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# Globalization, Mobile Technology, and Social Media's Influence on Leadership Communication Involving Millennials

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Rasheedah Dunston

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Dr. Lilburn Hoehn, Committee Member, Management Faculty

Dr. William Shriner, University Reviewer, Management Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University  
2016

Abstract

Globalization, Mobile Technology, and Social Media's Influence on Leadership

Communication Involving Millennials

by

Rasheedah Dunston

MBA, Rutgers University, 2003

BA, Rutgers University, 1993

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Applied Management and Decision Sciences

Walden University

June 2016

## Abstract

Current research identifies effective leadership communication, which includes frequent direct conversational communication from company leaders, influences worker performance during organizational change. Social media, mobile technology, and the Millennial workforce have shifted leader communication style from purely top-down, town hall style communication to incorporate more collaborative and engaging forums. The case study addressed how globalization, social media, and mobile technology affects leadership communication and then subsequently effects worker performance as Millennials join the workforce. Qualitative data were collected from observations and interviews from a purposeful selection of 9 Millennial employees, including 2 Millennial leaders, and 8 non-Millennial leaders of a Fortune 100 company. The data were focused on leadership communication during the leaders' implementation of key company and organizational structural changes, which centered on the company's U.S. Location Strategy program. Data analysis involved the identification of themes relating to current leadership communication trends that included recognition that globalization requires updated technology and tools along with communication of best practices. Encouraging employees to share these tools and resources trend improvement in company performance. These findings contribute to social change by producing information about how globalization, Millennials, social media, and mobile technology use influenced leadership communication and effectiveness. The adaption and use of newer technology has influenced leadership communication effectiveness. Company leaders could use this information to implement changes that help employees communicate better within their workforce.

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## Dedication

To my parents, Melvin and Ernestine Dunston, who provided constant encouragement and unwavering support throughout my Ph. D. program and my life.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Globalization, technology, media, and workforce demographic changes in companies are occurring simultaneously; in response, corporate leaders implement deep structural organizational changes as well as ongoing, longer-term changes as necessary. Communication is key to producing positive effects related to worker performance during organizational changes (Abugre, 2011). In this study, I explored the potential impact that recent changes in mobile technology, social media, and globalization might have on leader communication when company leaders interact with Millennial employees. Furthermore, I explored how leadership communication style could affect worker performance.

Millennials, or Generation Y, are individuals born between the years 1976 and 2001 (Sincavage, 2004). Part of the Millennials' business impact lies in their use of social networks. Their personal use of social networks has permeated into the workplace.

Social networks are more than a convenience. They are also business tools that companies use to interact with customers, forming a social networking business forum. Savitz (2012) stated that social networking for business, “puts the onus on managers to learn which tools best balance ease of use and employee familiarity with security, accountability, and productivity” (p. 1).

At the inception of my study, Lee and Cho (2011) summed up an expected trend, which indicated that there would be increases in social networking and mobile use over the next few years. The Pew Research Center (2015) stated that in the United States, “As

of July 2015, 76% of online adults use social networking sites” (Media and Technology-Social Networking Use). Twitter had 316 million active accounts and Facebook more than 1 billion as of active accounts. Through this study I assess how the spread of social media use impacted leader communications.

People use social media to exchange ideas and communicate almost instantaneously. This shift in speed and ability to communicate information has changed the way people share information socially and at work (Aichner & Jacob, 2015). With Millennials as the largest group adapting this communication style and growing as a large part of the workforce, communication styles and tools have changed to allow more two-way communication and collaboration at companies (Aichner & Jacob, 2015; Cardon & Marshall, 2015).

A business's immersion into social media must be strategic. Culnan, McHugh, and Zubillaga (2010) stressed, “Merely creating a presence on a social media platform (e.g., launching a corporate Facebook page) does not ensure the implementation will create value” (p. 246). There needs to be a strategy and business commitment to monitor, track trends, and use and respond to the people and information on the platform effectively. However, company leaders often lag behind society when adopting new technology or innovation because a company must implement changes effectively for its business (Day, 2011). Social media is not different from other new technology in this respect; however, now that organizations have begun to incorporate more social forums and mobile technology into business processes, there is a need to examine how this change may impact leadership communication.

## **Background**

Innovation impacts society increasingly over time (Lee & Cho, 2011). In particular, mobile and social media sites have had a significant effect on society, especially over the past 10 years, and especially on Millennials. More than 75% of Millennials are social media users, making this generation the largest population of users as compared to other generations (Lee & Cho, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2010). Mobile devices, mobile applications, and social media has integrated into workplaces (Savitz, 2012, p. 1). Today, more than half of adults in the United States who go online use two or more social media sites, a Pew Research Center survey conducted in September 2014 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Individuals in the Millennial generation have influenced business in the United States through the devices they use in the same way they have impacted society (Jackson, 2011; Understanding the Millennial consumer, 2012).

This case study helped to identify effective leadership communication specific to Millennials in the context of one company's global expansion and organizational changes implemented from 2010 to 2015. Specifically, I was interested in following leader communication methods and style with Millennial employees and how it would evolve based on new technology, social media, and globalization. One theme that surfaced was the shift to more collaborative, interactive communication between leaders and employees. Groysberg and Slind (2012) stated, "One-way, top-down communication between leaders and their employees is no longer useful or even realistic. Today's leaders achieve far more engagement and credibility when they take part in genuine

conversation with the people who work for and with them” (p. 78). I explored this communication trend as part of this study.

Recently, researchers have started to look at communication factors with respect to technology, social media, and globalization. Organizations across the United States recognized the need to transform and evolve to accommodate changing technology, and organizational demographics, as well as increased emphasis on values and social norms, societal and community behavior (Mason, 2012, p. 5). Although more studies and articles about globalization, mobile technology, and social media surfaced in 2015, most focused on the social impact or current business trends in convenience, marketing, and advertising when using media and technology to reach customers. This research examined internal business impacts between leaders and employees.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem addressed in this case study is a gap in the literature, which does not include significant information about how globalization, social media, and mobile technology may affect leadership communication and then subsequently effect worker performance as more Millennials joined the workforce. When companies lack the people and structures needed to implement or react to external changes and new technology it can impact a company’s competitiveness (Day, 2011). The influx of Millennials into the workforce in the United States along with social media, mobile technology, and globalization changed the way company leaders communicate with employees (Groysberg & Slind, 2012).

Research on leadership communication and generational differences suggests that Millennial workers place increasing value on collaboration and integrity (Eisner, 2005; Hewlett, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2009; Penney, 2011). Moreover, social media, technology, and Millennials have shifted leader communication styles from purely top-down, town hall style communication to incorporate more collaborative and engaging forums (Groysberg & Slind, 2012; Penney, 2011). However, prior literature did not include significant information about how globalization, mobile technology, social media, and generational shifts in the workforce collectively may affect leadership communication and the subsequent effect on worker performance. This dissertation case study was designed to address this gap in the literature.

As part of this case study I collected interview and observation data to better explore the associations between new technology, social media, and globalization as it relates to communication processes. This study was designed to contribute to social change by improving leadership awareness of the best communication practices and helping leaders understand the impact of them so that better practices can be applied to benefit individual and company performance.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to surface new information about leadership communication. I assessed Millennial employees and leaders in a Fortune 100 company to determine their preferred leadership communication style in light of globalization, mobile technology, and social media. I used interviews, observations of employees over



time, leadership meeting materials, and company survey results to triangulate my findings.

Business leadership and leadership communication are important factors with significant financial repercussions. Companies that attract, develop, and retain the best leaders are most likely to flourish (Smallwood, Ulrich, and Zenger, 1999). Further, Hewlett, Sherbin, and Sumberg (2009), in their statements regarding the effects of Millennials and the Boomer generations, emphasized that managers must remain flexible, must be open to new ideas, and establish relevant growth plans to sustain talent in the workplace. However, the most effective approach for leadership communication with Millennials was unclear.

This study explored how leadership communication with Millennials may improve through better understanding of available leadership communication methods and current impacts in the context of this study. I used case study design to explore effective leader communication. The goal was to discover new information about effective leader communication with Millennials. The data brought out several themes in the responses and observations of the employees, leaders, and other associates, which helped me to meet the goal and promote social change as I shared the ideas throughout the study.

### **Research Questions**

The overarching research question investigated in this study was, “Have globalization, technology, and social media have influenced leadership communication styles with Millennials and, if so, how?”. I explored this with six subquestions:

1. What is the perceived impact of globalization, mobile technology, and social media on leadership communication styles and effectiveness?
2. How do employees use more collaborative, two-way communication as the company applies new strategy and undergoes shifts in location?
3. How are the combination of globalization, mobile technology, and social media affecting the style, delivery, and forums for communication at work, and how does each impact the way that leaders communicate differently?
4. What is the relationship between globalization and collaborative forums such as social media?
5. How are certain communication methods or styles more effective than others for leaders, individual contributors, or both?
6. How do two-way, frequent communication influence company performance in Millennials, including adherence and achievement of set goals?

I chose a qualitative design because this design allowed me to make observation notes and interview participants to reveal unanticipated communication behaviors.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study was a combination of several theories: change theory (Argyris, 1972; Bennis, Benne & Chin, 1961; Nadler, 1998), leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Northouse, 2012), transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985), and situational leadership theory (Blanchard and Hersey, 1996). Each theory represents a different dimension of leadership that demonstrates the effects of leadership communication within the organization, company, and society. With

significant increases in business globalization, mobile technology usage, and social media, the potential exists for research to expound on these theories for exploration of possible communication impacts. The selected theories provided the foundation for this study and the rationale to determine why the company leaders may have needed to adjust how they communicate to most effectively lead the organization as the company faces changes prompted by external and internal factors.

Change theory discussed by Benne, Bennis, and Chin (1961) showed the importance of communication between associates and between leaders and associates while Nadler (1998) discussed the need for communication across the organization so that employees connect to the leader's strategy throughout change process. Argyris (1972) emphasized that there pros and cons of organizational structure and grouping; subdividing a group helps to give employees identification and purpose, but it also complicates leader communication and how leaders implement organizational change. These change theorists' work helped to shape the problem and purpose of my study as I researched the influence of globalization, mobile technology, and social media on leadership communication within a changing organization.

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Northouse, 2012) focuses on how the impact of proximity of leaders to employees could impact the quality of communication or the exchange of information. Transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985) proved that the characteristics of a leader, leading with passion and the ability to communicate well to connect to followers influences leaders success when transforming an organization. While situational leadership theory (Blanchard and Hersey, 1996) spoke to

the need for leaders to flex and adjust how and what they communicate based on the employee's needs. I will provide more detailed explanations of these theories and its relationship to my study in Chapter Two. Each theory provided insight that helped me determine the research questions that I wanted to focus on throughout my case study.

### **Nature of the Study**

I selected a case study approach for this research to allow me to explore how globalization, mobile technology, and social media may influence changes in leader communication. I explored leadership communication for Millennial generation workers in the context of company leader implementation of organizational changes; these leaders were implementing key company and organizational structural changes centered on a company's U.S. location strategy.

Face-to-face interviews included questions to prompt conversation about how employees and leaders use technology and social media currently and reviewed influences on company leadership communication. Additional data sources analyzed included leadership meeting materials, organizational meetings, and company survey results.

All data sources were cross-referenced throughout the study to verify information across sources who responded to the research questions. I interviewed several participants in the beginning of the study and triangulated the data with quarterly meeting material and survey data that I collected over time. I reviewed the information as it was received to inform the study and to assess any changes over time. Additionally, I

documented my observations over several months to understand any perceptual changes over time.

I observed interview participants and then engaged with the participants periodically throughout the duration of the research and as needed, based on the data, themes, and categories that emerged. During data collection, coding, and data analysis I determined the need to split up the interviews so that they all did not occur in the beginning of the study because different locations and business functions were in different phases of implementation of the location strategy. This was a key factor in shifting my study approach to stagger the interviews to better assess the changes over time. Throughout the study I looked for information that reinforced new ideas that contributed to a comprehensive report on the findings included in Chapter 5.

### **Definition of Terms**

To determine the leadership needs in a process of forming a geographically boundary-less corporate structure, it is essential to include a working definition of leader, globalization, and collaboration tools for reference.

*Company leaders:* The leaders of interest in this study are those who influence company organization and success, including officers, executives, managers, and informal leaders involved in company change.

*Globalization:* This refers to the worldwide influence of a company in terms of employees, marketing, sales, and/or manufacturing to increase business opportunities and results.

*Collaboration tools:* These tools include software, such as Microsoft SharePoint, Cisco Telepresence, or other tools that help facilitate collaboration on common goals or projects shared by a team, forum, or other group. Collaboration tools also include social networks, intranet portals, websites, telepresence, and tools for document and file management.

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions underlying this research include the following:

1. Effective leadership communication strategy is necessary to connect leaders and followers and to help produce positive results.
2. Company change is inevitable, and any change, either external or internal, requires changes in strategy.
3. Effective leadership communication styles for Millennials are different from those used for employees from previous generations.
4. The Millennials invited to participate in this study will openly express their views regarding effective leadership communication to the researcher, a fellow employee and professional.
5. The Millennials invited to participate in this study have college degrees and at least one year of work experience, which I assumed to be sufficient exposure to the corporate environment to provide informed answers to the interview questions.
6. Technology, globalization, and social media have led to the need for leadership communication style changes, and generational differences

introduced by the Millennial adoption of these tools will drive changes in leadership communication style that further exacerbates the leadership communication problem.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The focus of this research is on Millennials, although the factors previously mentioned may affect other generations. Also, I limited the discussion of leadership communication to how it relates to impacts caused by globalization, mobile technology, and social media, and as experienced by Millennials.

I confined the study interview participants to 17 U.S. employees—both leaders and individual contributors—having exposure to global employees of one Fortune 100 Company that sat for 60-90 minute in person interviews. Additionally, I observed 16 quarterly town hall style meetings held by various company executives with global associates as well as any ten interim meetings and announcements that occurred over eighteen months.

### **Limitations**

Although I made every attempt to include a diverse group of participants, the sample may not adequately represent the full population of company employees. Additionally, due to the rapid changes in technology, the data only applied to current thoughts, views, and experiences. These data points can, however, be used to predict future trends and possibilities.

Since the study focused on Millennials exposed to leadership communication in the context of the target company, the opinions expressed may not represent worldwide

views of other Millennial professionals. Furthermore, these Millennial participants may have limited experience that reflects narrow views of the corporate environment. However, since this study concerns the influence of globalization, mobile technology, and social media on Millennials, the participants provided useful insights about communication phenomena since they are demographically the largest global user group.

This topic is relevant to current activities occurring at the company. I was challenged to recognize and control my bias. However, since I am not a Millennial, I counteracted any personal bias by leveraging the participants' input as the primary data source. Although the data is not generalizable beyond the sample, I targeted a sample appropriate in the context of this case study.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was necessary because it helped determine new information about how leaders and managers may elicit stronger performance from workers. The problem is that significant information about how globalization, social media, and mobile technology may affect leadership communication and then subsequently effect worker performance as more Millennials joined the workforce does not exist. Mobile technology and communication tools can make leadership communication more complex than in previous years when information was not as easily accessible. Currently, a company's leaders and workers may operate in several regions throughout the world, so employees depend on the Internet, teleconferences, video teleconferencing (VTC), and other technology to communicate effectively. These are necessary tools and means of communication. By



interviewing newer employees, this study helps company leaders understand how communication style can affect worker performance.

Since technology has changed globally, it has become more challenging for company managers and leaders to communicate with workers. Mobile technology, social media, and the growing number of Millennials in the workforce have increased these challenges even more. Therefore, the target participants in the study, Millennial employees and leaders, included several ethnicities and races as well as both males and females. I explored leadership communication with respect to the leaders' implementation of multiple layers of organizational changes. The study will help advance knowledge about leader communication as Millennials and leaders that work in the corporate environment share their insights.

The results of this case study provided information to help leaders understand new communication trends based on the data derived from interviews, observations, and coding. The goal of the study was to help understand key communication methods used in current contexts, and then determine further action in new applications. I will promote social change by helping employees and leaders learn and share information that will allow them to work better together. This research will serve companies by providing information about the potential changes to leadership communication in any global company and could also inform uses in other contexts.

### **Summary**

The intent of this study was to determine actions that might improve company leadership communication. The problem is that the influx of Millennials into the

workforce along with the influence of several factors simultaneously on companies may have created the need to change the way leaders communicate with employees; however, there were not many studies on the topic since these influences are still relatively new. Recent literature indicates that Millennials (or Gen Y), a term commonly used to describe those born between 1977 and 2000, have adopted social media and mobile technology at a faster rate than other generations (Pew Research Center, 2010). This has made a significant impact on communication.

