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COMMUNICATION OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES TO EMPLOYEES: A CASE STUDY

NKULULEKO GLADSTONE VICTOR FOLOSE

A research report submitted to the faculty of Management, University of the Witwatersrand in partial fullfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management)

January, 1995

ABSTRACT

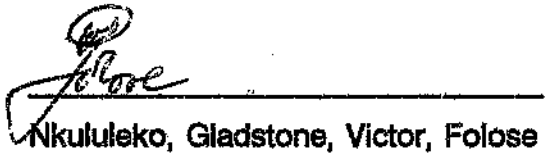
The democratisation of local government requires effective communication structures. The current methods of communicating changes and developments to employees of the Sebokeng Town Council are: top management discussions, notice-boards and informing those affected. Their ineffectiveness is shown by the poor knowledge of local government issues revealed in a council characterised by adversarial union-management relations.

Management appears to play a minimal role whilst shopstewards dominate the process of communicating changes to employees and the grapevine is said to provide information most timeously. The quest for change and for a two-way communication process were endorsed strongly. Consultative meetings, discussions involving union representatives and informal worker discussions are the preferred methods of communication.

It is recommended that a change management process be triggered by the researcher facilitating a more inclusive management-employee workshop to discuss the findings, establish an internal communications structure and explain how to disseminate information through briefing groups.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research raport is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.



Nkululeko, Gladstone, Victor, Folose

30 January 1995

DEDICATION

This reserch report is dedicated to my wife,Lindi, for keeping the fires burning in the true African tradition whilst the husband is out hunting. It is a challenge to our three children, Mandlakazi, Siseko and Ntsika to scale even higher academic heights.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although the refusal of the Town Treasurer, Mr G P Roets, to participate in the study is regretted, the support and active participationof the Acting Town Clerk, Mr N P van der Westhuizen guaranteed the success of the attitude survey. He granted access to use of the photocopy machine, provided transport to decentralised offices, personal encouragement and advice and the granting of approval for the survey to be conducted. This spirit of cooperation was exhibited by other heads of departments and all participants in the exercise.

A special thanks is given to the Personnel Branch.

- Mr J M Mofokeng, the Personnel Officer for providing personnel statics and
- in particular to the following ladies for venturing the extra mile of tabulating the data manually: L M Senkhane, AT Mooko, P M Mokhema, E M Tshekedi, and P Dlamini.
- Mrs Maggie Dladla for providing the critical typing touch under the most trying conditions.

The mother of it all is, however, Ms Dominique Wooldridge, my research supervisor, for her technical expertise which guided the research process.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since the Government of National Unity is the embodiment of the transition from an apartheid repressive past to a democratic future, democratic standards should be used to judge the effectiveness of all levels of government. Equally this investigation into how the Sebokeng Town Council communicates institutional and organisational changes to its employees should be viewed within the prerequisites of open government - "transparent in its decisions and their implementation....

- accountable for its actions...
- an active promoter of freedom of expression and freedom of information...
- an active promoter of popular participation in the mechanisms of democracy" (Nyembe, 1994, p25).

The importance of local government stability for making reconstruction and development a reality is echoed by Thozamile Botha who states that the struggle against apartheid was at local level and "That's where the rebuilding of our communities must start. It will demand both moral commitment and practical proof but without appropriate structures we run the risk of chaos and loss of property." This sums up the challenge of orderly transition to fully representative local government.

The Weekend Star (June 25/26, 1994) warns that a total breakdown in the credibility of local government is looming unless those in power start communicating with the electorate. Now that a new metropolitican government and new town councils are to be established, nobody explained activities of negotiating forums. Thus Randburg Management Committee chairman, Gary Cooney agrees "we need to step up the communication process, but it is difficult because no agreements have been reached" and further states that he does not know what to tell his staff,. "I know that the Randburg Town Council is going to be dissolved, but I do not know what will replace it. My staff have asked me whether they should be looking for jobs" (Marsland, Weekend Star, 25/26 June 1994).

The above merely serves to emphasize that the question being investigated, how the Sebokeng Town Council is communicating changes to its employees, is not only fair but legitimate and topical.

1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION: THE SEBOKENG TOWN COUNCIL

The Sebokeng Town Council is a black local authority which administers the Vaal Triangle black townships of Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Boipatong and Bophelong. Is as a result of the Lekoa Town Council Dissolution Act, Act 61 of 1991. These townships are steeped in the struggle against the apartheid regime, e.g. the 1961 Sharpeville Shooting and 3 September 1984 triggered the rent boycott which later spread countrywide. The top management of the council is exclusively Afrikaner-male dominated. The South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) organises in the council, thus the employees participated in the 1991 action against local authorities, and the 1992 SAMWU National Strike. In April 1994 there was strike action by more than 1 200 SAMWU members against the Transvaal Provincial Administration because of, inter alia, failure to resolve a salary dispute.

The Local Government Transition Act, No.209 of 1993 provides for the establishment of local government negotiating forums where all major stakeholders negotiate the future democratic local government dispensation.
The Vaal Metropolitican Council has three transitional metropolitican substructures. The Western Sub-Structured includes:
Vanderbijlpark, Bophelong, Boipatong, part of Sebokeng, Tshepiso, Vaal Oewer, Noordvaal, and rural areas of Vanderbijlpaaaark. The Eastern Substructure includes Vereeniging, Roshnee, Rus-Ter Vaal, Sharpevile, part of Sebokeng, Vaal Marina and farm Koppiesfontein and rural areas of Vereeniging. The Northern Substructures includes Meyerton, Randvaal, Walkerville, De Deur, Evaton, part of Sebokeng, Orange Farm (Palestine), Poortje, and part of rural area of Vereeniging.

The Vaal Metropolitan Council was launched in terms of proclamation No.2 (Premiers) 1995 of the Province of Gauteng, with effect from 1 January 1995. The inaugural meeting of the TMC was held on 14 January 1995 followed by those of the Northern Substructure, Western Substructure and Eastern Substructure on 16, 17, and 18 January 1995 respectively.

What is interesting is that up to 23 January 1995, the employees of the Sebokeng Town Council which includes Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Boipatong and Bophelong, have not been let into the secret of what will happen to them in future in the light of the above fundamental reorganisation and restructuring.

1.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

- the survey research was limited to the attitudes of literate employees who need not be worse off regarding communication with management. The study would have addressed substantive issues more authoritatively if the illiterate bulk of employees would have been proportionately represented.
- a rigorous random selection of the sample of employees from Standard 8 or artisan certificate would have proved difficult as some employees were writing examinations and would have compromised voluntarism which was emphasized in the study.
- respondents had difficulty discriminating five levels of degree in Likert-type scales on question 7-12 on barriers to effective communication and questions 29-33 on timeliness of information from various sources.
- the length of the questionnaire and it,s difficulty level especially for the majority of the respondents with a lower level of education proved problematic because "there is no interviewer to help the respondent if a question is not understood" (Bryman 1989, p43).

Since the situation dictated that the self administered questionnaires were the modus operandi, the problems associated with the presence of the interviewer who would have been the researcher and known to respondents and would have produced special effects on responses, were minimised and "obviously, if there is no interviewer present, as in the case of self-administered questionnaires, such sources of error may be eliminated" (ibid).

The following six chapters examine the underlying rationale behind intra-organisational communication viewed within the framework of change management, the method employed to investigate, the research findings, recommendations to council and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

2.1 CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN THE 1990'S

According to Thomas Kuhn history is marked by occasional major changes -"in what he called paradigm shifts when the working assumptions on which people have depended become so inappropriate that they breakdown, to be "replaced by a more appropriate set". "Clearly we cannot use the organisation of the 1890's to solve the problems of the 1980's." (Kanter, 1988, p43). As South Africa moves from apartheid to democracy, the new environment demands new answers.

The key element to the management of change in the 1990's is people management, "organisations in the West can no longer afford to ignore the human element as part of the change process. All change in organisations is about people". (McCalman and Paton, 1992, p116) Werth (1994, p12) depicts the post 27 April 1994 shock change in South Africa, "inevitably today most change is shock change; unexpected, unprepared for and often coming from more than one area at the same time, continues and gathering pace". This situation results in uncertainty about the future, insecurity, lack of identity, loss of confidence and sense of personal competence and self-esteem. To avert a complete "people breakage" this trauma needs to be managed effectively," but you cannot buy a structured guide to change management for your organisation - it doesn't exist" (McCalman and Paton, p117). This is the challenge of organisation development.

John Harvey-Jones warns that people do not necessarily love change - "abandoning the safety of the known for the haziest picture of the future" (Laburn, 1994,p6). Organisations change only when people begin to identify themselves with the proposed changes.

The debate about change in South Africa is rather about the nature of change. Public administrations at provincial and local level have to be restructured and reorganised because of the need to deracialise in line with the country's population composition and dictates of the constitution which embrace democratisation so that structures, systems and practices reflect this new ethos. The

difficulty of transforming the provincial and local levels is that one is not simply assembling mechanical objects, but is dealing with "organisms made up of people with values, cultures and interests, networks and power relations" (Swilling , 1994, p52). The choice of an administrative model with it's change strategy are political decisions. The expert-led approach to change involves outside experts and top management agreeing on organisational changes and then forcing them down the organisation resulting in a restructured pyramid which leaves the status quo intact in the hands of white males. The alternative change management approach enhances the current management skills and extends needed knowledge, skills and information to other stakeholders via a process of empowerment resulting in active participation by all in the change management process.

The actual role of communication in the change management process is emphasized by P Labum (1994, p6) "keeping abreast of change in the nineties is critically important. From the CEO's down to the lowest level worker, people need to be kept informed of developments ....and how these developments might affect them". A detailed discussion of communication with specific reference to intra-organisational communication becomes imperative to prepare a sound theoretical framework for the research project.

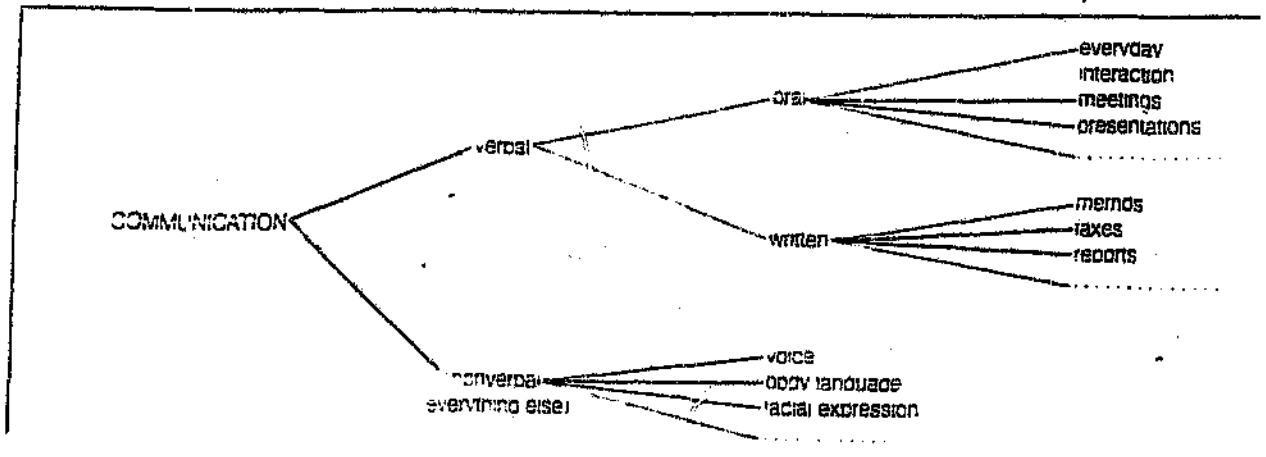
2.2 ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Below communication will be defined, explain its importance, highlight barriers to effective communication, reflect on the role of management and conclude with methods of communication and it.s nature.

