

**AN EVALUATION OF COMMUNICATION INTEGRATION WITHIN A
STATE-OWNED ORGANISATION**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS WITH SPECIALISATION IN ORGANISATIONAL
COMMUNICATION RESEARCH AND PRACTICE**

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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APRIL 2009

DECLARATION

I declare that **THE EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT POSITION OF COMMUNICATION INTEGRATION WITHIN A STATE - OWNED ORGANISATION** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE
(MR MJ MAENETJA)

.....
DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the composition of this Masters Dissertation I was blessed to have the support and encouragement of some very special people. I hereby wish to acknowledge the contribution of the following persons:

- To my family, friends and Eskom colleagues for supporting me through all my years of study. Thank you for believing in me, even when I did not believe in myself. Thank you for all of the unconditional love and support you gave me. What I have done, I have done to make you proud.
- Large amounts of gratitude to professor TC Du Plessis and professor DF Du Plessis from the Department of Communication at the University of South Africa for always remaining optimistic in the face of numerous rewrites. Thank you for all your guidance and helping hands through the writing of this Dissertation. Without your help I would not have been able to put the finishing touches to my Dissertation.

ABSTRACT

This research study is qualitative exploratory in nature, trying to gain insight into integrated communication at Eskom. The study presents the methodology of the investigation, the analysis of the data, the findings as well as the conclusion and recommendations. Data collection techniques include an online self-administered questionnaire, structured questionnaire, focus group discussions and content analysis of the organisations' publications. The population selected consists of Eskom communication managers and professionals, human resources personnel and project managers to establish the extent to which integrated communication is practised within Eskom.

Finally, the research findings are discussed and further recommendations proposed. The findings show that Eskom communication is predominantly top-down with the divisions still working in silos. Furthermore, a measuring instrument developed to evaluate the extent of integrated communication as proposed by Du Plessis and Scoonraad in Barker and Angelopulo (2006) were found to be applicable to the Eskom situation.

KEY TERMS:

Internal communication, communication integration, messages consistency, communication coordination, organisational stakeholders, communication alignment, information sharing, free flow of information, communication infrastructure.

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION: NEED FOR THE STUDY

As organisational processes, theories and management styles change, there is a need to change the traditional models of practice and the traditional role of communication practitioners in organisational communication. Traditional communication models are based on early organisational theories and their biggest drawback is that they tend to provide a fragmented view of problems. The following are some of the problems associated with traditional models of communication practice (Grates 1995:17):

- Traditional communication practice models show us as being re-active, not strategically aligned with management and oriented towards narrow, technical, production-centred solutions such as producing newsletters and videos.
- Traditional organisational models have too many separate islands of communication, resulting in fragmented, redundant or even contradictory communication programmes and messages. As a result, they have created institutional silos.
- The traditional theoretical perspective of public relations is that of being oriented to external communication. Seldom does it include the role of internal communication practitioners as change agents who promote increased organisational reflexivity and who are involved in organisational development.
- Traditional models do not sustain the concept of creating one value chain. In order to meet the needs of these stakeholders, organisations have to create and nourish long-term relationships between the organisation, its brands and its stakeholders.

These trends are undeniably widespread and prevalent not only in private organisations but also in state-owned enterprises. According to Schultz and Schultz (2004:3), few organisations were traditionally involved in the idea of integrating any of their business functional areas. Gronstedt (2000:7) acknowledges this and adds that still fewer organisations felt traditionally that there was any need to integrate the marketing and communication functions. According to Duncan (2001:22), many employees do not have a basic understanding of what their organisation manufactures, how their organisation operates, or what their specific role is in building customer relationships. The most common reason for this is that employees have not been integrated into the organisation. An example is that of former Transnet's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Maria Ramos, who resolved a nine-month dispute with four striking transport unions that threatened to derail the restructuring of the transport parastatal. The unions decried her unilateral efforts, but the agreement reached thereafter kept her reform agenda on track with the difference that the unions were now on board as part of the process. Analysts said Ramos's confrontation with labour was the outcome of the parastatal's lack of consultation, as Ramos fulfilled her mandate to implement a four-point turnaround strategy (Sake Beeld 2004:5). This supports the contention of Denton and Vloeberghs (2003:90) that workers need to be involved from the start, otherwise they will not buy into the process.

The above example is an indication that overall strategic success depends on how well an organisation is managed as a whole, and on the ways in which the components parts of the organisation are integrated. What this means is that decision-making has to be inclusive and integrated. Hyo-Sook (2003:56) maintains that excellent organisations have management structures which empower employees through internal communication and participation in decision-making. According to Koopman and Rus (1988:102), increased participation in decision-making by lower-level members of the organisation has been found to have a positive effect on the efficiency of the decision-making process.

Hence, a perceived lack of involvement in organisational decision-making results in employees feeling disillusioned and disempowered. In the case of Transnet, Ramos discovered the problem very late and only after she realised the importance of involving the trade unions, could she make progress with the negotiations. In other words, her success can be attributed to open and frank liaison with employees and trade unions (achieved through the process of participation). This implies that, in addition to searching for improvement in its own activities, an organisation should also look to improve the links with key stakeholder groups such as its employees. Therefore, organisations should shape their communications as a tool for linking employees to business decisions, creating a channel for them to air their opinions and make suggestions which will ultimately affect outcomes. Duncan and Moriarty (1997:24) propose that the way to integrate employees into a customer-focused approach is through internal marketing. Bernstein (2000:2) maintains that the more employees feel part of the organisation and the better informed they are about its business strategies, the better their morale. Duncan (2001:23) acknowledges this and states that organisations with high employee morale have higher levels of customer satisfaction.

However, Percy (1997:8) postulates that the theory of integrated communication, though theoretically pragmatic, ultimately fails because of significant structural-functional barriers to its implementation. For instance, depending on organisation's level of access to technology, it may be found that in a technologically advanced organisation, e-mail may be the preferred method of communication, whereas in a non-technologically advanced organisation, communication is limited to face-to-face communication. It is, therefore, against this background that the researcher evaluates the current position of communication integration in a state-owned organisation in order to determine its level of communication integration.

1.2 THE MAIN RESEARCH PROBLEM

The main research problem was to evaluate the current state of communication integration in Eskom by applying a new measurement instrument for assessing integration: a cross-sectional survey.

1.3 SUBORDINATE PROBLEMS

The study has the following subordinate problems:

- 3.1 Internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation at Eskom.
- 3.2 Communication alignment to strategic focus at Eskom.
- 3.3 Existence of the consistency of messages and media in and from Eskom.
- 3.4 Mechanisms to co-ordinate communication efforts and action within Eskom.
- 3.5 Infrastructure for integration within Eskom.
- 3.6 Sharing of information and free flow of information within Eskom.

1.4 ASSUMPTIONS

The study has the following assumptions:

- 1.4.1 Assumption 1: There is sharing of information across divisions at Eskom.
- 1.4.2 Assumption 2. There are mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of Eskom.
- 1.4.3 Assumption 3. Eskom has the mechanisms in place to facilitate interaction with stakeholder groups.
- 1.4.4 Assumption 4. Eskom employees are treated as important stakeholders.
- 1.4.5 Assumption 5. Eskom employees are reminded about what the organisation stands for.
- 1.4.6 Assumption 6. There is a formal policy regarding communication integration at the corporate level.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Because this is a qualitative study, the following research questions are asked regarding the level of communication integration at Eskom:

- 1.5.1 Does Eskom communication have internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation?
- 1.5.2 Is Eskom communication aligned with the strategic focus of the organisation?
- 1.5.3 Is the messaging going in and out of the organisation consistent?
- 1.5.4 Is there a co-ordination of communication efforts and action?
- 1.5.5 Is there infrastructure for the integration of communication messages?
- 1.5.6 Does the sharing of information and free flow of information exist?

1.6 RESEARCH AIMS

An exploratory, qualitative research methodology has been chosen for this study. Since this is an exploratory study, the purpose is to explore a topic under study so as to learn more about it.

According to Fouche (2002:108), research goals are categorised as either basic or applied. Research that tends to solve specific problems is called applied research. Fouche (2002:108) describes applied research as research that is aimed at solving specific policy problem or at helping practitioners accomplish tasks. Applied research, with the emphasis on exploration was used for this research study. According to Du Plooy (2001:21) unlike basic research, applied goals of communication research investigate practical issues, such as exploring solutions for problems, assessing and describing communication needs, policies and practices and/ or evaluating the effectiveness of communication.

The goal of this research is applied, since the research was focused on solving the immediate problems facing the organisational communication in practice as opposed to providing a foundation for knowledge and understanding, that is, theoretical results. The goal of the research study was to evaluate the current position of integration communication within Eskom through the application of the new measurement instrument. The specific research aims to be addressed are as follows:

- 1.6.1 To determine the extent to which the organisation focuses on its internal stakeholders.
- 1.6.2 To determine the extent to which communication is aligned with the strategic focus of the organisation.
- 1.6.3 To determine the consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation.
- 1.6.4 To determine the extent to which the organisation co-ordinates its communication efforts and actions.
- 1.6.5 To determine the extent to which information flows and information is shared within the organisation.
- 1.6.6 To determine whether the organisation has infrastructure for integration.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing research on the topic is reviewed in this study. The literature review helps the researcher to focus on the topic, clarify issues, place the research project in context and, in so doing, lay the foundation for a good research outcome. Mark (1996:20) points out that with a careful review of the literature, a discovery can be made regarding how others have studied the problem and approaches which the researcher has not considered. A solid review of the literature also helps to position the research interest and possible findings within a theoretical framework. Furthermore, acquaintance with the literature can provide a researcher with data to compare with his/her own findings.

One of the objectives of this study was to provide a theoretical background on the integration of communication through a literature study. Therefore, the researcher conducted an in-depth literature review, which is presented in Chapter 2.

Since contemporary organisations operate in an environment characterised by rapid change, competition and evolving trends and technologies, Hugo-Burrows (1998:91) indicates that it is of strategic importance for the organisation to employ integrated communication techniques to address these changes. Encouraging employees to accept change and emphasising the fact that they are crucial to obtaining organisational results are two objectives of organisational communication in times of change. As a result of these changes, a shift has occurred from integrated marketing communication to integrated communication (see Section 1.8.4 for the difference between integrated marketing communication and integrated communication).

1.8 THEORETICAL APPROACH

The following theoretical statements provide the theoretical grounding for the identified research questions and research aims:

1.8.1 Internal communication

Internal communication is a multi-dimensional construct. Nemec (1999:28) claims that owing to the organisational trends of downsizing and re-engineering, the morale of employees has to be lifted, so organisations have to think about how they communicate with their employees, also known as internal communications (Argenti 1996:77). Internal communication, in the broadest sense, is the process of sharing information with other individuals. The process involves gathering, processing, disseminating and storing information. Moreover, Power and Rienstra (1999:504) claim that internal communication can be described as a process of communication within the organisation itself, with other business divisions within the organisation and with the CEO.

According to Goldhaber (1993:84) although definitions of internal communication vary greatly, the following common strands can be detected in many of the wide variety of viewpoints, which define internal communication:

- Internal communication involves messages, their flow, purpose, direction and media;
- Internal communication involves people, their attitudes, feelings, relationships and skills; and
- Internal communication occurs within a complex open system that is influenced by and influences its environment.

1.8.2 Organisational communication

With regard to the strategic importance of communication to an organisation, as addressed by Newstrom and Davis (1997:49) and Sanchez (1999:11), a model of organisational communication conceptualised by Power and Reinstra (1999:511) highlights the strategic planning processes pertinent to organisational communication within organisations. Power and Reinstra (1999:511) deduce that the model represents the planning and evaluation process inherent in organisational communication planning. Cascading from the organisational objectives, the organisational system has an umbrella communication model with articulated aims and objectives in relation to communication planning and system effectiveness.

1.8.3 Integrated communication

Organisational integration revolves around the degree to which individuals receive information about the immediate work environment. The items included here are the degree of satisfaction with information about departmental plans, the requirements of the job and personnel news (Downs 1996:113). Proctor and Doukakis (2003:275) postulate that the organisation should integrate the overall approach it takes to both internal and external communication.

This integration occurs within corporate communication, as indicated in the definition of corporate communication provided by Van Riel (1992:26) where it is a mechanism of management by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communication are harmonised as effectively and efficiently as possible, so as to create a favourable basis for relationships with the groups upon which the company is dependent.

Christensen (2002:162) expands on Van Riel's (1995:295) definition by indicating that to qualify as corporate, all communication, with regard to symbols, messages and strategies, ought to be conceived, co-ordinated and integrated as a whole organisational body, thus acknowledging that this "corpus" could comprise a set of interrelated organisations. Furthermore, the notion of corporate communications, according to Christensen (2002:162), builds on the assumption that organisations are able to have a general view of themselves as communicating entities. Contemporary organisations feel under pressure, not only to stand out in a cluttered communication environment saturated with competing messages but also to present and express themselves in their surroundings in coherent and legitimate ways.

1.9 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

The discussion related to key concepts for this particular study broadly deals with integrated communication. The various key concepts that have been identified are as follows:

1.9.1 Strategy/strategic

"Strategic" derives from the root word "strategy". This word has a military background. By construction, "strategy" is a noun used to denote the art or science of military command applied to the overall planning and conducting of a large-scale combat operation.

Organisationally, this adopted concept has come to mean a plan of action, having specific objectives designed to set the direction for the achievement or securing of a specific advantage (Barker & Angelopulo 2006:28). (see Chapter 2).

1.9.2 Integration

Integration refers to that part of the process during which the various bits of information are put together (Steinberg 2007:146). (see Chapter 2).

1.9.3 Integrated marketing communication versus integrated communication

In this section, the concepts of integrated marketing communication (IMC) and integrated communication (IC) are discussed in combination to illustrate the reasoning behind the choice of terminology. Du Plessis and Schoonraad (2006:374) clearly distinguish between IMC and IC. The authors maintain that, whereas IC is concerned with the corporate brand - that is, what the organisation is and stand for, IMC is concerned with individual products or service brands. Gayeski and Wood (1996:57) maintain that it is important to note that IC is different from IMC. It is imperative to note that the focus is predominantly on IC, not on IMC, which was the preferred term before the late 1990s (see Chapter 2). It is asserted that there are some fundamental differences between the concepts of IMC and IC (where integrated communication is seen as the evolution of the concept of integrated marketing communication).

Since contemporary organisations operate in an environment characterised by rapid change, competition, evolving trends and technologies, Hugo-Burrows (1998:91) indicates that it is of strategic importance for the organisation to employ integrated communication techniques to address these changes. Encouraging employees to accept change and emphasising the fact that they are crucial to obtaining organisational results are two objectives of organisational communication in times of change.

As a result of these changes, a shift has occurred from integrated marketing communication to integrated communication. The fundamental differences between these two concepts can be summarised as follows:

- Integrated marketing communication focuses predominantly on customers, whereas integrated communication proposes a more holistic perspective to include stakeholders, which Steyn and Puth (2000:198) define as groups of people that are affected by the decisions of an organisation, or whose decisions affect the organisation. Furthermore, an integrated communication approach will lead the organisation to greater stakeholder centrality.
- In integrated marketing communication, the focus is on the messages sent out by the organisation. However, in the context of integrated communication, the focus is on communication (implying a two-way process), therefore emphasising that all communication, not merely messages, contributes to the brand of the organisation.
- Integrated marketing communication focuses strongly on external messages, whereas integrated communication focuses on internal and external messages.
- With integrated marketing communication, the marketing or communication departmental strategy drives the messages of the organisation. By contrast, in integrated communication, the strategic intent of the organisation as a whole drives all the communications of the organisation. In this regard, van Riel (1997:294) indicates that organisations are increasingly becoming aware that organisational communication is not being fully utilised internally or externally. Furthermore, the promotion of effective organisational communication seems to be via the integration of various communication disciplines.

This integration, according to van Riel (1997:295), can be achieved in various ways, for example by corporate design (common house-style) and integrated marketing communication, which work with common starting points, common operational systems, as well as co-operative structures for decision making in communication.

Integrated communication is therefore seen as a broader view of integrated marketing communication. According to Gronstedt (2000:7), integrated communication is, therefore, built on the premise that there must be interaction between the two forms of communication (internal and external) in an ongoing, interactive, independent and synergistic manner. In other words, there should be no walls or barriers, despite their often different functions, between these types of communication, for both are ultimately strategically indispensable to driving the business forward. The focus is, therefore, on integrated communication and not on integrated marketing communication.

Integrated communications, according to Change Communications (2001:3), have more impact than a plethora of disjointed messages. In a rapidly evolving business world, characterised by information overload through the multitude of messages confronting employees, a consistent and consolidated set of key messages across all channels has the best chance of cutting through the noise of competitors' messages which bombard employees on a daily basis.

Non-integrated communications send disjointed messages that dilute the impact of the communication. Non-integrated communications often result in internal and external messages colliding, thereby undermining the credibility of both. Therefore, through the presentation of a reassuring sense of order and direction, integrated communications help define and nurture long-term relationships with potential, as well as existing employees (Change Communications 2001:2).

1.9.4 Free flow and sharing of information

Good communication is about consistency: people are more likely to listen if there is a regular flow of information they trust. The sharing of information has a certain binding quality (Theunissen 1998:105), as it improves the feeling of belonging and trust among employees, and the sharing of information enhances the communication climate in the organisation.

The converse is also true – poorer communication leads to ineffective sharing of information. For this reason, the role of integrated communication operations has changed progressively from the role as mere disseminators of information to adopting the role of communication facilitators for the internal organisation, thus recognising the importance of two-way communication (from management to employees and from employees to management) to the vitality of the organisation (Le Menager 1999:33) (see Chapter 2 &3).

1.9.5 Co-ordination of communication efforts and action in the organisation

Co-ordination is usually achieved via some kind of communication or information exchange. The co-ordination of internal and external communication, as stated by Van Riel (1997:294), is a means of finding a solution to the problems of efficiency and effectiveness in organisations. In this regard, communication management at the macro level focuses on the role and management of integrated communication in the organisational environment (Claassen & Verwey 1998:81). Duncan (2001:90) strongly proposes the cross-functionality of processes in the organisation as a prerequisite for communication. He argues that cross-functionality is essential so that all the departments in the organisation are able to co-operate with one another in planning and monitoring its relationships with stakeholders and the brand. In essence, communication in teams and across teams is a hallmark of innovative organisations (see Chapters 2&3).

1.9.6 Consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation

Organisational communication as a whole offers a means of becoming a strategic tool in helping to ensure the synergy and consistency of messages, regardless of the communication method used to deliver the message. Duncan (2002:2190) proposes that a brand ought to have “one big creative idea” and then ensure that it is integrated into all the integrated communication messages. He states that “the big creative idea” provides a single focus for all communication efforts, gives direction to both message design and message deliveries and must be reflected in the execution of all the messages (see Chapters 2 & 3).

1.9.7 Stakeholder orientation and differentiation

Stakeholder theory is concerned with the nature of the relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders. In Freeman’s (1984:46) landmark book, stakeholders are defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation’s objectives”. This means that all organisations will, as Kitchen and Schultz (2000:7) explain, have to build real relationships with real stakeholders. Referring to “real” implies that relationships are not outbound, based on spin, rhetoric and one-way communication, but based on a correct understanding of the dynamics of served markets and constituencies throughout the world in which the organisation competes. The approach that organisations should follow in order to ensure interactivity with stakeholders is that of integrated communication (see Chapters 2 & 3).

1.9.8 Alignment of communication strategy with corporate strategy

Communication has to be linked to the business plan, with everyone in the process clear about their roles in making communication happen. According to Duncan and Moriarty (1997:13), the communication function in the organisation should also be aligned with the organisational mission, and therefore be based on the strategic intent of the organisation.

This implies that communication management is driven by the strategic intent of the organisation (see Chapters 2 & 3).

1.9.9 Infrastructure for integration

The systems of planning, quality control and information management are crucial to an organisation's performance in its primary activities. Infrastructure also consists of organisation's structures and routines, which sustain its culture. According to Binneman (1998:57), these are the systems and structure aspects that focus on the actual communication-related infrastructure, such as the communication channels used, including issues such as media richness, the levels at which communication takes place, the directions in which communication flows, as well as the communication networks existing in the organisation (see Chapters 2 & 3).

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN

Based on the preceding discussions about the problem statements, and the research aims relating to the identified problem statements, the ensuing section is a brief discussion of the various stages of the research methodology employed (see chapter 4 for a detailed discussion):

According to research conducted by Neuman (2000:7), researchers gather data by employing specialised techniques, and use the data to support or reject theories. Moreover, methodologies or data can be categorised under the heading of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and data.

The methodology appropriate to this study is qualitative research (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2). Qualitative research can be described as any type of research which produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Straus & Corbin 1998:10).

Miles and Huberman (1994:6) believe that qualitative data give useful information about the social processes in specific settings, as well as enabling critical researchers to break through the technocratic assumptions implicit in a quantitative approach to research.

1.10.1 Research methodology

Since a qualitative research methodology was utilised, a qualitative research design was employed. The overriding research design is in the form of an online self-administered survey; structured questionnaire; focus group interviews and content analysis, thus enabling the use of a qualitative mix (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2). These were used to obtain the information necessary to apply the measuring instrument for communication integration proposed by Du Plessis and Schoonraad, cited in Barker and Angelopulo (2006:381). The measurement instrument includes the following:

- Stakeholder orientation and differentiation.
- Communication alignment with corporate strategy.
- Consistency of messages to and from the organisation.
- Co-ordination of messages.
- Free flow and sharing of messages.
- Infrastructure for integration.

The measurement instrument was used to evaluate whether or not integrated communication is practised in Eskom. Through the measurement instrument, the researcher can determine how Eskom's internal communications function is organised and structured, and whether it is focused on a more integrated approach which will ensure maximum effectiveness. Studies show that communication integration involves the timely sharing of information in an organisation. It also means effective working relationships across divisions so that response and mitigation steps are integrated across the business.

1.10.2 Population and sampling

The target group was determined by non-probability sampling. A non-probability sample was used as an exploratory, qualitative research methodology was used. Non-probability samples rely on the judgement of the researcher and are only as representative as the researcher's luck and skill permit. According to Strydom and Venter (2002:208) target sampling is a strategy for obtaining systematic information. In non-probability sampling, there is no way to estimate the probability each element has of being included in the sample, and no assurance that every element has an equal chance of being included. The chance of bias is higher in non-probability sampling, so the generalisations derived from these samples are regarded as being less accurate than those based on probability samples. Some examples of non-probability samples are convenience sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling and theoretical sampling.

A purposive sample was employed for this study. It is an acceptable method of sampling used for unique situations. According to Neumann (2000:198), purposive sampling uses the judgement of an expert in selecting cases or it selects cases with a specific purpose in mind. This method is used with the knowledge that it does not represent the general population; but instead attempts to represent a specific portion of the population. It is used in exploratory research (see chapter 4).

1.10.2.1 Population of the study

Mouton (1996:134) refers to the population as a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics which the researcher is interested in studying. The target population for this study was the more than 30 000 Eskom employees.

1.10.2.2 Accessible sample of the study

The sample comprises the elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study (Strydom & Venter 2002:199). The size of the sample was thus restricted to Eskom's communication managers and professionals. The survey was administered in an online format, as this is currently the primary communication channel used in the organisation. The online self-administered questionnaire targeted 10 Eskom communication managers and 20 communication professionals.

As is the case with an online self-administered survey, a non-probability and purposive sample was used for the focus group discussion, as the participants were selected on the basis of their specific positions in the organisation in order to gain information from senior employees/managers who have both an operational and strategic role to play. In this regard, the focus group discussion included two segments of participants, namely seven human resources managers and six project managers. (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.5.1).

1.11 ANTICIPATED FINDINGS

Although the integration of communication is accepted in principle, integration tends to be implemented at a superficial level. With regard to the application of the measurement instrument, Eskom has yet to fully implement the foundational ideas contained in integrated communication as outlined in the measurement instrument in terms of each of the following six areas, namely:

- Internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation.
- Communication alignment with strategic focus.
- Existence of the consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation.
- Co-ordination of communication efforts and action within the organisation.
- Infrastructure for integration within the organisation.

- Sharing of information and free flow of information within the organisation.

This makes the new measurement ideal for the evaluation of communication integration within the organisation.

1.12 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

The layout of the research study is divided into six chapters, with the following sequential flow:

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

The chapter provides the background to the research problem, the definition of concepts, and the presentation of the research problem, subordinate problems, assumptions, research questions, research design and research methodology.

Chapter 2: Integrated communication

The chapter concerns the literature review, and it brings an overview of the relevant literature with regard to the underlying theories of integrated communication. Thus, this chapter elaborates on the exploration of integrated communication.

Chapter 3: Operationalisation of the measuring instrument

This chapter gives an explanation of the measurement instrument proposed by Du Plessis and Schoonraad, cited in Barker and Angelopulo (2006) which was used to test the integration of internal communication at Eskom. Attention is given to the internal communication techniques that an organisation implements to ensure integration.

The areas of integration that are measured include: internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation, communication alignment with strategic focus of the organisation, consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation, co-ordination of communication efforts and action, infrastructure for the integration and sharing of information, and the free flow of information. The chapter also provides a brief background of Eskom and its communication practices.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

This chapter discusses the research design, population, sampling and the limitations as well as the reliability and validity of the study.

Chapter 5: Research findings and the interpretation of the results

The chapter discusses the research findings and the interpretation of the results.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter discusses the final conclusions and recommendations of the study. This is followed by recommendations for future research.

The next chapter, chapter 2 expands upon these identified concepts, namely: integration, integrated communication, stakeholder orientation and differentiation, communication alignment with the strategic focus of the organisation, consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation, coordination of communication efforts and actions, infrastructure for integration and free flow and information sharing. This expansion of concepts occurs through the integration of various theoretical frameworks and the opinions of the numerous authors identified as valuable contributors to the field of integrated communication.

CHAPTER 2: INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The scope of this chapter entails a literature review of the existing theories and literature on integrated communication. It also encapsulates the essence of integrated communication by briefly describing it in terms of its historical development and evolution.

Organisations need a framework within which they can occasionally pause, assess, re-examine and redefine their activities. Barker and Angelopulo (2006:367) state that as yet there is no single, ready-made evaluation instrument for measuring integration. However, the authors point out that, depending on the point of departure, various models of communication integration have developed over time. They contend that the basic principles and concepts contained in these models could provide criteria for measuring the integration of organisational communication.

In this study, elements of four models are discussed to illustrate how the measurement instrument for integrated communication proposed by Du Plessis and Schoonraad (2006) was developed, since these authors base the instrument on some of the above aspects (see point 5). The first of these four models is by Ehlers (2002) – the development of a framework for structuring integrated communication in South African organisations; the second by Gayeski and Woodward (1996) – the renaissance communicator; the third by Duncan and Moriarty (1997) – the ten strategic drivers of integrated communication; and the fourth model is Van Riel's (1995) model of organising and co-ordinating the communication process.

As discussed above, it is imperative to note that integrated communication is viewed as the evolved offspring of integrated marketing communication. In Chapter 1, the fundamental differences between these two concepts are clarified.

The literature presented in the current chapter is based heavily on the integrated communication literature. A distinction is therefore not made between the two concepts in this chapter.

2.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION

Before discussing the literature that exists on the subject of integrated communication it is also important to look at the historical development of integrated communication. According to Niemann (2005:69), there are conflicting views as to when integrated communication was first devised and put into practice. Since its beginnings as integrated marketing communication, various scholars, including Duncan (2001:11), Drobis (1997:2) and Schultz (1998:1), view the basic concepts of integrated communication as having been practised since the early 1970s. During the 1990s, the emphasis was placed on Integrated Marketing Communication, which led to its own approach to holistic communication being developed (Moriarty 1994:38).

Van Riel (1995:14) considers integrated communication in the 1990s to be the combined use of multiple marketing communication techniques, linked in the planning and execution thereof, though he agrees that the idea behind integrated communication goes back to the early 1970s. By contrast, scholars such as Smith (1996:56) argue that the concept only emerged or gained increased relevance in the early 1980s.

While the origins of integrated communication are to some extent contentious, the term “integrated communication” appears to have emerged in the public relations/corporate communication literature in the late 1980s (Sportts & Lambert, 1998:212). Kitchen and Schultz (1999:21) disagree and state that integrated communication had its early development at the Medill School of Journalism at North Western University in the United States of America.

Based on the evidence of the literature study, it is clear that the concept of integrated communication did indeed originate in the early 1990s. During the 1990s, the developmental nature of integrated communication was made evident by a special issue of the *Journal of Marketing Communication* (1996). At present, the concept is still undergoing continuous development.

According to Duncan (2001), an example of the developmental nature of integrated communication is found in the various new comprehensive studies on the topic in the literature as well as in the inception of the *Journal of Integrated Communications*. In the South African context, several empirical studies and other literature have been developed on the topic (Barker & Angelopulo, 2006; Ehlers, 2002; Niemann, 2002; and Store, 2002)

Integrated communication has been defined as a management philosophy Stewart (1996:149) and a unifying business practice (Burnett & Moriarty, 1998). In parallel with the emergence of the concept of integrated communication, various definitions of this phenomenon have emerged, based on the fashion in which integrated communication was practised. For this reason, the various definitions are expanded upon by categorising them into the eras of the evolution of integrated communication. Four of such evolutionary eras are identified below.

2.3 DEFINITION OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION

There are a variety of definitions of integrated communication. In everyday usage, integration refers to “the act, the process or the instance of forming or uniting differences into a whole, of incorporating parts into a larger unit and thus, eventually, ending or at least managing segregation” (Webster's Dictionary). In addition to this focus on unity, one finds notions of integration that highlight the coexistence of differences within the larger unit. Integration in this view refers to “the process of bringing together a multiplicity of differences (people, perspectives or expressions) into unrestricted and equal association, as for example in an organisation” (The American Heritage Dictionary).

Drobis (1997:2) and other scholars indicate that the basic concepts of integrated communication have been practiced since the 1970s, when the role and impact of advertising in the marketplace started shifting. However, Niemann (2005:104) contends that the idea behind integrated communication emerged and gained importance in the early 1980s. According to Sportts and Lambert (1998:211), during the early 1980s integrated communication was described as the integration of various communication vehicles in a specific campaign. Kitchen and Schultz (1999:21) disagree with the view and trace integrated communication's origin to the Medill School of Journalism at North West University in the United States.

It is evident that the focus during the first evolutionary era of integrated communication was on specific functions, not on the bigger picture of how these functions in the specific campaigns related to the overall organisational efforts. A definition for integrated communication in the late 80s can therefore be proposed as: "Integrated communication is the integration of vehicles and tactics within a specific communication campaign."

During the early 1990s, Keegan, Moriarty and Duncan (1992), Schultz (1991), Tannenbaum (1991) and colleagues developed various definitions to describe integrated communication. Schultz (1991:101) describes integrated communication as a process that should be managed actively. This implies that integrated communication is not a haphazard process. Tannenbaum's (1991:27) definition states that internal communication and actions also contribute to the communication efforts of the organisation. This definition emphasises the prominence of dialogue, by moving away from the transactional style to focus on a conversational style.

Keegan, Moriarty and Duncan (1992:631) view integrated communication as "the strategic co-ordination of all the messages and media used by an organisation to collectively influence its perceived brand value".

Their definition highlights three focal points: strategic co-ordination, which implies synergy through the co-ordination of complementary messages; the concept that all messages and media should be used collectively to create a great impact and influence the perception of the brand; thus indicating more of an attitudinal change. A combined definition for integrated communication from the early 1990s could therefore read as follows: “Integrated communication is the strategic co-ordination of all messages to create dialogue between the stakeholder and the organisation, which will attitudinally and behaviourally move the stakeholder towards brand loyalty.”

Between 1996 and 1998, the most prominent definitions of integrated communication included contributions by Gayeski and Wood (1996), Duncan (1997) and Harris (1998). Gayeski and Wood (1996:2) define integrated communication as “the application of analysis, communication and evaluating techniques to create and manage integrated, multi-faceted interventions combining information, instruction, collaboration, business-process design, feedback and incentive systems to improve human performance in the workplace in order to achieve an organisation’s desired missions and visions”. In addition, Gayeski and Wood (1996) propose a model for the integration of communication that is based on the concept of a market-based strategic communication, human performance technology, business process engineering and a systematic method for analysis and development of communication intervention.