Social media, technology, and the Millennial workforce may have driven the need for company leaders to change from top-down, town hall style communication to incorporate more collaborative, engaging forums for communication (Hastings, 2012). The purpose of this study was to understand the effects of recent phenomena (i.e., changes in leadership communication from solely top-down, town hall style, to a two-way, conversational style). I specifically explored the impacts of (a) changing workforce makeup, (b) globalization, and (c) the emersion of social media and mobile technology on Millennial worker performance using a theoretical framework in the context of a Fortune 100 global company.

This case study analyzed the behaviors and responses of 17 Millennial employees, and leaders to verify leadership communication effectiveness theory, and to solidify ways to improve leadership communication and respective organizational performance throughout the implementation of the company location strategy. For this study, in lieu of generalizability, I sought to inform as themes surfaced. I used the case study approach to cross-

reference data sources and then to produce new information that can be used by industry leaders. Since this study used the same set of interview questions with different participants, it allowed me to triangulate information gathered from the Millennial participants, current leaders, organizational meetings, organizational surveys, and my own observations.

In Chapter 1, I presented the purpose of this proposed study—to investigate the influence of globalization, mobile technology, and social media on leadership communication styles with Millennials. In Chapter 2, I present a review of the relevant literature, and Chapter 3 discusses the study methodology.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

This chapter includes a critical review of articles in current academic, peer-reviewed journals, as well as in books and contemporary online sources, that deal with the topic of leadership communication: (a) leadership communication studies; (b) Millennial influence; (c) globalization, technology, and social media impacts on communication; and (d) leadership challenges today. Each topic is presented as it relates to the current leadership communication trends and Millennials. This review concludes with a summary of the findings in the literature about leadership communication and how these factors are changing the way people communicate with each other.

The problem that I addressed in this case study is a gap in the literature, which does not include significant information about how globalization, social media, and mobile technology may affect leadership communication and then subsequently effect worker performance as more Millennials joined the workforce. The purpose of this study was to surface new information about leadership communication. The literature review includes recent information that led to this study topic.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

While reading through the literature I found several themes including technology innovation, leadership strategy, leadership communication style, leadership effectiveness, globalization, Millennials, social media, and leadership communication. I used these key search terms as criteria to select recent articles that would be relevant to this study. The selection of the search engine and databases was a key part of the successful searches,

which primarily leveraged EBSCOhost search of the Business Source Complete database and occasionally used the Education Research Complete database as well as other databases (even opting to select all in one search). I narrowed my focus to Millennials to streamline the research scope.

The initial search attempts included combinations of all the named search terms; however, this was not successful. Subsequent searches used varied combinations of the search terms to find relevant topics since there was not an exact match. Another search iteration included search terms of *Millennials* and *leadership*. A key search focused on business use of social media. I wanted to read recent literature about the current workforce, especially experiences with Millennials.

A search that focused on Millennials yielded several articles that point out leaders as a key force in how well the exchange occurs between older generations and Millennials. Another key thought is that leaders respond to each generation differently based on their mindset and values. Millennial workers are different from previous generations because they value having a purpose more than previous generations (Penney, 2010). Additionally, the literature indicated that Millennials communicate differently because they grew up with technology such as the Internet and social media as commonplace.

The latest searches focused on leadership communication and leadership communication studies, which brought out the evolution of leadership communication and the communication tools available over the past decade.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The theoretical framework underpinning this research stated that effective leadership communication influences worker performance. The theories reference included organizational change theory (Argyris, 1972; Bennis, Benne & Chin, 1961; Nadler, 1998), leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Northouse, 2012), transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985), and situational leadership theory (Blanchard and Hersey, 1996). The introduction of mobile technology, social media, and the movement towards globalization may affect company leader communication effectiveness. Additionally, more frequent, conversational communication from company leaders may improve Millennial employee performance.

This case study involved the collection of qualitative data from Millennial employees and leaders of a Fortune 100 company regarding leadership communication. For the purpose of this study I explored leadership communication using existing literature from a theoretical perspective. Change theory, LMX theory, Situational leadership theory, as well as transformational leadership theory provided foundational information that I applied to the subject organization in this study as it underwent workforce, structural, and geographical changes to build on these theories.

Bennis, Benne, and Chin's (1961) theory of group development states that improvements in communication help to mature an organization. Benne et al argued that a group must master internal communication systems that allow the group to function appropriately, resolving internal conflicts, mobilizing resources as needed, and taking intelligent action. They emphasized two phases that mark the growth pattern:

- Phase I, dependence, in which the group looks for a common goal and desires approval from the authority figure; and
- Phase II, interdependence, in which the group attention moves to the problem of shared responsibility, group affiliation, and affection—similar attitudes “as a group” toward authoritative figures.

Bennis et al. (1961) maintained that growth (moving from Phase I to Phase II) requires that group members can communicate and help each other, and that leaders must understand any barriers to communication. Leaders must determine the group characteristics necessary to ensure communication effectiveness and top performance.

Nadler (1998), like Bennis et al. (1961), refers to organizations as social systems and states that each system comprises four "tightly interrelated components (pp. 9-12)":

1. the work
2. the people
3. the formal organization, and
4. the informal organization (values, attitude, beliefs, communication style, behavioral standards, etc).

According to Nadler (1998), each component must fit the strategy before the strategy can succeed (p. 12). Communication must be integrated into organizational change. Nadler (1998) further states that change strategy should include the whole organization even if everyone will agree with it (p. 161). Workers must be included and share a common understanding to successfully implement strategy. Therefore, communication of action

and goals is imperative and must describe the new vision and culture to be achieved as a result of organizational changes.

Argyris (1972) stated that difficult communication can be a product of structural differentiation, stating that any criterion, basis, or rationale for dividing members of a group into ranks or subunits has impact, contributing to the complexity of communication. Each group has its own goals, strategies, and values. As more groups are subdivided, more ideals, goals, and sense of purpose are presented, which makes it harder for any communication or change implementation to occur, because naturally everyone values their own thoughts and conclusions more highly than those of others (Simmons, 2006, p. 3). However, organizations often complicate communication by continually executing structural differentiation with the increasing number of supervisors or units (Argyris, 1972, p. 15).

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory focuses on the interactions between leaders and followers. It further stated that differences in the level of exchange might exist between the leader and each individual follower because a leader does not interact with the group uniformly. The theory references in-groups and out-groups, which represent followers who have a higher-quality exchange with the leader versus those who have a lesser-quality exchange. This theory was developed in the 1970s, and subsequent studies have shown that LMX positively affects employee performance according to the quality of the exchange (Northouse, 2012). Additionally, high-quality leader-member exchange leads to positive organizational outcomes (Northouse, 2012).



Historically, both transformational leadership and situational leadership have proven successful during organizational change. Transformational Leadership theory maintained that people with vision and passion can influence others, and Situational Leadership Theory stated that effective leaders apply varied styles based on the situation.

Transformational Leadership (Bass, 1985) surfaced often in the literature surveyed for this study. Transformational Leadership Theory suggests that companies need visionary leaders to implement several dimensions of change that often occur simultaneously in today's organizations. Since technology is constantly improving and changing, leaders must understand the characteristics and skillset needed for today's leaders as well as future leaders to handle the changes imposed by mobile technology, social media, and globalization within the next generation. Regarding transformational leadership, Clawson (2009) stated that, "regardless of how articulate they are in a conventional sense, leaders find a way to convey their visions in unmistakable terms to their constituents" (p. 461). In transformational leadership, effective communication is imperative to ensure that messaging and visions are well understood throughout the workforce.

Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard developed the Situational Leadership Theory in the 1970s (Gates, Blanchard, & Hersey, 1976). They determined individual leaders' style (or others' perception of their style) using a three-dimensional approach that includes (1) task behavior, (2) relationship behavior, and (3) effectiveness, with task and relationship being the central concepts to determine appropriate leadership communication style required to be effective in each specific situation. Their theory stated, "successful leaders

are those who can adapt their behavior to meet the demands of their own unique environment” (Hersey & Blanchard, 1981, p. 38). Since communication is a key attribute in both Transformational Leadership and Situational Leadership theories, I refer to concepts from these theories as they relate to leadership communication in this study.

Some of the key concepts of effective leadership communication include the following: (a) companies and their organizations need leadership communication; (b) individuals from different generations respond to leadership communication differently; (c) changes brought about by technological innovation impact leadership communication; and (d) leadership communication effectiveness will influence worker performance. The intersection of globalization, mobile technology, and social media along with the advent of greater numbers of Millennials into the workforce may require that company leaders adopt new communication styles to be effective.

Similar to the seminal leadership communication theories that serves as the framework for this study, recent studies have shown that leaders who communicate effectively will positively impact employee performance. Rouse and Schuttler (2009) studied the effect of absent or confusing organizational leadership and communication in the context of the 2008 financial crisis. They found that the financial crisis, similar to any external factors or major shifts impacting society, could introduce the need for change in leader communication.

Rouse and Schuttler (2009) correlated red, yellow, and green zone leader categorizations, as defined by the authors, with worker performance levels. They believed that green zone leaders exhibited behaviors such as proactive communication,

meaningful feedback, and effective mentoring, which resulted in highly valued employee performance including innovative problem-solving skills and perceived empowerment. Red zone leaders exhibited undesired behaviors with consequently lower performance from workers in that category. Yellow represented the middle zone.

A study conducted by Neufeld, Zeying, and Yulin (2010) researched leadership performance with respect to communication and leader-worker proximity and leadership theory. Neufeld et al. stated in their results that managers must act on their beliefs through effective communication. This study expanded the Rouse and Schuttler (2009) findings by showing that not only is leader communication important, but the proximity of the leaders to the employees influence the degree of performance. My study expands on these theories by producing new information about how globalization, mobile technology, and social media influence leader communication in a changing corporate environment.

### **Literature Review**

Social media, mobile technology, and globalization have individually impacted how companies operate (Groysberg & Slind, 2012; Lee, 2010; Roberts, 2012). Several articles discussed each impact and their combined impact as factors that challenge company leaders (Penney, 2011; Savitz, 2012). Social media and mobile device use, primarily influenced by Millennials, has transitioned from social environments into business environments. As this trend continues, the need to evolve guidelines for appropriate use of personal electronic devices in a business context is quickly becoming an imperative (Jackson, 2011). Leaders must determine the group characteristics that will

be necessary to understand in order to ensure communication effectiveness and top performance. Good communication between leaders and workers is essential.

### **Leadership Communication**

Globalization goals have triggered organizational change at the company level, and these factors have collided with the shift in the workforce makeup. Leaders must be skilled and flexible in their willingness to learn and respond to organizational changes (Hickman, 2010). Leadership flexibility is another theme in many articles regarding Millennials. Millennial workers require flexibility in when and where they work (Yeaton, 2008; Eisner, 2005). This is especially important to keep in mind in dealing with the four generations currently active in today's workforce. Also, as technology is constantly improving and changing, it is important to understand the characteristics and skillset needed for today's leaders as well as future leaders to handle the communication changes imposed by mobile technology, social media, and globalization.

Articles about leadership communication explored current influences and trends in contemporary organizations with respect to its impact on employee performance. Several articles explored leadership trends and contemporary concerns such as how globalization and technology have intersected to create new challenges for future leaders because of how vast companies and their organizations have grown to be boundary-less (Neera, Anjane, & Shoma, 2010). The speed at which news and information travel poses new challenges that leaders must manage.

Other articles discuss innovation impacts on society increasingly over time (Lee and Cho, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2015). Specifically, mobile devices and social

media sites have had a significant effect on society, especially over the past ten years, with a more concentrated impact on Millennials since more than 75% of Millennials are social network users (Lee & Cho, 2011, pp. 71-76). Day (2011) highlighted traditional organizational rigidity as a key issue. Company leaders often have difficulty keeping pace with external impacts as companies expand, grow, and adjust to accommodate innovation. Since innovation is a key factor in companies' ability to remain competitive, not having the right leaders or adequate structures in place needed to implement, communicate about, or react to changes and new technology can be detrimental.

#### Studies on Leadership Communication

Leadership communication theory from a decade ago explored face-to-face versus electronic communication. De Vries, Bakker-Pieper, and Oostenveld (2010) cited a 2004 study showing that people more often choose direct contact with other people rather than use the Internet as the initial source of information. In another article written in 2002, the authors focused on email as a primary electronic source for communication. Baldoni (2002) emphasized that relevance of proximity as well by highlighting that face-to-face communications work best when leaders discuss employees' performance. However, in this same article the author emphasized that effective communication required two-way communication that flows from the top down and from the bottom up.

When leaders talk to employees it is important to ensure employees understand the information. Employees must also have a way to communicate their thoughts and views to leaders. Baldoni (2002) emphasized, "If only leaders speak, the organization as a whole is silent...[O]rganizations that emphasize communications seem to have a

greater sense of purpose and unity [when associates] keep one another informed” (pp. 4-5). Part of good communication is listening to others and ensuring that the information is not only heard, but also understood.

A more recent study by De Vries et al. (2010) explored the question of whether leadership equals communication in government organizations. The study’s goal was to define measures for leadership communication and uncover relationships between existing leadership styles (i.e., more communicative versus less communicative) on worker performance. Similar to Rouse and Schuttler (2009), the study found that leadership communication quality correlates to worker performance quality.

Another key finding was that leaders’ communication styles were strongly related to knowledge-sharing behaviors, perceived leader performance, employees’ satisfaction with the leader, and team commitment (De Vries et al., 2010, p. 367). A limitation of the study, as noted by De Vries et al. (2010), was that “[it neglected to include] data from different sources or to use different methods to measure the predictor and criteria variables” (p. 377). My study leveraged the information from this study using different data sources, focusing on the Millennial demographic, and exploring the named external factors as possible predictors or criteria that could influence leadership communication in the context of this case study.

Chang, Chuang, and Chao (2011) explored the impacts of cultural adaptation, communication quality, and trust on virtual team performance in their study. They stated that globalization increased the need for organizations to form virtual teams across nations, which created the need to explore performance impacts and measures unique to

virtual teams. Chang et al. highlighted that “characteristics emerge which emphasise the specific nature of the virtual teams: geographic separation of team members, identified need to perform work in virtual settings, and use of alternative methods of communication with increased emphasis on electronic interaction” (p. 307). Further, effective communication is essential to success of virtual teams (Chang et al., 2011). The study also reinforces LMX theory in its finding that more personal and quality contact resulted in improved team relations and the team’s consequent success.

Some articles define communication as the exchange of information because it is a two-way exchange involving speaking and listening used to engage employees, deliver a message, or increase understanding (Baldoni, 2004; Nicholson, 2011; Thompson, 2011). In this study I explored the impact that globalization, social media, and mobile technology may have on leadership communication behaviors with Millennials. However, since leadership communication effectiveness varies based on its context and how leaders execute it, I used the interviews to get more information about leadership communication style.

The studies in this section showed the correlation between good leadership communication and positive employee performance results. I have used these studies as a basis for my study and expanded on the theory that leader communications impact performance to understand how globalization, social media, and mobile technology may influence how leaders and associates communicate in order to share and receive information.

Today mobile technology and social technology have emerged to allow people to connect directly in two-way exchanges of information on the Internet. In this study I explored whether these Internet-empowered factors are still considered a secondary source for information by understanding how associates primarily communicate today for work. I also assessed how information is received throughout the company and then reviewed how this may influence employee performance.

### **The Focus on Leadership Communication for Millennials**

The Millennial generation is already having an impact on society in its use of mobile technology and the development and use of social media. Venters, Green, and Lopez (2012) predicted that by 2014 about half the workforce would be Millennials. Additionally, the influx of Millennials, with their technical expertise, has changed companies across the globe. According to Eisner (2005), “Gen Y’s large size, level of education, and technical skill position it to echo the Baby Boomers’ impact on business and society” (p. 6).

The Millennial generation is the largest user group of social media; and social technology and mobile technology have introduced new communication methods that are used globally. If innovation trends prevail, as indicated by Lee and Cho (2011), these factors may impact workplace communication as well. As of 2015, more than one-in-three American workers are Millennials, and this year Generation Y became the largest share of the American workforce (Fry, 2015).