2.2.1 WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

"Communication is a process by which we share facts feelings and attitudes. More specifically it is the process of talking and listening so that we can achieve our objectives. It is the mutual exchange of understanding which precedes positive action in all it's forms" (Katz, 1991, p2). Communication is not restricted to the spoken word, it extends to other signals which convey messages, the daily actions and utterances of front-line managers, top management concerns and follow-ups, departmental activities and priorities etc. It is a two-way process that impacts on the culture and health of the organisation. Whenever one is intent on transforming the company culture "all these communication signals need to point in the same direction and your messages need to be consistent and repeated all across the business" (Drennan, 1992, p89). The communication process is summed up in the diagram depicted below by Katz, (1991).

Diagram 1. Effective communicators understand the communication process



The greatest stumbling block to interpersonal communication is "the inability to listen to each other intelligently, understandingly and skilfully....we need to make greater efforts to educate people in effective communication - which means, essentially teaching people how to listen" (Rogers and Roethlisberger, 1991). Effective communication involves more than policies, procedures and media "It involves attitudes and behaviours that reinforce the importance of sharing ideas, information and feelings rather than hoarding them" (Garnett, 1992, p138).

2.2.2 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

It is important to recognise and attempt to overcome barriers to effective communication "which constitute one of the most important problems in public administration" (Simon, Smithsburg and Thompson, 1950, p229). William James added that "The most insurmountable barrier in nature is between one man's thoughts and another") Garnett 1992, p20). These barriers can block communication at the encoding, sending and receiving stages of message transmission and some are the following:

a) **Emotions**

How the receiver feels when he receives information will influence how he interprets information.

b) **Filtering**

The sender may manipulate information so that it is seen more favourably or unfavourably by the receiver.

c) **Language**

Words mean different things to different people depending on their age, educational level and cultural background.

d) **Selective Perception**

The receiver in the communication process selectively sees and hears based on his needs, motivations, background, experience and other personal characteristics.

e) **Prejudice**

Prejudice refers to prejudging an idea, person, group or organisation etc and thus preventing a careful and impartial evaluation of ideas, people, proposals etc.

f) **Distractions**

Intended messages may be distracted by other messages, job assignments, departmental protocol and personal interests.

Lastly these barriers are compounded by faulty communication skills, themselves a formidable distortion.

2.2.3 THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT IN COMMUNICATION

David Drennan (1992, p97) states that "to make changes stick the whole management team needs to be conveying the same message, speaking the same language, actually living the talk".

They must be made not only communicators but advocates of the change process.

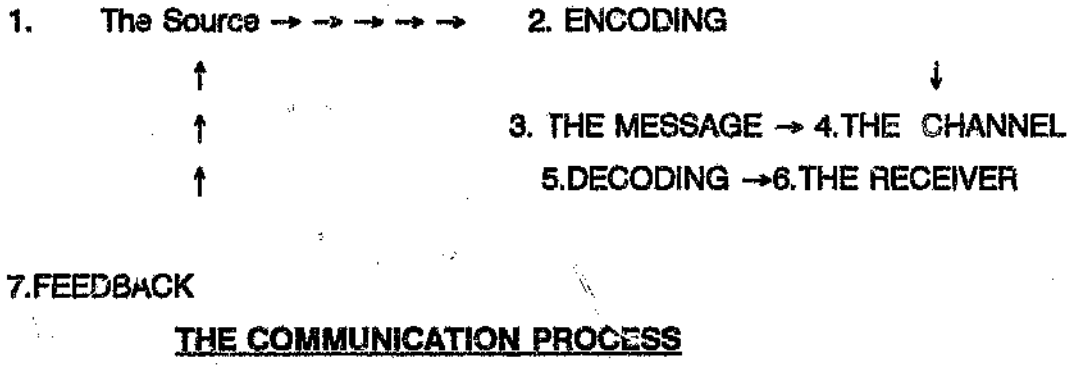
Since in most organisations 85% of personnel are non-managerial at the low echelons of the

organisation and make the product and/or deal with the clients, their boss, the front-line manager is the critical person to place on the top management's side "to see visible and possible changes across the organisation" (Drennan, 1992, p100). Thus it is imperative to develop front-line managers into "the best two-way communications" (ibid).

A communications manager or facilitator can play an important role in providing useful material for managers and in planning and controlling materials presented in various media. He is only the communications technical expert, effective two-way communication resides with line managers.

2.2.4 METHODS OF INTRA-ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

The communication process depicted below serves to illustrate that each of its components has the potential to create distortions.



THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

According to (Robbins, 1984, p94) communication is initiated by a prior purpose expressed as a message. The message moves between a source (sender) and a receiver. It is encoded (transmitted) in a message (some symbolic form) and transported by way of a channel (medium) and decoded (retranslated) by the receiver. The receiver relays feedback on whether the message is understood or not. The final product is the transference of meaning from one person to another. Below is discussed the three major communication systems in organisations:

2.2.4.1 Oral Communication

Popular forms of oral communication include speeches, formal one-on-one and group discussions and the informal rumour or the grapevine.The major advantages of oral commur ion are speed and feedback. The major disadvantage is that the message has to pass through several levels and is open to distortions.

2.2.4.2 Written Communication

Written communications include memos, letters, organisational periodicals, bulletin boards and all others transmitted via the written word.

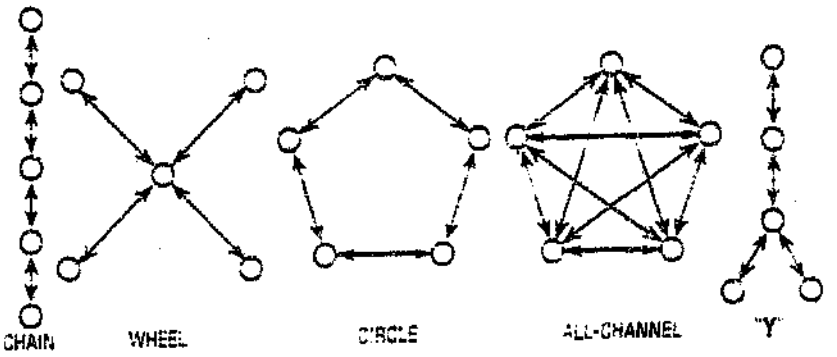
Written communications have certain advantages: they provide a permanent, tangible and verifiable record of the communication; message can be stored indefinitely; complex and lengthy communications available for later reference and written communications are more likely to be well thought out, logical and clear.

The disadvantage of written communication is that it is time-consuming and lacks a built-in feedback mechanism.

2.2.4.3 Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication includes body movements, intonations or emphasis given to certain words, facial expressions and the physical distance between sender and receiver (Robbins 1984:p97). Thus the message is conveyed by the body language. A discussion of organisational communication would be incomplete without examining communication networks, directions of communication and informal communication.

2.2.4.4 Communication Network



The manner in which groups structure themselves facilitates or hinders the ease with which communication flows through the communication channels. Laboratory research has yielded insights into five types of communication networks depicted above:

a) The chain network represents a pattern where communication moves only upward and downwards.

b) The wheel network represents a supervisor with four subordinates who do not interact

(c) The circle network represents a three-level hierarchy with superiors and subordinates and horizontal communication at the lowest level.

(d) The all-channel network allows each of the subjects to communicate freely with the other four

(e) The Y-network turned upside down represents two subordinates reporting to one superior.

Since there is no single network best in all situations, the network used should be a product of objectives sought. The circle is slower and less accurate in communication flows. The wheel and the chain result in high job performance. Morale is higher in the circle and all the channel the yields faster and most effective results in complex operations.

2.2.4.5 Directions of Communication

Some features of communication pertain to the direction communication takes, whether vertical (downward and upward) or horizontal.

Downward communication refers to the flow of information from the superiors to their subordinates. Task directives and job instructions tend to dominate downward communication at the expense of employee performance feedback and information on the direction of the organisation. Upward communication flows to higher organisational levels as feedback on progress and problem areas as well as suggestions and grievances. This type of information is not encouraged as managers are reluctant to solicit rejection because upward communication tends to be threatening.

Horizontal communication occurs when employees at the same organisational level communicate to coordinate operations and provide emotional and social support to members. Leaders tend to discourage peer contact if it provides access to information available only to leaders and is at the expense of vertical communication.

Informal communication owes its existence to that the formal communication system cannot adequately meet the needs of employees. The informal communication network (grapevine) emerges around existing social relationships to satisfy requirements for additional information in the workplace.

2.3 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Typical of a young field which still "lacks on a overreaching theory", the study of organisational communication is faced with teething problems: differences on theoretical approaches; preponderance of static research with dynamic approaches and field studies rare and questionable validity of a few controlled experiments because "laboratory studies cannot effectively stimulate the social structure in which organisational communication takes place" (Graber, 1992, p16). Political communication studies have laid the foundation for understanding communication in the public sector.

Intra-organisational communication studies are premised on three management schools of thought. Scientific management views messages as tools to accomplish work-related tasks; the Human Relations School sees communication as contributing to psychological welfare and job satisfaction and the Systems School combines concerns for psychological welfare with organisational concerns. Other schools of thought are the "intepretist" perspective which argues that communication should focus on perceptions and the "critical" approaches which seeks to improve current social flaws of existing systems by introducing new systems.

The situation being studied should dictate the combination of approaches to employ. Gerald Goldhaber uses the Watergate scandal as an example: senators true to the scientific management school focused on the hierarchical structure of the White House and the flow of directives from the president's office. The human relations orientation was reflected in probing for motives that prompted actions of defendants. The social systems approach was evident in attempts to establish the relationship between the burglary at Watergate and other issues such as persons who ordered the burglary and the resultant cover-up.

The following are some of the studies conducted in organisational communication.

a) Communications in Research and Development Laboratory

Tom Allen as principal researcher of the Massachuseths Institute for Technology investigated the importance of communication to the success of highly technical organisations in 1966.

The first research question asked was: What channels of communication are most frequently used by scientists and engineers in obtaining technical information? The methods used were weekly interviews. Channels external to the company were: technical books and journals, suppliers' technical representatives and their publications, customers and consultants. Internal sources were: technical staff, company research and personal experience. Information from external sources was more frequent. There was more reliance on internal information for final external channels were rated as more accessible and easy to use than internal channels.