The same concept of integrated communication is defined by Duncan (1997:631) as “the process of strategically controlling or influencing all messages and encouraging purposeful dialogue to create and nourish profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders”. This definition focuses more on relationship building than on the outcome of the approach. It entails attracting new customers and then interacting with them to find ways in which the organisation could further satisfy their wants and needs.

Harris (1998:58) defines integrated communication in a similar way as “a cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging purposeful dialogue with them”. This implies that the entire organisation’s major departments must have a means of working collectively in the planning and monitoring of brand relations. The following combined definition of integrated communication in this era can therefore be proposed as: integrated communication is the cross-functional process of strategically influencing or controlling all messages and encouraging purposeful dialogue to create and nourish profitable relationships with other stakeholders.

The last evolutionary era of integrated communication has been the era between 1999 and 2006. Scholars who have contributed to defining integrated communication include Barker and Angelopulo (2006), Barker and Du Plessis (2001), Duncan (2001) and Gronstedt (2000). Gronstedt (2000:8) defines integrated communication as “the strategic management process of facilitating a desired meaning of the company and its brands by creating unity of efforts at every point of contact with key customers and stakeholders for the purpose of building profitable relationships with them.” This definition focuses on “unity of effort,” which is one of the most important additions to the integrated communication concept, as it signifies the idea that integrated communication stretches beyond merely the planned messages of the organisation to include everything the organisation does and does not do.

Barker and Du Plessis (2006:58) note that in the integrated approach, attention is focused on the integration of various communication activities in the organisation in order to face the increased challenges of maintaining a positive image of the organisation and remaining competitive in a changing global environment. It is through integrated communication that an organisation can establish meaningful relationships with its stakeholders.

Duncan (2001:8) conceptualises integrated communication as a “cross-functional process creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to the groups”. Building on this, Barker and Angelopulo (2006:40) define integrated communication as “the cross-functional process for creating and nourishing strategically determined relationships with stakeholders by controlling or influencing all messages sent to those groups and encouraging purposeful dialogue with them”. Unlike Sportts and Lambert (1998), Barker and Angelopulo (2006) assert that the focus on two-way communication should be data-driven. This is due to an increasing amount of communication taking place between the organisation and the stakeholder, based on information obtained and captured on a database.

Oliver (2004:230) describes integrated communication as the bringing together of all relevant corporate communication activities. This implies that all organisational communication activities should be integrated and aligned so that people do not have to put fragments of uncoordinated messages together for themselves.

The combined definition for the final evolutionary era of integrated communication, which also serves as a definition for the purpose of this study, involves a combination of the definitions of this evolutionary era. It reads as follows: “Integrated communication is the strategic management process of organisationally controlling or influencing all messages and encouraging purposeful data-driven dialogue to create and nourish long-term, profitable relationships with stakeholders.” It can therefore be argued that the concept “integrated communication” today refers to an approach to communication management that no longer separates or divisionalises the communication function. Viewed from the stakeholder’s perspective, such a separation is irrelevant. In today’s rapidly changing business environment, cohesive, integrated communications are gaining recognition as a means of developing a competitive advantage and of allowing an organisation to adapt quickly to evolving needs and demands.

Professionally developed organisational communication is increasingly part of overall strategic planning and action.

The next section contains a discussion of some of the theoretical frameworks that have been developed with the objective of developing an evaluation instrument for the measurement of integrated communication.

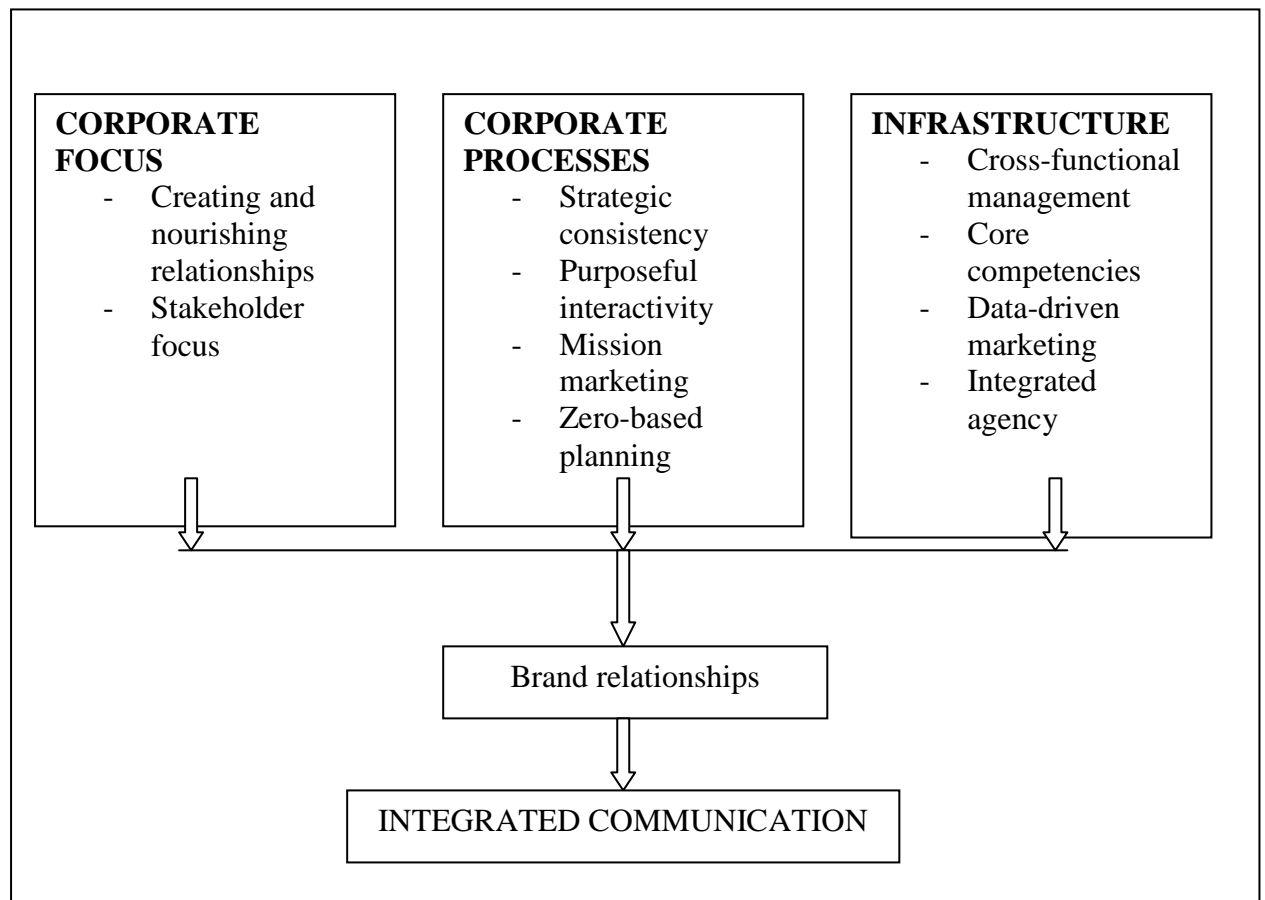
2.4 AN EXPLANATION OF THE FOUR MODELS OF MEASURING INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION

In this section, elements of the four models are discussed to illustrate how the measurement instrument for integrated communication proposed by Du Plessis and Schoonraad (2006) was developed, since the instrument is based on some of the aspects:

2.4.1 Duncan and Moriarty's (1997b) ten strategic drivers of integration

Duncan and Moriarty (1997:15) identify ten strategic drivers of the brand relationship that organisations which have benefited from marketing communication have used. The authors stress the importance of considering integration as a continuum, stating that it is not necessary for all ten drivers to be fully in place before an organisation can begin to benefit from integrated communication, because integration is a continuum. Duncan and Moriarty (1997:16) divide the ten drivers of integrated communication into three categories: infrastructure, corporate focus and corporate processes, as shown in Figure 2.1:

Figure 2.1 Ten strategic drivers of integrated communication



Source: Adapted from Duncan & Moriarty (1997:16)

The first category stresses that integrated communication must be driven from the top of the organisation. This requires the top management to be persuaded that focusing on relationships is more important than focusing on transactions. Furthermore, top management has to realise that stakeholders overlap and their management has to be integrated.

The second category includes the four process drivers – strategic consistency, purposeful interactivity, mission marketing and zero-based planning – representing the operational processes on which integrated communication is based.

The third category consists of the four organisational infrastructure drivers – cross-functional management, core competencies, data-driven marketing and working with an integrated agency. These are the organisational strategies required to create the corporate infrastructure that should be place to support the process drivers.

The following section gives brief explanations of the ten strategic drivers of integrated communication, based on the three focus areas of corporate focus, corporate processes and corporate infrastructure.

2.4.1.1 Drivers relating to corporate focus

The drivers relating to the corporate focus of the organisation relate directly to communication management, as the focus is on building relationships with stakeholders in the broader sense.

- **Creating and nourishing relationships rather than merely making transactions**

Organisations have realised that they can be more profitable by concentrating on building customer relationships instead of focusing solely on transactions. According to Harris (1998:4) it is becoming progressively more costly to acquire a new customer. Organisations will therefore benefit more by investing in growing their current customers. Organisation must get to know their customers and use that information in their communication with their customers, thus enhancing their credibility (Ehlers 2002:178).

- **Focusing on stakeholders rather than simply customers or shareholders**

Brand equity is determined by the quality of an organisation's relationships, not only with the customers but also with all the stakeholders. By definition, all the stakeholders have a vested interest in the success of the organisation.

Also, gaining the support of key stakeholders in the short-term generates profits for investors in the long term and therefore reaches the objective of shareholder equity.

2.4.1.2 Drivers relating to corporate processes

The drivers relating to corporate processes are linked to business and marketing management in that all these drivers should be related to the marketing management of the organisation and consequently to the strategy of the organisation as a whole.

- **Maintaining strategic consistency rather than independent brand messages**

It is important to recognise the communication dimension to all contact with a brand and the source of these messages, as they impact positively or negatively on customers and other stakeholders' behaviour. The better the strategic integration of the brand's position into all the brand messages, the more consistent and well-defined the organisation's identity and reputation.

- **Generating purposeful interactivity rather than merely a mass media monologue**

Though it is important to speak to customers, it is equally important to listen to them. Interactivity is a form of integration, which is why a balance between mass, personalised and interactive media is required to augment feedback from customers and to reach them. The better the facilitation of customer feedback and dialogue, the better the integration of customers into the organisation's planning and operations.

- **Marketing a corporate mission rather than merely product claims**

An organisation's mission contributes to the organisation only if it is integrated into every function of the organisation. A mission programme has to be focused for the organisation to develop a conspicuous presence rather than a fragmented one (Ehlers 2002:178).

- **Using zero-based planning rather than altering last year's plan**

The process of planning an integrated marketing campaign starts with a SWOT analysis, taking into consideration all the brand-relevant internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats. The marketing communication function then effectively prioritises and addresses the findings. Zero-based planning means that all communication objectives and strategies must be justified in terms of what needs to be done to better manage relationships, not just adjusting last year's programmes.

2.4.1.3 Drivers relating to corporate infrastructure

These drivers relate to business and marketing management. The drivers of cross-functional management relate to business management, whereas core competencies, data-driven and integrated agency relate to marketing management.

- **Using a cross-functional management process rather than departmental planning and monitoring**

Internal groups must interact more frequently to ensure integration through the sharing of expertise and customer information so as to enhance consistency. Organisationally, integration is about relating proficiency and sharing information (Aakar & Biel 1993:1). A cross-functional management process provides a link to specialist departments and functions, in this way eliminating their isolation but maintaining their specialisation.

- **Creating core competencies rather than merely communication specialisation and expertise**

All marketing communication professionals should have a basic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of major marketing communication functions. According to Ehlers (2002:179) the strengths and weaknesses should be evaluated objectively and applied in a combination that will maximise the cost-effectiveness of each function. Experts are needed in the organisation to produce materials, but communication generalists are needed to plan and manage an integrated communication programme.

- **Using an integrated agency, rather than a traditional, full-service agency**

A communication management agency takes responsibility for co-ordinating a brand's total communication programme. It handles the planning and routine executions internally, but when communication expertise is necessary, it has relationships with other specialist agencies that can offer this expertise. The integrated agency will monitor the work of these specialised agencies and ensure that they remain focused on the communication strategy and implement this strategy at the required level of quality (Duncan & Moriarty 1997:19).

- **Building and managing databases to retain customers rather than acquiring new customers**

According to Duncan and Moriarty (1997:19) information is an integral part of integration. How customer and other stakeholder data are collected, organised and shared determines whether or not an organisation has a record of its stakeholders' transactions and interactions. Without a programme of building and using databases, it is difficult for organisation to establish personalised communication (Duncan 2001:62).

Duncan and Moriarty's (1997) model of integration with its ten strategic drivers of brand value (relationship building, stakeholder focus, strategic consistency, interactivity, market mission, zero-based planning, cross-functionality, core competencies, data-driven and integrated agency) offers significant benefits, a valuable conceptual framework and a feasible set of operational criteria, but the model's primary focus is on marketing and building the brand process externally. There is no focus on employee communication.

However, the model recognises that every department and function in an organisation has a communication dimension, and that all messages must be aligned with the corporate brand of the organisation. Everything an organisation communicates sends a brand message to internal and external stakeholders. Therefore, the various tools have to work together to present an integrated brand identity. Communication messages delivered through the spectrum of promotional tools must be co-ordinated to present a consistent brand message to stakeholders. In other words, integrating the marketing communication is futile if the other actions of the organisation send contradictory, more powerful messages.

In addition, databases were identified as being a central force in the integration process. According to Duncan and Moriarty's (1997) model, databases can be used to build effective relations with the different stakeholders. Information can be stored in the databases and used for more effective planning. Thus the Web can also contribute to compiling databases to conduct better two-way relationships with stakeholders.

2.4.2 Van Riel's (1995) model of organising and co-ordinating the communication process

All communication efforts must be fully co-ordinated to achieve organisational objectives. Van Riel (1995:162) proposes a framework for organisations to stimulate co-operation among all the relevant communication functions by defining the baseline of corporate communication.

The following tools are identified by van Riel (1995) to help the co-ordination of communication, namely: common starting points, common operational systems and co-operative structures for decision-making in communication.

2.4.2.1 Common starting points

Van Riel (1995:162) states that common starting points are considered central values that function as the basis for undertaking any kind of communication envisaged by an organisation. Van Riel (2001:301) adds that establishing common starting points is particularly useful in creating clear priorities (e.g. to facilitate an eventual control and evaluation of the total communication policy). He comments that a successful balance of communication between the corporate and the Business Unit on the one hand and between Business Units among themselves on the other, does not occur by adhering strictly to the common starting points. Rather, this balance is achieved by adapting the common starting points on which the various company divisions wish to base the starting points of their own communication policy.

Van Riel (2001:301) furthermore points out that the degree to which an organisation wants to co-ordinate the content of its key messages (content co-ordination) has a strong impact on the type of corporate communication policy the organisation constructs. He states that corporate communications can be uniform, varied or endorsed. Also important is the extent to which one wishes to reveal parent visibility, or the parent behind the brand, by using the company name or its house style.

Even though the organisation uses differentiated communication, the common starting points help all divisions/subsidiaries to start at the same level. Therefore, representatives from various communication functions should jointly develop the “common starting points”.

2.4.2.2 Common operational systems

Van Riel (1995:163) asserts that it is accepted practice to introduce operational systems in management fields, such as techniques for financial reporting and, to a lesser extent, the application of planning techniques in functional management areas such as marketing and human resources. He claims that communication specialists have more or less generally accepted protocols for setting up campaigns.

Barker and Angelopulo (2006:53) argue that operational systems are specifications for the implementation of communication projects and that these systems may highlight any areas of a communication project, including those that deal with integration. Usually uniformity is introduced into communication operational systems by applying explicit directives, such as those located in a house-style manual or those associated with routines. A house-style manual enables organisational members to control parent visibility in uniform ways, whereas routines provide consistency through on-the-job training and education. A more sophisticated means of making protocols explicit is to introduce a computerised decision support system for vital communication decisions.

These systems are already available in marketing (for instance, Marketing Decision Support Systems) and in marketing communication. Communication Decision Support Systems have recently become available for media planning, advertising strategy and corporate communication (Van Riel 2001:303).

2.4.2.3 Co-ordination of decision-making in communication

Van Riel (1995:163) identifies three types of co-ordinating groups, namely: one person, a steering committee and ad hoc meetings.

- ***One person***

This refers to decisions co-ordinated by one person, solely in charge of all communication departments. This is a consolidation of the communication function in one person. This structure initiates the process of centralisation, which can then lead to the integration of the organisation's communication activities. This centralised approach, with the establishment of a communication controller, assumes that the existing organisation will not change (Sirgy 1998:136).

- ***Steering committee***

This refers to co-ordination by a steering committee in which representatives of all communication departments participate. In this subsection, communication integration could be implemented through the work of a steering committee which oversees communication as a whole, or which more specifically oversees communication integration. This means that communication professionals will operate effectively when they are made up of tightly coupled, interlocking groups of people across departments.

- ***Ad hoc meetings***

This is an ad hoc committee or temporary committee usually formed to make recommendations on a specific issue. In this subsection, several communication managers are grouped together in one location and are compelled to interact frequently, both privately and professionally. According to Barker and Angelopulo (2006:55), communication integration could be managed through a process of ad hoc meetings which address communication planning, co-ordination, implementation and evaluation.

The authors believe these meetings should include individuals who oversee integration and the people responsible for the selected elements of the communication mix.

Van Riel's (1995) model strongly advocates that integrated communication is and should be a cross-functional process involving all key business activities and taking all the stakeholders into account. The intent is to develop a communication plan in which the communication disciplines work together as an integrated whole, to achieve maximum communications impact and deliver a consistent brand identity. The aim is to achieve greater consistency and synergy among all programme elements. Accordingly, all communication functions in an organisation should be integrated and function as an overall, centralised communication department, as opposed to a communication department which may promote turf battles between the various communication functions. Therefore, having a common planning process helps ensure a common language, greater consistency and easier comparability of plans.

Typically, a small number of people at the centre have the authority to take decisions which affect the whole organisation. The emphasis is on developing overall communication policies and practices and delivering “one sight, one sound” through communication. Companies therefore ought to develop a holistic and integrated communications mindset.

2. 4.3 Ehlers’s (2002) model for structuring integrated communication

Ehlers (2002:339) proposes a framework for structuring integrated communication in South African organisations. In her model, the stakeholders of an organisation should be the starting point. She regards the employees of an organisation as one of the stakeholder groups and believes that the employees should form part of the various functions in an organisation.

The organisation does not function in isolation and employees influence its relationships with other stakeholders. According to Ehlers's (2002) model, employees should be considered as part of the stakeholder orientation because employees are able to influence interactions with other stakeholders.

She observes that all stakeholders are interdependent in that their action or inaction has consequences for other stakeholders; hence it is likely that changes in one group of stakeholders will elicit changes in others. Taking this into consideration, the integrated communication approach builds on this interdependence, by synchronising communication activities with the total web of stakeholders.

Ehlers (2002:339) also believes that genuine integration is possible only when cross-functional relations exist between the different parts of the organisation. The author argues that by using a team to integrate communication, layers are reduced and flexibility is ensured. This is supported by Duncan (2001:90), who strongly proposes cross-functionality of processes as a prerequisite in the organisation. Duncan (2001) argues that cross-functionality is essential so that all the departments in the organisation are able to co-operate with one another in the planning and monitoring of relationships with stakeholders and the brand.

Ehlers (2002:339) states that an “integrator” or team of “integrators”, which has a total stakeholder focus, should be responsible for co-ordinating communication in the organisation. The author recommends that integrated communication should be part of the organisation's strategic planning process and those driving the integration should be multi-skilled so that they can contribute effectively to that process.

Ehlers (2002:340) further identifies databases as a central force in the integration process. When centrally kept, information collected from research and other sources can be stored and used by all concerned for the effective planning and integration of communication in an organisation.

It is therefore imperative for the organisation to have a strong database-driven strategy in order to ensure that learning takes place regarding the customers and the stakeholders.

This model places more emphasis on other stakeholders and not just on the customers. This means that customers and other stakeholders should be integrated into the total operations of the organisation. In other words, they need to give input into how the organisation operates. Duncan (2001:23) declares that such input will ensure a more customer-focused organisation. Databases were identified as being a central force in the integration process. In managing communications with all relevant stakeholder groups, the use of databases becomes important. Information on the various stakeholders should be stored in the databases to aid in the planning and integration of communication in an organisation. It is therefore imperative for the organisation to have a strong database-driven strategy to ensure that learning takes place regarding the organisation's customers and stakeholders.

Emphasis is also placed on the whole organisation's seeing integrated communications as a central element in the management process. The principles of wholeness and interdependence are therefore important in integrated communication because the interdependence of the system's parts is what makes the process work. This means that organisations should be tightly coupled internally and that everything should be related to everything else.

In the next section Gayeski and Woodward's (1996:2) idea of the renaissance communicator is discussed.

2.4.4 The renaissance communicator

Gayeski and Woodward's (1996:2) idea of the renaissance communicator is based on the notion that, as organisations and environments change, there is a definite need for an alternative approach to communication in order to move towards the strategic management of the organisation. These authors state that a strategic approach to communication is required for the renaissance communicator. They furthermore state that it is not only about the execution and implementation of strategies of the organisation, but also about understanding the business issues that the organisation faces.

The renaissance communicator must be part of top management in order to be up to date with business issues so as to understand them properly. Constant interaction with the CEO is therefore a natural endeavour for the renaissance communicator (Gayeski & Woodward 1996:2)

The idea of the renaissance communicator in this model is further based on Hunter's (1997:185) vision that the various specialised fields of communication and marketing need to work together in selecting the tools that promise the highest degree of effectiveness for synergies to be created so that the total communication effect can be greater than the sum of its parts. The following discussion emphasises the five prerequisites pivotal to the functioning of the renaissance communicator:

- **Sufficient budget to ensure the renaissance communicator's effectiveness**

The first prerequisite for the functioning of the renaissance communicator is that integration at the various levels in the implementation model for the management of strategic integrated communication requires a sufficient budget to ensure effectiveness. However, it is argued that if the renaissance communicator is part of the dominant coalition of the organisation and if CEO/top management integration takes place, the budget will be allocated according to the perceived importance of communication in the organisation.

- **Renaissance communicator should have knowledge and comprehension of core competencies**

The second prerequisite for the functioning of the renaissance communicator is that he/she should have exceptional knowledge and comprehension of core competencies on three levels. Firstly, the incumbent should know the brand or company core competencies and then make sure his/her work supports these.

Duncan and Moriarty (1997:192) argue that the corporation's core competencies are what give it its competitive edge. Therefore, if the renaissance communicators are doing their jobs, they are continually ensuring the core competencies are properly packaged and interpreted for the stakeholders.

An important element of the corporate core competency should be the organisation's mission as part of the long-term strategic organisational plan. This should help determine how the core competencies are packaged and presented. It should therefore be the priority of the renaissance communicator to integrate these competencies and keep them as the foundation for the organisation's relationships with stakeholders.

The second level of core competency is the understanding of how the company functions. It is important to be involved with, and interested in, the skills and techniques in other areas of the organisation. This enables the renaissance communicators to network and position themselves and their programmes internally.

The third level is having a core competency in strategic integrated communication and managing stakeholder and brand relationships. Therefore, the organisational communicator should undoubtedly have an understanding and knowledge of the core organisational competencies in order to align the communication objectives with those of the organisation as a whole. Brand (1997:28) contends that the concept of multi-skilling, continuous competency enhancement and diverse career changes may bring about more flexible and viable business decisions.

- **Strategic consistency in all organisational efforts ultimately ensures unity of effort**

The third prerequisite for the functioning of the renaissance communicator is to ensure that strategic consistency is inherent in all efforts in the organisation to ensure ultimate "unity of effort".

According to Duncan and Everett (1993:30) strategic consistency is the co-ordination of all the messages that create or cue brand messages, positions and reputations in the minds of the customers and other stakeholders. Therefore strategic consistency not only implies consistency in terms of the “one-voice, one-look” approach, but also truly integrates everything the organisation does and does not do. Consistency begins with brand positioning, which is based on core values, selling promises and distinctive features. All the messages must complement and reinforce this position.

- **Cross-functional planning should be inherent**

The fourth prerequisite for the functioning of the renaissance communicator is that cross-functional planning has to be inherent in his/her functioning. This implies that all of the organisation’s major departments that affect its stakeholders must have a means of working collectively in the planning and monitoring of brand relationships.

Furthermore, a cross-functional process integrates managers from different departments in order to plan and manage the messages an organisation sends to and receives from stakeholders. Duncan (2001:90) states that the cross-functionality of processes in the organisation is a prerequisite for enabling all the departments in the organisation to co-operate with one another in the planning and monitoring of relationships with stakeholders and the brand.

- **Communication and marketing planning should be zero based**

The final issue central to the functioning of the renaissance communicator is that planning in this function should be zero based. According to Duncan and Moriarty (1997:148), zero-based communication planning is the idea that communication tools are used on the basis of an assessment of what needs to be done now, and not based on the previous year’s budget allocation.

This also links up with the idea that the organisation should be following a learning-organisation approach, in that the communication tools are used on the basis of what the organisation learns from the changing environment and the stakeholders.

The core of the organisational integration area, according to Gayeski and Woodward's (1996) model, is the renaissance communicator could be the key to the implementation of strategic integrated communication. The renaissance communicator contributes to the organisation's success through the alignment of communication objectives with the strategic intent of the organisation, thereby ensuring unity of effort in all organisational efforts through strategic consistency.

Employees in the organisation form part of different expert areas in their organisation. True integration is only possible if cross-functional relations exist among the various experts in an organisation. A multi-skilled integrator with a total stakeholder focus is needed to co-ordinate efforts. An integrator or team of integrators could be responsible for the co-ordination. Integrated communicators therefore need to be multi-skilled so that they can contribute effectively to the strategic planning of an organisation.

2.5 DEVELOPING AN INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

Several frameworks have been proposed in the literature for ways of measuring integrated communication in an organisation. According to Barker and Angelopulo (2005:108), although significant benefits are offered by the theoretical framework of Ehlers (2002) and Van Riel's (1995) model of organising and co-ordinating the communication process, as well as Gayeski and Wood's (1996) framework of the renaissance communicator, together with Duncan and Moriarty's (1997) ten strategic drivers of brand value, the framework's primary focus is on marketing and building the brand externally. All the above authors contend that the main limitation of these frameworks is that there is little focus on the role of employees.

By contrast, Barker and Angelopulo (2006:367) believe that the basic principles and concepts contained in these models could provide the criteria for measuring the integration of organisational communication. Du Plessis and Schoonraad (2006), cited in Barker and Angelopulo (2006:381-387) state that for communication integration to occur in an organisation, much of the effort towards achieving this integration should be aimed at the following (see also Chapter 3):

- Consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation
- Co-ordination of communication efforts and actions
- Communication alignment with the strategic focus of the organisation
- Stakeholder orientation and differentiation
- Sharing of information and free flow of information
- Infrastructure for integration

In the present study, a new measurement instrument for integrated communication, as identified by Du Plessis and Schoonraad (2006) cited in Barker and Angelopulo (2006:380), was applied in the context of Eskom so as to meet the objective of this study, namely to evaluate the extent of integrated communication within the organisation. It is the first time that the measurement instrument has been applied in the organisation. The above-mentioned measurement instrument for determining whether integration is realised and effective is discussed below:

2.5.1 Stakeholder orientation and differentiation

The literature shows that stakeholders ought to be integrated into the total operations of the organisation. Therefore, communication managers have to focus on the stakeholder as the starting point for the integration of communication, and work together to ensure a true stakeholder orientation. Duncan and Moriarty (1997:25) believe that, in order for integrated communication messages to have maximum impact, an organisation must integrate the following: employees, customers and other stakeholders.

Kitchen and Schultz (2000:7) state that the 21st century marketplace is symbolised by stakeholder integration, which is built around a two-way symmetrical approach to interactivity and that this century is therefore regarded as the stakeholder age. The most obvious characteristic of this global interactive marketplace is that stakeholders will have greater access to information than in any previous phase. This means that all organisations will, according to Kitchen and Schultz (2000:7), have to build real relationships with real stakeholders.

The stakeholder theory, pioneered by Freeman (1984:46), suggests that an organisation is characterised by its relationship with various groups and individuals, including employees, customers, suppliers, governments and members of the communities. This means that fostering good company-stakeholder relationships is a great way to nurture a positive corporate reputation. Consequently, communication strategies designed to engage employees should increasingly acknowledge and account for employees' integrated identity as stakeholders.

2.5.2 Communication alignment with the strategic focus of the organisation

It is important for the strategic communication plan to be aligned with the management strategy of the organisation. The literature shows that organisations forge alignment in various ways – by breaking down silos, integrating systems and co-ordinating business unit activities to achieve objectives. Accordingly, aligning the communication plan with business objectives is also important. Duncan and Moriarty (1997:26) reason that “an organisation that has a real mission based on a set of corporate values can maximize the impact of the mission by integrating it into everything it does”. Fineman (1993:13) notes that organisations are sites where individuals make meaning for themselves and have their meaning shaped. In essence, this occurs when individuals have internalised the organisational values and beliefs and can act instinctively in accordance with these values.

According to Labovitz and Rosansky (1997: xi), the concept of communication alignment is based on how an organisation deals with customers, strategy, people and processes as well as the relationship between them. Strategic business alignment means that all employees understand, buy into and are able to enact their organisations' strategic objectives (Gagnon & Michael 2003:25). This implies that it is also essential to bring to the attention of all the organisation's employees the mission statement, the corporate values and the organisational culture.

Duncan and Moriarty (1997:26) argue that an organisation which has a real mission based on a set of corporate values can maximise the impact of the mission by integrating it into everything it does. For Duncan (2001:24), integrating the mission into the organisation's business operations serves as a call to unity and provides a common, consistent focus for all employees. It can therefore be argued that the communication function in an organisation should also be aligned with the organisation's mission, which is based on the strategic intent of the organisation. Gagnon and Michael (2003:25) state that creating this alignment is vital for organisations, as companies depend on their employees for achieving the company's strategic objectives. Indeed, research has shown that if employees show a supportive attitude to the company's strategic objectives, they are more likely to make decisions that are consistent with the objectives. Hence, engendering employee alignment is essential for the functioning of organisations.

Hynes (2005:21) believes that the areas of business management, marketing management and communication should be seen as equal partners in contributing to the bottom line of the organisation. To meet these challenges, communicators and senior management have to work together to establish proactive, well-defined communication strategies that engage and align employees with the organisation's business goals.

2.5.3 Consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation

Brand strategists and academics reason that the various tools have to work together to present an integrated brand identity. This means that the communication messages delivered through the spectrum of promotional tools should be co-ordinated to present a consistent brand message to stakeholders. Duncan (2001:219) proposes that a brand has to have one “big creative idea” and then ensure that it is integrated into all the integrated communication messages. He states that “the big creative idea” provides a single focus to all communication efforts, gives direction to message design and message deliveries, and must be reflected in the execution of all the messages.

According to Van Riel (1992:16), the final picture created in the recipient’s mind should be consistent, not be marred by internal contradictions. Kitchen and Schultz (2000:67) state that for an organisation to consider true integrated communication, it should create global processes for the internal and external standardisation of operating, producing, transporting and communicating. For these authors, the reason for the standardisation is to ensure the consistency and coherence of all messages which go to a number of audiences.

Duncan and Moriarty (1997:70) also support the idea of developing strategic consistency in the messages of the organisation and members of the organisation. For them, strategic consistency is the co-ordination of all types of messages which create or cue brand images, positions and reputations in the minds of customers and other stakeholders. This implies that the same internal brand message is communicated at all times, through every employee contact point, including initial recruitment, through training, when compensated and incentivised, to information sharing and two-way communication channels. Ehlers (2002:148) states that although a full array of marketing communication is not required for all market challenges, the visual and verbal consistency might prove an eminent stage in developing internal co-operation among the various specialised communication disciplines.

