

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY: THE CASE OF A UTILITY

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Abstract

NOTE: Due to the nature of the agreement between the researcher and the client the name of the utility provider may not be disclosed.

The utility provider was instructed to decentralise and experienced a change in the organisational structure. Where previously they were centralised as a utility distributor, the new dispensation allows them multiple (6) regional distribution organisations in a back to back configuration in order to cover the total Southern African grid. These organisations are still Public entities and by means of this and combined with the effect of a three tiers of governmental system may cause problems with regards to human resource re-distribution such as conditions of service and empowerment as well as own personal considerations. The communication of the decision to decentralise was taken by cabinet and had to be understood at all levels of the utilities organisation. This study was aimed at assisting the utility provider in determining the success in the communication of this message.

In terms of the required research, management of the specific region had drawn the conclusion that the staffs was unsure and unhappy about this restructuring and many where resigning and seeking employment elsewhere. The blame for these actions was placed on the effectiveness of the method of communication and in this case it was mainly a form of intranet e-mail. Other forms included focus groups and meetings. However, the dissemination of the messages to the staff from management was not always understood or interpreted in the way it was intended.

Descriptive statistics was used at the request of the utility with deductive and inductive results drawn from these findings given that these findings were for the utility provider's official use in order to correct the problem. Research findings was drawn and published with the utility's permission. For the purpose of this report, 111 questionnaires from a specific region were analysed. These are to be seen as representative sample (given consideration to the total number of staff employed by this region with specific reference to the area of concern) as proposed by the utility of this region and results reflect only the one region's opinion. This must by no means be construed as being neither representative as a sample of the whole utility nor as the opinion the utility's management.

Introduction

Due to numerous restructuring issues, a utility provider in South Africa supplying services to many neighbouring countries and utilising, amongst others, a form of electronic communication to inform their staff about these changes, had authorised an audit of their effectiveness and efficiency in the use of these methodologies by the researcher.

The utility provider has decided to decentralise and is experiencing a change to the organisational structure. Where previously they were very much centralised as the utility generator, transmission and distributor, the new dispensation allows them generating multiple (6) distribution organisations in a back to back configuration in order to cover the total Southern African grid. These organisations are still Public entities and by means of this and combined with the effect of a three tiers of governmental system may cause problematic re-distribution with regards to many aspects such as conditions of service and

empowerment as well as own personal considerations. The communication of this decision by cabinet has to be understood at all levels of the utilities organisations. This study was aimed at assisting the utility provider in determining that success in the communication of this message. This study was initiated as part of an ongoing study and was done as a pilot study to determine the responsiveness of participants. Phase two of the study has however not been approved due to various organisational changes.

The Problem Statement

The utility provider as the sole provider and distributor of this commodity was by act of cabinet required to decentralise the various component. The problem experienced by the utility is that the communication of this cabinet decision was not well received. The new dispensation allows them business units with generation in particular, having six regional distribution units. These are still public entities and by means of this and combined with the effect of a three tiers of governmental system may cause problematic re-distribution with regards to many aspects such as conditions of service and empowerment as well as own personal considerations.

The *aim of the study* is to determine the degree of success in the receipt of the communication regarding the cabinet decision in particular and important organisational messages in general through the use of the organisational; communication medium, GroupWise (e-mail). The outcome of this research is to assist the utility provider in determining what factors should be considered for the successful communication of future messages of this nature. The utility was also adamant that the grapevine method of communication (albeit used beneficially in controlled environments) was not a formal or acknowledged method of communication.

As per request of the utility, only descriptive statistics was used together with limited deductive or inductive findings. This approaches primarily because the utility required the outcome for official use only. For the purpose of this report 111 questionnaires from a predetermined region are analysed. These are to be seen as representative sample as proposed by the utility provider of this region's identified sub-units and results will only reflect these units within the regions opinion. This must by no means be construed as being neither representative as a sample nor as the opinion of the utility provider as a whole nor the utility management perspective.

