

**EMPLOYEES' EXPECTATIONS OF COMMUNICATIVE
WORK IN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION
- A CASE STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

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| <p>Abstract</p> <p>The constantly changing and complex environment has influenced organizations' communicative environment and the increase of employees' communication roles in corporate communication (Pekkala, 2021). Organizations expect employees to communicate actively, and communication is no longer only the responsibility of communication professionals (Madsen & Verhoeven, 2019). Recognizing and monitoring expectations have been seen effective to keep up with the changing environment (Ledingham, 2003). The phenomenon has hardly been studied from employees' perspective which is why this study aims to improve the current understanding of how employees perceive their role and what kind of expectations they have towards the organization and internal communication and towards themselves about internal communication. In addition, the expectations that they think come from organization about internal communication is studied. The study was conducted as a case study in one organization. In theory, employees' role in internal communications were inspected from the perspective of internal communication, communicative work and professional agency in communication. The second part of the theory explored the expectations and expectations management introducing first concepts that connect internal communications and expectations: trust, relationship and satisfaction. The study was conducted as qualitative research with semi-structured interviews as the aim was to deepen the understanding of the topic. Eight employees from the case organization were interviewed and the collected data was analyzed with inductive data-driven content analysis method. It can be concluded that the employees have understood their increasing communication role in the organization. Despite the recognition, however, the employees have not fully accepted all expectations as part of their roles. It can also be stated that employees' expectations are multi-level phenomenon, the most critical of which the organization must consider the employees' minimum expectations so that they can minimize crises. In the end, it must be noted that the roles of employees are constantly changing with requirements of the communication environment, the goals of the employees and the organizations.</p> | |
| <p>Key words</p> <p>internal communication, communicative work, professional agency in communication, expectations, expectations management</p> | |
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| <p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Organisaatioiden jatkuvasti muuttuva ja kompleksinen toimintaympäristö on vaikuttanut viestintäympäristöön ja työntekijöiden viestintäroolin kasvamiseen organisaation viestinnässä (Pekkala, 2021). Organisaatiot odottavat, että työntekijät viestivät aktiivisesti eikä viestintä ole enää vain viestinnän ammattilaisten vastuulla (Madsen & Verhoeven, 2019). Odotusten tunnistaminen ja monitorointi on koettu tehokkaaksi tavaksi pysyä muuttuvan ympäristön mukana (Ledingham, 2003). Ilmiötä on kuitenkin tutkittu vain vähän työntekijöiden näkökulmasta, minkä vuoksi tämä tutkimus pyrki parantamaan nykyistä ymmärrystä: miten työntekijät näkevät muutoksen ja millaisia odotuksia heillä on organisaatiota ja sisäistä viestintää sekä heitä itseään kohtaan sekä millaisia odotuksia he kokevat tulevan organisaation suunnasta. Tutkimus toteutettiin tapaustutkimuksena yhdessä organisaatiossa. Ensimmäisessä teoriaosuudessa tarkasteltiin työntekijöiden roolia sisäisessä viestinnässä sisäisen viestinnän, viestinnällistyvän työn ja viestintätoimijuuden näkökulmista. Toisessa teoriaosuudessa käsiteltiin odotuksia ja odotushallintaa esittelemällä ensin käsitteitä, jotka sitovat sisäisen viestinnän ja odotukset yhteen: luottamus, suhteet ja tyytyväisyys. Tutkimus toteutettiin kvalitatiivisena tutkimuksena puolistrukturoitua haastattelumenetelmää käyttäen, sillä tavoitteena oli syventää ymmärrystä aiheesta. Kahdeksaa työntekijää haastateltiin tutkimusta varten ja kerätty data analysoitiin aineistolähtöistä sisällönanalyysia hyödyntäen. Työntekijöiden odotuksia tarkasteltaessa voidaan todeta, että työntekijät ovat ymmärtäneet heidän kasvavan viestintäroolin organisaatiossa. Tunnistamisesta huolimatta työntekijät eivät ole kuitenkaan täysin hyväksyneet kaikkia odotuksia osaksi rooliaan. Voidaan myös todeta, että työntekijöiden odotukset ovat monitasoinen ilmiö, joista kriittisimpinä organisaation on huomioitava työntekijöiden minimiodotukset, jotta he voivat minimoida kriisejä. Työntekijöiden roolit muuttuvat kuitenkin jatkuvasti viestintäympäristön vaatimusten, työntekijöiden sekä organisaatioiden tavoitteiden mukaan.</p> | |
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1 INTRODUCTION

Organizations continue to operate in rapidly changing, complex and uncertain environments. At the same time, the communicative environment has also become more complex (Pekkala, 2021). Changes in the communicative environment have affected how the employees' communication roles are perceived by organizations. In fact, research has acknowledged the rise of employees' communicative role in organizations (Andersson, 2019; Heide & Simonsson, 2011; Madsen & Verhoeven, 2019; Mazzei, 2014; Pekkala & Luoma-aho, 2017) and organizations expect employees to communicate more actively (Madsen & Verhoeven, 2019). Hence, communication professionals are not the only ones responsible for communications anymore (Madsen & Verhoeven, 2019).

The change in the communicative environment has been studied from the perspective of communicative work which is defined as "communicative action conducted intentionally, driven by expectations and requiring some effort or resource from an individual" (Pekkala, 2021, p. 28). However, the studies in communicative work and employee communication responsibility have been focusing on the communicative roles that have been extended to outside of the organization, e.g., employee ambassadorship (Andersson, 2019) and roles in external social media (Pekkala, 2021). There is a gap in research to inspect employees' increasing communication responsibilities and roles inside the organizations.

Internal communication has been studied to positively affect employees' communication behavior and advocacy (Kim & Rhee, 2011; Ewing, Men & O'Neil, 2019). Internal communications studies have varied whether they recognize employees as active contributors in communication. The recognition of this phenomenon is seen in the definition of internal communication that includes all the formal and informal communication and interaction between people that is needed in work communities to do work, to build and maintain interactions, and to negotiate and achieve common goals (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). There is a need to study employee communication roles in internal communication further.

Ultimately, the change in the communicative environment has resulted in the need for organizations to understand their employees better in order to support them and keep them satisfied and engaged. Identifying and monitoring expectations is seen as an effective way for organizations to keep up with the changing environment (Ledingham, 2003). If employees feel that they don't know what is expected of them, they can experience stress and become dissatisfied which makes them perform less effectively (Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970). Employees can also create their own sense of responsibility and build expectations for themselves (Andersson, 2020). If organizations understand employees' expectations from all perspectives, they can support their employees better, manage their expectations and adapt to a changing environment.

This study aims to understand employees' communication roles from an employee perspective. In fact, current studies have recognized a problematic side of employee communication roles and responsibilities (Andersson, 2020). The risk is that employees' communication responsibilities are considered limitless if the theoretical foundation and practicalities remain vague (Andersson, 2020) which can create excessive responsibility for employees. Hence, it is paramount to study the concept further and create a better understanding and make it more explicit for the sake of employees and organizations.

Before it is possible to study employees' expectations towards communicative work in internal communication, first we need to understand if they are aware of their communications role and responsibility. Hence, the research questions for this thesis are:

1. Do employees recognize their role in organization's internal communication?
2. What kind of expectations employees have regarding communicative work in internal communication?
 - 2.1. What kind of expectations do employees have about an organization and internal communications?
 - 2.2. What kind of expectations employees have set for themselves for internal communications?
 - 2.3. What kind of expectations employees feel that come from the organization about internal communications?

This thesis is conducted as a case study. In the case organization, the change in the communication environment is clearly visible which is why it was considered a suitable case organization for this thesis. The transition of employees' communication responsibility and roles can be seen in the internal social media platform of the organization. The idea in the platform is that everyone is able and responsible to communicate. The communication is distributed to different channels and all employees have access to post, comment and react on the channels. The employees are expected to bring forward their ongoing projects,

topics and/or questions. Hence, the organization is expecting its employees to take responsibility for communication.

The data is collected from the case organization with a qualitative method by interviewing eight employees. The employees chosen for this study are working in an expert position in the organization (white-collar employees) and do not have people reporting to them. The interviewees were chosen from different parts of the organization excluding communication and public affairs and from several different locations to get the most comprehensive view of the organization.

This thesis is structured in six chapters. After the introduction, the theoretical framework will be constructed in two separate chapters. The first theoretical framework chapter considers employees' role in internal communication by first introducing internal communications as a concept and its viewpoint on employees as communicators. Then, the concept of communicative work is presented with employees' communication roles as they are closely connected to each other. Finally, as a third sub-chapter in employees' role in internal communication, this study inspects employees' communication role from the perspective of a professional agency in communication which expands concept from employees' individual point of view.

The thesis structure will continue with the second theoretical framework chapter focusing on expectations and expectations management. The first sub-chapter will make a few notes on concepts that have used expectations in their definitions. They can be seen as the antecedents of the expectations definition that will be introduced in the second sub-chapter. After expectations, the last sub-chapter will inspect the theoretical aspects of expectations management.

Next, data and methodology of this study will be clarified by explaining the research method, data collection and analysis method that were chosen for this study. In the fifth chapter, analysis will be conducted based on the interview data. Then, research results will be discussed, and theoretical implications presented in the sixth chapter of this thesis. In this chapter, the research questions will also be discussed and answered. Finally, in the seventh chapter conclusions will be made and the limitations of the study and recommendations of future research will be introduced.

2 EMPLOYEES' ROLE IN INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

This chapter will examine research that focuses on employees' relationship and role in internal communication. The chapter will consist of the following concepts: internal communication, communicative work, and professional agency in communication. These concepts will create the basis of this study and introduce the issues that have been raised in the context of employees and internal communication.

Firstly, internal communications will be introduced. While internal communication is a generally known concept in corporate communication, it has not had as much focus compared to e.g., external communication. As this study will focus on the internal aspects of communication, the concept needs first to be defined and reviewed.

Secondly, the communicative work and employees' communication roles will be discussed after the internal communication chapter has created a good basis. Thirdly, employees' communicative roles will be inspected from a different perspective introducing a concept that has recently been studied from the perspective of communications: professional agency in communication.

2.1 Internal communication

Internal communication has been more neglected in research compared to external and corporate communication. However, there are various different definitions that have been developed throughout the years for internal communication. To introduce a few, Welch and Jackson (2007) define internal communication as "strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels within an organization" (p. 183). Instead, Karanges, Beatson, Johnston and Lings (2014) define internal communications as "the process responsible for the internal exchange of information between stakeholders at all

levels within the boundaries of an organization” (p. 333). Both of these definitions see internal communication happening solely inside the organization.

Internal communication has also been closely linked to symmetrical communication. The idea of symmetrical communication, or two-way communication, is to have dialogue between the organization and its employees (Andersson, 2020). Grunig (1992) has characterized symmetrical communication with “trust, credibility, openness, relationships, reciprocity, network symmetry, horizontal communication, feedback, adequacy of information, employee-centered style, tolerance for disagreement, and negotiation” (cited in Men, 2014, p. 558). Symmetrical communication recognizes the role of the employee in communication. In contrast, asymmetrical communication is recognized as one-way communication, usually as top-down communication (Grunig et al., 2002, cited in Men, 2014).

Symmetrical communication has also been studied to have a positive connection to employee satisfaction and engagement. According to research when an organization has symmetrical communication that is open, considers employees thoughts and ideas, and enhance shared understanding, cooperation, and dialogue, the employees feel more satisfied and engaged (Men, 2014). Employees who are engaged feel also committed to the values and mission of the organization and they are empowered and passionate about their work (Ewing, et al., 2019). Employee engagement is, in fact, often seen as the aim of internal communication (Karanges, et al., 2014; Mishra, Boynton & Mishra, 2014; Ruck & Welch, 2012). However, the issue with the studies focusing on employee engagement is that they often see employees as recipients, not active contributors and participants.

Symmetrical communication has also been connected to employee communication behavior. Kim and Rhee (2011) have recognized that internal communication and organization-employee relationship can lead to positive communication behavior and employees who are engaged are more likely to serve as advocates to the company (Ewing, et al., 2019). Employee communication behavior is one of the concepts that recognises employees' roles as active communicators.

The change of employees perceived as active communicators instead of passive recipients has only been recognized in recent years in internal communication research (Andersson, 2020). Even so, many studies and definitions are still based on the idea that employees should be committed to the organization through strategic internal communication, not active participation (Andersson, 2020). This can be also seen in the definitions of internal communication that were introduced in the beginning of the chapter.

There are definitions that recognize employees as communicators in recent literature. Internal communication can be considered to include all communication and interaction within the work community between different members and groups in both formal and informal forums (Juholin, 2011 cited from Kempainen & Laajalahti, 2016). Kempainen and Laajalahti (2016) expand this definition to all the formal and informal communication and interaction be-

tween people that is needed in work communities to do work, to build and maintain interactions, and to negotiate and achieve common goals. This study will utilize the expanded definition of Kempainen and Laajalahti (2016), as it best considers and opens the possibility for the role and responsibility of the employees in communications.

In the following chapter, the employees' communication roles will be inspected more closely, and the concept of communicative work will be introduced.