The value of integrated communication also resides in the consistent and mutual understanding it creates among employees in relation to all aspects and processes of the organisation, thereby assisting the organisation to internalise the principles of shared purpose, commitment and collaboration within the organisation. It can then be argued that the positive influence of consistency is that it provides integration and co-ordination. Measures should therefore be taken to ensure strategic consistency in the implementation of integrated communication.

2. 5.4 Coordination of communication efforts and actions

The processes of brand contact management cannot be confined to a specific department in an organisation. Every department and function in a company has a communication dimension and will influence and shape stakeholders' impression of the brand. In other words, the process of integrated brand contact management must be applied as a cross-functional goal. Schultz and Schultz (2004:3) state that the best mechanism for making transitions in marketing and communication is the integration of all efforts, that is, the development of processes, systems and co-ordination. In short, this refers to the integration of all forms of communication both inside and outside the organisation, including all the relevant stakeholders. As Aberg (1990:17) observes, all communication activities in the organisation must be integrated in order to support the achievement of the organisation's aims and goals.

Van Riel (1992:16) examines co-ordination from two main angles, namely integrated marketing communication and co-ordination in organisational communication. Describing integrated marketing communication, van Riel (1992) talks about "the integration of content and form of all commercial messages of a company activity". Two approaches are described by van Riel (1992:17) regarding co-ordination in organisational communication. The first is connecting the organisation's internal and external policies by introducing a common symbolism. This is similar to the unification of corporate symbolism found in the traditional house-style manual.

Another approach is “the integration and adjustment between the different forms of communication generated by the organisation as a whole”.

Keegan, Moriarty and Duncan (1992:631) state that integrated communication is the strategic co-ordination of all messages (internally and externally) to create dialogue between the customer and the organisation, which will attitudinally and behaviourally move the customer towards brand loyalty. This definition highlights the use of strategic co-ordination, which implies synergy through the co-ordination of complementary messages. The intent is to develop a communications plan in which the communication disciplines work together as an integrated whole, to achieve maximum communication impact and deliver a consistent brand identity.

2. 5.5 Infrastructures for integration

The way in which an organisation is structured can create functional divisions, silos and departmentalisation. Therefore, an organisation's communication infrastructure plays a critical role in how communication takes place, as it provides the basic framework within which communication occurs. For example, in a technologically advanced organisation, the way in which communication is shared is completely different from the way in which communication is shared in a non-technologically-driven organisation (Goldhaber 1993:73).

Gayeski (2000:31) further identifies infrastructure as an aspect of integrated communication – who may easily and directly communicate with whom, and which paths and channels can be used. Therefore, in addition to the actual communication infrastructure that is provided, it is also necessary to consider whether the organisation utilises the most appropriate medium for the transmission of information throughout the organisation (Goldhaber 1993:67). Essentially, one can argue that without an effective communication infrastructure, communication cannot be effective. Discussed below are two infrastructural organisational drivers, namely cross-functional management and data-driven communication:

- Cross-functional management – is the way in which an organisation is structured and can create functional divisions, silos and departmentalisation. Many organisations now realise that creating cross-functional teams, rather than working in isolated silos, allows for enhanced internal performance, which ultimately benefits service delivery. Edmondson (2003:1419) shows that cross-departmental communication facilitates inter-departmental co-operation regarding the implementation of an organisation's strategy, and therefore enhances strategic business alignment. Dimancescu (1994:232) asserts that organisational synergy is ultimately created through the cross-functional integration of information. Points of brand contact evidently flow across functional lines.

To create an integrated brand identity, all points of contact must, irrespective of function or department, communicate a focused positioning of the brand. Duncan (2001:90) proposes the cross-functionality of processes in the organisation as prerequisite for integrated brand identity. He argues that cross-functionality is essential so that all the departments in the organisation are able to co-operate with each other in the planning and monitoring of relationships with stakeholders and the brand.

Duncan and Moriarty (1997:169) observe that a cross-functional process integrates managers from different departments and agencies, who are working on the same brand in order to plan and manage the messages an organisation sends to and receives from customers and other stakeholders. Dimancescu (1994:232) asserts that organisational synergy is ultimately created through the cross-functional integration of information. The implementation of a cross-functional management process demands, however, that companies should make significant changes to how they are organised and to what they consider to be a corporate priority.

- Data-driven communication – refers to the extent to which employee information and behaviour are captured and can be utilised as a strategic tool to enhance internal communication in an organisation. This can be achieved by integrating databases that track and facilitate the cross-referencing of information from contacts with elected officials, shareholders, employees active in their organisations, et cetera.

Duncan and Caywood (1996:33) argue strongly for such databases which represent not only marketing databases but also and preferably stakeholder databases, which store information about an organisation's stakeholder groups. Emphasis is placed on the aim that the whole organisation should regard integrated communications as a central element in the management process.

Duncan and Moriarty (1997:19) maintain that information is a fundamental part of integration. They contend that the way that employee data are collected, organised and shared determines the extent to which an organisation takes advantage of internal communication on multiple fronts. Steyn and Puth (2000:18) argue that communication is progressively gaining the standing of a central management function in an organisation's business management. Thus, organisations should increasingly make use of database marketing with customer-driven practices, leading to an integration of all its communication functions.

One can therefore argue that in managing communications with all relevant stakeholder groups, the use of databases for communication is becoming increasingly important. Organisations should use the full potential of the Web to enable their integrative communication efforts. Effective management and monitoring of the Web are necessary to ensure that it becomes a competitive tool and not simply a communication medium.

2.5.6 Information sharing and free flow of information

The communication process is incomplete if it flows only one way. This means that organisations should ensure that their communications invite a response, whether formal or informal. Duncan and Moriarty (1997:5) propose that information sharing can strengthen brand relationships and help integrate organisation strategies. According to Nieuwmeijer and Hall (1992:6), communication focuses strongly on the whole concept of sharing and on the prerequisite that at least two people are involved in this process. This means that communication requires dialogue, that is, there can only be communication if there is two-way communication. Within the confines of organisational communication as defined by Barker and Du Plessis (2002:4), the necessity of communication, information sharing and participation is a critical concept. Denton and Vloeberghs (2003:88) contend that the emphasis should be on effective and co-ordinated teams rather than on a top-down information process. This promotes greater information-sharing and breaks down the myth that the best ideas only come from the top.

By contrast, communication “flow” refers to the amount of information disseminated through the different channels in the organisation. Studies have shown that in successful organisations, structures are viewed as being more permeable and flexible. This allows for the free flow of information and ideas from one part of the organisation to another. According to Mersham and Skinner (2001:53), for organisations to function effectively, information must flow freely and unrestrictedly upward, downward and laterally. Likert’s Participative Management approach suggests that upward, downward and lateral communication flows are needed for maximum organisational efficiency (Cummings, Long & Lewis 1987:77). For example, when employees perceive as adequate the flow (who communicates how much information), content (what is communicated) and climate (how it is communicated) of employee communication, they will be more likely to have favourable attitudes to the organisation’s strategic initiatives. This in turn may result in a greater degree of willingness to behave in accordance with the organisation’s initiatives.

The flow of communication between departments also influences attitudes regarding strategic issues, but again its influence is less important than that of management communication.

One can therefore argue that the communication-measuring instrument outlined in this study should not be regarded as an end in itself, but as a viable guideline for the type of organisation concerned. However, it can also be argued that knowledge of these instruments is critical to enable the organisations to recognise and address any shortcomings related to communication, with the purpose of improving communication. It is evident in the present study that through these instruments, issues related to whether communication goals and objectives are aligned with the organisation's vision, mission and overall objectives and whether departmental interaction and collaboration are effective in achieving shared goals and objectives could be determined. It is for this reason that the measuring instrument, as highlighted by Du Plessis and Schoonraad (cited in Barker and Angelopulo, 2006:381) could be beneficial to this study as it concerns improving the effectiveness and efficiency of communication in the organisation.

2.6 SUMMARY

The underlying principle arising from this chapter is that the marketplaces of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries or the "customer or stakeholder centuries" are based on how organisations manage their brand and stakeholder relationships which in turn determine their brand equity. Physical assets in this century are no longer the only elements that matter, but rather intangibles such as relationships and communication. What is needed in this twenty-first century marketplace is a business management model which manages the brand relationship with stakeholders driving the brand equity. This business management model is integrated communication.

Ehlers (2002:339), Duncan (2001:14) and Niemann and Crystal (2002:14) for example, strongly advocate that integrated communication is and must be a cross-functional process involving all key business activities and taking all the stakeholders into account. This shows how integrated communication has moved from the tactical activity practised by the historical communication professional, to a more strategic, managerial, customer-driven activity in the current marketplace.

Various measuring instruments for communication integration were developed. The four concepts of communication integration by: Duncan and Moriarty's (1997) ten strategic drivers, Van Riel (1995's model of organising and co-ordinating the communication process, Ehlers' (2002) theoretical framework and Gayeski and Wood's (1996) framework of the renaissance communicator – are briefly discussed, with the intent to measure integrated communication within an organisation.

The chapter concludes with an explanation of the measurement instrument used for evaluating integrated communication in Eskom. Elements of the existing measurement instrument proposed by Barker and Angelopulo (2006) are used to determine the extent of integrated communication in Eskom. The authors developed an instrument consisting of six dimensions, which include consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation, co-ordination of communication efforts and actions, communication alignment with the strategic focus, stakeholder orientation and differentiation, sharing of information and the free flow of information and infrastructure for integration.

In applying the above to the communication function in the organisation, it seems that communication is not limited to managing relationships with customers, as is the case with marketing management, but should be used for planning and monitoring relationships with all stakeholder groups. In the alignment of communication management, organisations need a new role for communication in this changed milieu.

In this chapter, it is argued that integrated communication is the new role of communication in such a changed environment, as communication creates and maintains the relationships with stakeholders that are driven by the strategic intent of the organisation.

It can be concluded that merely placing greater emphasis on traditional approaches to promotional practices is no longer an efficient way to build brands. It is also clear that future organisations should structure themselves to gain an advantage in the new competitive landscape.

They will have to revise standard management thinking and rethink strategic actions as well as organisation structure.

CHAPTER 3: OPERATIONALISATION OF THE MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Working in “silos” has become a buzzword in business today. One hears people complaining all the time about lack of communication between divisions within the same organisation. There has been an overwhelming focus on one-way, downward communication, with the minimum sharing of information across groups and the insulation and isolation of senior levels.

In view of this, organisations need to evaluate the way in which their communications function is organised and structured and focus on a more integrated approach that will ensure maximum effectiveness. Studies show that communication integration involves the sharing of information within an organisation in a timely manner. It also means effective working relationships across divisions so that response and mitigation steps are integrated across the business.

In this chapter, the measurement instrument used to apply the integration of internal communication at Eskom is explained. The measurement instrument includes the six areas of integration as proposed by Du Plessis and Schoonraad in Barker and Angelopulo (2006:381). These are:

- Internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation.
- Communication alignment with strategic focus of the organisation.
- Consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation.
- Coordination of communication efforts and action.
- Infrastructure for integration.
- Sharing of information and free flow of information.

It should be noted that it was the first time that the measurement instrument was applied to measure communication integration. Furthermore, this chapter explains the formal organisational structure of Eskom as well as the flow of its communication and the various channels and the media used.

3.2 THE MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT OF THIS STUDY

Operationalisation is the process of defining concepts so that they are measurable (Sekaran 2003:153); that is, operationally defining a concept allows the researcher to describe observable characteristics in terms of specific testing criteria or operations.

In this chapter, there is a discussion of the online self-administered questionnaire, focus group interviews, and content analysis that were used to obtain the necessary information in order for the researcher to be able to measure the six areas of integration at Eskom as proposed by Du Plessis and Schoonraad in Barker and Angelopulo (2006) (see chapter 6). These research methods are applied in Chapter 5. A content analysis was done on back issues of employee publications, corporate identity and the Eskom website to get a sense of earlier communication. (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3) A brief discussion of the six areas of communication integration included in the measurement instrument is outlined below:

3.2.1 Internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation

This approach is concerned with the identification and managerial response to groups and individuals who can affect and are affected by the organisation's decisions. According to Freeman (1984:46), a stakeholder in an organisation is (by definition) any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives. Stakeholders may be categorised as internal and external stakeholders.

The stakeholder theory, pioneered by Freeman (1984), suggests that an organisation is characterised by its relationship with various groups and individuals, including employees, customers, suppliers, governments, and members of the community. Stakeholders are of importance to any organisation in that they may obstruct the organisation in reaching its goals and targets the way it has in mind to do. Thus, a group qualifies as a stakeholder if it has a legitimate interest in aspects of the organisation's activities and performance. From a managerial perspective, the stakeholder theory suggests that the various groups can and should have a direct influence on managerial and strategic decision-making (Jones 1995:404). The approach is valuable not only in the context of strategic management, but also in terms of communication. Since integrated communication is a strategic element of business management, it can be argued that a stakeholder orientation and differentiation to strategic management in the organisational context are imperative.

Duncan and Moriarty (1997:57) argue that brand support depends on stakeholder interactions and the relationships built up with these stakeholders. Against this background, one may argue that employees need to have input on how the organisation operates. Duncan (2001:23) declares that such input will ensure a more customer-focused organisation. McKenna (1995:92) agrees and adds that customers should be integrated into the organisation's activities such as product planning.

Leisen and Sautter (1999:318) argue that destination management should proactively consider the strategic orientations of all stakeholder groups before proceeding with strategic decision-making. As congruency across stakeholder orientation increases, so does the likelihood of collaboration and compromise.

The internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation will be measured via the online self-administered questionnaire to be completed by communication managers and professionals and focus group discussion with human resources and project managers.

Communication managers and communication professionals will be asked what empirical work has been done on the effect of stakeholder management and whether the organisation has mechanisms in place to segment its internal communication to tailor its messages. The answer to these questions will establish whether:

- Eskom has developed direct channels of ongoing dialogue with its key stakeholders.
- Eskom management interacts regularly with all stakeholder groups.
- There are feedback mechanisms that the organisation uses and that feedback from stakeholders is maximised.
- Contact points with stakeholders are optimised.
- Current stakeholders are being nurtured.

A focus group discussion with human resources and project managers will determine whether Eskom target audiences are defined clearly and in more detail and that core communication strategy is tailored for different stakeholder groups. A focus group discussion will also shed light on whether employees attend regular forums or briefings to ask questions and get updates.

3.2.2 Communication alignment with strategic focus of the organisation

Strategic communication is the practice of linking communication to organisational business objectives. Communication strategy describes how communication helps achieve those objectives.

However, it is not unusual for those involved in the planning process to fall into the trap of just thinking about the communication strategy in isolation. It is, therefore, vital that any communication plan be aligned to the business strategy and to specific business goals and objectives.

Alignment refers to the sharing of a common vision and common understanding of corporate goals and methods. Stakeholders, particularly employees, want to know where their organisation is headed, and they want to know how their behaviour and roles can contribute towards achieving that vision. To this end, stimulating the alignment between employees and an organisation's strategic initiatives has become increasingly important in recent years. One way of facilitating alignment is through high-quality employee communication. Creating this alignment is vital for organisations, as companies depend on their employees for the achievement of their strategic objectives. For example, if employees are successfully informed of the organisation's mission, strategic objectives, and the needs of its customers, both internal and external, they should become more focused on the satisfaction of those needs and, hence, contribute significantly to organisational effectiveness.

Research has shown that if employees show a supportive attitude towards the company's strategic objectives, they are more likely to make decisions that are consistent with the objectives (Gagnon & Michael 2003:25). Hence, engendering communication alignment with the strategic focus of the organisation is essential for the functioning of the organisation.

The communication alignment with the strategic focus of the organisation was measured via the online self-administered questionnaire to be completed by communication managers and focus group discussions with human resources and project managers. Communication managers will be asked, through the online self-administered questionnaire, whether Eskom uses internal communication to make sure that individual and corporate goals are in alignment and that the organisation's vision is shared by its employees. This will be done by asking whether:

- The corporate mission is incorporated into all operations.
- The organisation's brand position is strategically integrated into all brand messages.
- Clear strategic organisational objectives are communicated regularly to all staff members.
- Strategic organisational objectives are clearly related to communication objectives.
- Strategic organisational objectives are formulated in such a way that all employees can relate to them.

A focus group discussion with human resources and project managers will determine to what extent internal communication interventions assist in mobilising Eskom employees around Eskom's vision, values, and strategic priorities challenges. Through the focus group discussion, the researcher will determine whether communication is used as a tool for aligning behaviour with the goals and direction of different business units and the company as a whole. Consequently, this (in turn) will help determine whether everyone understands the organisational strategy and direction and knows how he/she can help create value.

3.2.3 Consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation

Messages should be clear and consistent (van Riel 2001:301). The messages conveyed by each of the promotional tools should be harmonised in order that audiences perceive a consistent image of a product or organisation (Fill 2001:411). Duncan and Moriarty (1997:70) agree that a lack of consistency in brand messages will create a brand identity that is "unfocused, diffused and fuzzy". For an organisation to realise true integrated communication, it should create global processes of internal and external standardisation of operating and communicating. The reason for the standardisation is to ensure consistency of all messages.

Duncan and Moriarty (1997: xv) warn that “integrating communication is futile if contrary, more powerful messages are being sent by other actions of a company”. Integration of communications activities must be achieved to develop a consistent brand identity. All brand contacts, therefore, have to be integrated to present a consistent and synergistic brand identity. The primary goal is the joint acceptance of company communication programmes and shared understanding. However, it should be noted that the integrated communication approach does not mean that individual departments/divisions should not be allowed to produce planned messages, but rather that they should conform to a central positioning strategy and core values and coordinate their activities with other departments/divisions that interact with the same stakeholders.

In this study, the consistency of messages and media will be measured via a content analysis of all planned messages and standardised visual corporate identity guidelines. Content analysis will assess all publications and standardised visual corporate identity guidelines and website planned messages published over the past 12 months. This will determine whether consistent messages are delivered and received in a consistent way by every member of the organisation. Similarly, content analysis will also establish whether written and electronic internal publications comply with branding protocol.

3.2.4 Coordination of communication efforts and action

As the environment becomes more dynamic and uncertain and organisations become more complex, coordination across departments becomes more critical, but cooperation is more difficult to achieve. According to van Riel (2001:300), coordination is not a goal itself, but a means of finding a solution to problems of efficiency and effectiveness in organisations. Communication messages that are delivered through the spectrum of promotional tools must be coordinated to present a consistent brand message to stakeholders.

The strategic integration of multiple means of marketing communications must be attained “to form a comprehensive, consistent message”. The aim is to coordinate all organisational-based messages – “those sent by the unplanned messages and planned format”.

Belch and Belch (1998:9) submit that organisations fail to recognise that the wide range of marketing and promotional tools must be coordinated not only to communicate effectively, but also to present a consistent image to target markets. Kotler (1997:23) agrees that consistency in brand identity will only be achieved if the organisation works as a coordinated force and, specifically, if the functions of marketing are integrated. Organisations, therefore, need to develop a holistic and integrated communication mindset and must acknowledge the collective effect of all marketing and promotional activities on the status and identity of the brand in the stakeholders’ mind.

The measurement of coordination will be assessed through the online self-administered questionnaire with communication managers and professionals and a focus group with human resources and project managers. The communication managers and professionals will be asked whether Eskom has already created central contact hubs into which all employees’ communications are channelled, rather than having separate departments with their own communication records. These hubs can integrate business units, but do not have to be under one department or even in one location. This will be determined by asking respondents whether:

- Cross-functional planning and monitoring exist across divisions.
- There is strategic coordination of complementary messages.
- There is the sharing of information across divisions.
- There is formal interaction between internal groups.
- There is informal contact between members of divisions.

A focus group discussion will ask human resources and project managers whether a comprehensive integrated internal communication strategy has been developed between Human Resources Division and Group Communications Department and whether an integrated business unit forum has been established at every business unit.

3.2.5 Infrastructure for integration

The communication infrastructure of an organisation plays a critical role in how communication takes place, as it provides the basic framework in which communication takes place. Most often, information sharing occurs in an ad hoc fashion, via methods that are devised anew with each interchange. However, as the volume and frequency of information sharing grow, a more permanent mechanism often becomes beneficial, one that can function repeatedly and serve a variety of purposes. This multi-use, multi-purpose mechanism is what is termed an information sharing infrastructure.

Organisationally, integration is about relating proficiency and sharing information (Aakar & Biel 1993:1). A cross-functional management process for planning and monitoring relationships provides a way to link specialty departments and functions, allowing them to maintain their specialisation, but eliminating their isolation (Duncan 2001:763).

Dependent on an organisation's level of access to technology, it could be found that in the technologically-advanced organisation, due to its greater access to technology, e-mail may be the preferred method of communication, whereas in a non-technologically-advanced organisation, where access to technology is limited, face-to-face or small group contact may be the preferred method of communication. Therefore, bearing in mind that organisations have incorporated technological change, which has impacted directly on the way in which the infrastructure of organisations is configured, it is critical for organisations to recognise this as a factor in achieving integrated communication.

In addition to the actual communication infrastructure that is provided, it is also necessary to consider whether the organisation is utilising the most appropriate medium for the transmission of information throughout the organisation (Downs 1996:29). Internal groups must interact more frequently in order to ensure integration through the sharing of expertise and customer information to enhance consistency. A cross-functional management orientation must be instilled to ensure that an integrated brand identity is communicated at every point of contact with the brand. Consistency in brand identity is achieved through the cross-functional integration of the organisation, its operations, and communication messages. Integrated communication management thus requires an approach that, as Hammer and Campy (1993:3) explain, “looks across and beyond functional departments to processes”.

The infrastructure for integration will be measured through the self-administered questionnaire and focus group discussion. Communication managers and professionals will be asked via the online self-administered questionnaire whether the organisation has a variety of robust formal communication channels that keep employees well informed about the company for which they work. Thus, the researcher will be able to understand how effective Eskom’s internal communication systems are in conveying information to various employee groups. Consequently, the researcher will be able to determine:

- What delivery methods are used for employee communications, for example, e-mail, voicemail, website, et cetera.
- Whether the communication infrastructure provides the various constituencies of an organisation such as employees with multi-source feedback processes and mechanisms.
- Whether, internally, communication supports collaboration between employees so that it is easy for them to work together.

During a focus group discussion, human resources and project managers will be asked what tools (innovative and integrated processes) there are to help the organisation to plan its messaging and to communicate effectively and more consistently. The discussion will establish whether Eskom delivers the organisation's strategic messages in a planned way through multiple organisation media channels, such as e-mail, newsletters, posters, and written correspondence.

Focus group discussion will also look at whether the organisation has assigned someone as the overall "coordinator or integrator" of organisation-wide employer branding initiatives and activities, rather than pigeon-holing them in a distinct function. Focus groups will further establish how and by whom internal communication is measured.

3.2.6 Sharing of information and free flow of information

The sharing of information has a certain binding quality (Theunissen 1998:57). As it improves the feeling of belonging and trust among employees, the sharing of information increases the communication climate within the organisation. The converse is also true – poor communication leads to ineffective sharing of information.

Effective communication is, therefore, essential for the smooth functioning of the organisation. High-performing organisations communicate effectively both 'bottom up' and 'top down' between employees and managers at all levels. The aim is to achieve active two-way communication. 'Active' communication relies on the receiver of the communication taking responsibility for his/her part in the communication process.

However still, in many organisations, communication flows through narrow channels and usually only from the top down. According to Steinberg (2007:295), communication can flow vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. Initially, greater emphasis was directed at vertical organisational communication as compared to lateral communication, but that is no longer the case. Gronstedt (2000:21) argues that the focus of vertical integration is to align “top-down communication” around a clear vision, which is evolved through a process of “bottom-up communication” and ongoing dialogue between employees of all ranks. According to Neher (1997:16), horizontal integration involves integration and alignment across business units, functions, and regions in terms of systems, processes, procedures, and communication. Vertical integration aligns communication between people working in different business units and departments (Neher 1997:16).

The evaluation of the sharing of information and free flow of information will be measured via an online self-administered questionnaire and focus group discussions. The online self-administered questionnaire was completed by communication managers and professionals to establish whether mechanisms existed to share information upward. The approach will also be used to establish whether the organisation has mechanisms to share work group and strategic information as well as whether Eskom managers encourage employees’ input. Information flow elements to look for will include:

- Whether information flows openly from the top of the organisation downward.
- Whether information flows openly to the top of the organisation.
- Whether information flows openly between work groups/departments.
- Whether information flows openly throughout the overall organisation.

A focus group discussion with human resources and project managers will shed light on whether there is established equitable employee participation in Eskom's decision-making processes. A focus group discussion will also help determine the effectiveness of the internal communication interventions/tools/channels used to communicate about different internal communication projects. Through a focus group discussion, human resources managers will establish whether:

- There is dialogue between management, trade unions, and employees.
- The unions are involved in the strategic forum and given the opportunity to influence strategic planning and help set the direction in which the organisation needs to move.
- Interaction and cooperation do not remain at Eskom management and trade union leadership level, but permeate throughout the organisation.

3.3 ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND OF ESKOM

Eskom is a separate legal entity owned by the state and financed from reserves, net financial market liabilities, and assets. The organisation was established in 1923 – under the 1922 Electricity Act. Eskom ranks among the top 10 utilities in the world in terms of generation capacity and among the top 11 by sales. Its core business is generating, transmitting, trading, and distributing electricity. Within Eskom, units of generation, transmission, and distribution are run as separate internal divisions, with a transfer pricing mechanism between each division. Eskom supplies 95% of South Africa's electricity requirements and 45% of the electricity generated on the African continent. It also owns and operates the national integrated transmission network that transmits high-voltage bulk electricity to large consumers.

Eskom's 37 840 MW nominal generating capacity is spread across 26 power stations. Most power stations are in the Mpumalanga Province, centred on Witbank, and there is one in Limpopo Province and one in the Western Cape. All the electricity generated is fed into a common national grid, which is both owned and operated by Eskom. This power is then fed into regional networks from which it is distributed by local authorities to domestic customers.

The organisation employs over 30 000 workers scattered across the country, reporting to 10 functional business groups. These employees are widely varied in terms of race, culture, and educational and literacy levels. While striving to meet its objectives, Eskom's management has to adapt to the many changes necessitated by increasing international competition and South Africa's ongoing economic, political, and social transformation. This is also the challenge faced by the communication function.

If communication is seen to be the "electricity that powers an organisation", the over 100 communication practitioners have to guide the organisation to communicate more effectively and efficiently to its stakeholders, both internally and externally and locally and internationally. In addition, senior, middle, and line management are increasingly relying on communication to provide consistent services in support of effective management communication processes.

The following are the key challenges facing Eskom today: continuity of supply – keeping the lights on, new build, financial sustainability, public confidence in Eskom, and the system. In order to meet the expected increase in electricity demand in South Africa, Eskom has entered into a major capital expansion programme. This is because the organisation is facing a very serious decline in surplus generating capacity, as some of its generating assets are ageing, while it is also facing an increase in the demand for power due to the growing economy.

3.4 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF ESKOM

All organisations are structured in such a way as to achieve organisational goals. According to Van Staden, Marx, and Erasmus-Kritzinger (2002:19), organisational structures help to make the flow of information or organisational communication more effective. Eskom was created as a centralised organisation with all decisions made at the top of the hierarchy. Before 1985, Eskom was a typically paternal, authoritarian organisation, consumed by its grand mission, which was engineering; it was technology first, finance and people afterwards. It appeared that even Eskom management suffered from a shortage of information; rumour thrived in an atmosphere of unwarranted secrecy – particularly about personal matters.

The corporation was head-office driven: most of the important decisions were taken by the Chief Executive. Delegation and accountability suffered, and management became timid. For example, if a power station manager needed to replace a typewriter, he/she was required to obtain scores of authorising signatures.

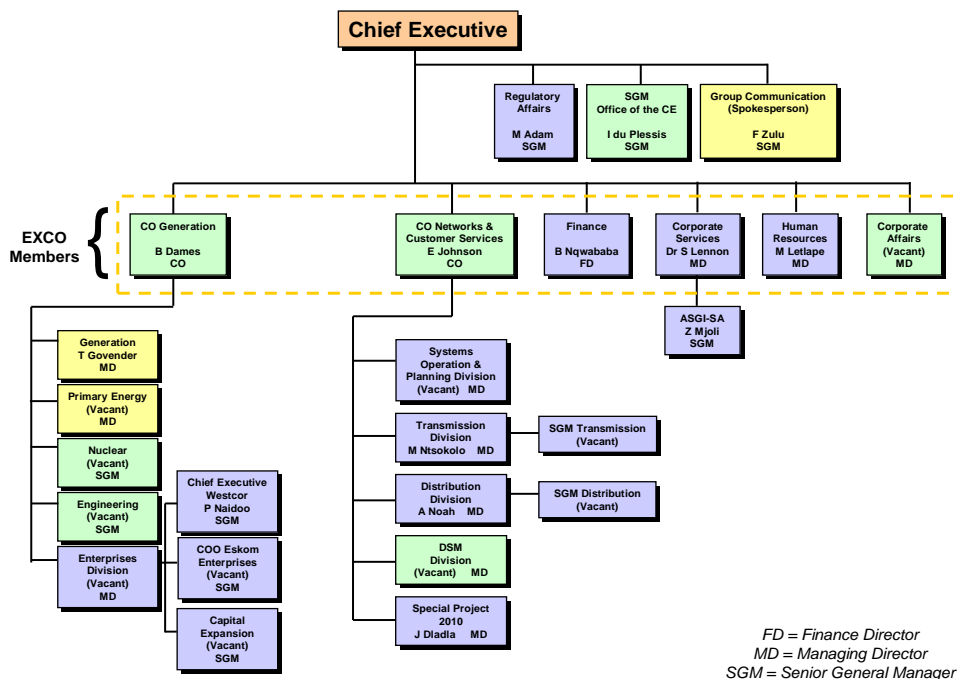
However, it was decided that such a centralised structure negatively impacted on the service delivery capabilities of the organisation. In 1985, with different people heading the organisation, Eskom was poised for change. The organisation now stood for the basic principles of good communication and tight financial control and devolved authority and responsibility by decentralising power structures. A new style became visible.

The unprecedented attempt to consult and canvass the views of employees contrasted sharply with the previous top management style of near invisibility. Decentralisation offered Eskom major developmental advantages. The organisation was divided into a dozen strategic business units.

Today, Eskom has nine Managing Directors reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The board-appointed Directors head the sections Human Resources, Transmission, Generation, Distribution, Corporate, Resources and Strategy, Eskom Enterprises, Systems and Operations and Planning, Corporate Services, Generation Primary Energy, and Finance. Another unit, also managed by a designated Director, reports directly to the CEO. All of these positions form part of the organisation's Executive Management Committee and, therefore, form the strategic decision-making management structure of the organisation.