Communications

Walther (1988) argues that clear and accessible communication is a pre-requisite for staff to understand the organisational needs and requirements. Hargie *et al* (2002) argues that communication audits although useful was not applied correctly resulting in the loss of the performance improvement of the communication and generating a requirement for more communication. Walton (1989:p1) expresses the idea that any business success is dependent on the skill to master all forms of communication. According to Watson (1998:p48), companies (organisations) should listen more. This implies an ability to understand the comprehension of the staff at all levels. Robinson, quoted by Walton (1998:p72) states that communication should be a two way effort. Otherwise it is a monologue. Under these circumstances the situation must change. Effective communication in management cannot be under estimated in order to determine the success of the organisation especially during transformation. Quoting Mintzberg, Griffin (1987:p489-490) states that decisional roles of managers depend on obtaining the correct information for their decisions. This will also apply to communiqués during times of restructuring when a lot of uncertainty is about. Griffin (1987:p487) states that communication can be defined as the process of transmitting information from one person to another. In an organisation it would be preferred that two-way communication exists. This for a variety of reasons such as: was the initial communiqué understood as intended or, what is the response be it feeling or perceived understanding of the communiqué (Bateman, *et al* 2007:p486). This referred to by Griffin as effective communication when the message is understood as was intended (Griffin 1987:p487). According to Griffin (1987:p487) for this to occur at least two (or more) parties need be involved. A specific message need be communicated

the restructuring was done as a project from Head Office. According to Torres *et al* (2005:p12) awareness building and the gaining of support is required more many situations. The need for accurate communication then requires skill in selection of the message and the medium by which it is to be delivered. Dainton *et al* (2005:p154) supports the notion that an interaction process analysis (IPA) is essential in communication.

Schwalbe (2006:p388) suggests that in all cases communications plans must exist in order to determine what message gets to whom at what time and in what specific format. This implies that the message to be communicated must be phrased in such a manner as not to leave any doubt as to the intended outcome. Preference of communiqué type should also be considered (Schwalbe, 2006:p390, 394-396). This holds especially true in a culturally diverse society such as the utility provider where literary skills are not always very high at grass roots level. This dilemma is indicative of the Southern Africa continent as a whole. According to the 1997 School Registry of Needs Survey, South Africa has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world. The survey report indicated that nearly half of the adult population was illiterate. Figures taken from the most recent population census in South Africa showed that 10,2 million out of a population of 44,8 million of adults over the age of 20 had only received education up to primary school level. This was proved by an opinion poll on voter education that preceded the South African general election of 1999 in which it was found that only 36% of the people with no formal education understood the necessity for registering on the voters' roll (IDASA *et al.*, 1999).

Bateman *et al* (2007:p489) also indicates that a message especially when restructuring/downsizing should be carefully worded so as not to cause distress or misconceptions. According to Griffin (1987:p498), research has found a variety of group dynamics in groups varying from four to six members in size. In the case of the utility provider size was not limited and could range from one (reading GroupWise) to many (attendance of a meeting). According to the author the absence of excessive power will lead to better understanding of the message (Griffin, 1987:p498). Although e-mailing is the most common method of mass communication in an organisation in this day and age it holds certain pitfalls as well in that staff are exposed to an information overload (Bateman *et al*, 2007:p491-492). Clements & Gido (2006:p360-363) are of the opinion that the listening skills of the leaders must also be excellent in order for the message to have the right impact. In order for this to occur two-way communication must exist. A second drawback in the use of electronic messaging is that a message however carefully constructed, may be viewed in the wrong perspective (Bateman *et al*, 2007:p492).

Griffin states that any organisation must take cognisance of the informal communication network within an organisation (Griffin, 1987:p509). This network also referred to as the 'grapevine', could have negative effects on communications from and to all levels (Griffin, 1987:p509). There are various methods in which this network operates which range from clusters (two or more employees), to gossip chains (Griffin, 1987:p510). The Utility provider had experienced a significant amount of this type of communication.

More recent publications on the topic of effective communication using electronic methods are found in journals. In particular the International Journal of Medical Informatics, reports that effective communication using whiteboard (more a chat room facility) greatly increased efficiency of the medical care in an acute care hospital. The use was however facilitated with a change management methodology and training in and on the use of the whiteboard system (Wong *et al*, 2009).

Chalmers *et al* (2006), doing a communication audit at a United States public library using e-mail primarily and face-to-face communication, secondary, found that staff was partially satisfied with the communication. The staff required improvement in the communication of the top structure utilising this means of communication.

utility provider personnel at both Head office and Technical Support Offices. As these were administered by the researcher and the representative of the utility provider, the return was good and all but two questionnaires were returned. Statistical this is represented in Exhibit 1.

AREA	% OF AREA SAMPLE	NO. OF QUESTIONNAIRES
HO	12%	14
TSO/WIC	86%	97
Discards	2%	2
Total	100%	113
Total Used for Research	98%	111

Exhibit 1: Number of Questionnaires.

