

Internal communications through new media - A narrative study of a company's first steps

International Business Communication
Master's thesis
Mirjami Sipponen-Damonte
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Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study was to comprehend what are the opportunities of new media for internal communications and how these opportunities can be seized. The main focus was not on the technological aspects of new media, but in understanding what kind of communications and discourse new media enable inside an organization and what their successful application requires. In addition, the interest was in identifying user types for new media. This was a qualitative study that focused on the phenomenon of new media through an Enterprise social network (ESN) taken in use in an internationally operating technology company, called 'Beda' in this paper. The ESN under research was called 'BedaNet'. BedaNet was an internal network aimed at all the managers of the company.

Methodology and the Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study summarizes theories from internal communications, change communication and media research. The data was collected with seven semi-structured interviews and a survey. The data was analyzed using narrative methodology.

Findings and Conclusions

The findings of this research are presented in a form of four narratives, describing the introduction of the BedaNet from point of view of directors and different user types. Three user types of new media were identified: Active participant, Silent follower and Absent contributor. This research pointed out several opportunities of new media for internal communications, supported by previous literature. Also, the study identified some critical features that facilitate or alternatively hinder the effective use of new media.

As a conclusion, this research argues that the new media bring several benefits that respond to the needs of the work life in future. However, in order to implement internal new media successfully in a company, their introduction should be done carefully and with awareness of the critical factors. Such critical factors identified in this research are a new set of communication skills needed to communicate through new media, and the existence of a tension between personal and professional closeness in internal new media.

Key words: new media, social media, social networks, ESN, internal communications, change communication, Web 2.0, mass self communication, MSC, personal vs. professional closeness

Uudet mediat sisäisessä viestinnässä Narratiivinen tutkimus erään yrityksen ensimmäisistä askelista

Tutkimuksen tavoitteet

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli ymmärtää mitä mahdollisuuksia uudet mediat tuovat yritysten sisäiseen viestintään, sekä sitä miten nämä mahdollisuudet saadaan käyttöön. Päähuomio ei ollut uusien medioiden teknologisissa näkökulmissa, vaan sen ymmärtämisessä millaisen viestinnän ja diskurssin uudet mediat mahdollistavat organisaation sisällä ja mitä niiden menestyksekkäs käyttö vaatii. Lisäksi tutkimus pyrki tunnistamaan erilaisia uusien medioiden käyttäjätyyppejä. Tutkimus oli luonteeltaan laadullinen ja se tutki uusien medioiden ilmiöitä 'Bedaksi' kutsutun case-yrityksen sisäisen verkoston kautta. Beda on kansainvälisesti toimiva teknologia-alan yritys. BedaNet on yrityksen kaikille esimiehille suunnattu sisäinen verkosto.

Tutkimusmenetelmät ja teoreettinen viitekehys

Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehysten lähtökohtana oli aiempi kirjallisuus sisäisestä viestinnästä, muutoksen viestinnästä ja mediatutkimuksesta. Tutkimuksen aineisto kerättiin seitsemän teemahaastattelun, sekä case-yrityksen esimiehille suunnatun kyselyn avulla. Aineisto analysointiin narratiivisia menetelmiä käyttäen.

Tutkimuksen tulokset ja johtopäätökset

Tutkimuksen tulokset on esitetty neljän narratiivin muodossa, jotka kuvaavat BedaNetin käyttöönottoa case-yrityksessä johdon ja kolmen käyttäjätyypin näkemysten kautta. Tutkimus tunnisti kolme käyttäjätyyppiä: Aktiivisen osallistujan, Hiljaisen seuraajan ja Poissaolevan tekijän. Tutkimus osoitti useita mahdollisuuksia joita uudet mediat tuovat sisäiseen viestintään. Tutkimus myös tunnisti kriittisiä tekijöitä, jotka helpottavat tai vastaavasti hankaloittavat uuden median tuloksekasta käyttöä.

Loppuyhteenvedonä tämä tutkimus esittää, että uudet mediat tuovat useita hyötyjä yrityksen sisäiseen viestintään, jotka vastaavat tulevaisuuden työelämän tarpeisiin. Kuitenkin, uusien medioiden menestyksekkäs toimeenpano yrityksessä edellyttää suunnitelmallisuutta ja tietoisuutta kriittisistä tekijöistä. Tämä tutkimus tunnisti kriittisinä tekijöinä tarpeen uudelleenlaadulla kommunikointitaidoilla uusissa medioissa kommunikoida, sekä sisäisiin uusiin medioihin liittyvän jännitteen ammatillisen ja henkilökohtaisen läheisyyden välillä.

Avainsanat: uudet mediat, sosiaalinen media, sosiaaliset verkostot, ESN, sisäinen viestintä, muutosviestintä, Web 2.0

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the last decade the way in which we communicate and share information across time and space has been revolutionized by the introduction of new media. Interactivity aided by technology is strengthened in a way that brings electronic communication closer to the qualities of traditional communication (Sorensen & Skouby, 2008). The term Web 2.0 refers to the technology that enables the users to create content in the Internet (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009) in such social networks as MySpace, Facebook or LinkedIn. It provides a foundation for communication, for exchanging rich material such as pictures and videos, creating new communities and connecting with others (Sorensen & Skouby, 2008). Web 2.0 can be regarded as the ideological and technological foundation to new technologies (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Morrison, 2009), while “user generated content” (USG) can be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make use of new media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Also companies have recognized the potential of new media for business. Decision makers try to identify ways in which firms can make profitable use of Web 2.0 applications (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) in interacting with existing customers, maintaining corporate image or reaching out new markets and audiences (Hearn et al., 2008). But when it comes to using social-networking technologies inside organizations, many business leaders are at loss to understand what value can be created from a facebook-like status updates within the enterprise (Li, 2012).

The term “new media” has been used in this paper to emphasize the multidimensionality, and especially the discursive content of social media. Hearn et al. (2008) propose a term “new media” to be used rather than Information and Communications Technology (ICT) or Web 2.0, terms that will as well be explained more in detail in the next chapter, because it reminds us that we are dealing with communicative and discursive content instead of pure technical infrastructure or systems. New media incorporates three layers of communicative ecology: a social, a discursive and a technical layer. While new media in internal communications is at the focus of this research, the technological environments in which these communications

take place are called “enterprise social networks” (ESNs). ESNs have been created taking the best elements of public social networks and applying them to the special needs of an organization (Lin et al., 2012). Lin et al. (2012) define ESN as a set of technologies that creates business value by connecting the members of an organization through profiles, updates and notifications. In this study I use both terms in different meanings. By ESN I refer specifically to the technical application, while by new media to the communication phenomenon that is enabled by such tools as ESN. However, it is important to bear in mind that ESNs are not just Facebook or LinkedIn used for business purposes. Even though the user interface is often quite similar, ESN is an application that is specifically built for internal networking purposes (Bennett, 2012). Although the potential of new media in internal communications is generally acknowledged, companies are struggling in making it work for them (Lin et al., 2012; Healey, 2012). This is considered to be related to an unbalanced attention to the technological issues over the interpersonal ones (Lin et al. 2012; Kotter & Cohen, 2012).

Even though new media enable us now to communicate online in many ways similar to the traditional face-to-face social networks, they still represent a completely new way of communication that requires a new set of competences. In fact, new media use is often thought to be something that characterizes the young generation. However, the growth is not limited to them. Members of the so-called Generation X, now 35-44 years old, increasingly populate the ranks of joiners, spectators and critics (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In 2011 more than half of all adults in US visited social networking sites at least once a month (Li, 2012). Castells (2009) has introduced the concept of “mass self communication” (MSC) to describe the complexity of communicating in online networks with multiple channels, modes and messages. The communication in new media necessitates, according to Castells (2009), continuous interpretation of meanings from different messages. Through the process of continuous interaction and interpretation, members of a community create shared meanings. Hence, due to the novelty of the phenomenon, introducing channels of new media in a work context requires changing the used communication habits. Therefore, in order to make the

change happen, proper change communication practices should be in place (Bordia et al., 2012; Lewis & Seibold, 2004; Frahm & Brown, 2005).

In the first thorough report of the relation between Finnish companies and social media, Isokangas and Kankkunen (2011) point out that the biggest growth potential for social media is seen, indeed, in internal communications. Internal communications examines how people communicate in organizations and the nature of effective communication systems in organizations (Grunig et al., 2012, p.486). Since internal communications have been studied in different domains, there is a lack of common terminology, which makes it difficult to establish a common cognitive ground (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Joensuu, 2006). The concept of internal communications has been referred as internal relations, employee communication, employee relations, internal public relations, staff communication, organizational communication and corporate/business communication (Garcia-Morales, 2011; Joensuu, 2006). It is also defined as “the strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels within organizations (Welch and Jackson (2007, p.183)”. Kalla (2006) has adopted a holistic approach to internal communications. According to her, internal communications should include all formal and informal communications taking place internally at all levels of an organization. Garcia-Morales et al. (2011) have studied internal communications in relation to technological proactivity, organizational learning and organizational innovation. According to them, good internal communications are crucial in communication networks. Organizations should adopt strategies to make internal communications flow quickly, making it a key resource to knowledge (Jablin & Putnam, 2001; Monge & Contractor, 2003). In this study, the term internal communications is used in plural because the communication that takes place in internal new media includes potentially several communication processes, different tenors of formality as well as communication of and between different organizational levels. Focus of the current study is strongly in the communicational aspects of new media. Through the case company, the study is collocated in an international business context. Therefore it can be affirmed that the current study fits well into the discipline of international business communication.

Previous research regarding the new media focuses on large parts on the technical aspects of the phenomenon (e.g. Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Sorensen & Skouby, 2008; Andriole, 2010; and Ahlqvist et al. 2010) but Castells (2009) has studied the characteristics of communication taking place in new media. In the field of corporate communications, instead, Hearn et al. (2008) have studied the use of new media in organizations. Studies that look at ESNs more specifically have been conducted by Lin et al. (2012), as an analysis of social networks in an enterprise. From the point of view of internal communications, García-Morales et al. (2011) have studied the interrelation between internal communications, technological proactivity, organizational learning and organizational innovation. Herlin (2012), instead, has studied the internal social media in a strategy communication process. This study builds on the existing research and contributes to better understand the role and the potential of new media for internal communications.

1.1 Research objectives and questions

The purpose of this study is to better comprehend what new media can offer to internal communications in a multinational company. The main focus is not in the technological aspects of the new media, but in understanding what kind of communications and discourse new media enable inside an organization and what their successful application require. This is a qualitative study that focuses on the phenomenon of new media through an ESN taken in use in an internationally operating technology company, called 'Beda' in this paper. To the ESN under research I have given a name 'BedaNet'. It is an internal network aimed at all the managers of the company.

In this study I intend to answer the following questions:

1. What opportunities do new media provide for internal communications, based on the BedaNet experience?
2. What factors facilitate and hinder the use of internal new media in the case company?

3. What types of new media users can be identified in the case company?

The current research is related to the evaluation of the next steps with the BedaNet. In this research I have chosen not to concentrate on the managerial role of the BedaNet users. Instead, the aim is to focus on the communication through new media and its patterns of use amongst any employee group that shares a similar role in an organization. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and a survey with multiple choice and open questions. To analyze the data, I used a narrative methodology that enables studying organizations as socially constructed verbal systems where the voice of each person who is part of the organization is important (Hazen 1993). This approach enabled observing the use and the potential of the new media in internal communications from the point of view of individual experiences that can be similar or very different.

1.2 Case company

The empirical data for this research was collected from a company that carries a pseudonym Beda to protect the company privacy. Beda is the Finnish subsidiary of a global company that provides products and services in the field of technology. Beda employs several thousands of people in Finland, with nearly 250 managers working in the company. It has two Finnish subsidiaries and an Estonian office. Recently the Nordic subsidiaries including Beda have strengthened their collaboration and various operations have been merged into Nordic teams. My role in Beda is that of an external consultant, having designed and delivered training sessions for Beda's managers and specialists since five years.

During the last years, the concept of 'Lean' has been integrated into the process development and leadership of Beda. Lean is the term used to describe a principle-based continuous quality improvement management system based on the Toyota production system that has been evolving for over 70 years (Clark et al., 2013). Lean has two fundamental elements: first, a systematic approach to process improvement by

removing waste in order to maximize value for the end-user of the service and second, a commitment to respect, challenge and develop the people who work within the service to create a culture of continuous improvement (Clark et al., 2013).

In March 2012 the top management of Beda decided to launch an internal social network, targeted at its managers to serve as a space for peer communication and support, with the objective of developing activities and ‘digging wisdom’ from the organization. The BedaNet was started as a pilot project for the year 2012 and it remained in use after the pilot period with the interest of expanding it to the whole Nordic area at a certain point. This would enable a faster and stronger cooperation amongst the colleagues from different Nordic countries. The BedaNet is located in a Yammer network, one of the world’s leading social network services providers launched in 2008. Creating, discussing, sharing and storing content with coworkers without sending e-mails is possible with Yammer.

1.3 Thesis structure

This Master’s Thesis is divided into six chapters. This first and introductory chapter presents the background, the objectives and the questions of the present research as well as the case company. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the existing literature that contributes to the current research, divided in two parts. The first part looks at research carried out in the domain of internal communications. The second part presents the literature regarding communication in new media. At the end of the chapter, the theoretical framework of the current study will be presented. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in this study. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the empirical study. The findings of the data analysis have been constructed in four separate narrative lines, presented in four separate subchapters. The findings are discussed in Chapter 5. Both the relation between the three narrative lines, as well as their link to the theoretical framework is discussed. At the end of the chapter, a list of suggestions will be provided on how to gain the best benefits of an ESN in a company. Chapter 6 concludes this study by summarizing the main findings and implications, discussing the limitations of the study, as well as providing suggestions for further research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents existing literature that relates to the topic of this study. This research project draws from theories in the domains of internal communications, media communication and communication technology technology, but the basis of the theory can however be considered to lie in the field of internal communications. In the following sub-chapters the existing literature that contributes to the present research will be presented. At the end of this chapter I will synthesize the key theories reviewed in this chapter in a theoretical framework.

2.1 Internal Communications

Understanding how new media can contribute to the internal communications is a key interest of this research. This sub-chapter reviews previous literature related to internal communications comparing how internal communications have been defined in different domains and periods, orienting the reader to those theories that contribute to the theoretical framework of the current study. Section 2.1.1 explains how the introduction of ICTs has influenced the internal communications of organizations. Since this study argues that adopting tools of new media at work requires a change in communication habits, section 2.1.2 reviews literature related to change communication.

Since internal communications have been studied in different domains, there is a lack of common terminology, which makes it difficult to establish a common cognitive ground (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Joensuu, 2006). For example, internal communications have been referred in literature as internal relations, employee communication, employee relations, internal public relations, staff communication, organizational communication and corporate/business communication (Garcia-Morales, 2011; Joensuu, 2006). One reason for the high number of synonyms for internal communications lies in the fact that its origins emerge from various areas of research. Consequently, due to its multidisciplinary interest internal communications have been defined in various ways. One of the first academic references to internal

communications come from Frank and Brownell (1989) who define them as “the communications transactions between individuals and / or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialization that are intended to design and redesign organizations to implement designs, and to co-ordinate day-to-day activities” (Frank & Brownell, 1989, pp. 5-6). Welch and Jackson (2007, p.183) define internal communications from a strategic perspective as “the strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels within organizations.” Within the domain of business communication, Bovée & Thill (2000, p.7) define internal communications broadly as “the exchange of information and ideas within an organization.” In addition to these, Argenti (1996) defines internal communications through their role in an organization. According to him, internal communications have the role of creating an atmosphere of respect for all employees. Kalla (2008) has introduced the term integrated internal communications. According to her, in the increasingly complex world communicators need to understand the organizational life as a whole. Therefore, communication skills should be combined with an understanding of the business and cultural environment. The nature of integrated internal communications is but multidisciplinary, also multilevel. In fact, Kalla states that all formal and informal communications that take place at various levels of the organization are considered an important part of the overall communication process. Soda & Zaheer (2012) talk about the importance of taking a holistic view on the both informal and formal elements of an organization. According to Soda & Zaheer (2012), these elements need to be examined together in terms of their mutual interplay, both because a holistic approach provides a more complete understanding of organizational functioning, and because the two sets of elements act together and their interrelationship has implications for performance of individual organizational actors. The formal and informal organizational elements to which Soda & Zaheer (2012) refer generate patterns of interaction through which organizational actors coordinate effort, share goals, exchange information, and access resources that affect performance (Nickerson & Zenger, 2002), creating hence a clear link to internal communications. Kalla includes in the concept of integrated internal communications the processes of business communication, organizational communication, management communication and corporate communication.