The next research question was: What factors influence communicators within a research and development laboratory? A questionnaire was administered. Status played an important role eg PhD's communicated amongst themselves and engineers discussed technical issues more often with friends. Technological gate-keepers" were the link between the laboratory and the outside world. They served as opinion leaders by absorbing information from outside and disseminating it to colleagues (Reitz, 1977, p363).

b) Network Research

Alex Bavelas and Harold Leavit (1960) concluded that for simple tasks, the wheel and the all-channel communication networks are the most effective and the circle the least effective. The circle results in the highest degree of satisfaction and the most peripheral members of the wheel are the least satisfied.

Geutzkow and Simon (1955) found that difficulty in organising the group negatively impacted on performance, hence the wheels group"organised the earliest, followed by the all-channels and lastly by the circle's group. The setting up of an organisational structure resulted in quick task accomplishment regardless of communication network.

The study by Dubin (1959) concluded that the lesser the number of links between communication centers, the more effective

communication becomes at the expense of efficiency and satisfaction.

c) Informal Network

A study reported by Davis (1953) on the grapevine among sixty seven managerial personnel in a small manufacturing firm found that whilst the grapevine was an important source of information: only 10% of the executives acted as liaison individuals; events of a general interest tended to flow between major functional groups rather than within them and that different types of information passed through different liaison persons.

CHAPTER 3: EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The survey of literature and related studies leads one to conclude that since we are a society in transition, how we manage the change process will determine our success, provided that major stakeholders participate in the process because "As leaders and followes work side by side to develop the answers to these questions, they create their future together." (Duck, 1993, p112). Since the management of change is a balancing act showing "how changing one element changes the rest, how sequencing and pace affect the whole structure." (Duck, p110) the investigation's focus on communicating change should be viewed holistically as an integral part of the change management process.

3.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Thus the research problem is as follows:

To determine the methods of intra organisational communication in the council and the ineffectiveness.

The specific research goals are to:

- determine awareness of developments at local government level in changing South Africa (What?
- determine barriers to effective internal communication (What?)
- determine effectiveness of channels of intra-organisational communication in the council (What?)

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

When this research project is defined in terms of the above-mentioned research goals, it becomes apparent that in our research questions "What?" dominates. This justifies the use of the survey method because surveys and archival analysis "are advantageous when the research goal is to describe the incidence or prevalence of a phenomenon. (Yin, 1984, p18.

As it is proved impracticable to expect immediate filling in of questionnaires without disrupting work, the researcher had only to explain to a group or individual how to respond to the questionnaire and fetched the completed questionnaires at arranged time.

A letter explaining the purpose of the project accompanied each questionnaire. Respondents were told about the nature and purpose of the research, afforded an opportunity not to participate, told that information would be held in utmost confidence and that no one in organisation would have access to individual responses. Thus this proved more of a self-administered questionnaire "because in organisational research respondents frequently fill in on their own questionnaires which have not been sent to them through the mail."(Bryman, 1989, p41). One hundred and thirty questionnaires were returned of which 1,1% was top mangement, 2,6% middle management 17,6 frontline management and 61% non-managerial. A biographical profile of the respondents is presented in Table I. (See Annexure F).

The current council;s staff establishment is as follows:

Total staff complement:		985
Blacks	:	944
Whites	:	41
Male	:	857
Female	:	128

The breakdown in terms of organisational levels based on post levels from Town Clerk, post level 1, to labourer, post level 20, (See Annexure A) is as follows:

	Frequency	Percentage
Top Management	11	1,1
Middle Management	26	2,6
Frontline Management	176	17,6
Non-Managerial	772	78,3

Top management is post levels 1-4, middle management 5-9, frontline 10-15 and non managerial 16-20.

The researcher faced with time, cost and geographic constraints had to settle for the resultant non-probability sample of 130 respondents, chosen on the basis of convenience, willingness and ready availability of subjects, a "convenience sample". (Bryman, 1989, p113). What flows from use of the non-random method of sampling is the inappropriateness of advanced statistical analysis of data, for example, to determine significance, variability and internal consistency. It was because of this realisation that analysis was restricted to tabular analysis based on percentages and frequencies. It is, however, worth noting, that a comparison on the nature of the council's labour strength and of the sample, reveals a high level of apparent representativeness in terms of the council,s staff and the proportionate distribution of managerial levels to non-managerial personnel.

3.5 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The unit of analysis is the individual manager and non-managerial employee representing the population of managers and non-managerial personnel in the Sebokeng Town Council. Thus findings can be extrapolated only to other managers and non-managerial personnel in the council.

3.6 STRUCTURE AND DESIGN OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE USED

The questionnaire consisted of 57 questions which can be grouped to reflect the following themes: (See Annexure B)

- awareness of organisational changes at organisational, area, and provincial levels: questions 1, 34, 35, 44-49, 53-56.

- knowledge/perception of what intra-organisational communication entails: questions 16-22, 26-28.

- barriers to effective communication: questions 7-15.

- methods of communication: questions 2-6,, 23-25, 29-33, 36-37.

- organisational climate assessment: question 41

- biographical data: questions 38-40, 42, 50-52.

The attitude survey was conducted from 7 to 22 November 1994 at the premises of the Sebokeng Town Council.

3.7 TIME SCHEDULE

This guestimate is an attempt at recalling the researcher's personal experience in conducting this research project. Major areas covered and their duration are highlighted. An integral part which parellels each stage is the vital role played by initially the lecturer and later the research supervisor in guiding the research process.

STAGE	DURATION
- Conception of Research Topic	1 week
- Submission of Written Research Proporal	2 weeks
- Literature Review	4 weeks
- Design of Research Questionnaire	2 weeks
- Conducting Attitude Survey	2 weeks
- Analysing Research Data	3 weeks
- Writing Final Research Report	
	TOTAL=16 Weeks

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

A detailed tabular analysis to explore the findings of the attitude survey is employed. This method is preferred because it provides a "fast and flexible way of identifying the aspects of workplaces.....and presenting them in a manner that is understandable to the general readership" (Daniel, 1987, p10). The frequencies and percentages are used to describe the demographic variables of the responses.

As non-response is an unavoidable feature of any sample survey relying on the voluntary cooperation of sample units, this attitude survey was no exception. In the sample non-response was not concentrated in one characteristic and was so low that it had little influence on the worthiness of the data.

The findings will be presented in terms of the three specific research goals- determining the level of awareness and knowledge of local government issues and changes at organisational, areal and provincial levels; determining barriers to effective communication and determining the effectiveness of methods of intra-organisational communication.

4.2 DETERMINING LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ISSUES AND CHANGES:

As the dissolution of the Lekoa City Council in terms of the Lekoa Dissolution Act, Act No.61 of 1991 was important in the organisational history of the council, it,s communication to the average employee would be typical of the council's strategy of intra-organisational communication.

Responses to how the dissolution's communication was handled are indicated in Table 2 appended herewith. The majority of employees state that nobody informed them of the dissolution of the council and state that the spoken word is means of communication.

In tables 3,4,5 and 6 appended herewith it becomes clear that the shopsteward is most effective in communicating changes to employees followed by the supervisor and to a lesser extent by head of department with the Town Clerk least effective. What is evident is that the closer a leader is to the people (physical or organisational proximity) the more involved he/she is in communicating changes to employees.

Since the above concentrated on highlighting the role of various actors in communicating changes in the day-to-day running of an organisation, following is the examination of the content of such communications with specific reference to change management. Are the employees abreast with the organisational changes and/or developments currently afoot at local government level?
Such information or its lack will reflect on the effectiveness or adequacy of communication channels in current usage.
The respondent's perception of whether the need to communicate changes to employees will change is as follows:

a)	more demand for communicating changes:	Frequency	=	96
		%	=	73%
b)	need will remain the same:	Frequency	=	15
		%	=	11,5
c)	less demand for communicating	Frequency	=	19

The responses on who decides about organistional changes indicate that top management in conjuction with departmental management decide about organisational changes (See Table 7).
The following responses are from questions posed to determine to what extent respondents possess knowledge of national, and provincial issues which impact on the restructuring and reorganising of local government i.e. change management issues.

a) 34,6% correctly stated that Thozamile Botha heads the commission tasked with transferring functions from the central government to the provincial governments.

b) 40,7% were correct that Tertius Delport was the minister responsible for local government in Mr de Klerk's last cabinet.

c) 65,3% stated that Dan Mofokeng is the MEC responsible for local government in the PWV region.

d) 67,7% stated that the date for local government elections had not been announced yet.

e) 40% identified Port Elizabeth as the first South African city to have a black mayor.

f) 72,3% stated that the local government negotiating forum is the structure where the new local government dispensation is negotiated.

g) 59,2% acknowledged that boundaries of local authorities are likely to change.

h) 36,2% stated that the name of the area's local government negotiating forum is the Vaal Metropolitan Negotiating Forum.

i) 22,3% stated that there is a likelihood of three municipal sub-structures in the Vaal area.

j) 29,2% identified the two sides of transitional local government structures as the statutory and non-statutory sides.

k) 34,6% stated that local government matters are handled by the Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development department

The responses on knowledge of local government change management issues can be summed thus: less than 30% of respondents knew that the Vaal area is likely to have three municipal sub-structures and that transitional local government structures have a statutory and non-statutory side; about 40% stated that Tertius Delport held the local government portfolio in Mr de Klerk's last cabinet and that Port Elizabeth elected the first Black mayor; a sizable number of respondents (59-73%) are aware that Mr Dan Mofokeng is the MEC for local government in Gauteng region; that the local government negotiating forums negotiated the new local government dispensation. The lack of knowledge revealed on what respondents are supposed to know has thus revealed a training need for it is the responsibility of management to provide this information to the rest of the employees.

4.3 INTRA-ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Prior determining the effectiveness of methods used to facilitate communication in the council, it was felt necessary to first determine how communication was perceived in the council as a context within which methods used will be evaluated. Responses to general questions on communication are summarised below:

- 53% view communication as both telling one what to do and listening to what one says.
- 23% correctly responded that a briefing group is a formal method of in-company consultation.
- 54% believe that employees, management and the community are not facing the same direction as they communicate.
- 60% maintain that there is a communications policy within the council.
- 49,2% know the current communication objectives of the council.
- 42% are of the opinion that the attitude of management is not right for effective communication to take place.
- 53% of the employees are of the opinion that the attitude of employees is not right for effective communication to take place.
- 60% of respondents state that the council does not make special provisions for communicating with illiterate employees.
- 49,2% state that management has a right to communicate with employees and 36,1% hold that this is an obligation.

The picture which emerges from the above can be summed up as that communication is viewed as a two-way process by a small majority; very few know what a briefing group is; a small majority believe the critical stakeholders (employees, management and employees) at local government level are not at the same wavelength; close to a half of the respondents perceive that the attitude of both management and employees is not conducive to effective communication; a significant majority of respondents state that nothing is done to facilitate communication with the illiterate majority of employees; almost half of respondents perceive that it is the right of management to communicate with employees while a significant minority view this as an obligation. This in no way casts a rosy picture of

communication within the council. Thus one can safely conclude that communication is not healthy in the organisation especially if viewed within the context of the response to question 41 inquiring on the nature of management-union relationship: (See Table 8).