2.2 Communicative work and employees' communication role

Organizations have always wanted their employees to communicate and express their opinions (Pekkala, 2021). However, the employee communication roles and capabilities have developed into more significant and complex with the evolution of the communication environment (Pekkala, 2021). Compared to before, employees' communication role is increasingly becoming more active in organizations (Heide & Simonsson, 2011; Madsen & Verhoeven, 2016; Pekkala & Luoma-aho, 2017; Andersson, 2020) which is closely connected to the rise of social media (Pekkala, 2021; Andersson, 2020). Social media refers both to public social networking sites (SNSs), such as LinkedIn, and internal social media (ISM), which is an internet-based communication platform for employees (Madsen & Verhoeven, 2016). Hence, there are new forms of communicative work that the employees are expected to perform nowadays.

The shift in communication roles can be also inspected from the perspective of communication professionals. The communication roles employees are expected to assume have been previously considered the communication professional's responsibilities (Madsen & Verhoeven, 2019). The more active and broader employee communication roles have been studied to cover both organization's internal and external communication aspects (Heide & Simonsson, 2011). Moreover, the role of communications professionals is changing as they are instead expected to take a bigger role as consultants, and coaches internally (Heide & Simonsson, 2011).

There are different characteristics that are connected to employees' communication roles and communicative work. Employees' communication roles are not stable or fixed because they are influenced by the pressure coming from communication goals of the organization and the individual and in addition, from the communication environment (Pekkala, 2018). Hence, the role is produced and reproduced constantly (Pekkala, 2018). Similarly, communicative work is described as contextual which means that it is also dependent on the environment - the organizational setting and work conditions (Pekkala, 2021). In addition, it requires something in return when performing, for example time, the development of skills and understanding and tools (Pekkala, 2021). Hence,

not all employees have the skills or confidence to do communicative work (Pekkala, 2021).

There are benefits for communicative work. At best, communicative work can give something back either to the employee or their organization (Pekkala, 2021). Communication is also something that employees expect from themselves, not only by the organization (Pekkala, 2021). From the employee perspective, communicative work is also described as intentional because the employees commonly have a reason when and why they communicate (Pekkala, 2021).

Recent studies have paid attention to employees' communication roles. Andersson (2020) has considered employees' communication roles from social perspective as "socially produced personas that employees enact and revise as they, in their work, engage in interaction with managers, colleagues, and external stakeholders" (p. 23). Madsen & Verhoeven (2019) relies on a more formal description and has defined employee communication role as "a set of communication activities that an employee is expected to perform". Madsen & Verhoeven (2019) have developed a diverse conceptualisation of employees' communications role as they created a categorization consisting of eight roles that employees are expected to have: embodier, promotor, defender, scout, sensemaker, innovator, relationship builder, and critic. Their categorization is the most diverse conceptualization of employees' communication role that there is (Andersson, 2020).

The definition of employee communication roles has been utilized when defining communicative work. In line with Madsen and Verhoeven's (2019) definition, Pekkala (2021) developed a definition for communicative work in her dissertation as "communicative action conducted intentionally, driven by expectations and requiring some effort or resource from an individual" (p. 28). This thesis utilizes Pekkala's definition in its research, but also recognizes both the social and formal perspective of the employees' communication roles to understand employees better as communicators.

The employee communication roles have been seen to be connected to responsibility. Employees' communication responsibility can be described as extrinsic and intrinsic which means that it includes both how organizations make employees accountable and how employees create their own sense of responsibility (Andersson, 2020). Hence, while organizations have expectations towards their employees, employees create expectations for themselves too. Both affect the employees' communication behavior (Andersson, 2020).

Employees' communicative actions and behavior have been further studied in literature because they are considered as the basis for company's success (Mazzei, 2014). There are three communicative actions presented by Kim and Rhee (2011). The first is megaphoning which is when employees share and forward information that is related to their organizations (Kim & Rhee, 2011). The second is scouting which is when employees voluntarily gather strategic information from outside the organization and spread it inside the organization (Kim & Rhee, 2011). The third combines these two concepts which is called mi-

crossboundary spanning, which is “two-way communication efforts by nonnominated employees between organizations and strategic publics” (Kim & Rhee, 2011, p. 249). These communicative actions demonstrate what roles and behaviors employees can adopt in the organization.

It is important that employees and organizations share the same understanding of what is expected in terms of communication. In previous research, it has been observed that employees experience stress and dissatisfaction when they don't know what is expected of them (Rizzo, et al., 1970). Dissatisfaction inevitably leads them to perform less effectively which is a threat to the organizations (Rizzo, et al., 1970). Hence, the same understanding helps organizations with communication management.

The communication management has changed with the transformation of the communicative environment. In addition to managing content, communication management is changing into management of people as communicators (Pekkala, 2020). This has an effect on the communication processes and practices that organizations have in place (Pekkala, 2021). It also affects communication professionals and employees' competence requirement that can be defined as “overall set of skills, abilities, and knowledge about what, when, and how to communicate in diverse situations, to diverse stakeholders, and for diverse purposes” (Pekkala, 2021; Pekkala, Valentini & Luoma-aho, n.d., p. 1).

Internal communications management can be also seen as expectations management. Employees have expectations of their management and for trust, management should fulfill those expectations (Röttger & Voß, 2008). Employees continuously evaluate and adapt their expectations based on what is communicated to them (Röttger & Voß, 2008). For example, communicating about decisions, projects, successes and lessons learned help employees to build more realistic expectations which management can then more easily reach (Röttger & Voß, 2008). Hence, with communications management you can also manage expectations.

Circling back to communicative roles and the scope of this study. While Pekkala's (2021) doctoral research focused on “communicative work in the form of employees' work-related social media use and the meanings ascribed to it by organizational members - managers and employees alike” (p. 60) this thesis takes on a different perspective on communicative work concept. The aim of this study is to examine new forms of communicative work from employees' perspective as the employees are expected to adopt more active communicative roles in their internal social media platform in the case organization. Hence, this study will forgo the external social media and focuses only on internal communication.

The next chapter will continue with the idea of employees as active communicators with the focus on employees as individuals that can have professional agency in communications.

2.3 Professional agency in communication

Professional agency in communication is a dimension of professional agency that specifically targets communication (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). Professional agency in communication as a concept was introduced and defined by Kemppainen and Laajalahti in 2016. It refers to a limited process to professional agency where professional individuals, groups or work communities express and determine choices and aspirations related to the communication aspects of their work and negotiate their professional identities (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016, p. 11).

In recent years, agency has become an interesting concept as it has different definitions depending on the field of study (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). This study does not introduce the definitions of agency as communicative work is the main concept. However, to understand the basis of professional agency in communication, it is good to know that the agency highlights proactiveness, intentionality and participation of the individual or the community and emphasizes how they have the control: they have the opportunity to choose and influence (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016; Vähäsantanen, 2013). Professional agency is more commonly used when the employee directs its activities and focuses on work-related aspects (Vähäsantanen, 2013). Hence, a professional agency describes better how the expectations are built and influenced by the work and the organization.

Professional agency in communication – professional agency that specifically focuses on communication – is closely related to the concept of communicative work that was introduced in the previous chapter. However, professional agency in communication focuses on individuals' (or community's) conscious, rational and intentional decisions rather than goals defined by the environment, organization and individual which is how communicative work is described.

Professional agency in communication as a concept supports this thesis with its focus on experts which is the group that will be interviewed for this study. The key elements of experts' work are considered to be communication, interaction, cooperation and influencing and negotiating constantly about their professional identity as they typically work and interact in some kind of a group rather than alone (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). The group can be in example the work community where they present transparently their work results (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). The role of professional agency in communication is, hence, important in an expert's work to be part of the work community and communicate in it (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016).

Kemppainen and Laajalahti (2016) have studied the factors that influence professional agency in communication. They divided the factors into two categories: individual factors that support professional agency in communication at expert's work and the social-cultural factors that build an expert's agency in communication (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). First, the individual factors are understanding the meaningfulness of communication, skills, attitude and

motivation, and identity (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). Secondly, the socio-cultural factors are favorable communication setting, enabling leadership and encouraging expertise while respecting individuality (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). These factors will be interesting when inspecting the expectations that the experts raise in their interviews.

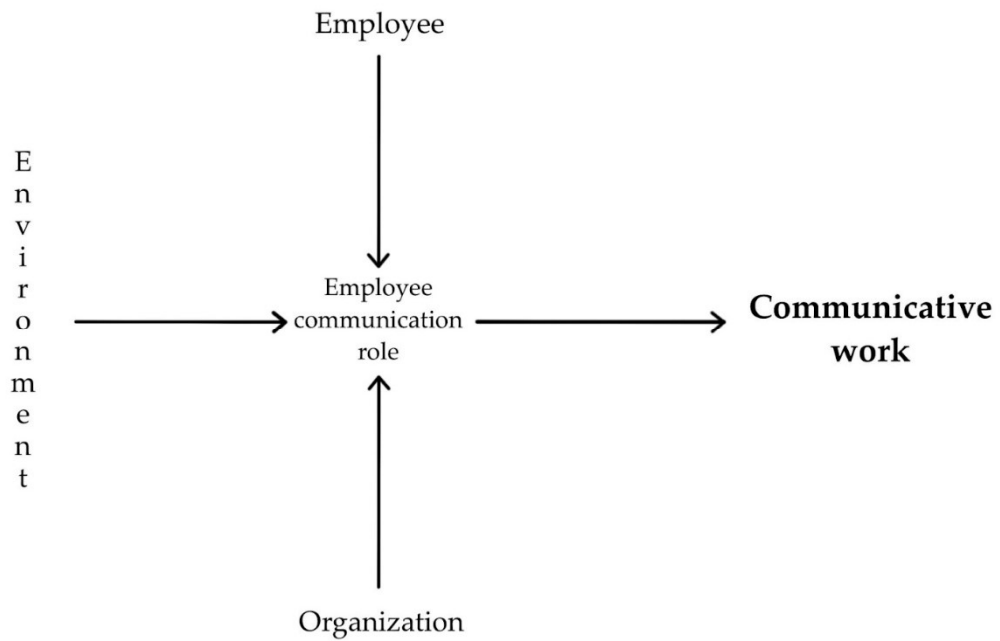
Individual factors are crucial in the formation of the professional agency in communications. The first factor, understanding the meaningfulness of communication, can be seen as something that creates a basis for experts to build upon their agency in communications (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). In addition, it clarifies the role of the experts as they see the bigger picture of communication roles and responsibilities inside the organization (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). The second factor, skills, can be divided into communication and information technology skills, self-reflection and learning from others, and the ability to evaluate and judge (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). These are considered as important skills for experts to have in order for them to develop their agency in communications (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). The third factor, attitude and motivation, instead was divided into assuming and bearing responsibility, communal way of thinking, professional enthusiasm and ambition, and finally, desire to develop (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). The fourth factor, identity, was related to the idea that clear identity – how the experts see themselves as communicators and how they want to develop as communicators – helps experts to better understand their agency in communications (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). Ultimately, fortifying the identity can help to develop the communications of the entire organization and work community (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016).

The formation of professional agency in communication is supported by socio-cultural factors. The first socio-cultural factor, favorable communication setting, refers to clear practices and tools to communications which help building their agency in communication both individually and collectively (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). Unifying the practices and creating a framework creates a better setting for more active communication (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). The second factor, enabling leadership, focuses on culture that supports the open interaction between employees (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). The third factor, encouraging expertise while respecting individuality, fortifies the idea that roles and responsibilities and expectations for communications should be communicated clearly (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). Experts want to be encouraged and supported in taking over their active communications roles (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016).

To illustrate how employees' communication role and communicative work can be seen in relation to each other, see below Figure 1. As mentioned above, an employee's communication role is influenced by the communicative environment and the communication goals of organization and individual. Organizations also set expectations for employees' communication roles. Employ-

ees' communication role can then lead to communication activities or communicative work.

FIGURE 1 Employee's communication role



3 EXPECTATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS MANAGEMENT

The second theoretical framework chapter will focus on expectations and expectations management that are the core concepts in this study. Expectations will be utilized to examine employees' communication roles and communicative work in internal communication from employees' perspective. Organizations can then support their employees better by understanding their employees' expectations. First, the antecedents to expectations will be examined from the perspectives of relationships, trust and satisfaction to understand how expectations are connected to internal communication and employee communication roles. Then, expectations and expectations management concepts will be investigated in relation to this study.

3.1 Antecedents to expectations and expectations management

Expectations have scarcely been studied from the context of internal communication. In addition, there are not many definitions for expectations in previous research (Olkkonen, 2015) because expectations have been generally used to define other concepts (Olkkonen & Luoma-aho, 2015). For instance, public relations research has utilized expectations to define reputation, corporate responsibility, relationships, trust and satisfaction among others concepts (Olkkonen & Luoma-aho, 2015). However, internal communication has been investigated in relation to, i.e., trust (Röttger & Voß, 2008), satisfaction (Men, 2014) and relationships (Kim & Rhee, 2011; Lee, Kang, Kim & Yang, 2022). Hence, the concepts of relationship, trust, and satisfaction will be used to create a bridge between expectations and internal communication.