In terms of the discarded questionnaires this is significant as the participatory response reflects a very high level of interest in the subject. From the survey results **less than 2%** did not want to participate. The researcher addressed various dimensions of internal communication in the questionnaire. The results and the findings of the survey will now be discussed.

Survey Results

Participation in the survey was restricted to the utility provider employees. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher and the utility provider representative who worked in all the geographical areas of the research region. The fieldwork was conducted at various TSO, WIC and Head Office sites. Attendances at TSO and WIC were good but HO not as responsive. At this level, informal interviews led the researcher to the opinion (not for final dissemination) that at the head office communication was always understood as was intended.

Gender	%	Number
Male	81%	74
Female	19%	17
Total	100%	91

Exhibit 2: Gender distribution of the sample

Gender was included in the questionnaire on request of the client as the possibility of gender prevalence was observed during an earlier research pole. Exhibit 2 depicts the distribution of gender within the responses to the questionnaires. This might seem skewed to the left but in all situations given that other statistical analysis were not performed, females were not as upset about the communication issues. The researcher is of the opinion that gender has little or no significance with regards to the internal communication.

Age distribution and Educational Distribution

The age spread of the respondents that were interviewed is depicted in exhibit 3. An interesting observation is that although slightly skewed to the right an interest is displayed by older respondents. An observation that may be made is that the age distribution of respondents may reflect on the knowledge areas of employees of the utility provider at this stage. A deductive conclusion that might be made is that the older the staffs the more uncertainty prevails. This again might reflect on the previous syndrome of total State initiatives and certainty of privileges such as medical benefits and pension after retirement.

AGE	% OF AGE DISTRIBUTION	NO. OF QUESTIONNAIRES
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60+	4%	4
Total	100%	107

Exhibit 3: Age distribution of the sample (disclosed)

Due to the fact that pure statistical analysis where not performed (e.g. f-test etc) it is statistically impossible to derive that education in the utility provider does have an effect. What is clear from the sample size is that the distribution of participant’s where in the lower category of educational level which lent the researcher to believe that understanding any message imparted by management is not fully understood due to a multitude of complexities (e.g. language). The following exhibit depicts the educational levels of the respondents. What is inductively deduced from the information is that even the qualified staff with grade 12 and higher are not satisfied with the internal communication. In terms of an analysis this reflects poorly of the current communication patterns and methodology of the utility provider and will require attention in the form of motivational communication preceding other information communication.

Qualification	% of Qualification	Number
Little/No Formal	18%	18
Grade 8-10	13%	13
Grade 11-12	33%	33
Diploma/Degree	34%	34
Post Graduate	3%	3
Total	100%	101

Exhibit 5. Qualification Distribution (disclosed)

Deductions on age and education: It was found that the lower the educational level the more assistance was required by the employee in the use of the e-mail system. Also, the older he/she was, the more the resistance to the use of the e-mail system. This resulted in not only the message not being understood but also in many instances not reaching the audience.

Source of communication and Regularity of Communication

In terms of the communications patterns (Exhibit 6) the distribution is relatively skewed to the left. The implication might be honesty in responding to the question or nativity. No formal conclusion other than the fact that perception is of low communication is perceived. A positive aspect lends itself to the conclusion that management does communicate with the employees. With regards the source of information the pattern depicts a spread and skewed distribution in that the age the respondents reflects the preference of correspondence. Combined with the aspect of qualification and other previous matter this conclusion might be more in favour of uninformed. What is worrying is that the main source of communication GroupWise (GW- the e-mail system) is not accepted as the main source of information regarding the utility provider information. These factors might relate to mistaken methodology or method but must be addressed. The good spread of information distribution via the managerial process is positive in that there is the willingness to communicate, however the relatively high distribution of co-worker communication lends itself to the acceptance of a “bush telegraph”.

Source of information	Top Mngmt	Sup	Shop S	Co-Work	Other (GW)	
Communication Patterns	31	55	5	9	18	118
Percentage	26%	47%	4%	8%	15%	100%

Exhibit 5: Communication Patterns

In terms of the communication pattern with regards to regularity, it is evident from the responses that mainly monthly communications are received. In some instances it was noted that none of the respondents received any communication the reason for this was not investigated but should be a **source of concern** to the utility provider. In many of the responses it was indicated that in excess of monthly correspondences was received. This is not good in terms of the overall communication plan with regards the new dispensation on distribution. It will be advisable to communicate on an understandable basis at least weekly to the staff.

