is not always an opportunity to do that. Many other interviewees try to get needed information after the meeting often by phoning or e-mailing a colleague they know has the information. One of the interviewees prefers to read protocols from meetings if any have been written. This person state *"if I can't hear what's been said in the meeting I use to think, I can read the protocol later"*. The protocol may not refer to all details discussed and the context is often lost. To get information after a meeting also has the side effect that part of the information is likely not to reach the person who needs it. This creates frustration among the employees and the feeling of pointless meetings. Some of the interviewees think that it is up to the leader of the meeting to make sure that everyone who needs to take part of the information can do it. Some interviewees also feel that invitations to meetings have poor information about why there is a meeting

and what kind of result the meeting will contribute to. Because of this meetings often start to conclude what everyone is doing there and is experienced as irritating.

Not all members in a meeting can take part of the information, protocols not written and that invitations to meetings have poor information can also be seen as non supportive or unhelpful actions. This will not help the team activity to reach their goal and is affecting the cooperation (Tjosvold et al., 2003). Since supportive actions help to build interpersonal relationships these actions will probably not help because the employees get irritated on each others unhelpful actions. Employees need to take responsibility for their behaviour and actions and make sure that ethical corporate behaviour is conducted in the every day work (Collier et al., 2007).

According to many of the interviewees meetings over Lync are working best when all of the meeting members are sitting by them selves. The meetings are most of the time well structured and therefore also effective, in comparison with physical meetings that can float away. One reason to this could be that people can't sit small talking with each other over Lync, because if they do no one can't hear anything.

6 Conclusions

The organizations CSR commitments are affected by the horizontal internal communication. The aim of this study is to describe how environmental CSR commitments are affected by the horizontal internal communication within an organization. The most significant conclusions are as follows:

This study shows that the employees in this organization define environmental aspects in different and sometimes contradicting terms. Though cooperation between employees have become much better since several units moved to one location there are still differentiations that cause segmentation in the organization. This have affected the horizontal internal communication and resulted in situations where inefficient and restricted communication occurs between units and employees. Because of this employees have a more difficult time to get the information they need.

The employees are discordant about environmental aspects and this affects the priority of environmental aspects in team activities. Different perspectives on environment have resulted in separate opinions and a division among the employees about how it should be included in team activities. Because there is resistance among the employees several of the interviewees rather avoid situations where they know they will meet resistance from other employees. The overall experience among the interviewees is that environmental aspects are not included as much as it could be in team activities. A more common understanding of environmental aspects among the employees could be achieved through clear corporate communication. At the same time the employees need to find ways to assist each other and prevent resistance of environmental aspect in order to gain good cooperation within the organization.

Segmentation and resistance between employees also make the horizontal integration across units weak and aggravate the cooperation in the organization. Aggravation of cooperation is evident in team folders because of confusing names on documents and structure of folders which makes it difficult for employees to reach information. It is also evident with information in and around meetings. Because employees don't get proper information before meetings or can't, from time to time, take part of information in and after meetings aggravate the cooperation. It shows that some employees do not choose to work cooperatively which is essential for a well working horizontal internal communication. However, the employees are keen to help each other to find information in all situations which facilitates cooperation. To make the cooperation better the interviewees all agree on that more and stronger relationships need to be established among the employees. Today employees often communicate without having any relationships which aggravate the cooperation. To build stronger relationships would facilitate both cooperation and the horizontal internal communication in the organization.

References

Printed

Abdullah, Z. and Antonay, C. A. (2012). Perception of Employees on Internal Communication of a Leading Five Star Hotel in Malaysia. *Asian Social Science* Volume 8(2):17-26.

Abrahamsson, B. and Andersen, J, A. (2005). *Organisation – att beskriva och förstå organisationer*. 4th ed. Slovenien: Korotan Ljubljana.

Altinöz, M. (2008). An overall approach to the communication of organizations in conventional and virtual offices. *International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering* Volume 2(5):627-633.

Alvesson, M. (2011). *Interpreting Interviews*. Croydon: CPI Group Ltd.

Arvidsson, S. (2010). Communication of corporate Social Responsibility: A study of the views of management teams in large companies. *Journal of Business Ethics* Volume 96:339-354.

Bernelind, A. and Widén, E. (2015). En fungerade intern kommunikation kan leda till engagemang: en fallstudie av den interna kommunikationen på Kinnarps Interior Uppsala. Uppsala: Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet. (Examensarbete inom ekonomi och kandidatprogrammet).

Blackler, F., Crump, N., and McDonald, S. (2003). Organizing processes in complex activity networks. In: D. Nicolini, S. Gherardi, D. Yanow, ed., *Knowing in organizations: A practice-based approach*, 1st ed. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., pp. 126-150.

Borca, C. and Baesu, V. (2014). A Possible Managerial Approach for Internal Organizational Communication Characterization. *Social and Behavioural Sciences* Volume 124:496-503.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Carroll, A, B. (1999). Corporate social responsibility: evolution of a definitional construct. *Business and society* Volume 38(3):268-295.

Collier, J. and Esteban, R. (2007). Corporate social responsibility and employee commitment. *Business Ethics: A European Review* Volume 16(1):19-33.

Cresswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed methods Approaches*. 4th international student ed. London: SAGE Publications.