Internal communication has been seen to influence the relationship between employee and organization. It has been proven that symmetrical communication has positive effects on employee-organization relationships (Kim &

Rhee, 2011). In addition, expectations have perceived to affect the formation of organization-public relationship: "when parties have perceptions and expectations of each other, when one or both parties need resources from the other, when one or both parties perceive mutual threats from an uncertain environment, and when there is either a legal or voluntary necessity to associate" (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997, p. 95). It has also been studied that how long the relationships will last are affected by whether expectations have been met (Ledingham, 2003). Organizations naturally hope for long-lasting relationships with their employees as employees are seen as crucial factors for internal business' success (Röttger & Voß, 2008). This creates a need for relationship management. The relationship can be managed with internal communication by e.g., creating a balance between the employee and the organization (Röttger & Voß, 2008). Positive relationships can lead to employee engagement and supportive communication behavior from the employees (Kang & Sung, 2017) and employee engagement creates trust for the organization (Jiang & Luo, 2018).

Positive employee-organization relationship has been connected to trust. It can be seen as important for effective internal business because trusting relationships between the employee and organization lead to employee motivation and support (Röttger & Voß, 2008). Trust can be defined as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party" (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995, p. 712). Hence, expectations are seen to influence the formation of trust as well. From a communications perspective, it has been studied that employees trust their organization when the organization communicates transparently which also includes informational, participatory and accountable communication (Jiang & Luo, 2018).

Satisfaction is also closely related to relationships because relationships between employees and organization have been studied to last longer when employees are satisfied with their work and the organization (Men, 2014). Studies show that openness and two-way communication that takes into consideration employees' voice and encourages interaction and dialogue and improves the same level of understanding makes employees more satisfied with the organization (Men, 2014). Satisfaction has been also defined with the help of expectations. Jo (2006) describes satisfactions as follows: "If one feels that actual performance exceeds the level of expectations, he or she is more likely to be satisfied with the relationship. In contrast, if the actual performance is lower than the level of expectations, he or she would feel unsatisfactory with the relationship in which he or she is engaged" (p. 243). Hence, expectations play a crucial role in determining whether employees feel satisfied.

Relationship, trust and satisfaction are not the only factors that connect internal communication and expectations together but, in this thesis, they have been used to create the basis for expectations. In the next chapter, expectations will be inspected more closely as a concept of its own.

3.2 Expectations

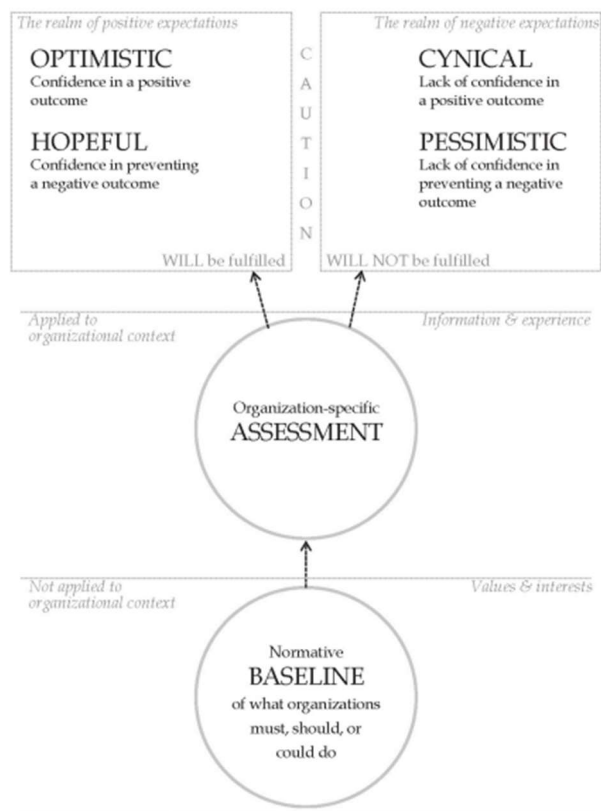
There is one interesting definition of stakeholder expectations that has been developed from public relations studies. In her dissertation, Olkkonen (2015) has filled the conceptual gap by defining stakeholder expectations as a concept of its own. The definition for expectations is “positive or negative future-oriented assessments of an organization’s ability and willingness that form in the interplay between normative and predictive factors and can, ultimately, convey optimism, hope, cynicism, or pessimism toward the organization and its actions” (Olkkonen, 2015, p. 60). In this definition, the expectations are seen as multidimensional (Olkkonen, 2015). Multidimensionality means that the expectations are affected by different phases and factors which are important to understand together (Olkkonen, 2015).

In her dissertation, Olkkonen (2015) has analyzed how stakeholder expectations are forming to define the concept. In her model (Image 1), the formation starts from a baseline that values and interest have effect on. This includes what are the stakeholder’s ideas, notions, and attitudes of what they think organizations must, should and could do as normative factors (Olkkonen, 2015). With these factors, must is referring to stakeholders’ minimum requirements, should is something that stakeholders perceive possible and realistic, and could means the ideal situation (Olkkonen, 2015). This baseline occurs when the stakeholder is not referring to any specific organization which makes it a static phase (Olkkonen, 2015).

Information and experience influence the next phase of the model (Olkkonen, 2015). This means that the expectations are applied to specific organizations and relationships between them (Olkkonen, 2015). With information and previous experience, a predictive element of will determines whether the expectation is positive or negative (Olkkonen, 2015). Hence, the predictive element will characterize the stakeholder’s expectation even more thoroughly.

As mentioned above in the definition, the actual expectation can be either positive or negative. Olkkonen (2015) has divided the positive expectations into optimistic or hopeful and the negative into cynical or pessimistic. In the model, expectations are optimistic when an organization is expected to provide a positive outcome and hopeful is when the organization is expected to prevent a negative outcome. Expectations are cynical when an organization is expected to fail delivering a positive outcome and pessimistic when organization is expected to give a negative outcome (Olkkonen, 2015).

IMAGE 1 Expectations model from Olkkonen (2015, p. 57)



Overall, this model helps to understand the different factors and phases that affect how expectations are formed. As this thesis will study the expectations employees have about communicative work and internal communication in their organization, the model will be utilized to categorize the expectations with normative level that can be recognized from the research data.

However, as Olkkonen's study focuses on organization–stakeholder relations it dismisses almost wholly the relationship with the internal stakeholders – the relationship between the employees and the organization (Olkkonen, 2015). Despite the dismissal, the internal group is considered important as the meanings inside the organization are shaped by the views of the employees (Olkkonen, 2015). In this study, the definition and model by Olkkonen (2015) is reviewed in the context of personnel and their relationship with the organization which fills the gap of examining expectations from the perspective of employees.

This study focuses on the formation phases in the expectations (see the Image 1) and does not analyze whether the expectations will be fulfilled or not. Hence, the recognized expectations will not be categorized with the positive and negative expectation realms that can be seen in the Image 1. Instead, the research will classify the expectations based on the normative baseline of what organizations must, should or could do.

3.3 Expectations management

In addition to expectations, the concept of expectations management is relevant and crucial for organizations. At best, it can help to recognize how deeply organizations understand their stakeholders and the complex environment that can create conflicting expectations (Olkkonen, 2015). In this study, understanding the expectations of employees will help the organization minimize and possibly avoid crises with its employees. With the results of this study, the case organization can therefore manage better its reputation and relationship with its internal stakeholders.

Expectations management is connected to several concepts. For example, Olkkonen and Luoma-aho (2015) have studied that fulfilled expectations can lead to good reputation and relationships and their continuation is connected if expectations have been met or not. In Olkkonen and Luoma-aho's research (2014), expectations management help organizations to evaluate what would be causes and priority of issues: whether stakeholders are willing to begin, continue or end relationships, the reputation stakeholders have as confidence or lack of confidence and finally, is there mismatched expectations that can cause crises for the organizations. Hence, in addition to reputation and relationship management, it creates a bridge also between issues management, and crisis management (Olkkonen, 2015).

Expectations management can be also seen as internal communication management in organizations (Röttger & Voß, 2008). Employees have expectations of their management and for trust, management should fulfill those expectations (Röttger & Voß, 2008). Employees continuously evaluate and adapt their expectations based on what is communicated to them (Röttger & Voß, 2008). For example, communicating about decisions, projects, successes and lessons learned help employees to build more realistic expectations which management can then more easily reach (Röttger & Voß, 2008). Hence, with communications management you can also manage expectations.

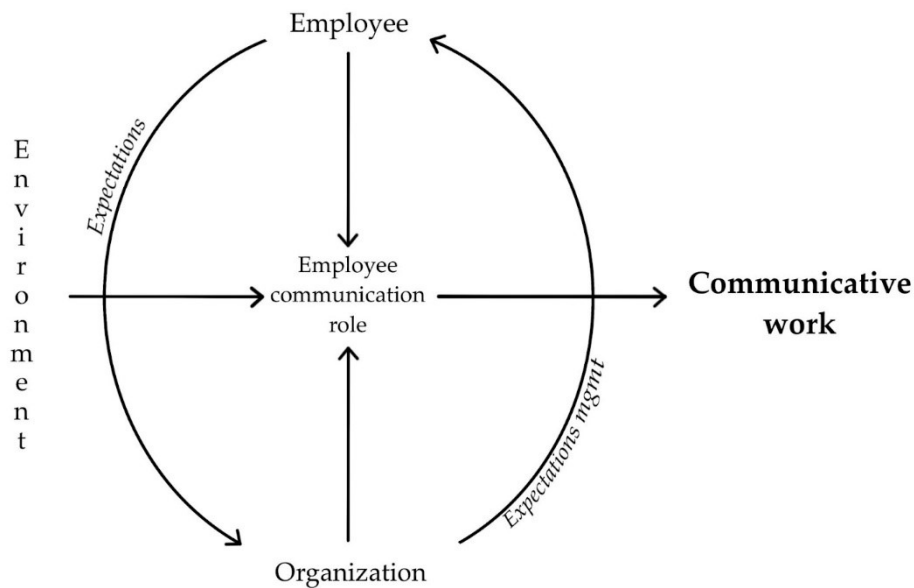
Differences in expectations should be solved to minimize conflicts. Expectations go both ways: what employees expect from management and what management expects from the employees (Röttger & Voß, 2008). Therefore, expectations management for employees and for management is essential. Communicating what employees can expect from management and conveying management's expectations towards the employees can prevent conflicts that can destroy the trust between the subjects.

In the context of studying expectations, expectation management was also defined by Olkkonen (2015) in her dissertation papers. It is defined as "an organization's ability to manage its own understanding of what is expected of it, especially in terms of different expectation types and their differences in relevance and priority" (Olkkonen & Luoma-aho, 2014, p. 233). With this study, the

case organization will have a better understanding of what is expected and what can be seen relevant and a priority in their actions.

To demonstrate how expectations can be seen in relation to employees' communications roles and communicative work, the expectations have been added to the Figure 1 presented earlier (see below Figure 2). In Figure 2, the expectations arrow from employee to organization illustrate the expectations that employees have for the organization. These expectations include the normative and predictive expectations Olkkonen (2015) has illustrated in her dissertation (see Image 1). On the other hand, the arrow from organization to employee displays the expectation management organizations in order for organizations to understand employees' expectations better.

FIGURE 2 Expectations in employees' communications roles



4 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter will present the collected data, methodology and analysis method. This study was conducted as qualitative research by utilizing a semi-structured interview method to collect the primary data which was analyzed with content analysis. The chapter is structured as follows: first, semi-structured interviews will be introduced in connection with this study and then data collection will be explained. The third section focuses on the analysis method which is content analysis in this study.

The case organization where the interviews were conducted is a Finnish stock listed company that employs approximately 5,000 employees. The organization operates 14 countries in three continents. Internal communication has an important role in reaching and engaging all the employees globally. In the organization, internal communication is considered to be everyone's responsibility, and this is highlighted in their main internal communication channel which can be described as an internal social media platform. It is communicated to employees as an interaction tool where anyone can and should communicate. Employees can create and join channels, where they can make and comment on posts. All the relevant news are shared in the platform's channels.

4.1 Qualitative research method and semi-structured interviews

The qualitative research method was chosen for this study because the goal was to gain more understanding of the communicative work phenomenon from the perspective of employees and their expectations. The data of this research was collected through interviews.

The interviews were conducted with the semi-structured method as the interviewer was not experienced and the method provided some flexibility. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher prepared an outline of questions, themes or topics but they can choose to change the order or wording of the

questions in each interview (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The idea of semi-structured interviews was to solve what somebody has in their mind (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998). They were also used to answer questions 'how' and 'why' (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

The interview questions (see Appendix 1) were formed based on the research questions and theory. The interview questions should not be equal to research questions but rather formed with the idea of collecting material that will help to answer the research questions through the chosen analysis type (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) which in this case was content analysis.

In the interviews, two types of research questions were utilized: emotionalist and constructionist. The emotionalist interview approaches focus on people's experiences and perceptions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The constructionist approaches instead consider the meanings built through the interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Combining these two approaches the study can try to resolve both 'what' and 'how' questions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

In semi-structured interviews, the interviewees answer in their own words instead of answering pre-made options (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998). The interviews are a discussion that are started by initiative of the researcher's questions and led by the researcher (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998). However, the participants - the interviewee and interviewer - are influencing each other which makes it an interaction situation (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998).

4.2 Data collection

The data was collected by interviewing eight employees from the case organization. The interviewees were employees who were not in a supervisor position and worked as an expert or specialist position in the organization. Employees from communications, brand and public affairs were excluded from the study because their roles and tasks were seen to contain communication aspects automatically. The interviewees were chosen from different business units or support functions and from several different locations to get the most comprehensive view of the organization. Hence, the interviewee selection was not completely random.