Deduction on sources and regularity of communication: In terms of the clients’ organisational affiliation, ‘bush telegraph’ types of communication is unstructured and factually biased information

Exhibit 6. Communication Regularity

Credibility of Communications and Communication Participation

In the next question the respondents reported on how credible the communication was. This determinant is important in that the employee will need to have a significant trust factor with regards the communicated message. The significance of the results is found in that the frequency determines the understanding of the employees with regards to the credibility of the utility provider communication from the HO to the sites. From the final results it is evident that credibility is extremely low in the perception of the interviewees. This will need rectification as the moral of personal is usually affected by aspects such as uncertainties. Participation with regard the transformation is an issue to many of the respondents as is indicated by the following graphical depiction. Credibility which should be high given management activities (exhibit 5) is not on a bell distribution as should have been expected. This relates poorly to the status and stance of perceived information interpretation. In this regard and combined with the previous findings the utility provider must launch a motivational communication package to improve the current perceived feeling of discontent.

Credibility	High	Moderate	Low	Total
Percentage	16%	35%	50%	100%
Communication pattern	17	37	53	107

Exhibit 7: Communication Credibility

Communication participation might not be important but this factor does have a feel for the respondents. It is evident from the results that the respondents feel left out in the general business and decision making of the utility provider. As a suggestion more participative work sessions should be organised before major decisions involving the total work force are decided upon. Exhibit 8 reflects the participant's general position towards this issue. The findings of this report support the notion that the utility provider must have a more transparent and consultative communication methodology. This participative approach will inherently support the believe that the organisation has the well being of the employees at hart.

Participation in RDC issues	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
Percentage	7%	30%	19%	43%

Exhibit 8: Participation Matrix

Deductions on credibility and participation: From the findings the organisation will need to improve its credibility with regards it intend. This was clearly at a low during the research period. From a decision making and participative point of view an improvement is required. Having the e-mail system as the primary method of communication, the ICT development within the organisation will require a re-adjustment in terms of participations. Poles are possible but level of understanding might be a problem. With regard to credibility one can merely state that the organisation *per se* needs to improve on its word. Older employees also had a more relaxed attitude towards the communicated message but where more averse to using the e-mail system.

Impact of Communication, Communication Visibility and Management Directives

Participation in terms of the distribution centres is not always understood. In some instances respondents did not feel that they actually contributed. It is the researcher's opinion that where bottom-up communication occurred, the respondents were of the opinion that the inputs they had given were not used in terms of the transformation. This might not necessarily be the case.

The visibility of such communication is not always evident. The respondent's views are the following. Multiple selections were done between visible/limited/uncertain/none. It is disconcerting to note that many of the respondents have the opinion that they are not visibly informed. In a situation such as this and from the perspective of the researcher who witnessed the availability of the visible transformation material, the clarity and simplicity would need to be addressed. Also in some instances the material was not displayed. This matter will need rectification.

Impact	Visible	Limited	Uncertain	None
Percentage Communication Pattern	17%	23%	35%	25%
Communication pattern	19	25	38	27

Management Directive			
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Exhibit 10: Communication Pattern

Deductions on communication, impact assessment and management directives: It is the researcher’s opinion that the visibility of communication also such issues that GroupWise (the e-mail system) must be used and monitored for company correspondence on important matters, was not well advertised. Also the regularity of communication was an issue. General communication was however covered in this regard. Management directives are dealt with correctly in a top-down profile but if consideration is given in terms of communication participation, employee participation is lacking. The research indicated that Head Office staff was more at ease with e-mail correspondence than the staff at the outlying areas primarily because head office staff were well versed in the use of the ICT use. The older and the illiterate staff had difficulty in communicating through the electronic medium, this needs rectification.

Form of Communication

The form of the communication plays an important part in the utility provider environment. As managers are informed of developments they are supposed to inform the staff under them with regards to these developments. This seems to be happening as e-mails (GroupWise) do reflect the favoured mechanism. The problem given previous observations is that the messages are not understood or the employees do not have access to/unable to read/do not read the communication bulletins. This problem could be addressed by means of training. The form of communication that seems to be most transparent is depicted in the following graph and table.

Form	e-mail	interper s discus	Small grp	Lrgd grp	Prnt rpt
Communication Pattern - Form	36%	7%	19%	18%	19%

Exhibit 11: Form of communication most utilised and understood.