When responses, very bad and bad are combined, good and very good also combined and those of the average category are split between the preceding combinations, it emerges that:

- 55,8% perceive union-management relations as ranging from bad to very bad and
- 44,2% perceive them as good to very good

An interesting observation emerged when about 60% of respondents stated that there is a communications policy in the council and 49,2% claimed knowledge of the council's communication objectives. A letter was delivered to the Acting Town Clerk, Mr P A van der Westhuizen to provide documentation on the council's communication policy and current communication objectives (See Annexure C). The responses of the Town Clerk (See Annexure D) stated that there is no single written document of the council's communication policy which, however, finds form and takes expression in "numerous resolutions."

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The seriousness of the incidence of barriers to effective communication in public institutions cannot be adequately expressed by the written word. Awareness of the presence of such barriers is a precursor to communicating and suggesting ways of minimising, avoiding and overcoming them. The response to questions on the extent of the existence of stumbling blocks to effective communication is tabulated below. (See Table 9).

The pooled responses are devided into bi-polar positions by:

- adding results of levels 1+2 (little no extent, some extent)
- adding results of levels 4+5 (great extent, very great extent)
- adding results of level 3 (moderate extent) and allotting each half to each of the above.

The tendency revealed is that about 60% of the respondents are of the opinion that barriers to effective communication are a problem from a little or no extent to some extent whilst about 40% hold that these barriers exist from a great extent to a very great extent. It is noteworthy to register that these findings which imply that communication is not a problem conflict with the trend established by the findings above that of a significant lack of knowledge which tallies with the findings that intra-organisational communication is not healthy in the council.

METHODS OF CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

This part of the analysis, the methods of communication, should be viewed in the light of preceding findings especially that:

- 53,8% of the respondents were not informed of such an important event as the dissolution of the council.
- 56,2% state that intra-organisational communication is via the spoken word.
- apparently the closer the leader is to the people the more involved he/she is in communicating changes.
- a sizeable number of respondents are unaware of the changes taking place at local government level.
- overall, communication is not healthy in the council and no special provision

is made to address communication needs of the illiterate.

- lack of a written document on the council's intra-organisational communication's policy which is embodied in various council resolutions.
- a sizable majority hold that the following conditions: organisational levels, physical distance; poor listening and premature evaluation; language; provision of too much information; poor communication skills; distrust, threat and fear; faulty communication means and lack of planning; are a barrier to communication from a little to no extent and to some extent.

A few tables of aspects to shed further light on the methods of intra-organisational communication used in the council are appended herewith.

a) The first is a response to what extent are organisational sources of information timely in providing information. (See Table 10: Timeliness of Information) The pooled responses project this pattern of responses: a slight majority hold that co-workers are poor in providing information; a sizable majority holds that immediate supervisor and middle management are poor (very little to little) in providing timely information; an overwhelming majority describe top management as poor in providing timeous information; a sizable majority see the grapevine as providing the most timely information.

b) The methods used to introduce changes according to respondents are in their order of popularity: discussions at top management level, use notice-boards and consulting those affected. (See Table 11: Methods of Introducing Changes). Thus decisions about changes are made at top management level, communicated through noticeboards, to those affected with lesser consultation. It is significant to note that the highest frequency, 27,7% of the respondents state that changes are made at top management level and that the lowest frequency 6,2% of the sample hold that staff proposals are invited.

The picture which emerges from respondents preference of communication methods, after pooling the frequencies of choices made is as follows:

a) 85 respondents chose meetings (departmental and sectoral) as the first choice
b) 78 respondents chose departmental circulars as the second choice
c) 49 respondents have as their third choice union general meetings

The above three most popular methods were determined by combining frequencies of the first three choices in question 23,24 and 25 (order of preference of nine methods of communication listed).

The respondents' choice of communication methods in their order of preference are joint-consultative meetings, discussion with internal trade union representative and informal worker discussions (See Table 12: Respondents Recommended - Communication Methods).

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This discussion will commence with introductory remarks on change management issues at national and provincial levels in general and at local government level in particular as the environmental context within which the Sebokeng Town Council operates. Some issues of intra-organisational communication will be highlighted to provide the necessary background to an increased understanding of our research goals which are geared towards determining how organisational changes are communicated to employees in the Sebokeng Town Council.

5.1 Change Management Context

What better source of South Africa's national vision can one have than that espoused by the national leadership of the leading political grouping in the Government of National Unity, the African National Congress (ANC). At the national congress of the ANC, held in Bloemfontein from 17-21 December, 1994, the Secretary General, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa described the current political vision as "to transform the socio-economic structures of the past for the liberation of all" whilst the President of the ANC, Mr Nelson Mandela added that the realisation of this objective entails several steps including the transformation of the State into "a more effective driving force for change". This merely emphasizes that change is here and now and processes have to be set in motion to manage it.

South Africa's political miracle of traversing the political devide on 27 April 1994 into a political democracy, has ashered in a new culture, underpinned by governance which is "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (World Bank, 1993, p3). Accountability and transparency are cornerstones of good governance and sound public management is characterised by "predictable, open and enlightened policy making, a bureaucracy involved with a professional ethos acting in furtherance of the public good, the rule of law, transparent processes, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs", (ibid).

It, however, appears as if "vital institutions which make up the productive system; private, public and municipal sectors, and unions" (Nel, 1994, p9) are overtaken by political developments and left behind. Our newly-born democratic state is still highly vulnerable and highly dependent on the institutions which constitute the society's well-being. The current challenge is that "unions, workers, management and shareholders all need to transform their old ways. All need to demonstrate the humility of admitting that none of us have any real experience about what it means to live within and contribute to a democratic and high-performance culture" (ibid). The lack of "easy solutions for South Africa" and the existence of a few political precedents" with any likelihood of success, the challenge is that "we must invent our own future" (Manning, 1987, p3). What is needed is formation of representative structures to integrate the interests of all the major stakeholders at local government level. This is founded on the view that "The democratisation of the development process by which we mean the empowerment of the people, their involvement in decision-making, in implementation and monitoring processes - is a condition sine qua for socio-economic recovery and transformation" (Africa News (US) 12 January 1990).

5.2 Intra-Organisational Communication

Mindful that "In all studies regardless of focus, theory or technique, it is essential to incorporate contextual information into the analysis " (Graber, 1993, p323), the discussion of research goals is preceded by an explanation of how communication is perceived within the Sebokeng Town Council. This background information, it is hoped, will enhance our appreciation of the research findings.

A sizable majority (55,8%) of respondents perceive union-management relations as bad to very bad. Since "a democratic climate would presumably be supportive of individual employees ...") (Graber, p211) that 60% of respondents state that the council does not make special provision for communicating with illiterate employees, the council's organisational climate is decidedly undemocratic. When one considers that findings revealed the aloofness of the Town Clerk and Heads of Departments (top management) from communicating changes to employees, the organisational climate "comes closest to the Weberian notion of appropriately detached bureaucratic attitudes" (Graber, p213). This, however, mirrors what years of racial segregation have produced in South Africa, a caste public service, concentrated on certain ethnic religious and gender attributes (Stereotypically white, male,Afrikaans-speaking and Christian-Calvinist) (Fitzgerald, 1993, p936).

Thus the organisational climate can be summed up as adversarial, undemocratic, detached and authoritarian.

Organisational culture refers to the rules of behaviour, myths and symbols which guide the behaviour of organisation members. There is an interaction between the organisation's climate, its culture/s and the general political culture. When one considers the adversarial organisational climate within top management schooled in maintenance of the status quo and resistance to political change and clinging on controls of power and that of the Black majority of employees hardened by resistance politics demanding inclusion in corridors of power and the general political culture of a political democracy, political tensions within the council become inevitable as proved by the recent employee strikes in the Sebokeng Town Council. Thus (Graber, 1993, p218) concludes that the size and diversity of government institutions makes it impossible for a single culture to dominate and "clashes

between internal cultures may produce serious intraorganisational conflicts" and this is excarbated by national, and ethnic barriers.

In the Sebokeng Town Council whites monopolise senior positions and blacks languish in lower positions, thus 42% of the sample is of the opinion that the attitude of management is not right for effective communication to take place, that 53% of the sample is of the opinion that the attitude of employees is not right for effective communication to take place and that 60% of the respondents hold that no special provisions are made for communicating with illiterate employees, the stereotypical South African communication patterns is confirmed. South Africa has a "generation of management who by and large are either unwilling or incapable of changing their management style to match changing demands of the system" (Laburn 1994,p5).
R. Caldwell (1993, p135) warns against blanket compartmentalisation of organisations as traditional or participative because an organisation in transition may exhibit all characteristics as it evolves from a directive to a more open pattern of communication.

The council's failure to make special provisions to help communicate with illiterate employees is a cause for concern because "some people will accept the message at a slower rate than others. The lower the educational level of the recipients, the more messages they will need and the longer they will take to accept them" (Van Eeden, 1994, p32). In a study by Huseman, Alexander III, Henry, JR & Denson, (1978, p25) to ensure clarity of communicating organisational changes, "initial means of communication was an employee bulletin.....followed by supervisors contacting each employee to answer questions and to ensure that the message has been received by all employees".

A small majority of employees (53%) view communication as a two-way process. This is endorsed by Manning (1987, p54) that "The more interaction you risk, the more effectively you are likely to communicate."
About a few respondents correctly responded that a briefing group is a "formal method of in-company communication" (Miles, 1988, p2). The importance of this

response lies in that it endorses the view that knowledge of methods of intra-organisational communication is poor.
Lastly changes will only be long-lasting and productive when the entire management team will be conveying the same messages, speaking the same language, actually living the talk" (Manning, 1987, p97).

According to Mike Miles (1988, p3) management has an obligation to communicate with its employees" and 36.1% of the respondents concurred. This is against the view which is stronger in the council that communication is a right at the discretion of management. Management is obliged to communicate with its employees because failure will result in lack of meaningful performance. The strong traditional orientation towards directive communication -"a traditional hierarchical organisation with a high degree of centralised, downward communication" (Caldwell, 1993, p137) - is still quite dominant, and in such an organisational culture a briefing group would be an anachronism.

It cannot be stressed enough that the success of an organisation's attempt to realise effective communication rests on the commitment of all the major parties. These parties should be welded together by a two-way understanding or a shared meaning of whither the council is headed. It is thus a cause for concern that 53% of the respondents perceive that the major stakeholders, the employees, management and the community served are not facing the same direction yet to transform the organisational structure and introduce new changes" all these communication signals need to point in the same direction and your messages need to be consistent and repeated all across the business" (Drennan, p89). This forcefully drives home that a new culture, i.e. a new set of shared values leading to viable local government is likely to be viewed as disempowering from predominantly white management which supported apartheid and are likely to be lukewarm to the current changes.