Before the interviews, a pilot interview was conducted. The idea was to investigate how the structure of interview questions was working and how long the interview would approximately last. The pilot interview was conducted with a person who was working at the case organization. The interview was not recorded or transcribed, but the researcher took notes during the interview and asked feedback from the interviewee after the interview. After the pilot interview the structure of the interview questions and actual questions were modified according to the notes of the researcher and comments from the interviewee. Some of the repetitive questions were discovered and deleted and some

probing questions were added to the questions. In addition, the structure and order of the questions were changed to fit the interview flow better. The final interview structure can be inspected from Appendix 1 in this document.

Then it was time to proceed contacting the actual interviewees to gather the data for the study. The potential interviewees were discovered by contacting employees known to have contacts in different business units and functions and asked them to give a list of names that would fit the target group of the study. All of the interviewees were contacted through email and asked whether they were interested in participating in the research. Hence, participating in the study was voluntary and it was clearly expressed in messages sent to the potential interviewees. When someone declined, the name was crossed over and the researcher contacted the next one on the list. When someone agreed, the interview was scheduled to fit their timetable. All of the interviews were conducted during May–June 2022.

Before the interviews, a research notification and a privacy notice of the study was prepared and shared with the research subjects prior to the interview. The research notification contained a description of the study. The privacy notice explained how the personal information would be processed in this study. In the beginning of the interviews, the topic of the study was revised, and the anonymity and confidentiality of the study was highlighted with a short reiteration of how the data will be processed. All of the interviews were conducted and recorded virtually through Google Meet. The average interview duration was 46 minutes. The longest interview lasted approximately 59 minutes and the shortest 35 minutes.

The interviews were also transcribed after the interview session. Three of the interviews were held in Finnish and the five in English if interviewee's native language was not Finnish. The transcribing was word to word, but any mispronunciations were corrected. Pauses and tones were not transcribed as they were not relevant in this study. In total, there were 67 pages in the transcriptions with 30 553 words with Times New Roman font, font size 12 and 1.5 spacing. The interviewees' personal information and data was processed and stored according to the data protection legislation.

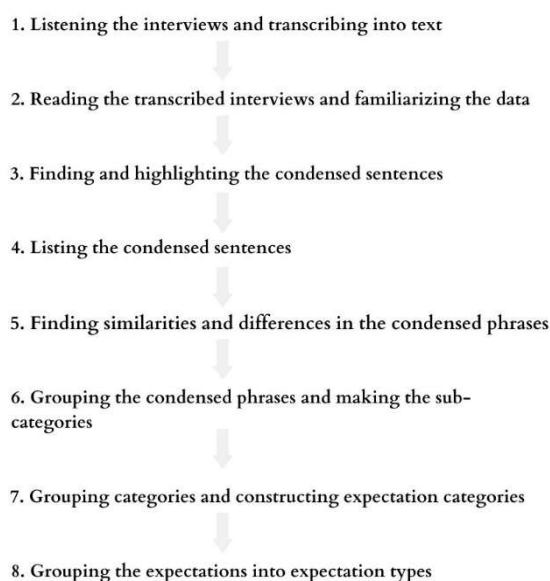
4.3 Analysis method

In this research, content analysis was the method chosen to conduct the analysis of this research. Content analysis is one of the most common analysis methods in qualitative studies (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). With content analysis, the idea is to create a clear, general description of the subject of the research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Content analysis can utilize either an inductive or deductive approach (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). In an inductive method, the analysis is not based on theory but the research data (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Inductive method recognizes the significance of earlier research, but it will only be con-

sidered at the end of the analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Hence, the inductive method can reveal new perspectives on the studied phenomenon. Instead, the deductive analysis approach is theory driven and results of the deductive method strengthen already existing theories (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). In this study, an inductive, data driven approach of content analysis was utilized as a content analysis approach.

This study applied Miles and Huberman's analysis phases that were described by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018). They describe the inductive analysis approach as a three-step process: 1) reducing data, 2) clustering data and 3) drawing conclusions (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Roughly the same process was utilized in this study (see Image 2). First, the conducted interviews were transcribed by listening to the recordings of the interviews. After transcribing the interviews, the texts were separately read thoroughly one by one while making notes on the interesting topics. After familiarizing with the data, it was important to return to the research questions and remember the research problem. Then it was time to read the data through again and recognize the interesting topics and sentences that were highlighted and then reduced into simple phrases. All of these phrases were listed with direct quotes from the transcripts. Then these simplified phrases were categorized into categories. The analysis was continued with categorizing the sub-categories into the expectations that were introduced in the research questions. Expectations were then analyzed into expectation types (must, should, could) which created the results of this study.

IMAGE 2 Inductive content analysis process



5 ANALYSIS

This chapter will present the analysis of the interviews conducted with an inductive, data driven content analysis approach. The analysis has been divided into four sub-chapters according to the research questions: perceptions of employees' communication role, expectations towards internal communication, expectations towards oneself and expectations employees think that come from the organization. All of these expectations and perceptions of communicative work are analyzed from the expert's perspectives as they were interviewed for this thesis.

In the analysis in chapters 5.2-5.4, the expectations are categorized utilizing the Olkkonen's (2015) expectations model that describes how expectations are formed with must, should and could expectations. In summary, must can be described as minimum acceptability, should as normative hopes and wishes and could as ideal possibilities (Olkkonen, 2015). Some of the expectations that arose in the interviews and analysis could be categorized in several of the previously mentioned expectation types.

However, first, we will inspect the interviews from the perspective of the first research question which was "Do they recognize their role in organization's internal communication?".

5.1 Perceptions of employees' communication role

In this chapter, the focus will be on employees' perception towards their communication role (see the Figure 2). This chapter will also be a good introduction to the expectations that will be handled in the following chapters. How employees perceive their roles, capabilities and competencies in an organization's internal communication is important to comprehend to create a basis for employees' expectations and how organizations can meet these expectations.

The interviewees described their communication practices in different ways. All of them used various channels and ways to find information inside the organization. Many mentioned the organization's internal social media platform, email, Drive, chat, colleagues and team lead as the main ways to find information. In all of the interviewees' answers, reaching out to and being in contact with people was highlighted as an important information source. Email and chat were merely described as tools, but they considered contacting specific people personally most efficient.

"...when asked personally, the answer will be found easily." (P7)

"...it's actually asking people who might know about this and then arranging meetings with them." (P4)

Some of the interviewees also described the process of finding information – how they start with thinking what information they need or how they filter the information that is interesting for their work and role. It shows how they put thought in their own communication processes and take a more analytical approach – not doing things automatically without thinking about it. It also shows how they are building their professional agency in communication by being intentional and conscious about it.

"It's just regularly checking the [internal social media platform] and also the channels at [internal social media platform]. And then I am filtering out what is interesting for me and then I am going towards that and if it's not interesting, then I am just passing by." (P6)

"...you have to process the information, of course. That's part of it." (P5)

"The first thing is that I figure out what information is needed, kind of think through where the data source would be..." (P8)

The interviewees described that the information sharing was happening on different levels: upwards, to colleagues and team, outside of the close contacts. Their manager was described to have an important role when sharing and reporting key information upwards. In addition, sharing information to their colleagues and team was considered and described to be part of their roles and it occurs naturally. Sharing information to other parties outside the immediate team or close colleagues was seen open and encouraged as some of the interviewees were concerned about being too siloed. Sharing information outside the immediate contacts resulted usually with positive experiences and sharing to more bigger groups inside the organization. However, there were differences whether sharing information was seen as easy or difficult. Some got clear signals and they knew when to communicate, others deemed it more ad-hoc and difficult.

"...utilising the time with one on ones with line manager to able to report key things, reporting risks, and then leveraging kind of the internal channels to highlight things as well so maybe utilising [internal social media platform] to help share the North American perspective on some things" (P8)

"I think it is pretty easy, because I share information within my group" (P7)

"I can post anything I want on [organization's internal social media platform] for example. I can link article, I can write myself or... So there is no guidelines on what to be shared, and how and so on. So it is quite open actually" (P6)

Several interviewees expressed that sharing information was one of their communication responsibilities and duties. This was expressed directly by saying that sharing information is part of their job or indirectly implying. They also described how they communicate with their own example, pushing past their own limits, which can be seen as part of them building their professional agency. All of the interviewees felt that they could participate and influence in communication.

"I think [sharing information is] part of our job" (P8)

"It's not like I am waiting for the internal comms person to inform me about everything" (P6)

"Because there are some information that I need to share [...].If I don't share that the key account managers can't perform their job, they don't know what to sell and how to sell. So I need to do that on a monthly basis for example." (P5)

"...own example. Discusses and shares information. And listens what others say and of course, I strive and try to remember to take the new people into account because the corona times have made it not so easy to join [...] In a way, it is a bit like pushing yourself beyond the limits." (P4)

"...actively uses all of those channels, in a way with my own action. And at least I try to be easily approachable." (P7)

However, there were some exceptions to interviewees' feelings of responsibility. Their responsibility is limited to what they are interested in doing or what kind of input they receive from others. Some thought that sharing information is a two-way process: if they don't get information, they don't share either. Others thought that others should show that they are interested. While there were some conflicting issues, everyone in the interviewees described how they have and are currently sharing information.

"It's just matter of time and interest honestly, I am not the type of person who wants to share... not really wants but who are interested in writing blogs or posts." (P6)

"I do also expect people to share with me information and since I never receive information you don't share information either." (P6)

"...if it's interesting to someone, I am always willing to share depending on the energy level of the person next to me." (P6)

Interviewees were struggling with different communicative aspects in their work. One of the aspects is knowing the balance between sharing and not sharing. This is closely related to information overload and the lack of time. They feel that sharing and finding information actively is part of their role, but they don't want to burden their colleagues with information they might not need. Some of the interviewees described how they need to filter the relevant information to prevent the information overload. However, while they were able to manage it for themselves, they worried for their peers.

"Makes it kind of a hard balance to know whether it's appropriate to take somebody's time to help them think about stuff beyond their scope of what they need to get done on day-to-day basis." (P8)

"If I would see somebody is not interested and I wouldn't share the information with that person. If there is low level of interaction, then it's not interesting. Why to take someone's time" (P6)

"I hate to say look people in on emails because obviously everyone's emails are super cluttered." (P8)

"But I don't share that because again, is it overloading your colleagues." (P5)

"The challenge is that it's a bit too much information typically so it's like to find what's relevant for me." (P1)

Overall, the employee communication role the interviewees described varied. Some of the interviewees were more critical and did not acknowledge their communication roles directly but indirectly they were doing communication actions. Others were more aware of the communication role they had, and they were consciously developing it and their professional agency in communications. Some of the interviewees also had more knowledge of communication in general.

5.2 Expectations towards internal communication and organization

In this chapter, the expectations will be inspected more closely. In the following three chapters (5.2-5.4), employees' expectations will be examined from three different perspectives. In Figure 2, the arrow pointing from the employee to-

wards organizations will be in the focus in this chapter. The expectations towards internal communication were asked in the interview with questions e.g., how you would describe internal communications, what are the minimum requirements for internal communications and how would you describe successful internal communication. Some of the expectations towards internal communications and the organization were also expressed during other parts in the interviews.

Firstly, several interviewees mentioned there should be someone responsible for internal communications or personnel dedicated for it. In some cases, it was directly expressed by saying “proper personnel”, but some implied it in between lines by saying “he or she” which means that they imagine someone else taking care of the internal communications in a company. Clear communication responsibility was described as a minimum requirement and hence, a must expectation.

“Proper personnel, proper timing, proper tools at their hand.” (P6)

Responsibility is closely related to the scope as internal communications professionals can define what information they cover in their communication and what not. In the interviews, some of the interviewees discussed how internal communication should have clear scope. This means that everyone should be aware of what information internal communication should cover and what it would not cover. In addition, it should be clear what the audience of the communications is when something is communicated.

“Should have clear scope of what is covered by the information, what isn't.” (P8)

“Clear audience as well, this might not be relevant to you, but we are including you just for awareness or whatever.” (P8)

With dedicated personnel to do the internal communication, skills, resources, and tools were also raised by several interviewees. Without the tools and the skills to use them, internal communication would be nearly impossible. The skills could refer to either anyone’s skills in the company or the skills of the communications professionals as they both are using the tools. It was also seen that resources, e.g., budget, personnel, were important in order internal communication to function. As part of the tools, channels were mentioned as one of the requirements for internal communications as they are the main meeting points and platforms for internal communication. One of the interviewees described them to create routines and safety. In addition, when they have been defined and communicated, everyone knows where they can get information and what they can use in their own internal communication. Skills, resources, and tools were described both as must and should expectations.

"And then these other tools. That there are these tools and everyone would know how to use them..." (P7)

"he or she need to have proper tools and capabilities, proper resources, at hand, proper budget at hand, so that they can do their best" (P6)

"Meeting places and platforms and information channels should also be built, which are regular in a way, which creates routines and security and where it comes from." (P4)

In addition, interviewees talked about what are the topics that internal communication must at least cover. They expressed that they expected that internal communication must cover at least informing personnel the current, ongoing topics that are happening inside the organization. These ongoing topics are described for example basic level information about the organization and about the employees and their work role. This can also be described as one-way communication or top-down communication which is from the organization and/or management to the employees and does not necessarily encourage dialogue.