Studies have shown a link between leadership effectiveness, worker performance, and leadership communication. Previous studies, as indicated in the previous section,



have found the link between leadership communication and worker effectiveness. In the current study, I explored how these factors may impact leadership communication as Millennials increasingly enter the workplace, by exploring this phenomenon and answering the research questions about if, when, and how these factors are impacting leader communication at the company I studied.

Today global organizations depend on mobile technology, and various communication media. According to Weimann, Hinz, Scott, and Pollock (2010), “it is evident that communication media play an integral role in team activities and [most] virtual teams are functioning teams who rely on technology-based communication while crossing several different boundaries” (p. 189). Frequent and targeted communication contributed to improve virtual team performance. However, familiarity with a specific technology or communication medium significantly influenced when these tools were leveraged when communicating, regardless of whether they could have helped improve efficiency (Weimann et al., 2010). My study explored how communication media, frequency of communication, targeted communication, and familiarity with communication and tools may impact leadership communication involving Millennials.

Demographically, holding for socioeconomic status, Millennials have by far been the most influential generation in the adoption of social media (Lee and Cho, 2011, p. 76). As social media becomes more and more common throughout society it will be especially important to leverage it as a powerful communication tool. Millennials brought new communication methods and habits of “constant” communication into the workplace that were adopted by other employees (Savitz, 2012, p. 1). The pervasiveness

of new communication style has influenced business communication by simplifying the flow of information and allowing constant interaction that facilitates employees' ability to implement multiple tasks simultaneously (multitasking). The recent phenomenon of social networking, combined with mobile technology and corporate globalization, introduces new challenges and ways for leaders to assign day-to-day tasks to employees, communicate visions, and set and achieve goals.

Millennial workers introduced a new mindset to organizations that required a different approach from the traditional top-down communication. Millennials and other younger workers gained influence in organizations by setting new expectations on peers and authority figures to communicate with them in more fast-paced, interactive, two-way fashion, which generates consent rather than commanding agreement (Groysberg & Slind, 2012). Penney (2011) addressed this communication phenomenon as well and observed that Generation X and Generation Y are more collaborative and inclusive than previous generations.

Although generational differences are noted, the literature also points out the emergence of more collaboration in leadership, which requires a more inclusive communication style. Therefore, part of my research explored how much collaboration tools are being used and whether they are changing leadership communication at this company.

Another differentiator between Millennial Americans and other American generations is their perspective on diversity and tolerance. More than previous generations, this group is more ethnically and racially diverse, and more open socially to

other races and cultures (Pew Research Center, 2015, Social Trends). Therefore, the workforce demographics will shift accordingly as more Millennials join the workforce (Toossi, 2009). As the workforce shifts to incorporate more Millennials it will be important to understand how these dynamics will impact organizations and how leaders communicate within them.

One leadership communication style may not fit all situations. Additionally, the Millennials' mindset and use of technology has distinguished the Millennial generation from previous ones in ways that may indicate the need to refine leadership communication styles that will be effective in the changing workplace and workforce. The next few sections talk more about the Millennials' influence, considering how globalization, social media, and mobile technology each changed the way that people communicate.

### **Communication Changed With Globalization**

With technology, new workforce demographics, globalization, and diversity considerations, it is important to watch what is happening externally for company leaders to determine if changes are required. Caputo and Crandall (2012) stated that, "the dynamics of globalization mean we face a reality wherein leaders are called upon to communicate effectively in cultural situations unfamiliar to them" (p. 58). Other authors stress the importance of the need for cultural adaptation as well as quality communication in dealing with global teams. Chang et al. (2011) stressed that "if financial resources and time do not allow team leaders to bring all the members to a face-to-face meeting, they should at least make sure that team members get acquainted virtually through chat rooms,

white board, home pages, e-mails, or video conferencing” (p. 310). Globalization introduced organizational dynamics that require current and future leaders to transform traditional communication styles to incorporate cultural considerations.

Increases in globalization have led to an increased need for leaders with a global mindset; leaders must be able to communicate with individuals of their own and divergent cultures, backgrounds, and demographics (Caputo & Crandall, 2012; Ching-Hsiang & Hung-Wen, 2008; Irving, 2010; Rofcanin & Mehtap, 2010). Leadership behaviors can be interpreted differently from culture to culture. Although culture is not a primary factor for this study, it is a mediating variable for globalization as well as social media and mobile technology

Globalization introduced other dynamics within organizations that requires leader flexibility in how decisions are made. Bueno and Tubbs (2004) studied different leadership styles to identify the competencies required for global effectiveness. The results they presented also indicated that leaders consider the following to be some of the most important global leadership competencies: (a) communication skills, (b) motivation to learn, (c) flexibility, (d) open-mindedness, (e) respect for others, and (f) sensitivity. Rofcanin and Mehtap (2010) stated that the “ever changing nature of organizations into flatter organizations has brought about the necessity of team-oriented decision making processes, continuous learning, and diversity, all of which pose challenges to the way of managing subordinates” (p. 84). Perruci (2011) discussed the complexity of the way globalization is shaping how Millennials will lead inter-generationally across nations.

Another theme in the literature is that technology is central to the success of companies seeking to expand globally. Along with a global mindset and cultural flexibility, globalization necessitated accessibility to new technology and ways to communicate (Chang et al., 2011; Irving, 2010; Perruci, 2011). Technology allows people to work together regardless of distance as if they were together in the same office.

Advances in communication and technology, largely influenced by the Internet, have brought people around the world into proximity and changed the way people relate to one another (Irving, 2010; Perruci, 2011). Additionally, workplace dynamics have changed with the communication and technology changes required to work in the global context. According to Perruci (2011), “followers are now empowered by education, technology, and new means of communication, which allow them to play an active role in negotiating their space in the leadership process” (p. 83). Newer technology facilitated the globalization of organizations; however, it poses new communication challenges for leaders.

Another impact globalization has had on communication is that increased interaction across cultures has forced people to share, learn about, and learn from other cultures (Caputo and Crandall, 2012; Ching-Hsiang & Hung-Wen, 2008). Individuals grow from intercultural experiences. Leaders require excellent communication skills that use varied techniques to ensure a quality delivery of instruction or message. According to Chang et al. (2011), “Successful virtual team facilitators must be able to manage the whole spectrum of communication strategies via new technologies, as well as human and social processes, and often do it across cultures” (p. 311). Another challenge leaders face

is that information travels quickly, and news and problems cannot be confined within borders. Perruci (2011) asserts that, “A global perspective on leadership calls on Millennials to transcend local norms in order to develop transnational agendas” (p. 85). Leaders must be able to create and communicate strategy that expands to include knowledge acquired throughout global organizations.

However, global presence does not equal a homogeneous global culture; effective leadership communication varies based on global context, each situation (i.e., Situational Leadership Theory), and each person (i.e., LMX Theory). Increased globalization created the need for more virtual teams as well as other nontraditional team structures such as multicultural teams within and across regions or organizations (Chang et al., 2011; Perruci, 2011). Globalization is forcing Millennials to confront not only traditional leadership challenges when implementing organizational changes, but also cross-cultural dimensions of leadership (Penney, 2011; Perruci, 2011). In addition to the need for leaders to lead globally, effective leaders must be able to communicate well with virtual teams as well as multicultural regions and organizations, which can be a challenge.

The literature also discussed the need for trust among team members to be most productive. To work well together, team members are required to communicate well enough to gain confidence in each other’s competency to help develop trust (Chang et al., 2011). This is a key consideration for leadership in global organizations where developing trust in global teams can be a challenge because of non-proximity and cultural differences.

Other researchers expressed the importance of trust and leader proximity in organizations. Rofcanin and Mehtap (2010) in their examination of applied LMX theory in their study stated that, “The relations between managers and subordinates are reciprocal and that the high-quality leader-member exchange results in high trust, mutual respect and consequently in less turnover, better performance, higher productivity and developed organizational citizenship behavior” (pp. 86-87). Globalization changed leadership communication by adding new complexity in how leaders effectively cultivate trust, develop, interact, and communicate with employees across the globe to maintain employee engagement and satisfactory performance levels.

Factors that affect the performance of global virtual teams include (a) cultural adaption, (b) communication quality, and (c) member trust (Ching-Chou & Hsin-Hua, 2010; Perruci, 2011). Communication style determines how well a group may perform. Successful global virtual teams depend more on people than on technology since a team’s interaction style can affect group performance by facilitating or inhibiting the exchange of information (Chang et al., 2011).

In the 21st century, organizations typically have constant changes in the context, needs, and goals of the organization (Perruci, 2011). Leaders face constant challenges in the chaotic environment of overlapping organizational changes, which have impacted how leaders effectively communicate. Social media and mobile technology have also added new dimensions to how people can communicate across the globe.

### **Communication Changed with Social Media**

Social media has been generally accepted as a new media (Piotrowski, 2012; Mason, 2012; Parsons, 2011; Lee, 2010). The popularity and use of social media continues to grow, with 41% of people surveyed in the United States having a profile on a social networking site in 2009 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Lee and Cho (2011) noted that from 2004 through 2010 social media sites, specifically Facebook and Twitter, had followed the innovation adoption trend pattern in which innovation spreads through society in a positive S-curve fashion, where usage gradually increases and ultimately levels off as it becomes commonplace.

Other authors noted similar statistics. Lennon, Rentfro and Curran (2012) reported that “over eight in ten internet users ages 18-29 use social networking sites compared with seven in ten 30-49 year olds, half of 50-64 year olds, and one-third of those age 65 and older. [The 18-35] age grouping made up 48% of social networking site users” (p. 3). Social media has become a standard tool for many as a communication media and source.

A key differentiator between traditional media and social media is that social media enables individuals and groups to create and send messages, not just receive information. Social media allow its users to give recommendations (e.g., liking a product or company) and it is more interactive. This allows two-way communication that changes the way information is gathered and shared. Social media alters the exchange of information such that media is no longer just about delivering a message but has expanded to create an environment for exchanging thoughts and ideas.



Another key difference between social media and traditional media lies in the credibility of the information. Lee (2010) asserted that social media “tends to release the content without verification, unlike in the mass media. Therefore, social media is not yet capable of replacing traditional media. However, it still has value in four aspects: time, audience, cost, and relations” (p. 113). The positive aspects of social media seem to offset the concern with data validity. Also, social media allows people to share and distribute information more broadly and quickly than with traditional media and communication methods (Groysberg & Slind, 2012; Lee, 2010).

The trend in social media popularity and usage has caused companies to implement strategy specific to social media. Social media, when leveraged appropriately, is beneficial to business (Bhanot, 2012; Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010; Giamanco & Gregoire, 2012; Roberts, 2012). Bhanot (2012) believed that today's leaders must embrace social media for several reasons, including (a) it provides a low-cost accessible way to promote a personal brand; (b) it allows for rapid engagement with peers, employees, and customers; and (c) it exposes businesses to “instant information and unvarnished feedback” (p. 48). Social media provide new platforms for businesses to reach customers and exchange information.

However, along with social media's growth in use, as with any new business niche, there are positives and negatives that companies are grappling with as company leaders strive to make the most profitable use of social media. Two major impacts of social media have grabbed the attention of company executives: its popularity with

Millennials and the growth of companies using social media for advertising and marketing (Piotrowski, 2012).

Recent articles have emphasized that the application of new technology and media in business is expanding. According to Roberts (2012),

Social technologies are still in the early phase of business-use adoption, but, in some cases, they are already transforming enterprises by flattening hierarchies, creating previously unthinkable networks of employees, spurring wider collaboration aimed at business objectives and even democratizing workplaces.

(p. 30)

The company in my study has recently adopted social media as a marketing tool, and it is expanding its use by incorporating it into the business. Remidez and Jones (2012) shared similar sentiments to Roberts (2012), adding that social networks, when strategically planned and managed, can facilitate communications and ultimately improve decision-making and operations. Lee and Cho (2011) also emphasized the importance of social media for business in their broader statement that all adapters of social media influence others, whether late adopters or early adopters, because of its interactive nature. This study unveils how these recent technological changes may influence changes to leadership communication style for one company's organizations throughout a specific transition period.

Communication within and throughout a company is critical to how information is used and interpreted. Social media has changed the way that many people communicate and connect socially. Initially largely used for personal interaction, it is

now used by companies for business. Social media platforms have impacted how people in organizations work due to the level of adaption and frequency of use by GenY (Groysberg & Slind, 2012; Understanding the Millennial Consumer, 2012). Social media, mobile technology, and the Millennial workforce have driven the need to change from top-down, town hall style communication to more collaborative, engaging forums. The social media concept of two-way exchanges has affected the way leaders interact with employees as well as how employees interact with leaders (Lee, 2010; Roberts, 2012; Trainor, 2012).

Communication between leaders and employees must be more interactive than in the past to be successful. Authors Groysberg and Slind (2012) stated, “when a spirit of inclusion takes hold, engaged employees can adopt important new roles, creating content themselves and acting as brand ambassadors, thought leaders, and storytellers” (p. 81). Leader conversations with employees will play a key role in how leaders will engage with employees in the future to create an interactive work environment. Social media allows for interactive communication, which can reduce misunderstandings that can occur during unilateral communication and build corporate trust that organizations need internally and externally (Lee, 2010).

Communication within and about a project or organization is crucial to its success. Challenges with communication or communication tools can impact performance. Face-to-face meetings in today’s business world are a challenge, but online meetings, video conferencing, instant messaging, and so forth have generally facilitated virtual communication with associates because they allow real-time exchanges and the

ability for workers to share pictures, presentations, documents, and just about anything that can be produced electronically on the Internet. To maintain a company's success, leaders must understand and incorporate the latest technology and communication vehicles to fit its business appropriately.

Although literature about social media has increased in 2013, prior to starting this study, research pertaining to social media's impact on business communication and with respect to globalization and cross-cultural factors was still scant (Bernoff, 2011; Lennon, Rentfro, and Curran, 2012; Piotrowski, 2012). Piotrowski (2012) stated that there are "articles and documents on the topic of Facebook, but they seem to deemphasize research studies that deal with organizational-business factors" (p. 80). The Lennon, Rentfro, and Curran (2012) study mentioned the need for more research that looks at demographic variables and social network use as an opportunity in future research. This research opportunity relates closely to my research since the Millennial demographic has the largest percentage of social media users, as noted previously.

My research incorporates additional data on how the social media usage and data trends may impact leadership communication in the context of my case study. As more Millennials join the workforce, organizations continue to increase social media use for business purposes. Mobile technology has experienced usage trends similar to those of social media, with significant increases in usage that have changed how many people communicate throughout the world.

### **Communication Changed with Mobile Technology**

Company leaders are dependent on their teams to be productive. This requires leveraging technology and tools effectively at work. Technology and media changes are becoming a part of society in day-to-day interaction worldwide. This has also taken hold in business. A company's communication culture must take into account the technology used and the work setting within its organizations. This begs the question of how communication and technology influence how leaders lead and how followers follow the leaders. Employees have difficulty communicating when they encounter system limitations, insufficient or unavailable resources, or time zone concerns and conflicts. Therefore, companies and leaders must select tools and technology carefully to ensure that their uses and limitations do not impede them.

The literature discusses the impact of technology-empowered customers and prompted me to explore it as part of my study. In 2011 there was a significant lag in literature and organizational responses to the new technology and communication vehicles. Day (2011) stated, "During periods of technological disruption, most organizations have trouble keeping pace.... When an organization masters a capability, it is likely to keep doing it long past the point of obsolescence" (p. 184). When companies find it difficult to keep pace with technological disruptors, it underscores the problem. In 2013 more companies and more studies have focused on mobile technology and social media and its uses for business.

Since innovation is a key factor in companies remaining competitive, not having adequate structures in place needed to implement or react to external changes and new

technology can be detrimental. While the literature underscores the immersion of technology and its impact on society, it also emphasizes the gap or lag in its application within many organizations. This study particularly focuses on mobile technology, globalization, and social media, since these recent phenomena have become status quo for many Millennials.

Mobile technology usage has increased significantly over the past 10 to 15 years, especially since mobile phones are more accessible than any other form of information and communication technology (ICT) (De Reuver, Stein, & Hampe, 2013; Dietel, McMann, Bosco, & Harvey, 2011; Hinks, 2012; Ladd, Datta, Sarker, & Yanjun, 2010;). Mobile devices have become an integral part of people's lives. Kaufman (2011) stated that, "By 2014, it is estimated that mobile Internet use will overtake desktop Internet use" (p. 547). A contributing factor identified in the literature is the mobile computing phenomenon that is transforming societies that previously did not have access to computers, and the fact that mobile computing adoption rates in recent years are higher in developing nations than in developed nations (Ladd, 2010).