The introduction of new changes results in a new language signifying the new way of doing things. An example is the emergence of "negotiating forums" which dominated negotiations at all levels of government. It is important that all people be

trained in what these concepts do not mean to bring them quickly on-board. The amount of information imparted should be controlled to prevent confusion and people should be allowed adequate time to become used to the new. The nature of change bombarding South Africa is "shock change", a new capability has to be developed via management skills "to effectively manage shock change and the disrupting impact it has on all employees" (Werth, 1994, p13).

Asked on the existence of a communication's policy and objectives, 60% of the sample stated that the council has a communication's policy and 49,2% are aware of the council's current communication objectives. When the acting Town Clerk was requested to provide the necessary documentation of the council's communication policy, he stated that the council did not have a single policy document which embodied the council's policy as it was diffused in several council resolutions. Methods of communication used are superior-subordinate channels of all levels of management, notice-boards and attaching notes on payslips and communication language and medium is highlighted as a problem.

It is significant to note that the language problem mentioned by the Acting Town Clerk, is equally echoed by Manning when he points out the lack of inter-cultural communication skills in South African organisations, that "while many of the official barriers are falling fast, the realities of language and culture and our years of practice in emphasizing differences rather than similarities all serve to separate us" (Manning, p5). The apparent reliance on departmental heads and supervisors tends to emphasize hierarchical structures "which require superiors to direct the work and subordinates to carry out directions" (Graber, p94). The hierarchical structure is in conflict with today's realities as today's world demands organisations designed to give people the say they demand through flatter organisational structures. Fear whether people will handle communications effectively or not is groundless because "we get what we expect from people" (Manning, p66). Positive ideas held of people are reciprocated by positive behaviour and vice-versa. Thus management gets the worker reaction it deserves. The absence of a written communication's policy within the council rather signifies that communication in the council is relegated to a

maintenance function considered only after all else has been considered. Would the council attend to communication in the absence of some form of communication structures, channels and defined rules and responsibilities?

This unsatisfactory state of affairs has resulted in the majority of the sample yearning for an improvement to their lot, thus they strongly endorse that communication is a two-way process. This is in keeping with W J Corbet (1986, p74) that "people want to feel involved in their organisations and they need to know that their input is valued". This is hardly surprising as the very people strongly opted for a democratic order on 27 April 1994. The organisational equivalent of this national perception is that South African organisations still languishing under autocratic and paternalistic rule as the Sebokeng Town Council have to be transformed into organisations characterised by a democratic and participative organisational culture.

5.3 Communicating Organisational Changes

The birth of a new democracy in South Africa has unleashed a new set of anxieties, fears, hopes, fulfilments, opportunities and challenges amongst its diverse cultural and language groups. "The chances of successfully implementing change are significantly increased when everyone concerned has a shared understanding of what may happen and why" (McCalman and Paton, 1992, p8). This can be realised if all actors at local government level including the workers who inevitably have to implement the changes, participate in the setting of change objectives and means of realising them through a process of two-way communication which ta ›s place in an atmosphere of trust and understanding. It is within this theoretical framework that we have to determine to what extent employees of the Sebokeng Town Council are knowledgeable of local government changes as proof of the effectiveness of current means of intra-organisational communication, and where possible an attempt will be made to highlight specific discernible communication patterns, trends and problems.

a) Failure of Downward Communication

When a significant majority of respondents were not advised of an important development as the dissolution of the Lekoa City Council in 1991, apparently both formal and informal communication structures failed to deliver. This goes against the grain of Graber's (p102) submission that downward communication predominates where the power and status differences are greater and where the procedures are more formal. Does a more plausible explanation not lie in that where there is no formal communication system in place, internal communication suffers because it cannot be left to chance or taken for granted?

b) Effectiveness of Council Leadership

The involvement of council leadership in communicating changes to employees reveals a pattern that the more a leader is closer to the people the more effective he/she is in communicating changes to employees. Thus a shopsteward leads followed by frontline supervisors, head of department and Town Clerk. Manning

(p53) ranks forms of communication in terms of effectiveness as follows: one-to-one meeting; small group meeting; large group meeting; telephone conversation; personal note, impersonal note and printed message, "All other things being equal, the more personal your communication, the more powerful it is likely to be". When one considers that the shopsteward and the town clerk occupy the two extreme positions, it may be as well be that the effectiveness of the shopsteward is owed to utilisation of forums of direct democracy which are typical of unions and which the Town Clerk lacks.

The facelessness or abdication of the Town Clerk is contrary to that "the top person is almost always the "almighty finger which sparks the communication programme into life" (Jackson P, 1987, p30). Although communication is the responsibility of all managers the commitment and desire for improved communication must flow from the top which has the final responsibility for integrating internal communications.

The history of the Sebokeng Town Council, however, depicts the alienation of Town Clerk and top management who are excluded from the predominantly Black labour force. An anecdote will help clarify this point. At a delicate juncture in union-management negotiations in 1992 about the implementation of a general salary increment, when employees were hovering on the brink of strike action, the local SAMWU leadership, the Lekoa Shop Stewards Committee resolved that the Town Clerk was the only credible person to convey to employees that a salary increment was forthcoming. It proved difficult to convince the Town Clerk, Mr N P Loury that his personal safety was guaranteed to address his subordinates in the Mphatlalatsane Community Hall of the Sebokeng township under his jurisdiction. He ultimately entered the "lions den" accompanied by the Town Treasurer, having agreed that his security backing should not come near the community hall where the union was having a general meeting. The warmth with which the Town Clerk was received and the ability with which the union leadership managed the proceedings convinced employees that the salary increment was in the pipeline and a strike was averted. This however typifies the South African reality where local government offices are located at the outer fringes of townships and administered

by white top management who are not familiar with the township they are paid to practically administer by remote control without any hands-on experience of what is happening on the ground inside the black residential areas. Manning (1987, p26) offers an explanation of this apparent management abdication as that in the post-Wiehahn era most employers welcomed the unions and "they then handed over power to union leaders by making them the sole channels of communication. By the time there is a dispute they are out of touch with their workers".

c) **Poor Knowledge of Local Government Issues**

There is a very strong respondent expectation that in future there will be a greater need to communicate changes to employees and this indicates a greater receptiveness for change on the part of the respondents. There is also a stronger perception that organisational changes are determined internally and thus one can expect stronger worker demands for internal managements to introduce needed changes.

When respondents reveal a poor knowledge of personalities who dominated national negotiations on local government affairs as Tertius Delport and Thozamile Botha as well as an equally serious lack of knowledge of the two sides of local government negotiating structures and a very poor knowledge of matters pertaining to local government negotiations in the Vaal area, and an average knowledge of general local government affairs, a serious training need has been unearthed for the council management to address.

In the light of the current hyperactivity about negotiations at local government level, is this what management is saying to the workers "we are busy figuring out your future - we'll tell you what it is when we're ready"? (Duck, 1993,110).

What this reveals, is failure of the council's management to take it's labour force into it's confidence about what changes are afoot at local government level. Management has simply reneged on its obligation to inform council employees about constitutional changes envisaged in chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic

of South Africa Act, Act No.200 of 1993 and find effect in the Local Government Transition Act, Act No.209 of 1993.

It is, however, puzzling how these changes will see the light of day when those to implement them are placed in the dark.
What has to be noted is that whatever management does or plans to do, communicates a message to employees, especially during times of intense change when rumour rules the day. During these times messages have to be repeated consistently, especially when such messages are not necessarily welcome to all ears. Communication will only have realised its objective, when the people have heard the message, believe it, interpreted it and internalised it. (Duck 1993, p111).

Does this lack of knowledge of developments at local level not serve as the logical explanation for a significant reliance on rumour revealed in the findings?

5.4 Barriers to Effective Communication

The conditions listed as barriers to effective communication were:
organisational levels; physical distance; poor listening and premature evaluation; language; information overload; poor communication skills; distrust threat and fear; faulty communication means and poor communication planning. A striking feature is the apparent contradiction to an emerging trend that council communication is ineffective as proved by the poor knowledge of local government changes. The findings are that 60% of the respondents view the conditions as a barrier to communication from no extent to little extent whilst 40% view them as a barrier from great to very great extent.

This response leads one to explore possible alternative explanations for this apparent departure from the pattern established by the research findings. The
conditions listed in the question might not have been exhaustive enough to include conditions which our sample also consider as barriers to effective communication, and only an ope-ended question would have yielded such data. It is equally possible that respondents might have been denying that these are barriers to

effective communication. According to Drennan (1992, p107) we may be dealing with a phenomenon that since "the company's best ambassadors are its employees" they tend to refrain from speaking ill of their organisation because it reflects on their personal images.

The above-mentioned explanation may be similar to the problem of "social desirability bias - the propensity to reply in socially desirable ways when responding to questionnaires" and thus cast the respondents in a more positive light. This explains the apparent contrast and inconsistency between what people say and do and their own, and others behaviour. Information gleaned from the Acting Town Clerk's letter hinted at the existence of problems regarding intra-organisational communication and language, one of the conditions listed as a barrier to communication, is singled out. The problematic nature of language was further reinforced by that 60% of the sample stated that no special provisions were in place for aiding illiterate employees communicate with management. A study by Phillips (1981) revealed that "the potential for error as a result of bias or ignorance is considerable". The high difficulty level of this question on barriers to communication is highlighted by that respondents reported having difficulty in discriminating the degrees of extent on a five-point Likert-type scale. This might have been confusing especially to respondents with a low level of education. As an after-thought, three levels of degree would have been clearer.

The tendency for organisations to delineate the communication problem in partial terms results in half-hearted and less comprehensive solutions. The view point that "In South Africa our communication problems in the workplace are compounded by the fact that some supervisors and many more employees are semiliterate or illiterate in English and Afrikaans, the business languages in most workplaces" "(O'Brien, 1991, p38) is inadequate. This should go further to state that equally most managers are unable to write or speak languages of the majority of employees in some organisations, e.g. S.Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa or North Sotho. Is it not easier, cheaper and quicker for a literate manager to learn to speak and write the predominant African language in the area than for the security guard to first achieve

literacy prior advancing to language proficiency? These two dimensions of the language of communication at the workplace should better be addressed simultaneously.

The ideas of Neville Alexander, a prominent writer on language planning in South Africa become relevant in his suggestions for a "democratic language policy for South Africa states "that all languages spoken by the people of South Africa have an equal right to exist and that the main aim of language policy for South Africa should be to facilitate communication between people who have been separated for so long by apartheid policies" (Alexander, 1989, p51).

Methods of Communication

The findings will first be considered separately in accordance with the four questions under this section, followed by the integration of responses with the rest of the findings.

a) **Timeliness of Source of Information**

In an attempt to determine which of the two sides, the negative side (very little-little) and the positive side (great to very great), frequencies of each side are combined and on each side is added half of the frequencies of the middle degree of comparison (some extent).

The greatest majority (59.95%) of the sample intimated that rumour (grapevine) provides information most timeously, followed by 48.9% which holds that co-workers provide information more timeously. These results strengthen the view that communication in the council is neither structured nor coordinated.

These are the only aggregations which are skewed to the positive side of the continuum of gradations from very little extent to very great extent.