The definition of Kalla (2008) is suitable also for the present study, since it includes different communication processes inside an organization. In fact, company internal new media most probably touch various internal communication processes and at least it is important, when studying a new phenomenon, to remain open to this possibility. The term internal communications has been chosen to be used in plural in this study, with the aim of capturing all the communication processes that take place simultaneously inside an organization (see also Kalla, 2006, p.53).

Internal communications are all the time in a closer contact with the external environment of organizations, mainly due to faster and wider information sharing enabled by the steps taken in the ICTs. Academic research, however, has hard times in keeping pace with the continuously changing world of business. In fact, the research conducted in the field of internal communications has been criticized for a narrow scope. For example, organizations have often been viewed through a container metaphor, in which an organization has fixed borderlines (Joensuu, 2006). Zorn (2012) argues that the changes outside the organization have not been taken much into consideration in the research of internal communications, even though they influence the internal processes of the organization. Jones et al. (2004) have suggested that some of the major challenges for internal communications are the following: “to move from micro- to macro level issues and to understand the communication of the organizational change.” With the micro- and macro level issues Jones refers to the blurring boundaries of internal and external communication. In line with this, Schultz (2004) calls attention to the role of customer needs in internal communications. In fact, often the objectives of internal communications are related to communicating the organization’s goals, while the customer aspect is completely forgotten (Joensuu, 2006). Instead, internal communications should support the organization in creating the customer the best possible experience on the organization’s products and services (Joensuu, 2006).

In addition to the fact that the boundaries between internal and external communications are increasingly blurred, there has been another significant trend in the internal communications of organizations that has emerged in the relative research as well – a shift from a traditional top-down to an increasingly adopted two-way communication.

In fact, it is nowadays widely agreed that two-way communication is important to successful internal communications (Garcia-Morales, 2011), while the traditionally preferred one-way communication from top management to employees is losing its applicability in today's complex work life. Aaltonen & Ikävalko (2002) discuss the benefits of two-way communication to, for example, strategy implementation, since the possibility of commenting, asking or questioning the strategy enables understanding it. According to Aaltonen & Ikävalko, this can be reached by a continuous two-way communication that includes feedback and reaction on the messages that come from bottom to top in the organization. Mustonen (2009, p.52), on the other hand, expresses her doubts on whether the strategy communication can truly be symmetrical, meaning bi-directional to the same extent. Tourish and Hargie (2004) have studied vertical two-way feedback between the organizations' personnel and their management. They recognize that it is very important for the management to receive feedback from the organization, since this way the managers can get a more accurate picture about both the organization and their own performance. However, in practice there are different barriers to providing this critical upward feedback (Tourish & Hargie, 2004). Also Lewis (2007) argues, regarding change communication, that despite empirical evidence showing the positive impact of employee input in change decisions, the top-down approach to communication continues to be most widely used. Accordingly, the reason why many organizations may encounter difficulties in reducing employee uncertainty during change is the often one-way nature of communication strategies (Allen et al., 2007). De Vries (2010) supports the idea of two-way communication from the leadership perspective. According to him, most successful organizations are not led by one, powerful, charismatic leader, but are the product of distributive, collective, and complementary leadership. Also Smythe (2004) criticizes models in which the aim of internal communications is that of making the employees adopt the latest ideas, formed strategies and visions of top management. According to him, this "command-and-control" management is not able to take into account the changes in attitudes of employees, caused by the changed working life. Similarly, Garcia-Morales et al. (2011) argue that two-way communication increases the likelihood that members of an organization will be satisfied with their individual jobs and with the organization as a whole.

Two-way communication is not limited to communication between the company management and employees, but it has also a horizontal dimension as organizations' stakeholders communicate increasingly with each other, resulting in infinitely more complex communication (De Bussy et al., 2000). A natural consequence of the increasing number of different voices in organizations is the growing diversity in opinions. In fact, Holtzhausen (2000) proposes that two-way communication should be defined as dissidence. It gives people the freedom to disagree in situations that they find unjust, instead of pushing towards incorrect compromises. According to Holtzhausen, dissidence helps to achieve new ideas and solutions that can lead to real change. Unfortunately, however, changing the dynamics of communication is not that simple.

2.1.1 ICTs in internal communications

Due to the increasing complexity of organizations and the growing tendency and necessity to ICTs in internal communications, communications researchers have become interested in technology-supported communication. This section reviews some key research related to communication supported by ICTs, since in order to answer the research questions it is the interest of this study to understand how the existing literature has seen the influence that ICTs have had on internal communications.

ICTs and the likes of computer-mediated communication (CMC) have become part of the keywords in communication (Olaniran, 2009). According to Kane et al. (2004), traditional media, such as written messages, phone calls and face-to-face contact, are often replaced by e-mails as the preferred channel in the business world, while brochures and organization-wide memos find their importance diminishing with the increasing use of Internet and intranet applications. Also Grosse (2002) states that e-mail is still the most widely used communication technology media in virtual teams. It seems, however, that during the last years many companies have taken a step forward in the use of new communication technologies. Daim et al. (2012) describe blogs, wikis, file sharing and discussion forums as typical ESN tools for work communities. Blogs are journal-style communication channels, while Wikis are document-oriented collaborative workspaces (Daim et al., 2012). The changes in communication, enabled

by technology, have influenced both internal and external communications of organizations (Kane et al., 2004) and they support the trend of the 21st century in group work involving participants in different physical locations that need to be connected by technology (Olaniran, 2009).

The increasing role of ICTs in internal communications seems to be, thus, a commonly accepted fact. Less clear is, instead, what are its effects in organizations. There is an ongoing debate amongst scholars on whether the ICTs allow employees greater communication access to management and other members of organizational hierarchy, hence flattening the organization (Olaniran, 2009). According, for example, to De Bussy et al. (2000, 2003) ICTs empower employees and contribute to the democratization of the workplace through the possibility for stakeholders to communicate interactively both with organizations and with each other. Instead, in the traditional channels of internal communications control was highly centralized and in the hands of few. It therefore stands to reason that ICTs have their own inherent tendencies that influence the nature of communications and the direction of organization as a whole (Sing et al. 2007).

At the same time it is important to bear in mind that the technology provides merely tools for communication. For example, O’Kane et al. (2004) underline that the technology alone is not sufficient to create progress, but that it offers new opportunities that need to be properly harnessed if benefits are to be reaped. According to O’Kane et al. (2004), implementation of new technology must fit neatly into an already existing communication strategy. Lehtonen (2000) states that the mere knowledge without social connections is useless. In addition, the will of different parties to give their knowledge for common use is required. From the point of view of the organization, Lehtonen (2000) argues that it is particularly important to create structures that enable the use of the kind of knowledge that is useful to the organization. Olaniran (2009) presents two general benefits that ICTs have over the traditional face-to-face communication: freedom to participate and convenience, as well as potential for equalized or democratic participation. ICT mediated discussions offer greater freedom to participate than face-to-face meetings. Garcia-Morales et al. (2011) also claim that in an increasingly

globalized economic and social environment marked by the rigorous need to achieve efficiency in internal communications, the power of new technologies is more and more necessary to facilitate internal communications to overcome barriers of time and space. Sender and receiver do not have to share the same space or time to be able to develop effective communication (Garcia-Morales et al. 2011). Even though the ICT –mediated communications offer new opportunities, they as well present new challenges for internal communications.

The effectiveness of ICTs is often criticized on the basis of media richness theory (Olaniran, 2009). A communication medium is considered ‘rich’ to the extent that it is able to support multiple cues (especially non-verbal cues), and ‘lean’ due to its inability to support multiple cues (Olaniran, 2009). Face-to-face communication is, for example, believed to be the richest communication medium for its ability to support different nonverbal and social cues (Olaniran, 2009). Also Kane et al. (2004) claim that virtual groups are not the same as actual groups, and that the differences must be dealt with if the timesaving potential of multi-location teams should be taken in use. One of the challenges for virtual working teams compared to single location teams is a difficulty to build trust to other team members. Järvenpää & Leidner (1999) have studied trust building based on the exchange of personal electronic communication. According to them, the trust building is facilitated by an active exchange of information electronically. Those who exchange the greatest amount of social information early in the process also establish highest levels of trust (Järvenpää & Leidner, 1999). In fact, Joensuu (2006) states that also the exchange of non-business related information amongst employees is beneficial for the firm in the long run. De Bussy et al. (2003) have come up with similar results when studying internal marketing. According to them, the conditions of trust, trustworthiness and cooperativeness between management and employees create a potential framework for the internal marketing construct.

2.1.2 Change communication

This section explores some theories related to change communication. Even though the introduction of new media tools in a company is not comparable to a large-scale

organizational change, this study hypothesizes that to be able to take advantage of new technologies, a significant change in communication and information sharing habits is required. Therefore, the role of communication when implementing an organizational change is explored in this section through existing literature.

Although many change scholars (Axley, 2000; Doyle et al., 2000) argue that communication has an important role in implementing a change, organizational change communication has been little studied explicitly (Eisenberg et al., 1999). Doyle et al. (2000) argue that this lack of empirical research leads to practitioners frequently lacking success in change communication goals. Despite the high frequency with which organizations undertake change, more often than not these efforts fail to deliver the desired results on a variety of outcomes, including cost reduction, employee attitudes and productivity, as well as revenue growth (Attaran, 2004; Marks, 2006; Paper & Chang, 2005). The reasons behind these failures are related to a poor change leadership (Quinn, 2004), lack of communication (Lewis and Seibold, 1998) and the focus on technical aspect instead of the human one (Kotter and Cohen, 2002). Furthermore, Bordia et al. (2004) argue that change communication facilitates openness and positive attitudes towards change to the extent that it effectively addresses employee uncertainty. In line with this, according to Frahm and Brown (2005), organizational change communication is a crucial element in employees' receptivity to change. Therefore, the role of communication in any change process cannot be ignored nor underestimated.

The role of middle managers in change communication is receiving increasingly attention. According to Self et al. (2007), perceived organizational support and the relationship between employees and their immediate manager are some of the internal contextual variables that can influence the success of a change effort. However, Frahm and Brown (2005) remark that communication is a symbol of organizational culture and if the existing organizational culture does not value information exchange and processing, then it is unlikely that the managers will deviate from the norm. And if a cultural change is expected, the top management need to be committed to it (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Therefore, middle managers should not be blamed as being responsible for communication breakdowns (Frahm & Brown, 2005), but their important role

should be acknowledged in order to support them in change communication. If there is a difference between the employees' understanding of a concept and that of their managers the change will not be as effective. Consequently, Huy (1999, 2002) has identified workgroup managers' leadership to be an important determinant of the effectiveness of their own and their employees' emotional responses to organizational change. Seo et al. (2012) have studied the affective experiences of employees during change and, according to them, employees' positive and negative affective experiences during the initial phase of organizational change were strongly related to their commitment to the success of the change and their behavioral responses during the later phase of change. In addition to already mentioned aspects related to change communication, the change should always be observed and managed in its context. The interpretations of the changes made and the process used during the implementation, will be influenced by the existing organizational circumstances (Self et al., 2007). Organizational context is not a static factor, but organizations are dynamic, experiencing fluid changes and adjustments related to internal and external incidents (Self et al., 2007). Finally, successful implementation of organizational change requires a high degree of employee creativity in order to fundamentally change old ways of behaving and develop new approaches. (Seo et al., 2012).

As a conclusion, the establishment of a common cognitive ground to the research of internal communications is still a work in progress, due to the multidisciplinary background of the research that also results in a mixture of different terms that refer to internal communications. It is now widely accepted that the two-way communication is more beneficial in today's organizations than the traditionally preferred one-way or top-down communication. It is good to note that two-way communication does not always mean consensus of ideas. Quite the opposite, often it means also dissidence and freedom to disagree. Introduction of the ICT in internal communications presents new challenges, but at the same time it provides opportunities for the collaboration of virtual working teams. In fact, the ICT –mediated communication has come to stay for various reasons and now awareness of its challenges is required in order to overcome them. When changes of any dimension are introduced in organizations, such as the adoption of new technologies, the change communication is crucial for obtaining the desired

outcomes. It is now clear that the direct line-manager has most influence in enhancing or hindering the change, and that the line managers in their turn are influenced by the prevailing organizational culture.

2.2 New media

This sub-chapter presents the key definitions and theories related to new media. The terms new media, Web 2.0 and social media are easily used as substitutes to the term new media. The terms in fact are closely interrelated, but each one of them has own, specific role in the context. Therefore, for sake of clarity of language and understanding of the communicative environment that this research investigates, section 2.2.1 presents Web 2.0 platform and the opportunities it has brought to communication, section 2.2.2 presents the concept of social media and section 2.2.3 the particularities of an ESN.

For who is not familiar with the research in the field of new media, the term itself may raise some questions. What is new and what is old? How can the new media be distinguished from the non-new media? To define new media I first start with the definition of media. The BusinessDictionary (2013) defines media as “communication channels through which news, entertainment, education, data, or promotional messages are disseminated”. Media includes every broadcasting and narrowcasting medium such as newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, billboards, direct mail, telephone, fax, and internet.” Peters (2009) presents instead two definitions of the ‘new’ media. First, “new media can be understood as emerging communication and information technologies undergoing a historical process of contestation, negotiation and institutionalization” (Peters, 2009, p. 18). The second definition is much simpler: “new media are media we do not yet know how to talk about” (Peters, 2009, p. 18).

New media can also be recognized through the five periods they pass:

1. Technical invention – during which media are recognized rarely as ‘new’ and usually thought of as ‘old plus’;

2. Cultural innovation – during which media develop new social uses;
3. Legal regulation – during which the interested parties explicitly contest and negotiate for media power;
4. Economic distribution – which continues until media become social mainstream
5. Social mainstream – the point at which media are no longer new.

(Peters, 2009, 18)

Therefore a characteristic of new media that distinguishes it from bare media is its changing content. No new media is new forever, but the content of new media changes in time. Contemporarily, some ‘old’ media can be re-introduced and, hence, return under the umbrella of new media. Hearn et al. (2008) define instead new media through the three layers of communicative ecology it incorporates: social, discursive and technical layers.

2.2.1 Web 2.0

At the moment, Web 2.0 platform is the hot stone of the new media with all the applications it enables, being the latest wave of innovation in CMC technology (Harrison & Barthel, 2009). In order to better understand the research problem of this study, it is worthwhile become more familiar with the unique characteristics of Web 2.0 technologies and what they enable to the users. This section presents an overview of what is meant with the term 2.0 and what it enables from the communications point of view.

The term Web 2.0 was first used in 2004 to describe a new way in which software developers and end-users started to utilize the World Wide Web: as a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative way (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Therefore, services and applications of the Web 2.0 enable more dynamic interactions between clients and servers, more engaging webpage displays and

applications, as well as more direct, interactive and participative user-to-user interactions than what has been experienced on the web before that (Harrison & Barthel, 2009). In practice this means that while applications, such as personal web pages, online encyclopedias, and the idea of content publishing belong to the era of Web 1.0, they are replaced by blogs, wikis and collaborative projects in Web 2.0 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, 61). Such interactions are possible due to the applications of the Web 2.0 that enable users with little technical knowledge to construct and share their own media and information products, as they do, for example, on social networking websites (Harrison & Barthel, 2009, p.157). Web 2.0 is in fact very closely connected with what is called 'user generated content' (USG). The term USG gained high popularity in 2005 and it is usually applied to describe the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). While Web 2.0 represents the ideological and technological foundation, the USG can be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make use of the new media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Harrison & Barthel (2009, p.157) describe the attractiveness of the Web 2.0 to its consumers consequently:

The popularity of Web 2.0 applications demonstrates that, regardless of their levels of technical expertise, users can wield technologies in more active ways than had been apparent previously to traditional media producers and technology innovators. Users build and maintain social networks, they tag and rank information in 'folksonomies' and become deeply involved in immersive virtual web experiences. They do all these things in collaboration, pooling knowledge and constructing content that they share with each other, which is subsequently remixed, redistributed and re-consumed. This burgeoning phenomenon suggests that users are gratified in significant ways by the ability to play an active role in generating content, rather than only passively consuming that which is created for them by others.