Computing is increasingly mobile. Krell (2012) discussed customer service and stated that, "Everything is exposed thanks to the internet, mobility, and social media [and today 80% of customers rely on technology while they shop]" (p. 6). According to the literature mobile ICT, when leveraged appropriately, is beneficial and sometimes necessary for business since the power has shifted to the customers that leverage mobile technology when making decisions about purchases. Sarker, Xiao, Sarker, and Ahuja (2012) summarize key benefits of organizations using mobile technology:

- The potential for 24x7 uninterrupted connectivity to human as well as information resources
- Increased flexibility
- Improved coordination
- Increased productivity through flexibility in time management
- Pleasure and enjoyment
- Availability of multiple media and genres of communication suited for different scenarios. (p. 144)

Dery and MacCormick (2012) highlighted positive attributes of mobile technology for business executives and stated that, “In addition to mobile technology making it easier to get out of the office, the executives felt that there were now opportunities to spend more time at home while still being connected to work” (p. 161). Mobile technology is now a necessary tool for leaders to stay connected to work.

According to LMX theory, as noted as part of the theoretical framework for this study, the quality of leaders’ communication is key in employee performance. The literature points out that mobile technology may help or hinder productivity depending on whether and how it is used and governed by leaders (Dietel, McMann, Bosco, & Harvey, 2011). Specifically, leaders today still use email as a primary method of communication. According to Deitel et al. (2011):

In a global survey, 67 percent of senior executives and managers said their organization would be more productive if their superiors communicated more often by personal discussion. In contrast to their opinions in this regard, the top

personal method of communicating for these same business leaders is e-mail, based on the survey by NFI Research. (p. 1280)

However, recently organizations have seen a shift in how leaders and employees are using mobile technology, from a means to gain mobility (ability to work anytime from varied locations) to a means to stay connected to work (Dery and MacCormick, 2012). Ladd et al. (2010) specified that, “upwards of 70 percent of business users now report accessing their business data via a mobile device” (p. 286). The shift to using mobile technology in organizations has changed the way that employees and leaders communicate at work.

The use of mobile technology may have less to do with personal preference and more to do with the company’s culture, the individual’s role within the company, or the practicality in the context of the meeting or function (Dietele et al., 2011; Sarker et al., 2012). The adaption of mobile technology can help improve quality and speed of information transfer from person to person, which helps to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness. However, many corporations have been slow to adapt mobile technology as part of their business processes (Leidner, Pan, Sutanto, & Brown, 2012; Saccol, Manica, and Elaluf-Calderwood, 2011). This is largely due to the complexity and duality of its implementation, which Leidner et al. (2012) captured in this paragraph:

Organizations are learning to use mobility to create high performance workplaces and to enable green initiatives, all the while dealing with an array of important decisions such as which devices to support, how much security to require, how



many devices per employee to allow, how to protect privileged information, which applications to whitelist or blacklist, and which enterprise applications to make accessible to mobile devices. (p. 4)

Hinks (2012) and Ladd et al. (2010) agreed with this assessment, while Luo, Warkentin, and Li (2013) emphasized that the caution is not necessarily warranted as the productivity and performance benefits of mobile technology implementation may outweigh the risks. However, the decision to leverage mobile technology is influenced by the organizational demographics and culture as well as the individuals, as noted throughout this section.

According to the literature, many companies have adopted mobile technology and reap the benefits. Mobile technology can provide flexibility and convenience as well as facilitate work/life balance, multitasking, and increased productivity (Dery & MacCormick, 2012; Dietel et al (2011), Leidner et al. (2012); Luo et al., 2013; Sarker et al., 2012). Mobile technology allows resources to work together and connect directly through various web and mobile technology applications without being in the same location at the same time.

Mobility and social media, largely influenced by Gen Y in the workplace (as covered in the “Communication Changed with Social Media” section), combined to force changes in how organizations work and perform. This changed the way people communicate and connect with other people at work. Additionally, social media has caused significant cultural change within organizations because junior members are often more fluent in what social media can do and how it drives business (Krell, 2012).

Luo et al. (2013) explored how organizations use mobile technology internally

and externally as well as the mobile office (MO) phenomenon: workers accessing corporate networks on the road, at home, and at work via mobile devices and uploading and downloading data, voice, and video. According to Luo et al., “MO has great potential to become one of the most widely utilized m-business solutions.... As such, MO can enhance productivity for employees, since having real-time access to business information can significantly increase productivity and overall corporate profitability” (p. 66). Social media and mobile technology have influenced changes to communication at work to be more interactive and collaborative (Bhanot, 2012).

The literature points out that mobile technology has introduced some communication challenges in the workplace. The lack of standardization of and across mobile devices and usage is a challenge for organizations (Deitel et al., 2011; Hinks, 2012; Leidner et al., 2012; Saccol et al., 2011). Leidner et al. (2012) commented that, “A common theme in the papers is that there is no one-size-fits-all mobility strategy. Instead, companies must allow for not only different devices, but also different approaches to mobility” (p. 3). Hinks (2012) adds that the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) phenomenon exacerbates data and security concerns.

The literature discussed advantages and pitfalls of communication with mobile technology that echoed the themes of globalization and social media. Personal interactions influence the level of trust and confidence employees have in others within their organization. Therefore, leaders need to manage mobile device use protocol to ensure that the benefits of mobile device use are emphasized over any negative behavior, work/life balance issues, and device abuse at work (Deitel et al., 2011; Dery et al., 2012).

Organizations are more productive when leaders create a mobile communication strategy. Deitel et al. (2011) stated that, “The design of communications technology systems in organizations needs to become a conscious process. More often than not, these systems have evolved without direction and have led to deterioration of organizational communications” (p. 1283). Sarker et al. (2012) echoed these sentiments but stressed that leaders should give guidelines on how and when mobile devices should be used, in order to improve employee productivity without interfering in their personal lives. Leaders can avoid potential negative impact on work/life balance by communicating and reinforcing strategy for mobile technology use.

There are few studies that focus on the use of mobile and wireless technology within organizations, and a scarcity in articles about organizational performance impacts related to mobile technology (Ladd et al., 2010; Luo et al., 2013; Saccol et al., 2011). Saccol et al. (2011) asserted that although research exists on the increase in mobile technology applications, there are few studies about efforts to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness using mobile technology. Ladd et al. (2010) commented that few studies “discussed the internal business value chain proposition, i.e., how mobile communication devices led to increased individual performance, and how individual/firm usage of mobile communication devices increased overall firm performance” (p. 294). I also found few studies in my search that explored the performance benefits or value of increased mobile technology use in organizations.

In addition to performance, another gap in the literature about mobile technology is the aspect of workforce mobility and its impact on communication. Luo et al. (2013)

specifically studied the mobile office (MO) phenomenon—employees’ ability to work anytime, anywhere—and asserted that “A lack of studies directly investigating the adoption and diffusion patterns of MO is to be expected due to the newness of the MO initiatives per se” (p. 66). I partially address these gaps through my case study on how globalization, Millennials, social media, and mobile technology use might impact leadership communication style and effectiveness.

Communication is core to leadership success, and technology and devices used to communicate are equally important. It is crucial for leaders to decide what to communicate, but they must also determine the optimal way to communicate it. This topic is another area that may indicate the opportunity for additional exploration. In another research question I ask: What can be done to improve or close the gap in leadership success? Communication, starting with this study, can help to unveil new information that highlights new trends and provides new understanding that can impact employee performance.

### **Communication Challenges for Existing Leaders**

As mentioned in the introduction, most of the literature speaks about the importance of good leadership; however, a gap exists where the latest technology, media, globalization, and leadership meet. Badawy (1998) suggested, “The idea that a good manager can manage anything regardless of its technological base is simplistic, misleading, and must be abandoned” (p. 96). Globalization and technology have intersected to create new challenges for leaders. Specifically, with the advent of social

media, the speed at which people communicate news and information pose new challenges those leaders must manage.

Effective leadership communication remains a frequent topic in the literature. Companies require good leader communication to fill information gaps throughout the workplace. Today many managers feel leadership communication can improve (Hastings, 2012). Leadership communication is critical where leaders implement organizational changes. Bevan (2011) asserts that:

Effective management of change requires leaders to be very clear about the purpose and the process; seek input and information from those involved and affected; deploy sufficient resources to manage the transition without losing focus on day-to-day business processes; and maintain an effective multi-directional flow of communication and information. (p. 4)

As organizations expand global boundaries and change to incorporate mobile and social technologies, leadership communication must support these changes. A key challenge for today's leaders is controlling the flow and content of information.

Another leadership communication challenge is how to achieve performance objectives. Abugre (2011) found, "Effective organizational communication can be possible if organizational leadership improve on their communication methods and create unrestricted access of communication media to their workers" (p. 13). When efficient communication structures are in place, leaders have greater success in achieving their objectives because employees are more satisfied and consequently more productive. In this study I asked employees about their use of social media and mobile technology for

communication at work to help understand current employee communication methods at work that may influence worker satisfaction and subsequent performance.

Leaders must be able to influence organizational performance. Within global organizations leaders face unique challenges in being able to communicate goals and objectives as well as the standard behaviors and values that employees are expected to exhibit in achieving performance goals. Neera et al. (2010) stated that, “values act as the bedrock of an organization. Leadership must ensure that the values remain at the core of the way an organization functions and are not lost sight of or jettisoned in the drive to achieve results” (p. 23). Employees work better in environments where the values are understood and they can relate to them (Barsh, Mogelof, & Webb, 2010; Clawson, 2009; Mason, 2012; Neera et al., 2010). Therefore, as values shift with the Millennial generation, leaders must be able to communicate effectively across organizations to build a solid foundation that allows employees to thrive.

Additionally, once desired performance levels are achieved, leaders must keep talented leaders effective and engaged. Company leaders face this challenge today and it is exacerbated in the boundary-less environment (Aggarwal, 2011). Demographics, sustainability, technology, and globalization are interrelated. It is important to understand the relationship between them and how they ultimately will impact leadership communication. Workforce shifts, mobile technology, social media, and globalization have influenced multiple layers of organizational changes. Leadership communication is necessary to carry companies through the layers of change that occur simultaneously in today’s organizations. With the globalization of Fortune 500 companies, effective

management and implementation of multiple changes is a frequent topic in current literature. Globalization forces the need for teams to communicate virtually throughout the globe.

Other literature explored the advantages and disadvantages of virtual teams and stressed that traditional productivity risks are further exacerbated by the regional locations and cultural dimensions experienced by globally distributed teams. Since communication is a critical factor to success, managers must have the ability to communicate well and they must develop ways to facilitate communication within the teams to decrease the risk. Weimann et al. (2010) analyzed effectiveness of communication based on varying factors, including

- Same time and same place;
- Same time and different place;
- Different time and same place; and
- Different time and different place.

Video teleconferencing with recording features and web-based media allow for information to be communicated simultaneously in varying locations, or recorded and then broadcast or viewed at a later time in different locations.

Various communication media have varying ability to transfer information. Further, communication frequency and the proximity of the parties communicating (face-to-face, phone, VTC, etc.) will have an effect on how information is processed. Today, it is necessary to view leadership communication with a global mindset (Weimann et al., 2010). Advancements in technology have significantly changed the way we work and

live. Organizations are changing quickly to keep up with the influences of varied cultures, varied traditions, and varied lifestyles of their workforce that all need to be accommodated to work together effectively (Groysberg and Slind (2012); Penney, 2011). My study seeks to answer how the shifts in the workforce, both demographically and regionally, based on company globalization efforts are affecting leader communication.

Leaders are no longer judged by lineage, gender, or even the size of their office; how well one communicates and transfers information is the key to advancement and respect (Clawson, 2009, p. 58). However, communication effectiveness depends on the complexity of the task or complexity of the information communicated, which makes a difference in the transfer of information. Flexibility is needed, as well as proper focus on softer skills in management, in order for leaders to be successful in their careers.

Another challenge is the interdependency of culture (across the globe), legal and regulatory restrictions, and the impact on and of technology. The effects of technology and globalization are reciprocal (Aggarwal, 2011). Virtual teams have become commonplace since technology, social media, and changes in corporate culture have changed how employees work. The changing boundary-less environment has also introduced the need for leaders to change the way they communicate and engage with their global workforce. As the global mindset has shifted to accommodate the boundary-less environment, it presents the question of how globalization may continue to influence changes to how the workforce at the company I studied will communicate across the globe.



The ability to build and maintain relationships, attract and retain customers, communicate with organizational members and followers, and motivate others, are some of the other factors that challenge leaders. Additionally, effective leadership requires the ability to empower employees to take on greater responsibility and decision-making. The basic conditions for a team to work effectively include (a) the leader's individual skill and (b) how effectively the leader "stacks the deck" or organizes the team based on the team's makeup (Hickman, 2010, p. 212). A good leader communicates well, facilitates tasks toward specified goals and objectives, and will organize the team to support the most effective use of available resources.

The applicability of leadership communication styles varies based on organizational settings. However, when a leader can combine others' priorities with his vision or goals, then the best outcomes can be achieved. Leadership communication must effectively relay messages, goals, and leader visions to followers while allowing an upward flow of information from followers. Two-way communication helps the leader facilitate his followers' ability to reach their own goals, and it helps inspire followers to reach the leader's vision for the organization. However, as the company experiences changes, this will become more challenging for leaders. The leader is ultimately responsible for the actions of associates to ensure they understand company vision, internalize the company brand, and contribute to its success.

It will be especially important for leaders to recognize the changes being introduced to today's workforce and technologies that support it. Hewlett et al. (2009) stated, "The organizations that thrive will be those that recognize their people's shifting

values and preferences—and that find ways to make the work meaningful on those terms” (p. 76). To remain successful, leaders must remain connected, open-minded, and flexible. This research seeks to understand this by asking pointed questions to Millennials and their leaders about how technology can be used more effectively. With changes in technology and social media, as well as shifting global footprint, it is more challenging for leaders to reach their whole workforce.

Communication helps leaders connect with employees, but is especially challenging in a global company. Leaders with a good connection to the workers can overcome complications introduced with demographic differences in the workforce, including generational. Work and life balance becomes of key importance. Leaders should assess their values and beliefs to prioritize their needs and desires and then translate that into their own words and actions (Barsh et al., 2010).

The primary motive for this study is to determine ways that leader communication methods or communication content can be more effective in light of new technology, media, and the global organizational environment. Although technology facilitates the transference of information, it also introduces challenges for people to exhibit and interpret emotion and context. This case study seeks to uncover new information that helps to answer the research questions and find ways to maintain or improve worker performance through leadership communication.

Building on the impacts on communication discussed in the previous sections, globalization introduces unique challenges to leaders as organizations flatten. According to Clawson (2009) the best leadership (i.e., Level Three Leadership) entails recognition

of how to influence based on the three levels human behavior—(a) visible behavior; (b) conscious thought; and (c) semiconscious values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations (VABEs)—and how they interplay within an organization. Level Three Leadership is challenged by globalization as VABEs change from region to region around the globe.

Communication becomes more challenging in global organizations that need to consider cross-cultural dimensions and conflicting views. Perruci (2011) noted that, “globalization is breaking down national barriers and forcing Millennials to confront the cross-cultural dimensions of leadership. As they become involved in global movements, values and norms do not always mesh up” (p. 86). Leaders face challenges in how they communicate visibly, consciously, and semiconsciously.

In 2013, there were few articles that addressed the impact of the social media and mobile technology innovations on business. Now, there are more studies and articles about the topic that discuss companies that are starting to increase the use of these technologies. Companies are starting to investigate how to incorporate them into their business. Leadership communication strategy is something that had not been leveraged greatly within the company I studied; it was recognized by leadership as a gap that I would study by starting to discuss this with the Millennial workforce. I investigated how this global company can leverage mobile technology and social media to alleviate some of its leadership communication challenges.

Although a quantitative study such as experimental design or survey research could have worked for my study, I preferred to use a direct approach with the narrow focus allowed with interviews and observation as part of case study. This allowed greater

depth of meaning and potential drivers of the leadership communication phenomenon I mentioned in my introduction. I chose case study because it would allow for multiple inputs from the various participants that I could then cross-reference.