"Internal comms for me is keeping people informed of ongoing topics or what is important to highlight. (P3)

"...it probably requires such a basic level of information sharing that people have that information about the company and themselves and their own role..." (P4)

"...it is such a responsibility, who is responsible for informing about such big matters." (P7)

While the importance of one-way communications and spreading general knowledge throughout the company was raised, two-way communication was not forgotten in the interviews. In many of the interviews, it was discussed that internal communications should also be interaction and dialogue between people. While it was not the minimum requirement as one-way communication, it was strongly hoped that the organization will have dialogue.

"First of all, communication should be some form of interaction, if the word communication is used and not informing. It should enable some form of mutual interaction or interaction of different levels." (P4)

In the interviews, there were several different characteristics that described how internal communication must, should or could be. One of the characteristics that were discussed in the interviews is that internal communication must and should be clear and informative which will lead to understanding.

"I think clear and regular communication is key to ensure that certain things are understood and expected." (P3)

Additionally, some of the characteristics were related to time specifically. Some described that the needed information should be found fast because people want the information fast. Which also relates to the fact that communications should be done at the right time. Hence, in addition, the timing is also important – when a matter is communicated. One of the interviewees even said that sometimes it is even better to communicate internal information that is not finalized because the time aspect can be even more important – communicating something to employees when the matter is only just being considered when there is a time-sensitivity in the matter. This creates an element of proactiveness to internal communication.

"Internal communication means that you find that information quickly." (P2)

"In a timely manner, I think that is the key" (P3)

"It's about informing people in a timely manner what's being done or what's in progress." (P3)

"...it also has to be quite fast, people want information and in my opinion it requires that you have to be able to communicate internally when everything is not ready." (P4)

"...communicate real information in a way it is clear and concise..." (P8)

Internal communications should also be accessible. Accessibility of information was referred to in several interviews and different parts of the interviews. The interviewees described that all information should be easily accessible and there should not be limits to access rights – within the limits of sensitive information. One of the interviewees gave an example that all information could be in one system which would make it easy to find necessary information and everyone could access it. Now it creates difficulties that there are several different systems, and some information can only be accessed through one team or a person. Transparency and openness were also considered as an important aspect when they thought about accessibility but also communication in general. Transparency and openness were categorized as a should expectation.

"That's when everyone has access to any information at any time." (P5)

"should be easily accessible and should be known to." (P1)

"Everything should be transparent and everyone should have access to information." (P5)

"Openness within the team needs to be there" (P3)

In the interviews, several of the interviewees expressed different expectations towards the organization and its leadership. They said that the leadership should be visible, leading them with their example which means that they behave as they expect the employees to behave for example supporting them and being easily approachable. Leadership can either signify the higher management or their own manager.

"...they [management] ensure that you know that they are there, if you need anything and I think that is very helpful" (P3)

"I think it could be good that there is an initiative coming from higher management people..." (P6)

"First, of course, from the immediate supervisor, he/she is an important source of information." (P4)

"I would like my boss to inform more what is going on or internally discussion, project but also support functions, for example sustainability which is a core thing for us." (P5)

In addition to leadership and its role, the importance of team communication was highlighted in the interviews which clearly moves the communication responsibilities away from communication professionals to the team: the team members and manager. This was also described as a minimum requirement for internal communications as the communication within the team was considered crucial. This expectation is closely related to the expectations towards managers as the manager should lead the team communication.

"...it should at least have weekly or monthly meetings where you discuss and share information among the team members, face to face I would say. That is the minimum you should have." (P5)

"...to have good communication within your team." (P3)

However, the one-way, top-down communication was perceived to create the basis for engagement and feeling of belonging in one of the interviews. Other interviews also highlighted that at best, internal communications could create feelings of belonging. Then you would participate beyond the scope of your official role, feel engaged and proud.

"At best, it probably requires a basic level of information that people have the information about the company and themselves and their own role, because it enables interaction and communication and the building of a sense of community." (P4)

"...you have a feeling of belonging, you know what's going on, but also that it gives you good energy. Some of these things make you feel proud and happy about being part of it" (P1)

"That people want to participate in the company's activities other than by doing my own role and that's what I'm paid for." (P4)

Some of the interviewees raised the issue of acknowledgement. Some of the interviewees talked about the idea of celebrating and sharing successes and why it is encouraged and important. One of the interviewees recognized it as a practice in their team. However, one of interviewees expresses that celebrating and being proud of good work was not highlighted enough. They also said that they are good opportunities to learn, why there should be a culture for it. The organization should be the one who makes sure that successes are being acknowledged and celebrated.

"...common successes, at least in our team, we strongly want to bring them up, because we are in a role in a way that we, as we are, are the last ones to produce that success and write that announcement or write that news or something like that. There is also, of course, the creation of a sense of community and the sharing of successes." (P4)

"...we have this kind of culture, in general in our team and in our operations, I have been given a role that encourages communication and sharing success and making one's own work visible." (P4)

"...there is no like celebration or no like pride, we inform we got a good deal or huge deal and that's it. In my view that should be linked with some kind of more activities or celebration as well. Or reward or anything, just to highlight the appreciation of the company for reaching those deeds or targets. It's always like an announcement but that's it, nothing more." (P5)

All of the expectations that were recognized in this chapter were also tabulated (see Table 1) and categorized with the expectation types that were expressed directly or indirectly. In this analysis, the researcher's judgment was used when something was implied or could be deduced from the context but was not expressed directly. Some of the expectations could be categorized in several different expectation types.

TABLE 1 Expectations towards internal communication and organization

| Expectation | Must | Should | Could |
|--|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| Communication responsibility | • | | |
| Communications scope and audience | | • | |
| Communications skills, resources and tools | • | • | |
| One-way communication | • | | |
| Symmetrical communication | | • | |
| Clear & informative communications | • | • | |
| Timely & proactive communications | • | • | |

| Expectation | Must | Should | Could |
|--|------|--------|-------|
| Accessibility of information | | • | • |
| Transparency & openness of communication | | • | |
| Leadership communication | • | • | |
| Team communications | • | | |
| Feeling of belonging | | | • |
| Acknowledgement | | • | • |

5.3 Expectations towards oneself

This third sub-chapter will focus on the expectations that employees expect from themselves related to internal communication. In Figure 2, these expectations are not visible in terms of arrows or lines but instead, focus only on the employee. In general, some of the interviewees were more focused on other's roles and responsibilities than expressing their expectations towards themselves. Despite these limitations, there were several interesting perspectives that could be recognized either directly or indirectly from the interviews. Some similar perspectives were recognized when compared to the expectations towards internal communication and organization.

One of the main expectations that experts set for themselves in internal communications is openness. This includes the expectation that they should and could share information more actively. This includes sharing different perspectives that expands others knowledge. In addition, the interviewees discuss being more intentional on how they are sharing information. They should also communicate clearly and be open about their expectations and needs when something is shared. It includes the perspective of sharing incomplete information which makes the environment even more open.

"I am not saying I don't share information but actively sharing, I think I could do it better" (P3)

"I think the communicating up aspect is pretty important, so utilizing the time with one on ones with line manager to able to report key things, reporting risks, and then leveraging kind of the internal channels to highlight things as well so maybe utilizing [internal social media platform] to help share the North American perspective on some things" (P8)

"So it's been for me kind of this need mentally on myself to step back a little bit on having things in such a perfect state when sharing information and just being willing to have blank spaces on charts or on tables if the information isn't there yet. So in refinement mode that we don't get too far down the road without sharing the information." (P8)

"I guess being intentional about surfacing things, whether that being on coffee chat or one on one discussion." (P8)

"...if I am being asked then if I am allowed to share, then I am freely sharing with these people." (P6)

"Usually someone approaches you and say you have this information, can you share that. But it is say for meetings or anything for that, usually it is not really clear what is expected" (P5)

In addition, the expectation of supporting colleagues was raised in many of the interviews. This includes them being concerned about the overload of information and fullness of their colleagues' email boxes. Ultimately, they want to be considerate when sharing information which is why they consider carefully whether something is relevant for others and who they should share information to. Some interviewees also raised the perspective that they could share information that they know their peers are lacking and support them in that way, but for some reason that is not always happening. Listening & feedback was also mentioned as something they should be expecting from themselves. In addition, the expectation of availability was also raised. They discussed how they could be more available for others to contact and approach. These are all different perspectives on how colleagues must, should and could be supported.

"If I am developing something and looking to solicit some feedback or input from some of the working groups then it's sufficient for me to have given it at least a modicum of thought and then quantified the open questions that I have." (P8)

"Makes it kind of a hard balance to know whether it's appropriate to take somebody's time to help them think about stuff beyond their scope of what they need to get done on day-to-day basis." (P8)

"...help them to adjust their expectations or their thinking or awareness of what goes on in Americas." (P8)

"If I feel like it's relevant for someone from my peers, I am always sharing it." (P6)

"I could at the same time share that you know what I feel that my people around me are lacking, the knowledge they are lacking I could think of that. Share, inform, support, all that could be done." (P5)

"I am also trying not to share just to not overload my colleagues with information." (P5)

"...let's give positive feedback or continue in a way that if you comment on something that it's good and we continue, then it will feel like people actually hear and listen to what I'm saying." (P4)

"And at least you try to be easily approachable like that." (P7)

"That is available." (P7)

One of the expectations raised in the interviews was effectiveness. The interviewees felt that they must and should be effective when communicating. The idea of effectiveness affected how they were thinking: whether something is effective, how something should be more effective or how they were not being effective enough for example. It was clearly seen how they expected them to be more effective and ultimately, could feel even guilty of not being effective enough.

"That's probably not the more effective routes I think." (P8)

"It's [sharing information] time-consuming exercise, and also it is not done efficiently in my view." (P5)

"That's why it requires an awful lot of time, which I don't have at the moment. Then I feel a bad conscience and also feelings of failure in communication." (P2)

Most of the interviewees consider communication to be part of their work roles. When asked why they shared or what encouraged them to share information, some answered directly that they see it as their duty or part of their role. In addition to perceiving communications as one of their responsibilities, the interviewees explain that they want to keep up-to-date on relevant topics that are happening in the company. This is also closely related that they perceive that it is crucial having the same understanding of things that are happening in the organization. They could also be proactive in finding the relevant information for them. In conclusion, they expect themselves to share and find out information related to the organization.

"...so I feel that it is part of my role to communicate and tell about it internally." (P4)

"My responsibility is to share information" (P2)

"It's not like I am waiting for the internal comms person to inform me about everything" (P6)

"...that is very important for us to grow and to have the same level of understanding of the business. And in some cases, it is crucial of making a deal or making a business. So the parties needs to execute or perform needs to know certain information to be able to do that. I think we all need to keep updated and basically speak the same language." (P5)

"I work directly with customers, so I need to have some picture of what the [company name] does as a whole, so that I can read [newspapers] what is written about the [company name]. Because the customer sees me as a representative of the [company's name] and not some small unit." (P4)

The employees also expect them to know how to use the different channels that are provided for them. These channels can either mean written channels when they write a message and post it to a certain channel but also, they mean meet-

ings and other oral interaction situations where they are presenting their knowledge and topics to a certain group. This means that they should have the skills to use those channels.

"...actively uses all of those channels, in a way with my own action. And at least I try to be easily approachable." (P7)

"That is something we try to do when it's a bigger approval that can help people in their daily work then I try really get that message out for different channels. That I would sort of post on the channels and also typically bring up in these big group meetings also, make a small presentation about it." (P1)

"...if you can assess whether someone needs this information, is able to assess it and then also has the skills to communicate it in front of them, so that they are able to, even if there is someone, able to write that information." (P7)

All of the expectations that were recognized as expectations that experts have for themselves were tabulated and categorized with the expectation types that were expressed directly or indirectly (see Table 2). In this analysis, the researcher's judgment was used when something was implied or could be deduced from the context but was not expressed directly. Some of the expectations could be categorized in several different expectation types.

TABLE 2 Expectations towards oneself

| Expectation | Must | Should | Could |
|-----------------------|------|--------|-------|
| Openness | | • | • |
| Supporting colleagues | • | • | • |
| Effectiveness | • | • | |
| Responsibility | • | • | |
| Staying up-to-date | | • | • |
| Multi-channel skills | | • | |

5.4 Expectations that come from the organization

This part analyzes the expectations that the experts raise about what they think that comes from the organization. In Figure 2, these are the expectations that come from the organization towards the employee. However, these expectations cannot be confirmed in this study as the expectations are inspected from the employees' perspective, not from the organization. Compared to the other

expectations recognized from the interviews, the expectations that the interviewees perceived coming from the organization were not present as much. However, they could be noticed indirectly from the expectations they were placing to themselves. The expectations could be divided into five different topics: effectiveness, communications skills, staying up-to-date, interaction and trust.

Effectiveness was one of the expectations they raised also for themselves. However, at the same time, it could be something that they feel coming from the organization. Effectiveness is closely tied to the issue of time. Many of the interviewees were struggling finding the time to participate actively in communications. One of the interviewees even said that they have a guilty conscience and a fear of failure because of it. Based on the interviews, it seems that they feel that it's a should and could expectation, but not a minimum requirement as they seem quite practical about it.

"That's why it requires an awful lot of time, which I don't have at the moment. Then I feel a bad conscience and also feelings of failure in communication." (P2)

"...but that would require a lot of time." (P5)

The employees think that internal communication is one of their responsibilities and tasks which was also introduced in the previous chapter as an expectation for themselves. Employees expect it from themselves which is why they also expect that their organization is expecting them to communicate. If they think that organization does not require or expect communication, they would be working beyond the scope of their role. This leads to the thought that employees also expect that organization expects them to know how to communicate, how to fulfill their responsibilities as communicators. These can be both must and could expectations as the employees describe how they are communicating currently and how they should be communicating better.