On the negative side of the continuum 80.5% of the respondents believe that information from top management is from little to very little extent and this is followed by that of middle management and frontline management which is 63% and 61,6% respectively.

The results can be summed up as meaning that overall management is poor

in providing information to workers timeously and the higher the level of management, the less timely is information provided to workers. Respondents further hold that the grapevine provides information most timeously followed by co-workers and this enhances the strength of the grapevine because this is the method employed by co-workers.

In a council where management has effectively abdicated from its communications role because it is least involved in communicating changes and is the least source of timeous information, the increased reliance on, the grapevine becomes logical to compensate for managements failure to communicate. Huseman, et al (1987, p25) warn against reliance on rumour thus "since the grapevine seems to flourish during times of change", accurate and frequent communications is the best way to combat rumours. Indeed to the extent that information is haphazard, employees may receive totally incorrect information about the nature of change. Other drawbacks of the grapevine are that it is unsystematic, is motivated by self interest, is dominated by privileged groups to the detriment of the disadvantaged. The occurance of rumour cannot be wished away as it complements the formal structures.

The advantages of the grapevine are that it can arise quickly and spontaneously and enhance the organisations adaptability and effectiveness, it carries information unsuitable for the formal structures, it is dispersed more widely and can move as the situation dictates and is not restricted to formal positions.

The major strength of the grapevine lies in that as it "usually travels by word of mouth. Such face-to-face communication fosters trust, social support and rapid feedback, and researchers agree that while the grapevine may not present a complete picture" usually 75 to 90 percent of the information travelling via grapevine channels is accurate" (Graber, 1993, p109). Where internal communications structures have collapsed, the grapevine may be the only means to keep the organisation going.

b) Methods of Introducing Changes

The methods used to introduce changes in the council/department section are in their order of importance: discussing changes at top management level; placing changes on notice-boards and informing those affected. This top-down approach is typical of "slow-moving bureaucracies intent upon maintaining the status quo within narrow boundaries of change" (Feldberg, 1975, p139). These findings may be symptomatic of an entrenched culture of resistance to change nurtured at the top of the council "so if efforts are to be made to change the culture, they must be made at the top. "(Manning, 1987, p37). The changing context at local government level which is consequent to the popular election of provincial and national political structures emphasizes "the pressing need for change for South African organisations to reinvent themselves" (Laburn, 1994, p20).

"The management style which is predicated on control is ill-adapted to deal with South Africa's current issues of change and transformation. It has to be replaced by a new system where there needs to be less structure and more flexibility; less predictability and more entrepreneurship; fewer rules and more participation and joint decision-making" (Koopman, 1994, p17).

c) Preferred Methods of Communication

The order of preference of channels of communication in terms of choices with the highest frequencies are:

i) departmental or sectional meetings
ii) departmental circulars and
iii) union general meetings

d) Recommended Methods of Communication

Respondent's recommended methods of communication are in terms of the highest frequencies as follows:

i) joint consultative meetings

ii) discussion with internal union representative and

iii) informal worker discussion

Discussion of choices of method of communication will incorporate both the preferred and recommended methods as separation was merely semantic and deliberate to gauge the intensity of strength of the preferred method of communications.

The picture which emerges is a strong endorsement of an earlier yearning for two-way communication that the strongest choice is for joint consultative meetings as the most preferred method of communication followed by discussions involving union representative and informal worker discussions.

This strongly complements an earlier finding that the more personal or closer the leadership category is to workers, the more involved it is in communicating changes to employees. The frontline manager is chosen as the most preferred representative of management for communicating with employees. In a study by MORI, a polling organisation, employee participants in the attitude survey prefer the immediate boss as the communicator because "He is the face of the company they see everyday, the one who helps interpret company goals and policies into working practicalities ... he understands their everyday problems, talks their language, he "makes communication two-way and at the employees' level and information is more personal than a noticeboard, a video or magazine" (Drennan, 1992 p100).

What is important is that the unique individual needs have to be accommodated and a small group meeting would cater for this and break away from the management trick of using the media to insulate themselves from the people.

What one cannot afford to ignore is that this strong choice for meetings as a method of communication with employees is a central feature of the trade union movement and finds form in the broader democratic movement as the "forum, as a means to deepen democracy" (Badat, S, 1994, p13). These structural attempts at "the principle of direct democracy by the member" i.e. the process of government by union members, the "rank and file" or the "grass roots" (Jones, R A, 1982, p7-8) are lacking in town council

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 General

Attempts at improving communication of changes to employees will only be effective if they are nurtured by a democratic and participative organisational culture. Although latent racism and mutual distrust will still exist as a hangover of the apartheid era, management has a chance to rise up to the challenge. What an opportune moment for management and worker representatives, as an integral part of the process of democratising the workplace to commence by discussing the findings of this attitude survey. The Wadeville Experience case study in culture change where "sharing the results with all the employees was the start of the democratisation process" (Fuhr, I 1994, p28) is an exercise in change management which improved communication between **Wadeville Engineering** and **NUMSA** (The National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa). The Managing Director, Mr Christo Lubbe, is under no illusion about the delicacy of this process, but is doing what each chief executive should do, to lead the transformation process. He says, "We are operating in such a volatile environment that things can literally change overnight. But at least we're going in the right direction ....If things should go badly wrong at

any stage, and they may, I won't be derailed. Democratisation is the only route to go ...I'll just pick myself up and start again" (Fuhr, 1994, p31).

The objective of effective interpersonal communication is aptly summed up by Mayeroff, 1971, as caring and understating. "I must be able to see, as it were, what his world is like to him and how he sees himself ... I must be able to be with him in his world ... to sense from inside what life is like for him, what he is striving to be and what he requires to grow" (Anderson, 1992, p109). This merely serves to emphasise that managing the transition is something beyond rhetoric, it is blood, sweat and tears anchored on a negotiated and inclusive change management process.

The recommended approach to effective communication of changes to employees at local government level is the long-term cultivation of a participative and democratic organisational culture and guarding against "a one-size-fits-all approach to change management (O'Connor, 1993, p15). "The chances of successfully implementing change are significantly increased when everyone concerned has a shared understanding of what may happen and why" (McCalman and Paton, 1992, p8). These recommendations are not cast in iron, they are merely guides or points of departure for a participative union-management process.

6.2 ORGANISING AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

An effective communication system should be developed with the following elements as a guide:

a Establish an Overall Communications Policy

A broad policy based on attitudes and actions of management and the workers should be developed via an inclusive participative process.

b. Establish an Overall Climate Conducive to Communicating

How people are treated when they communicate or fail to communicate, should relay that communication is highly regarded.

c. Assess Communication Needs

A communications audit via a survey or interviews is useful for assessing communication needs, performance and determining most appropriate communication channels for the different target groups.

d. Establish Communication Structures and Channels

There is a need for an organisational unit or functionary i.e. a Co-ordinating Committee or Communication's Co-ordinator to integrate and co-ordinate communications, as a communications command centre is the point of departure.

e. Establish Communication Roles and Responsibilities

The entire top management team has to be involved in the emergence of an inclusive management union/worker process which establishes, implements and evaluates communications policy and performance.

Effective communication involves more than policies, personalities, procedures and media, "It also involves attitudes and behaviours that reinforce the importance of sharing ideas, information and feelings, rather than hoarding them" (Garnett, 1992, p138).

6.3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

A prerequisite for effective management of change is that a well organised communications system be in place because "sending or publishing information is not equivalent of its being received" (O'Connor, 1993, p69). A thorough analysis of the context for communication improves the chances of the reception of such information. Back-up methods are important when information is essential for the success of change.

It is thus recommended that when delivering messages important to change use three different methods:

a) a general announcement in a public meeting, by loudspeaker or on a noticeboard,

b) individual memo directed to those affected and

c) one-to-one interview to address concerns and to answer questions.

It is important that managers review the effectiveness of methods in current usage in terms whether everyone receives all the necessary information whenever it is required as well as identify alternative methods for potential use. A form recommended for use is attached herewith as *Annexure E.*

The development of an effective communication strategy can further be enhanced by, in addition to choosing an appropriate communication method, also employing an appropriate network:

a. Hierarchy uses official roles to communicate information and is the most formal method.

b. Expert uses specific skills groups, less formal network.

c. Influential uses prestige and power, useful informal network.

d. Friendship uses personal friends, family and supporters within the company and stands the risk of identification with cliques.

The grapevine within companies is made up of contacts described as "influence" and friendship and this can serve as an important communication back-up.

3. THE BRIEFING GROUP SYSTEM

Since there has been an unmistakable commitment and preference for a two-way communication system and the consultative meeting as the preferred method of communication, it is recommended that the briefing group system should be used to communicate information about changes and developments at local level to the different groups in the council on a constant basis.

The briefing group system is preferred for communicating changes because it will provide employees with an opportunity to voice their concerns. It can be combined with the printed media to provide a more permanent record for later reference. The credibility of the different communicators should be taken into account and no promises that cannot be fulfilled should be made.

It is recommended that shop stewards be briefed as a separate group prior to all employees receiving the briefing. "This substantiates their status and gives management the opportunity to discuss the implications, if any, of the brief to the shop stewards before the majority of employees receive the brief" (Miles, 1988, p15).

4. COMMUNICATION, A MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

It is now a truism that "to make changes stick, the whole management team needs to be conveying the same messages, speaking the same language, actually living the talk" (Drennan, 1993, p97).

What is forgotten is that in most organisations 85% of the personnel are the non-managerial group and their communications-link person is the frontline manager who having his charges "speaking and acting in support of the company's drive to change has a veritable army which becomes difficult to resit. But equally if they are forgotten their cynical remarks can quickly kill the credibility of the company's efforts and lead them to make no serious effort to change". Get them on your side "to see visible and possible changes across the organisation" (Drennan, 1992, p100).

Lastly as "industry has followed politics and crytallised its public face into that of one person....the top person is almost always the "almight finger which sparks the communication programme into life" (Jackson, 1987, p30).

7. CONCLUSIONS

The paucity of knowledge about changes at local government level amongst respondents is testimony of the ineffectiveness of the top-down approach to communication practised in the Sebokeng Town Council. Thus the methods of communication used,- discussing changes at top management level, use of noticeboards and consulting those affected - are a failure. Although the union-management relationship is adversarial, the strong need for change and desire for a two-way communication process indicate that respondents are receiptive and sensitised to change. The council management should seize the opportunity of structuring on the basis of these findings a more personalised communication process and a briefing group system retains all the advantages of the sample's choice for consultative meetings.

The management problem, apparently afflicting the Sebokeng Town Council is aptly echoed by P Laburn (1994, p5), "we have a generation of management who by and large are either unwilling or incapable of changing their management style to match changing demands and systems". The restructuring cum reorganisation of local government structures with a view towards deracialising and democratising them is the essence of change management and is the only game in town. It will also ensure that the Government's Reconstruction and Development Programme is implemented as a financial programme at grassroots level and this underlies the urgency of creating sustainable local government through setting-up in place capacity-building interventions aimed at de-educating, re-orienting and retraining

initially the upper management echelons to manage the current administrative reality because "The winning organisations in the future are those that will cause, lead and create change" (ibid). The incessant nature and unstoppability of the tide of change which has engulfed South African public institutions is captured by General Johan van der Merwe, when he announced his resignation as Commissioner of Police on 10 January 1995," I was involved in the old dispensation. It might affect my suitability when the police force is reorganised" (Laurence P, The Star, 11 January, 1995).