In fact, with the introduction of Web 2.0, interactive platforms including features of social media such as online chatting, content creation, tagging, blogging, new

opportunities for networking, knowledge sharing and collaboration have emerged simultaneously (Mcafee, 2006). Hence, Web 2.0 is founded on a fundamental reconceptualization of the user, from consumer of online products and information produced by companies to producer of online products and information that they share with others, including companies (Harrison & Barthel, 2009, p.157). Related to this phenomenon, Howe (2006) has coined the term “crowdsourcing” to describe company efforts to outsource an activity to the crowds, representing an entirely new business model. In fact, users are now recognized as practitioners of a new degree of agency in engaging with resources and other users so that it is easy to form and interact with social and technological networks (Harrison & Barthel, 2009). According to Hardey (2007), Web 2.0 is innately social as users are central to both the content and form of all material and resources. It can be seen as a paradigm shift enabling a new culture of participation based on interaction, collective sharing and knowledge creation of users over the Internet (Schneckenberg, 2009; Ahlqvist et al., 2010). The content provided by other users is responsible for the popularity of the typical Web 2.0 applications Facebook and MySpace, as well as other social networking sites (Hardey, 2007).

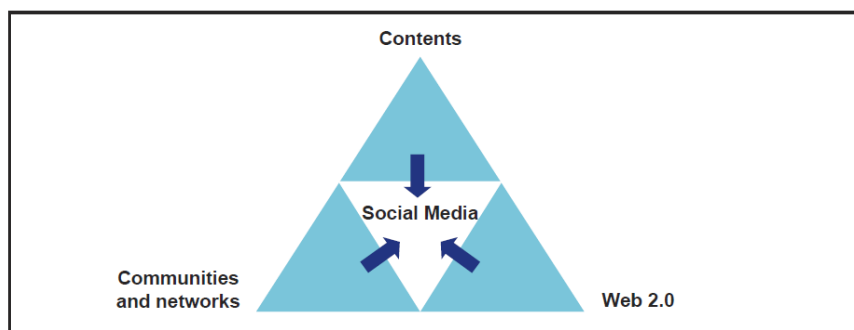
For some time, it has been discussed what can be technically foreseen or expected for the coming Web 3.0 and 4.0 versions. Semantic search, semantic databases, widgets, intelligent personal agents and distributed search are some of the elements identified (Sorensen & Skouby, 2008). Seen from a user perspective, the Web 2.0 created a jump in the Web-user experience (Sorensen & Skouby, 2008). Now the question is what Web 3.0 and 4.0 will mean for the users.

2.2.2 Social media

Amongst all the terms related to CMC presented in this chapter, such as new media, ICT and Web 2.0, ‘social media’ is without doubt the most heard and used in common language. However, there has been a lack of clear definitions for social media (Vuori, 2011a), which has led scholars in the last years to work on them. This section reviews those definitions and classifications to provide an understanding of what is meant by social media in research.

Social media is Ahlqvist et al. (2010) present the key aspects of social media in a triangle form (see Figure 1). Contents refer to user generated content (UGC) which may be of different types, such as photos, pictures or videos, but also tags, reviews and play-lists, amongst others. Communities and social networks refer to the social interaction that forms the basis of social media use. Typically, social media applications enable communication either directly or via media objects. Web 2.0 can be described as an umbrella term referring to the development of digital technologies for content creation and sharing, web technologies and applications that let people easily participate on the Internet.

Figure 1: Key aspects of social media (Ahlqvist et al., 2010)



Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define Social Media as a group of Internet –based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content. Web 2.0 can, thus, be regarded as an umbrella term, encompassing new collaborative technologies (Morrison, 2009), while social media can be considered as a result of applying Web 2.0 technologies in online social environment (Bonsón & Flores, 2011) drawing on the features of UGC, communities and networks, enabled by Web 2.0 technologies (Ahlqvist et al., 2010). To create a scheme for classification of different types of social media, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) have used theories of media richness and social presence from the field of media research, and theories of self-presentation and self-disclosure from the field of social processes, considering these two fields forming the key elements of social media. The classification is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Classification of Social Media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

		Social presence/ Media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

Media richness and social presence theories are widely accepted in explaining media choices and media behaviors (Zhang & Ge, 2006). Media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984 & 1986) is based on the assumption that “the goal of any communication is the resolution of ambiguity and the reduction of uncertainty” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p.61). It measures the richness of media in terms of the capacity for immediate feedback, multiple cues, natural language and personal focus on voice tone and modulation (Zhang & Ge, 2006). Media have varied capacities to reduce ambiguity and thus facilitate mutual understanding (Daft & Lengel, 1984). They differ in the degree of richness they possess in terms of the amount of information they allow to be transmitted in a given time interval, resulting in different levels of effectiveness in resolving ambiguity and uncertainty amongst different media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Richer medium facilitates more accurate and meaningful transmission and exchange of ideas (Zhang & Ge, 2006). A concept of social presence is closely related to the idea of media richness. Social presence theory (Short et al. 1976) measures media in terms of the extent to which they are perceived to convey the presence of an individual. The theory states that media differ in the degree of ‘social presence’ they allow to emerge between two communication partners, defined in terms of acoustic, visual and physical contact (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) explain the concepts of intimacy and immediacy in social presence theory consequently:

Social presence is influenced by the intimacy (inter- personal vs. mediated) and immediacy (asynchronous vs. synchronous) of the medium,

and can be expected to be lower for mediated (e.g., telephone conversation) than interpersonal (e.g., face-to-face discussion) and for asynchronous (e.g., e-mail) than synchronous (e.g., live chat) communications. The higher the social presence, the larger the social influence that the communication partners have on each other's behavior.

Two forms of immediacy can be identified: technological and social (Byron et al. 2008). Technological immediacy is intrinsic while social immediacy can be changed (Heilbronn & Libby, 1973). The maximum amount of exchanged information ensures technological immediacy, while social immediacy is conveyed through communications with verbal or non-verbal cues (Heilbronn & Libby). According to Walther (1996, 1997) ICT is also able to convey social information, just as face-to-face communications, but with lower transfer rate. Walther (1995, 1996, 1997) has also found that ICT mediated groups have greater social discussion, depth, and intimacy than in face-to-face groups. Moving to the social dimension of social media the concept of self-presentation states that in any type of social interaction people have the desire to control the impressions that other people form of them (Goffman, 1959). On one hand, this is done with the aim of influencing others to gain rewards (e.g., make a positive impression on your future in-laws); on the other hand, it is driven by a wish to create an image that is consistent with one's personal identity (e.g., wearing a fashionable outfit in order to be perceived as young and trendy) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to Schau & Gilly (2003), the key reason why people decide to create a personal webpage is the wish to present themselves in cyberspace. Usually such a presentation is done through self-disclosure: conscious or unconscious revelation of personal information (e.g., thoughts, feelings, likes, dislikes) that is consistent with the image one would like to give (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Companies worldwide are implementing the tools of social media for a wide range of purposes, the most common area of application being internal operations followed by interfacing with customers and business partners in the supply chain (McKinsey Quarterly, 2008). However, after an initial trial period a number of companies have

been abandoning these technologies altogether (McKinsey Quarterly, 2008). A study of Finnish companies as adopters of social media shows that the “fear of the unknown” may impact on company willingness to adopt social media for business use (Vuori, 2011b). Furthermore, the study reveals that where Web 2.0 technologies and social media had been implemented, a lack of clarity and consistency could be observed in the actual implementation and use (Vuori, 2011b). In fact, Culnan (2010) has claimed that companies are yet to realize the actual business benefits related to social media uses. According to Levy (2009), the value is derived from the content and not from the technology or system per se. Chui et al. (2009) suggest that participatory technologies, such as Web 2.0, have the highest potential for success when they are incorporated into the daily workflow of people.

2.2.3 Enterprise social networks

Since the arrival of ESNs in companies is very recent and they share many, even though not all, features with public social networks, it is worthwhile to begin with literature related to social networks on a more general level. Consequently, the particularities of an ESN are presented.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social networking sites as web-based services that allow individuals to a) construct a public or a semi-public profile within a bounded system, b) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and c) view and pass through their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The social networking sites make it possible for individuals to meet strangers to form new networks that would never have been formed otherwise (Haythornthwaite, 2007).

A growing number of companies are launching internal ESN sites to encourage employees to share both professional and personal information with each other on the corporate intranet (Brandel, 2008). These sites are frequently built with commercial tools and customized for the company, and they often share a core set of features that can also be found on external social networking sites (Wu et al., 2010).

The following features have been identified as characteristics of an ESN:

- Employees can create online profiles that can be customized with a wide range of content (Dugan et al., 2008).
- Users can express their relationships with other colleagues by connecting to them on the site. Once a connection link is established, users can track the activities of colleagues, much like Facebook's newsfeeds. (Wu et al., 2010)
- The primary activity in an ESN is content sharing, which can include status message updates, photo sharing (Thom-Santelli & Millen, 2009), lists sharing (Geyer et al., 2008), and blogs (Jackson et al. 2007).
- Many of the sites support commenting so that conversations between employees can occur across the site, and serve as a mechanism for informal communication between employees. Additionally, an ESN typically directly connects each profile to information in the company's employee directory and users typically log in to the ESN with their corporate identification. (Skeels & Grudin, 2009)

According to Skeels and Grudin (2009), ESNs cause more tensions to their users than the non work-related social networks. According to them, different relationships cannot be selectively expressed on different tools in the enterprise because the tools are linked to one another and this tension between professional identity and non-professional identity is brought together (Skeels & Grudin, 2009). Therefore, multiple tensions can arise in terms of what information to share with whom (Skeels & Grudin, 2009). To understand the issue of multiplex relationships and ESN use, Wu et al. (2010) have studied two dimensions of relationships between colleagues: professional vs. personal closeness. Table 7 summarizes the factors that uniquely predict professional versus personal closeness, across the range of tie strength (Wu et al. 2010).

Table 2: Predictors that distinguish professional closeness from personal closeness (Wu et al., 2010)

	Strong tie	Weak tie
Professional closeness	<p>Direct management relationship between colleagues</p> <p>Colleagues are in same division</p>	<p>No direct management relationship between colleagues</p> <p>Colleagues are not in the same division</p>
Personal closeness	<p>High levels of viewing of a colleague's content</p> <p>High levels of mutual profile commenting between colleagues</p> <p>Interaction with mutual connections</p>	<p>Lower levels of viewing of a colleague's content</p> <p>Lower levels of mutual profile commenting between colleagues</p> <p>Less interaction with mutual connections</p>

Strong professional ties work closely together and frequently exchange information relating to work tasks and critical job-related information (Wu et al., 2010). Strong personal ties also communicate regularly, but may not work together, and the primary basis of their communication is for emotional, or non-task oriented, support (Wu et al., 2010). While the framework treats professional and personal ties as separate concepts, the two types of strong ties coexist within a multiplex relationship (Wu et al., 2010).

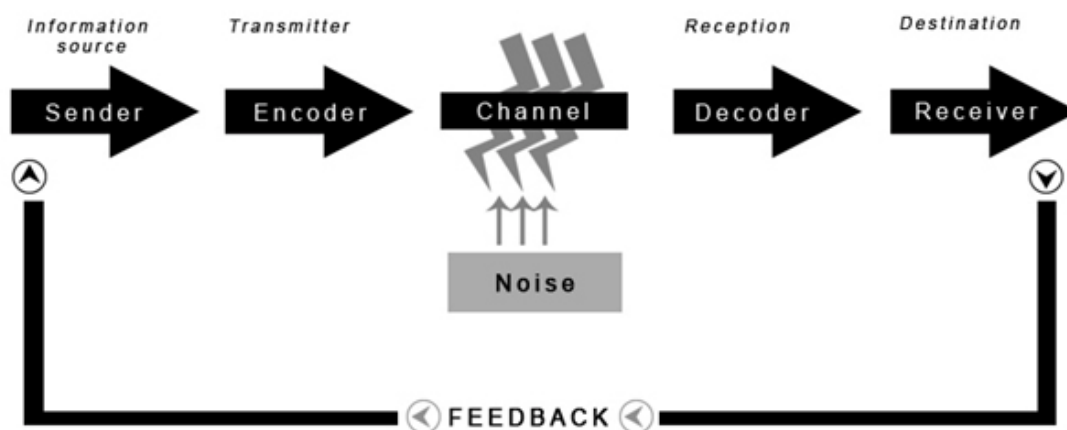
2.3 Communications in new media

This section will present theories that have explained communication in new media, such as the theory of Mass Self Communication (MSC).

One of the earliest ways to describe the communication process is the Shannon-Weaver model of communication, presented in Figure 2. Despite the fact that the model is old and it has been widely criticized, it continues to be commonly cited and used as a frame

of reference for different interpersonal situations (Al-Fedaghi, 2012). Due to its popularity, the model illustrates well how the process of communication has been viewed in behavioral sciences and it therefore is used here to describe the traditional flow of communication in organizations prior to Web 2.0.

Figure 2: The Shannon-Weaver model of communication (Shannon & Weaver, 1949)



In Figure 2 the sender encodes a message, transmits it via a channel to the receiver who decodes the message. Along the way there is noise, which refers to any disturbance that could affect the reception of the message (Shannon & Weaver, 1949).

The arrival of Web 2.0 has complicated the communication from the traditional interpersonal communication, generating a new form of communication that places itself between the interpersonal and mass communication, namely Mass Self Communication (MSC), presented as model in Figure 3. The MSC is characterized by a message originated by an individual and targeted to a mass (Castells, 2009). The characteristics of MSC are similar to that of mass communication, like the presence, within the process, of receivers of the message, as well as the potential for reaching global audience (Castells, 2009). This type of mass communication is, however, self-communication, because the composition of the message is self-generated by individual users, more or less professional (Nichita, 2012). Altogether, MSC is a process to get to a wide audience. Three forms of communication (mass communication, interpersonal communication and MSC) coexist, and complete each other, without substituting one another (Nichita, 2012). While interpersonal communication illustrated by Shannon and

Weaver (1949) is an interactive process in which the message is continuously conveyed from sender to receiver and vice versa, mass communication can be both interactive and one way (Castells, 2009). The communication process is defined by the technological means through which it is realized, by the characteristics that define the sender and the receiver, by the cultural reference codes, by the communication protocol and, finally, by the purpose of the communication process (Nichita, 2012). The signification of the message can be understood only in the context of social relations, through which the information and the communication are processed (Nichita, 2012).

Figure 3: Mass self Communication (MSC) process (Castells, 2009)

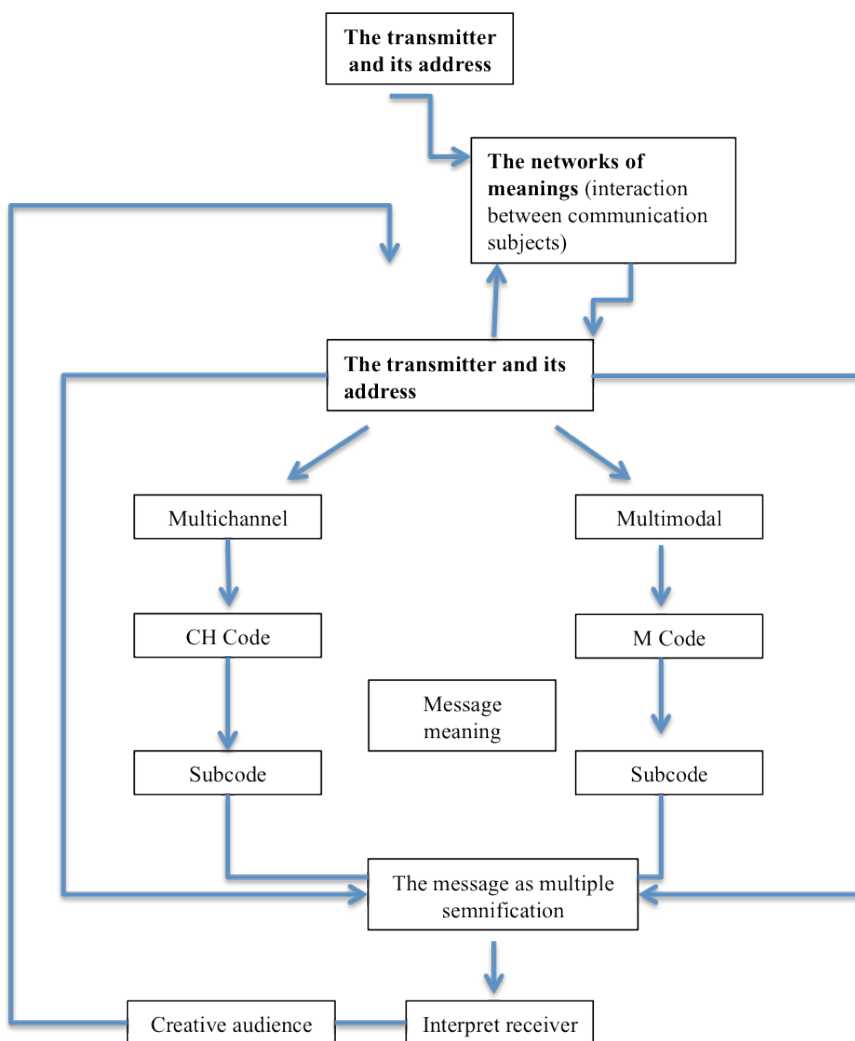


Figure 3 presents the model of MSC. Castells (2009) comments the model as follows:

Senders and addressees are collectively the same subject. Specific individuals or organizations do not necessarily correspond with each other: one sender/addressee may not necessarily receive messages from the sender/addressee to whom she sent a message. But taking the communication process as a shared, multidirectional network, all senders are addressees and vice versa. Communication in the new technological framework is multichannel and multimodal. Multimodality refers to various technologies of communication. Multichannel refers to the organizational arrangements of the sources of communication. If a message is multimodal, it is carried through the Internet (wireline or wireless), wireless devices, television (with its different broadcasting technologies, radio, VCRs, the print press, books and the like). ...Each one of these modes, and their composites, organizes a particular code of communication, to be identified specifically in each context and process.