I amassed hundreds of pages of information to analyze with multiple inputs that provided better support for my findings. Grounded theory would not have worked as an alternative method because it seeks to develop new theory where little or no theory exists; there are several theories about the leadership communication topic. In case study, the researcher seeks to do an in-depth study on some situation (the case) over a period of time. Therefore, I opened the study with a theory that may or may not change based on input from the participants.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

During the literature review, I discovered several articles that included studies on leadership communication and leadership in general, but not many examined globalization, mobile technology, and social media together with their impact on leadership communication involving the Millennial workforce. Additionally, there is not a lot of information about the influence of these factors in a global insurance company that is a consumer of these tools and practices. This case study allowed exploration of the leadership communication phenomenon in the context of one company's implementation of globalization and internal company changes to restructure to meet the demands of external impacts such as mobile technology and social media.

Leadership's ability to communicate well with employees is key to a company's success. What seems to be missing from the literature, what is not known today, is

whether employee performance may be impacted by leadership communication changes driven by mobile technology, social media, and globalization. Articles surfaced over the past few years with more focus on business use of social media and social technology; however, most did not get into great depth and indicated that research regarding use of social media for business is a possibility for future research.

In 2015 more articles surfaced regarding the topic of social media in business. Specifically Aichner and Jacob (2015) stressed that, “not all social media platforms are relevant for business. While social networks, video-sharing platforms and business networks are of high interest, other types of social media, such as photo sharing, social bookmarking or social gaming, might be less important in absolute terms and of less interest to companies because the scope of application is limited”. Therefore I paid close attention to how social media was and should be applied at the company.

Other researchers addressed the importance of communication in leadership and that communication styles between leaders and employees is changing to be less top-down, more two-way. I examined this company’s use of social media, social technology, and collaboration tools that may influence leader communication in terms of format and effectiveness as part of this study.

I specifically focused on Millennial employees to identify any specific changes to leadership communication attributable to this demographic. Millennials are increasingly joining the workforce across the globe, and as the workforce shifts, especially with their increased use of social media and mobile technology and as greater adoption of the global mindset persists, information about the impact on leadership communication becomes

more important. The literature indicated that these factors could have a significant impact on leadership communication, which makes this study relevant and timely.

Throughout the literature review I revealed common themes that have surfaced from the literature. These themes included (a) the influence of globalization, innovation, and technology on leadership communication; (b) the influence Millennials have had on communication in business; (c) the role of leadership communication in a global company; and (d) leadership communication effectiveness. Additionally, recent articles highlighted the fact that the confluence of the technology, media, and demographic trends has resulted in the need to reexamine business needs. Business needs include the need to look at how these changes influence leadership communication, especially as the workforce shifts to include more Millennials at this company.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

This chapter includes a description of the case study design that I used to explore how globalization, mobile technology, and social media might change leadership communication style. The problem investigated in this study was the unclear influence of external factors on companies and how these may have created new ways for leaders to communicate with workers. The literature does not include significant information about how globalization, social media, and mobile technology affected leadership communication and then subsequently effect worker performance as more Millennials joined the workforce. Current research related to this topic includes traditional discussions of good leadership qualities. The purpose of the study was to surface new information about how these factors may affect recent phenomena, namely changes in leadership communication, since leadership communication is key to leadership performance and effectiveness and can influence worker performance.

One driver for my choice of method is that case study will ensure richness in the information in the context of the company and current organizational changes enacted to create a strong global company. The information will be helpful to my audience and also helped me to develop new information that my target audience can use to improve leader communication. In this chapter, I discuss the research method through four subtopics:

1. Research and design rationale
2. Role of the researcher
3. Methodology

#### 4. Issues of Trustworthiness.

The chapter closes with a summary of these topics and a description of how this method will support the study.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

The research for this study was designed to best analyze the influence of the three named factors on leadership communication involving Millennials. A case study design allows the researcher to do an in-depth study on some situation (the case) over a period of time. A core benefit of case study is that it allows for multiple inputs from the various participants. By using the case study approach in this study, I obtained multiple inputs from the various participants, which allowed me to gain greater insight directly from current employees who are part of the company workforce.

I needed to sift through data to get adequate information to determine new findings in the context of this study. My goal was to appropriately leverage all phases of the process to obtain new ideas and information that can add to the body of knowledge available. Since the case study approach involved using data and strategically coding the data to uncover new ideas, I believed that case study was the best fit because the approach compliments the goal to better understand the influence of globalization, mobile technology, and social media on leadership communication.

The research consisted of four major steps:

1. a review of current literature and existing leadership theories;
2. the development of a set of core questions with regard to current technology and leadership influence (internal and external) to use



throughout data collection that will evolve as data is gathered through various interviews (preparation) and analyzed iteratively;

3. review data sources such as leader meeting materials, survey data, HR data sources, and organizational metrics for triangulation with interview data; and
4. the final step was to identify successful communication methods and then report the results throughout positive social change actions.

A key strength of the case study was the way that data are limited to a small sample to allow for enough time to thoroughly review data and identify themes within and across the cases. This allowed for new discovery and for me to dig into particular concerns of the participants. This methodology required a thorough review of data and allows for an in-depth collection of data that can produce richness in the information that helps to reinforce the study. A weakness of the case study approach is that the data are not generalizable and are restricted to the context of the study. Another weakness is that the methodology requires patience throughout data collection and data analysis. The methodology is severely dependent on the quality of the data, the researchers' skill, and their ability to be meticulously organized.

A case study design was appropriate for this study because the methodology provides the best support for its goal, to analyze Millennials in this particular context. In this case study I interviewed and observed workers to find new information about leadership communication that will help resolve the problem. I collected data that I then coded and analyzed by cross-referencing data. This method allowed me to interview

Millennials to gain information about their perspective and knowledge, determine codes, cross-compare the information with participants in leadership positions, and determine more information about leadership in the corporate environment. Specifically, this methodology helped me review the question of whether leadership communication changes as a company expands and evolves globally in the wake of mobile technology and social media immersion while the Millennial presence increases in the workforce.

### **Role of Researcher**

In my role as researcher I observed the progress of Millennial entry-level to mid-level associates after their first year at work and then solicited their insights and perspectives to determine how new technology, social media, and globalization could influence changes in leadership communication. I received inputs from the small group of participants that allowed me to gain greater insight directly from current employees who will be a part of the future workforce. The smaller sample allowed me to analyze the information in greater depth of detail.

I leveraged any data that contributed relevant information and fit the context of the study. The information obtained in this study allowed me to learn new things about individuals, groups, and the environment that were revealed in this particular context. My target audience includes company leaders, executives, and managers. Therefore, I emphasized the most useful and relevant information to help leaders plan better for future training and skills specific to the fast-paced technological changes and environment that forces Millennials and leaders to continually improve their companies.

## **Methodology**

### **Participant Selection Logic**

The population, including sample and setting, is a key element of any study. Further, in case studies the sample is a particularly key element because the initial sample, along with the results of the data collected based on this sample, determine the next steps. In other words, the sample provides the data that in turn informs the study of new ideas and opportunities for subsequent research.

I selected participants for the interviews that fit the target population based on demographic data provided by the Human Resources (HR) department and according to the definition provided in Chapter 1 for Millennial and leader participants. I used a purposeful sampling strategy to recruit the candidates to interview. Participation in this study was strictly voluntary. I provided the participants background information on the study as well as the expected level of involvement and time required.

The sample size in my study was limited to 17 participants from various groups within the company so that I could obtain the most depth during each interview and be able cross-reference the information to review patterns across the different participant interviews. This number of participants was sufficient for the study since data collection was quite extensive and I was able to produce significant data. I limited the sample to allow for enough time to thoroughly review data and identify themes within and across the participants. I needed to refine data and participants as the research progressed I followed up with participants within the company as needed for clarification. Finally, I

reviewed the data until I reached the saturation point as themes began to resurface across data sources, which indicated that the sample was sufficient.

The setting for this research was the company where I am employed. Since I worked for the company, I was able to gain access to the site easily and plan to work directly with the participants in the context of this study to gain trust. The sample allowed for a good set of responses that I used as input to my study. Creswell (2007) suggested, “ a hallmark of all good qualitative research is the report of multiple perspectives that range over the entire spectrum of perspectives” (p. 122). Therefore, I planned the research using the best candidates, approach, and framework while employing appropriate strategies for validation to ensure accuracy.

The data complemented the study by providing insight about the Millennial generation and current leadership practices at the company that helped answer the research questions and revealed new information about the problem. At the time of the study, the population included a diverse workforce with a presence in over 50 countries throughout North and South America, Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The focus of this study was on U.S.-based employees who are impacted directly or indirectly by the company’s shifting global presence and location strategy.

The participants were Millennial employees who may or may not hold leadership positions, as well as company leaders who may or may not be in the Millennial demographic. I used a purposive sampling process by seeking out those who fit the Millennial criteria, and then identified leaders I would like to interview and asked them to participate in the study.

## **Instrumentation**

Several tools were used as data sources for this study; most data, however, were derived from interviews and observation. I interviewed 17 employees, including Millennials and their managers. I used self-designed observation sheets and interview protocol based on my research questions, as well as audiotape, HR demographic data, organizational survey data, HR employee ratings processes, company performance information, company survey data, and meeting materials (e.g., presentations) that were necessary to support the study.

The researcher-designed instruments were sufficient for data collection since this study is based on emerging information from interviews and observations. The data collection instruments were designed and created to fit the context of this study. Additionally, I used recording devices to facilitate the data capture during interviews.

The observation worksheet was used to collect data in a two-column table format. I used the first column to document my observation notes, and the second column to record my initial interpretation of that observation. Table 1 shows how the observation data aligned to my research questions.

Table 1

*Observation Worksheet Aligning Observations With the Research Questions*

Research Questions	Observation Notes	Observation Interpretations
How do globalization, mobile technology, and social media impact leadership communication style in your company (workplace)?	What technology/social media or other tools are used to facilitate communication?	
Will employees use more collaborative, two-way communication as the company applies new strategy and undergoes shifts in location?	How do participants interact throughout the meeting/ discussion? (Leadership panel, leader to participants, guest presenter, participant to leader, participant to participant) Are participants in the same location? Are all participants in the same time zone? Are some participants on a telephone call/conference call? Is there a web presentation? Are there PowerPoint presentations? Is video technology used? (Telepresence, video teleconference, video streaming, video recording, Skype) Can participants participate using mobile technology? Is collaboration software used? What other meeting materials are used? Is there opportunity for participants to ask/answer questions?	
What is the perceived impact of globalization, mobile technology, and social media on leadership communication styles and effectiveness?	Does subject matter include global company, globalization, and/or world? Does subject matter include social technology, social networking, and/or social media? Does subject matter include mobility, mobile technology, mobile usage, and/or mobile tools? Does subject matter include changes or impacts of globalization, social media, or technology over time? Does subject matter include organizational changes, organizational performance, or organizational impacts? Who discusses the topics? Employee? Leader? Both?	
How do globalization, social media, and mobile technology impact leadership communication effectiveness?	Do participants express ideas/topics/answers clearly? Is there a two-way flow of information? What methods are used to ensure clarity of information, performance, and tasks? Does communication appear to be executed effectively?	
How are the combination of globalization, mobile technology, and social media affecting communication at work, and how does each impact communication differently?	How many forms of communication are incorporated into the discussion? Do the participants/leaders always use the same format? Is there any difference in method or style observed from previous meetings? How do new communication tools facilitate or complicate communication? Is communication more or less effective when leveraging social media, mobile technology, both?	
How have globalization, mobile technology, and social media impacted communication quality? Has one impacted communication quality more than the others?	Is there good leader communication? What changes are observed or experienced in leadership communication style? Are participants engaged in two-way conversation with employees/leaders? Is it effective (how do you know its effective)? Do globalization, social media and mobile technology factors allow for more effective communication? How does this meeting compare to other meetings? (Number of participants, employee grade level of participants, proximity of participants, engagement of participants)	
Other Observations		

The interview protocol (see Table 2) included 61 open-ended and closed-ended questions that align to the research questions. The topics included the following:

- Demographic information
- Technology savvy
- Employment information
- Organizational communication
- Leadership communication
- Organizational effectiveness
- Opportunities.

I organized and used the data from the interviews to determine categories of data and themes that surface that I will analyze further. The interview questions listed in Table 1 prompted responses that helped to feed my study and revealed new concepts that I discovered during data analysis.

Table 2

*Interview Protocol Aligning Interviews With the Research Questions*

Research Questions	Interview Questions
<p>How do globalization, mobile technology, and social media impact leadership communication style in your company (workplace)?</p> <p>Will employees use more collaborative, two-way communication as the company applies new strategy and undergoes shifts in location?</p>	<p>Workplace:</p> <p>Do you consider the company global?</p> <p>How do you think the globalization of your company has influenced the way you work?</p> <p>How does mobile technology influence the way you work?</p> <p>How has social media influenced the way you work?</p> <p>What changes have you experienced as a result of mobile technology and social media?</p> <p>Communication:</p> <p>In what ways has social media influenced company leader communication?</p> <p>How have company leaders used mobile technology in the last three years?</p> <p>Do you use your smart phone, social media, or tablet at work? For work purposes?</p> <p>How does mobile technology impact the work that you do?</p> <p>How has the company used social media in the last three years?</p> <p>How has social media impacted the work that you do?</p>

Research Questions	Interview Questions
What is the perceived impact of globalization, mobile technology, and social media on leadership communication styles and effectiveness?	Associate role impacts: How do globalization, technology, and social media impact leadership communication effectiveness in your role? What makes a good leader? What changes have you experienced in leadership communication over the last three years in your organization? What changes have you experienced in leadership communication with senior executives over the last three years?
How do globalization, social media, and mobile technology impact leadership communication effectiveness?	Communication changes experienced or observed: How are leadership communication styles different from the communication you yourself use in your daily tasks at work? How do social media and mobile technology impact work communication? What changes have you observed in the last three years in communicating with employees across the globe? What changes do you expect to see in the near future?
How are the combination of globalization, mobile technology, and social media affecting communication at work, and how does each impact communication differently?	Job performance: How much communication is needed to implement tasks you perform? How are tasks implemented most effectively when working with associates globally? Has communication become more complex or easier due to these factors? In what ways has communication changed in the last three years? How much of the change do you feel is attributable to globalization? Mobile technology? Social technology? What changes have you experienced with respect to leader communication? How have these factors changed organizational communication?
How has globalization impacted the need for collaborative forums such as social media?	Collaboration: How have collaboration tools impacted the way you work? Has their use increased over the last three years? In what ways have collaboration tools been used most effectively? Are there other uses for collaboration tools that are not being used? Are collaboration forums necessary for effective communication in your organization?
How have globalization, mobile technology, and social media impacted communication? Has one impacted communication more than the others?	Globalization and diversity: Do globalization, technology, and social media collectively influence the way you work? Have globalization, technology, and social media influenced the way you work with different demographic groups? Do you work differently with various employees to be more productive? Leadership and communication: What makes a good leader? What changes have you observed or experienced in leadership communication style in the past three years? Do you engage in two-way conversation with employees/leaders? How? Do globalization, social media, and mobile technology factors allow for more effective communication?
How are certain communication methods or styles more effective than others for leaders, individual contributors, or both?	Organizational communication: Have you observed or experienced changes in leadership communication style in the past three years? Do you engage in two-way conversations with employees? Do globalization, social media, and mobile technology factors allow for more effective communications? How often do you interact with leadership? How often do you hear from leadership? Do you feel that it is adequate? Can current leaders communicate more effectively? How? How do new communication tools facilitate or complicate communication? Is communication more or less effective when leveraging social media, mobile technology, both?