It deserves emphasis that management is obliged to communicate with non-managerial personnel as the basis for effective on-the-job performance. Surely the management of all organisations is anchored on people management. You can't manage them without speaking to them. If you trust them, treat them as human beings they will respond positively because, "we got what we expect from people". (Manning, 1987, p66). Communication goes beyond the spoken and written word. What frontline management does, middle management regard as important and the top brass appears to be concentrating on and how they deal with others communicates the loudest. Let the intra-organisational communication intervention be part a participative approach to management which is an integral part of a holistic organisational an renewal process in the long term.

The immediate realisation of the benefits of this attitude survey is possible by arranging a workshop facilitated by the researcher for initially top management and the internal union leadership as well as other strategically placed employees to discuss the implications of these findings and recommendations especially how to

prepare and manage a briefing system. Such a workshop should result in the emergence of an internal communications center, the communications coordinator and other agreements on practical arrangements to improve intra-organisational communication. The completion of this attitude survey hopes to result in the development of a capacity within the Sebokeng Town Council resulting in the formation of an internal communications process, co-established by management and labour. It should provide timeous information to all employees about developments, changes, problems and above all about the future vision of the council within the broad parameters set in local government negotiations envisaged in the constitution and stipulated in the Local Government Transition Act.

As the researcher is in the employ of the Sebokeng Town Council, there is still ample scope for a more detailed analysis of responses in terms of work location (head office or decentralised office), sex, race, management level union membership or interestingly comparing the responses of top management and the Lekoa Shop Steward Committee.

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ANNEXURE A:

1 JANUARY 1994

LEVEL	POST	OLD SCALE	NEW SCALE
		R	R
1	Departmental Head	97 872	100 320
2	Deputy Departmental Head Civil Engineer Electrical Engineer	82 308 - 88 656	84 372 - 90 876
3	Assistant Departmental Head	76 404 - 80 292	78 324 - 82 308
4	Chief Technician Town Planner	76 404 - 78 324	78 324 - 80 292
5	Control Administration Officer Chief Personnel Officer Transport Manager	72 708 - 76 404	74 532 - 78 324
6	Senior Technician Chief Social Worker Chief Librarian Senior Administration Officer Senior Township Manager Senior Accountant	64 236 - 72 708	65 844 - 74 532
7	Senior Artisan Foreman (A) Chief Artisan Foreman (B)	61 128 - 67 500	62 664 - 69 192
7A	Chief Artisan Foreman (C) Control Traffic Inspector	58 164 - 64 236	59 628 - 65 844
7B	Senior Artisan Foreman (B)	58 164 - 64 236	59 628 - 65 844
8	Senior Social Worker Senior Librarian	58 164 - 64 236	59 628 - 65 844
9	Senior Artisan Foreman (C)	52 668 - 61 128	53 988 - 62 664
9A	Technician Draughtsman	46 536 - 61 128	47 700 - 62 664
9B	Artisan Foreman (A)	52 668 - 58 164	53 988 - 59 628
10	Administation Officer Accountant Personnel Officer Training Officer Auditor Township Manager Gr I Principal Traffic Inspector	48 900 - 58 164	50 124 - 59 628
10A	Social Worker Librarian	47 424 - 58 164	48 180 - 59 628

LEVEL	POST	OLD SCALE	NEW SCALE
		R	R
11	Artisan Foreman (B)	48 900 - 58 164	52 104 - 59 628
11A	Artisan Foreman (C) Building Inspector	43 200 - 52 668	44 280 - 53 988
11B	Artisan (A)	43 200 - 50 124	44 280 - 51 384
11C	Artisan (B)	41 112 - 46 900	42 144 - 50 124
12	Township Manager Gr II	36 312 - 47 700	37 224 - 48 900
13	Artisan (C)	39 120 - 45 396	40 104 - 46 536
14	Principal Foreman Horticulturist Liaison Officer/Sports Senior Administration Clerk	25 008 - 35 424	25 644 - 36 312
14A	Cashier Senior Typist/Secretary Assistant Librarian	20 496 - 29 772	21 012 - 30 516
15	Driver Gr I Traffic Officer	18 552 - 28 332	19 020 - 29 040
15A	Senior Foreman	21 540 - 26 292	22 080 - 26 952
16	Typist Administration Clerk Lifesaver Operator Assistant Draughtsman	19 020 - 26 952	19 020 - 26 952
17	Driver Gr II	19 020 - 24 396	19 020 - 24 396
17A	Foreman	19 020 - 23 208	19 020 - 23 208
17B	Driver Gr III	17 220 - 22 080	17 220 - 22 080
18	Operator Assistant Administration Clerk Switchboard Operator	13 740 - 19 500	13 740 - 19 500
19	Driver Gr IV	13 740 - 18 552	13 740 - 18 552
20	Labourers	10 164 - 13 068	10 164 - 13 068
	Team Leaders	13 068 - 16 800	13 068 - 16 800

ANNEXURE B:

P O Box 172
Masoheng
1908

TO ALL PARTICIPANTS

RESEARCH INTO COMMUNICATION OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES

TO EMPLOYEES: SEBOKENG TOWN COUNCIL

In fulfilment of Master of Management Degree in Public and Development Management, I ask your assistance in attempting to ascertain certain facts and perceptions regarding local government in general and specifically communication within the town council of Sebokeng.

Please note: I am approaching you as a student and not as a representative of either a trade union or local authority. Please do not allow the fact that you may know me to influence your responses to the questionnaire.

I would value your responses highly as I realise you have time constraints and considerable work pressures without having to fill in questionnaires. I assure you that your responses will form a vital part of the research project and the information that you share will be treated in the strictest of confidence. This questionnaire should not take more than fifteen minutes to complete.

Please raise your hand if a question is not clear.

You will not be contacted for any purpose other than to inform you of the results of the research once completed.

Thank you for your support and cooperation

Many thanks

VICTOR FOLOSE (MR)

ANNEXURE B: ATTITUDE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

OPINION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

COMMUNICATING ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES TO EMPLOYEES:

SEBOKENG TOWN COUNCIL

1. Who informed you that the then Lekoa Town Council was dissolved in 1991?

1. ☐ Nobody
2. ☐ Immediate Senior
3. ☐ Head of Department
4. ☐ Union Representative
5. ☐ Community Leader/Representative

2. How were you informed that the then Lekoa Town Council was dissolved?

1. ☐ Spoken Word
2. ☐ Written Word
3. ☐ Newspapers
4. ☐ Radio
5. ☐ Television

3. To what extent, if at all, is your supervisor involved in informing you about changes in the council?

1. ☐ Not involved
2. ☐ Little
3. ☐ Some extent
4. ☐ Great extent
5. ☐ Very Great extent

4. To what extent, if at all, is your head of department involved about informing you of developments in the council?

1. ☐ Not involved
2. ☐ Little
3. ☐ Some extent
4. ☐ Great extent
5. ☐ Very great extent

5. To what extent, if at all, is your Town Clerk involved in breaking out news about your future career in the council?

1. ☐ Not involved
2. ☐ Little
3. ☐ Some extent
4. ☐ Great extent
5. ☐ Very great extent

6. To what extent is your shop steward, union representative, involved in informing you about changes at local government level?

1. ☐ Not involved
2. ☐ Little
3. ☐ Some Extent
4. ☐ Great Extent
5. ☐ Very Great Extent

7. To what extent, in your opinion, is each of the following conditions currently a barrier to effective communication in the council?

CONDITIONS	LITTLE NO EXTENT 1	SOME EXTENT 2	MODERATE EXTENT 3	GREAT EXTENT 4	VERY GREAT EXTENT 5
7. Organisational Levels					
8. Physical Distance					
9. Poor Listening and premature evaluation					
10. Language					
11. Too much information provided					
12. Poor communcation skills					
13. Distrust, threat and fear					
14. Faulty means of communication					
15. Lack of planning to communicate					

16. Communication in an organisation is about

a) telling one what to do 1. ☐

b) listening to what one says 2. ☐

c) both a+b 3. ☐

d) equal sharing of the management 4. ☐

17. A briefing group is

a) an informal meeting of employees 1. ☐

b) a report back meeting by a shopsteward 2. ☐

c) formal meeting of supervisors and subordinates 3. ☐

d) a formal method if in-company communication 4. ☐

18. Would you say the employees, management and the community are facing the same direction as they are communicating locally? yes/no ☐ ☐

19. Is there a policy for internal communication in the council? yes/no ☐ ☐

20. Do you know the current communication objectives of the council yes/no ☐ ☐

21. Is the attitude of management right for effective communication to take place? Yes/no ☐ ☐

22. Is the attitude the employees right for effective communication

23. Indicate your order of preference of communicating channels inside the council by marking 1,2 and 3 on the list.

a) - meetings (departmental, sectional 1. ☐

b) - union general meetings 2. ☐

c) - departmental circulars 3. ☐

d) - in-house journal/magazines 4. ☐

e) - induction programme/training programme 5. ☐

f) - notice boards 6. ☐

g) - suggestion boxes 7. ☐

h) - grapevine (rumours) 8. ☐

i) - social gatherings with bosses 9. ☐

23. ☐

24. ☐

25. ☐

26. To what extent are <u>all</u> employees free to discuss anything with management and participate fully in discussions.

- little to no extent 1. ☐

- some extent 2. ☐

- moderate extent 3. ☐

- great extent 4. ☐

- very great extent 5. ☐

27. Does the council make special provision for communicating with the majority of illiterate employees?

Yes/no ☐ ☐

28. Which of the following statements do you agree with?

management has a right to communicate with it's employees 1. ☐

OR

management has an obligation to communicate with it's employees 2. ☐

Indicate the extent to which information from the following sources is usually timely (you get information when you need it?)

		Very Little Extent 1	Little Extent 2	Some Extent 3	Great Extent 4	Very Great Extent
29	co-workers					
30.	immediate supervisor					
31.	middle management					
32.	top management					
33	grapevine (rumours)					

34. Taking into account changes shaping South Africa now, do you believe that the need for communicating changes to employees will change?