This description illustrates how in MSC the whole concept of communication gains new meanings when on one hand the same person or organization represents both sender and receiver, and on the other hand the sender and the receiver may never meet each other.

In addition to the process of communication in new media, the users' reactions to Web design have influence on the communication patterns. Liu et al. (2001) characterize users' reactions to Web-design of Information Systems with four dimensions. These are:

- a. Information and service quality, which secures that the user gets satisfaction in using the services and information and has a benefit of using the system.
- b. System use, which relates to the way the user uses the system. Often this is used as a measure of quality and an important determinant of user satisfaction.
- c. Playfulness, which secures the return of the user, as the user finds using the system enjoyable and this provides intrinsic, personal and emotional rewards for the user.
- d. System design quality, which is linked to the security and reliability of the system.

The system must have for example a quick error recovery to have a high system design quality.

These dimensions have all an importance on how users perceive the system and its quality (Sorensen & Skouby, 2008).

Activeness of content creation in social networks has been studied by widely. A commonly cited rule of thumb on content creation in online communities states that 90% of the users of a service are “lurkers” who do not contribute; 9% are “editors”, “commenters” or “intermittent contributors” who contribute some original material and edit existing material, while the remaining 1% is responsible for producing a vast majority of the content in the service (Arthur, 2006; Horowitz, 2006; Nielsen, 2006). There is no direct explanation on why the different users behave in a certain way, but Orlikowski (2000) has argued that people’s experiences, knowledge, meanings, habits, power relations and norms shape the use of technology. In addition, social structures, authority structures, culture and behavioral norms bear an impact on technology use (Vuori, 2012a).

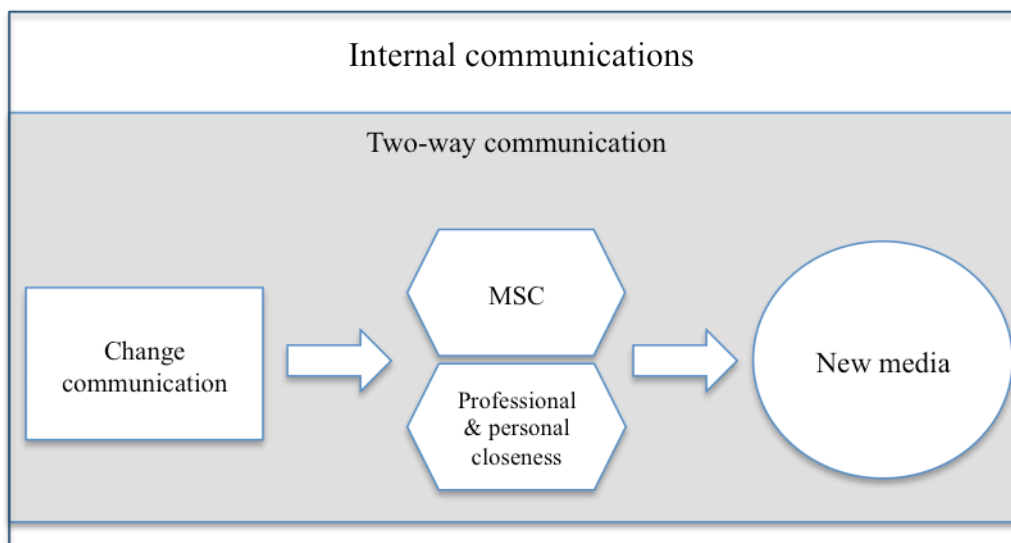
In this subchapter I have viewed the characteristics of new media both from technological and in particular from communicational perspective. The characteristics of Web 2.0, social media and ESNs have been introduced and analyzed from the user point of view. In the end, the changes in the process of communication from the more traditional interaction to mass self communication have been presented. In the next subchapter I will present the theoretical framework of this research.

2.4 Theoretical framework

We have so far viewed the key theoretical concepts that contribute to the framework of this study. Since little previous academic research exists on the use of new media in internal communications, the present study draws from various domains in order to build a suitable theoretical framework for this research. Namely, the theories reviewed in Chapter 2 are related to internal communications, media and communication

technology. More specifically, previous literature from use of ICT in internal communications, change communication, Web 2.0, social media and ESNs has been presented. These theories together build up the theoretical framework, presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4: The theoretical framework



The framework of this study is placed in the context of internal communications. The definition of internal communications in this piece of research follows the definition of integrated internal communications proposed by Kalla (2006). As described in sub-chapter 2.1, the integrated approach to communications combines different areas of communication inside a multinational company, namely corporate communication, business communication, management communication and organizational communication. This study approaches internal communications in a similar way, as combination of the different internal communication processes. The grey area describes the importance of two-way communication inside internal communications. As seen in Chapter 2, it is nowadays widely agreed that two-way communication is important to successful internal communications (Garcia-Morales, 2011; Aaltonen & Ikävalko, 2002; Tourish & Hargie, 2004; De Vries, 2010; Smythe, 2004; De Bussy et al. 2000). Furthermore, since the new media including Web 2.0 and UGC are based the activity and creativity of users (Harrison & Barthel, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), they can

be part of internal communications of an organization only if a two-way communication is prevalent.

Previous research claims that in the introduction of new media in organizations, there has been an unbalanced attention to the technological issues over the interpersonal ones (Lin et al. 2012; Kotter & Cohen, 2012). The theoretical framework of this study proposes that change communication is the first step to be taken in order to make the new media work for internal communications. The issues of MSC (Castells, 2009) and professional vs. personal closeness (Wu et al., 2010) are issues to be tackled in order to make the new media alive and successful in internal communications. MSC describes the increased complexity of communication in new media, due to the multiple roles of users (senders/receivers/ addressees) and to the fact that individual senders and receivers may never meet each other in the media. In other words, MSC is not a two-way process on an individual level. Therefore this study claims that the learnt communication skills are not sufficient for effective communication through new media. The relation between professional and personal closeness is related to a particular tension that is created in ESNs, combining the social network and the work context. Since people have different levels of personal and professional closeness with various members of their professional networks, they find it difficult to determine whether to participate with their professional or non-professional identity. This study claims that if not managed properly and with help of adequate change communication, the tension between professional and personal life hinders users' participation in ESNs.

This chapter has presented theories related to internal communications, new media and communication technologies. The theoretical framework, presented at the end of the chapter, synthesizes the key theories of the present research providing, thus, a theoretical starting point for the empirical study.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used in the empirical part of this research. The purpose of the empirical part is to verify whether the theoretical framework introduced in the previous chapter provides an accurate model for the use new media as part of internal communications of the case company. The empirical part is composed of both qualitative and quantitative data.

Methodology used for the data collection will be presented in sub-chapter 3.1. The mix of research methods used will be introduced and justified. Two rounds of semi-structured interviews, as well as a survey conducted to managers of Beda will be explained in detail. Sub-chapter 3.2 discusses narrative analysis as methodology for analyzing the data. Sub-chapter 3.2 discusses the trustworthiness of the study.

3.1 Collection of data

I chose to conduct this study around a single case for various motives. One of the main reasons for this choice was the fact that yet very little research exists on ESNs, practically none in relation to internal communications. For this reason, the present study can be considered exploratory in its nature. In fact, the natural advantage of case studies in research is their exploratory nature” (Gerring, 2007). Case study as type of research has been defined in several ways. George & Bennett (2005) define it as a study that investigates the properties of a single phenomenon, instance or example. Gerring (2007) defines this phenomenon further by saying that it is spatially limited and observed at a single point of time or over some period of time. The BedaNet around which the data was collected for this study was piloted at the time of the data gathering and, hence, it represents well a phenomenon with a limited period of time. Finally, a case-study type of research enables a more in-depth study on the phenomenon investigated.

The following mix of methodology was applied in order to collect the empirical data from the research under exploration:

- Semi-structured interviews with four directors
- Survey to all managers of Beda
- Semi-structured interviews with three managers

Semi-structured interviews were thus used in two phases of data collection. Four directors were interviewed at the beginning of the research process (first round of interviews). The aim of these interviews was, first of all, to set the basis for all the consequent research exploring the expectations of the directors regarding the study. Second, it was important to understand the initial motives for initializing the new media pilot project as well as the expectations of Beda's directors on its outcome. Finally, some questions were personalized regarding the role and responsibility area of each interviewee in order to get a more holistic picture of the case in its context. The second round of interviews was run after having analyzed the results of the survey. At this point three managers were interviewed. The aim of these interviews was to gain further understanding regarding the answers of the survey. All the interviews of both rounds were conducted in Finnish.

In addition to these methods, I had access to the conversations in the BedaNet. Being able to follow the actual conversations taking place there supports the other methods. Observing the users' behavior in the BedaNet provides further insight to the research.

Hence, a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods has been used in conducting the present research. Quantitative research lies on the logic of positivism, typical to natural science investigation. For a long time, the quantitative research methods were considered as the way of doing research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). However, also the qualitative research has hundred years of history behind it (Laaksovirta, 1988). The qualitative research has its origins in anthropology and it is based on an interpretivist paradigm. In qualitative research, the data is often observed as one entity (Alasuutari, 1999). Therefore, the choice of research methods is related to how the researcher sees and understands the world (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Glesne & Peshkin also recognize that even though much discussion has taken place on which

paradigms or methods are better, a variety of approaches has virtue. According to Glesne & Peshkin (1992), different approaches permit us to know and understand different things about the world. Also Laaksovirta (1988) acknowledges that the end result of a research project with a mix of approaches can be very interesting.

Marsland et al. (1998) provide different possible approaches for combining the quantitative and qualitative research. The research described in this paper corresponds to a combination that Marsland et al. (1998) call “Sequencing”. They describe the approach as follows:

- Using participatory techniques in exploratory studies to set up hypotheses, which can then be tested through questionnaire based sample surveys.
- Choosing a random sample and conducting a short questionnaire survey to gain information on key variables, which are then investigated in-depth by participatory enquiry.

In the following subchapters the data collecting methods of this research are explained more in detail.

3.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

According to Hirsjärvi (1981), a semi-structured interview is suitable when emotionally sensible topics are the target of research, when there is little awareness of the issues under research, when the lack of memory is suspected to produce erroneous answers, or when such phenomena are researched of which the interviewees are not used to discussing daily, such as their values, intent, ideals or motivations in a critical sense. The description of Hirsjärvi (1981) fits to this research, since the topics of the interviews are not part of daily discussion of the interviewees. Different variations exist of semi-structured interviews. In the interviews carried out for this research, a variation called ‘theme interview’, introduced by Hirsjärvi & Hurme (1982) was the chosen variation. The theme interview is typically focused on certain themes that are then

discussed. Specific questions are planned in order to gain clarification of the chosen themes. The order of the questions may vary, as well as the way in which these questions are asked. Also the number of questions varies based on the how much information the interviewee gives on a single question. The interviewer should facilitate the flow of information and motivate the interviewee. In order to do this, flexibility is required both in the use of verbal and non-verbal language, as well as in the control of situations (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 1981).

The interviewees of both sessions participated on a voluntary basis. The purpose of the interviews was reviewed in the beginning of each session and the confidentiality of the interview was emphasized

Four directors of Beda were interviewed in the first phase of data collection (see Table 2). The interviews took place on August 10, 2012 in the premises of Beda, and lasted circa one hour each. All four were face-to-face interviews. The roles of the four interviewees were: Chief executive officer (CEO), Human resources (HR) Director, Strategic Director and the Head of Communications. The HR Director and the Strategic Director report to the CEO. The Head of Communications reports to the Strategic Director.

Table 3: Description of interviews (1st round)

	Interviewee's job title	Role in the interview	Interview length (minutes)	Type of interview
1.	CEO	Commissioner of the case ESN	60	F-to-F
2.	Strategic Director	Sponsor of the case ESN Communications' department is under his BU	64	F-to-F
3.	HR Director	Sponsor of the case ESN Commissioner of the Thesis research	57	F-to-F
4.	Head of Communications	In charge of internal and external communications of Beda	60	F-to-F

There were specific reasons for choosing these interviewees. The BedaNet pilot project was launched due to an explicit interest from the CEO. Therefore, understanding what his motives were for starting this project and what kind of role he gave to this social network enabled understanding the connection between the data and the original need. The BedaNet had two sponsors from the top management: the HR director and the Strategic director. In this research, I conceptualize “top management” as the whole top management team, including the CEO and directors who report to the CEO. Especially in the beginning of the pilot project, the HR director took consciously a more active role in the network. Furthermore, since the Head of Communications reports to the Strategic Director, the Strategic Director could provide his view on the internal communications of the company overall. Finally, since this research stems from the domain of internal communications, the Head of Communications was able to clarify the whole setting of the internal communications in Beda and the role of the BedaNet in it. Therefore, each interview contained a common part to all the four interviewees, but also a personalized part that was related to the specific role of the interviewee. The interview themes are presented in Appendix 1.

Objectives of the interviews can be summed up as follows:

- a) Gain understanding of origins of the BedaNet; the reasons for which it was initiated and the expectations related to it.
- b) Better understand the communication culture and internal communications of Beda, to place the BedaNet in a wider organizational context.

According to Glesne & Peshkin (1992) the process of a qualitative research is typically neither invariably nor explicitly driven by theory, but researchers often use empirical generalizations or middle-range proposals to help form initial questions and working hypotheses during the first stages of data collection. This defines well the process of research of the present study as well. Therefore, the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 was formed prior to the empirical research part, acting as support to it, but it was further clarified on basis of the results of the empirical part. This type of iterative process is very typical in qualitative research and not atypical in quantitative research either (Alasuutari, 1999).

The second round of interviews was carried out on November 29, 2012, after the survey results had been analyzed. In this phase three managers were interviewed (see Table 3). The interviews were conducted at Beda’s premises and they lasted between 15 and 32 minutes. The aim of this second round was to further understand the patterns of behavior on the use of the BedaNet, indicated by the survey results. Also, development ideas for the BedaNet were welcomed. The three interviewees were chosen with the help of the HRD manager of Beda and they all cover managerial roles in Beda. They were selected with the objective of having a heterogeneous triad of interviewees. They come from different parts of the organization; represent both genders and different age groups. Regarding their habits of use, as well as attitude towards the social networks both inside and outside organizations, they represent both the more active and more hesitant end of the managers. The level of activity of these managers in the BedaNet was also looked at when choosing a suitable trio for the interviews. The interview questions can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 4: Description of interviews (2nd round)

	Role of the interviewee	Birth year	Managerial experience in years	Gender	Duration of the interview (minutes)	Type of interview
1.	Team manager in Infrastructure Services unit	1972	4	M	27	F-to-F
2.	Team manager in Infrastructure Services unit	1980	1	F	15	F-to-F
3.	Team manager in Business Application Services unit	1962	7.5	M	32	F-to-F

3.1.2 Survey

This subchapter discusses the characteristics of a survey as a research method and describes the data collection process that was carried out through a survey for this research.

Survey as research method means a type of study in which the focus is on the data that looks at the present situation. Survey data is empirical and it contains the assumption that the phenomena are measurable. A detailed general view on the research topic is attempted to be formulated through a survey. The data in a survey is collected mainly through a questionnaire or an interview. When a questionnaire is used, it is often both standardized and structured. The structuring refers to the quantity of open or closed questions in the questionnaire. In a structured questionnaire ready-made options exist for all the questions. The standardization means the level of steadiness of the questions in the questionnaire, both related to the form and order of the questions. (Laaksovirta, 1988).