Staying up to date on ongoing topics were described as part of their responsibilities by some of the interviewees. They would seek information for themselves, and they perceived that staying up-to-date was even affecting how they were doing their work. In a way, staying up-to-date was seen as something that they thought was expected from them because naturally the organization would expect them to do their job to the best of their ability. This is something that they also expected from themselves as was mentioned in the previous chapter.

"[Internal social media platform] to some degree as well, just for announcements and staying up to date on things" (P8)

"that is very important for us to grow and to have the same level of understanding of the business. And in some cases, it is crucial of making a deal or making a business. So the parties

needs to execute or perform needs to know certain information to be able to do that. I think we all need to keep updated and basically speak the same language.” (P5)

Interaction with colleagues was seen as a form of finding information by the interviewees. Closely connected to staying up-to-date, employees feel that the organization expects them to interact to stay up-to-date but also it is required to build relationships and a sense of belonging in the organization.

“So then I would sort of like interact with people that spend more time in those places like if there is any specific I need to know.” (P1)

“you are working in your own little bubble and there is no interaction with other business units or support functions which is important. usually you get to know you are lacking information when you are facing a question from a customer or when someone approaches you for that information.” (P5)

“In my opinion, it strongly includes the element of building the feeling of belonging, which then requires that it has those interactive elements” (P4)

Finally, some of the interviewees raised the issue of trust when communicating. They perceived it as an important aspect when sharing information and also, something that they expected from the organization. They hoped that organization would share information openly and transparently to them – that they were trusted. Trust was also connected to the feeling of belonging – being part of the community, the organization. In that sense, for organizations to get them to communicate, share information transparently, interact and create the feeling of belonging the organization would then expect the employees to ultimately trust each other.

“why people don’t end up sharing, as one possible explanation, is trust.” (P3)

“...I think it’s really nice, even if not all of them are relevant for you, but you get the feeling that you are more involved and there is also nothing to hide.” (P4)

All of the expectations that were recognized as expectations that experts think that come from the organization were tabulated and categorized with the expectation types that were expressed directly or indirectly (see Table 3). In this analysis, the researcher’s judgment was used when something was implied or could be deduced from the context but was not expressed directly. Some of the expectations could be categorized in several different expectation types.

TABLE 3 Expectations that come from the organization

| Expectations | Must | Should | Could |
|--------------|------|--------|-------|
|--------------|------|--------|-------|

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|
| Effectiveness | | • | |
| Responsibility | • | | |
| Communication skills | • | • | |
| Staying up-to-date | • | • | |
| Interaction | | • | |
| Trust | | | • |

6 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This qualitative thesis studied communicative work and employees' communication roles inside the organization. It has focused on employee perspective and employees from the case organization were interviewed to gather the data for this study. Overall, eight employees were interviewed, and their interviews were transcribed and analyzed with a data driven content analysis method. The findings were divided into sub-chapters according to the research questions.

The results and discussion chapter is constructed as follows. The results and discussion are divided into sub-chapters according to the research questions. The research questions will be answered at the same time. From the results and discussion theoretical implications will be made.

6.1 Discussion on employee perceptions of their communication role

The first research question focused on the communication roles that organizations have set for their employees. It has been studied that organizations expect employees to take on more active communication roles (Madsen & Verhoeven, 2019) and in the case organization, this can be seen in the internal social media platform that is being used. The case organization expects employees to use this platform to communicate more actively shifting the responsibilities of communications to the employees as well. Previous research has explored the increase of employees' communication roles and communicative work from the perspective of organizations and communications professionals (see e.g., Pekkala, 2020), but there is only some research that focuses on employees' experience and perspective. Therefore, at the beginning it is important to determine whether the employees have recognized their communication role in organization's internal communication.

In this study, it can be concluded that employees have recognized their communication roles in internal communication. However, it should be noted that there is variation in how it has been identified. Others have recognized the extent of their communication roles better than others by being more proactive and integrating communication as part of their roles and responsibilities. This can be seen to be closely connected to idea of them building their professional agency in communications (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). In contrast, some of the interviewees were expressing notions of resistance to this change with negative nuances and attitude while others were developing their agency in communications by being actively involved in communications and pushing themselves consciously beyond their limits.

It can also be concluded that employees are individuals that do not operate in the same ways. This makes any kind of generalization complicated. For example, people have different values and interests that vary from person to person (Olkkonen, 2015). From the interviews it could be seen that others were more self-interested compared to others that were considering the common good. In addition, the employees work in different environments, with different issues and stakeholders within the organization which creates levels of complexity. In addition, feelings and previous experiences affect their current perceptions. One of the employees felt that they are proudly communicating to prove their worth in the organization while others feel that it would be perceived negatively by others if they communicate too much and do not work on their “real” tasks. Hence, while they may recognize their communication role in internal communication, there are elements of complexity that affects the phenomenon and communication environment.

6.2 Discussion on employees’ expectations

The second research question considered expectations from various perspectives and the expectations that were recognized from the interviews were versatile. They were categorized according to Olkkonen’s (2015) expectations model that divides the initial expectations into must, should and could expectations. This study aimed to make a similar division between expectations based on the interviews. The expectations that were studied in this thesis were categorized from three viewpoints: 1) the expectations that employees have for internal communication and organization, 2) the expectations they have set for themselves about internal communication, and 3) the expectations the employees think that come from the organization about internal communication.

As a conclusion, the identified expectations have been illustrated in pyramids that demonstrate the levels of the expectations. The must expectations are the most important expectations – the base – that organizations need to consider. These expectations are the minimum requirements that employees expect from organization (Olkkonen, 2015). In the middle, there are the should expect-

tations which are perceived reasonable and realistic to achieve (Olkkonen, 2015). On the top, the could expectations are an ideal situation, when expectations can be exceeded (Olkkonen, 2015). Now we will inspect these viewpoints separately to answer the research questions individually.

6.2.1 Expectations towards internal communication and organization

In total, 13 different expectations were recognized that employees have set for internal communication and organization. The 13 recognized expectations are 1) communication responsibility, 2) leadership communication, 3) team communication, 4) one-way communication, 5) clear & informative communication, 6) communication skills, resources, and tools, 7) timely & proactive communication, 8) communication scope and audience, 9) accessibility of information, 10) transparency and openness of communication, 11) symmetrical communication, 12) acknowledgement, and 13) feeling of belonging. These expectations are illustrated in Figure 3.

The pyramid of 13 expectations is simplified. In Table 1, some of the expectations were categorized in several of the expectations type, e.g., in the interviews, one employee expressed that communication should be clear and informative but other said that it is a minimum requirement. In Figure 3, these double categorizations were eliminated to clarify the figure. As a rule, these expectations were categorized based on the more dominative expectation (e.g., must expectations are more dominating than should and could expectations).

FIGURE 3 Expectations pyramid of expectations towards internal communication and organization



Communication transparency (Jiang & Luo, 2018; Bentele, 1994, cited in Röttger & Voß, 2008), openness (Andersson, 2020; Vanhala, Puumalainen & Blomqvist, 2011; Jiang & Luo, 2018), informativeness (Jiang & Luo, 2018) and accessibility (Vanhala, et al., 2011) have been studied to be important factors in successful internal communication. It has also been investigated that communication from top management, immediate manager and within the team help employees take on more communication responsibility (Andersson, 2020). In addition, acknowledging successes and presenting lessons learned have been perceived to help employees to build more realistic expectations for organizations (Röttger & Voß, 2008). According to this study, the employees perceive these communication aspects important for organizations to consider as well. From this perspective, employees in the case organization seem to have agreed with the previous research and hence, these perspectives are supported by this thesis.

In addition, several of the expectations mentioned in the pyramid (e.g., timeliness, skills, tools and audience) can be connected to communication competence that been defined as “overall set of skills, abilities, and knowledge about what, when, and how to communicate in diverse situations, to diverse stakeholders, and for diverse purposes” (Pekkala, Valentini & Luoma-aho, n.d., p. 1). It has been seen that without communication competence, organizations cannot function effectively (Pekkala, et al., n.d.) which employees have also understood according to the results. Therefore, employees expect organizations to have communication competence as these expectations are directed towards the internal communication and organization.

Finally, the feeling of belonging is clearly separate from the other expectations towards organization as it is at the top of the pyramid. Internal communication has been seen to promote a sense of belonging to the organization (Welch & Jackson, 2007) and employees are more likely to feel a sense of belonging when they contribute to the information on internal social media (Ewing, et al., 2019). In this study, the feeling of belonging is seen as could expectation that can be described as ideal situation when expectations can be exceeded (Olkkonen, 2015). Based on the expectations model (Olkkonen, 2015) and the findings of this study, if organizations want to exceed employees’ expectations, they should create a sense of belonging, for example by encouraging employees to contribute in internal social media.

In contrast, there are other matters that should be noted. In this study, symmetrical communication is seen as expectations that the organization should meet. In line with this, many earlier studies have been highlighting the benefits of symmetrical communication (Lee et al., 2022; Men, 2014; Welch & Jackson, 2007) but according to this study, the one-way communication should not be completely forgotten. This study has found that employees appreciate the basic level of one-way communication that is also considered as top-down communication. Employees do recognize the importance of symmetrical communication, but they expect it as something that should happen, not as a minimum requirement. Hence, to simplify, they seem to see one-way communication more important than symmetrical communication. In this study, one-way

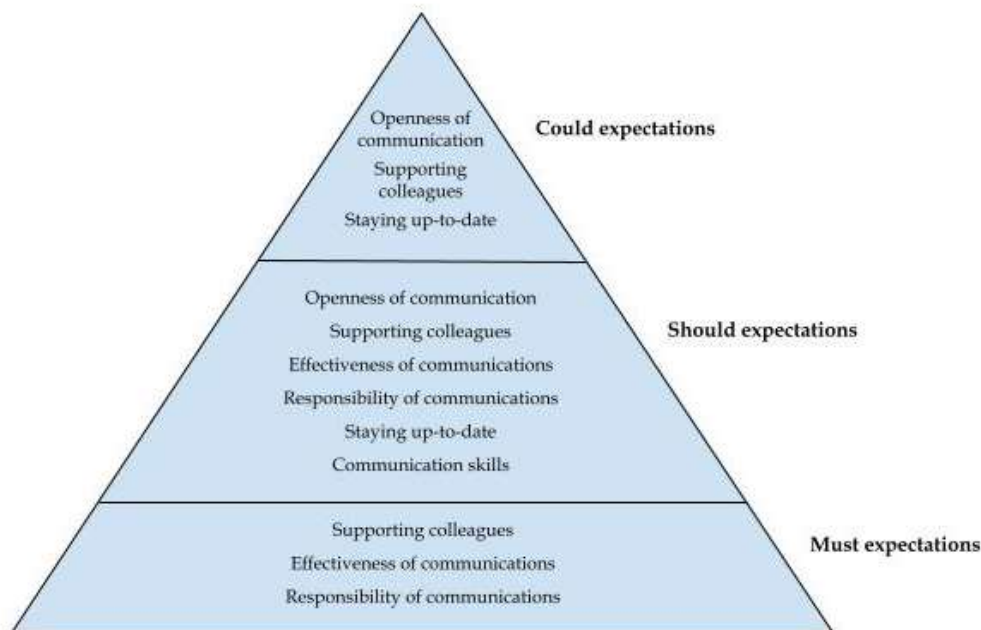
communication creates a basis for internal communication that should be then followed by symmetrical communication. The employees interviewed described one-way communication as informing about ongoing topics and basic level of information about the organization that employees require in their work. Hence, it should be highlighted that one-way communication does not exclude symmetrical communication in this study, but employees see that it should be the basis in internal communication before expanding to symmetrical communication.

From this perspective, internal communications and organization have a significant role based on the expectations alone that employees have towards them. While communicative work studies have said that communication professionals are expected to take on roles as consultants, coaches, and trainers (Heide & Simonsson, 2011) that change cannot happen instantaneously, or employees will be dissatisfied when their expectations are not met.

6.2.2 Expectations towards oneself

The second viewpoint and research question expanded Olkkonen's (2015) stakeholder-organization expectations model with the idea of expectations employees hold for themselves. This viewpoint is connected to communication responsibility and how it affects employees' communication behavior (Andersson, 2020). Six different expectations were recognized. There were also a couple of similarities to the expectations recognized towards internal communication and organization. These six expectations were 1) openness of communication, 2) supporting communication, 3) effectiveness of communication, 4) responsibility of communication, 5) staying up-to-date, and 6) multi-channel communication skills. All of these expectations were recognized as should expectations and then additionally categorized with either could or must expectations based on the interviews. These expectations were not simplified as it was done in the previous pyramid because there were only six expectations and the several layers of expectations needed to be illustrated in the pyramid in this case (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4 Expectations pyramid of expectations towards oneself



The expectations that employees have set for themselves have interesting connections to previous studies. Employees have set one expectation for themselves that is the same of what they expect from the organization: the openness of communication, that is seen as crucial in effective internal communications (Andersson, 2020; Jiang & Luo, 2018). They expect open communication from the organization but also from themselves. This can indicate that openness in communication is a shared responsibility and employees know that it is not only in organization's hands.