Each of these units/divisions forms the hierarchical structure for its relevant specialist areas, which typically include line management and staff. Divisions become the operating units, each serving a distinct market. As each division is largely independent, considerable authority and responsibility are delegated to divisional management teams. The positional structure of Eskom Holdings Limited is reflected in an organogram illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

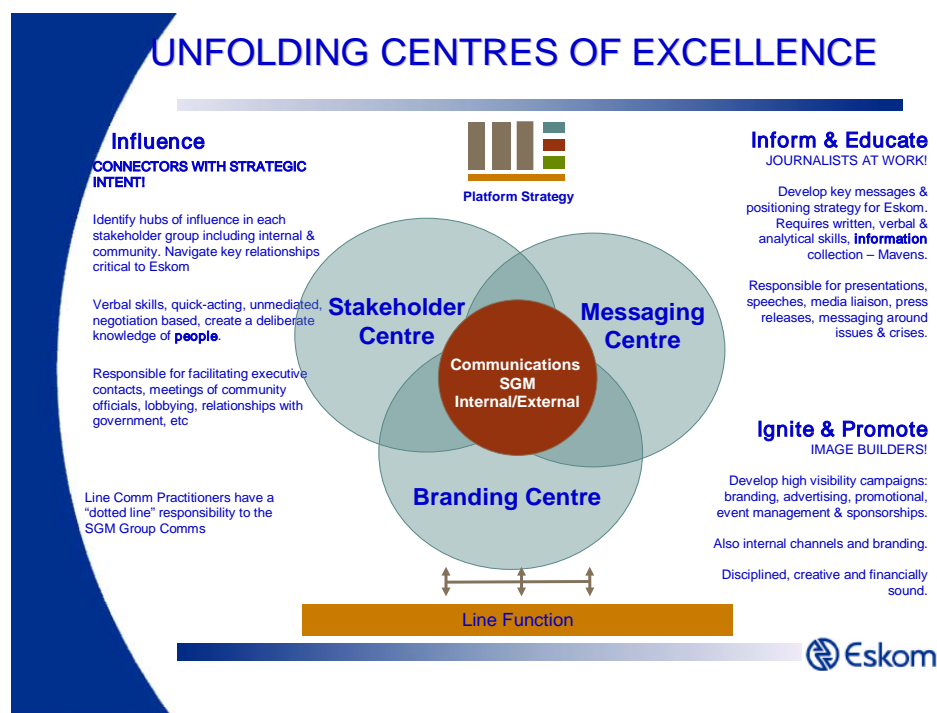
Figure 3.1: Organogram of Eskom



Source: Eskom intranet 2008

Figure 3.2 below illustrates the Eskom's communication structure at corporate level. The structure comprises three centres, namely, the Branding Centre, the Messaging Centre, and the Stakeholder Centre. Although divisional communication managers report directly to their respective divisional managing directors, there is a dotted-line responsibility to the Senior General Manager, Group Communication.

Figure 3.2: Eskom communication structure



Source: Eskom intranet 2008

3.5 Message flow, media, and channels used by Eskom

As organisations increased in size, formal top-down communication, media, and channel usage became the main concern of organisational managers. In the past, the concern of managers of large bureaucratic organisations and, consequently, the major focus of the organisational communication literature was formal, top-down communication.

Informal communication, generally associated with interpersonal, horizontal communication, was primarily seen as a potential hindrance to effective organisational performance. This is no longer the case. Duncan and Moriarty (1998:6) argue that the direction of communication flow is a critical element that impacts on all aspects of organisational communication. Gronstedt (1996:156) claims that a dialogue approach is mandatory to be able to integrate communication activities with all the stakeholders where they are documented as receivers as well as senders of information.

Following on the above discussion is the flow of communication, media, and channels of communication within the organisation.

3.5.1 Message flow at Eskom

Communication is channelled through an organisation, and the flow of information essentially refers to the direction in which messages travel in the organisation and encapsulates who communicates with whom (Rensburg 1997:104). Shocley-Zalabak (1991:55) and Mersham and Skinner (2001:40) define communication direction as the description of the movement of communication in organisations based on the authority or position levels of the organisational senders and receivers. There are three basic levels of communication within any organisation. Information and messages flow up and down as well as across the hierarchical structure of an organisation. Information flow and, therefore, communication take place in a vertical and a lateral direction (Neher 1997:160).

According to Hunter (1997:180), internal communication refers to all communication activities within an organisation: horizontal communication within a single department; vertical communication between management and employees; communication between departments; and any other forms of communication that may be observed in an organisation. Hunter (1997) reasons that the internal communication division will require the formation of a matrix relationship with the human resources department of the organisation.

Gronstedt's model (2000:17) proposes that the organisation should integrate communication externally with key customers and stakeholders, vertically between senior management and front-line workers, and horizontally across departments, business units, and geographical boundaries.

3.5.1.1 Vertical communication

To Gronstedt (2000:21), the focal point of integrated vertical communication is to align "top-down communicators" around a clear vision, which is evolved through a process of "bottom-up communication", an ongoing dialogue between employees of all ranks. The vertical dimension of the communication flow can further be divided into downward and upward directions.

- Downward communication

As is implied by the subheading, communication flows from the top of the organisation to the bottom, and this is usually from management to the subordinate employees. Downward communication involves communication channels where messages flow from managers to employees (O'Hair, O'Rourke & O'Hair 2001:75). In downward communication, the information provided is disseminated through the formal communication channels of the organisation (Mersham & Skinner 2001:40). Larkin and Larkin (1994: 37) suggest that downward communication is most effective if top managers communicate directly with immediate supervisors and immediate supervisors with their staff. Distortion of information is not uncommon where messages are vague, unclear, and hurriedly prepared. Information is distorted as it flows from senior management to middle managers to employees. A related factor affecting downward communication is information overload. Such an overload may result in stress and poor productivity.

Eskom's downward communication is done by using written and spoken channels as well as the intranet. The organisation is more reliant on predominantly one-way communication tools, such as newsletters and the intranet, meaning that face-to-face is not the norm.

- Upward communication

Upward communication is the movement of a message from subordinates to supervisors. Upward communication, therefore, flows to a higher level in the group or organisation. In upward communication, subordinates usually express their opinions and ideas. Aamodt (1999:39) describes upward communication as the communication channels where messages flow from employees to managers. The importance of this type of communication has traditionally been viewed from the perspective of management and the organisation.

However, Green and Knippen (1999:103) focus on a shift in the responsibility of upward communication from management to employee. As mentioned, in upward communication, employees usually express their opinions and ideas. This shift in focus means that employees, who traditionally do not possess the necessary skills regarding what and how to communicate effectively, are now faced with a dilemma. In Eskom, upward communication is facilitated through suggestion boxes, surveys, the open-door policy, and exit interviews.

3.5.1.2 *Horisontal communication*

Horizontal communication can be described as communication that takes place between members of a particular work group or unit and work groups or units of the same level and hierarchical equivalent – which, in other words, simply refers to people at the same level (Smit & Cronje 2002:372). Hendrikse (1999:47) indicates that the more hierarchical the structure, the more complex and difficult speedy, accurate, and efficient communication will become. Nevertheless, contemporary organisations and, indeed, the evolved traditional organisations, realise the importance of horizontal communication programmes. Realising the importance of integrated and horizontal communication programmes, contemporary organisations appreciate the fact that integration requires communication across departments, functional specialities, and the brand.

According to Robbins (2001:289), communication that a flow laterally has defined purposes in that it:

- Provides information throughout the organisation, which facilitates organisational integration.
- Increases the speed and efficiency of organisational operations and delivery.
- Increases organisational problem-solving ability.

At Eskom, lateral communication occurs by way of holding meetings between members of a particular department in the organisation.

3.5.2 Channels of communication

Channels of information in the organisation are described by distinguishing between the formal and informal flow of information (Steinberg 2007: 295). According to Steinberg (2007:295), formal channels are the official channels through which communication is exchanged. For the author, information is also exchanged unofficially through informal channels.

At Eskom, there is a wide range of channels to choose from. In increasing the upward flow of information within the organisation, Eskom uses the following communication strategies:

- Grievance systems – internal communication structures to accommodate full participation and meaningful influence by organised labour and employees in the decision-making structures and processes at all levels are examples of this form of communication.
- Open-door policies – these involve setting aside times when employees go directly to managers to discuss whatever is on their minds. They bypass the intermediate steps in the upward organisational chain, ensuring that important messages do, indeed, get to the top intact.

- Employee surveys – these are a quick way to measure employee attitudes in order to target problem areas or to solicit ideas for improvement. Because employees have the benefit of anonymity, they respond honestly without fear of reprisal.

There are other communication approaches to internal communication within the organisation, which include electronic mail, formal reports, meetings, memoranda, postal mail, regular communication events, face-to-face communications with management, and communication programmes related to specific key events such as major changes within the organisation.

Currently, a corporate newsletter, a 12-page full-colour publication, is circulated to all employees and is also available on the intranet 12 times a year. The newsletter carries company news and more in-depth features on departments, employees, and initiatives.

However, communication across the organisation is no easy task given the nature of the workforce, which includes many shift and field workers, not all of whom currently have access to personal computers or even the time to access them. Employees in this category are supported and backed by written documentation circulated through company and divisional newsletters, memos, and notice boards.

Eskom also uses plasma screens at selected sites where important information can be posted. Other internal communication media currently used in Eskom include the annual report, graffiti boards/walls, washroom advertising, posters, banners, pamphlets, and exhibitions. The key objective is to promote stakeholder engagement and involvement through integrated communication across the organisation.

3.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the measurement instrument that will be used to measure the integration of internal communication at Eskom was explained. (see chapter 5).The measurement instrument consists of six areas of integration as proposed by Du Plessis and Schoonraad (2006), namely, stakeholder orientation and differentiation, communication alignment with strategic focus of the organisation, consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation, infrastructure for integration, sharing of information and free flow of information, and coordination of communication efforts and action. The chapter also explained the research methodology that will be used to obtain the necessary information to measure the integration of internal communication at Eskom.

The chapter further explained the background of Eskom, its formal organisational structure, as well as the flow of its communication, channels, and media used. The next chapter, chapter 4 explains the research methodology.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this study. The chapter addresses what Mouton (1997:37) refers to as a mode of transport in his analogy of research as a journey. It focuses on the way and means adopted to reach a particular destination or to achieve particular goals.

In this study, a qualitative rather than a quantitative strategy has been selected. Qualitative research relies on the informal wisdom that has developed from the experience of the researchers.

Anon (2003:1) indicates that the aim of qualitative analysis is a detailed description that allows for fine distinctions to be drawn, as it is not necessary to categorise the data into a finite number of classifications. Allan (1993:80) concurs with the above statements and notes that qualitative approaches are regarded as exploratory, where the goal of exploratory research is to formulate more precise questions that future researchers can answer. According to Du Plooy (1995:33), qualitative research differs markedly from quantitative research in that it is “analytic and interpretative; it attempts to examine phenomena in a holistic manner”. For the author, events or extraneous variables are not controlled – the purpose is to capture the normal flow of events. The qualitative research approach generally does not generate specific numbers. It is concerned with exploring meanings, processes, reasons, and explanations. Patton (1987:9) states that a qualitative design is much more flexible in accomplishing the set goal (see section 4.2 below).

The chapter further explains the research design. This is followed by an explanation of the limitations of the study, including the reliability and validity thereof.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A well-defined research strategy is a precondition for any research study. Thus, the development of a research design follows logically from the research strategy. Smith (1988:179) defines a research design as “a comprehensive data collection plan whose purpose is to answer research questions and test research hypotheses”. Mouton (1996:107) presents a similar definition, where a research design is “a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem”.

The methodology appropriate for this study is exploratory qualitative research. Based on the above, qualitative research can be described as any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Straus & Corbin 1998:10). Baker (1999:8) explains that qualitative research is often carried out to investigate some important concerns to be found in some parts of the human view. The advantage of using qualitative research methods is that the researcher can view behaviour in natural surroundings, rather than in a laboratory or artificial surroundings (Mouton 2001:161).

Qualitative methods are flexible, thus allowing researchers to explore new ideas and concerns and to increase their depth of understanding throughout the process. Such flexibility is important for this study, which is exploratory in nature. It can, therefore, be argued that qualitative research aims at getting beneath the surface of verbal responses to explore the real dimension of a problem and the range of attitude to it. This type of information is particularly helpful to communication and creative agencies, as it allows for the development and evaluation of messages and products based on the target audience's motivations.

The data collection technique will consist of an online self-administered questionnaire survey, the administered structured interview, a focus group, and content analysis. The researcher will conduct a survey, based on an online self-administered questionnaire, with communication managers and professionals. The survey used in the research will be based on both closed and open-ended questions designed to glean as much information as possible from the respondents.

The qualitative data will also be quantified through content analysis of internal publications (letters, memos, written reports, administrative documents) of the organisation. This will include a qualitative evaluation of the logos and symbols across the organisation, organisation messages, and websites. The goal of content analysis will be the accurate representation of a body of messages within the organisation.

Focus group discussions with human resources managers and project managers (all line managers) will also be conducted as a follow-up on the findings of the online questionnaire. Interviews with this target audience will be recorded, transcribed, and coded by the researcher following accepted practice (Miles & Huberman 1994:57).

4.2.1 The main research problem

The main research problem is the following: to evaluate elements of communication integration within Eskom – a cross-sectional survey.

4.2.2 Sub-problems

The study has the following sub-problems:

- Internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation at Eskom.
- Communication alignment with strategic focus at Eskom.
- Existence of the consistency of messages and media in and from Eskom.
- Mechanisms to coordinate communication efforts and action within Eskom.
- Infrastructure for integration within Eskom.
- Sharing of information and free flow of information within Eskom.

4.2.3 Assumptions

The study has the following assumptions:

- Assumption 1. There is the sharing of information across divisions at Eskom.
- Assumption 2. There are mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of Eskom.
- Assumption 3. Eskom has the mechanisms in place to facilitate interaction with stakeholder groups.
- Assumption 4. Eskom employees are treated as important stakeholders.
- Assumption 5. Eskom employees are reminded about what the organisation stands for.
- Assumption 6. A formal policy regarding communication integration does not exist at the corporate level.

4.2.4 Research questions

Because this is mainly a qualitative study, the following research questions are asked with regard to the level of communication integration at Eskom:

- Does Eskom communication have internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation?
- Is Eskom communication aligned with the strategic focus of the organisation?
- Is the messaging going in and out of the organisation consistent?
- Is there coordination of communication efforts and actions?
- Is there infrastructure for the integration of communication messages?
- Do the sharing of information and free flow of information exist?

4.2.5 Research methodology

Three research methods will be used, namely, survey research, content analysis, and focus groups for triangulation purposes. These will be used to obtain the necessary information in order to measure communication integration within Eskom. According to Gable (1994:112), triangulation findings offer precise and reliable results and explanations.

4.2.5.1 Online Self-administered questionnaire

The survey approach using an online self-administered questionnaire is used for this study. This approach, usually involving sophisticated statistical analysis, remains popular with operations management researchers (Scudder & Hill 1998:91). According to Steinberg (2007:32), survey research involves collecting information from a group of people to describe their abilities, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, or knowledge with regard to a particular topic or issue. For Levy and Lemeshow (1999:6), survey design involves two steps. Firstly, a sampling plan must be developed.

The sampling plan describes the approach that will be used to select the sample, how an adequate sample size will be determined, and the choice of media through which the survey will be administered. Secondly, procedures for obtaining population estimates from the sample data and for estimating the reliability of those population estimates must be established. Survey design procedures also require inputs from the people who will use the survey data and from those who will conduct the survey.

The data users should identify the variables to be measured, the estimate required, the reliability and validity needed to ensure the usefulness of the estimates, and any resource limitations that may exist pertaining to the conducting of the survey (Levy & Lemeshow 1999:6). According to Sarantakos (1993:157), surveys are the most commonly used method of data collection in the social sciences. For the author, surveys are methods of data collection in which information is gathered through oral or written questioning. Baker (1994:172) adds that survey research is a method of collecting data in which a specifically defined group of individuals is asked to answer a number of identical questions. For Baker (1994:172), survey research is probably the best method available to the social scientist interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly.

Careful probability sampling provides a group of respondents whose characteristics may be taken to reflect those of the large population, and carefully constructed standardised questionnaires provide data in the same form from all respondents (Babbie 1998:237). The author further contends that surveys are excellent vehicles for measuring attitudes and orientations in a large population. Du Plooy (1997:127) states that when undertaking a survey in communication research, one collects information from a group of people to describe their abilities, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and/or their knowledge with regard to a particular topic or issue. According to Du Plooy (1997), this information is collected by asking questions, and respondents' answers to these questions constitute the data of the survey. Therefore, surveys seem best suited to large-scale data gathering, especially where factually based data is required.

Questionnaires invariably have the benefit of greater efficiency for the researcher. Key issues in their use centre on what questions to ask, in what form, and of whom. It is generally agreed that questionnaires are best suited to asking specific rather than general questions and for closed rather than open questions (Robson 1993:40). As such, they are best aimed at collecting data to test theories, hypotheses, or propositions.

For the purpose of this study, an online self-administered questionnaire was distributed via email to the respondent and returned to the researcher. The survey was administered in an online format, as it is currently the primary communication channel that is used by the organisation. According to Neuman (2000:246), the survey is highly valuable for studying some problems such as employee opinion and worthless for others. This method is also chosen with the knowledge that it is not representative of the general population.

It is recognised that one drawback of this approach is that returns would not be very high, and therefore, the generalisation of the findings of the study may not be representative of the total population. Though it is noted that a low response rate would undermine the validity and reliability of the study, the researcher decided to go ahead with the use of the online self-administered questionnaire because the approach is the most appropriate and fruitful for the problem at hand. To achieve a response rate necessary to provide an acceptable level of validity, the researcher will make use of follow-up telephone calls and e-mail to ensure a sufficient return.

The online self-administered questionnaire has six areas with which to evaluate the extent of integrated communication within Eskom. The six areas are internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation, organisational infrastructure for integration, message consistency, coordination, strategic alignment, and information sharing (see Chapter 3).

The online questionnaires designed by the researcher were administered to the whole sample, both communication managers and communication professionals. The questionnaires were mainly closed, after which the open-ended approach could be explored.

The open-ended questions allowed the researcher to follow up with probing questions in order to deepen the response to the question, thus increasing the richness of the data obtained. The questionnaire will serve as a guide to ensure that all six areas relevant to the research are covered.

The online questionnaires were thoroughly pilot-tested before being utilised in the main investigation. This ensured that errors of whatever nature could be rectified immediately. According to De Vos (1998:183), the purpose of a pilot study is to improve the success and effectiveness of the questionnaire because modifications can be made after the pilot study and before the questionnaires are given to the other respondents. In accordance with the requirements of the pilot study, it will be conducted replicating the final study.

From this target population of Eskom communication personnel, five communication professionals were selected via purposive sampling. The questionnaires were distributed to a sample of five respondents for pre-testing.

The preliminary set of questions went through many drafts before it was put into a form for self-administration. Based on feedback received, the questionnaires were further modified.

As the online questionnaire was intended to be self-administered, it was fronted with a brief explanatory rubric. To this end, the questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter that described the objectives of the survey, assuring the respondents of confidentiality of the information provided and requesting that returns be forwarded by a deadline. Details of the online questionnaire are available in Annexure C.

4.2.5.2 Structured (Standardised) interview

A structured interview has scripted questions and guidelines for consistently evaluating responses. This means that all candidates are asked the same questions, in the same order and in exactly the same way. Structured questionnaires with precoded responses are commonly favoured by those wishing to analyse their data via a series of statistical packages for the Social Sciences (Churton 2000:196). According to Du Plooy (2001:120) in a structured interview the researcher controls the setting of the interview; the order of the questions; the range of responses; the demographic characteristics of the interviewer and the interviewee; and the problem to be discussed. Huysamen (1994: 123) argue that a standardised test is a collection of tasks of which the content, the administration and the scoring of the obtained responses are the same, irrespective of who is administering it, on whom it is administered and by whom it is scored.

For the purpose of this study, one structured questionnaire with Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communication was held, which used three types of questions: closed-ended questions; closed-ended questions with the opportunity for comment and open-ended question (see Annexure A). Because this study is exploratory, the respondent answered 28 standardised questionnaires.

The questionnaire will serve as a guide to ensure that all six areas relevant to the research are covered (see research question in Chapter 1). The questionnaire was once again accompanied by a cover letter that described the objectives of the survey, assuring the respondents of confidentiality of the information provided and requesting that returns be forwarded by a deadline.

4.2.5.3 *Focus group discussion*

Wimmer and Dominick (1994:148) describe the focus group discussion as a research strategy for understanding audience/consumer attitudes and behaviour. These authors contend that the identifying characteristic of the focus group discussion is that it is a controlled group discussion that is employed to gather preliminary information for a research project, to help develop questionnaire items for survey research, to understand the reasons behind a particular phenomenon, or to test preliminary ideas or plans.

Powell and Single (1996:499) define a focus group as a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research. Meanwhile, Brewerton and Millward (2003:80) contend that the aim of focus groups is to get closer to participants' understandings of and perspectives on, certain issues.

In line with this, the focus group discussion was used as a research method to highlight issues and matters that might not be included in content analysis and the survey questionnaire. The approach was used to gain an understanding of, especially, regional employee attitudes and behaviour toward communication and its integration within Eskom. This approach further allowed for the free exchange of ideas where participants could discuss their personal experiences. Following will be a step-by-step discussion of conducting a focus group (Wimmer & Dominick 1994:148).

- ***Selection and recruitment of participants***

This study will not be generalised to the target population, and as such, non-probability sampling was used to select participants. Since focus group research is not meant to be statistically representative, the researcher did not recruit participants at random, but selected them carefully. According to Babbie (1998:195), it is sometimes appropriate to select a sample on the basis of own knowledge of the population, its elements, and the purpose of the study.

In this study, the Eskom regional human resources and project managers (both men and women) were sampled on the understanding that they qualified to provide better information on the phenomenon. The researcher realised that team leaders (that is, human resources managers and project managers) were always the main hubs of employee communication in any organisation. For instance, unlike line managers, asking employees to help evaluate existing communication vehicles may prove difficult, as recognition of these vehicles is sometimes so low that they might appear to be off the radar for some employees. Even where there is recognition, ordinary employees might be unaware of source, target audience, or purpose.

- ***Sample size***

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2000:121), the type of sample depends largely on the purpose of the focus group. With regard to this study, the researcher intends gathering detailed data and to get a deeper insight into the phenomenon. To this end, a sample of 13 participants from both human resources and project management was used. This is because this study requires the expertise of informants who can reasonably give accurate and perceptive accounts of communication integration in their respective sections. Hence, the researcher opted for the human resources and project managers to help identify relevant cases for in-depth investigation.

- ***Number of focus group sessions***

One of the biggest questions is how many focus groups should be held. To get a good sense of the audience, one would need to conduct several focus group sessions in order to hear enough opinions to be able to see patterns and themes in the response.

In this study, two groups of 13 people met in a moderated discussion and responded to open-ended questions about communication practices within Eskom. These groups will be sufficient to provide in-depth information on the research problem. An advantage is that participants will be able to react to, and build on, one another's response.

- ***Stratification of groups***

There was no need to divide the participants into strata, as the nature of the study is not sensitive, and therefore, participants were free to express themselves.

- ***Location and setting***

In order to keep costs down as well as to ensure the least disruption in terms of time and travel for the participants, the researcher arranged with Eskom management for the venue. To this end, the focus group location was the Eskom Head Office conference venue.

A well-organised room with a big table was arranged so that the participants could sit comfortably. It was a room that allowed the participants free movement.

- ***Time and date of the focus group***

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2000:451), the time for the focus group session depends on the type of participants designed. For purposes of this study, the time was determined by the availability of the participants. Since all participants were working during the day, the study was conducted during working hours. The time allocation of each focus group was one hour over a period of two days.

- ***Design of an effective interview guide***

In any interview situation, the researchers are expected to word, order, and present their research questions to respondents in a way that promotes discussion in a non-threatening manner (Krueger & Casey 2000:74). Questions were unstructured and open-ended in order to ensure that as much data as possible could be collected. The interview guide, which relates to the perceptions of the Eskom human resources and project managers about integrated communication, is also attached (see Annexure B). As stated before, the focus group questions were used to probe further with regard to the findings of the online questionnaire.

- ***Role of the moderator***

According to Rice and Ezzy (1999:85), one of the key players in the focus group, who has a significant influence on the collection of rich and valid information, is the moderator. For the purpose of this study, the moderator was the researcher. The moderator candidly explained all the issues relating to the research topic. In other words, the moderator directed the flow of the discussion. One person was responsible for recording and taking down notes as an assistant to the moderator.

- ***Conducting and recording the interview***

As stated earlier, the focus group was conducted in a conference room that was arranged at Eskom Head Office. The participants were informed about the date, time, and day on which the groups would assemble. It was important to indicate that the moderator would try to create an atmosphere that would permit everybody to express his/her views without any reservation.

In addition to the moderator, each focus group session had a tape recorder. The methods for recording the sessions was the tape recording and by hand-written notes. Thus, while the moderator facilitated the session, another person helped in checking the recording equipment and taking notes during the session.

Using a tape recorder gave the researcher the option of listening not only to what was said, but also to how the exchanges were made. However, the participants were informed ahead of time that the meetings would be recorded, and permission was obtained.

- ***Analysis of the data***

The data were analysed by using the Morse and Field approach. Morse and Field (1996:105) argue that there are two types of analysis that can be utilised here: inter-participant analysis or the comparison of transcripts from several respondents and the analysis or the categories sorted by commonalities, consisting of segments of transcripts or notes compiled from transcripts of several participants.

In this study, data were put into categories so that the researcher could find similarities and differences among phenomena. Coding was used to closely analyse the data and identify categories. All categories were related to the core category.

- ***Reporting of the data***

Reporting of the data is a significant step during the research process. Reporting data relates to the approach that the researcher uses to bring the research finding to the public. Communication at Eskom is a great concern to employees and employer alike, and therefore, interested people should have access to the available information about the phenomenon. Since Eskom is funding this study, the findings of this study will be available in the Eskom Library for easy access.

4.2.5.4 Content analysis

Internal documents such as memoranda, minutes of meetings, proposals, plans, and the like are likely to be required in order to track back events and intentions, both realised and unrealised, over time.

In this study, a qualitative approach will be used through the application of elementary content analysis. Steinberg (2007:32) states that, in communication research, content analysis is a method through which the researcher can measure the amount of something found in a representative sample of a mass communication medium, such as newspapers or television.

According to van der Walt and Breet-van Niekerk (2006) in Baker and Angelopulo (2006:351), the data investigated by content analysis are collections of encoded symbols, or messages, used in communication. For the authors, in the field of organisational communication research, content analysis can be used to identify the intentions, focus, or communication trends of an individual, group, or organisation or to describe attitudinal and behavioural responses to communication within an organisation. According to Sarantakos (1993:214), the type of content analysis employed in qualitative research is fundamentally different from that of quantitative studies. The differences relate to theoretical and methodological standards and principles.

For the purpose of this study, qualitative content analysis was used as a technique to identify and describe patterns in the collected documents. To this end, formal publications across the organisation, corporate identity, and websites messages published over the past 12 months were assessed to determine their consistency.

According to Sarantakos (1993:215), the process of content analysis in qualitative research is that after the units of analysis have been identified (for instance, transcripts of interviews, or other forms of verbal or visual communication), the researcher will identify and evaluate the items that appear to be theoretically important and meaningful and relate to the central question of the study. Unlike quantitative content analysis, however, it often does not begin with a fixed set of categories. Instead, researchers using qualitative content analysis constantly test and revise categories as they emerge (Sarantakos 1993).

Sarantakos (1993:210) states that, as a qualitative technique, content analysis may be directed towards more subjective information such as motives, attitudes, or values. For Marshall and Rossman (1995:85), qualitative content analysis can be defined as an overall approach, a method, and an analytic strategy that entails the systematic examination of forms of communication to document patterns objectively. The goal is to be flexible and, at the same time, systematic. To achieve this, various messages of all brand messages communicated during the past 12 months were collected and evaluated. All communications or planned messages used by Eskom over the past 12 months were evaluated to determine whether the messages were consistent with the organisation's communication objectives (see Chapter 5).

Similarly, written and electronic internal publications were evaluated to determine whether they complied with corporate branding protocol. Content analysis findings were compared to the views of the participants of survey and focus group discussions. It is envisaged that the gaps in the organisation's integrated communication will subsequently emerge.

4.2.6 Sampling design

In the social sciences, the typical unit of analysis is the person, or group or groups of people, although there may also be other units of analysis, such as general phenomena. According to Collins (1998:69), almost all market research studies use sampling, which is the attempt to learn about some large group, a population, by looking at only a small part of it, a sample. Salant and Dillman (1994:54) state that sample selection depends on the population size, its homogeneity, the sample media, and the degree of precision required. The people selected to participate in the sample must be selected at random; they must have an equal (or known) chance of being selected (Salant & Dillman 1994:13).

Salant and Dillman (1994:58) observe that a prerequisite to sample selection is to define the target population as narrowly as possible. The population is not necessarily the total population of a country or area, but the totality of the target group from which the sample needs to be drawn. As a first step in the sampling process, the target population needs to be identified. Thereafter, the researcher needs to determine the sample characteristics and determine the sample size.

Two broad sampling methods can be distinguished, namely, probability and non-probability sampling. Martins (1996:253) explains that a probability sample is one in which every element has a known non-zero chance of being selected. It is unnecessary for all elements to have an equal chance of being selected, but each element must have a chance, and that chance must be known so that the sampling results can be applied to the universe.

Non-probability samples rely on the judgement of the researcher and are only as representative as the researcher's luck and skill permit. In non-probability sampling, there is no way of estimating the probability that any element will be included in the sample, and therefore, there is no method of finding out whether the sample is representative or not.

It is important to note that the most important criterion of a sample, according to Puth (1996:87), is that it will be totally representative of the population relevant to the solving of the management problem and the ensuing research questions. However, the findings of this study will not be generalised. The population and samples for the study are demarcated and discussed below.

4.2.6.1 *Population of this study*

After determining the unit of analysis, the first task in sampling is to define the population of interest. Mouton (1996:134) refers to the population as a collection of objects, events, or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying.

The population, therefore, refers to the complete set of elements and their characteristics about which a conclusion is to be drawn, based on a sample. The target population for this study is the over 30 000 employees at Eskom.

However, the accessible population were all the Eskom communication professionals and managers in all the provinces. To this end, the online self-administered questionnaire targeted 10 Eskom communications managers and 20 communications professionals across the country, as they have practical experience in the field of communication.

Meanwhile, the focus group discussion included two segments of participants, namely, the seven regional human resources managers and six project managers (all line managers). All of these target audiences could be found in the various Eskom divisions in the Gauteng Province.

4.2.6.2 *Sampling technique*

An online self-administered questionnaire was administered via e-mail to 10 communication managers and 20 communication professionals selected by way of purposive (judgemental) sampling (see criteria for inclusion below).

Similarly, the focus group discussion was administered to seven human resources managers and six project managers (see selection and recruitment of participants). A purposive sampling was employed for the qualitative research approach. According to Neuman (2000:198), it uses the judgement of an expert in selecting cases, or it selects cases with a specific purpose in mind. Merriam (1988:87) states that purposive sampling is based on the assumption of discovering, understanding, and gaining insight. The selection of the sample in this study is based on what Patton (1987:12) refers to as its “information-richness”. This implies people with the necessary knowledge and years of experience about communication within the organisation.

In order to maximise the breadth of information collected, an effort was made to involve people who were information-rich, based on their positions or experience within the organisation. In choosing the members, an attempt was made to include representation from different business units and divisions. Care was taken to recruit employees who were at similar employment levels for specific groups so as to prevent employees feeling intimidated by members of groups who were at managerial levels above their own.

The survey questionnaire was chosen with the knowledge that it was not representative of the general population; rather, it attempted to represent a specific portion of the population. The following criteria were used for including participants:

- Maximum variation of length of service.
- Maximum variation of racial groups.
- Maximum variation of departments at each job level.
- Maximum variation of locations.

The preliminary set of questions went through many drafts before it was put into online self-administration and focus group discussion. Meanwhile, focus group discussion questions were used to probe further with regard to findings of the online questionnaire.

Both questionnaires were distributed to a sample of five respondents for pre-testing. Based on feedback received, the questionnaires were further modified.

4.3 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The goodness of the data has to do with the reliability and the validity of the three primary methods of collecting data, namely, the survey research, focus group discussion, and content analysis.

4.3.1 Reliability

The reliability of the data is concerned with the question of whether the measure will yield the same results on different occasions. Thus, reliability refers to dependability and consistency (Merriam 1998:206). Therefore, it will be necessary for the researcher to inform the participants of the context of the study to ensure its reliability.

The reliability of the study will also be highlighted by the coherent analytic procedures from the raw data to the reported findings. This means that, as soon as the researcher started with data collection, preparation for data analysis began. Morse and Field (1996:104) maintain that the process of making sense of the data begins as the researcher makes sense of the setting and learns what is going on. The stage of comprehension is reached when the researcher has enough data to be able to write a complete, detailed, coherent, and rich description (Morse 1994:26).