Research Questions	Interview Questions
How can current leaders be more effective?	<p>Leadership:</p> <p>Do you feel you could influence changes that could make you or your organization more effective? What are some of the challenges you face?</p> <p>Are globalization, mobile technology, and social media changing leadership influence?</p> <p>How do globalization, mobile technology, and social media influence leadership communication style for Millennials? Is the impact of the three combined greater than the individual impact?</p> <p>What do you think about your current leadership and their use of the latest mobile technology and social media?</p> <p>How can leaders [you] leverage mobile technology and media innovation in ways that make them more successful?</p> <p>How can company leaders work better with Millennials?</p>
How do social media impact leader communications about organizational changes?	
Will two-way, frequent communication improve company performance in Millennials, including adherence and achievement of set goals?	
How do mobile technology, social media and globalization affect leader communications?	<p>Organizational effectiveness:</p> <p>Do you feel that you are as effective as you could be in your current role?</p> <p>Do you feel that your organization is as effective as it could be?</p> <p>What do you consider the biggest hurdle or change that you face in being more effective in your current role?</p> <p>How can mobile technology and social media be used optimally at work?</p>
Participant Information	<p>Opportunities:</p> <p>What are some opportunities to use mobile technology differently?</p> <p>How can leaders work better with employees overall?</p> <p>How can leaders work better with Millennials?</p>
	<p>Demographic info:</p> <p>Are you part of the Millennial demographic (born 1977–2000)?</p> <p>How long have you been employed at the company?</p>
	<p>Technology savvy:</p> <p>Do you own a smart phone? How often do you use it?</p> <p>Do you have any active social media accounts? How many? How often do you use it/them?</p> <p>Do you own a tablet? How often do you use it?</p>
	<p>Employment information:</p> <p>Please describe your current role in the company.</p> <p>How often do you engage virtually with other employees?</p> <p>What is the most common way that you attain information at work?</p>

(table continues)

The research questions in this instrumentation section Table 2 are a more detailed version of the research questions presented in Chapter 1. I field-tested the interview guide with my initial participant to help ensure that the questions were clear to participants and determine ways to condense or reduce the content. I applied any necessary adjustments to phrases or terminology needed during the initial interview and then to subsequent participant interviews to enable consistency across all the interviews.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

I used observation and interviews throughout the study, a direct approach, to

identify positive and negative thoughts of the participants and then to determine the best answers. Case study was more appropriate than other methods because it allowed me to examine existing theories while collecting data and exploring varied perspectives and backgrounds. The case study methodology involved data collection, followed by analysis, and then discovery of new information that guided the study to new insights about leadership communication phenomena at the company.

The interviews were individual 60 – 90 minute sessions with the participants and were used to gain insight into the participants' experiences or views. The interviews for this study were primarily more formal, with questions planned in advance, leveraging the open-ended question format to derive data from the participants. The initial interviews included the same questions, which were all held by one person (me). I performed all the interviews, which helped to ensure consistency in the interview implementation and helped establish greater validity. However, I also used informal interviews (conversation) as needed to allow for more flexibility than if strictly formal interviews were used. Ideally, I sought to interview about 10 Millennial employees and 10 company leaders.

The observations included periodic worksite observation sessions of 30 to 60 minutes, including attending at least 25 team meetings hosted by managers throughout the company. I attended and observed more than 10 quarterly scheduled town hall meetings held by various company executives as well as any interim meetings, such as organizational change announcement meetings. I used presentation materials from the meetings as well as any post-meeting survey results, where permissible, from the

meetings that I attended throughout the research period. I collected the observation data over time to address research questions 2 and 3, respectively:

- Do employees use more collaborative, two-way communication as the company applies new strategy and undergoes shifts in location?
- How are the combination of globalization, mobile technology, and social media affecting the style, delivery, and forums for communication at work, and how does each impact the way that leaders communicate differently?

These observations were triangulated with interview responses to answer the research questions and capture any change or impact that occurred during the research.

Most live meetings at this company are video-streamed and recorded. I received permission to use the nonproprietary information from these meetings. Additionally, I incorporated journal writing into my research, as I have been journaling throughout this process to document my own reflections and thoughts to help harness personal biases. I maintained thorough notes to alleviate bias and capture the true essence of what the participant says or shows during the study, observation, or interviews.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

Data analysis in qualitative field research is an ongoing process; it is an iterative process that allows data to be refined as the researcher gathers more information. In this case study the interview transcriptions and field notes were increasingly vital to this research because they serve as both data that informed me throughout the analysis phase and, when reported, data that informs the audience and supports the validity of the study.

The data analysis consisted of a combination of several techniques, including the following:

1. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns, specifically seeking patterns from random data. Patton (2002) stated, “content analysis is used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (p. 453). I analyzed data to determine themes and patterns.
2. Inductive and deductive analysis was a secondary type of analysis that I used. According to Patton (2002), “once patterns, themes, and/or categories have been established through inductive analysis, the final, confirmatory stage of qualitative analysis may be deductive in testing and affirming the authenticity and appropriateness of the inductive content analysis” (p. 454). Inductive and deductive analysis helped me to refine the data that I used in my assessment. This analysis can be implemented in the form of social change in sharing the inductive data results with leaders and determining possible applications or interim test scenarios.
3. Logical analysis was leveraged since it involves determining emerging patterns that researchers develop by crossing information and reviewing data in a different way or different dimensions. It was important for me to cross-reference information from the participants.
4. Comparative analysis uses comparison to make generalizations across several participants. It can help to identify patterns that emerge across participants.

(Patton, 2002, p. 492) Additionally, it helps establish validity in studies as findings can be reinforced through comparison of data.

These varied techniques allowed me to study several different inputs to eliminate improper generalizations, and assisted in validation by including varied perspectives and backgrounds based on the participants selected.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

I employed several strategies to establish credibility in my study. Specifically, I personally transcribed the interviews so that I could discover emerging thoughts and get a feel for the cumulative data as I listened to the recordings. I used observation worksheets to collect data throughout the study. Additionally, I collected meeting materials, organizational survey data, applicable and HR reports to triangulate with my observations data, and interview data.

I leveraged direct participant quotes to derive the codes and thereby alleviate unintentional bias and data manipulation that could occur if using purely my individual thoughts and experiences. Direct information from varied sources helped to prevent data manipulation when organizing data and limit personal bias, which could have affected this study. Additionally, I stuck to the context of the study, the corporate global environment for Millennials, to alleviate the issue of too much data to analyze. Staying within context is particularly important in case study because of the inductive nature of it. I focused on the problem, purpose, and research questions for this study, which helped me to eliminate any preconceived notions and allow new ideas to emerge.

The approach included the exact words within the text to determine themes within my research and ultimately develop interpretations of the data that supported the study. This approach helped me develop emerging codes. I monitored information carefully to avoid issues of personal bias, as well as ethical concern that could arise because of my position in the company relative to the participants. Interviews and journals provided direct information about the participants that I cross-referenced and triangulated to ensure validity.

I used QSR's NVivo, developed and released in 1999 by QSR cofounder Tom Richards, to facilitate the process. This tool helped to organize the data and supported the research with evidence uncovered and presented in the tool to back up the findings. NVivo is a popular tool used by students and professionals performing qualitative and mixed-method research.

NVivo has garnered several awards for technology effectiveness and is used widely by researchers in over 150 countries. It is well vetted for reliability in its function as a product used to manage nonnumeric data. The tool fits well with case study and provides technique to organize data based on the information discovered during the study. Given the right data, the study could produce great information for its audience about the target population in the context (Millennials in organizations within large corporations).

The NVivo tool provides great support for qualitative research. It is critical to use a robust tool to facilitate data gathering, organization, and presentation of the data in the study. The NVivo tool acted as a central repository for this study's internal and external

resources including books, articles, and interview transcriptions. It allowed me to review the data and organize participants' thoughts using codes. It was particularly useful because of its ability to allow researchers to develop themes and manipulate information to determine how it relates to the study. These data management techniques were used to facilitate data analysis for the study.

During comparative analysis I monitored for data saturation (a point where no additional unique data is found to contribute to the study). Since the data determined the direction of this study, I took specific care to analyze the sample against saturation. I guarded against situations that could cause the study to conclude prematurely due to error in the sample size since an insufficient number of participants could result in false assumptions about the data.

To support transferability, I ensured that the data collection phase of my study generated data from interviews, personal journals, and observation. This included interview transcripts and observation field notes as well as images, articles, and other relevant items from external sources. Data collection for this study required patience to execute an iterative process to appropriately analyze data and uncover the important information that is needed to serve the audience. The qualitative methodology allowed me to triangulate data, which helped reinforce the reliability and contribute to the thickness of the information required for this study and its results. The responses and information provided by the Millennials and leaders was crucial to the study because the data drives the research, as characteristic of any qualitative study. The data obtained through observation added another layer of information that helped refine the study.

I used observation to study Millennial employee collaboration habits and communication methods, and then document how the workforce is currently using technology and media and whether there are communication tactics that leaders can benefit from in communicating with the workforce. I also observed how leaders interacted with their employees, in order to collect information on communication style and reactions. I observed as an outsider in many instances, but I acted as a participant observer in other settings to understand how leadership interacts with all generations in the workforce. The observations added more data that I used to compare and contrast against the interview sample data.

I provided all of the coding for this study to establish dependability and ensured that I considered all data points that I collected. I specifically performed all of the interviews and observations, recorded the interviews, and took notes the same way with each observation. Additionally, I was able to review the company's survey data results to incorporate triangulation into the study using another source.

To confirm the data I leveraged the quotes from the interviews and took a neutral stance in documenting any comments that I heard and behaviors that I observed. I was able to review my notes during data analysis and cross-reference information obtained from the interviews. This allowed me to confirm and audit the data throughout data collection and data analysis.

### **Protection of Participants' Rights and Informed Consent**

Each participant was introduced to the study via an overview, which I used to describe the study, and then was asked to voluntarily participate. Interview participants



had the opportunity to opt out at any time throughout the study. I engaged with the participants as deemed necessary throughout the research, and as based on the data, themes, and categories that emerged. Additionally, I asked participants to contact me at any time to discuss their thoughts and responses. I also asked them to be available to confirm the information they had provided, if needed, after the interviews.

### **Ethical Procedures**

I obtained a verbal agreement to gain access to participants prior to submitting the IRB application. A sample of this document is included in Appendix C. My community research partner agreed to assist in participant recruitment and/or data collection prior to submitting their letter of cooperation with this IRB approval. This helped ensure that I could use purposeful recruitment strategy based on my affiliation with the organization. Real names and irrelevant personal data were not used in this dissertation and review results. The intention of this study, to share information, was presented and reinforced throughout its duration to ensure the information will be received well by stakeholders and is informative in ways that improve associate performance.

Participation in the study was strictly voluntary to avoid any perception of coercion. My role as a researcher was emphasized to ensure participant recognize the separation from my role in the company. I took thorough notes, using my self-designed instruments to alleviate bias and capture the true essence of what the participant stated or showed during the study, observation or interviews. I also took special care to ensure to include the right participants, information, and detail to support the work. The anticipated benefits of this research for individual participants is minimal; however, since

I assessed the needs of the newest generation of corporate business operations and information technology (IT) employees to determine how some external factors will influence the leadership communication, the participants' thoughts and perspectives will be important because they will help to shape the study.

As stated in the theoretical framework section of Chapter 1, leadership communication impacts leadership effectiveness and worker performance. Therefore, this exploration of evolving technology and communication forums is critical to examine how they may affect leadership effectiveness for the Millennial generation. I used paper, an audio recorder, and my personal computer during data collection. I also captured observation notes using the Pages app on my iPad that I ultimately stored in Nvivo. I used my iPad to view some video-streamed meetings that I attended remotely) or attended over the web (web meetings). Video is used for some executive conferences that I observed. However, I did not videotape any interviews or observation sessions. I stored all data on my personal devices and computer.

All information is password protected and locked away so that no one has access to it except for me. To facilitate accuracy of data collection, I conducted all interviews and transcription to ensure better consistency in the delivery and accuracy of data. I will store all data on my computer and maintain backup copies for at least 5 years and then dispose of it. Participants could back out of the research at any time during the study; participation is voluntary. The study and data are not dependent on any one source of information. If any breaches or a conflict of interest occurred and reassessment becomes necessary, a re-plan would have occurred to address the issue or discontinue the study. I

will approach the participants. The names, personal information, and any revealing descriptive information will not be associated to the data, interviews, and responses.

To prepare for any ethical issues, I conducted preliminary interviews with the participants to ensure that they understood the purpose of the study and the concepts being studied. I approached the participants in person. The names, personal information, and any revealing descriptive information will not be associated to the data, interviews, and responses. The participants were required to sign informed consent forms, which outlined the study goals and their role in the study. All information was confidential. I received permission from the participants and the worksite in advance. Further, I communicated with the participants periodically throughout the study to inform them of theories identified as well as supporting information (or findings) to ensure there was not a breach of trust.

### **Summary**

This exploration of evolving technology and communication forums to determine how these factors may change leadership influence on the Millennial demographic is critical. This study leveraged the process outlined in the introduction of this chapter to discover data and information, using a case study approach to drive the research forward. The research was complex because of the broad range of topics that I chose to bring together to see how they interacted, in order to introduce new knowledge about leadership communication.

Leaders must be cognizant of current trends and theories, as well as processes that others are using, thinking about, or studying, to remain successful leaders in the future.

During this study, I used qualitative methods to assess the needs of the latest generation of employees to determine how this information influenced current leadership trends that could help address the gap in current literature and current leadership practices. The key factors highlighted by the research questions have changed organizational communication in new and different ways.

The information obtained as a result of this case study has also helped to educate others and influenced how people communicate best to ensure that the work gets done every day. This study contributed to improvements in leadership and consequently worker performance as interviews and discussion of the topic sparked new thoughts while participants reflected on their answers to the interview questions. I explored leadership theory and concepts throughout the research as described in this chapter and then throughout the implementation of the study.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to assess Millennial employees and leaders to determine the preferred leadership communication style in light of globalization, mobile technology, and social media, and thereby to identify how leaders could best communicate with employees. The case study methodology was employed to help answer the following research questions:

1. What is the perceived impact of globalization, mobile technology, and social media on leadership communication styles and effectiveness?
2. How do employees use more collaborative, two-way communication as the company applies new strategy and undergoes shifts in location?
3. How are the combination of globalization, mobile technology, and social media affecting the style, delivery, and forums for communication at work, and how does each impact the way that leaders communicate differently?
4. What is the relationship between globalization and collaborative forums such as social media?
5. How are certain communication methods or styles more effective than others for leaders, individual contributors, or both?
6. How do two-way, frequent communication influence company performance in Millennials, including adherence and achievement of set goals?

In this chapter I reviewed the execution and results of the study, which included interviews as well as formal and informal observations and how these compared to the

literature discussed in Chapter 2. I organized the results by the research questions as written in this paragraph.

### **Research Setting**

The study was very timely as the study site was undergoing several changes to meet a strategy of being world-class. Therefore specific efforts and strategy were implemented that included global strategy; a location strategy was launched just prior to the inception of the study that resulted in organizational structure changes, changes to the organizational footprint in the United States, and changes in leadership that occurred during the study window. The company experienced several site closures while opening up two new hubs and redesigning and renovating several existing hub sites. Thousands of people were impacted by the changes as existing employees either retired, left the company, relocated, or experienced significant changes in the associates they worked with on their teams, while still attending to the day-to-day business goals and objectives.

The complexity of multiple simultaneous changes significantly influenced the population of the study, interview responses, and state of the organization over the 18 months that the study took place. These factors had significant influence on how communication might be altered to help the company adjust to the changing demographics, strategy, and organizational footprint and remain effective as an organization. Throughout the study I focused on tracking how these changes over time might impact the data, analysis, and results. In fact, a key driver of the study was to analyze how globalization, mobile technology, and social media might influence

communication over time. The time frame of the study helped to track this company during this pivotal time of change and growth.

### **Demographics**

There were several participants included in the study as part of the interview process and observations. I interviewed nine Millennial employees, eight non-Millennial leaders, including 2 Millennial leader participants as part of this study. The participants reflected the company's workforce and were diverse in culture, ethnicity, age, sex, and experience within and outside of the company.

As part of the interview process I used purposeful selection to include participants from various U.S. regions, business functions, IT organizations, and departments at the company. I also included several survey-like questions at the end of the interview to get a feel for each participant's exposure to and level of expertise with mobile technology and social media. Although I originally targeted more than 20 participants, factors such as data saturation and changing population, which made it difficult to find willing and available participants, influenced the count of the sample data used for this study.

The observations were conducted on 15 town hall structured meetings hosted by senior leaders throughout the company in six locations. Many of the meetings were video-streamed and recorded so as to allow both in-person and remote access to the messages and information shared in the meeting. Many of the meetings included global participation and allowed for question-and-answer (Q&A) segments for those attending.

A third data stream came from 10 periodic onsite observations that allowed me to sit and observe employees at several locations across the United States in formal and

informal meeting setting throughout the study. These mostly focused on manager-to-associate and peer-to-peer interactions to observe how the communication took place and its perceived effectiveness. The onsite observations also helped to determine any changes in how people communicated or leveraged tools as the organization's workforce and availability of resources—including mobile technology and collaboration tools—changed over time.

### **Data Collection**

This study took place at the company over 18 months, from spring 2014 through summer 2015, with 17 interview participants and the observations of hundreds of associates at six different sites across the United States. The observations included informal and formal settings where leaders shared and exchanged information with organizations and teams using various communication forums and styles. Each of the six executive leaders hosted quarterly updates that contributed to the observations used in this study. Additionally, I was able to formally observe seven of the leader interview participants in meetings and informally observe several other leaders across the company.