Technology Availability

In terms of the availability of technology the respondents were of the opinion the facilities were available and mainly utilised by participants prior to them leaving for various tasks in the region.

Nearest communications:

Office	59%
Walking	14%
Driving	21%
Other	6%

Exhibit 12: Applied technology

Usability of Technology

Within the range depicted the usability was rated as usable in a high and limited degree as can be seen from Exhibit 13. From the research perspective the very high “limited” aspect will need addressing

Highly	46%
Limited	44%
Highly Restricted	9%

Exhibit 13: Usability of Technology

The issue of accessibility to URL’s and the consideration of participants with regards to the availability of ICT infrastructure at their various places of work, together with the technology availability and usability should be considered when ICT is utilised as a mass communication medium. With regard supervision a relatively skewed distribution was recorded but in most instances (52%) participants could navigate without supervision. This aspect is important as the utility provider makes extensive use of GroupWise for communication purposes. Most respondents did actually feel that the infrastructure did lend itself to betterment. (Refer Exhibits 14, 15 and 17). This aspect in itself could imply why communication patterns are not fully obtained by staff members. It is proposed that an exercise in business process re-engineering be considered in order to improve the existing shortfalls.

The skewness to the right (Exhibit 14) is indicative as is the responses to communication channels that an IT solution need to be found Albeit an training solution in the use of IT. In general basic communication means such as telephones and faxes was in place with privacy and usage permitted but e attended to (Exhibit 16). In this regard the

Supervised	24%
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Exhibit 14: Accessibility of URL's

Infrastructure Availability	%
In Place	45%
Partially	31%
Limited	14%
Non-Existent	10%

Exhibit 15: Infrastructure Availability

Other Communication Tools	%
Available	88%
Not Available	12%

Exhibit 16: Other Communication Tools

% Improvement Required	1	2	3	4	5	6
% Improvement	0%	10%	30%	50%	75%	100%
Percentage	7%	11%	11%	23%	29%	19%
Number	8	12	12	26	32	21

Exhibit 17: Required Service Improvement

With regards the RDS and the communication thereof a pattern of apathy is prevalent. Most respondents have the feeling of insecurity which does not reflect the overall the utility provider basis. This is reflected on their perception on personal situation which is mostly neutral with a discussion statement of “do not understand what is going to happen” and other statements which reflect negatively on the re-organisations to RDC. In finality the respondents reflect very neutral and even negatively on past communication of change. In terms of the prevalence of improvement the utility provider must take note of the discontent in terms of current facilities.

Deductions on communication tools and availability accessibility and support: This section has a serious impact on the approach of the utility providers’ concept of utilising ICT and specifically e-mail as the source for primary communication of important messages. The lack of accessibility, the skills to operate the technology and systems are negatively impacting on the intended application and use. Read together again with gender, age and educational levels, this compounds the issue.

Internal Communication

When considering the response to the internal communication to wit the method the assessment the impact serious problems arise as is depicted in the following graphs and tables. Exhibit 18 depicts the response which reflects a reflectively good understanding in terms of what is understood and the electronic medium. It seems that electronic mediums seem to a problem. This could be related to the aspect of language. In terms of the potential problem, the utility provider must eradicate this.

Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	
3%	5%	8%	3%		2%
4%	8%	3%	1%		3%
3%	6%	5%	2%		3%
2%	3%	5%	3%		5%
3%	6%	5%	5%		4%
15%	28%	26%	15%	17%	Rated Totals

Exhibit 18: Internal Communication Method

Communication – Cabinet Decision

It is disconcerting to the researcher to notice that a major event regarding the RED's are but “average” in terms of communicating and understood. It is good to see that the electronic medium is at the level of good as this a main form of communication. It is also very interesting to note that unions do not play that important role in communication. This in as much is information the utility provider might stand in good stead in future. However this major event should have been broadcasted to the staff as the solution to many a situation. Exhibit 19 depicts the situations.

Internal Communication					
8					Very

These issues also were also represented in the alternative form that with the impact assessment, human resource implication and implication on staff all response indicated a very neutral response (not exhibited but statistics available). This leads the researcher to the conclusion that uncertainty prevails.

Change History

An interesting observation based on Exhibit 20 is that previous changes within the utility provider were clearly understood. This could relate to the times that the situation was more Governmental but could also relate to a better understanding of the situation. This is an area that needs to be investigated.