The researcher has also employed multiple data sources in the self-administered questionnaire, focus group discussions, and content analysis. The questionnaires were thoroughly pilot-tested before being utilised in the main investigation. This ensured that errors of whatever nature could be rectified immediately.

The purpose of a pilot study is to improve the success and effectiveness of the questionnaire because modifications can be made after the pilot study and before the questionnaires are given to the other respondents (De Vos 1998:183). Thus, in this study, the pilot study was used as the comprehending phase and to ensure the success and effectiveness of the interviews in order to ensure the reliability of the study.

4.3.2 Validity

In order to lend credibility to the findings of the study, the researcher incorporated a variety of validity procedures. Validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2000:101). The validity of the research study was determined by the use of qualitative research to obtain accurate data about the object of the study.

In an effort to reduce bias and increase the validity of the study, the data were gathered through multiple methods (the self-administered questionnaire, focus group discussion, and content analysis). Merriam (1998:204) defines triangulation as using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings. Steps were taken in an attempt to reduce the risk of bias by ensuring that all the appropriate materials were collected as data and properly analysed. To achieve a response rate necessary to provide an acceptable level of validity, the researcher made use of follow-up telephone calls and e-mail to ensure a sufficient return.

4.4 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Several limitations of the study should be noted. The more important issues are discussed below.

4.4.1 Sample selection bias

While the research sample selection followed a predetermined selection path and criteria, these were still determined by the researcher, and some bias might still occur.

4.4.2 Sample size

The sample size was restricted by both time and money constraints on the researcher's part. Furthermore, it was taken into account from the outset that the sample size was not going to be enough to satisfy research objectives. This study is limited to Eskom only, and therefore, research findings cannot be generalised to the population.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter described how the research was conducted. This involved the research design of this study, the main research problem, sampling procedure, data collection, procedures in relation to reliability and validity, and the limitations of the study. As a matter of sampling the respondents, the purposive sampling method was highlighted. In order to collect data, a self-administered questionnaire, focus group discussions, and content analysis were also explained.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The conceptual and operational framework for this study and the methodological application thereof are discussed in the previous chapters. This chapter discusses the data analysis, findings and interpretation of the findings with regard to communication integration within Eskom. In order to identify the gaps, predominantly qualitative data were collected from a number of surveys and focus groups interviews. All the data gleaned from the respective respondents were analysed to determine the common themes among the respective groups, as well as to identify key inconsistencies. In interpreting the results of this study, certain limitations were kept in mind and potential areas for future research are highlighted in the next chapter.

Data were analysed manually in order to organise, provide structure to and elicit meaning from the data. A summary is provided of the biographical analysis pertaining to the respondents involved in the completion of the questionnaire.

5.2 DATA ANALYSIS

According to De Vos, Fouche and Venter (2002:339), data analysis is “the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data”. The methodological process of data analysis is comprehensively discussed in the previous chapter, and consequently the results of this analysis are reported in this chapter.

This research study was exploratory in nature to gain insight into the research question. The measuring instruments consisted of the administered structured interview, a self-administered online questionnaire followed up by a focus group and content analysis of Eskom's formal messages, its corporate identity from all forms of internal communications and its website messages published over the past 12 months. Content analysis was proposed for only one area, namely the consistency of messages.

The size of the target population totals 30 communication managers and 70 communication professionals. In order to ensure an appropriate level of validity in terms of the research findings, it was necessary for the researcher to include at least 1 Senior General Manager, Group Communication, 10 communication managers and 20 communication professionals, thereby attempting to ensure that a sufficient number of respondents participated in the online self-administered questionnaire survey. These respondents have practical experience in the field of communication. Because the research study includes a specific target audience, it is purposive in nature as it attempts to gain a deeper understanding of what is happening with communication in the organisation.

The questionnaires were completed by 1 Senior General Manager, Group Communication, 10 communication managers and 20 communication professionals from the Distribution division, Transmission division, Generation division and Group Communication Department in the Office of the Chief Executive (CEO). About 13 of these questionnaires were returned by e-mail and were used for data analysis, resulting in a response rate of only 43%. All these respondents were given the same questionnaire, except for the Senior General Manager Group Communication who completed a separate questionnaire (see Annexure A). In order to facilitate understanding by respondents, the aim of the research and motivation for completion of the questionnaire were highlighted at the front page of the survey questionnaire (see Annexure C).

In addition, a non-probability, purposive sample was used for the focus group discussion, as the participants were selected on the basis of their specific positions in the organisation in order to obtain information. In terms of hierarchical authority, the participants have both an operational and strategic role to play in the organisation. It was critical that not solely the views of communication professionals based at the head office should be obtained, as they might not be in touch with the current situation regarding communication in the organisation or alternatively might not be aware of the extent of potential communication-related issues in the organisation. To this end, follow-up focus group interviews were also held with Eskom human resources managers (seven) and project managers (six). Selection for the focus group interviews was guided by purposive sampling in an attempt to obtain a cross-cutting sample of employees at middle to senior levels who had relevant exposure to the inner operations of the organisation (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.5.2 for a discussion of purposive sampling).

Each focus group session was recorded on a tape recorder and in addition, hand-written notes were taken. Thus, while the moderator facilitated the session, another person helped with checking the recording equipment and taking notes during the session. Using a tape recorder gave the researcher the option of listening not only to what was said but also to how the exchanges were made. However, the participants were informed ahead of time that the meetings would be recorded and their permission was obtained (see Chapter 4 section 4.2.5.2 on conducting and recording the interviews).

Two focus group discussions were held with six and seven participants respectively per session, after receiving their permission. The discussion was used to highlight the issues and matters not included in the self-administered online questionnaire. To this end, the respondents' answers were simply coded and categorised in accordance with the themes that developed in the focus group discussions.

The answers to the various questions were grouped into these categories and subsequent subcategories. The different responses were then classified into categories to reflect similarities and differences (see Annexure B).

The qualitative data obtained from internal Eskom publications and the corporate identity in all forms of internal communications and website messages were quantified through content analysis to determine the consistency of messages. In this study, the data were analysed by using the Morse and Field approach. De Vos (1998:342) suggests that this approach consists of four cognitive processes integral to all qualitative data analysis methods, namely comprehending (the process of making sense of the data through the transcription, checking and coding of the data) and synthesising (the analysis of categories, which are sorted by commonalities and which consist of segments of notes or transcripts compiled from the transcripts of several participants). Accordingly, for the purpose of processing the data obtained, systematic coding (for example, categorisation and classification) was used. The categories used included: analysis of the internal print messages, corporate identity in all forms of internal communications and e-mail messages from the Eskom Distribution, Transmission, Generation, Eskom Enterprises and Eskom Corporate divisions.

5.3 FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The findings garnered while conducting research on the current state of communication integration in a state-owned organisation is illustrated in depth below. Throughout the section, references are linked to the theoretical postulations pertaining to the concept of integrated communication, thus aiming to add theoretical validity to the research results obtained, relating to Eskom's integrated communication endeavours (see Chapter 2 for the theoretical statements).

In this regard, questions to respondents were grouped into six integrated communication evaluation criteria, namely: stakeholder orientation and differentiation, communication alignment with corporate strategy, consistency of messages to and from the organisation, co-ordination of messages, sharing information and free flow of messages, and the infrastructure for integration (see Chapter 3 for an explanation).

The data collection methods included the self-administered online questionnaire, focus group discussions and content analysis. The findings from the survey were discussed first, followed by the findings obtained from the focus groups and then the findings for each area were interpreted. A focus group discussion allowed questions for an added depth of understanding of communication integration in the organisation. For the area of consistency of messages to and from the organisation, the findings of a content analysis are presented.

SECTION A: Demographic analysis of the respondents

The demographics of the respondents for the self-administered questionnaire can be explained as follows:

- **Communication managers per division, who participated in the survey**

The number of communication managers who completed the survey:

- Distribution division (1)
- Transmission divisions (1)
- Group Communications Department (3).

Communication professionals per division who participated in the survey

The response rate per division was as follows:

- Distribution division (1)
- Transmission division (1)
- Generation division (1)
- Group Communications Department (5)

- **Response from the Office of the Chief Executive**

The research was conducted as an administered structured questionnaire where the questions were posed to the Eskom senior general manager: group communication and was therefore an administered structured interview. The senior general manager was found to be the best source of information because the majority of decision making is done at the senior level. The assumption is that individuals employed in these positions generally have the best access to important organisational information.

- **Demographics of the respondents for focus groups can be explained as follows:**

In the focus group discussions there were 13 participants. There were 9 males and four females from Eskom's Human Resources division (5), Distribution divisions (2), Enterprises division (1), Transmission division (2), and Generation division (3).

SECTION B: Qualitative survey and focus group findings according to the six integrated communication evaluation criteria

In this section, the six integrated communication evaluation criteria were measured in accordance with the responses by the respondents to the survey questionnaire and the focus group participants. The six areas are:

- stakeholder orientation and differentiation;
- communication alignment with corporate strategy;
- consistency of messages to and from the organisation;
- co-ordination of messages;
- sharing information and free flow of messages;
- infrastructure for integration.

5.3.1 Stakeholder orientation and differentiation

The following is Eskom's stakeholder policy statement: through the stakeholder framework, Eskom seeks to ensure that all stakeholder management and engagement are consistently co-ordinated to give a reliable, timely and fair reflection of its strategic objective. The organisation broadly defines its stakeholders as: government departments (Department of Minerals and Energy, Department of Public Enterprises and Nersa), employees, municipalities, the business community, the general public and the media.

The internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation were measured as follows:

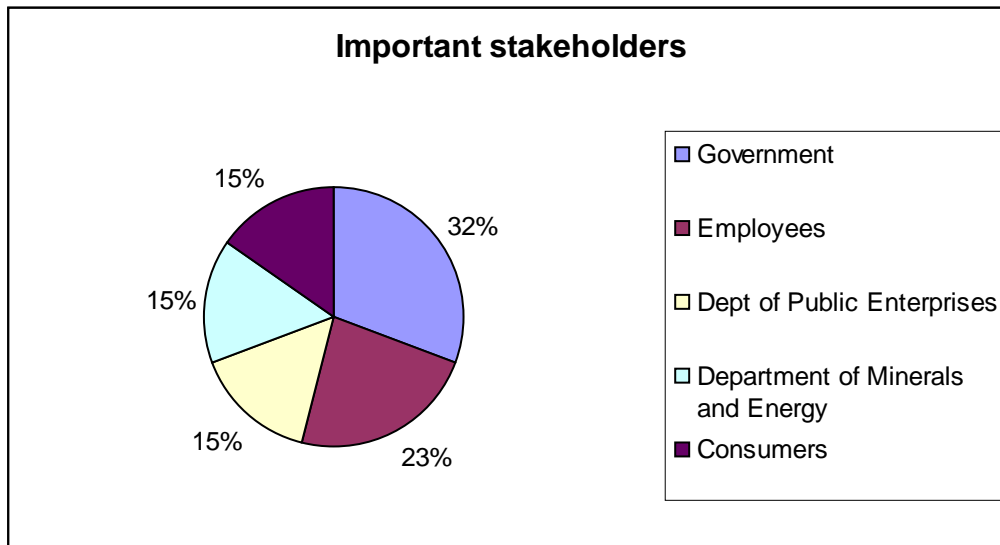
- The online self-administered questionnaire was completed by five Eskom communication managers and eight communication professionals. These respondents were drawn from Eskom's Distribution division (2), Transmission division (2), Generation Divisions (1) and Group Communications Department (8).

- Two focus group discussions were conducted with Eskom human resource managers and project managers. Each session comprised six and seven participants from Eskom's Corporate Human Resources (5), Enterprises (1), Distribution (2), Transmission (2) and Generation divisions (3).

5.3.1.1 Findings of the survey: Stakeholder orientation and differentiation

The following figure depicts the survey results of stakeholder orientation and differentiation:

Figure 4: Most important stakeholders identified by respondents

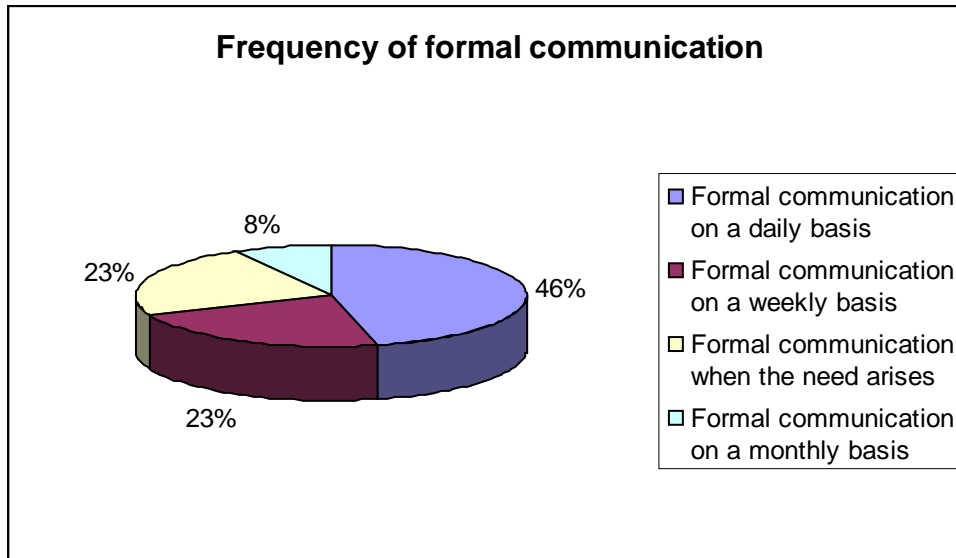


The survey question relates to Eskom's most important stakeholders. Figure 4 above shows that 32% of the respondents indicated that Eskom focused on the government as its primary stakeholder. A further 23% of the respondents identified the employees as Eskom's second most important stakeholders. About 15% of the respondents identified the Department of Public Enterprises, the Department of Minerals and Energy as well as consumers as Eskom's main stakeholders respectively.

These findings are consistent with the views expressed by the Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications who identified the organisation's stakeholders as follows: customers, the media, Department of Public Enterprises (Shareholder), Department of Minerals and Energy (policy), Nersa (regulation) and employees (asset).

The following figure depicts the frequency of formal communication within the organisation:

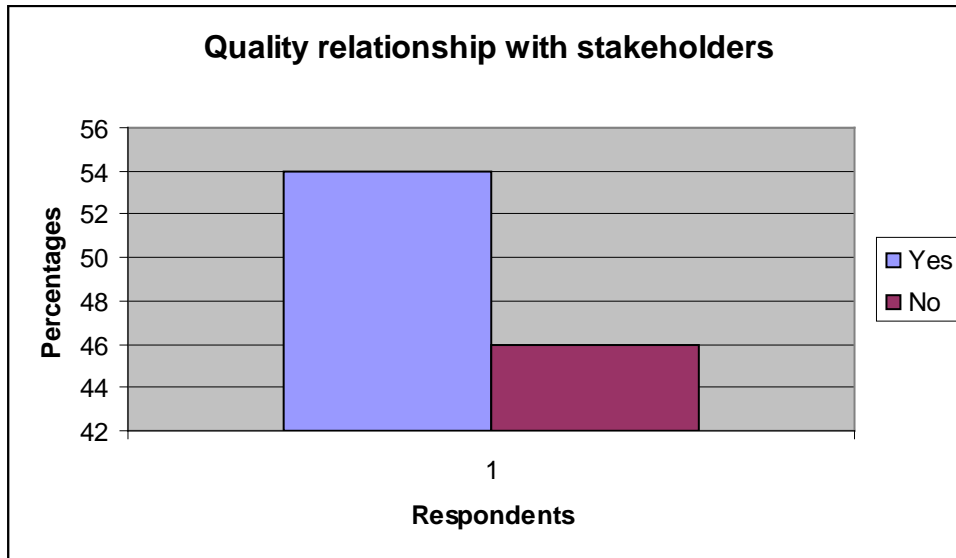
Figure 5: The frequency of formal communication



The survey question relates to the frequency with which Eskom formally communicates with its most important stakeholders. Figure 5 above shows that 46% of the respondents indicated that Eskom communicated formally on a daily basis with its most important stakeholders. A further 23% of the respondents indicated that the organisation communicated formally on a weekly basis with its most important stakeholders. Another 23% of the respondents indicated that the organisation communicated formal messages to its important stakeholders only when the need arose. Only 8% of the respondents indicated that the organisation communicated formally on a monthly basis with its most important stakeholders. These findings are supported by the statement by Eskom's Senior General Manager, Group Communications, who stated that the organisation interacted regularly with its most important stakeholders.

The following figure depicts the quality of relationships with all Eskom stakeholder groups:

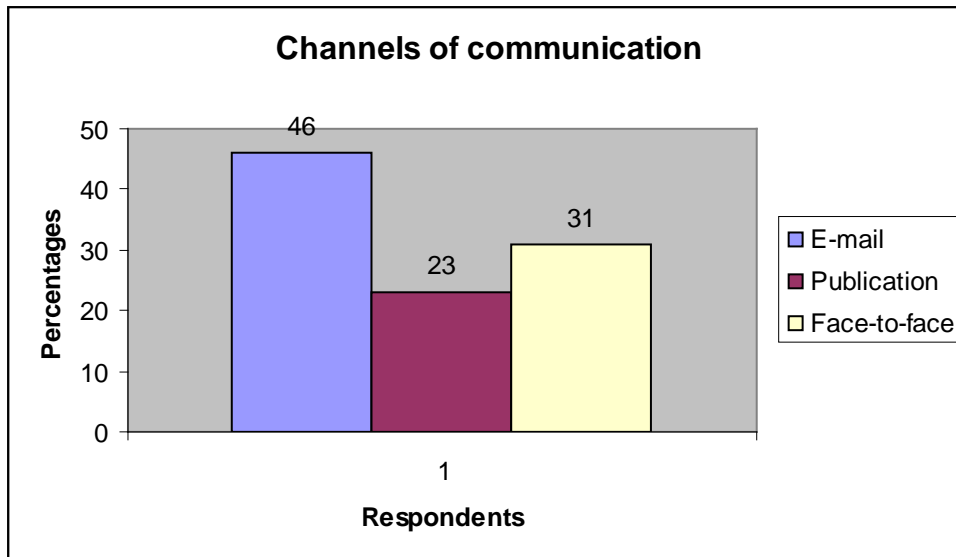
Figure 6: The quality of relationships with all stakeholder groups



The survey question relates to the quality of the relationships that Eskom has with all its stakeholders. Figure 6 above indicates that 54% of the respondents agreed with the statement that the organisation has a quality relationship with all its stakeholder groups. About 46% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the organisation has a quality relationship with all its stakeholder groups. These findings support the statement by the Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications who indicated that the organisation has a quality relationship with all its stakeholders.

The following figure depicts the channels with which Eskom communicates with its internal stakeholders:

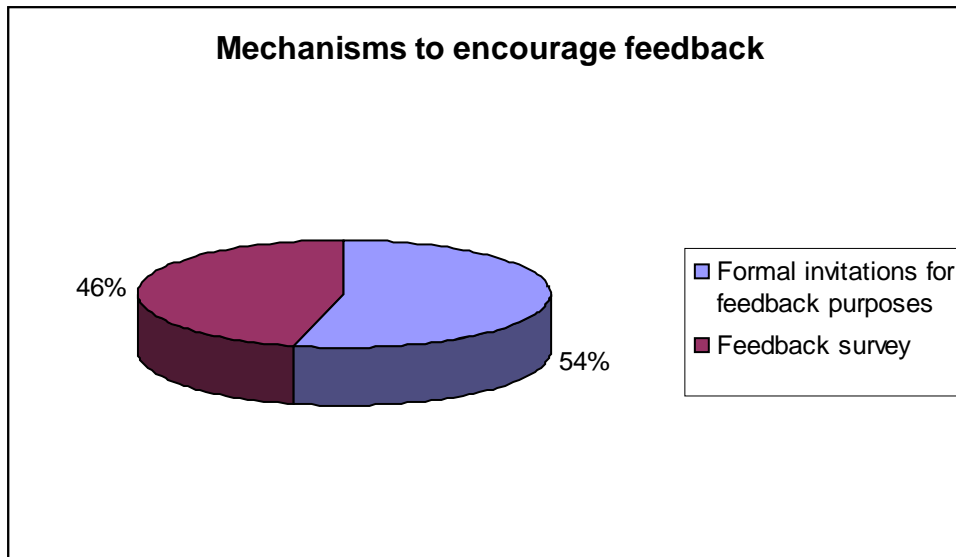
Figure 7: The channels with which Eskom communicates with its internal stakeholders



The survey question relates to the channels of communication Eskom uses to communicate with its internal stakeholders. Figure 7 above shows that 46% of the respondents identified e-mail as the most frequently used channel of communication with internal Eskom stakeholders. A further 31% of the respondents identified face-to-face as the second most frequently used channel for communication with the internal stakeholders. About 23% of the respondents indicated that publications were the third most frequently used channel of communication. These findings support the statement by the Eskom Senior General Manager; Group Communications that Eskom used newsletters, e-mail and face-to-face communication to share information with its internal stakeholders.

The following figure depicts the mechanisms Eskom has to encourage stakeholder feedback:

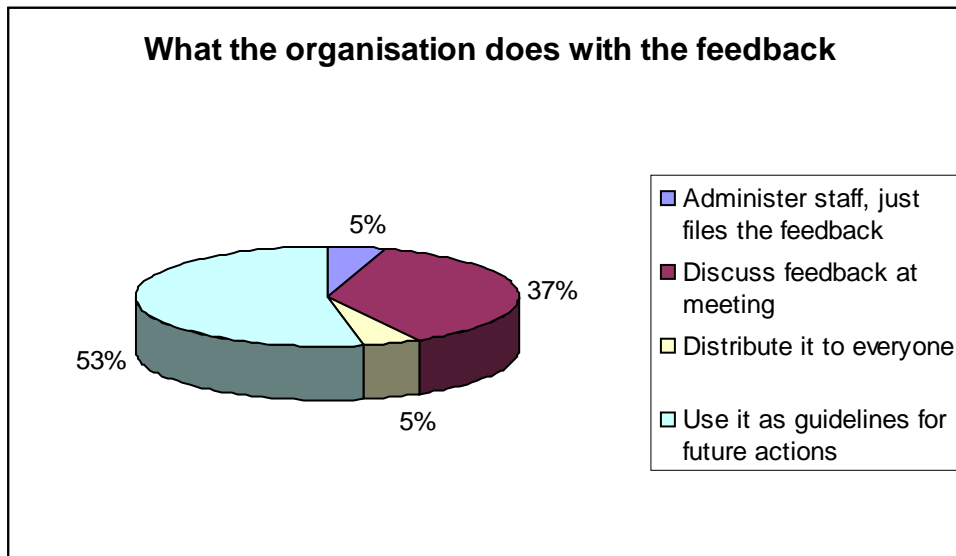
Figure 8: The mechanisms Eskom has in place to encourage stakeholder feedback



The survey question relates to the mechanisms that Eskom uses to encourage feedback from its stakeholders. Figure 8 above shows that about 54% of the respondents indicated that Eskom used formal invitations to obtain feedback. A further 46% of the respondents indicated that the organisation used feedback surveys from stakeholders to encourage feedback. These findings contradict the statement by the Eskom Senior General Manager; Group Communications that Eskom did not have mechanisms to facilitate feedback within the organisation.

The following figure depicts how Eskom uses feedback from stakeholders:

Figure 9: How Eskom uses feedback from stakeholders



The question relates to the manner in which Eskom uses the feedback received from stakeholders. Figure 9 above shows that about 53% of the respondents indicated that Eskom used the feedback report from stakeholders as guidelines for future actions. A further 37% of the respondents indicated that the organisation discussed the feedback reports at meetings. Only 5% of the respondents indicated that the organisation either filed the feedback or distributed it to everyone. These findings contradict the statement by Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications that the organisation did not have the mechanisms to maximise internal stakeholder feedback.

5.3.1.2 Findings of the focus group: stakeholder orientation and differentiation

A discussion follows of the responses by Eskom's human resources managers and project managers in the focus group discussion sessions, regarding stakeholder orientation and differentiation.

The researcher conducted two focus group discussion sessions. Each session comprised six and seven participants from Eskom's Corporate Human Resources (5), Eskom Distribution (2), Transmission (2), Enterprises (1) and Generation divisions (3). The comments from the focus group discussions, that appear to identify significant viewpoints of the participants, follow:

In the first question, participants were asked to identify Eskom's most important stakeholders. The findings indicated that Eskom cared more about the government than its staff members. One participant speculated that this could primarily be due to the fact that the government was Eskom's main shareholder.

The second question relates to the extent to which Eskom Executives are interested in building relationships with the key stakeholder groups. Most participants indicated that Eskom employees did not have enough information and were not included in a more interactive communication process. An example of such comment is: "Eskom always wants to ensure that the media are aware of the company's new direction first. Often we are surprised at how often we read things about Eskom in the national newspaper before hearing directly from the organisation itself."

Some participants indicated that there was a positive relationship between Eskom management and the various unions that represented employees. An example of such comment is: "Eskom has over the past years developed internal structures to accommodate full participation and meaningful influence by organised labour and employees in the decision-making structures and processes at all levels."

At the one extreme, the analysis reflects some commonalities between the responses from the focus group discussion, the survey questionnaire responses and the statement by the Senior General Manager, Group Communications. The results point to the fact that Eskom focuses more on its external stakeholders than on its internal stakeholders.

At the other extreme, the focus group results added some value in that they indicated that trade unions played a crucial role in ensuring that communication was both effective and two-way. Although forged in the field of industrial relations, trade unions have much wider implications. Among other things, trade union representatives can give feedback to their constituencies.

5.3.1.3 *Interpretation of findings: Stakeholder orientation and differentiation*

The results show that there is an imbalance between the perceived importance of internal and external organisational stakeholders and the actual attention and resources given to them. Although Eskom does to a certain extent recognise the importance of employees as stakeholders, the main focus is predominantly on government (see Figure 4 and Annexure B). In essence, external communication is seen as especially critical and as playing a key role in marketing the organisation, its positioning and communication to all external stakeholders. There are three possible reasons for this. Firstly, this could be because the South African Government is Eskom's main shareholder and regulator and therefore the organisation gives it special attention (for example, Eskom is aligned to government departments such as the Department of Public Enterprises and the Department of Minerals and Energy). Secondly, in the pursuit of organisational success, Eskom has traditionally focused on building and sustaining relationships with external customers, as the belief was that the external paying customers would ensure the financial success of an organisation. Thirdly, Eskom is currently associated with a shortage of electricity and the negativity felt around this issue is reflected in the feelings that the public has about the organisation. As a result, the organisation might be desperate to turn public confidence around and to regain control of its external stakeholders. It can also be argued the communication budget is largely allocated to external communication.

In Chapter 1, various literatures are discussed to clarify the differences between the concepts of integrated marketing communication and integrated communication (where integrated communication is seen as the evolution of the concept of integrated marketing communication). In the context of integrated marketing communication, the focus is on the messages sent out by the organisation. In the context of integrated communication, the focus is on communication itself (implying a two-way process). Integrated communication is built on the premise that there must be interaction between the two forms of communication (internal and external) in an ongoing, interactive, independent and synergistic manner (Gronstedt, 2000:7). Duncan and Moriarty (1997:25) assert that in order for integrated communication messages to have maximum impact, an organisation must integrate the following: employees, customers and other stakeholders. Similarly, Christensen (2002:162) postulates that the expectations of internal and external stakeholders regarding their right to have unrestricted access to the organisation, have intensified considerably. In view of this, it can be argued that the approach to focusing predominantly on external communication is a representation of integrated marketing communication, not of integrated communication. This is against Duncan's (2001:30) view, who maintains that integrated communication must first exist internally if a company is to communicate effectively externally. To this end, Duncan and Moriarty (1997:23) acknowledge the role of every employee as a corporate brand ambassador and the extent to which every employee needs to support the corporate brand in everything that is said and done. The implication is that internal communication plays a secondary role in the organisation.

To summarise and synthesise, in general a holistic approach has not yet been taken to focus on internal stakeholders, as the focus is predominantly on external integration. Instead, public relations have played a large role in this process of communication as the organisation seems to focus mainly on building relationships with stakeholders.

Therefore, by not giving emphasis to internal communication, there is no way to ensure that one of the fundamental principles of integrated communication, namely that everyone in the organisation has the potential to touch the customer (Duncan 2001:18), is put in place. This is in contrast to the statement by the Senior General Manager; Group Communications, that stakeholder engagement (both internal and external to the organisation) is a priority and critical component of the organisation's communication.

5.3.2 Communication alignment with strategic focus of the organisation.

This section discusses the results with regard the alignment of Eskom's communication strategy with the corporate strategy:

This section discusses the following research methods that were utilised: the online survey questionnaire and focus group discussions. A total of 13 Eskom communication professionals and managers drawn from Eskom Distribution (2), Transmission (2), Generation divisions (1) and Group Communications Department (8) responded to the survey questionnaire. All these divisions/departments are involved in and responsible for the implementation of Eskom's communication strategy. The Group Communications Department is mainly responsible for the development of communication policies, and the divisional communication departments ensure that these policies are implemented.

In addition, two focus group discussion sessions were conducted with Eskom human resources managers and project managers. Each session comprised six and seven participants respectively, from Eskom's Corporate Human Resources (5), Eskom Distribution (2), Transmission (2), Enterprises (1) and Generation divisions (3).

5.3.2.1 *Findings of the survey: Communication alignment with strategic focus of the organisation*

This section discusses the findings obtained from the self-administered questionnaire with Eskom communication managers and professionals regarding the alignment between Eskom's communications strategy and the corporate strategy.

With regard to the Eskom policy, the Eskom Senior Communication Manager stated that the organisational vision had been launched to all employees and was communicated on an ongoing basis (see Annexure A). However, it should be pointed out that Eskom's communication strategy does not mention the corporate mission per se.

In terms of the Eskom policy, the Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications stated that the organisational vision is launched to all employees and is communicated on an ongoing basis. Meanwhile, it should be noted that Eskom's strategy does not mention the corporate mission per se. The corporate vision fulfils the mission. It currently stands as: "Together building the powerbase for sustainable growth and development." Table 5.1 explains Eskom's vision and its meaning:

Table 5.1: The meaning of Eskom's vision

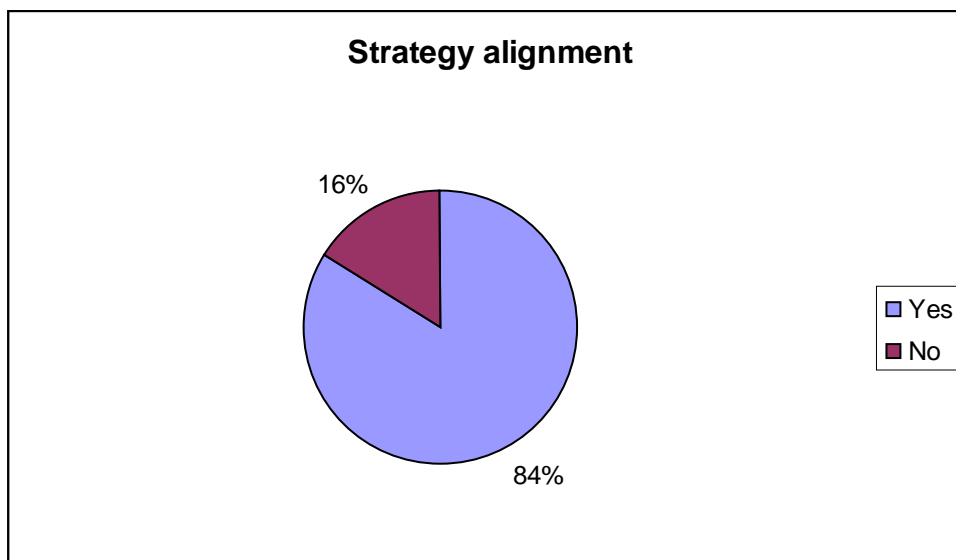
Together	One Eskom, unified, working together in partnership with others
Building	Planning for the future, building South Africa's economy
Powerbase	Providing the electricity foundation for positive sustainable development
Sustainable	Ensuring continued delivery on economic, environmental and social outcomes
Growth	Empowering South Africa, its people and the economy
Development	Securing a brighter future for all and integrating the first and second economy

But employees also need to know how the vision will be achieved. The how is determined by the values of an organisation. Eskom's values are described below:

- Integrity
- Customer satisfaction
- Innovation
- Excellence

This section presents the survey findings pertaining to the alignment of the communication strategy with the corporate strategy. The following figure depicts Eskom's communication strategy's alignment with the corporate strategy:

Figure 10: Communication strategy's alignment with the corporate strategy

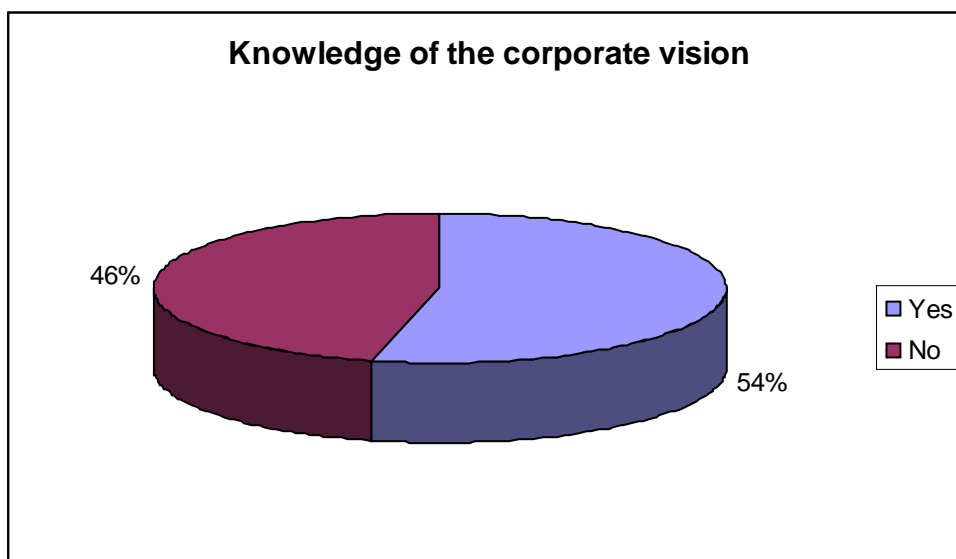


The survey question relates to the alignment of Eskom's communication strategy with the corporate strategy. Figure 10 above shows that 84% of the respondents agreed with the statement that Eskom's communication strategy was aligned to the organisation's corporate strategy.