Based on the definitions provided, the survey used for this research can be considered standardized and semi-structured. The data was collected through an electronic questionnaire that was sent to all the managers of Beda. Aim of the questionnaire was to better understand managers' behavior in the BedaNet, the reasons behind certain patterns of behavior as well as thoughts on how the BedaNet could be improved and what benefits could it bring to the company. There were 18 questions in the questionnaire. However, the respondents were asked to answer certain questions on basis of their previous answers. Therefore, each respondent had to answer 16 or 17 questions, depending on the answers given in the beginning of the questionnaire. The respondents could not modify the order in which the questions were answered. One of the questions was completely open-ended, while the others had ready-made options for answering. However, in eight of the closed questions the managers had the possibility for an open-ended answer. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix 3.

The questionnaire was sent September 28, 2012 to all the employees of Beda that hold a line manager position and, therefore, have access to the case ESN. This includes all

levels of managers up to the CEO. A link to the electronic questionnaire was sent by the HR department of Beda. Managers had ten days to answer the questionnaire. A reminder was sent after a week. The questionnaire language was Finnish. The total number of the managers that received the questionnaire was 238, of which 95 answered, resulting in a 40% response rate. A cross check was made to see how well the respondent group describes the true distribution of managers in Beda from the point of view of age, seniority, management level and sex. The percentages had a very close correspondence in all the areas. Therefore, it can be considered that the 95 persons that answered the questionnaire describe the total population of the managers in Beda well.

3.2 Analysis of data

The data collected in this research was analyzed using narrative methodology. I chose this methodology because the interpretation of the organization's members of the communication in the BedaNet is at the center of this research. The concept of sense making is strongly connected with the narrative methods (MacIntyre, 1981); from the sense making perspective organizations are narratively constructed (Bruner, 1991). Participants of the organizations are the authors of narratives that feature, for example, in documents, conversations and electronic media (Brown, 2006). From such a prospect, organizations are understood not as singular and objective, but rather as resulting from different perspectives and accounts where it is possible that what we call an 'organization' can mean different things to different people (Thatchenkery 1992; Walter-Busch 1995). This leads to the study of organizations as socially constructed verbal systems where each person who is part of the organization has a voice (Hazen 1993). One key contribution of narrative research is the attention it focuses on temporal issues in organizations (Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001). Narrative involves the unfolding of a narrative of events and experiences over time. Emplotment is a key feature of narrative, and 'plot requires a pre-understanding of time and temporal structures' (Boje 2001, 113) so, by invoking narrative, one is concomitantly employing time as a central organizing concept (Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001). Narratives not only allow for multiple connections among events across time, they also preserve multiple temporalities. As well as being linked to clock time, narrative time is primarily humanly relevant time (Ricoeur, 1984):

its significance is not derived from the clock or the calendar, but from the meanings assigned to events by actors (Bruner, 1991). No one single truth about the role or effectiveness of the BedaNet exists, but rather the different experiences and their interrelation are interesting in understanding the phenomenon of new media in company internal communication. A sense making perspective sees that organizations are narratively constructed (Bruner 1991) from ‘networks of conversations’ (Ford 1999, p.485). Rather than viewing organizations as static, homogeneous and consistent entities, narrative approaches demonstrate the process-related characteristics of organizations (Rhodes & Brown, 2005). From a narrative perspective, organizations’ identities are discursive constructs constituted by the multiple narratives that their participants author about them, and which feature, for example, in documents, conversations and electronic media. (Brown, 2006). There is an emerging consensus that narratives can ‘open valuable windows into the emotional and symbolic lives of organizations’ (Gabriel, 1998, p.135) and yield ‘knowledge unavailable through other methods of analysis’ (Stutts & Barker, 1999, p. 213). Narrative analysis can be divided in two parts: the analysis of narratives and the narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). The narrative methodology was considered suitable method of analysis for this research for three reasons. First of all, the topic under investigation is new for organizations. Second, the sense making and the interpretations of the organization’s members are central for understanding it. Finally, the narrative methodology emphasizes the process-related aspect of the topic under research, another aspect that has not yet been studied in the company internal new media.

The analysis of narratives is focused on narrative types, classification, metaphors and categories. The narrative analysis instead has emphasis on creating a new narrative on the basis of narratives in research data (Polkinghorne, 1995). To analyze the narratives, I first of all transcribed all the interviews. The narrative of Experimental director was created on the basis of 43 pages of transcribed data. To form the narrative of the directors, I read the interviews over and over again, adding notes, looking for both common features and diversities. I found that the three interviews of the first line directors completed each other well. After the initial reading marathon, it was quite easy to see how the common narrative would be formed to describe the background and the

pilot phase of the BedaNet. The fourth interviewee amongst the directors, the Communications director, was not involved in the BedaNet. The focus of that interview was more to gain background information and understanding on how the internal communications are organized in Beda. In addition to this valuable information, I interviewed the Communication director as one of the managers, as a user of the BedaNet. From that point of view her interview stands on the same line with those interviews that I had with three other managers of Beda after the survey had been conducted. I decided to include the Experimental director's narrative into the findings chapter to broaden the understanding of the BedaNet, to lengthen the time-span of the narrative since the directors were involved in an earlier phase, and to let different voices from the organization to be part of this study.

The narratives of the user types were created on basis of the survey and the managers' interviews. I first studied the transcribed interviews, which were 13 pages of data. I then tried different alternatives to categorize the survey respondents. It was not clear since the beginning that there would eventually be three narratives describing the user types. Initially I had more categories, but the dilemma I encountered was the difficulty to establish a clear line between one category and another. Many respondents could have been part of more narratives, whilst some users were not part of any. The three manager types were at the end formed with the MECE principle (mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive). This means in practice that no respondent could be part of more than one category and every respondent is part of one category. This categorizing provided me the kind of starting point from which I felt solid enough to start to construct the narratives. The distinctive factor based on which the respondents were divided into certain categories was the type of participation they had had in the BedaNet. In the first group there were the managers that had commented actively in the BedaNet. In the second group there were those that had followed the conversations but never commented anything. In the third group remained those that had never even followed the conversations. I then looked for other common features that tie these groups together, such as gender, managerial level and preferences on how to use the BedaNet. After this phase, I started to form the narratives with the help of the managers' interviews and the open-ended answers in the questionnaire. It is worth underlying that

no single individual is represented in any of the narratives, but the material for each narrative is collected from various survey and interview responses. It can be said that each narrative represents something of all the representatives of the type in question, without representing any single person in particular. However, the narratives are not compromises of all the responses but their role is to show the salient and distinguishable features of each type. In order to do this, those survey responses that contained most information in the open-ended answers, together with the interview data, contributed most to the final narratives.

The interview and survey responses have been directly cited inside the narratives. At the end of the citations (S) stands for a response taken from the survey and (I) for a response taken from one of the interviews. For reasons of confidentiality the specific interviewee is not indicated in the narratives.

3.3 Trustworthiness of the study

In this subchapter the trustworthiness of the present study is discussed in the light of the used methods and data.

According to Shenton (2004), development of early familiarity with culture of participating organizations contributes to the credibility of the research. Therefore, I explain here my familiarity with the case organization. I work in a consulting company that provides services of leadership development to a variety of client organizations. My cooperation with Beda started in 2008. I have both designed and delivered training sessions for managers and experts of Beda in themes related to leadership and facilitation. Over ten training or development sessions have taken place in these years during which I have become to know at least 70 managers, specialists and directors of Beda. These encounters have enabled me to become familiar with the characteristics of the daily work, as well as with the issues related to management in Beda. Due to this common history and trust relationship, the access to Beda was naturally facilitated.

The use of multiple data-collection methods contributes to the trustworthiness and validity of the research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 1982, p.23).

According to Guba (1981) and Brewer & Hunter (1989), the use of a combination of different methods compensates for their individual limitations and exploits their respective benefits. Marsland et al. (2000) argue that in particular the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches increases the trustworthiness of a study. A mix of different methods has in fact been used to conduct the present research, including both quantitative and qualitative methods. Semi-structured interviews were done in two different instances and for two separate groups of people: directors and managers. Data was collected with a survey from a larger group of managers. In addition to this, participant observation was carried out in the BedaNet to obtain deeper understanding both of the BedaNet as network and of the communications taking place there. The data collected from the BedaNet discussions was used mainly in building the first narrative: Experimental director. The data collected was analyzed using the methodology of narrative analysis. Thus, altogether four different methods, representing both qualitative and quantitative research, were used altogether in five instances. Marsland et al. (2000, p.8) define this combination of methods “enriching” from the trustworthiness aspect.

As example, the practice of undertaking qualitative studies before quantitative ones has been standard practice in mainstream market research for at least 30 years (Marsland et al. 2000). The Association of British Market Research Companies (ABMRC) provide following reasons for this: “Prior to any large-scale quantitative study particularly in a relatively unknown market, it is strongly recommended that a qualitative phase of research is initially conducted, the main purpose being to understand the vocabulary and language used by the customers as well as understanding their motivations and attitudes towards given services, products and usage occasions. The findings of the qualitative research provide invaluable input to the quantitative stage in terms of the line and tone of questioning, and of course the overall structure and content of the quantitative phase. (ABMRC, 1989, p.26)”

In addition, it is worth underlining that the data was collected from two different groups, a group of directors and the whole group of managers of Beda. This combination provides a more accurate view of the research topic and adds objectivity to it.

While response rate alone does not represent the quality of a study, it is one indicator that editors of academic journals use in determining the potential contribution of a study (Campion, 1993). Baruch and Holtom (2008) carried out an extensive study related to the research response rates, in which they analyzed 490 organizational research articles published in 17 different academic journals in years 2000 and 2005. The results of their study show that surveys used in these articles had an average response rate of 52.6 percent in the studies published in 2000, and 52.7 for the studies published in 2005, both with a standard deviation of circa 20. The surveys conducted via e-mail (as the survey in the present research) had the average response rate of 54.7, with the standard deviation of 23.9. It is interesting to note that many articles were published in academic journals without providing the response rate of the data collection. Baruch & Holtom (2008) suggest that a response rate that exceeds the boundaries of one standard deviation should be discussed. Thus, the achieved response rate of 40 percent can be considered to be fully in line with the quality standards of academic organizational research. Baruch & Holtom (2008) remind, however, that the response rate is just one element to consider when evaluating the quality of empirical studies. More important yet is that the respondents are representative of the population being studied, that they are not systematically different in any meaningful way from the overall group. Tables 4 and 5 describe the representativeness of the 95 managers that answered the survey over the whole population of managers from the gender and age points of view.

Table 5: Sample population vs. total population, Gender

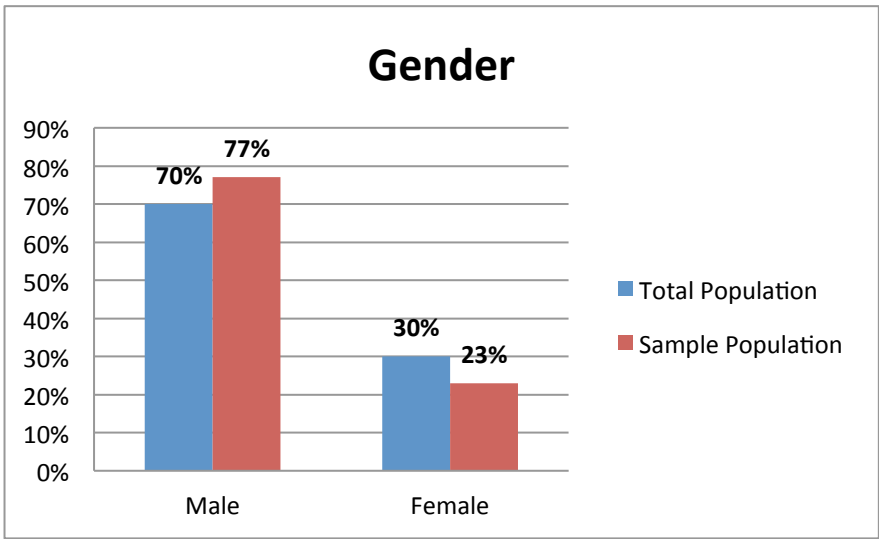
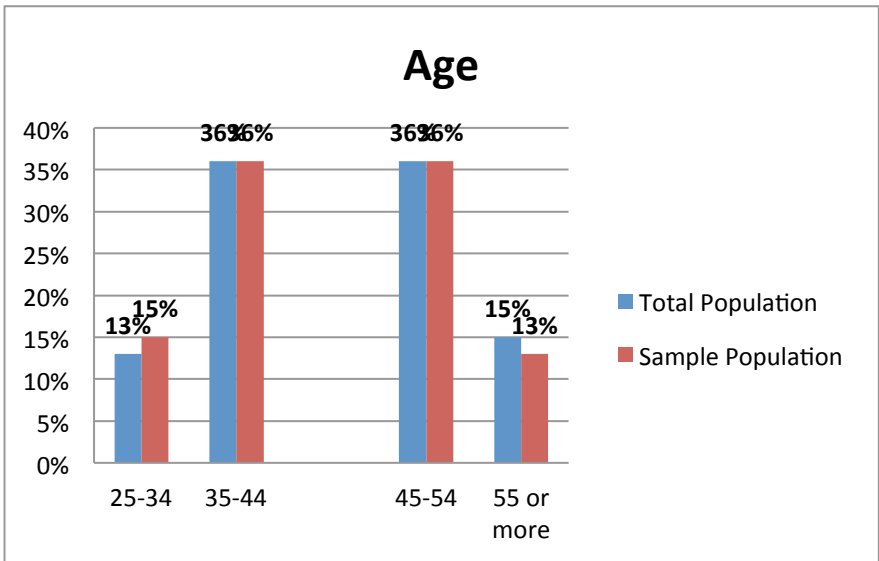


Table 6: Sample population vs. total population, Age



Since the nature of a case study is predominantly qualitative, with the aim to describe the researched phenomenon, it is important to bear in mind that the results of a qualitative study cannot be automatically transferred to other realities. Indeed, Shelton (2003) underlines that the results must be understood within the context of the particular characteristics of the organization and, perhaps, geographical area in which the fieldwork was carried out. According to Shenton (2004), the whole concept of transferability should be re-evaluated, since it disregards the importance of context, a key factor in qualitative research. The narrative methodology used in the data analysis of this research is, in fact, completely context related. It gives visibility to the multiple

voices and narratives that coexist in an organization and shows them in a temporal perspective. The researcher's texts become valid after being reintegrated into a social-historical metanarrative and it is the researcher's role to certify their believability (Wang & Roberts, 2005).

This chapter has presented the methodology used in the present research, including the description of the data collection and of the data analysis through narrative methodology. At the end of the chapter, trustworthiness of the present study is discussed.

4. FINDINGS

In this chapter I present the main findings of this research project. The findings are presented using the narrative methodology, in a form of four narratives. The first narrative describes the perspective of Beda's directors regarding the BedaNet. The other three narratives present three types of managers as different types of users of an ESN. All the citations in this chapter are translated by the researcher. As explained in chapter 3, the narratives do not represent any specific individual, but each narrative has been influenced by multiple respondents and interviewees. Each sub-chapter includes an introduction to one narrative, the narrative itself, and a conclusive analysis of the narrative. The conclusive section discusses the linkage between the narrative and the first and second research questions. The narrative itself answers to the research question three. In sub-chapter 4.5 the main findings from the narratives are grouped together. Due to the fact that 77% of the survey respondents were male, major part of the narratives are written in male gender. The only exception is the narrative of Silent follower due to the fact that the category of Silent follower was the only category in which the women were more strongly represented (29%) than they were in the survey (23%). Thus, the gender choice in the narratives reflects the gender distribution in the survey.

4.1 Experimental director

The narrative of Experimental director is based on the interviews of four directors. The interviews were role-specific even though all of them included common parts as well. Therefore, the narrative of top managers includes complementary pieces from different interviews in order to describe as much in detail as possible the birth and the first steps of the BedaNet from the directors' perspective. Direct citations from the interviews of directors are signed with a (*D*). In addition, the narrative is supported by the conversations that I had a chance to observe in the BedaNet. At the same time it is worth noting that only those directors that had an active role in the BedaNet or in the company internal communications were interviewed. Therefore, for example the business directors' perspective is lacking in the directors' narrative.

4.1.1 Narrative of the Experimental director

The history of BedaNet goes far more back from the moment in which it was invented. Since many years the top management of Beda has promoted ways of working that encourage active participation and sharing through building of Lean culture.