The participants were based in six different sites across the United States: Somerset and Bridgewater, New Jersey; Charlotte and Cary, North Carolina; Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania; and New York City. One third of the data were collected in the first six months of the study, one third of the data were collected in the second six months of the study, and the final third of the data were collected in the last six months of the study. I used self-developed instruments developed for this particular study that were approved by the IRB for all of the data that I collected.



I employed a purposeful selection approach that required confidentiality. Therefore, some participants were selected based on two public requests for volunteers that allowed me to choose participants from those who contacted me individually. Other participants were selected as a result of impromptu conversation followed by my direct request to participate in the study. All interview participants were required to review and provide consent using the consent forms approved by the IRB. Additionally, I received permission from the site leader and the company to do the observations and use the site locations in the study.

I used a personal recording device to audio-record each interview. Once I completed an interview I used Dragon software to do first interpretations from audio into text files and then personally manually transcribed each interview into a Word template that I designed based on the interview instrument. All of the observations were collected into a similar template designed for the observation instrument.

After 80% of all data were collected and transcribed, in spring 2015, I loaded the data collected into the NVivo software tool to initiate data analysis. The data in NVivo included the results of my literature review, interview transcriptions, and observation data. I was able to use the data recorded in NVivo to develop codes based on word frequency, interview participant demographic analysis, and cross-referencing codes across sources.

I used a manual coding process to identify themes across the interviews. In this process I used a spreadsheet to track themes uncovered in each interview with one column for each interview and 1 row for each interview question. I noted each new

theme and noted any similar responses across interview participants. I used the themes uncovered in my manual coding process to uncover additional codes to use for analysis in the data stored within NVivo.

When I initially presented my data collection plan in Chapter 3, I had assumed that I would complete data collection in one year. However, the population at the site only included a small percentage of associates that fit the Millennial demographic and there were several changes in human resources impacting the population. This posed some challenges since any participation needed to be voluntary, and to avoid possible indications of coercion I needed to select participants from other departments outside of my team.

As the company's location strategy took hold, more participants in the Millennial demographic became available, but they would not meet the one-year experience criterion. As the workforce shifted, the company underwent several changes in leadership as well. Therefore, I needed to be careful to include participants who would be available for observation for the duration of the study. These changing circumstances introduced the need for additional scrutiny and decisions in my selection process to ensure that a level of consistency was maintained in order to have data integrity.

### **Data Analysis**

I used the instruments that I created for data collection to facilitate my transition from data collection to analysis. I was able to easily code the documents into categories and themes that related back to the research questions. I also purchased a license and

used NVivo software to organize my data into groups and derive graphical and pictorial representations of the data that helped determine codes and streamline the data analysis.

Specifically, I leveraged the automated word count function in NVivo software as one starting point. After I organized and loaded my data sources into NVivo it was helpful to collect the top 100 words of five or more characters used throughout the study. These 100 most frequently mentioned words are shown in Figure 1. I used the transcribed interviews and observations to identify potential themes within the text. Once I manually identified codes, I used the codes in the query function within NVivo to verify some of the themes and information that I identified during the transcription process.



- Rule or guide
- Security
- Strategy
- Flexibility.

The word count led to phrases that uncovered themes regarding the benefits of or gaps in mobile technology and social media use in the workplace at this particular worksite.

Once I narrowed down the data, I was also able to run queries to find specific instances of these words and the context within the interviews and observation worksheets. After I loaded the information into NVivo, I was able to dissect the data into categories that distinguished the responses from Millennials and non-Millennials as well as leaders and nonleaders. This helped to further refine any findings to create the final results.

In addition to NVivo, I used Microsoft Excel to organize data that I manually coded. Although I didn't schedule the interviews in any particular order, I started data analysis with the first interview and summarized ideas expressed by the participant for each question. Next, I compared the ideas of one participant to all others to determine if the thoughts were similar or unique. I used this compare-and-contrast strategy to determine themes expressed across all of the interviews for each interview question. I also used the self-designed instrument to determine how the themes uncovered within and across interviews aligned with each research question. I was able to compare the codes electronically surfaced in NVivo to themes manually identified using Excel to further

narrow down the data to focused themes and information relating to the interview questions.

I collected unique categories and then combined them into themes as they related to each research question. Since the interview and observation tools were organized by research question I was able to cross-reference the data, organize it, and then condense it. Finally, I triangulated the information I obtained against other sources—company surveys, HR data, and so forth.

I found the data collected regarding research question 1, perceived impact of globalization, mobile technology, and social media on leadership communication, fascinating. It revealed a general consensus in the interviews that although the company has a presence and conducts business in several countries around that globe it does not operate as one global company, not in its operation and infrastructure (Participant B, Participant I). This was a key theme that helped me understand the mindset of the participants at the site. Through the interviews I was also able to pick up a disparity between leaders and associates who were not leaders, and the impact of these factors was more obvious in responses and information shared from executive leaders as opposed to more junior associates.

Another theme that surfaced is the direct impact to the business now having to provide products that can be used as customers and associates travel from one country to another; therefore business associates were forced to rethink how to perform business activity (Participant F, Participant H). One leader stated that “We have people who travel into the states that we will be able to provide insurance just so the people can move

around; and then also when people who are leaving [the United States], they still have their insurance when they're leaving, going to other countries" (Participant F). As the company expands its global footprint it is essential to develop products that speak to the changes in how and where business is executed and the changing needs of its customers.

Many of the Millennials stressed the desire to have more access to the information about what was happening across the globe. For example, one Millennial stressed that looking for a job at the company and finding out about offices in places outside the United States is difficult, in his statement that:

Recently I was looking for job postings outside the United States. It's kind of a secret to get to those sites for the other countries. Its like we know we're global, we know we're out there, but if you're working in the U.S. and you're not in one of those positions [that works with other countries] it doesn't really impact you as much. (Participant D)

This was also apparent in the observation of quarterly leadership meetings. Most meetings focused on the targeted audience or region.

All participants identified mobile technology as a useful tool. Specifically, Millennials and leaders recognized it as very influential in the way that they work in that it helps a lot (Participant B, Participant I). One leader stated that

I think [mobile technology] influences [the work] a lot because...it makes it more of an agile workplace. So you can take an appointment in the middle of the day and still know what's going, you know, on back at the office. I think it's good because you're not tied as a leader and manager, not having to be tied down to the

desktop. It gives you more time to actually make plans to travel, see other locations, and have more flexibility. I think the different types of technologies that we're doing, [e.g.] putting Good on your phones so you're not carrying a Blackberry all around, you know, and stuff like that...and even now some of the things with now like the [Intranet site] that they put out on mobile the release [app]—just anything that's enabling people not to have to be in, in a management role, not tied down, enabled to get out there and meet people and do different things. I think this has really been helpful. (Participant I)

Several participants noted the flexibility that comes with leveraging their mobile phones and VPN remote access on their laptops to balance work and personal commitments (Participant A, Participant D, Participant E, Participant G).

Another theme uncovered was that although mobile technology is very influential to the way we work, there is no structure or strategy around its use (Participant C, Participant D, Participant H). One leader stated that “mobile [is] a massive consideration and the fact is that, like it or not, it's here. And I say that because there isn't a real strategy around it and there isn't someone identified who would be the owner of such strategy if it did exist... And [so], as important as it is and as influential as it is, it's not being addressed quite as significantly as one might expect” (Participant H). The data indicated mobile technology is core to the success in productivity, global access, and the new agile culture at the site, although some indicated that the company should implement a targeted strategy, standards, and guidelines for its use.



Social media was not viewed as having much if any impact on leader communication at the research site. Some participants indicated that social media has no direct impact at work (Participant A, Participant B, Participant D, Participant E) while others pointed out that it allows colleagues and customers to connect to people and find out information without meeting someone in person (Participant B, Participant F, Participant P). Most participants were acutely aware that social media was being monitored by the company and felt the need to be cautious about what they posted and how they were presented online.

Each theme uncovered more information about how globalization, mobile technology, and social media affected how people worked at the site. I applied the same process for all of my research questions. The responses were vast in perspective and provided a huge amount of insight. I amassed hundreds of pages of data throughout the interview and observation process. I didn't discard any of the information that I gathered since my goal was to get new ideas and information about how globalization, mobile technology, and social media might influence leader communication. All perspectives were valid even if they differed from the majority because everyone had different functions and roles within the company.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

#### **Credibility**

During data analysis I leveraged direct participant quotes to derive the codes, as indicated in Chapter 3, to alleviate unintentional bias and data manipulation that could occur if using purely my individual thoughts and experiences. I used the information that

I gathered from various sources while suppressing my own opinions to prevent data manipulation when collecting data, and then organized the data obtained from this study into codes and themes. Additionally, I stayed within the context of the study, the corporate global environment for Millennials, to help narrow the data used to analyze leadership communication and stay focused and on topic.

### **Transferability**

One strategy that I used to maintain transferability of the study was enlisting participants from different locations, functions, experiences, and roles within the company. However, as I stated in the introduction, although the data will not be generalizable beyond the sample, I targeted a sample appropriate in the context of this case study through purposeful selection. Since the study focuses on Millennials exposed to leadership communication in the context of the target company, the opinions expressed may not represent worldwide views of other Millennial professionals. Furthermore, these Millennial participants may have limited experience that reflects narrow views of the corporate environment. Since this study concerns the influence of globalization, mobile technology, and social media on Millennials, the Millennial participants provided useful insights about communication phenomena since they are demographically the largest global user group. The leaders outside of the Millennial demographic helped to balance out the data. The instruments and population can be reused to get additional data to continue work on any progress and shifts in communication and to determine more current data, trends, and future possibilities.

**Dependability**

I used the strategies as described in Chapter 3, although the time frame extended beyond the initial year allocated by the IRB. Preliminary results showed trends in the data surfaced and persisted in the first half of the interviews. As the purpose of the study was to uncover information and analyze the site over time, the additional time allowed me to include and follow additional participants in a consistent manner to other participants interviewed or observed initially, and to give a more complete assessment of the organization. It also allowed me to gather additional information from the focus subject: Millennials associates. The workforce at the subject site underwent considerable change as more retirement-eligible associates retired and associates in the Millennial generation joined the population.

**Confirmability**

I leveraged the research questions and alignment to categories as listed in the instrumentation section Table 2 of Chapter 3. This allowed the interviewee to understand the context of the questions when asked to allow for more variations in the answers throughout the interview. I did not field-test the interview guide with three to five people in the company as initially planned, since getting enough interviews became a challenge once the location strategy was implemented and the resource pool shifted. However, during the first interview I was able to adjust the questioning by leading with the context, using each category for each section of questions as indicated in the table instead of just asking the questions. This also helped ensure that the questions were clear to participants, suggested ways to streamline the responses in future interviews, and reduced

the interview time, which averaged about one hour. I applied the adjustments to the interview protocol to all subsequent interviews sessions to enable consistency across all the interviews.

### **Study Results**

The information uncovered in the study aligned with the Situational, LMX, and Transformational theories discussed in Chapter 1. I also found that several topics discussed in Chapter 2 literature review—namely (a) the influence of globalization, innovation, and technology on leadership communication; (b) the influence Millennials have on communication in business; (c) the role of leadership communication in a global company; and (d) leadership communication effectiveness—surfaced throughout the study. This case study helped to uncover how these items might be influenced in the subject company. I have organized the results by the research questions that I outlined in Chapter 1.

Research question 1: What is the perceived impact of globalization, mobile technology, and social media on leadership communication styles and effectiveness? Although most participants acknowledged some gaps in information communicated, technology use, and process standards, all indicated that the company was either already operating globally in their particular business function or moving in that direction. Outside of the company's location strategy, which directly impacted about 10% of the U.S.-based associates (the company intranet), globalization had not had a lot of impact directly on the day-to-day operation for most associates as most areas still exist and operate in silos; however, it has increased awareness of other countries, cultures, and

business practices. As discussed in the Transformational Leadership theory, communication is a vital part of transformation. Many participants recognized the gap in global operations and acknowledged the need to overcome the operational deficiencies before being able to thrive as a global company.

More senior leaders recognized the impact globalization had on the business and tied it to various company strategies and goals. A key component of this strategy was to establish core values to promote a global mindset; these values were discussed in leadership meetings to promote more cohesiveness and awareness of other areas within the company. Another component that I observed from the leadership meetings was to tie goals and objectives for the company to these core values and implement standard training and tools across the company for all people managers.

Some leader participants noted that the U.S.-based associates are forced to think outside of U.S. culture, customs, and business (Participant C, Participant J). One leader stated that:

We're a global company, but people still use the term *offshore*. How can it be offshore if we're global? So I think the way that it has influenced the way that we work is basically trying to change the mindset of individuals... So in certain aspects it's really changing the mindset of individuals who are sitting here in the United States because people outside the [United States] get it. So I think that the impact to the way that we work is [the associates] really understanding that the power and the information doesn't stop here" (Participant C).

Globalization is forcing associates across the globe to change their mindset to think globally in day-to-day work and future strategy.

Other leaders also observed the shift in mindset. One stated, “it’s been a very sharp shift in perspective in terms of having to consider other countries and other areas” (Participant H). There’s been a sharp shift in terms of the mindset of the company to consider other projects and other perspectives, globally, in terms of prioritization and planning. Another leader echoed similar sentiments in stating that

I think [globalization] going to lead to getting more, more technology-driven communication between individuals—telepresence and video-conferencing [and things] like that. I hope that we expand that more, so that people get used to different cultures and people from cultures and seeing those interactions and mannerisms, but I’m not sure about that yet. I think we’re still little new to the global community to see the results of that. (Participant I)

So participants most noticed a shift starting to occur in how associates think, interact, and work every day.

I observed a shift in executive leadership meetings that started to incorporate technology to allow people across the globe to participate in the meeting via videoconference and video streaming. Additionally, panelists from finance and various business organizations in the company were brought in to present along with the keynote speaker so that the communications didn’t just come from one leader, top-down. Interview participants made the same observation. Whereas in years prior you rarely heard about the business in other countries and continents, in the past three years

executive leaders purposely incorporated global information and updates, even bringing in panelists to deliver updates from their respective areas (Participant K, Participant N, Participant O, Participant Q).

Customers internal and external to the company want to understand more about their business partners and the company. One participant stated:

My agents look me up. So now they can actually see my face. I've had several people want to see if I look like my voice, or to see my age, what I know about life insurance. I think they're thinking Facebook or LinkedIn will show whether or not I know what I'm talking about, but it's brought us closer together as well where I can form a better relationship with someone when they look me up on Facebook, even though you still have to be careful because they're not your friends. Just, 'Oh I didn't know you read that book,' or 'I didn't know you like swimming,' or whatever it is, you know. There's just that little added connection... And then I know the [Disability Insurance] people that look at claim and stuff. They can look at Facebook and see who's telling the truth (Participant F).

Social media has helped customers become increasingly savvy in how and when they do business. Others participants pointed out that it helps them stay connected to industry information and to network with people in the industry. So although social media hasn't influenced the job for most participants in their current roles, it allows associates to stay connected to work and industry associates (Participant C, Participant E, Participant I). One Millennial mentioned that

One of the things that we've used social media for is when people leave the company, and staying in touch with them and then kind of having that separation. So okay, you want to have a social network at work, but you don't really want your social life connected to your work life. So social media allows you to be connected with work people but still separate from work programs as, I guess, ways of communicating.

Other Millennial participants seemed to want a clear separation between work and personal lives and tried to keep the information on social media separate from work (Participant B, Participant D, Participant N), while leaders were excited to see how they could leverage the data from social media to elevate the business (Participant H, Participant K).

One participant summarized the company's status on incorporating social media.

This leader and early adopter stated that

[Social media] comprises about 23 hours of my day right now, and so I'm looking at it from a different perspective because I think that in terms of the way that it influences the way that I personally work, I have connected with a lot of leadership, influencers, and people who post on that topic—people who I think are influential in the various areas that my team functions in... And I've been pretty aggressive about working with people within the team to encourage them to connect, and I think that the prevalence of information as a result of just connecting through social media is astounding. From that development perspective, from, you know, what we're doing in terms of our work functions,



[there's] no change within the team, really, in terms of work tasks. From a managerial perspective, and I mentioned the leadership perspective before, but from the managerial perspective I have connected with a lot of people online. I have weeded out a number of people; you know that for here in Charlotte we're hiring a ton of people. [Social media] weeded out a number of people. There was someone who, her name was really quite interesting, and so I looked her up, and instead of her LinkedIn profile coming up it was a full-page mug shot because she'd stabbed and then tried to shoot someone. So you know that the prevalence of information is just really astounding. (Participant H)

Since social media is still a relatively new tool for internal business customers, its use and the strategy around it for business purposes is still in its infancy.