Only 16% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that Eskom's communication strategy was aligned with the organisations' corporate strategy. These findings are consistent with the statement made by the Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications that Eskom's communication strategy was aligned to the organisation's corporate strategy.

The following figure depicts employee's knowledge of Eskom's corporate vision:

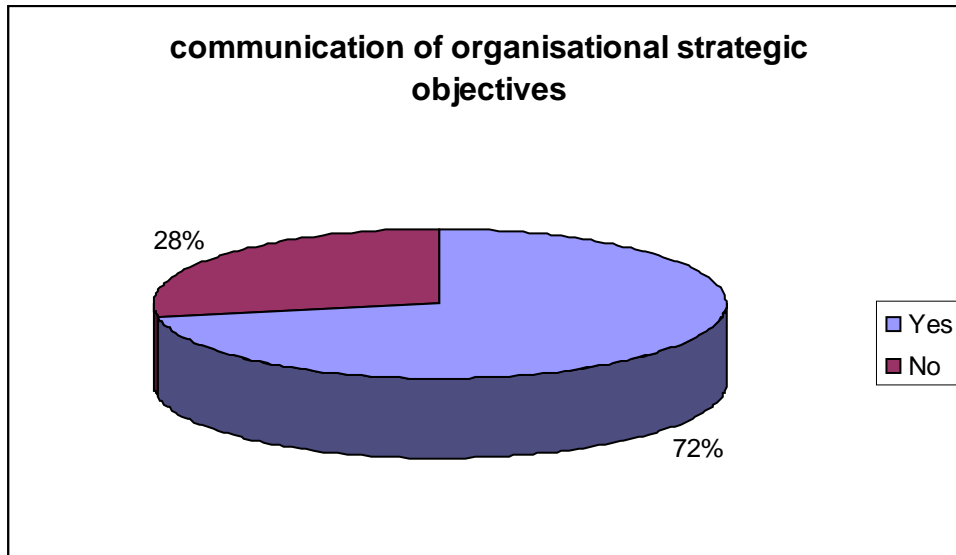
Figure 11: Employees' knowledge of Eskom's corporate vision



The survey question relates to the employees' knowledge of the Eskom corporate vision. Figure 11 above indicates that 54% of the respondents agreed with the statement that Eskom employees have knowledge of the organisation's vision. A further 46% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that Eskom employees have knowledge of the organisation's vision. These findings support the statement by Eskom's Senior General Manager, Group Communications that all Eskom employees were aware of the corporate vision and that the vision was being launched to all employees on an ongoing basis.

The following figure depicts the regular communication of organisational strategic objectives:

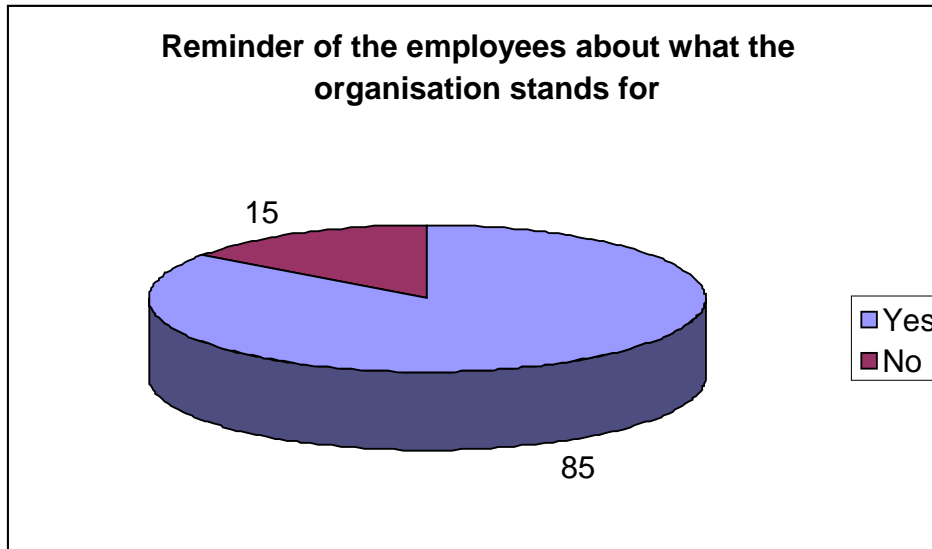
Figure 12: Regular communication of organisational strategic objectives



The survey question relates to the frequency of communicating Eskom’s strategic objectives. Figure 12 shows that about 72% of the respondents agreed with the statement that Eskom’s strategic objective was communicated regularly to all employees. A further 28% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the organisational strategic objective was communicated regularly. These findings are in accordance with the views expressed by the Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications that the organisational vision had been launched to all employees and was communicated on an ongoing basis.

The following figure depicts the reminding of employees about what Eskom stands for:

Figure 13: Reminding employees about what Eskom stands for



The survey question relates to whether employees were reminded about what Eskom stands for. Figure 13 above shows that about 85% of the respondents agreed with the statement that Eskom employees were reminded about what the organisation stood for. A mere 15% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the organisation's employees were reminded of what their organisation stood for. These findings support the views expressed by the Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications that the organisation's vision was communicated on an ongoing basis.

5.3.2.2 Findings of the focus group: communication alignment with strategic focus.

The following are the results of the focus group discussions regarding the alignment of Eskom's communication strategy with the corporate strategy:

- The first question relates to the knowledge of the organisational vision and values. The majority of the participants were aware that the vision statement of the organisation functioned as a preamble to many of the Eskom publications, in particular the Eskom annual report.

Other participants indicated that Eskom had an orientation programme in place for new employees. Through this programme, the organisation's new employees learned about the vision of the organisation, management philosophy, policies, what Eskom stood for and the role they could play in the organisation. An example of such a comment is: "Eskom tells me where we are going, how we will get there, what my role is in getting us there and what is in it for me."

Some of the participants indicated that the communication they received from Eskom was adequate in helping them to understand its brand values. They identified the values as being: integrity, excellence, customer satisfaction and innovation. Only a few of the respondents said they did not take Eskom's values seriously.

- The second question relates to the medium of communication Eskom uses for communication purposes. Most respondents identified newsletters, e-mail and the annual report. One respondent said: "The annual report is the one document that reaches many of the Eskom employees, either in print or via the Internet."

In summary, there is consistency regarding the responses of the focus group discussion, the survey findings and the statement by the Senior General Manager, Group Communications, namely that there is an alignment between Eskom communication strategy and the corporate strategy. Responses from the focus group discussions indicate that the organisation recognises the role and importance of orientation programmes for new employees.

The orientation programme acquaints new employees with the organisational culture and procedures and helps them feel part of the team.

5.3.2.3 *Interpretation of the findings: Communication alignment with strategic focus.*

Overall, there is a connection between Eskom's communication strategy and the corporate strategy. The evidence suggests that Eskom's employees have a clear understanding of the objectives of the organisation. The organisation seems to have communicated the organisation's vision to its employees and introduced new employees to the culture of the organisation. Evidence further suggests that the organisation uses internal communication to ensure that every employee understands the organisation's objectives, and their role in achieving the vision. This is because all new employees have undergone an induction programme when they started working at Eskom (see Annexure B).

The literature shows that engaging employees with a strong vision is one way of building a strong internal brand. This was clear from the focus group results, namely that efforts have been made to communicate the values and the vision of the organisation to the employees via the annual report (see Annexure B). The organisation seems to have capitalised on an intranet as a mechanism for information sharing and promotion of the organisational values. For instance, as the organisation is able to put the annual report information on the organisation intranet site, one can only assume that a great deal of information has been shared throughout the organisation and that the organisation's employees are living the corporate values. This statement is underpinned by the fact that most participants identified the Eskom values as being: integrity, excellence, customer satisfaction and innovation (see Annexure B). Creating this alignment is vital for the organisation, as companies depend on their employees for the achievement of their strategic objectives.

This dimension contributes significantly to quality relationships between employees and the organisation and is the result of constant, clear and relevant communication. It can be argued that creating internal vision marketing helped employees understand that they could make a difference and created a sense of belonging to the organisation.

It is for this reason that the research findings from the online self-administered questionnaire and focus group discussions are more in keeping with the statement by the Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications that there is a link between communication and organisational objectives. Consequently, this also gives the impression that communication at Eskom is driven by the strategic intent of the organisation as a whole, in order to manage stakeholder relationships. Farmer, Slater and Wright (1998:94) show that the degree to which the leader communicates a strategic change influences the degree to which employees agree with the strategy. The approach to ensuring that communication management is driven by the strategic intent of the organisation is called integrated communication.

5.3.3 Consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation

Consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation was measured through the research method of qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is a technique for systematically describing the form and contents of written and spoken material and “allows for simultaneous application of qualitative and quantitative techniques” (Sommer & Sommer, 1997:171). According to Barker and Angelopulo (2004:251), data investigated by means of content analysis consist of collections of encoded symbols or messages used in communication. These authors maintain that as a research tool, content analysis is used to determine the significance of certain words or concepts in texts. They maintain furthermore that in the field of organisational communication research, content analysis can be used to identify the intentions, focus or communication trends of an individual, group or organisation, or to describe attitudinal and behavioural responses to communication within an organisation.

Leedy (1997:164) defined content analysis as “the continual process of comparing data segments and data codes within and across categories. The methodology that was used in this study can be explained as follows:

- ***Research method***

The study qualitatively evaluates the consistency of Eskom publication messages, corporate identity and web site messages. Thematic analysis was the first step in grasping a sense of the publication messages, corporate identity and web site messages, followed by categories to which the researcher did the coding. De Vos (1998:342) suggests that the Morse and Field approach consists of four cognitive processes integral to all qualitative data analysis methods, namely comprehending (the process of making sense of the data through the transcription, checking and coding of the data), synthesising (the analysis of categories, which are sorted by commonalities and which consist of segments of notes or transcripts compiled from the transcripts of several participants.

- ***Selection of a sample***

The type of sample for this study is a purposive sample. The research samples were reviewed and the documents coded and placed into the relevant categories. To this end, one Eskom corporate newsletter – EskomNews (monthly newsletter to all Eskom employees) and one Eskom Transmission division newsletters - Trasmitter (bi-monthly to the specific divisional employees) were selected in order to provide an overall picture of publication messages at Eskom. All the newsletters are published in English. In addition all press releases and speeches issued by Eskom during the past 12 months were included.

The organisation’s corporate identity in all forms of internal communications was analysed to determine to if there are any standard templates for announcements and presentations.

Eskom web page messages was also analysed to determine how the Eskom divisions' websites compare in terms of their content; and how the key messages of all web pages are aligned with the Eskom strategy.

- ***Unit of analysis***

The unit of analysis is what the researcher actually categorise and count. It is a measurable unit which provides the researcher with a standard method of analysing the data (Du Plooy 1995:157).

- In terms of the Eskom publication messages, the unit of analysis was paragraphs, sentences, key words, clause, phrases and an individual word from the publication of both Eskom divisional and corporate newsletters. It also includes the examination of the tone of the messages and frequency of the publication.
- The visual corporate identity elements and the usage of Eskom logo on all internal print documentation such as names on print, pamphlets, posters et cetera.
- The web page messages and the use of Eskom logo on the web site.

- ***Categorisation***

Categories are the meaningful groups into which the researcher allocates the units of analysis (Du Plooy 1995:160). The goals of categorisation is referred to as 'the discovery and ordering of ideas and themes, the storing of growing understanding, linking of ideas to data, cross-referencing, sorting and clarifying' (Richards & Richards 1995:63). Once the categories had been established, the researcher undertook the process of coding or classifying the data in the content categories. After conducting a thematic analysis of the two Eskom publications messages, visual corporate identity and the Eskom web page, the following were identified:

1. Eskom Publications:
 - People – This category feature people at Eskom who make a difference.
 - Feature – This category report on topical workplace issues.
 - Travel- This category features holiday destinations in Africa.
 - Road safety – This category encourage Eskom employees to become a better road users.
 - Social issues – This category profiles charities committed to helping those less fortunate.

2. Corporate Identity:
 - PowerPoint template with the Eskom corporate identity
 - Letterhead template
 - Intranet web design according to the Eskom's corporate identity

3. Eskom website:
 - Intranet messages
 - Eskom projects posted on the intranet
 - General Eskom information on the intranet

- **Coding**

Content analysis almost always requires developing a somewhat ingenious means of sorting and coding the content to be studied. Coding is the process of transforming raw data into a form suitable for analysis. According to Du Plooy (1997:159), coding refers to the process of transforming raw data into a form that is suitable for analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) define codes as 'tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. For the purpose of this study, coding was done to quantify the qualitative data. The units of analysis were placed into a content category.

The results of content analysis were compared to the statement by Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications Department that Eskom has formal processes in place to ensure strategic consistency in relation to internal communication. In terms of the Eskom policy for message consistency, Eskom's Senior General Manager, Group Communications indicated that the organisation had a communication policy in place which applied to all business units. It should also be acknowledged that the corporate identity is controlled by the Corporate Identity Manager and is audited on a regular basis. The results are reported below.

5.3.3.1 *Research results: content analysis*

The following results are presented and analysed to track patterns in organisational message consistency within the organisation:

Generally the findings suggest that there are common practices in terms of communication planning across the organisation. With regard to the overall identity of the organisation which is communicated to internal and external stakeholders through the brand management techniques, the results suggest that the organisation has a standard procedure (common framework) for approaching business issues. The Eskom logo, along with certain other graphic elements, serves as a visual representation of the organisation. This could be attributed to the fact that the organisation has subscribed to a monolithic brand architecture strategy. The organisation uses the logo on communications and much more. Eskom Corporate Identity is mandatory in terms of the organisation's corporate colour, namely that the corporate blue colour must be dominant and use a 70:30 blue: accent colour ratio. Eskom's logos are shown below:

Figure 14: Eskom logos

Corporate	
Distribution	
Generation	
Transmission	
Enterprises	

The organisation always presents one uniform, consistent visual interface to all stakeholders and markets. All Eskom employees in all divisions apply the same corporate identity specifications as contained in the Corporate Identity Manual (ESK AM AAA I Rev 2).

In terms of the Eskom websites, it is recognised that:

- responsibility for the technical aspects of Eskom’s intranet and website rests on the respective divisions/ departments.
- Professionals in the divisions/departments are responsible for ensuring that the corporate style guidelines are adhered to and that the quality of the website messages is consistently high.
- The physical appearance of the Eskom website is an important extension of the organisation’s corporate identity. Each division has its own page or section of the site and the scope to update it.
- Shared intranet: Eskom has one intranet site hosted by one department (Group Communications Department) and is shared and used by all Eskom divisions. This is another method of top-bottom communication within the organisation.

- Eskom has an improved website and intranet which are easier to navigate. Information on the website is constantly updated and therefore provides the latest information. This site is designed for the specific Eskom's signage use, for those webmasters who would like to build intranet websites according to the new Eskom identity rules and guidelines. The findings from the content analysis concur with the statement by the Senior General Manager, Group Communications that Eskom has formal processes in place to ensure strategic consistency in relation to internal communication.

In terms of Eskom publications it was established that the organisation has adopted a monthly internal corporate newsletter called "*Eskom News*". An editorial board provides a forum with wide employee involvement for various communication issues and to implement aspects of the communication strategy. The editorial board develops the newsletter, conducts audits of the publication and develops protocols.

There is a Transmission divisional newsletter produced every two months, called *Transmitter*. This divisional newsletter has its own editorial team and follows its own protocols. However, the contents of these publications complement each other in terms of key information coverage. The information in all newsletters is businesslike in tone, and covers relevant organisational information, including what each Eskom division is doing. They all facilitate the flow of information between Eskom management and employees about the direction in which the organisation is heading and why it is important. Messages emanating from the various Eskom divisional publications are not only consistent but also aligned with and support the organisation's overall strategy. The analysis revealed that in all publications reviewed, the organisation's vision statement described its macro goal and strategic advantage in the marketplace while being an inspiration to employees. Nevertheless, the results suggest that each division has a stylebook that provides it with guidelines on writing style and punctuation and the use of divisional colours (see Figure 14).

5.3.3.2 Interpretation of the findings of the content analysis: consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation

The interpretation of the data collected regarding message consistency is presented as follows:

Eskom seems to have adopted a single consistent communication approach to both its customers and the employees. The organisation's internal communication seems to repeatedly reflect consistent themes. Evidence suggests that consistent messages seem to be delivered and received in consistent way by every member of the organisation. This could be due to the fact that, despite its size, the organisation has adopted a branding strategy which is holistic in its messaging approach. For instance, the organisation has a publication policy and a corporate identity for printed and electronic communication in place. There is a clear, consistent and recognisable identity, in terms of the positioning of the organisation. The Eskom logo, on its own or with certain other graphic elements, serves as a visual representation of the organisation (see Figure 14). Evidence show that the organisation's letters, leaflets, posters and publications make an important contribution to the organisation's identity. The reason is because guidelines on good practice and expected standards in communications have been developed along with the template for checking corporate identity. This is probably due to the fact that the organisation has adopted a monolithic brand architecture strategy. According to this strategy, no other logo or identity other than the Eskom brand identity is recognised by the Eskom management and the employees in general.

All Eskom subsidiaries adhere to a corporate template, which acts as a check against governance headings. Stationery, signs or emblems are printed in the correct colours, in the correct typeface and in the right size. For instance, the only colour blue, known as Eskom's corporate blue, is one which is identified on the colour chart. This demonstrates corporate integrity and provides a platform for integrated communication and message consistency.

This is in line with Kitchen (1999:235), who contends that the raising of a corporate umbrella over all communication activities makes sense, the characteristics of which are: order, uniformity, rules and regulations, policies and procedures with an emphasis on stability, predictability and smooth operation.

The same graphic identity and standards used for publications is carried through to all communication vehicles, including the corporate website. The web site at Eskom has one common entry point where important corporate headline news is published. This means that this main homepage can provide all kinds of information about the organisation, its projects, strategy, et cetera. In addition, the results show that the organisation has an identified member of each division who acts as a key contact for collating local information for employee news. This means that there is a key point of contact for internal enquiries in each locality.

In terms of writing style, the different divisional publications consistently reflect the same corporate style and image. The organisation seems to have developed protocols and standards in this regard. This helps to ensure that all Eskom publications carry consistent brand messages and graphic elements. Hence, all printed material carries the blue colour and conforms to a house style in terms of design and layout. Its messages are of high quality, in plain English, informative and with no jargon.

The organisation seems to have maintained a tight control over key messages and this has helped created a sense of consistency around all organisational communication. Analysis indicates that once established its vision, the organisation has included the vision in all its subsequent communication activities throughout the year, for example, speeches, press releases, newsletters, web sites, marketing collateral, et cetera. This is in line with Thorson and Moore (1996:136), who argue that many organisations and agencies believed they could end all their mixed messages and build better relationships by simply making sure their marketing communication had “one voice, one look”.

The collected data has so far confirmed the statement of the Senior General Manager, Group Communications that the organisation has a formal process in place (see Annexure A).

5.3.4 Co-ordination of communication efforts and action

The following are the results of measuring the co-ordination of communication efforts and action across the organisation:

Co-ordination of communication efforts and action were measured through the self-administered questionnaire completed by five Eskom communication managers and eight communication professionals from Eskom's Distribution division (2) Generation division (2), Transmission division (1) and Group Communications Department (8). All communications managers and professionals in these divisions are responsible for the co-ordination of communication efforts and actions in their areas of responsibility.

In addition, two focus group discussion sessions, each with six and seven participants, were also conducted. The participants in the focus groups came from the Eskom Human Resources division (5), Distribution division (2), Transmission division (2), Generation division (3) and Eskom Enterprises division (1).

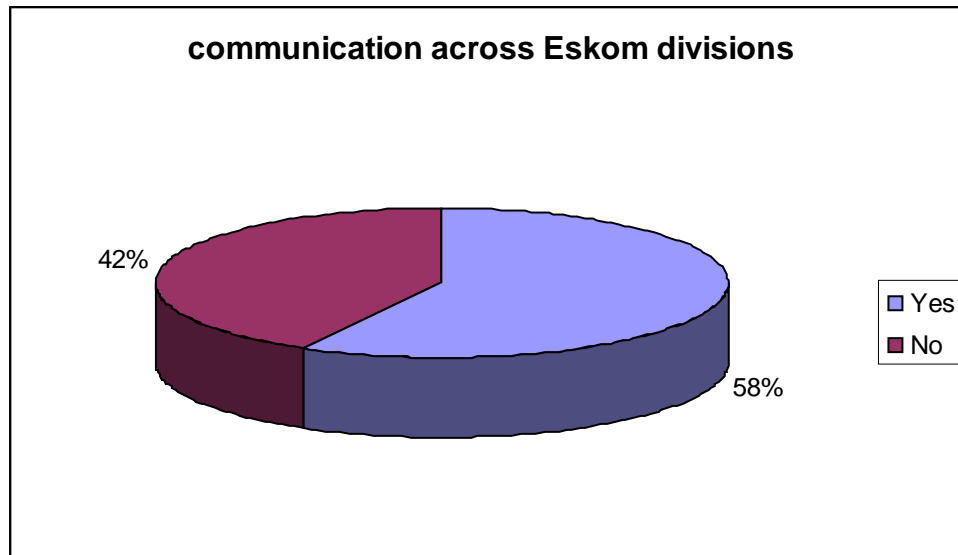
5.3.4.1 *Findings of the survey: co-ordination of communication efforts and action*

Following are the findings of the survey regarding how Eskom co-ordinate its internal communication efforts and action:

To date, there appears to be no overarching communication strategy or even a policy to co-ordinate the various Eskom divisions'/department's communication efforts. However, the Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications indicated in the interview that Eskom has processes in place to plan its communication activities across all divisions.

The following figure depicts the planning of communication activities across Eskom divisions:

Figure 15: Planning of communication activities across divisions

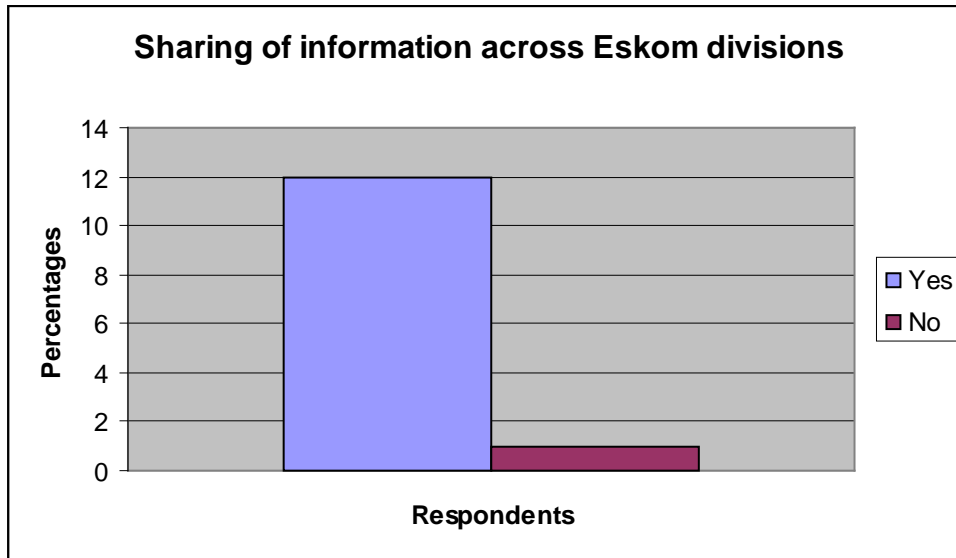


The research question relates to the communication plan across the organisation. Figure 15 above shows that 58% of the respondents agreed with the statement that Eskom planned its communication activities across all divisions. However, about 42% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the organisation's communication was planned across all divisions. These findings are consistent with the views of Eskom's Senior General Manager; Group Communications who stated that Eskom planned its communication activities across all divisions. The Eskom internal communications team has a mandate to:

- inform, educate and update the internal stakeholders on activities that Eskom is involved in and encourage participation.
- empower and support Line Managers to communicate effectively (encourage face-to-face communication).

The following figure depicts the sharing of information across Eskom divisions:

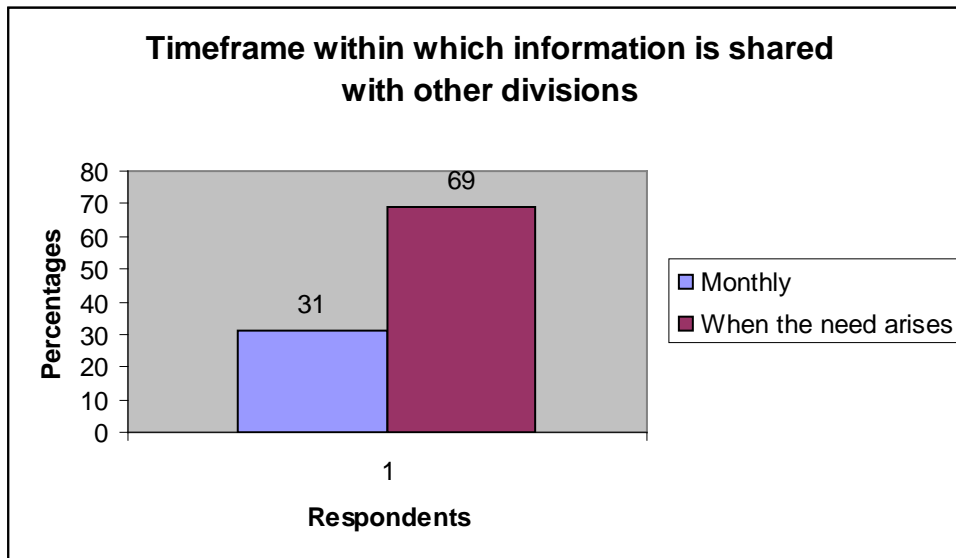
Figure 16: Sharing of information across Eskom divisions



The survey question relates to the sharing of information across Eskom divisions. Figure 16 above shows that an overwhelming majority of the respondents (92%) agreed with the statement that information was shared across Eskom divisions. Only 8% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that there was sharing of information across Eskom divisions. These findings are in accordance with the statement by the Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications that the operational and strategic management committee (management committee consisting of communication managers from various Eskom divisions) planned communication across the organisation (see Annexure A).

The following figure depicts the timeframe within which Eskom departments/divisions formally hold meetings with members of other departments/divisions for information sharing:

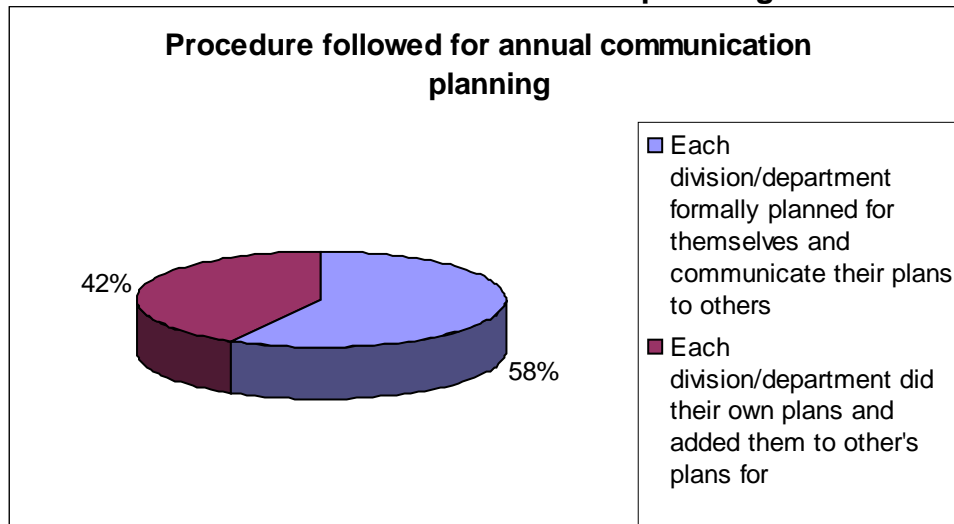
Figure 17: The timeframe within which departments/divisions formally hold meetings with members of other departments/divisions for information sharing.



The survey question relates to the frequency with which divisions formally hold meetings with other divisions for information sharing. Figure 17 above shows that about 69% of the respondents indicated that their departments/divisions held formal meetings with members from other department/divisions for information sharing, but only when the need arose. Only 31% of the respondents indicated that their department/divisions held formal meetings with members of other divisions for information sharing on a monthly basis. These findings support the statement by the Eskom Senior General Manager; Group Communications that Eskom's communication divisions used fraternity meetings, strategic management committee meetings and at-issues management meetings for communicating with other divisions.

The following figure depicts Eskom procedure for annual communication planning:

Figure 18: Procedure for annual communication planning



The survey question relates to the procedure followed for planning the annual communication. Figure 18 above shows that 58% of the respondents indicated that each division/department formally planned for itself and communicated its plans to others. A further 42% of the respondents indicated that each department/ division did their own plans and added them to other's plans to form the planning for the bigger unit. These findings contradict the statement by Eskom's Senior General Manager, Group Communications that Eskom's operational and strategic management committee meetings are used to plan communication throughout the organisation.

5.3.4.2 Findings of the focus group: co-ordination of communication efforts and action

The following comments were highlighted in the focus group discussion:

- The question relates to the medium the organisation frequently used to communicate across the organisation. The results revealed that Eskom mainly made use of e-mail messages and that most of the organisation's staff members' contact details were available on the intranet for communication purposes across the organisation.

- Participants were also asked if they knew a person responsible for co-ordinating Eskom's communication efforts across the organisation. The majority indicated that Eskom's communication was centrally co-ordinated and that it was a formal responsibility of the Group Communications Department to ensure that Eskom policy was communicated to all members of staff. However, most participants indicated that central communication, where it existed, was largely restricted to the dissemination of formal policy and procedures.
- Other participants indicated that communication across divisions was still prone to silos and territorialism. They stated that there appeared to be no clear or consistent mechanism for effectively cascading information to other staff members in the various Eskom departments/divisions.