We want to encourage people to create ideas and share more actively ideas and good practices related to their daily work. And to turn the thinking about leadership upside down, that the channels of influence are not from such direction that decisions come from the top and they are implemented down in the organization. But that we could turn it that way that on any level in the organization you could work in such a role that you influence the ways of doing and your own work. (D)

The idea of BedaNet was born and concretized in one of Beda's regular self-assessment events in the end of 2011, in a sub group that worked around the topic of leadership. The group acknowledged the need for major self-leadership and for a stronger responsibility on participating, taking up defects or generating ideas. This need was defined in a period in which Beda had an ESN tool called Yammer in test use. Therefore the idea of the BedaNet was born combining the existing need for major sharing and the tool that enabled it. It was also decided that the target group of this particular ESN would be all the managers of Beda, in order to enable peer support between manager colleagues and provide the managers with a place to share ideas with each other. Therefore, the BedaNet provided a cost-efficient, flexible and an ongoing way to communicate in real time. Potentially, it liberated the managers from many traditional meetings, phone conversations or one-to-one conversations. There were various goals that were identified for the BedaNet in the initial phase. The Experimental director wanted to encourage and to create prerequisites for the managers to discuss, including also those silent performers that do not share their knowhow that easily in face-to-face meetings. It was seen as an important place for peer communication and support, but also as an experimental place from the new media point of view. The

experts of new media in Beda's strategic office were interested in observing their managers' behavior in new media. At the same time, BedaNet represented a new possibility from the point of view of internal communications as well.

Of course it is interesting from the point of view of internal communications. Because you can sort of bring in interactivity and bi-directionality to the whole internal communications, which is lacking at the moment. (D)

After the facilitation team was formed and the BedaNet was kicked off, managers started to register themselves actively into the system to see what this network was about. Very soon, a discussion about the rules of game for the BedaNet was started by the facilitators. There were no pre-existing rules, but the rules were rather a common topic of discussion that was summed up from time to time by facilitators. Some quality standards regarding the content were also called for by the facilitators. More managers raised questions regarding trust and handling confidential issues in the BedaNet. At the end of the first weeks the topics of discussion as well as the number of comments were summed up by the facilitators. Various conversations took place in the BedaNet in the first months, even amongst persons that did not know each other beforehand. The openness and constructiveness of these pieces of conversations surprised the directors positively. Also the pre-organized events in the BedaNet had been very positive experiences to them due to the activity and enthusiasm that could be perceived in the conversations. Then, on the other hand, the overall number of active participants was smaller than the directors had hoped and this was a slight disappointment.

What maybe interests us most is how it (the BedaNet) should be built, sell somehow and market internally. How it should be used, as a way of action, to make the discussion happen. ...Maybe it hasn't been as active as we could have hoped for. But probably in that case we haven't in the end done enough in that sense and now I'm talking of myself or to myself that we haven't done enough in publicizing it. (D)

Also, apart from the pre-organized discussions, the top management of Beda was quite silent in the BedaNet. The Experimental director hoped that this would change after the pilot phase and the facilitation team came up with new solutions in involving the top management, such as the pre-organized events with personal invitations and assigned topics of discussion. However, the Experimental director acknowledged the fact that probably the low participation of the top management had influence on the overall activity in the BedaNet. Also, he thought that the BedaNet contained much unused communication potential for the top management and that the lack of participation to the conversations in the BedaNet is a strong message from the top management.

That's one problem sort of that there should be more of example of top management so that all the managers would be committed to it. It is so easy to say that my boss is not there, so why should I. Clearly the message at the moment is that other things are more important. ...There could be the fear of being labeled of using time with wrong things if you are in the BedaNet while you should be doing business. (D)

Despite some initial difficulties, the Experimental director sees the BedaNet as an investigational tool that should encourage managers towards the kind of communication required more and more in the future. The tools may change, but the communicational needs in organizations are inevitably going towards a new direction.

The communication will change a lot still and of course it's stupidly said since everything changes always but here there has been a long state of stagnation. The organizational communication has been very settled, so now we need a step into a different world. And these are the first steps at us and should just find those ways and consequent steps so that we can really make this change... (D)

I optimistically believe that people have a need to discuss. It can be heard and seen so much that there should be much more time or forums or something that would make the BedaNet or a similar tool such that the

conversation could take place more there. I believe that the need for it increases all the time. The need increases for something that is not dependent on time or place. When the people are moving a lot and the operations become probably much more dispersed...it will become more complicated to organize big meetings. (D)

4.1.2 Narrative of the Experimental director – conclusive analysis

The narrative of the Experimental director tells about a director who has a vision of the communication and work style of future and who sees the BedaNet as a step towards that vision. This first narrative could provide answers to the first two research questions.

The BedaNet brings new opportunities to the internal communications of Beda enabling for the first time an ongoing, active two-way communication amongst all the departments and management levels of Beda. The fact that this type of communication is free of time and space restrictions answers to future needs of work life in which the physical working place becomes increasingly less relevant and the need for communication increasingly important. In fact, BedaNet offers great opportunities for peer communication and support, as well as for idea creation and problem solving. According to the narrative of the Experimental director, the existence of the BedaNet is a motivating factor to the managers as such, enabling everyone to make his or her voice heard. In addition to this, there is much unused potential for the top management to communicate effectively with other management levels in completely new ways. Altogether, based on the narrative of the Experimental director the future of internal communications is inevitably in the new media channels and, therefore, even though there would be some initial struggles, introducing the new media to the internal communications is not really a choice.

Regarding the factors that facilitate and hinder the use of internal new media, the availability of technology facilitates the use of new media. For example, launching a new ESN is fast and easy. However, it is important to keep in mind that the true question is not about the technology but about people and their working habits. The

narrative of the Experimental director describes that there was a lack of concrete objectives to measure the success of the BedaNet. This is a hindering factor, since without objectives it is difficult to guide the use of the BedaNet towards a wanted direction. Consequently, without clear objectives it is difficult to communicate to the BedaNet users what is expected from the new tool. In fact, the lack of effective communication to promote the BedaNet to the users could be noted from the narrative. Finally, the scarce activity from part of the top management seemed to hinder the overall use of the internal new media.

4.2 Active participant

The narrative of Active participant is based both on the managers' interviews and on the survey answers, both closed and open. 16% of managers that responded to the survey announced that they had participated in discussions in the BedaNet. Six of these respondents had managers also as subordinates. This category includes both more active writers and the occasional commenters. In other words, every manager that has at least once participated in the conversation in the BedaNet belongs to this group. Naturally this division includes also the more passive respondents that are very close to the category of Silent follower. Due to the initial choice of questions in the survey it was not possible to distinguish afterwards clearly the less active users from the more active ones. Therefore, to distinguish Active participant clearly from the Silent follower, I chose to use as basis to construct the narrative the interview data from one of the managers that represents the more active end of this category. The survey answers, as well as interview data from other active users contributed to the narrative. In all the following three narratives the citations of the interviews are signed with an *(I)*, while the citations from the survey open answers are signed with an *(S)*. Even though the managers that write frequently in the BedaNet represent a smaller subgroup inside this category, they are the visible part of the network and in that sense represent the whole group of managers. Also, the role of active participators is important in encouraging the others to participate.

4.2.1 Narrative of the Active participant

Active participant has been interested in new media tools since MySpace arrived in the beginning of the millennium. He is a typical early adapter that tries first every new media that is introduced in the market. New media is part of Active participant's everyday life and commenting in Facebook or sending messages in Twitter integrates smoothly in his other daily activities, in and outside the working hours. He publishes his own blog accessible to friends and has his own Pinterest account. When the BedaNet was introduced, the Active participant was very positive about the idea. He firmly believes in an organization's internal new media. He sees the biggest value of the BedaNet in expanding the managerial peer network and increasing openness in the company. In order to achieve these objectives, the topics discussed in the BedaNet can be related to any topic of interest, such as change of the company doctor, Christmas party, years of service awards, complicated management cases, best practices, but also to personal aspects of managers, such as family celebrations or hobbies. Active participant finds the possibility to personalize his profile in the BedaNet very important.

Maybe it's (the BedaNet being so silent at the moment) because you can't make it personal now. Because I think that's the idea that you can personalize it endlessly. You can have some nice new things to it. (I)

The profile should include CV and current projects, but also information on hobbies, family and other interests. The top managers should share information in the same way, revealing at the same time their human side. This, according to the Active participant, would increase openness in the company. The Active participant finds the current level of openness in the company good, but he also sees much space for improvement. He thinks that there is no reason for which the top management would not be present in the BedaNet. On the contrary, the Active participant finds the BedaNet an excellent place for the top management to share their ideas and thoughts, a good channel for informing all the managers, as well as for receiving feedback. The Active participant sees, however, that there are many people who are afraid of presenting critical opinions in the BedaNet. These people are afraid to be pointed at, just because they say out loud an

existing problematic issue. He himself thinks that his colleagues are more open to receiving feedback than his manager. He thinks that this is one obstacle for the success of the BedaNet, since the openness and courage to speak out loud are part of the underlying ideology of the new media. According to him, everyone should be able to be an anchorman in the new media.

After the BedaNet was introduced, the Active participant followed some interesting discussions that took place there. After a while, however, the number of new conversations started to diminish. The Active participant tried once in a while to ask for comments on something in the BedaNet, but he received few if any answers.

When I created my account some weeks ago and invited colleagues to join, the answers were quite negative. The idea (of BedaNet) doesn't seem to raise much positive opinion. (S)

I just heard a couple of weeks ago that a colleague sent an invitation to join the BedaNet to another colleague. This person answered that "My way of keeping contact is face-to-face or by phone. I have left myself out from these (new media)." (I)

Despite of his disappointment related to the low activity in the BedaNet, the Active participant would definitely keep on trying to integrate new media as part of the daily work of managers in Beda. In fact, he thinks that there should be much more marketing and active change agents to involve people in the use of the BedaNet. The specific criticism of the Active participant is pointed at the technical aspects of the BedaNet. The platform should be easier to use, and it should speak with different applications. You should be able to have Yammer directly on your desktop or mobile desktop, and receive feeds on the desktop on updates.

Everyone should have his or her own personalized site or whatever it is there on which you can write things. And it should be done so that you have it all the time there in some way. It should be on your mobile device,

it should be visible as a feed on your desktop, but still it shouldn't oblige anyone to anything. But that you could see if someone writes an interesting comment there. Of course it raises your interest and you would want to follow the conversation. That's where the power would be. (I)

At the moment the Active participant continues to communicate through the traditional channels at work, through new media outside work context, waiting that both the technology and the organization's members will become ready for an active use of new media as a channel for internal communication, which then could easily be expanded on an international level as well.

4.2.2 Narrative of the Active participant – conclusive analysis

The three narratives describing different user types answer to all the three research questions. The answer to the question about the manager type can be obtained from the narrative itself and from the way in which it describes the characteristics of a manager. The narrative of the Active participant speaks about a manager to whom the use of new media including social networks is natural both in and outside the work environment. The Active participant is willing to use new media at work and feels free to share his personal thoughts, feelings and interests with the colleagues. He thinks that this kind of open sharing would increase openness in the organization and bring more visible the human part of all the people, including the directors. For the Active participant, using the channels of new media should be first of all fun, because that is the key to attract people to use them.

Based on the narrative of the Active participant, the BedaNet brings new opportunities to the internal communications by enabling the expansion of the peer network and by increasing openness in the company through more active and free exchange of opinions, thoughts, feelings, work status and personal updates. Furthermore, the top management would have many benefits from the use of the BedaNet, such as having an active and effective communication channel with the organization that also enables and facilitates receiving feedback.

Regarding the factors that facilitate and hinder the use of internal new media, the most crucial element is the technological aspect of it. Since the Active participant has much experience in the use of new media, he also requires more from it. He sees the possibility to strongly personalize own profile in the BedaNet very important. This way people could connect quickly with each other based on, for example, professional projects, CV or personal interests. The application should be simple and quick to use, having it directly on desktop or mobile desktop. On basis of the narrative of the active participant, both the technology and the using habits are equally important. One should not be raised over another.

4.3 Silent follower

Of the survey respondents 43% were registered to the BedaNet and had followed the discussions there without having ever participated actively in any conversation. Nine of them represent the second or a higher level of management in the organization, in other words they are supervisors of other managers. Major part of the survey respondents belonged to this group. Instead, no one of the interviewees represents this group. Therefore, the narrative of the silent follower is based on the survey, both closed and open-ended questions in it.

4.3.1 Narrative of the Silent follower

The Silent follower registered herself as a user of BedaNet when it was launched and communicated to the managers. She started to follow the conversations with curiosity, even though she didn't have the time to take an active role in them.

Adopting new methods of communication is a good thing as such, but unfortunately there is no time for new things unless something old isn't taken away at the same time. Due to the workload I am forced to act solely in the role of a follower. (S)

BedaNet has been a good idea. It is worth continuing. (S)

Silent follower sees that the BedaNet or a similar company network can bring various benefits to the organization, such as enabling problem solving, speeding up implementation of group surveys, as well as acting as a mobile information channel. Also, for those who are not that familiar with the new media, the BedaNet provides a chance to get to know their opportunities. As a major benefit for the organization the Silent follower sees the faster finding of new ideas and solutions. Finally, the Silent follower sees a value in BedaNet as a way for increasing openness.

However, there are various reasons for which the Silent follower has never posted any comments in the Beda Net. The biggest obstacle for the Silent follower is the lack of time. There have not been any conversations that would have been particularly worth participating for the Silent follower in the BedaNet. Also, she has doubts on what concrete benefits the participation gives her.

Conversation, but then what? (S)

The comments remain disconnected. (S)

The comments disappear into the bit space without reaching those persons who could do something about them. (S)

The biggest question that I see in the BedaNet and in the social media in general is that there is endlessly conversation for the sake of conversation itself, but it is difficult to see any concrete outcomes of it... (S)

Due to the lack of time, Silent follower finds it too time consuming to elaborate her messages in a form that can be easily understood by the others. There is always the risk of misunderstanding and things are rarely black and white. Similarly to Active participant, Silent follower thinks that her colleagues are more open to receiving feedback than her manager. Also, she finds the BedaNet difficult to use and finds

demotivating the fact that the active users are always the same. Furthermore, the quality of the conversations does not convince her.

The conversations of BedaNet have not been very fruitful on my opinion. Some work topics have been discussed there when forced, but also in those cases only a couple of persons talk and the atmosphere is similar as style to suomi24 discussion forum. (S)

Generally, Silent follower sees the BedaNet suitable as a tool for specific purposes other than being a channel for an ongoing generic dialogue, such as a pin board for communicating HR issues that could then be clarified with specific comments and questions, or for mapping development issues on organization or unit level and collecting ideas and alternative solutions. It is important for the Silent follower that these discussions would have clear start and end dates, after which they would be analyzed and the necessary actions would be taken. People management, as well as operational models and processes interest the Silent follower as topics of discussion, but she doesn't see the use of activating herself in the BedaNet as long as the concrete outcomes of the conversations are not visible. Some doubts of the Silent follower regarding her participation in the BedaNet are related to the security issues.

Yammer as a tool is still seen unsecure. We need an 'authority' to ensure that the information remains inside the house. The biggest obstacle in using the social media is in its security: does the information remain internal and do I have control of what of my information is conserved and where. (S)

Finally, Silent follower thinks that her participation in the BedaNet would increase if the directors and colleagues would be more active there.

4.3.2 Narrative of the Silent follower – conclusive analysis

The narrative of the Silent follower describes a manager that follows the conversations in the BedaNet more or less actively, but sees no good enough reason to take an active role there. The Silent follower has a female voice, since there were more women represented in this category than in the survey on average. The Silent follower is also based on the biggest category of survey respondents out of the three manager types, with 43% of respondents.

Since the narrative of the Silent follower describes a passive user of the BedaNet, it can be considered as a natural consequence that fewer opportunities for the BedaNet are found from this narrative than from that of the Active participant. However, based on this narrative, BedaNet brings new opportunities to the internal communications by facilitating the finding of new ideas and solutions, as well as increasing openness in the company. It seems, in fact, that the Silent follower sees these aspects as opportunities, but does not find them in the present reality of the BedaNet.

Regarding the factors that facilitate and hinder the use of internal new media, on basis of the narrative of the Silent follower it is difficult to see the concrete outcomes of conversations held in the BedaNet, which then discourages the managers from participating in the conversations. Therefore, having a tight schedule, the managers find no reason in prioritizing the participation in the BedaNet over other activities. Also, this narrative points out a scarce quality of the conversations in the BedaNet, which has kept the Silent follower from participating actively in them. To sum up, the Silent follower likes to keep herself updated from what is going on in the BedaNet, but she doesn't see the added value of it in its current form to her work.