I believe that it will

1.	20.1	change (more demand)
2.	20.1	remain the same
3.	20.3	change (less demand)

35. From your understanding of the organisation at which level would you say decisions about organisational changes are made?

departmental management	1. ☐
top management	2. ☐
joint decisions	3. ☐
external organisation	4. ☐

36. Which method was used when changes were introduced in your council, department or section? (tick one)

a) Consult with affected staff	1. ☐
b) Invite staff to review proposal	2. ☐
c) Encourage staff participation	3. ☐
d) Rely on experts to decide	4. ☐
e) Place changes on notice board	5. ☐
f) Inform those affected of changes	6. ☐
g) Discuss changes amongst top management management and senior personnel	7. ☐

37. Which of the following communication mechanisms between management and workers would you recommend to introduce any change in the organisation. (tick one)

a) Informal discussion with workers	1. ☐
b) Meetings with groups of workers	2. ☐
c) Discussion in joint consultative meeting	3. ☐
d) Discussion in specifically constituted committee	4. ☐
e) Discussion with union representative	5. ☐
f) Discussion with paid union official outside organisation	6. ☐

38. For how long have you been employed by the council?

1. ☐ Less than 1 year
2. ☐ One year but less than three years
3. ☐ Three years but less than fifteen years
4. ☐ Seven years but less than fifteen years
5. ☐ More than fifteen years

39. How old are you?

1. ☐ Under 20 years
2. ☐ 20-24 years
3. ☐ 25-29 years
4. ☐ 30-34 years
5. ☐ 35-39 years
6. ☐ 40-44 years
7. ☐ 45-49 years
8. ☐ 60-65 years

40. What is your (i) job title.....

1. ☐ Top Management
2. ☐ Middle Management
3. ☐ Front-line Management
4. ☐ Non-Managerial

41. How would you rate the relationship between the trade union and top management?

1. ☐ Very Bad
2. ☐ Bad
3. ☐ Average
4. ☐ Good
5. ☐ Very Good

42. Are you a member of the trade union or not?

2. ☐ Yes
1. ☐ No

43. Who is heading the commission tasked with transferring power from the central government to the provinces?

1. ☐ Cyril Ramaphosa
2. ☐ Thozamile Botha
3. ☐ Sibusiso Bhengu

44. Who was the cabinet minister who headed the department dealing with local government matters in President de Klerk's last cabinet?

1. ☐ Leon Wessels
2. ☐ Roelf Meyer
3. ☐ Tertius Delport

45. Who is the member of the executive committee responsible for local government affairs in the PWV regional government?

1. ☐ Dan Mofokeng
2. ☐ Tokyo Sexwale
3. ☐ Tito Mboweni

46. When are the local government elections going to be held?

1. ☐ In 5 years time
2. ☐ September 1994
3. ☐ Date not determined yet

47. Which South African city has elected the first black mayor?

1. ☐ East London
2. ☐ Port Elizabeth
3. ☐ Cape Town

48. Which structure is responsible for negotiating the new local government dispensation?

1. ☐ Local government negotiating forum
2. ☐ Provincial government legislature
3. ☐ National parliament

49. The names and boundaries of local authorities are likely to change

2. ☐ True
1. ☐ False

50. What is your level of education?

1. ☐ Artisan certificate
2. ☐ Standard 8 or 9
3. ☐ Matric
4. ☐ Post Matric & Degree
5. ☐ Second Degree + Post-graduate

51.

1. ☐ Male ☐
2. ☐ Female ☐

52.

1. ☐ White ☐
2. ☐ Black ☐

53. What is the name of the local government negotiating forum in your area?..... ☐☐

54. How many sub-councils (municipal councils) are we likely to have in the Vaal area?

True/ False ☐☐

.....

55. Transitional local government structures (TMC's, or TLC,s) will consist of two sides, the 1. .....side and the.....side

True/ False ☐ ☐

56. Local government matters are currently handled by the department of

- L[illegible]l Government Affairs 1. ☐
- Public Service and Administration 2. ☐
- Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development 3. ☐

.....
.....

57. NB: Other Codes:
2- True/Yes
1- False/No
0- no response

H/O

Where are you working? 2. ☐

D/O

1. ☐

ANNEXURE C

612 Zone 10 Ext 2
SEBOKENG
1982

7 December 1994

The Town Clerk
Sebokeng Town Council
P.O. Box 3314
VANDERBIJLPARK
1900

Sir

ATTITUDE SURVEY : COMMUNICATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES TO EMPLOYEES : SEBOKENG TOWN COUNCIL

I wish to request that the council provide me with any documents which set out the council's communication policy as well as it's current communication objectives.

Your assistance in this regard will facilitate the timely completion of the report on the attitude survey conducted in the council from 7 to 18 November 1994.

Yours faithfully

N G V FOLOSE

ANNEXURE D

SEBOKENG

DORPSRAAD — TOWN COUNCIL

ALLE KORRESPONDENSIE MOET AAN DIE
STADSKLERK GERIG WORD

ALL CORRESPONDENCE MUST BE ADDRESSED
TO THE TOWN CLERK

Telefoon/Telephone (016) 88-1060
Fax (016) 88-1588

Privaatsak/Private Bag X048
Posbus/P O Box 3314
VANDERBIJLPARK 1900

VERW NO / REF NO 2/B 9 Dec 1994
P.A.van der Westhuizen.

Mr. N.G.V.Foiose
612 Zone 10 Ext 2
Sebokeng
1982

Sir.

re: Attitude Survey: Communication of Organisational Changes to Employees: Sebokeng Town Council.

With reference to your letter of 7 Dec, 1994 requesting documents spelling out the Council's policy on communication, we would advise as follows.

The Council has no defined procedure on paper that can be quoted or referred to at lib. It is however accepted policy as can be inferred from numerous resolutions that essential information be transmitted to the originator of a query as well as the Departmental Head and supervisors in that department who would be concerned with the issue.

The communication language and medium is an everpresent problem that requires consideration with each event.

Where matters of major importance are concerned, the decision/resolution of the Council would be circulated to Departmental heads and supervisors with sufficient copies for distribution among staff and placed on notice boards as well.

The option to attach a note to payslips is always open but this means that the timing should invariably coincide with that period when payslips are issued.

Whatever method of communication is employed, the governing principles appear to be;

Content/level.
Essentiality.

Relative urgency.
Response required.
Medium.

The facilities available to the Council through which it can communicate are not always under the control of the Council and this invariably inhibits the format of communication to a level where cost becomes an acceptable part of it.

Your research into the broad subject should produce some very interesting facts.

We trust that the foregoing is of assistance.

Yours faithfully,

Act. Town Clerk.

ANNEXURE E

Table 4.2 Eight methods of communication

	Presently used	Effectiveness 0= Poor 5= Excellent	Potentially used
Public address (large group)			
Briefing session (small group)			
Written memo			
One-to-one			
Telephone			
Newsletter			
Bulletin board			
Grapevine			

ANNEXURE F: LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1 BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

a) Organisational Level

	Frequency	Percentage
Top Management	8	6,2
Middle Management	19	14,6
Frontline Management	23	17,7
Non-Managerial	80	61,5

a) Education

Artisan Certificate	1	,76
Std 8/9	53	40,76
Matric	44	33,8
Degree/Post Matric	30	23,0
Postgraduate/2nd degree	2	1 ,5

c) Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	77	59.2
Female	53	40,8

d) Race	Frequency	Percentage
Black	116	89,2
White	14	10,8

e) Workplace	Frequency	Percentage
Head Office	67	51,5
Decentralised Office	63	48,5

f) Union Membership	Frequency	Percentage
	77	57,6

N=130

TABLE 2: COMMUNICATING COUNCIL'S DISSOLUTION

SOURCE:	Frequency	Percentage
Nobody	70	53,8
Immediate Senior	14	10,7
Head of Department	19	14,6
Union Representative	24	18,5
Community Leader	-	-

COMMUNICATION MECHANISM		
Spoken word	73	56,2
Written word	12	9,2
Newspapers	33	25,3
Radio	4	3,0
Television	1	0,8

TABLE 3: INVOLVEMENT OF SUPERVISOR IN COMMUNICATING CHANGES

RESPONSES	N	%
Not involved	44	33,8
Little	41	31,5
Some extent	23	17,6
Great extent	14	10,7
Very great extent	4	3,0

TABLE 4: INVOLVEMENT OF HEAD OF DEPARTMENT IN COMMUNICATING CHANGES

RESPONSES	N	%
Not involved	51	33,8
Little	47	31,5
Some extent	20	15,4
Great extent	10	7,7
Very great extent	3	2,4

TABLE 5: INVOLVEMENT OF TOWN CLERK IN COMMUNICATING CHANGES

RESPONSES	N	%
Not involved	85	65,4
Little	44	33,8
Some extent	6	.46
Great extent	3	.23
Very great extent	2	.15

TABLE 6: INVOLVEMENT OF SHOPSTEWARD IN COMMUNICATING CHANGES

RESPONSE	N	%
Not involved	40	30,7
Little	19	14,6
some extent	26	20
very great extent	13	10
	22	16,9

% = 14,6

TABLE 7: DECISION ON ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

	Frequency	Percentage
departmental management	25	19,2
top management	46	35,4
joint decisions	48	36,9
external organisation	12	9,2

TABLE 8: NATURE OF MANAGEMENT-UNION RELATIONSHIP

NATURE OF MANAGEMENT-UNION RELATIONSHIP

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very Bad	19	14,6
Bad	20	15,4
Average	67	51,5
Good	16	12,3
Very Good	8	6,2

TABLE 9: EXTENT OF BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

7. To what extent, if at all, is each of the following conditions currently a barrier to effective communication in the council?

CONDITIONS		LITTLE NO EXTENT	SOME EXTENT	MODERATE EXTENT	GREAT EXTENT	VERY GREAT EXTENT
1.	Organisational Level's	25	33	25	23	19
2.	Physical Distance	42	35	20	15	10
3.	Poor Listening and premature evaluation	35	34	14	19	21
4.	Language	33	29	40	12	17
5.	Too much information provided	56	33	9	9	14
6.	Poor communication skill	25	58	19	17	27
7.	Distrust, threat and fear	34	21	23	20	35
8.	Faulty means of communication	31	36	27	10	31
9.	Lack of planning to communicate	32	29	14	16	39

TABLE 10: TIMELESS OF INFORMATION

EXTENT

SOURCE		VERY LITTLE	LITTLE	SOME	GREAT	VERY GREAT
	Co-workers	29	20	44	16	21
	Frequency	22%	17,6%	36,2%	12,3%	16,5%
	Percentage					
Immediate	Frequency	29	31	41	20	9
Supervisor	Percentage	22%	23,8%	31,5%	17,8%	6,9%
Middle	Frequency	38	26	30	24	6
Management %		29,2%	20%	27,6%	18,5%	4,6%
Top	Frequency	73	21	21	9	6
Management	%	56,2%	16,2%	16,2%	6,9%	4,69
Grapevine	Frequency	30	10	24	22	44
rumours %		23%	7,7%	18,5%	16,9%	33,8%

TABLE 11: METHODS FOR INTRODUCING CHANGES

METHOD	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Consulting affected staff	13	10
Inviting staff proposals	8	6,2
Encouraging participation	13	10
Relying on experts	13	10
Placing changes on notice-board	26	16,2
Informing those affected	21	27,7
Discuss changes at top management level	36	

TABLE 12: RESPONDENT'S RECOMMENDED COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS

Informal worker discussion	21	16,2
Meeting of worker groups	17	13
Joint consultative meeting	43	33
Specific committee	11	8,5
Discussion with union representative	38	29,2
Discussion with external union official	0	0

Author: Folose N.G.V
Name of thesis: Communication of organisational changes to employees- A case study

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