Two of the factors can be connected to professional agency in communication. In Kemppainen and Laajalahti's (2016) research, communications skills have been seen to help in the construction of professional agency in communication which is seen as a should expectation in this study. Additionally, assuming and bearing responsibility of communication is seen as factor building professional agency in communication (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). Hence, communication skills and responsibility of communication are expectations which are linked to professional agency in communication. This supports the idea that some of the employees interviewed in this study develop their professional agency in communication.

Three of the expectations can be loosely tied to previous research. Employees expect themselves to stay up-to-date on ongoing matters in the organization, support colleagues in different aspects in communication and information sharing and be effective in communication. Employees have their sense of responsibility for communication, but they have also highlighted the importance of finding relevant information and having the understanding of ongoing matters. In fact, symmetrical communication has been found to boost mu-

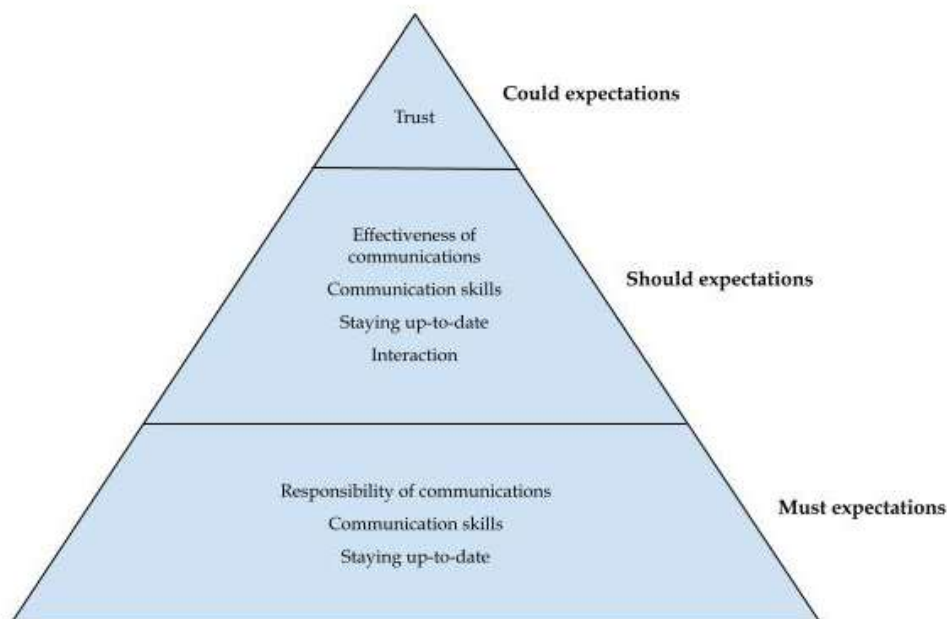
tual understanding (Men, 2014) which can be seen connected to employees' hope and goal to stay updated. Symmetrical communication has also been seen to encourage collaboration, reciprocity, horizontal communication and dialogue (Men, 2014) which are factors that can be seen to help employees to support each other. Effectiveness of communication has been discussed in terms of it being a goal for communication (see e.g. Men, 2014; Karanges, et al., 2014). It has also been studied that effective communication is the responsibility of all members in the organization (Mazzei, 2014). The effectiveness of communication will be mentioned in the next chapter as it has been also raised as an expectation that employees think that organization expects from themselves.

From this perspective, employees have set many expectations for themselves about communication but only three aspects are thought of as minimum requirements (must expectations). Hence, this further supports the idea that they have, in fact, recognized the change in their roles in taking more responsibility and communication related tasks and they know that they should do internal communication and communicative work as organizations expect them to. However, they are not demanding it as minimum acceptability from themselves yet.

6.2.3 Expectations that come from the organization

In the third viewpoint and research question, the expectations employees think that the organization expects from them were investigated. This viewpoint helps the case organization to understand and convey better their expectations towards their employees if there are any gaps between what employees think and what organizations actually expect. This practice is crucial for organizations because expectations management can prevent trust-destroying conflicts from happening (Röttger & Voß, 2008; Olkkonen, 2015). Six different expectations were recognized from the interviews, four of which were same or similar to the expectations that employees have set for themselves. The six expectations are 1) effectiveness of communication, 2) responsibility of communications, 3) communication skills, 4) staying up-to-date, 5) interaction, and 6) trust. These expectations were constructed the same way as the previous one: not simplified because there were only six expectations (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5 Expectations pyramid of expectations from organization



The four same expectations are effectiveness of communication, responsibility of communication, communication skills and staying up-to-date. It is possible that employees have set these same expectations for themselves because of what they think are the organization's expectations for them. However, it should be noted that these expectations have not been confirmed to come from the organization, they are only expectations employees have perceived. The only expectations that can be confirmed, and is the basis of this study, is the communication responsibility expectation as it was the reason the case organization was chosen for this study.

Contrast to the same expectations, trust and interaction are new expectations that have not been inspected from the perspective of previous studies. However, in a way interaction can be seen expanding the staying up-to-date expectation because in research, interaction is also connected to symmetrical communication (Men, 2014). Interaction is also connected to professional agency in communication (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). Trust instead has been closely connected with internal communication (Röttger & Voß, 2008), employee satisfaction (Men, 2014), employee-organization relationships (Kim & Rhee, 2011; Lee, et al., 2022) and ultimately, expectations (Olkonen, 2015). In this study, trust is seen as the ultimate form of open and transparent communication and the feeling of belonging that are on the top of other expectations pyramids and recognized as a could expectations. In this case, trust includes trust between the organization and between its employees.

From this perspective, employees seem to reflect on the organization's expectations to the expectations that they are already expecting from themselves. According to this study, a connection between these aspects can be seen. Em-

employees seem to know that they are expected to communicate and take on those communication activities. They also think that organizations expect them to know how to communicate and seek actively information to stay up-to-date as a minimum requirement. In an ideal situation, employees seem to think that organizations hope that employees will trust the organization. It has been studied that employees trust their organizations more when there is openness, interaction and participation (Jiang & Luo, 2018).

This concludes the results and discussion section. In the next and final chapter, overall conclusion of this study will be made.

7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the results and discussion will be summarized, and overall conclusion will be drawn. Then limitations of the study will be discussed and recommendations for future research will be considered from the perspective of this thesis.

7.1 Conclusion of the study

Overall, the following conclusions can be drawn. Employees' expectations are multi-level that affect both employees and the organization. Different expectations can be complementary to each other as the expectations seem to be constructed in continuous interaction with one another. Understanding employees' expectations give organization a tool to lead and support their employees and help the organization to avoid crises with their employees. In fact, internal communication management can be seen as expectations management as internal communication can be used to build more realistic expectations for employees (Röttger & Voß, 2008). Understanding and managing employees' expectations is crucial as employees are the glue that holds the organization together in this complex and constantly changing environment.

The complexity affects the communicative environment and employees are expected to communicate more according to recent research (Madsen & Verhoeven, 2019). According to this study, employees have recognized their communication role that comes from the organization. Employees in the case organization set many communications related expectations upon themselves which supports the conclusion that they have recognized their role. However, employees have placed a greater number of expectations for the organization and internal communication compared to expectations they have set for themselves. This suggests the increase of employees' communication role and responsibilities is only gradually happening, at least in this case organization. In

addition, different issues such as environments, experiences, and interests are seen to affect in which ways employees recognize their role and immerse in them. Some employees actively develop their professional agency in communications by taking on more responsibility and being active. In contrast, some employees dismiss the communication aspect in their professional agency and identity and rather perceive it as a mandatory part of their work that they cannot develop. Hence, this study supports the intrinsic and extrinsic aspect of communication responsibility: organizations hold employees responsible, but employees also create their own sense of responsibility (Andersson, 2020).

This case study supports also different aspects from earlier research, e.g., openness (Jiang & Luo, 2018; Andersson, 2020), trust (Jiang & Luo, 2018), interaction (Men, 2014; Kempainen & Laajalahti, 2016; Vanhala et al., 2011), effectiveness of communication (Men, 2014; Karanges, et al., 2014), communication skills (Kempainen & Laajalahti, 2016), symmetrical communication (Lee et al., 2022; Men, 2014; Welch & Jackson, 2007), acknowledgement (Röttger & Voß, 2008) and links expectations and internal communication more tightly together.

There are interesting viewpoints that this study proposes that organizations should consider closely. Employees' expectations are supporting many of the aspects inspected in professional agency in communication: openness in communication, interaction, supporting colleagues, communication skills, communication responsibility and so on. According to agency studies, employees have the control and the opportunity to choose for themselves (Kempainen & Laajalahti, 2016; Vähäsantanen, 2013). This study supports this idea but also highlights the demands that come from the environment. For example, when comparing the expectations employees have set for themselves and what expectations they think organizations have for them, there are several similarities. This study suggests that employees adjust their expectations based on what expectations they recognize from the environment. Hence, it is crucial for organizations to communicate their expectations to their employees clearly.

In addition, all the employees seem to understand the meaningfulness of communication which is one of the individual factors in professional agency in communication (Kempainen & Laajalahti, 2016). Understanding meaningfulness can be seen in the variety of must and should expectations they have set for organization and internal communication. They see it as important but not all of them necessarily understand the bigger picture of internal communication and what it contains. For example, not all of the interviewees understood that it can contain all formal and informal communication in the organization (Kempainen & Laajalahti, 2016). They also expressed their motivation and attitude towards internal communication by assuming their communication role and wanting to support their community, but not everyone expressed their enthusiasm, ambition, or desire to develop it. Neither did they seem to have a clear identity as communicators. These are all aspects that professional agency in communication raises (Kempainen & Laajalahti, 2016). There are clear differences between different employees, and this should be considered when organ-

izations lead communicative work and employees' professional agency in communications.

More than ever, organizations need to support their employees as communicators. Organizations can affect the socio-cultural factors that help employees build their professional agency in communication, for example ensuring favorable communication setting (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). By unifying the practices and having a clear communication framework organization can create effective setting for employees to communicate more actively (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016). At the same time, organizations can provide the support employees need and communication professionals can adopt their role as coaches and consultants (Heide & Simonsson, 2011). The leadership has a crucial role in developing a culture of openness and interaction between all internal stakeholders (Kemppainen & Laajalahti, 2016) so that employees can do communicative work. However, development of employees' skills, understanding and tools requires time and not all employees have the skills and confidence to do communicative work (Pekkala, 2021).

In the following chapter, limitations of the study will be discussed and recommendations for future research will be further introduced.

7.2 Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research

This study has investigated the employees' expectations of the communicative work and communication roles from the perspective of one organization. In the current complex and constantly changing communicative environment, studying one organization does not give a comprehensive view of the phenomenon. At the same time, communicative work is contextual concept that is dependent of the environment (Pekkala, 2021) which makes the generalizations of this study impossible. In addition, while this study might support the idea that employees have recognized their increasing communication roles, the roles are constantly changing with the demands of the communicative environment and the organizational and individual communications goals (Pekkala, 2018). The study was also conducted by one researcher which is why this study is affected by the researcher's subjectivity. Hence, the results cannot be generalized, and the topic needs to be further studied in the contexts of other organizations – preferably in several organization that operate in different environments.

One of the limitations of this study was excluding the external perspective. Especially, the communicative work concept has been studied from the perspective of external social media. This study was consciously limited to internal communications and employees' communication roles in the organization and did not include employees' communication roles in external channels. However, that line of research is prominent in communicative work studies and should not be excluded in the future studies as it plays an important part in the grow-

ing employee communication roles. Hence, future research should be expanded to also include external channels, which nowadays are also thought of as the employee's communication responsibility.

The results may have also affected by the interview structure. In hindsight, some of the expectations were covered better in the interview questions than others. Questions aiming to reveal different expectations should have been balanced, which has probably led to the fact that some expectation types emerged more than others. The possible imbalance of the questions was influenced by researcher's inexperience.

Some of the expectations recognized in this study were overlapping. Hence, in the future studies, the expectations could be grouped more specifically connecting the similar expectations with each other (e.g., transparency and openness). In addition, the different expectation types could be compared to each other and find correlations and differences between them with quantitative method in the future studies.

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APPENDIX 1 Interview questions (in Finnish & English)

In Finnish:

Taustatiedot

1. Ikä
2. Vuodet työelämässä
3. Nykyinen rooli organisaatiossa
4. Roolihistoria ja vuodet organisaatiossa

Oman työn käytännöt

5. Mistä saat tällä hetkellä tietoa työhösi ja organisaatioon liittyvistä sisäisistä asioista?
 1. Keneltä saat tietoa? Mitä kautta?
6. Miten toimit, että saat sinulle ja työllesi relevanttia tietoa sisäisesti?
 1. Joudutko näkemään vaivaa? Miksi?
7. Kuvaile sellaista tilannetta, jolloin olet itse tiedon jakajana organisaatiossa. Tiedon jakaminen voi olla esimerkiksi kirjallista tai suullista.
 1. Miksi jaoit tietoa?
 2. Millainen vuorovaikutustilanne oli kyseessä? Mitkä asiat mahdollistivat vuorovaikutustilanteen ja osallistumisen?
 3. Mitkä asiat ylipäättään rohkaisevat sinua jakamaan aktiivisesti tietoa organisaation sisällä? Mitkä taas eivät?
 4. Miten sinä yleensä jaat tietoa organisaation sisällä?
 5. Kenelle tyypillisesti jaat tietoa organisaation sisällä?
 6. Millaisena koet tiedon jakamisen organisaatiossa?
8. Miten pystyt osallistua aktiivisesti tiedon jakamiseen tai sen vastaanottamiseen? Millaista on viestintään osallistuminen omassa työssäsi?
 1. Minimivaatimukset, vähintään
 2. Onko tilanteet selkeitä, "tietää mitä odottaa"
 3. Mitkä estävät aktiivisen osallistumisen tällä hetkellä?
9. Vaihtoehtoisesti, kun kuvaile sellaista tilannetta, jolloin olet päättänyt, että et tietoisesti jaa jotain tietoa organisaation sisällä, mikä tilanne sinulle tulee mieleen?
 1. Miksi päätit olla jakamatta tietoa? Mitkä asiat ovat estäneet sinua jakamasta tietoa organisaation sisällä?
 2. Huomasitko jotain seurauksia?
10. Millaiset vuorovaikutustilanteet työyhteisössäsi auttavat sinua työssäsi?
 1. Miltä tällaisissa tilanteissa oleminen tuntuu?
 2. Miksi ne auttavat sinun työtäsi?