4.4 Absent contributor

Of the survey respondents 41% had either never been registered as users in the BedaNet or after the registration they had never followed any discussions there. Seven of the respondents were superiors of other managers. This user type is supported by the interviews as well.

4.4.1 Narrative of the Absent contributor

The Absent contributor heard about the BedaNet when it was launched but he never found the right moment to see what this network was really about. One of the biggest reasons for his absence has been the lack of time. The Absent contributor perceives the BedaNet as a time waster and is quite cautious about it, since there have been some cases in the company in which the time used in Facebook of some employees needed to be restricted. Furthermore, he sees that in order to be part of the conversations in the BedaNet, there should be enough time to really follow them, which then would take too much time away from work. The Absent contributor has been so far satisfied with the open conversations with colleagues, other managers and subordinates – he does not see a need for a tool like the BedaNet. The Absent contributor is in general very cautious about the use of his time. He feels that the company introduces more and more virtual places where the managers should be to study different instructions, measurements, statistics and conversations, as if people would not have already enough work to do. At the same time the company emphasizes the importance of people management and presence to the team members, the importance of which is acknowledged by the Absent contributor. He simply does not see how he could find time for being present virtually in different places in addition to all the rest. Absent contributor has also difficulties in seeing what benefits this kind of a virtual peer network could bring to him. Furthermore, his attitude towards the new media is not that positive in general. Even hearing the term Social media in work context upsets him and he definitely prefers live discussion with colleagues, instead of faceless systems.

I need to say that I'm annoyed by the model of today. If you are not in the Facebook, you don't exist. Only giving out your information to an American company you can be happy. People would probably scan their fingerprints there if they had the chance. And now this same hype from the company side. No thanks. (S)

The Absent contributor sees that there is in a certain way a place to internal new media, but he doesn't want to be pushed to use them. For some clearly defined groups the

ESNs, for example, could work, but then there are other roles inside the company in which people just cannot use the new media all the time.

It is as such rather irrelevant what the channel for open conversation is, discussions in the Intranet or social media – to those to whom this is important it is of course good to offer channels, but it must not be obligatory... (S)

Also, the Absent contributor finds it impossible to post comments and thoughts on the BedaNet freely, without thinking about his specific role. The role is always present and it puts additional pressure to the formulation of the written comments, which then would take too much time. Also, the Absent contributor is not yet completely convinced about the level of openness that is accepted in Beda. He thinks that his colleagues are more open to receive feedback than his manager. In the end, however, the Absent contributor sees that the BedaNet could have potential if used in the right way.

The idea is good but it shouldn't remain solely as a place for venting. There would be potential in it also as an interactive work tool for business, for example exchanging thoughts about processes, not from the feeling point of view but in order to find knowledge and right practices. There is much knowledge in Beda on the individual level, but could we expand it better? There is always someone who knows, but no one knows who knows what. (S)

4.4.2 Narrative of the Absent contributor – conclusive analysis

The narrative of the Absent contributor talks about a manager who is even less active in the BedaNet than the Silent follower: the Absent contributor has never followed conversations in the BedaNet due to both lack of time and negative attitude towards new media at work context.

Since the overall attitude of the Absent contributor is rather negative regarding the use of the BedaNet in work context, it is difficult for him to see opportunities that it could bring to the work. However, he sees that the BedaNet contains opportunities for the future as an interactive business tool that enables exchanging work-related information, knowledge, ideas and practices, to enable organizational learning and development.

Regarding the factors that facilitate and hinder the use of internal new media, on basis of the narrative of the Absent contributor the overall attitude towards new media is a hindering factor in their use. In general, the Absent contributor sees the new media in work context as additional workload instead of something that could make the work easier, smoother or faster. Even hearing the term social media in the work context irritates him.

4.5 Key findings from the narratives

When the four narratives are put together, they are able to respond to the research questions in a complementary and holistic way. In this sub-chapter I will discuss the key findings from all the four narratives together.

Regarding the opportunities that the new media can bring to internal communications, the narratives show that the Experimental director who also was the generator of the BedaNet was also able to define the longest list of opportunities that it brings to the company. It enables for the first time an ongoing and active two-way communication amongst all the departments and management levels of Beda. It enables major flexibility of work arrangements being free of time and space restrictions. It offers great opportunities for peer communication and support, as well as for idea creation and problem solving. Consequently, the Experimental director sees the existence of the BedaNet as a motivating factor to the managers as such, enabling everyone to make his or her voice heard. In addition to this, the BedaNet enables the top management to interact effectively with other management levels in on a new level. The Experimental director was opportunities for internal communications both in short term, such as expanding the network and long term, such as the overall breakdown in company

internal communications in the future. When looking at the three narratives of the managers, the Active participant is the one who finds it very natural to be present in the new media, both in work context and during the free time. However, the Active participant represents only sixteen percent of the BedaNet users. The other two types, the Silent follower and the Absent contributor do see some opportunities in what the tools of new media could bring to the working life in future. However, these opportunities are more distant from their current ways of working and at the moment they don't see concrete benefits in participating in the conversations in the BedaNet.

Regarding the facilitating and hindering factors for the users' activity in the BedaNet, such elements as the participation of top management, clarity of the purpose and objectives, easiness of use and the overall attitude were the main facilitating or alternatively hindering factors in the use of the BedaNet.

This chapter has presented the findings of the present study in a form of four narratives, those of the Experimental director, the Active participant, the Silent follower and the Absent contributor. The three narratives about the managers respond as such to the question about the user types. In addition to that, each narrative has been analyzed in light of the research questions related to opportunities, as well as to the facilitating and hindering factors of the new media in internal communications.

5. DISCUSSION

In this chapter I will discuss the relationship between the key findings and the literature review, focusing on three topics that are presented in separate sub-chapters: two-way communication as a natural direction in internal communications, resistance factors to the use of new media in internal communications and change communication during the introduction of new media for internal communications.

5.1 Importance of two-way communication

The narrative of Experimental director shows that the BedaNet was viewed since its beginning as a tool that enables true two-way communication inside the company unlike any other communication tool before that. The idea of two-way communication was also appreciated by managers, as described in the narratives of the Active participant and the Silent follower. These managers saw that the two-way communication would contribute to increased openness in the company. However, as the narratives pointed out, the top management did not participate on an ongoing basis to the conversations in the BedaNet. Therefore, at least part of the potential of the channel remained unused. Amongst many others, Tourish and Hargie (2004) have studied the vertical two-way communication in organizations and, according to them, the top management should not skip any possibility for receiving feedback from the organization, since this way the managers at higher levels can get a more accurate picture about both the organization and their own performance. However, also Tourish and Hargie (2004) acknowledge that the opportunities for true two-way feedback are seldom grasped. Two-way communication is not limited to vertical direction, but it has also a horizontal dimension as organizations' stakeholders communicate increasingly with each other, resulting in infinitely more complex communication (De Bussy et al., 2000). The BedaNet enabled the two-way communication both vertically and horizontally. Regarding the communication with peers, the managers acknowledged the opportunities of the new media, but the conversations that took place in the BedaNet did not encourage them to participate for two reasons. First, they found the quality of the existing conversations

scarce and second, the fact that only few colleagues had an active dialogue there discouraged them from participating.

Active two-way communication brings arguably many benefits in, for example, strategy implementation (Aaltonen & Ikävalko, 2002), employee satisfaction (Garcia-Morales et al., 2011), as well as generation of ideas and solutions that can lead to real change (Holtzhausen, 2000). Also according to Smythe (2004), one-way top-down communication doesn't respond to the requirements of the working life of today. However, as Holtzhausen (2000) remarks, a natural consequence of the increasing number of different voices in organizations is the growing diversity in opinions, which results in dissidence. The dissidence gives people the freedom to disagree in situations that they find unjust, instead of pushing towards incorrect compromises (Holtzhausen, 2000). As commented in the narrative of the Active participant, everyone should have the possibility to comment openly in the new media. The whole ideology of the new media is based on this idea. At the same time it was acknowledged in the narratives that all the people do not feel themselves comfortable in speaking out loud their ideas and thoughts, especially those related to critical or delicate issues. Furthermore, all three manager types described in the narratives think that their peers are more open to feedback than their supervisors. Therefore, even though the majority was positive about the idea of open sharing in new media and the benefits it would bring, few wanted to be the first ones to start.

5.2 User behavior in new media

Three user types of new media were identified in this research: Active participant, Silent follower and Absent contributor. Considering that the category of Active participant was over presented, including also the occasional commenters, this study is in line with the previous ones regarding the content creation in online communities, which state that 90% of the users of a service are "lurkers" who do not contribute; 9% are "editors", "commenters" or "intermittent contributors" who contribute some original material and edit existing material, while the remaining 1% is responsible for producing a vast majority of the content in the service (Arthur, 2006; Horowitz, 2006; Nielsen, 2006).

According to Orlikowski (2000), there is no direct explanation on why the different users behave in a certain way, but that people's experiences, knowledge, meanings, habits, power relations and norms shape the use of technology. Vuori (2012a) states that social structures, authority structures, culture and behavioral norms bear an impact on technology use. The results of the present study indicate two concrete reasons for the low participation activity of most new media users: the need for a new set of competences and the existence between a tension between a professional and personal closeness supporting, hence, the theory of Wu et al. (2010).

The theory of Mass Self Communication (MSC) of Castells (2009) explains why a new set of communication competences is needed when communicating in new media, where the receiver of the message is not anymore identifiable by the sender and the message is targeted to a mass of people in a particular network of meaning. The message can be multichannel and/or multimodal and it's meaning is continuously interpreted by the recipients who on their part contribute in creating the content. It can therefore be argued that a new set of communication skills is required for effective and responsible communication in new media. The findings of this study point out that the users of the BedaNet felt themselves insecure about the meaning of the ESN, about what and how to write, how to formulate the text and how to be effective time-wise while keeping control of the professional self-image. For who was not familiar with the new media it was understandably complicated to just change the channel of communication, even though the general advantages of the new channel were clear. In addition to that, also for those who were active in new media in their personal life, transferring that type of communication to the work context is not as simple as it might sound.

According to Skeels and Grudin (2009), ESNs cause more tensions to their users than the non work-related social networks due to the confusion between professional identity and non-professional identity. Since different levels of professional and personal closeness exist between colleagues (Wu et al., 2010), multiple tensions can arise in terms of what information to share with whom (Skeels & Grudin, 2009). According to the narrative of the Active participant, the directors should be present in the BedaNet as

human beings, presenting openly both their professional and personal parts of life. This would increase the overall openness in the organization. However, as this kind of opening had not yet happened in the BedaNet nor had there been clear guidelines regarding the levels of professional or personal openness, the tensions continued to exist and they increased the obstacle of participating actively.

The users of BedaNet were asked in the survey what topics of discussion would motivate them to participate. Interestingly, major part of the topics indicated by the respondents had also already been discussed in the BedaNet. This provides an additional reason to consider that the real reasons for low participation lie deeper, such as the new set of communication skills required and the tension between professional and personal identity.

5.3 Top management commitment and change communication

Introduction of the BedaNet was not seen as organizational change in Beda. It was much less than that, an additional tool for communication amongst managers available for those interested in using it. It was seen as an initiative from part of the top management to enable managers of all levels to share their ideas, and the directors hoped that this would have a motivating impact on the managers. At the same time, directors had many expectations regarding the communication in the BedaNet and they hoped that people would become interested in it. Therefore, due to the lack of guidance and active communication most managers were suspicious or confused about the role and significance of the new tool. Many were also missing instructions on how the BedaNet should be used. In addition, as discussed in the previous sub-chapter, communicating in new media requires a new kind of mindset, as well as renewed communication skills.

In the change communication literature the focus is increasingly in the role of immediate supervisors (Self et al., 2007; Frahm & Brown, 2005; Huy et al., 1999, 2002). In light of this, it is worth observing the behavior of those managers that represent higher levels of management and have supervisors reporting to them. 73% of

managers that belong to this higher-level manager category were Silent followers or Absent contributors. We could then hypothesize that the direct manager of around seventy percent of all the BedaNet users has never commented anything in the BedaNet. Hence, in order to get the users of an ESN committed, the first step is to gain commitment from their direct managers. Similar results were obtained from the interviews. If your manager is not in the BedaNet, it automatically is a message for you on how you should prioritize your time. However, as Frahm & Brown (2005) point out, communication is a symbol of organizational culture and if the existing organizational culture does not value information exchange and processing, then it is unlikely that the managers will deviate from the norm. And if a cultural change is expected, the top management needs to be committed to it (Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

5.4 New media - opportunity or risk?

The first research question of this study was: *What opportunities do new media provide for internal communications, based on the BedaNet experience?* In light of both the existing literature and the empirical research presented in this study, it can be confirmed that there are plenty of opportunities that new media can provide in internal communications. According to Olaniran (2009) the new media can involve simultaneously participants in different physical locations increasing, hence, freedom to participate and convenience, as well as potential for equalized or democratic participation. Furthermore, they allow employees greater communication access to management and other members of organizational hierarchy, hence flattening the organization (Olaniran, 2009). Results of the present study confirm the study of Olaniran. Based on the findings of the empirical study, new media enable smooth internal two-way communication. They can accelerate the generating and sharing of ideas and solutions. They enable peer support and expanding of professional network. They can increase openness in the organization and be used as a practical tool for teamwork. The biggest obstacle managers identified for using the BedaNet was lack of time. However, the potential of new media, including ESNs in internal communications is that of saving a notable quantity of time, as lots of work could be moved there directly. However, if the risks are not kept in mind, the opportunities are hardly seized.

Based on the media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984), face-to-face communication is believed to be the richest communication medium for its ability to support different nonverbal and social cues. Also O’Kane et al. (2004) claim that virtual groups are not the same as actual groups, and that the differences must be dealt with if the timesaving potential of multi-location teams should be taken in use. One of the challenges for virtual working teams compared to single location teams is a difficulty to build trust to other team members. Another concrete risk is that of not having value for investment if the network does not kick off as expected.

As a conclusion, in this chapter I have discussed the key findings of the present study in light of the earlier literature, focusing on four main points. First, the present study confirms that two-way communication is becoming a standard for internal communications. Even though adopting it understandably causes some initial struggles, every organization should look for the right solutions to make its way through, in order to be successful in future. Second, the present research demonstrates that the motivation to actively contribute to the conversations in the BedaNet is not related to the discussion topics, but to more deeply situated issues. Previous studies have identified the media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984), the theory of MSC (Castells, 2009), as well as the theory on a tension between personal and professional closeness in ESNs (Wu et al., 2010) as possible explanations for user behavior in the new media. The present research supports all the three theories. Many people find face-to-face communication more pleasant and effective. The learnt communication skills and habits do not respond to the needs of communicating in new media. Furthermore, regarding a social network in the work context, tensions between professional and personal identity come into the picture causing insecurity. Third, in order to make an ESN a real asset for internal communications, the commitment to it should be ensured gradually, level by level, starting from the top management. This idea is supported by many studies regarding the strategy implementation (see e.g. Mustonen, 2009). Finally, it can be stated that new media present plenty of interesting opportunities to be captured for internal communications, but they also include risks, such as lack of value for investment. Thus, if an organization decides to take the road towards the new media, it should have a proper plan on how to get there.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will conclude the thesis by summarizing the research project and by bringing together the main findings of the study, as well as practical implications. First, the sub-chapter 6.1 will summarize the research project including its main findings. Practical implications will be discussed in sub-chapter 6.2. Sub-chapter 6.3 presents the limitations of the present study, while sub-chapter 6.4 will conclude by providing suggestions for future research.

6.1 Research summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the possibilities that the use of new media tools can bring to internal communications of a multinational company. The topic was approached studying an enterprise social network (ESN) called BedaNet in this research, aimed at all the managers of the case company. The study was motivated by relevance of the topic in the companies of today. Companies, one after another, decide to integrate tools of new media in their internal communications, supported by the availability of and easy access to the technology. However, little research exists yet on the effective use of new media and ESNs in the context of internal communications, which leads the practitioners to test it without the support of previous experiences. The present study was practically oriented and it aimed at answering both *why* companies should include new media in their internal communications and *how* organizations should be supported in the use of new media, in order to gain benefits from them. On the basis of the previous literature the present study proposed a framework synthesizing theories related to two-way internal communications, change communication, Mass Self Communication (MSC), personal vs. professional closeness and new media. The methods of this study consisted of semi-structured interviews and a survey. Four directors and three managers of the case company were interviewed. The survey was aimed at all the managers of the case company. It explored the habits and the preferences of use of the BedaNet. The research questions the study set out to answer were:

1. What opportunities do new media provide for internal communications, based on the BedaNet experience?
2. What factors facilitate or hinder the use of internal new media in the case company?
3. What types of new media users can be identified in the case company?