In summary, the findings from the focus group discussion varied significantly from the survey responses and from the statement by the Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications Department. Although the results from the survey indicated that cross-functional communication existed in Eskom, the focus group results indicated that cross-functional communication was extremely poor – divisions were still working in silos. This signifies that the Eskom divisions/department are not working together as a team and therefore not sharing a common goal.

5.3.4.3 Interpretation of the findings: co-ordination of communication efforts and action

The following presents the findings regarding the co-ordination of communication efforts and action:

In the broader sense, respondents indicated the general availability of communication channels to ensure the co-ordination of messages throughout the organisation (see Figures 15 and 16). This statement was reinforced by the focus group results which indicated that a number of communication channels existed in the organisation (see Annexure B). The intranet was indicated as being an increasingly used communication tool for interacting with stakeholders.

However, based on the results of the focus groups, central information from senior management does not appear to be adequately disseminated to the divisions/departments. What emerges is that the organisation is still working in departmentalism (see Annexure B). For instance, the various Eskom divisions of the organisation still function in isolation from one another to a large extent. In this regard, a situation exists where divisions operate in silos when dealing with the same stakeholders regarding different issues. It appears that it may be the absence and inefficiency of cross-functional communication that creates a barrier to the communication processes and therefore contributes to the lack of a sense of cohesion. In other words, communication strategies and operational plans in these divisions are developed without input from other divisions, including the central office. This is contrary to the views of Duncan (2002:58) who advocates that integrated communication is and must be a cross-functional process which involves all key business activities and takes all the stakeholders into account. The goal is to get all the communication messages lined up so that the organisation can send out consistent and clear messages to its employees. Integrated communication therefore involves the creation of links between all departments and employees in an organisation.

It requires organisations to co-ordinate their various strategies and messages so that they can engage coherently and meaningfully with their target audience. This is in contradiction to the statement by the Eskom Senior General Manager; Group Communications Department that cross-functional communication exists in Eskom.

In summary, comments taken from the focus groups illustrates that Eskom's communication across the organisation is insufficient or completely absent. Analysis reveals that there is continuous fragmentation of communication activities, due to insufficient co-ordination and planning, therefore losing efficiency.

5.3.5 Sharing of information and free flow of information

The results of the survey and focus group discussion regarding the sharing of information and free flow of messages are presented below:

The sharing of information and free flow of information were measured via a self-administered questionnaire to 13 Eskom communication managers and professionals from Eskom's Distribution (2), Generation (2), Transmission (1) and Group Communications Department (8). All communication managers and professionals in these divisions are responsible for the co-ordination of communication efforts and actions in their respective areas of responsibility.

In addition, two focus group discussion sessions were conducted with human resources managers and project managers, each with six and seven participants. The participants for the focus groups came from the Eskom Human Resources division (5), Distribution division (2), Transmission division (2), Generation division (3) and Enterprises divisions (1).

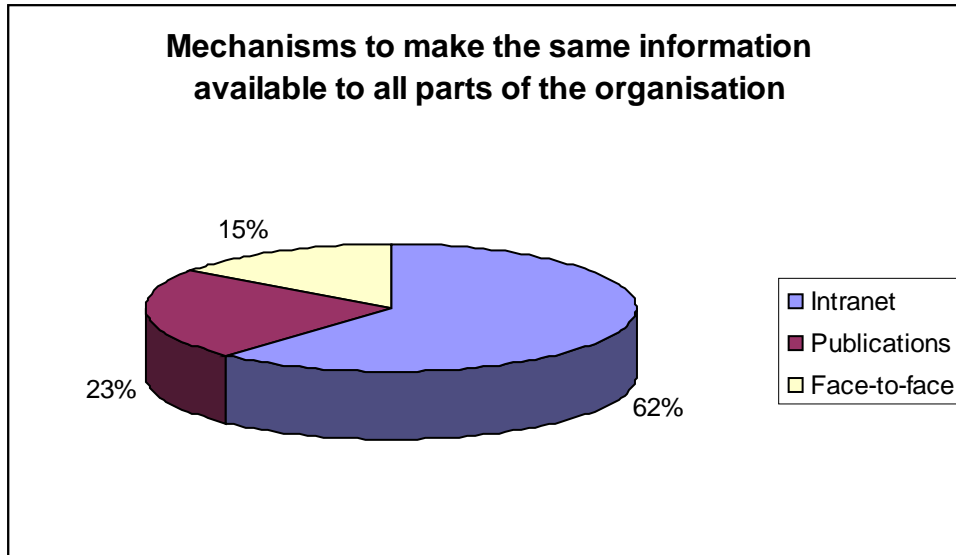
5.3.5.1 Findings of the survey: sharing of information and free flow of information

This section presents the research findings of the survey obtained from Eskom communication managers and communication professionals regarding the free flow and sharing of information in the organisation:

In terms of the Eskom policy for the free flow and sharing of information, the organisation does have an internal communication strategy in place to facilitate information sharing throughout the organisation. Eskom's internal communication strategy forms part and parcel of the organisation's overall communication strategy. This was confirmed by Eskom's Senior General Manager, Group Communications who stated that Eskom had the mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation.

The following figure depicts the mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation:

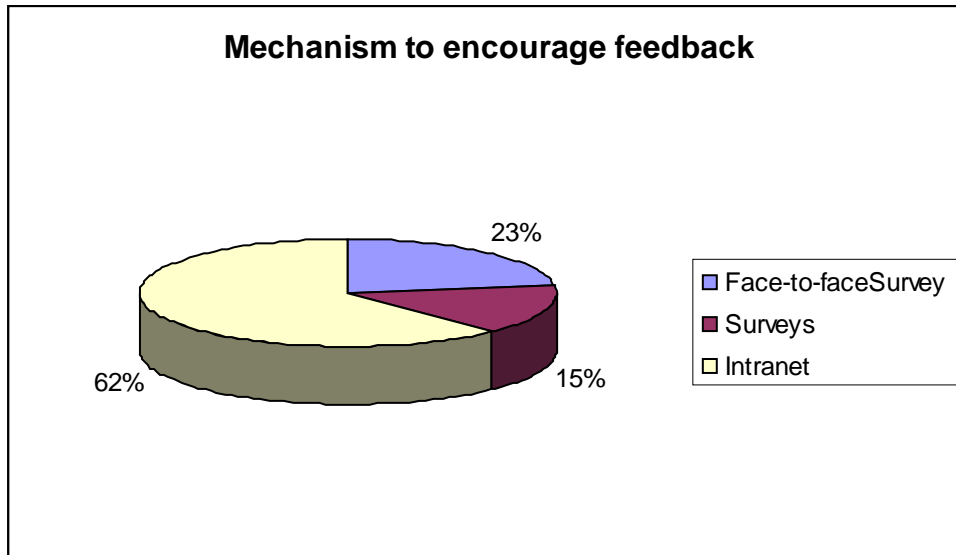
Figure 19: The mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation



The survey question relates to the mechanisms Eskom uses to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation. Figure 19 above shows that 61% of the respondents identified the intranet as the mechanism the organisation used to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation. A further 23% of the respondents identified publications as the mechanisms the organisation used to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation. Only 15% of the respondents indicated that face-to-face was the mechanism the organisation used to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation. This is in keeping with the statement by Eskom's Senior General Manager, Group Communications, who identified newsletters, the intranet and mass meetings as the mechanisms that Eskom used to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation.

The following figure depicts the mechanisms to encourage feedback from stakeholders:

Figure 20: The mechanisms to encourage feedback from stakeholders



The survey question relates to the mechanisms Eskom uses to encourage feedback from stakeholders. Figure 20 above shows that most respondents (62%) indicated that Eskom used the intranet frequently in order to encourage feedback from stakeholders, with face-to-face in second place at (23%). Only 15% of the respondents indicated that the organisation used survey interviews as the mechanism to encourage feedback. The findings contradict the statement by Eskom's Senior General Manager, Group Communications that the organisation did not have the mechanisms to maximise feedback from internal stakeholders.

5.3.5.2 Findings of the focus group: sharing of information and free flow of information

The following responses emerged from the focus group discussion sessions:

- The first question relates to the location where communication strategy could be found. A significant number of the participants believed that all communication functions were co-ordinated through the Group Communications Department in the Office of the Chief Executive.
- The second question relates to how Eskom shared information with its internal stakeholders. The majority of the participants indicated that the organisation had multiple internal communication vehicles. The mediums identified were the intranet, e-mail bulletins, online and printed newsletters, briefing sessions, posters and notice boards. "Generally our intranets serve as terrific resources for up-to-date company news, sharing remarks and messages from our leadership teams. However, e-mail communication with field employees is extremely low if not impossible."

Most participants mentioned that the sharing of information normally occurred at senior level and that the sharing of information did not cascade down to the lower level as expected.

Others participants thought that the sharing of information occurred in their departments, but again on a need-to-know basis. Some indicated that notices of meetings were not timely, sometimes reaching them only on the day of or the day before a meeting.

Other responses that emerged from this question regarding the perception of the remote workers were as follows: they felt they did not receive the same information as the office staff, they believed that knowledge sharing across the organisation could be improved and they preferred to receive company information by newsletter, as it was portable and they did not have regular access to a personal computer.

- The third question relates to the organisation's ability to encourage the upward flow of communication and the lateral flow of information across the organisation. One participant responded as follows: "When management decides to have an instruction implemented, they merely inform the supervisor or place a memo on the notice board. However, when the workers wish to see changes or grievances resolved, it can take a long time."

Similarly, another participant said: "if the manager wants to get a word down to the sweeper, they can get it there within a matter of hours. But if that sweeper has a message to send up to management, it is not the case."

One participant said: "In Eskom they indeed have this two-way communication going, but only from the top down. For example, let the work force just try and communicate a problem upwards. You find that there are all sorts of obstacles. And sometimes, halfway down the road, the workers throw their hands up in disgust and say: 'it is not worth it – let us just forget it'."

- The fourth question relates to the mechanism for employee feedback regarding communication. Most participants cited communication channels such as staff meetings as the main channel for providing and receiving feedback to a certain extent. “This forum also provides a platform where some of our disgruntled employees can air their views.”

The findings emanating from the focus group discussions did not accord with the survey results and differed from the statement by Eskom's Senior General Manager, Group Communications that Eskom had the mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation. The focus group results indicated that the communication receivers (employees) at Eskom were merely passive information processors who reacted appropriately if the message was clear. This result also means that feedback is unnecessary.

5.3.5.3 *Interpretation of the findings: sharing of information and free flow of information*

A discussion of the findings regarding the sharing of information and free flow of information follows next.

Where the available communication methods are put to good use in the organisation, effective communication appears to be working well. The findings from the respondents indicate that Eskom has a range of communication channels through which it communicates with employees. Links have been established in building and developing communication relationships. Information technology plays an important role in Eskom's communication framework. The intranet seems to be gradually becoming the primary arena to distribute information within the organisation (see Figures 19 and 20).

Therefore, most employees in the organisation are accessible through the intranet, suggesting that the intranet has replaced “traditional” communication channels as a preferred, most trusted information source within the organisation.

However, the focus group results showed that the organisation's communication generally flowed mainly from the top downward (see Annexure B). In terms of theories on the integration of communication, the communication process is incomplete if it is solely one way. An integrative model suggests a planned and co-ordinated communication effort. According to Gronstedt (2000:21), vertical integration means aligning “top-down communicators” with a clear vision, which is evolved through a process of “bottom-up communication”, an ongoing dialogue among employees of all ranks.

The results indicate that the upward communication, namely, communication between employees and top management, is in some cases non-existent and in other cases inefficient. The findings show that the same communication which goes all the way down does not go all the way up, along the same channels and with the same urgency. This is evidenced by the following statement: “If the manager wants to get a word down to the sweeper, he can get it there within a matter of hours. But if that sweeper has a message to send up to management, it is not the case.” This has a negative impact on the effectiveness of vertical communication in the organisation.

After further detailed probing, the results established that a significant minority of employees does not have access to either the intranet or e-mail (see Annexure B). This implies that messages via e-mail can only be targeted at particular groups and therefore makes this kind of communication system ineffective. Thompson (1998:36) believes that communications systems, such as intranet and e-mail, only add technological gloss to the continued use of tell-and-sell modes, doing little to create genuine dialogue among employees.

The Eskom newsletter was seen as an important source of information for the employees (see Annexure B and Figure 19). However, the frequency of production and limited availability were deemed to hinder its effectiveness. Given the diversity of the workforce in Eskom, including employees without access to a computer, this means a variety of communication vehicles are needed to reach all target audiences.

In summary, there is a significant discrepancy between the findings from the online self-administered questionnaire and the focus group discussions. In view of this discrepancy, it can be inferred that Eskom does not have an effective two-way symmetrical model of communication. According to this model, technology has enabled organisations to move from a one-way to a two-way interactive marketing relationship environment (Rockart, Earl & Ross, 1996:46). However, Eskom seems to be utilising some, but not all of the communication opportunities that the website provides. These results seem to add to the statement by the Senior General Manager, Group Communications that Eskom does not have the mechanisms to maximise internal stakeholder feedback (see Annexure A). What this implies is that Eskom does not have an effective means for the transmission of information between all levels of the organisation. The most common barrier is the lack of upward and horizontal communication because some employees have no access to computers.

5.3.6 Infrastructure for integration

The results of the responses to the survey questionnaire and the focus group discussion interviews regarding infrastructure for integration, are presented below:

The infrastructure for communication integration was measured through the self-administered questionnaire completed by five Eskom communication managers and eight communication professionals from Eskom's Distribution (2) Generation (2), Transmission (1) and Group Communication Department (8).

All communication managers and professionals in these divisions are responsible for the co-ordination of communication efforts and actions in their respective areas of responsibility.

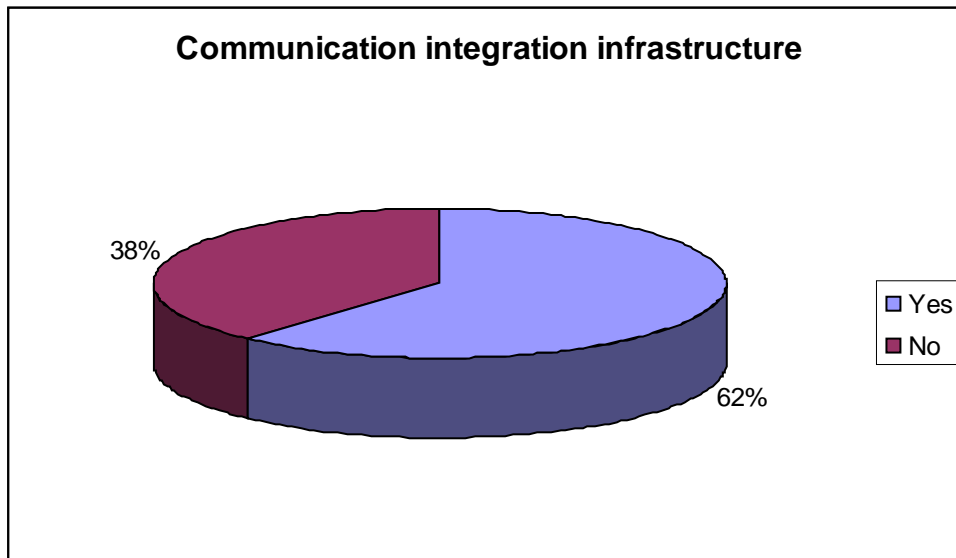
In addition, two focus group discussion sessions were conducted with human resources managers and project managers. Each session comprised six and seven participants respectively. The participants in the focus groups came from the Eskom Human Resources division (5), Distribution division (2), Transmission division (2), Generation division (3) and Enterprises divisions (1). Infrastructure for integration is applicable to all these divisions.

No framework exists for infrastructure for integration as no person has been appointed specifically for communication integration in the organisation.

5.3.6.1 Findings of the survey: infrastructure for integration

This section presents the findings obtained from the survey questionnaire and focus group discussions. The following figure depicts the availability of communication integration infrastructure within Eskom:

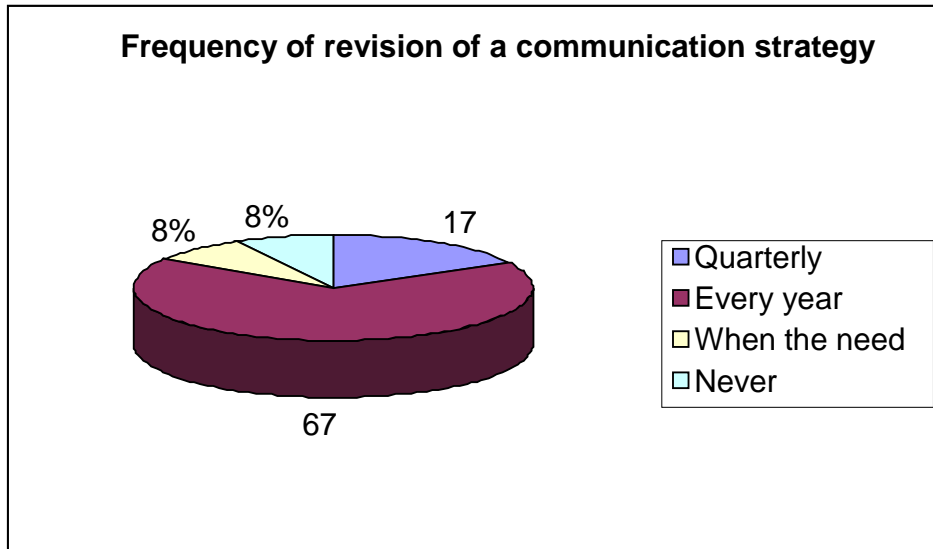
Figure 21: Communication integration infrastructure



The survey question relates to the availability of communication integration infrastructure. Figure 21 above shows 62% of the respondents agreed with the statement that Eskom had an infrastructure in place for communication integration. About 38% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the organisation had an infrastructure for communication integration in place. These results accord with the statement by the Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications that the organisation had an infrastructure for communication integration.

The following figure depicts the frequency of the revision of the communication strategy within Eskom:

Figure 22: Frequency of the revision of the communication strategy



The survey question relates to the timeframe within which the corporate communication strategy is revised. Figure 22 above shows that 67% of the respondents believed that Eskom revised its communication strategy every year. About 17% of the respondents indicated that the organisation revised its communication strategy on a quarterly basis. Another 8% of the respondents indicated that Eskom revised its communication strategy when the need arose. A further 8% of the respondents indicated that Eskom never revised its communication strategy.

These results are inconsistent with the views of the Eskom Senior General Manager, Group Communications that the corporate communication strategy was revised on an annual basis by the strategic management committee, chaired by Eskom's Senior General Manager, Group Communications Department (see Annexure A).

5.3.6.2 Findings of the focus group: infrastructure for integration

The following information was highlighted in the focus group discussion:

All participants indicated that a number of communication channels existed in the organisation. They identified the following systems and processes as the means through which information was shared across the organisation: briefings and meetings, informal contacts with colleagues, electronic mail, newsletters, posters and flyers, induction sessions, formal visits, notes on payslips, notice boards and displays. "E-mail communication is the most used method for receiving and giving formal and work-related information, both inside and across the division. Most of the Eskom employees are equipped with laptops. These employees are expected to check their e-mails every morning to read news and instructions. However, not all of the Eskom employees have e-mail addresses."

The second question asked about mechanisms for employee feedback regarding communication. Most participants indicated that the mechanism for employee feedback regarding communication was mostly staff forums. "Feedback channels such as staff meetings are the main channel to provide and receive feedback to a certain extent. This forum also provides a platform where some of our disgruntled employees can air their views."

The results of the focus group discussion complement the results from the survey in that they both emphasise e-mail as the most frequently used communication tool in the organisation.

5.3.6.3 Interpretation of the findings: infrastructure for integration

The interpretation of the findings regarding the infrastructure for communication integration within the organisation follows below.

The communication infrastructures provide the various constituencies of an organisation such as employees with the information and keep it viable. The organisation utilises many communication channels to disseminate information to reach the employee across geographic boundaries. Information is shared between staff members mainly through briefings and meetings, newsletters, posters and flyers, induction sessions, formal visits, notes on payslips, notice boards and displays.

However, e-mail and intranet seems to be the bread and butter of Eskom communication. The Intranet is the primary means of transferring messages and electronic documents among members (see Annexure B). The ability to reach relevant information quickly is a prerequisite for the employees' efforts to make fast decisions. Since the information is available on the intranet, everyone in the organisation can access this updated information at the same time. The literature shows that when communicating a corporate brand, electronic channels of communication, for example e-mail, the intranet and chat rooms, play a definite role in co-ordination. In other words, by using electronic communication technology, Eskom has the capacity and the ability to reach anyone with access to a computer in the organisation. According to Duncan (2001:62), it would be problematical for the organisation to establish personalised communication without using databases.

Though it is recognised that the necessary infrastructure for communication is generally in place, the lack of access to computers by non-office-based employees hampers the information exchange processes in the organisation. Unlike office employees, the focus group results indicated that remote employees do not have constant access to a personal computer or have a work e-mail address.

This means that they also have very little time to update themselves about company news from the intranet. With the advances in technology, one would reasonably expect an increase in the opportunities for truly open access to information, but paradoxically, the results indicate that this is not the case with Eskom.

In summary, although adequate communication infrastructure exists in terms of enabling effective communication to take place, the accuracy, relevance, timeliness and appropriateness of the source of information and the channels through which it is transmitted, are inadequate, because as a whole the focus group participants indicated a negative perception in this regard. The ability to transmit information effectively in an organisation requires that organisations must use the different available channels in the best way possible. The organisation therefore has to create linkages between the different internal channels in order to create a combination of the oral, written and electronic medium so that it can have the best effect possible on the interests of the management and the employees (Erikson 1998:58).

6. SUMMARY

Chapter 5 provides the empirical research findings, focusing on the current state of integrated communication at Eskom. In this chapter, the data gleaned from the survey, focus group discussion and content analysis are analysed and the results interpreted.

Based on the findings, some of the research assumptions made in Chapter 4 were found to be true, but others were false. In the use of the survey interviews, the results obtained from the self-administered online questionnaire seemed to be favourable. However, by adding the results of the focus group discussion interviews, which enabled the researcher to “probe” and the participants to “go deeper” and voice their opinions, an added dimension emerged, revealing hidden communication problem areas (see Annexure B).

The major findings indicate that to a large extent the practice of integrated communication takes place at a “superficial” level, without taking into consideration the totality of the concept.

Chapter 6 focuses on the conclusions and recommendations. Then the implications of the findings are reviewed, and recommendations are made on future research.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 completes the full circle of the research study. In this chapter, final conclusions are drawn, based on the literature review discussed in Chapter 2 and the research results obtained from the survey, focus group sessions and content analysis presented in Chapter 5. Based on the results, conclusions and recommendations are made with regard to integrated communication within Eskom.

The recommendations stem from a consideration of the responses, at the general level of concern about the current position of communication integration in Eskom, taking into account and drawing on information from other sources. However, it should be noted that the recommendations in this study are not intended to be prescriptive, but rather to be a road map for improving communication and developing a comprehensive integrated communication in the organisation. The chapter ends with suggestions for further research.

The assumptions applicable to this study (see chapter 4) is listed again for convenience purposes and will either be accepted or rejected, based on the findings of the study. The assumptions are as follows:

- Assumption 1. There is sharing of information across all Eskom divisions.
- Assumption 2. There are mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of Eskom.
- Assumption 3. Eskom has mechanisms in place to facilitate interaction with stakeholder groups.
- Assumption 4. Eskom employees are treated as important stakeholders.

- Assumption 5. Eskom employees are reminded about what the organisation stands for.
- Assumption 6. A formal policy regarding communication does not exist at the corporate level.

6.2 MAIN FINDINGS WITH REGARD TO THE SIX EVALUATION AREAS OF INTEGRATION ACCORDING TO THE APPLIED MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT

Based on the results of the study, the researcher is now able to complete the integrated communication evaluation table, as proposed by Du Plessis and Schoonraad and cited in Barker and Angelopulo (2006:381). Table 6.1 below presents a summary of the findings of the study together with the key conclusions and recommendations pertaining to integrated communication at Eskom. The various items were rated on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, and are cross-referenced to reflect the researcher's concluding opinion (see chapters 3 and 5). Only tested items are calculated. This variable gives insight into whether or not integration communication is practised at Eskom. A rating closer to a 1 score signifies a favourable evaluation. The scale includes an average rating of 3. The rating closer to a score of 5 signifies an unfavourable evaluation.

Table 6.1: Summary of key findings pertaining to the evaluation of communication integration (Barker & Angelopulo, 2006:381-387)

A. Infrastructure for integration:					
1. Well established and functional					
2. Established but does not function optimally					
3. Established but not functional					
4. Exists informally					
5. Does not exist					
Activity	Measurement				
	1	2	3	4	5
A person or group is responsible for communication integration (integrators). see Chapter 5, Annexure A)					x
A formal policy regarding communication integration exists at the corporate level (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.6)					x
A formal policy regarding communication integration exists in every division of the organisation (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.6)					x
The organisation regularly makes a content analysis of visual corporate identity elements, measuring consistency (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.1)	x				
The organisation regularly makes a content analysis of a sample of all messages originating inside it, measuring the consistency of messages (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.1)					x
On a quarterly basis, the organisation updates the criteria (derived from the strategic organisational objectives) to be applied to the measurement of message content consistency. (Not tested)					

Mechanisms exist for interaction between internal groups (divisions) (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.51 & Chapter 5, Figure 19)			x			
Mechanisms are in place to facilitate quality relationships with stakeholders (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1.2 & Chapter 5, Figure 6)			x			
Mechanisms are in place to facilitate interaction with stakeholder groups(see Chapter 5, Figure 7)		x				
Mechanisms are in place to maximise stakeholder feedback (see Chapter 5, Figures 7 & 8)			x			
<p>B. Consistency</p> <p>Two elements must exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A published and standardised visual corporate identity guideline (for colours, logos, etc.). • A content analysis of planned messages: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perfectly consistent 2. Mostly consistent 3. Some variations 4. Varied 5. Extremely varied 						
Dimension	Activity	Measurement				
		1	2	3	4	5
Visual corporate identity elements conform to standardised norms and standards	Stationery (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.1)	x				

	Use of logos and names (in print and other public exposure) (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.1)	x				
	Web pages (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.1)	x				
	Printed material (pamphlets, posters, advertisements, etc.) (see Chapter 5.3.3.1)	x				
Content of messages (based on a regular content analysis)	Internal communication, marketing communication, public relations messages, etc. (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.1)		x			
C. Co-ordination						
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It always happens 2. It happens most of the time 3. It happens sometimes 4. It almost never happens 5. It never happens 						
Dimension	Activity	Measurement				
		1	2	3	4	5
Cross-functional planning and monitoring	Co-ordinating of planning across divisions (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.4.2 & Chapter 5, Figure 15)			x		
	Cross-functional budget allocation (not tested)					

	Sharing of information across divisions (see Chapter 5, Figures 16 & 17)			x		
	Formal interaction between internal groups (see Chapter 5, Figure 15)			x		
	Informal contact between members of divisions (not tested)					

D. Strategic alignment

1. It always happens
2. It happens most of the time
3. It happens sometimes
4. It almost never happens
5. It never happens

Dimension	Activity	Measurement				
		1	2	3	4	5
Corporate mission	The corporate mission is incorporated into all operations (see Chapter 5, Figure 10)		x			
	All staff members know what the corporate mission is (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2.2 & Chapter 5, Figure 11)		x			
	Clear strategic organisational objectives are communicated regularly to all staff members (see Chapter 5, Figure 12)	x				

	Strategic organisational objectives are clearly related to communication objectives (see Chapter 5, Figure 10)		x			
	Strategic organisational objectives are formulated in such a way that all employees can relate to them. (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2.2)		x			
	Strategic organisational objectives are operationalised so that all employees are able to apply them to what they are doing (see Chapter 5, Figure 13)		x			
	Employees are reminded about what the organisation stands for (that is, its values) (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2.2 & Chapter 5, Figure 12)		x			
Strategic consistency	Is the organisation's brand position strategically integrated into all brand messages (the "big idea")? (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.1)		x			

	Are the communication dimensions of all brand contacts consistent (not only the planned brand contacts)? (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.1)		x				
<p>E. Stakeholder orientation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It always happens 2. It happens most of the time 3. It happens sometimes 4. It almost never happens 5. It never happens 							
Dimension	Activity	Measurement					
		1	2	3	4	5	
Stakeholder focus	Are stakeholder changes monitored regularly (see Chapter 5, Figure 6)			x			
	Are stakeholder groups differentiated? (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1.2 & Chapter 5, Figure 6)			x			
	Are employees treated as important stakeholders? (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1.2 & Chapter 5, Figure 5)			x			
	Is message consistency for overlapping stakeholder groups monitored? (not tested)						

	Do quality relationships exist with all stakeholder groups? (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1.2 & Chapter 5, Figure 6)				x
Purposeful dialogue	Does the organisation interact regularly with stakeholders? (see Chapter 5, Figure 6)			x	
	Is feedback from stakeholders maximised? (see Chapter 5, Figures 8 & 9)			x	
	Are contact points with stakeholders optimised?			x	
	Does the organisation strive toward a balance between mass, personalised and interactive media in its communication with stakeholders? (see Chapter 5, Figure 7)			x	
Relationship management	Are current stakeholders being nurtured? (not tested)				
	Is information about current stakeholders made freely available to all divisions of the organisation? (see Chapter 5, Figure 7)			x	
	Do the various divisions make use of existing information about current stakeholders? (not tested)				

	Are links with stakeholders being developed and built? (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1.2 & Chapter 5, Figures 8 & 9)			x		
	Are relationships with stakeholders personalised, based on organisation-wide available information? (not tested)					
<p>F. Information sharing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Well established and functional 2. Established but does not function optimally 3. Established but not functional 4. Exists informally 5. Does not exist 						
Activity	Measurement					
	1	2	3	4	5	
Mechanisms to centralise information about stakeholders (see Chapter 5.3.4.2)		x				
Mechanisms to maintain research information (not tested)						
Mechanisms to ensure that cross-functional processes are geared toward a database management system that provides universal customer information and a corporate memory (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.6.2)				x		
Mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.5.2 & Chapter 5, Figure 19)			x			

Below are conclusions and recommendations based on the findings:

6.2.1 Infrastructure for integration (score 3.6)

Based on the results of the study regarding the infrastructure for integration, this section presents conclusions and recommendations.

6.2.1.1 *The main conclusion*

There is no efficient infrastructure for an integration mechanism. Despite utilising a variety of internal communication channels of which computer technology is the primary means, the aggregate score of 3.6 indicates that the infrastructure for communication integration has been established, but is not functional. For instance, some employees do not have access to either a personal computer or the internal electronic network, especially on distant sites of the organisation and therefore this tool is limited as a means of communication.

The corporate publication is seen as the second important source of information at Eskom. However, the newsletter is not user-friendly for some of the employees, as there is a high rate of illiteracy. For this reason, the research assumption that there are mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation cannot be convincingly accepted or rejected.

6.2.1.2 *Recommendation*

While the usual newsletters, brochures, e-mail messages and team briefings all served a purpose, something with more impact is required. For example, Eskom should ensure that appropriate communication systems and mechanisms are put in place to meet the communication needs of those of its employees without access to computer technology and those with physical and other disabilities.

Appropriate methods of communication for different employee groups might include interpreting and translation services, written information in different formats and languages, Braille, audio tapes, the use of “signers” et cetera.

One issue which should be addressed is the engagement of employees based in geographically remote or technologically poor locations. The organisation should communicate with all employees equally, irrespective of their location, working hours or status in the organisation. Revising or drafting policies would promote a more consistent approach. Currently, the most rapid mechanism for getting information out and receiving feedback in this geographically widespread organisation is inevitably electronically based, particularly by means of e-mail.