Roolit sisäisessä viestinnässä

11. Kun mietit tilannetta, jolloin on ollut mielestäsi tärkeää jakaa tietoa sisäisesti, mikä sinulle tulee mieleen? Tilanne voi olla onnistunut tai epäonnistunut.
 1. Millaiseksi kuvailisit organisaation rooli tässä tilanteessa?
 2. Millaiseksi kuvailisit omaa rooliasi tässä tilanteessa?
12. Voitko mielestäsi vaikuttaa ihmisten väliseen vuorovaikutukseen ja osallistumiseen? Miksi?
13. Millaisissa tilanteissa olet yllättynyt positiivisesti omasta osallistumisesta viestintään? Esim. mennyt oman mukavuusalueen ulkopuolelle.
14. Millaisissa tilanteissa olet yllättynyt positiivisesti jonkun muun osallistumisesta viestintään?
15. Mitä organisaatio (ylin johto) voisi tehdä paremmin, että jokainen tuntisi olevan paremmin mahdollistettu osallistumaan sisäiseen viestintään?
 1. Mitä esihenkilöt voisivat tehdä paremmin?
 2. Mitä sinä voisit tehdä paremmin?

Sisäinen viestintä yleisesti

16. Mitä sisäinen viestintä mielestäsi on?
17. Miten kuvailisit onnistunutta sisäistä viestintää?
18. Mitkä ovat mielestäsi sisäisen viestinnän minimivaatimukset?

In English:

Background information

1. Age
2. Years in worklife
3. Current role in the organization
4. Role history and years in the organisation

Practices in one's own work

5. Where are you currently getting internal information related to your work and the organization?
 1. From who or what?
6. What do you do to find relevant information for you and your work internally?
 1. Do you struggle finding the information? Why?
7. Describe a situation where you have shared information within the organization. It can be for example written or oral.
 1. Why did you share information?
 2. What kind of interaction situation was it? What things made interaction and participation possible?
 3. What encourages you to actively share information within the organization? What things do not encourage instead?
 4. How do you typically share information within the organization?
 5. Who do you usually share information with?

6. How do you feel about sharing information within the organization?
8. How can you actively participate in information sharing or receiving within the organization?
 1. What are the minimum requirements for you to participate in sharing information in the organization? Something you should at least have in order to share?
 2. Are the situations clear where you have to participate? Do you know what is expected of you?
 3. What things are preventing active participation currently?
9. Alternatively, describe a situation where you have decided not to share information within your organisation.
 1. Why did you decide not to share information?
 2. Did you notice any consequences?
10. What kind of internal interaction in your work community helps you in your work?
 1. How does it feel to be in these situations?
 2. How is the information transmitted in your opinion?
 3. Why do they help with your work?

Roles in internal communication

11. Describe a situation in the organization when it was important to share information internally. The described situation can be a successful or unsuccessful situation in your opinion.
 1. How would you describe organization's role in this situation?
 2. How would you describe your role in this situation?
12. Do you feel that you can influence communication and interaction between people in your own role? Why?
13. In what situations have you been positively surprised by your own involvement in communication? For example, going outside your comfort zone.
14. In what situations have you been positively surprised by someone else's involvement in communication?
15. What the organization (higher management, incl. comms) could do better to make everyone feel better enabled to participate in internal communication?
 1. What line managers could do better to enable this?
 2. How about you?

Internal communications in general

16. How would you characterize/describe what internal communications is?
17. How would you describe successful internal communications? At its best.
18. What are in your opinion the minimum requirements that internal communications should have?

APPENDIX 2 TRANSLATED QUOTES (ENGLISH-FINNISH)

Quote: "And then these other tools. That there are these tools and everyone would know how to use them..." (P7)

Original in Finnish: "Ja sitten niinkun nää muut työkalut. Että on nää työkalut ja kaikki osais niitä käyttää..."

Quote: "Meeting places and platforms and information channels should also be built, which are regular in a way, which creates routines and security and where it comes from." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "Pitäisi olla rakennettuna myös kohtaamispaikkoja ja alustoja ja tiedotuskanavia, jotka on tavallaan säännöllisiä, jotka luo rutiineja ja turvaa ja mistä sitä tulee."

Quote: "...it probably requires such a basic level of information sharing that people have that information about the company and themselves and their own role..." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "...se varmaan vaatii sellaisen perustason siitä tiedottamisesta, että ihmisillä on se tieto yritystä ja heitä itseään ja omaa rooliaan koskevista asioista..."

Quote: "...it is such a responsibility, who is responsible for informing about such big matters." (P7)

Original in Finnish: "...se on semmonen vastuu, joka vastaa siitä tämmöisistä isoista tiedotusasioista."

Quote: "First of all, communication should be some form of interaction, if the word communication is used and not informing. It should enable some form of mutual interaction or interaction of different levels." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "Viestintä ensinnäkin pitäisi olla jonkinnäköistä vuorovaikutusta, jos käytetään sana viestintä eikä tiedottaminen. Sen pitäisi mahdollistaa jonkinnäköisen molemminpuolisen vuorovaikutuksen tai eri tasojen vuorovaikutuksen."

Quote: "Internal communication means that you find that information quickly." (P2)

Original in Finnish: "Kyllä sisäinen viestintä on sitä, että sä löydät sen tiedon nopeesti."

Quote: "...it also has to be quite fast, people want information and in my opinion it requires that you have to be able to communicate internally when everything is not ready." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "...sen täytyy olla myös aika nopeaa, ihmiset haluaa tietoa ja mun mielestä se vaatii että sisäisesti pitää pystyä viestimään silloin kun kaikki ei ole valmista."

Quote: "First, of course, from the immediate supervisor, he/she is an important source of information." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "Ensimmäisenä tietysti lähiesimieheltä, hän on tärkeä tietolähde."

Quote: "At best, it probably requires a basic level of information that people have the information about the company and themselves and their own role, because it enables interaction and communication and the building of a sense of community." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "Parhaimmillaan se varmaan vaatii sellaisen perustason siitä tiedottamisesta, että ihmisillä on se tieto yritystä ja heitä itseään ja omaa rooliaan koskevista asioista, koska se sit taas mahdollistaa sen että vuorovaikutuksen ja sen kommunikoinnin ja yhteisöllisyyden rakentamisen."

Quote: "That people want to participate in the company's activities other than by doing my own role and that's what I'm paid for." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "Halutaan osallistua siihen yrityksen toimintaan muuten kuin omaa roolia tekemällä ja mistä just mulle maksetaan."

Quote: "...common successes, at least in our team, we strongly want to bring them up, because we are in a role in a way that we, as we are, are the last ones to produce that success and write that announcement or write that news or something like that. There is also, of course, the creation of a sense of community and the sharing of successes." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "...yhteisiä onnistumisia niin me ollaan ainakin meidän tiimissä vahvasti haluttu nostaa niitä esille, koska me ollaan tavallaa sellaisessa roolissa että me niinkun ollaan viimekädessä tuotetaan se onnistuminen ja kirjoitetaan se tiedote tai kirjoitetaan se uutinen tai näin. Siinä on myös tietysti sellainen yhteisöllisyyden luominen ja onnistumisten jakaminen."

Quote: "...we have this kind of culture, in general in our team and in our operations, I have been given a role that encourages communication and sharing success and making one's own work visible." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "...meillä on semmoinen kulttuuri, ylipäättänsä meidän tiimissä ja meidän toiminnassa, mulle on luotu semmoinen rooli että siihen viestintään ja onnistumisen jakamiseen ja oman työn näkyväksi tekemiseen kannustetaan."

Quote: "...let's give positive feedback or continue in a way that if you comment on something that it's good and we continue, then it will feel like people actually hear and listen to what I'm saying." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "...annetaan positiivista palautetta tai jatketaan tavallaan se, että jos kommentoi jotain että toi on hyvä ja jatketaan, nii siitä tulee sellainen olo että ihmiset oikeesti kuulee ja kuuntelee mitä mä sanon."

Quote: "And at least you try to be easily approachable like that." (P7)

Original in Finnish: "Ja ainakin ite yrittää olla sellanen helposti lähestyttävä."

Quote: "That is available." (P7)

Original in Finnish: "Että on tavoitettavissa."

Quote: "That's why it requires an awful lot of time, which I don't have at the moment. Then I feel a bad conscience and also feelings of failure in communication." (P2)

Original in Finnish: "Sen takia se vaatii hirvittävän, tosi paljon aikaa jota mulla ei tällä hetkellä ole. Siitä koen sitten huonoa omatuntoa ja myös epäonnistumisen tunteita viestinnässä."

Quote: "...so I feel that it is part of my role to communicate and tell about it internally." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "...sit mä koen että se on osa mun roolia viestiä ja kertoa siitä sisäisesti"

Quote: "My responsibility is to share information" (P2)

Original in Finnish: "Mun velvollisuus on jakaa tietoa."

Quote: "I work directly with customers, so I need to have some picture of what the [company name] does as a whole, so that I can read [newspapers] what is written about the [company name]. Because the customer sees me as a representative of the [company] and not some small unit." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "mä toimin suoraan asiakasrajapinnassa, niin mulla tarvii olla joku kuva mitä [yritys] tekee kokonaisuudessaan, että kyllä mä luen hesaria tai kauppalehteä mitä [yrityksestä] kirjoitetaan. Koska asiakas näkee mut [yrityksen] edustajana eikä jonkun pienen yksikön."

Quote: "actively using all the same channels, in a way by my own actions." (P7)

Original in Finnish: "aktiivisesti käyttää semmosia kaikkia kanavia, tavallaan sillä omalla toiminnalla vaan niinku."

Quote: "...if you can assess whether someone needs this information, is able to assess it and then also has the skills to communicate it in front of them, so that they are able to, even if there is someone, able to write that information." (P7)

Original in Finnish: "...jos tulee jokin että arvioi sen että tarviiko joku tätä tietoa, pystyy arvioimaan sen ja sitten että on myös sellaiset taidot viestiä sitä eteen päin, että pystyy niinkuin, vaikka jos on joku, niin pystyy kirjoittamaan sen tiedon."

Quote: "In my opinion, it strongly includes the element of building the feeling of belonging, which then requires that it has those interactive elements" (P4)

Original in Finnish: "Mun mielestä siihen vahvasti kuuluu se yhteisöllisyyden rakentamisen elementti, mikä se sitten edellyttää, että siinä on niitä vuorovaikutuksellisia elementtejä"

Quote: "...I think it's really nice, even if not all of them are relevant for you, but you get the feeling that you are more involved and there is also nothing to hide."(P4)

Original in Finnish: "...se on musta tosi kiva vaikkei ne kaikki ole relevantteja ja itseä koskettavia mutta tulee sellainen olo, että on enemmän mukana eikä myöskään ole mitään salattavaa."

Quote: "...when asked personally, the answer will be found easily." (P7)

Original in Finnish: "...kun henkilökohtaisesti ihmiseltä kysyy niin se helposti se vastaus löytyy."

Quote: "...it's actually asking people who might know about this and then arranging meetings with them." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "...sit on oikeestaan se, että kyselee ihmisiltä, että kuka mahtaisi tästä tietää ja sitten sopii heidän kanssaan palavereja."

Quote: "I think it is pretty easy, because I share information within my group" (P7)

Original in Finnish: "Musta se on aika helppoa, kun se mun tiedon jakaminen on tässä omassa ryhmässä"

Quote: "...own example. Discusses and shares information. And listens what others say and of course, I strive and try to remember to take the new people into account because the corona times have made it not so easy to join [...] In a way, it is a bit like pushing yourself beyond the limits." (P4)

Original in Finnish: "...oma esimerkki. Keskustelee ja jakaa tietoa. Ja kuuntelee mitä toiset sanoo ja toki uudet ihmiset pyrkii ja muistaa ottamaan mukaan koska toki tässä korona-aikana on vähän se että ei siihen pääse niin helposti mukaan. [...] Jotenkin se on vähän sellaista itsensä puskemista."

Quote: "...actively uses all of those channels, in a way with my own action. And at least I try to be easily approachable." (P7)

Original in Finnish: "...aktiivisesti käyttää semmosia kaikkia kanavia, tavallaan sillä omalla toiminnalla vaan niinku. Ja ainakin ite yrittää olla sellanen helposti lähestyttävä."