The research data was analyzed using narrative methodology. As a result of the analysis four narratives were created to present the findings of the study, one representing the directors interviewed and the three others representing three distinctive manager types as users of an ESN: Active participant, Silent follower and Absent contributor. The identification of these three manager types was one of the main findings. The other main findings can be divided into two areas: opportunities of the new media, and facilitating and hindering factors for the use of new media. First, the findings point out that new media contain several opportunities for internal communications. New media enable an ongoing and active two-way communication amongst different departments and management levels, increasing openness and bringing members of an organization closer to each other. They enable major flexibility of work arrangements being free of time and space restrictions. They offer great opportunities for peer communication and peer support, as well as for idea creation and problem solving. The existence of new media in internal communications can be as such a motivating factor for its users, since the new media enable users to exchange information, thoughts, feelings and professional as well as personal updates. Furthermore, the new media are seen as an integrating part of the internal communications in the future and, hence, introducing them in a company means taking steps towards the type of communication needed in the future. Second, regarding the facilitating and hindering factors for the use of new media, such elements as the commitment and participation of top management, clarity of the purpose and objectives of the introduced channel of communication, easiness of use and the overall attitude towards the new media were the main facilitating or alternatively hindering factors that emerged from the study. To sum up, this study indicates that the new media will be increasingly part of internal communications. They do bring new opportunities for the organizations, but in order to capture these

opportunities, they should be introduced carefully with a clear implementation and communication plan.

This study ties together previous research both from the context of internal communications (Olaniran, 2009; Garcia-Morales et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2010) and from the context of behavior in new media (Castells, 2009). The findings of this study are supported by research of Olaniran (2009) and Garcia-Morales et al. (2011) regarding the opportunities of the new media, in other words the *why* the companies should become involved with the new media in their internal communications.

To explain *how* the new media should be introduced in order to be useful for internal communications, this research proposes a combination of elements. The results of this research are aligned with the studies of Castells (2009) on MSC and Wu et al. (2010) on personal vs. professional closeness in an ESN, pointing out certain critical aspects in the use of the new media. In addition to them, this study provides two new proposals. First, the present study proposes that a new set of communication competences is required in order to communicate successfully in the new media, since the competences acquired in the face-to-face communication are not directly applicable to the new media. Second, the introduction of new media in internal communications should be treated as an organizational change and, therefore proper and planned change communication practices should be put in place to implement the new tools successfully.

6.2 Practical implications

The practical implications of this study can be summarized in five key points.

1. *Be aware:* Due to the changes in the working life, such as increasingly dispersed teams and virtual offices, the tools of new media will be an important part of internal communications of multinational companies. Even though many organizations are not yet ready for the introduction of internal new media, it is good to be aware of the trend when building the visions and strategies of the future.

2. *Plan ahead:* There is no need to jump immediately into the world of new media. On the contrary, it is better to take small steps and plan in advance the introduction of the new media, for example in a five-year span. This way there is enough time for people to get used to the idea of a different communication environment, and the organization can support them in building the necessary competences to confront it.
3. *Ensure commitment:* Introduction of internal new media should be done only when the top management is truly committed to changing own communication habits and being an example to others in an open two-way communication.
4. *Start small:* Since there is no recipe that fits for all the companies, it is recommended to start with a smaller pilot group to study the best practices of an internal new media for a particular organization.
5. *Have fun:* New media outside the work context have gained much popularity because they are fun to use. The fun side should be as present in the company internal new media to make them attractive. For example, the technology should be easy to use, there should be the possibility to endlessly personalize own profile and there should be the freedom to talk about topics in and out of the work context.

6.3 Limitations of the study

As every research, this study also has its limitations. First, this research was conducted as a case study, exploring the internal communications of a single case company. Therefore the results also demonstrate a single-company approach to the subject matter. This means that the results are limited to the context of the organization in which they were studied, and are not directly applicable to a wider organizational context.

Second, new media is a young, relatively unexplored and constantly developing subject. Therefore the previous literature on which this study leans is yet scarce leaving, therefore, more space for free choice of the author on which literature to include. Furthermore, any approaches taken and comments given during the conduction of this study may become outdated quickly as the field is studied further and new theories and

applications are discovered.

Third, the author is familiar with the case company since several years through a professional relationship. One of the interviewees was the commissioner of the research, while the author was not however familiar with the other interviewees. The existing professional client-supplier relationship could have an effect on the author 's attempt to avoid unpleasant conversation topics during the interviews or information in the final research paper.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

The present research offers many interesting possibilities for future research. First of all, a similar study could be conducted in multiple companies to see what kinds of variations there are between organizations. Second, this study pointed out that specific communication competences for communicating in new media are needed. It would be highly useful to study more in depth what these competences are and how they could be developed. Third, in this research the focus has been in an ESN, but in future the research could be conducted on multiple channels of new media in a company.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Theme interview questions, interviews with directors

BedaNet esimiesten sosiaalisena mediana - mihin tarpeeseen se on luotu ja miten onnistunut?

- Mikä BedaNet on?
- Kenelle tarkoitettu?
- Miksi BedaNet –pilotti alun perin käynnistettiin?
- Mitä tavoitteita BedaNetille asetettiin?
- Miten BedaNet linkittyy Bedan strategiaan?
- Miten BedaNetin odotetaan tukevan Bedan liiketoimintaa?
- Mikä on oma roolisi BedaNetissä?

Miten BedaNet on vastannut odotuksiin tähän mennessä?

- Miten pilotti on vastannut odotuksiin tähän mennessä?
- Mitä positiivista BedaNet on tuonut?
- Miltä osin BedaNet ei ole ollut odotusten mukainen?

Miten suuri painoarvo BedaNet on käytännössä?

- Miten johto on osallistunut BedaNetissä käytyihin keskusteluihin?
- Onko BedaNetissä käytyjä keskusteluja hyödynnetty päätöksenteossa jollain tavoin?

Miten BedaNet täydentää johtamisviestinnän ja sisäisen viestinnän kokonaisuutta Bedassa?

- Millaisten kanavien kautta johtamisviestintä Bedassa tapahtuu?
- Mitä lisää BedaNet tuo olemassa oleviin kanaviin?
- Mitä muita kanavia pitkin viesti kulkee esimieskunnalta johdolle?
- Minkä muiden kanavien kautta esimiehet viestivät / keskustelevat keskenään?
- Miten arvioit näiden kanavien toimivuutta?
- Miten luonnehtisit BedaNetissä käytyä keskustelua?

Miten osallistava ja jatkuvan parantamisen (Lean) kulttuuri näkyy ylöspäin viestinnässä?

- Miten kuvailisit Bedan palautekulttuuria?
- Mitä eroja palautekulttuurissa on organisaation eri alueilla ja tasoilla?
- Miten Bedassa rohkaistaan kriittisen palautteen antamiseen ylöspäin organisaatiossa?
- Tavoitellaanko yhteisissä keskusteluissa enemmän yhteistä näkemystä vai rakentavaa kritiikkiä?
- Miten tämä näkyy?

Millainen kuva johdolla on Bedan esimiehistä?

- Miten kuvailisit bedalaista esimiestä? Mitä yhteisiä piirteitä esimiehissä on?
- Mikä motivoi esimiehiä jakamaan näkemyksiään / osaamistaan?
- Miten BedaNetin odotetaan tukevan esimiestyötä Bedassa?

Millä tavalla asiakas ja liiketoimintalähtöisyys näkyvät Bedan sisäisessä viestinnässä?

- Mistä Bedan sisäinen viestintä koostuu?
- Mitkä ovat sisäisen viestinnän päämäärät Bedassa?
- Miten sisäinen viestintä tukee liiketoimintaa?

Johdon odotukset jatkoon

- Minkä kysymyksen haluaisit kysyä esimiehillä kyselyssä?

Appendix 2: Theme interview questions, interviews with managers

Haastateltavien profiili

- Kuka olet ja missä roolissa toimit?
- Minä vuonna olet syntynyt?
- Kuinka kauan olet työskennellyt Bedassa?
- Kuinka pitkä esimieskokemus sinulla on?

BedaNetin tuntemus

- Onko BedaNet sinulle tuttu foorumi?
- Miten kuvailisit, mikä BedaNet on?

BedaNetin käyttö

- Oletko seurannut keskusteluja tai osallistunut keskusteluihin BedaNetissä?

Kokemukset BedaNetistä

- Koetko BedaNetin hyödylliseksi? Millä tavalla?
- Minkä näet suurimpana esteenä BedaNetin onnistuneelle käytölle?

BedaNetin kehittäminen

- Mitä mahdollisuuksia organisaatiolle BedaNetin kaltainen foorumi sisältää?
- Millainen BedaNetin pitäisi olla, jotta priorisoisit siellä läsnä olemisen ja viestimisen korkealle?
- Mitkä ovat sinun mielestäsi kiinnostavia aiheita BedaNetissä keskusteltaviksi?

Appendix 3: Survey questions

KYSYMYKSET BEDANETIN PALAUTEKYSELYYN ESIMIEHILLE

Tämän kyselyn tarkoituksena on kerätä kokemuksia Bedanetin pilottivaiheesta. Vastausten pohjalta Bedanetiä pyritään kehittämään vastaamaan paremmin esimiesten ja organisaation tarpeita. Samalla etsitään keinoja sosiaalisen median kanavien laajempaan hyödyntämiseen organisaation sisäisessä keskustelussa. Suurin osa kysymyksistä on vaihtoehtoisia. Osassa pyydetään valitsemaan vain yksi kohta, osassa voi valita 1-3 vaihtoehtoa. Kohdassa 14 on mahdollista tarkentaa aiempia vastauksia avoimella vastauksella. Kiitos tärkeästä panoksestasi!

1. Oletko kirjautunut BedaNetin käyttäjäksi
 - a. Kyllä
 - b. En

2. **Jos olet kirjautunut** käyttäjäksi, oletko
 - a. Seurannut BedaNetissä käytyjä keskusteluja
 - b. Osallistunut itse keskusteluihin
 - c. En ole seurannut keskusteluja, vaikka olenkin kirjautunut käyttäjäksi. Mistä syystä?

3. **Jos et ole kirjautunut** BedaNetiin, mistä syystä?
 - a. En ole tietoinen kyseisestä keskustelufoorumista
 - b. En ole kiinnostunut osallistumaan keskusteluun enkä seuraamaan sitä
 - c. En ole ehtinyt vielä kirjautumaan
 - d. Muu syy, mikä?
Voit siirtyä suoraan kysymykseen 5.

4. Mikä Bedanetissä tähän mennessä käydyistä keskusteluista on ollut antoisinta? Valitse yksi kohta. (vastaa vain jos olet seurannut keskusteluja)
 - a. Esimiespäivien ryhmätöiden raportointi ja aiheista keskustelu
 - b. Pikakeskustelut, joissa kutsutut henkilöt keskustelevat samanaikaisesti sovituista aiheista
 - c. Toimintatavan muuttaminen esim. kokouskäyttäytymiseen ja vastuullisuuteen liittyen
 - d. Tahtovoittojen avaaminen ja yhteinen sparraus niistä
 - e. Muu esimiehenä toimimiseen liittyvä keskustelu. Mikä?
 - f. Muu liiketoimintaan liittyvä keskustelu, Mikä?

Miksi olet kokenut kyseisen keskustelun antoisimpana?

5. Mikä olisi tärkein tekijä vahvistamaan aktiivisuuttasi BedaNetissä? Valitse 1-3 kohtaa.
- Kiinnostustani lähempänä olevat keskustelunaiheet
 - Sovelluksen helpompi käytettävyys
 - Sovelluksen visuaalinen selkeys
 - Johdon aktiivisempi osallistuminen keskusteluihin
 - Kollegoiden aktiivisempi osallistuminen keskusteluihin
 - Useammin tapahtuvat pikakeskustelut (joissa kutsutut henkilöt keskustelevat samanaikaisesti sovitusta aiheesta)
 - Muu, mikä?
6. Mikä olisi sinulle kiinnostavin keskustelun aihe BedaNetissä keskusteltavaksi? Valitse yksi vaihtoehto.
- Ihmisten johtaminen
 - Toimintamallit, prosessit ja niihin liittyvät työkalut
 - Myynti ja asiakkuudet
 - Liiketoiminnan tavoitteet ja liiketoiminnan kehittäminen
 - Kansainvälinen / Nordic –yhteistyö
 - Muu toiminnan kehittäminen
 - Muu, mikä?
7. Minkä koet suurimpana kynnyksenä omien kommenttien kirjoittamiseen BedaNetissä tai vastaavassa sosiaalisessa mediassa? Valitse yksi vaihtoehto.
- En näe oman työni kannalta hyödyllisenä osallistua keskusteluun sosiaalisessa mediassa
 - En usko muiden olevan kiinnostuneita kommentteistani
 - Uskon, että kirjoitetuilla kommentteilla voi olla negatiivisia seurauksia
 - Koen hankalana kiteyttää ajatukseni selkeään, kirjoitettuun asuun
 - Muu kynnys, mikä?
8. Mitä hyötyä BedaNetin kaltaisesta esimiesten sosiaalisesta mediasta näet organisaatiolle parhaimmillaan olevan? Valitse 1-3 vaihtoehtoa.
- Vahvistaa yhtenäistä johtamiskulttuuria
 - Sitouttaa esimiehiä lisäämällä vaikuttamisen mahdollisuuksia
 - Nopeuttaa uusien ideoiden ja ratkaisujen löytämistä
 - Evästää johtoa päätöksenteossa
 - Parantaa työhyvinvointia tarjoamalla mahdollisuuden kokemusten jakamiseen
 - Mahdollistaa yhteisen keskustelun yli maarajojen
 - Muu, mikä?
 - En näe, että esimiehille suunnattu sosiaalinen media toisi hyötyjä organisaatiolle.

9. Mitä hyötyä näkisit koko henkilöstölle suunnatusta sosiaalisesta mediasta parhaimmillaan olevan organisaatiolle? Valitse 1-3 vaihtoehtoa.
- Vahvistaa yhtenäistä yrityskulttuuria
 - Sitouttaa henkilöstöä lisäämällä vaikuttamisen mahdollisuuksia
 - Nopeuttaa uusien ideoiden ja ratkaisujen löytämistä
 - Evästää johtoa päätöksenteossa
 - Parantaa työhyvinvointia tarjoamalla mahdollisuuden kokemusten jakamiseen
 - Mahdollistaa yhteisen keskustelun yli maarajojen
 - Muu, mikä?
 - En näe koko henkilöstölle suunnattua sosiaalinen media toisi hyötyjä organisaatiolle.
10. Kuinka paljon hyötyä uskot esimiehille suunnatusta sosiaalisesta mediasta parhaimmillaan olevan organisaatiolle? Asteikolla 1 (Ei lainkaan) – 5 (Erittäin paljon)
11. Kuinka paljon hyötyä uskot koko henkilöstölle suunnatusta sosiaalisesta mediasta parhaimmillaan olevan organisaatiolle? Asteikolla 1 (Ei lainkaan) – 5 (Erittäin paljon)
12. Miten esimiehesi ja ylin johto vastaanottaa omista mielipiteistään eriäviä näkemyksiä? Asteikolla 1 (Erittäin heikosti) – 5 (Erittäin hyvin)
13. Miten esimieskollegasi vastaanottavat omista mielipiteistään eriäviä näkemyksiä? Asteikolla 1 (Erittäin heikosti) – 5 (Erittäin hyvin)
14. Tarkenna tähän vapaamuotoisesti aiempia vastauksiasi ja BedaNettiin liittyviä kehitysajatuksiasi.
15. Sukupuoli
- Nainen
 - Mies
16. Ikä
- Alle 25 vuotta
 - 25-35 vuotta
 - 35-45 vuotta
 - 45-55 vuotta
 - Yli 55 vuotta

17. Kuinka kauan olet toiminut esimiestehtävissä (aiemmat työpaikat mukaan lukien)

- a. Alle 2 vuotta
- b. 2-5 vuotta
- c. 5-10 vuotta
- d. Yli 10 vuotta

18. Onko sinulla esimiesalaisia?

- a. Kyllä
- b. Ei