Internal Communication			
Change History	Clear	Vague	Incomprehensible
Organisational Change	16%	17%	7%
Conditions of Service	23%	13%	7%
Others	3%	11%	2%
Total	42%	42%	17%

Exhibit 20: Change History

Previous Communication

A disconcerting factor with regard the communication within the utility provider is that the respondents indicated a factor of distrust in terms of previous communications. This leads the researcher to deduce that staff in the utility provider at the level interviewed do not have much trust or more importantly believe in the communication put forth to them. Exhibit 21 depict the statement

Internal Communication			
Previous Communication	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Organisational Change	15%	24%	8%
Conditions of Service	14%	21%	7%
Others	3%	7%	2%
Total	31%	52%	17%

Exhibit 21: Previous Communication

Deductions on internal communication, the cabinet decision and previous communication: Read together with the preceding section of accessibility and other matters, the history of the utility is not experienced as very good in terms of communicating important decisions by the employees. A mainly neutral stance was expressed on internal communication of all previous changes as well as the cabinet decision. Age has a role to play here as the older staff was more outspoken (negative comments). The less literate staff indicated that they did not understand any of the changes.

Conclusion

Considering the theory applied in this research, the need for appropriate communication is essential (Walther, 1988). When due consideration is given to Hargie (2002) with the argument that communication performance management is an imperative for successful communication of a particular message, no follow through was determined in this research other than having the internal audit sometime later. Applying a descriptive statistical approach with minor deductive reasoning to determine the findings, these research findings was contrary to the utility providers believe. However, from the research perspective and the findings of the questionnaires, the outcome is of such a nature that the utility provider will have to improve the internal communication with its employees. Although no dissatisfaction *per se* was observed, the underlying feeling from employees towards the utility provider was that of discontent. To a certain degree this represented a feeling of betrayal by the organisation towards them. It must clearly be stated this is an observation made during the interviews and not to be taken as factually proven. However, given the observational situation note must be taken of the feelings of employees.

The researcher's findings are that communication within the utility provider is not as good as perceived by management. This might be due to factors such as:

- Lack of e-mail usage (not specifically tested but implicated and detected, during informal

- A level of distrust exist especially to outsiders perceived to be sent by management resulting in non participation with the researcher and should be should be a cause of concern to management. (Cancellation to sites (Rustenburg) is proof of this as well as the lack of turn-out at the HO.)
- The age of the respondents played a role when considering the aspects which should be of importance such as personal well being, change history and impact of these on the lives of staff, a situation of neutrality appears.
- From the findings it is clear that the perceived opinion of the staff is that of a top-down communication channel with little if any opportunity for participation.
- The perception of the participants (staff) was that management did not listen to their issues.

This is not the impact management should desire as management requires a positive workforce with positive attitudes. Many of the theoretical underpinnings as is reflected in the introduction are apparently not complied with. As an example an interaction process analysis was required and nor executed. It was apparent that the communication plan was done but from a Head office perspective without due consideration of the different requirements at various levels. Again in contrast with general communication principles was that the informing and gaining of support for the organisational change was absent but went ahead anyway.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the changes as per the findings within this report be incorporated. Within the communication bulletins of the utility provider the use of GroupWise is an excellent method but according to the findings the limitations in the use of the ICT environment inhibits the user in terms of access and probably understanding (training) the use and/or the message. An aspect also clear to the researcher is that the respondents did not always understand the message. The Electronic media is good but further education and usage permission to this medium is essential. This medium will in future dominate the communication/marketing scenario. It is recommended that GroupWise be more “publicly” **advertised** within the utility provider group and **training sessions** with regards utilisation at lower levels of the organisation be scheduled to accommodate the transition to the ICT age. There is by the findings of this report no other inherit problems within the communication structure other than the fact that perception holds that little participative communications is induced in the system. The major concern of the utility provider should be that the feeling of **uncertainty and apathy** prevails. In many discussions post and pore the undertaking it was clear that this was the major concern of employees. Action must also be taken too limited or **alternatively swing** the existing negative informal communication channels to a positive application. More emphasises must be placed on communicating organisational intend and having two-way communication in order to understand the problems at grassroots level.

A possible solution for the utility provider would be to do a full communication needs analysis, taking into consideration aspects such as literacy, information overload, formulation of communiqués and level to which it must be disseminated. Combined with this is the need to understand the requirements for information by the level that need to execute the dissemination.

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