The organisation cannot depend on new technology alone to deliver key messages to its constituents. A variety of communication vehicles should be considered that would connect with key audiences at all levels. In other words, the organisation should communicate fully with all employees in a timely and appropriate way, using the full range of communication vehicles available, such as team briefing, newsletters, the intranet and meetings to facilitate this. Remote workers should be provided with communication tools which would provide two-way, real-time communication and collaboration with multiple team members. In this regard, Eskom should create a communication strategy that would combine the use of technology with face-to-face meetings.

In managing communications with all relevant stakeholder groups, the use of databases has been identified as being a central force in the integration process. Currently, a frequently used method for communicating in writing with all Eskom employees is to attach a document to their payslips. This is a good method of getting a short message to all staff but should not be over-employed if it is to remain effective. The use and application of databases to manage relationships with various stakeholders should be explored.

To this end, Eskom should utilise a reliable database of all employees for better communications at corporate level. Accordingly, appropriate circulation lists and databases on staff members should be developed for electronic circulation.

6.2.2 Consistency of messages and media to and from the organisation (score 1.2)

Based on the findings regarding the consistency of messages and media to and from the organisation, discussed in Chapter 5, the researcher has drawn the following conclusions and makes the following recommendations:

6.2.2.1 *The main conclusion*

Consistent, credible messages are communicated repeatedly and through a range of channels. Eskom has developed a number of communications protocols as a guide for employee communication. The organisation ensures that its services and information are consistently represented in a recognisable corporate style. With an aggregate score of 1.2, Eskom's messages and media to and from the organisation are rated as perfectly consistent. There is one visual image for Eskom. Despite its size, the organisation has been able to maintain a consistent message in its communications, ranging from content of publications, corporate identity and website information throughout the organisation. Information in all formats is always clearly branded. Hence, the organisation applies consistent branding to its marketing materials (logo, image library, colours, etc.) and to its messages (key message points, "tone of language" etc.). No own logos and identities are allowed, not even for projects or any internal campaigns. This is due to the fact that there is a centralised point from which all communications stem, with centralised messages and scripts from which everyone works.

There is a single point of editorial control over the intranet and website to ensure the site is easy to read and navigate, there is consistency of language and style, and co-ordination with other communications work. The organisation has also adopted a plain English policy for all its communications. Eskom's language policy influences the use of language on elements containing the Eskom signature (logo and logotype). Only one language is applied to an element at any given time. According to Kitchen and Schultz (2000:67), for an organisation to consider true integrated communication, it should create global processes for the internal and external standardisation of operating, producing, transporting and communicating. The reason for the standardisation is to ensure the consistency of all messages. In particular, the organisation has created a publication policy and a corporate identity for printed and electronic communication. This is because the organisation has adopted monolithic identity programmes to ensure that strategic consistency is inherent in all its publication communication efforts, thus directing integrated communication.

With regard to the uniformity of the look and feel of posters and newsletters, the organisation is always consistent. All published material adheres to the accepted corporate style and is easily and instantly identifiable. All Eskom employees apply the corporate identity specifications as contained in the Corporate Identity Manual housed in the Group Communications Department. For this reason, the research assumption that there are mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation can be conclusively accepted.

6.2.2.2 Recommendation

Eskom should continue to ensure that the look and feel of messages is consistent. The better the strategic integration of the brand's position into all the brand messages, the more consistent and well defined the organisation's identity and reputation. Thus, through the presentation of a reassuring sense of order and direction, integrated communications help define and nurture long-term relationships with potential as well as existing employees (Cchange Communications, 2001:2).

6.2.3 Coordination of communication efforts and action within the organisation (score 3)

Based on the findings regarding the co-ordination of communication efforts and action in the organisation, the researcher has drawn the following conclusions and makes the following recommendations:

6.2.3.1 *The main conclusion*

The findings showed that a devolved and fragmented approach to communication has emerged within the organisation. The main criticism is that the organisation is working in separate silos with little horizontal communication. Hence, the overall score for the co-ordination of communication efforts and action in the organisation is 3, which means that co-ordination happens sometimes, not always. This average score is a reflection of inadequate cross-functional planning and monitoring within the organisation.

In addition, communication across the organisation is no easy task, given the nature of the workforce, which includes many shift workers and part-time workers, not all of whom have access to personal computers (PCs), or even the time to access PCs. Unlike office staff, remote workers do not have constant access to a PC or to the work e-mail addresses of other employees. These employees have little time to update themselves on company news from the intranet. Not having access to the intranet is regarded as decreasing efficiency.

Based on the collective research findings presented, it can be concluded that the research assumption that Eskom has the mechanisms in place to facilitate interaction with stakeholder groups could not be conclusively rejected or accepted because of the mixed results obtained from the questionnaire, but could be rejected on the basis of the findings obtained from the focus group discussions conducted.

6.2.3.2 Recommendation

In view of the above, it is recommended that all communication functions in the organisation should rather be integrated and functions as an overall, centralised communication department, as opposed to separate communication functions in various departments, as the latter could promote turf battles between various communication functions. Thus, a centralised internal communication team should be formed with a mandate to radically transform the communication environment and engage employees more fully in the organisation. Edmondson (2003:1419) shows that cross-departmental communication facilitates inter-departmental co-operation regarding the implementation of a corporate strategy. The organisation should encourage effective cross-team and cross-divisional/departmental working. According to Duncan and Moriarty (1997), organisations will have to set up cross-functional processes and make other structural changes to better manage their brand relationships.

To this end, a comprehensive communications strategy should be developed and it should include innovative ways of encouraging some forms of interdivisional/departmental co-operation. One option for integration is to create a position designed solely to oversee the integration of communication messages across the organisation. The most common approach to establishing a central authority for communication is the use of a marketing communication structure or as it is called, a “marcom” manager (Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn, 1994, 167). The marcom manager is the central controller of a broad assortment of communication specialists. The marcom manager plans the overall communication programme and initiates and controls the various types of communication activities that are developed by the communication specialists. This idea is in line with Hunter's (1997) model of integrated communication implementation, where he proposes that a single department should be set up for the management of marketing, corporate and internal communication.

In view of the above, an integrator or a team of integrators (considering the size of the organisation) should be considered for the co-ordination of communication. Eskom, by virtue of its size, would need more team members with cross-functional relations with the different expert areas in the organisation.

Furthermore, there should be a group to co-ordinate strategy comprising the Eskom Chief Executive and other senior members. This group should be responsible for developing and implementing the overall strategy. Duncan and Everett (1993:32) state that a first step could be to develop teams throughout the organisation and create an opportunity for cross-functional assignments and advancement through the acceptance of greater responsibility. Denton and Vloeberghs (2003:88) agree and state that the emphasis should be on effective and co-ordinated teams, rather than on a top-down information process.

6.2.4 Communication strategic alignment with corporate strategy (score 1.9)

Based on the results of the study regarding the alignment of Eskom's communication strategy with the corporate strategy, the researcher presents the following conclusions and recommendations:

6.2.4.1 *The main conclusion*

There has been tremendous collaboration and alignment between the Eskom communication strategy and the corporate strategy. The findings showed that communication alignment with corporate strategy scored 1.9, meaning that links between the corporate strategies and the communication strategy happen most of the time. This is understandable, considering that Eskom expresses its vision and core values in all its strategies and they are prevalent in most executions of these strategies.

By having a vision statement, the organisation has a means of keeping all employees focused on the objectives of the organisation. It sets a consistent tone in strategy formulation, which leads to the creation of an organisation's objectives. In general, there is a high level of knowledge and understanding of the Eskom values and visions among the organisation's employees. According to Gagnon and Michael (2003:24), if employees show a supportive attitude toward the organisation's strategic objectives, they are more likely to make decisions that are consistent with these objectives. Based on these findings, the assumption that employees are reminded about what Eskom stands for, can be accepted.

6.2.4.2 Recommendation

The alignment between communication and an organisation's strategic initiatives has become increasingly important in recent years. The literature study showed that communication objectives should be aligned with the organisational goal and more importantly, the strategic intent of the organisation. "Then, and only then, can communication management be regarded as being a strategic contribution to the business management of the organisation" (Niemann, 2005:30). In view of this statement, Eskom should continue to align its communication strategy with the efforts undertaken by the organisation.

6.2.5 Stakeholder orientation and differentiation (score 3.1)

Based on the findings regarding internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation, the researcher is now able to present the following conclusions and recommendations:

6.2.5.1 *The main conclusion*

The rating regarding internal stakeholders' orientation and differentiation is 3.1, meaning that stakeholder focus happens sometimes. The main criticism is that the organisation focuses predominantly on external messages to stakeholders, without sufficiently emphasising internal messages to its internal stakeholders, such as employees. In other words, the two aspects of communication, namely internal and external communication, have apparently been pursued separately by Eskom, where a significant amount of communication has been directed to external stakeholders.

The implication is that the external stakeholders have been seen as especially critical and as playing a key role in the marketing of the organisation. The organisation broadly defines its stakeholders as the South African Government. Limited attention has been given to internal stakeholders. By implication, internal communication plays a secondary role in the organisation's communications. Consequently, this implies that the Eskom employees are not receiving important information before the external stakeholders do. This resembles the characteristics of integrated marketing communication (implying the messages sent out by the organisation), but not necessarily those of integrated communication (implying a two-way process).

Duncan (2001:18) contends that, by not placing the emphasis on internal communication (employees), there is no way to ensure that one of the fundamental principles of integrated communication, namely that everyone in the organisation has the potential to touch the customer, is in place. Based on the findings, the research assumption that Eskom employees are treated as important stakeholders should be rejected.

6.2.5.2 *Recommendation*

Eskom should develop a strategy which has both an external and internal focus since effective internal and external communication does not occur unless efforts are strategically planned.

This strategy should ensure an appropriate focus on each section of the stakeholders. In other words, Eskom should develop a communication strategy to address both the internal employee communication systems and its external communication. In reality, internal and external communication are inextricably intertwined, feeding into each other in a complex interaction which, if managed properly, offers the prospect of a total communications programme capable of playing a key part in the promotion of a quality-centred culture in the organisation (Tourish & Irving, 1995:9). This implies that the interrelationship between all aspects of the communication process should be taken into account. Focusing on one aspect only could be seen as akin to putting out a fire in the kitchen while ignoring an inferno engulfing the bedroom.

To this end, Eskom should be concerned with managing the communication process related to keeping its internal stakeholders, namely the employees, informed as well. In this regard, Eskom employees should be the starting point of the organisation's integration process. The employees should be informed, empowered and motivated to assist in this quest. Since employees are an organisation's first "ambassadors" in presenting and defending the organisation's image, it is extremely important to keep them informed about the organisation's orientation, priorities and vision.

This is supported by Duncan (2001:23), who states that when an organisation is not integrated internally, it is difficult, if not impossible, for the brand to be integrated externally in the minds of the customer. The literature review showed that an organisation cannot build relationships externally until it has built them internally (Cutlip, Center & Broom 1985:76).

6.2.6 Free flow and sharing of information (score 3)

Based on the findings regarding the free flow and sharing of information presented in Chapter 5, the researcher has drawn the following conclusions and makes the following recommendations:

6.2.6.1 *The main conclusion*

Communication at Eskom is still primarily one-way with little consideration of lower level input. However, some information is shared with employees. A score of 3 indicates that the free flow and the sharing of information in the organisation are established but not fully functional.

There has been an overwhelming focus on one-way, downward communication, with the minimum sharing of information across divisions and the insulation and isolation of employees at senior levels. At present, communication focuses on giving information from a management point of view, with little opportunity for candid discussion or feedback.

There is no form of easy access to information for all employees. For instance, some of the Eskom employees in outlying offices do not have reliable and easy access to computers and the intranet, so this tool is limited as a means of communication.

Trade unions play a crucial role in ensuring that communication is both effective and two-way. However, though Eskom encourages participative management, usually it is top management and union representatives who are involved. Therefore the research assumption that there is a free flow of information and sharing of information across all Eskom divisions should be rejected.

6.2.6.2 *Recommendation*

The communication process is incomplete if it is solely one-way. Eskom communications should be two-way and a number of interactive mechanisms should be put in place which would enable managers and employees to become involved in the decision-making process, to be consulted and to give feedback and express their concerns.

Denton and Vloeberghs (2003:88) declare that the emphasis should be on effective and co-ordinated teams, rather than on a top-down information process. These authors contend that this lends itself to greater information-sharing, and breaks down the myth that the best ideas only come from the top of the organisation. In line with this notion, the organisation should open the upward communication channels by regularly soliciting employee input and feedback. Eskom should ensure that its communications invite a response, whether informal or formal. In order to create employee buy-in, the organisation should also use a bottom-up strategy. In communicating with employees, Eskom management should not merely post news on the intranet and assume that communication has been achieved. Instead, there should be a mechanism for employees to respond to, or initiate, a dialogue upwards.

The central newsletter should be produced more regularly and distributed both in hard copy and electronically. The newsletter should have a feedback column and letter page if it is to make a positive impact. The newsletter should serve not only as a conduit for corporate information, news and views but also as a forum for constructive debate. The contents of the internal publications should also be shaped by employee feedback.

Consideration should be given to alternative methods of communications as there is heavy reliance on e-mail. Due to the diversity of its target groups, Eskom should deploy a multi-channel approach to delivering its messages. The intranet is currently and should remain the most important channel for exchanging information in the organisation. The use of various channels and tools should vary from activity to activity. In other words, Eskom should identify the most appropriate tools and activities for communicating key messages to the target audiences. These tools and activities could be suggested by the audiences, messages or a combination of the two.

Channels such as bulletin boards, the intranet, newsletters and e-mail are efficient modes of communication for certain messages, the power of face-to-face communication should not be underestimated. Face-to-face communication should be preferred over e-mail and internal publications to create organisational identification. Therefore, all employees should have periodical face-to-face communication opportunities with their managers. A significant level of communications occurs at a face-to-face level, either through existing large events or through mechanisms such as away-days.

Employees who work away regularly need to know what is happening at the office. Where employees do not have access to the e-mail facility, other avenues of dissemination should be identified and adopted. For example, to improve relations with remote workers, an internal communications adviser dedicated to customer service should be appointed in the Eskom divisions/departments. This would enable the communication team to work with site managers by asking them exactly what outcome and action they would like from remote employees, and then adapting the communication method to help achieve their goal. Alternatively, these employees' managers should share important information with them by either posting e-mails and e-newsletters on bulletin boards or discussing their contents at employees' meetings. The SMS texting channel should be investigated for future use, provided that it would support the online communication. This method would be good for communicating with remote workers and for obtaining feedback.

Similarly to the internal communication strategy, direct communications should be preferred to representative communications. Although trade union representatives should continue acting as spokespersons for the employees, they should never represent management. The responsibility for communicating and reporting back to employees and teams rests with managers. The employees need more direct and regular communication with management, not merely through labour negotiations and consultation. It is the managers' duty to communicate with the employees themselves and nothing should prevent employees from also speaking to management.

However, there will be times when partnership working with the unions can improve the process of communication to employees.

6.3 DISCUSSION OF THE MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT USED TO TEST INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION AT ESKOM

This section concerns establishing whether or not the applied measurement instrument can effectively measure communication integration. Chapter 3 contains a full explanation of the measurement instrument used to evaluate the integration of internal communication at Eskom. The measurement instrument includes the six areas of integration as proposed by Du Plessis and Schoonraad and cited in Barker and Angelopulo (2006: 381). These are:

- Internal stakeholder orientation and differentiation.
- Communication alignment with the strategic focus of the organisation.
- Consistency of messages and media in and from the organisation.
- Co-ordination of communication efforts and action.
- Infrastructure for integration.
- Sharing of information and free flow of information.

Since the above measurement instrument has been applied for the first time in the present study, it is important to establish whether or not it has been effective as a potential integrated communication measurement. To this end, the application of the above measurement instrument resulted in a number of advantages, some of which are as follows:

6.3.1 Stakeholder orientation and differentiation

The application of the stakeholder orientation and differentiation measurement instrument helped the researcher to pinpoint the finding that Eskom focused predominately on government as its external stakeholder. This by implication means that the organisation does not place sufficient emphasis on employees as primary stakeholders.

However, scholars usually classify stakeholders in two groups, namely the primary (for example, employees) and the secondary (social or political stakeholders) groups. The challenge was how to make the respondents/participants aware of the stakeholder group to which the researcher was referring, since the research question only refers to “Stakeholder Orientation and Differentiation”.

6.3.2 Alignment between communication strategy and corporate strategy

As a result of the applicability of the alignment between communication strategy and corporate strategy, it was revealed that the organisation placed more emphasis on the alignment of its communication strategy and its corporate strategy in the achievement of its strategic objectives, and ultimately the achievement of its strategic mission.

6.3.3 Consistency of message to and from the organisation

In this section, the researcher performed a separate content analysis to determine message consistency to and from Eskom. Through the application of the Morse and Field approach, the researcher was able to establish that all Eskom communications are controlled and consistent in the following categories: internal publications, corporate identity in all forms of internal communications and website messages.

6.3.4 Co-ordination of communication efforts and actions

The measurement instrument for assessing the co-ordination of communication efforts and actions helped to pinpoint specific shortcomings relating to integrated communication, such as the lack of cross-functional planning, which resulted in functional silos.

6.3.5 Infrastructure for integration

The applicable infrastructure for integration measured the typical aspects of communication, such as communication structure and systems. The measurement instrument established that information technology had created an infrastructure and numerous opportunities for information sharing within the organisation.

6.3.6 Free flow of information and sharing of information

Through the measurement instrument for assessing the free flow and sharing of information, it was found that although the necessary systems for communication were generally in place, they were either not being used or being used ineffectively.

To sum up, the researcher believes that the measurement instrument has offered important insights into the way in which Eskom's communication operates. In essence, the measurement instrument succeeded in effectively measuring the extent of communication integration within the organisation.

6.4 INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION AT ESKOM

The results of the research study have shown that Eskom communication is neither comprehensive enough nor visible enough. In general, the results of this study counter the research assumptions stated in Chapter 1. The findings of the study are that the integration of communication throughout the organisation, especially between divisions/departments, is very low even though the nature of the work requires a high level of interaction. According to Gayeski and Woodward (1999:19), an integrative communication approach suggests a planned and co-ordinated communication effort, where ideas are shared and a common understanding of the purpose of the communication is reached, resulting in a joint effort to achieve the set objective.

However, Eskom is a very large organisation, which is diverse and geographically widespread with over 30 000 employees nation-wide. These factors could contribute to the organisation's problems with communication integration. Cummings (2004:362) asserts that geographic distance makes many aspects of intra-group communications more difficult because of the reduced opportunities for informal contact.

6.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

No single piece of research can ever be perfect or address all of the relevant questions. Accordingly, certain areas for future research are highlighted below.

One of the limitations of this study is that the results were obtained from the first application of the measurement instrument, and the study was conducted in one organisation. Therefore, the results presented in this study may be taken as indicative but would require further testing and a wider sample before a final conclusion could be drawn. It is recommended therefore that more research should be done to examine this issue in more detail. Future research would help to establish whether the proposed measuring instrument by Du Plessis and Schoonraad, as cited in Barker and Angelopulo (2006:381-387) is reliable and valid.

Annexure: A

**AN ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETED BY THE ESKOM
SENIOR MANAGER, GROUP COMMUNICATION.**

Dear Sir

My name is Jonas Maenetja, a registered student at the University of South Africa. I am currently studying towards a Masters Degree (Organisational Communication Research and Practice). As part of the curriculum, I am required to carry out a survey interviews for a dissertation of limited scope. The topic is "The current state of integrated communication within a state-owned organisation".

I would appreciate if you could kindly spare me few minutes of your time to complete this online questionnaire and send it back to me by e-mail not latter than 31 October 2008. Please be assured that your identity and all answers you provide will be kept confidential in accordance with research ethics.

I would like to thank you in advance for your assistance

Yours sincerely

Jonas Maenetja

1. Strategic alignment

Activities
<p>1.1 Does Eskom have a corporate (business) strategy in place?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes x</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>
<p>1.2 If yes, please provide more details.....</p> <p>A business plan is compiled on an annual basis with a 5 year outlook.....</p>
<p>1.3 Is Eskom's communication strategy aligned to the corporate (business) strategy?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes x</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>
<p>1.4 Do all staff members in Eskom know what the corporate vision is?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes x</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>
<p>1.5 If so, how is the corporate vision being communicated to staff members?</p> <p>The vision was launched to all employees and is communicated on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>.....</p>

2. Consistency

<p>2.1 Does Eskom have formal processes in place to ensure strategic consistency in relation to internal communication?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No x</p>
<p>2.2 If yes, please provide more details.....</p>
<p>2.3 Is there a standardised visual corporate identity guideline (for colours, logo's etc.) at Eskom?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes x</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>
<p>2.6 If yes, please provide more details.....</p> <p>All CI are controlled by the CI manager and audited on a regular basis.</p> <p>.....</p>

3. Infrastructure for integration

Activity
3.1 Does Eskom have an infrastructure for communication integration? <input type="radio"/> Yes x <input type="radio"/> No
3.2 If yes, please provide more information..... Communication is controlled centrally.
3.3 Does Eskom have a policy regarding communication integration at corporate level? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No x
3.4 If yes, what is the name of the policy.....
3.5 Is there a person responsible for communication integration (integrators) within Eskom? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No x
3.6 If yes, who is responsible?.....

4. Coordination

Activities
4.1 Does Eskom plan its communication activities across all divisions? <input type="radio"/> Yes x <input type="radio"/> No
4.2 If yes, how are these activities planned? An n operational as well as a Strategic Manco is used to plan communication.....
4.3 Is the sharing of information across Eskom divisions possible? <input type="radio"/> Yes x <input type="radio"/> No

4.5 Is there formal interaction between Eskom's communication groups?

- Yes **x**
- No

If yes, please provide information regarding the formal interaction?

Fraternity meetings, Manco, Operational and strategic as well as Issues management meetings.

.....

5. Free flow and sharing of information

Activities
5.1 Does Eskom have the mechanisms to centralise information about stakeholders?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No x
5.2 If yes, what are these mechanisms?.....
5.3 Does Eskom have the mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of the organisation?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes x <input type="radio"/> No

6. Stakeholder orientation

Activities
6.1 Who are Eskom's most important stakeholders and why?
.....
DPE- Shareholder
.....
DME - Policy
.....
...Nersa – regulation
.....
Employees - Asset
.....
6.2 Does Eskom have quality relationships with all its stakeholder groups?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Yes x <input type="radio"/> No

6.3 If yes, please provide information.....

Stakeholder engagement is a critical component of Eskom communications.....

6.4 Does Eskom interact regularly with stakeholders?

- Yes **x**
- No

6.5 If yes, please provide more information regarding this interaction. E.g. channels, frequency, etc....

...One-on-one meetings.....

Mass meetings

.....

...Site visits.....

Presentations

.....

Written and oral briefs

Annexure: B

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

1. What are Eskom's most important stakeholders?

Stakeholders were factored in, meaning that they were taken into consideration, but stakeholder involvement was dependent on the power of the stakeholder. Eskom cares more about the government than of its staff members because the government is Eskom's main shareholder.

2. The extent to which key Eskom executives are interested in building relationships with key stakeholder groups

- Employees do not have enough information and are not included in a more interactive communication process. Eskom always want to ensure that the media is aware of the company's new direction.
- Eskom has developed and entrenched participative and high involvement management styles, structures and work processes. As a response to the rapidly and fundamentally changing socio-economic macro environment, as well as the human climate inside its own confines, Eskom has over the past years developed internal structures to accommodate full participation and meaningful influence by organised labour and employees in the decision-making structures and processes at all levels.
- Secom's industrial relations system endorsed the principles of fairness and equity as well as the importance of good communication. The Grievance Procedure, for example, enabled employees to channel their grievances in an orderly fashion and to resolve them through honest and open liaison. Trade unions acted as spokesmen for the employees.

- I am surprised at how often they read things about Eskom in the newspaper before hearing directly from the organisation itself.

3. How do you make sure that your plan is aligned?

The corporate strategy executive at Eskom headquarters sets out a framework, timetable and measurement criteria across the business, and it is this framework that helps us to align ourselves with our colleagues in other departments/divisions.

4. Do you know what the Eskom's vision and values are?

- The vision statement of the organisation functions as a preamble in many of the Eskom publications. The annual financial report consolidates every thing. The reports are left at the front desk for employees to read.
- There is an orientation programme at Eskom for all the new employees. It ensures that all our new employees know the vision of the organisation, our management philosophy, policies, what we stand for and the role they can play within our organisation.
- The communication they received was adequate in helping them to understand the company's brand values. The values are: values as being: integrity, excellence, customer satisfaction and innovation. I do not take the Eskom values seriously.

5. Tell us about the medium which the organisation use for communications?

The organisation provides an opportunity to contact the organisation via e-mail. All of the organisation's staff contact details are available. There are also e-mail newsletters and the annual report.

The annual report is considered a strategic communication document in that it provides a central place where the organisation communicates the following:

- The overall strategic positioning of the organisation.
- The CEO's vision for the company, looking out over the next three to five years.
- The direction the company is trying to take.
- Key messages used throughout the year.

“Once we have established the vision and messages, we look to include them in all subsequent communication activities throughout the year, for example, speeches, press releases, newsletters, websites, marketing collateral, etc”.

6. Do you have a person responsible for the coordination of internal communication across the organisation?

- Eskom communication is centrally coordinated. It is a formal responsibility of Group Communication Department to ensure that Eskom policy is communicated to all members of staff. Central communication Office, where it exists, is largely restricted to the dissemination of formal policy and procedures.
- The responsibility for internal communication is shared throughout the organisation. The communication managers are responsible for the actual publishing of formal communication and information. Generally, all communication managers have a level of accountability for the dissemination of formal communication in their own divisions/departments. The communication managers themselves are especially responsible and accountable for communication in their respective divisions/departments, which is then cascaded down through the management hierarchy.

Communication across divisions is still prone to silos and territorialism. There appeared to be no clear or consistent mechanism for effectively cascading information to other staff in the various Eskom departments/divisions. There is a lack of defined responsibility for undertaking such tasks within the departments/divisions.

7. What communication channels are frequently used in your division/department?

Following was some comments from the participants about the Eskom communication channels:

- Face-to-face – “Many of the Eskom communications channels are passive and remote; involving top-down information sent out on paper or e-mail and carrying no guarantee staff will absorb the information.”
E-mail – “Computer based communication is the most accessible and frequently used internally (daily). Web site has a wealth of information and is a wonderful tool. “E-mail communication is the most used method for receiving and giving formal and work-related information, both inside and across the division. However, not all of the employees have e-mail addresses. Most of the Eskom employees are equipped with laptops. These employees are expected to check their e-mails every morning to read news and instructions.”
- Publication - Some participants indicated that they are not entirely satisfied with the information in the publications and that they lacked time to read everything they are receiving. Some noted that the newsletters are not distributed to all office units.
- Staff induction – “Currently very little information is given to new employees about accessing Eskom communications.”
- Staff database – “Currently the only way to communicate in writing to all staff is to attach a document to payslips.”

8 To what extent does Eskom shares information with its employees?

- Eskom have multiple internal communication vehicles. Generally our intranets serve as terrific resources for up-to-date company news, sharing remarks and messages from our leadership teams. However, e-mail communication with field employees is extremely low.”
- The sharing of information normally occurred at senior level, but this was not cascaded down to the lower level.
- The sharing of information occurred within their departments, but again on a need-to-know principle. However, notices of meetings were not timely, sometimes reaching them on the day of or the day before a meeting.

9. Do you know the location where communication strategy can be found?

- All communication functions are coordinated through Group Communication Department in the Office of the Chief Executive. There is the Eskom communication strategy in place. I received such a strategy document many years ago.
- E-mail communication is very effective to send and receive messages both locally and further afield. Not all Eskom staff can be timeously reached on this platform.
- Remote workers had the following concerns:
 - They felt they did not receive the same information as office staff.
 - They believed that knowledge sharing across the organisation could be improved.

- They preferred to receive company information by newsletter, as it is portable and they do not have regular access to a PC. They felt the current quarterly divisional newsletter is too infrequent and does not contain enough information about the business.
- When management decides to have an instruction implemented, it merely informs the supervisor or places a memo on the notice board. However, when the workers wish to see changes or grievances resolved, it can take a long time.
- If the manager wants to get a word down to the sweeper, he can get it there within a matter of hours. But if that sweeper has a message to send up to management, it is not the case”.
- Communication must be a two-way street, but it must move more swiftly. In Eskom they indeed have this two-way communication going, but only from the top down. Let the work force just try and communicate a problem upwards. We find that there are all sorts of obstacles. And sometimes, halfway down the road, the workers throw their hands up in disgust and say: it is not worth it - let us just forget it.
- We have a host of publications. We have an internal magazine, called Eskomnews, but we use many other ways and means of communicating through the written word and ensuring that our employees are kept informed
- Our employees will not read what is happening to Eskom in the newspaper. We tell them beforehand. Whenever we announce our financial results we tell them first. When we launch a new product, we tell them first. Should there be a change in management, they are the first people to know”.

- We use team brief at Eskom and it is effective. So, after a board meeting or after a management committee meeting, the divisional heads have a debriefing session with their people and they in turn brief their teams. Normally, after a board meeting, all the people at Eskom know more or less what is happening, what is going on and what the priorities are”.
- When asked to rate the most effective communications media, participants indicated a preference for ongoing publications and the various types of face-to-face interaction (group meetings, one-on-one meetings with supervisors).

10 Mechanism for employee feedback regarding communication?

The mechanism for employee feedback regarding communication is mostly staff forums. Feedback channels such as staff meetings are the main channel to provide and receive feedback to a certain extent. This forum also provides a platform where some of our disgruntled employees can air their views. The forum meetings also take place at the national office and do not really include the regions.

Annexure: C

ONLINE SELF-ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE – COMMUNICATION MANAGERS AND COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS

Dear Respondents

My name is Jonas Maenetja, a registered student at the University of South Africa. I am currently studying towards a Masters Degree (Organisational Communication Research and Practice). As part of the curriculum, I am required to carry out a survey interviews for a dissertation of limited scope. The topic is “The current state of integrated communication within a state-owned organisation”.

I would appreciate if you could kindly spare me few minutes of your time to complete this online questionnaire and send it back to me by e-mail not latter than 31 October 2008. Please be assured that your identity and all answers you provide will be kept confidential in accordance with research ethics.

I would like to thank you in advance for your assistance

Yours sincerely

Jonas Maenetja

1. Strategic alignment

Activities
1.1 Does Eskom have a corporate (business) strategy in place? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
1.3 If yes, please provide more details.....
1.6 Do all staff members in Eskom know what the corporate vision is? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
1.7 If so, how is the corporate vision being communicated to staff members?

3. Consistency

2.1 Does Eskom have formal processes in place to ensure strategic consistency in relation to communication? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
2.2 If yes, please provide more details.....
2.3 Is there a standardised visual corporate identity guideline (for colours, logo's etc.) at Eskom? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
2.4 If yes, please provide more details.....
2.5 If so, does Eskom practice regular content analysis of visual corporate identity elements me consistency? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

3. Infrastructure for integration

Activity
3.3 Does Eskom have an infrastructure for communication integration? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
3.4 If yes, please provide more information.....
3.3 Does Eskom have a policy regarding communication integration at corporate level? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
3.4 If yes, what is the name of the policy.....
3.5 Is there a person responsible for communication integration (integrators) within Eskom? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
3.7 If yes, who is responsible?.....

4. Coordination

Activities
4.1 Does Eskom plan its communication activities across all divisions? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
4.4 If yes, how are these activities planned?
4.5 Is the sharing of information across Eskom divisions possible? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
4.4 If yes, how?

5. Free flow and sharing of information

Activities

5.1 Does Eskom have the mechanisms to centralise information about stakeholders?

- Yes
- No

5.2 If yes, what are these mechanisms?

.....
.....

5.3 Does Eskom have the mechanisms to make the same information available to all parts of t

- Yes
- No

5.4 If yes, how.....

.....

6. Stakeholder orientation

Activities

6.1 Who are Eskom's most important stakeholders and why?

.....

6.2 Does Eskom have quality relationships with all its stakeholder groups?

- Yes
- No

6.3 If yes, please provide information.....

.....

6.5 Does Eskom interact regularly with stakeholders?

- Yes
- No

6.5 If yes, please provide more information regarding this interaction. e.g. channels, frequency etc.....

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