Cunningham, W, P. and Cunningham, M. (2010). *Environmental science, a global concern*. 11th ed. New York: MacGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

- Dicken, P. (2011). *Global shift, mapping the changing contours of the world economy*. 6th ed. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Dougherty, D. (1992). Interpretive barriers to successful product innovation in firms. *Organization science* Volume 3(2):179-202.
- Flowerdew, R. and Martin, D. (2005). *Methods in human geography: a guide for students doing a research project*. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited.
- Goldhaber, G. M. (1989). *Organizational communication*. 5th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
- Halvorsen, K. (1992). *Samhällsvetenskaplig metod*. Lund: Studentlitteratur AB.
- Hansen, M. T. (1999). The search-transfer problem: the role of weak ties in sharing knowledge across organization subunits. *Administrative science quarterly* Volume 44:82-111.
- Idowu, S.O., Capaldi, N., Zu, L. and Das Gupta, A. (2013). *Encyclopedia of Corporate Social Responsibility*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag.
- Ince, M. and Gül, H. (2011). The Role of the Organizational Communication on Employees' Perception of Justice: A Sample of Public Institution from Turkey. *European Journal of Social Sciences* Volume 21(1):106-124.
- Johansson, C. (2003). *Visioner och verkligheter*. Stockholm: Elanders Gotab.
- Joshi, A. and Jackson, S. E. (2003). Managing workforce diversity to enhance cooperation in organisations. In: M. West, D. Tjosvold, K. G. Smith, ed., *International handbook of organizational teamwork and cooperative working*, 1st ed. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate., pp. 277-296.
- Kolja, P. (2010). *Corporate social responsibility (CSR): an international marketing approach*. Hamburg: Diplomica Verlag.
- Lee, E. M., Park, S-Y. and Lee, H. J. (2013). Employee perception of CSR activities: Its antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Business Research* Volume 66:1716-1724.
- Leung, K., Lu, L. and Liang, X. (2003). When east and west meet: effective teamwork across cultures. In: M. West, D. Tjosvold, K. G. Smith, ed., *International handbook of organizational teamwork and cooperative working*, 1st ed. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate., pp. 551-572.
- Lloyd, H. and Varey, R. J. (2003). Factors affecting internal communication in a strategic alliance project. *Corporate communications: An international journal* Volume 8(3):197-207.
- Miller, P. (2009). How intranets and related technologies are redefining internal communication. In: M. Wright, ed., *Gower handbook of internal communication*, 2nd ed. Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd., pp. 189-198.
- Silverman, D. (2015). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. 5th ed. London: SAGE Publications.
- Smith, L. and Mounter, P. (2008). *Effective internal communication*. 2nd ed. London: Kogan Page Limited.
- Tjosvold, D., West, M. A. and Smith, K.G. (2003). Teamwork and cooperation: Fundamentals of organizational effectiveness. In: M. West, D. Tjosvold, K. G. Smith, ed., *International handbook of organizational teamwork and cooperative working*, 1st ed. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate., pp. 3-8.

Tjosvold, D. (1998). Employee Involvement in Support of Corporate Values in Successful Organizations: Groups, Cooperative Interaction, and Influence. *International Journal of Value-Based Management* Volume 11:35-46.

Walker, S. (2009). Measurement. In: M. Wright, ed., *Gower handbook of international communication*, 2nd ed. Surrey: Gower Publishing Limited., pp. 7-18.

Watzlawick, P. Beavin Helmick, J., and Jackson, D. D. (2007). Some tentative axioms of communication. In: R. T. Craig, H. L. Muller, ed., *Theorizing Communication: Readings Across Traditions*, 1st ed. Los Angeles: Sage Publications., pp. 275-288.

Welch, M. (2012). Appropriateness and acceptability: employee perspective of internal communication. *Journal of Public relations review* Volume 38:246-254.

Welch, M. and Jackson, P, R. (2007). Rethinking internal communication: a stakeholder approach. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* Volume 12(2):177-198.

West, M, A. and Hirst, G. (2003). Cooperation and Teamwork for innovation. In: M. West, D. Tjosvold, and K. G. Smith, ed., *International handbook of organizational teamwork and cooperative working*, 1st ed. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate., pp. 297-320.

Internet

European commission, Corporate social responsibility (CSR) Available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/corporate-social-responsibility/index_en.htm

Accessed: 160107

Appendix 1

Intervju formulär/interview form

Ämnesområden

1. Bakgrundsinformation

- 1.1 Kan du kort beskriva din bakgrund? Utbildning etc.
- 1.2 Hur kom det sig att du började arbeta i den här organisationen?

2. Projektet

2.1 Startfråga

2.1.1 Jag håller på med en studie om er organisations horisontella intern kommunikation och jag är intresserad av hur ni arbetade i projekt X som jag vet att du har varit med i. Kan du berätta mer om vad det projektet handlade om?

2.2 Samarbete

- 2.2.1 Vad försvårar och underlättar samarbete i projektet?
- 2.2.2 Finns det erfarenheter av spänningar/olikheter vad det gäller olika enheters synsätt på målsättningar inom organisationen?
- 2.2.3 Gemensamma riktlinjer inom projektet

2.3 Kommunikation

- 2.3.1 När, hur, varför
- 2.3.2 Diskussionsforums
- 2.3.3 Förståelse av varandras information
- 2.3.4 Spänningar mellan individer

2.4 Miljö

- 2.4.1 Miljömässiga mål och åtaganden finns det inom organisationen?
- 2.4.2 Hur prioriterar man miljöaspekter i projektet?

3. Övriga kommentarer