Research question 2 helped me to examine collaboration and communication style. It specifically asked if employees would use more collaborative, two-way communication as the company applies new strategy and undergoes shifts in location. Early in the data collection process, leader and Millennial participants indicated that they had not experienced any overt or explicit influence of social media on leader communication; however, they experienced hints of change (Participant A, Participant B, Participant D, Participant G, Participant H).

The level of experience and exposure to leaders varied for each individual, which surfaced as an indication of some disparity in communication and perspective between Millennials and non-Millennials. While many leaders acknowledge the need to bring in new technology, update processes, and adjust their communication style to accommodate

the changing workforce, most of the Millennials stated that although they like and appreciate the new work environment (part of the company's location strategy), they don't want to be treated differently and they strive to adapt quickly to be successful in their roles (Participant D, Participant E, Participant F, Participant O).

One leader remarked that, "globally, when I was traveling abroad, I noticed they use [social media] more there than we do here [in the United States]" (Participant C). As for the ability of communication from a global perspective, the company and more specifically investment as a whole uses social media outside of the United States more than internally or inside the United States. While other leaders remarked that although there aren't specific guidelines for using social media, leaders have become more cautious and expect employees to represent the company in a professional manner (Participant F, Participant M, Participant P). However, most of the Millennials interviewed stated that they didn't see any impact of social media on leader communication (Participant D, Participant G, Participant H). One Millennial observed that:

I think just when they present town hall meetings I notice now that instead of them having to go on roadshows and go from city to city to city to make sure everybody gets their message, they can do the videos that are really popular now and then they can video stream their town hall meetings and have WebEx's and teleconferences versus everything being in person, but in terms of getting information out I think they tend to stick to email communication and more traditional written documents (Participant D).

Regarding mobile technology, most Millennials agreed that leaders use it. One interview participant stated that, “the only technology that I see senior leadership use, like the iPad when [a senior VP] used it, at least used to use it... Other technology, I’ve seen a laptop. Other than that I haven’t seen anything innovative” (Participant B). Others focused in on mobile phone use and noted that leaders use mobile technology to be more connected to work (Participant D, Participant E). Some participants commented that leaders use mobility to be more flexible in their work schedules (Participant E, Participant I). One Millennial stated:

What I have noticed since being here, there are a lot of diverse work schedules and [the company] works really—in my opinion—is very open to people’s schedules. And I’m really having a good work-life balance, and part of that probably can be attributed to a lot of the mobile technologies. So the ability to still connect with them on videoconferencing on off-hours versus having to be in the office or having to be on a conference call or in a meeting room...and then also just being able to work from home. So I think it influenced leaders to be a lot more flexible over time and, in my opinion, in just a short time, very much so here (Participant E).

Most leader participants concurred that mobile technology use has been limited to extensive used of mobile phones and laptops, but other mobile technology has not been largely adopted.

One leader admitted that mobile technology use is spotty in terms of how much and how well mobile technology has been adapted in the company. He mentioned that,

“I do think there is some disconnect in the 145-year-old insurance company that makes attempts to be a high-tech company by certain projects as opposed to other companies totally embracing it” (Participant A). These sentiments parallel some of points taken from the literature review, that companies often lagged behind in the adoption of new technologies (Day, 2011). In this example we highlight this observation in the adoption of mobile technology and social media.

Another leader’s perspective on this highlighted the speed that this has changed over the past few years. This leader stated that mobile technology use at the company has grown and changed very rapidly over the past few years. He specifically noted that

This is an area where things have changed so rapidly—it used to be, and because of my role I’ve always [liked to use] some of the stuff, but I would be the only one who went to a meeting with an iPad and stylus. Now you see a lot of people—even my boss, who is 63, does it, and you see other people doing this. I think that for the amount of business travel that I’ve done, every seat, you know, there’s somebody sitting there with an iPad... It didn’t matter if it was Blackberry or iPad. iPad was a major game changer, but the prevalence of information and the amount of different things that people are reading—and what struck me was everybody’s reading all these very different things that would’ve been so much harder to find five years ago, [and] it’s really influencing the way the people are thinking and functioning. But I think the other thing that’s really having an impact here is that people are using these things and then, because of the regulatory environment and knowing that they can’t do some things that they’re seeing other

people do, there's a frustration and an exasperation because they want to be active and they want to participate. And then, understanding where we are, there's that immediate in "Oh, you got to be so careful about what you say, what you do, and how that works," and all that sort of thing. So I could be using it, but I think it also brings that sort of challenge. (Participant H)

This early interview gives another example of the frustration some leaders experienced because they wanted to implement new innovative technology for use at the company, but cautiously stopped because of the conservative nature of the company, which is highly regulated, and lack of published guidelines on what could be appropriately implemented (Participant A, Participant C, Participant H).

However, other leaders, when interviewed several months later, mentioned a shift to a more agile culture (Participant I, Participant J). One leader stated that:

You can see that there is a concerted effort to try and get more mobile technology out there and get it into the leadership's hand, in the manager's hands. You know, they've pushed the different kinds of—so they pushed out Good [technology] for the, you know, the cell phone. They're promoting like the iPad to me to make everything more mobile for the leadership, so I think that's good. I don't know that it has changed, really, how they are communicating, but I think again it shows an effort that they're trying to make it more...more...I don't want to use *agile* again but I will—a more agile place for people to work because they're not tied down, and not at just a more senior level. (Participant I)

More recent interviews, about midway into the location strategy shifts, hint at a noted difference in the drive to more innovation and increased use of mobile technology and other communication tools, such as video chatting) (Participant K, Participant L, Participant Q). Unanimously, when asked the question, “Do you use your smart phone, social media, or tablet at work?” all participants answered “yes.” But when asked to qualify whether it was used for work purposes, the answer dwindled down to mobile phone use. Social media was only notably used at work for marketing, company branding, and the hiring process. The company used it in some areas, but I observed that there was not a single, easily accessible policy or regulation as to what employees can and cannot do with social media, which suppresses how people use it and in some cases deters people from using it.

For research question 3 I reviewed how the combination of globalization, mobile technology, and social media might affect the style, delivery, and forums for communication at work, and how each impact the way that leaders communicate differently. Most interview participants stated that there was not yet a direct impact on communication effectiveness. When asked if communication effectiveness was impacted by globalization, mobile technology, and social media, they responded that it does not impact them (Participant C, Participant E, Participant F, Participant P). Another theme included a disconnection between senior leaders and associates regarding organizational goals. One leader observed the disconnect and a potential opportunity with social media, stating that:

I think that [leaders] understand what the goals of the organization are. I'll give you an example. At the beginning of the year I was in India and meeting with both [employees of the company] and our strategic partners... So, I asked people in the room, the associates, [for] one of the goals for 2014 for your company from your CEO. Only the managers knew, and only the senior managers knew... So I would say that if I were to measure the effectiveness of social media, I would think that one of the primary things the senior management would want is for individuals to understand the goals of the organization so that they can align what they do on a daily basis to the goals of the organization. So I think it's not been effective at all. (Participant C)

Other leaders agreed that social media can be effective for specific purposes to add value (Participant A, Participant C, Participant H, Participant I), while many of the Millennials enjoy its use for personal communication and interaction outside of work, even preferring to keep the separation between social media and work-related tasks (Participant E, Participant N, Participant O).

During the span of my study at this particular company, social media didn't seem to have much of an impact, but globalization was viewed as having a greater impact on increased awareness and communication effectiveness (Participant A, Participant I, Participant L, Participant O, Participant Q). This surfaced as a recurring theme in many of the interviews. Globalization was also a key topic discussed and observed in my observation sessions of meetings at all employment levels.

Research question 4 was used to assess the relationship between globalization and collaborative forums such as social media. Most participants agreed that collaboration tool use has increased (Participant A, Participant B, Participant C, Participant E), although some emphasized that a key tool is primarily used for documentation (Participant B, Participant E). One Millennial stated that, “I haven’t seen collaboration being used the way it’s supposed to be” (Participant B). Many of the participants indicated that SharePoint, which is a strategic collaboration tool for the organization, was primarily used to store documents.

One leader recognized that although collaboration tools are great tools, they were not always reliable. She stated, “We use [collaboration tools] all the time. The number one thing is SharePoint. It works fine when it works fine, and when it doesn’t work you almost feel...some of the younger staff members have trouble working” (Participant C). All participants agreed that collaboration tools allowed better multitasking, document revision history tracking, and improved productivity.

Other participants highlighted that video conferencing (VTC) and web meeting use has also increased since 2012. When asked to indicate the best use of collaboration tools, some emphasized that WebEx, share drives, and any tool that allows things to be centrally stored and accessed were the best tools. One participant stated that, “WebExes, walking people through things, the share drive, you know, just having access to the cloud. I would say where you can all say things in there, you can pull it out, so if someone’s not here you can still have access to it.” Therefore participants appreciated tools that allowed associates to input, access, and share information. When asked, most



participants agreed that although collaboration forums were not necessary for effective communication in their organization, they're helpful.

One Millennial emphasized that it would be great to grow the collaboration forum feature. He stated:

I would love for the forum aspect to be grown, because I can tell you, I mean, a few hours of my day is spent on forums trying to see how things work...from a technology aspect, not necessarily for [the company], but for me to be able to do my work, I need to ask questions online and get the answers from people that know the answers to it. Unfortunately, at [the company] there's no—maybe we do have the means to do it, to collaborate and have the forums, but I don't know what it is and I don't think anybody else does. For me to post a question to a forum, then nobody answers...that's the biggest problem with collaborating. You know that the organizations, unless people are using it, it's not going to be effective, and you know they're not today. (Participant B)

Other participants acknowledged the gaps in collaboration across the company, and mentioned two potential barriers: gaps in knowledge of collaboration tools and how to use them, and the lack of strategy and oversight in implementation and use. Specifically, one leader stated that, "I don't think that we're using [collaboration] to the best effect in all cases, because it requires discipline and oversight, which we don't have at [the company]" (Participant A). A theme across the interviews was that despite increased use and emphasis on collaboration across the company, there are gaps in its implementation, including training, guidelines, and strategy.

The next research question, number 5, was used to examine how certain communication methods or styles are more effective than others for leaders, individual contributors, or both. When participants were asked if they worked differently with various employees to be more productive, the most common response was that they adapt to each individual regardless of whether it's local or global (Participant B, Participant E, Participant F, Participant P). They also observed a noticeable change in how leadership communicates with employees. Leadership communication style is less formal than in previous years (Participant D, Participant F, Participant G, Participant H, Participant P). Although less formal, some Millennials shared that the communication is less interpersonal because the video updates make it harder to ask questions, while others stated that the communication is more personable and interactive where leaders walk the floor and engage associates.

This disparity could be attributable to the training given to leaders or to the fact that there were changes in leadership throughout the study with the focus on Millennials in the newer locations (via the location strategy) versus the status quo in the established locations at the company; this may indicate an opportunity for follow-up research. One leader observed change in leadership communication and stated:

We've gone from people who were more, who liked more informal type communications, like newsletters, to people who don't. So we've stopped doing stuff like that. So yeah, I think that, and that could just be individual style, where you're moving from someone who's more--who likes that type of interactivity more than other people who it's not a focus for them...and I think that just varies

by the individual taste. I'm not sure if it's just a big trend or anything.

(Participant J)

Another key observation is the dedication to two-way conversations between associates. All interview participants stressed the importance of two-way conversations in the current environment to facilitate the exchange of information as well as making meetings or discussions more effective. However, the responses were split when interviewees were asked whether globalization, social media, and mobile technology impact communication effectiveness. One Millennial participant summed it up in his response that in some ways it does, in other ways it doesn't. He stated that:

I mean [sitting] in a room, in a conference room and everybody's engaged, versus being over the phone, and when you're talking directly to a person, technology is a lot better because obviously makes it a lot easier to do that. But when you're working in groups and, you know, working with the big groups, technology I think is making it worse because everybody knows that [there's] multitasking over the phone; everybody does it. (Participant B)

This response was evenly split among both Millennials and leaders, who agreed that accessibility of information, technology and tools facilitates communication and helps improve the transfer or communication of information; however, the proximity and type of meeting may make it more difficult to ensure the message or information is received in a global environment.

Another theme uncovered regarding leadership communication was that leaders and Millennials agreed that communication is most effective when it's not role based, but

rather it's based on the individual. Versatility is key: What works for one may not be the best for the other. However, that doesn't mean that a certain communication method or style is better or worse (Participant D, Participant E, Participant I, Participant J). One Millennial stated that

To be effective is to be versatile. So I think you have to be good at all [types of communication tools] to reach everyone, because I think what works for one person may or may not work for the next person. I don't think necessarily one is better than the other, but for different people it's better to communicate with them in different ways. (Participant D)

This reinforces the Situational Leadership theory discussed in Chapter 1 that states that effective leaders must be flexible to achieve the best performance from employees.

Finally, with the sixth and last research question, I researched how two-way, frequent communication influences company performance in Millennials, including adherence and achievement of set goals. Here, I was able to explore how a new performance development process and system influenced communication between leaders and associates and respective performance.

Change theory, according to Bennis, Benne, and Chin (1961), says leaders must remove any barriers to communication, since a group will master internal communication systems that allow the group to function appropriately in two phases. In Phase I, the dependence phase, the group looks for a common goal and desires approval from the authority figure; in Phase 2 the group takes on a shared responsibility as a group. Throughout this study I found specific strategy was in place to address potential barriers

to communication through onboard training for new hires and relocated employees as well as for the managers, and then setting up buddy groups so that each person could build the relationships needed to discuss and develop shared goals and be able to connect with their leaders.

Some codes within the text of the interviews related to the struggle to find strategy regarding social media and mobile technology use, where associates were looking for rules and guidelines around mobile technology and social media use. Additionally, some leaders indicated that a strategy for implementing use of such tools in their organization was lacking, although there was a keen awareness that the company had a social media site and hired resources to monitor it for statements about the company. The company also issued mobile phones to several employees for work purposes.

LMX theory, as referenced in earlier chapters, stated that differences in the level of exchange might exist between the leader and each individual follower because a leader does not interact with the group uniformly, and that the level and quality of interaction between leaders and employees affects employee performance. When asked how leaders can do better, most responded that they would appreciate more direct communication (Participant A, Participant B, Participant E, Participant F, Participant P). However, when I asked each associate the frequency at which they heard from their leaders and whether it was adequate, unanimously the response was “often” and “adequately.”

Therefore strategy with regard to change, training, and communication between leaders and associates, particularly Millennials, seemed to be successful, although

specific strategy for mobile technology and social media seemed to be lacking. Strategy was another code and theme that surfaced in the study. Repeating Nadler (1998) theory from Chapter 1, each component must fit the strategy before the strategy can succeed (p. 12). Communication must be integrated into organizational change. Further, as new tools, processes, and organizational structures are introduced, it is important for associates to understand the strategy for them.

When asked how leaders could communicate more effectively, one leader stressed the importance of understanding how strategy affects him. One Millennial, in his answer to the same question, responded that she would like to hear the executive updates. She stated “quarterly updates about the true strategy of [the company] or each leader speaking about the strategy and goals and where are they at with those goals and contributing to those goals and that type thing is important to me. Like, I want to see the big picture” (Participant E). A common theme among all of the interviewees was the need to understand the broader strategy and how that ties to the work they do every day.

Mobile phones allow all associates greater flexibility in when and how they interact at work. Several themes surfaced regarding whether globalization, mobile technology, and social media facilitated or complicated work. Responses were that (a) they facilitated communication because they allow people to disseminate information in various ways (Participant A, Participant B, Participant D, Participant F, Participant P); (b) they also allow people more options in how they attain information, thereby allowing individuals to get information in ways that work best for them, in terms of how they feel most comfortable and how they best absorb information, as well as flexibility in when

they can receive information (Participant A, Participant D, Participant E); and (c) associates appreciated that they were not locked into “having to be there” to get the message. Most associates viewed flexibility as a positive contributor to disseminate or attain information that facilitated work and helped them to be more productive.

More recently, in 2015, I observed a posting of mobile guidelines on the company intranet. Also, the mobile strategy was broadened to encourage collaboration and the policy opened up to allow any associate level to acquire and use a company-issued mobile phone at the discretion of their manager. Additionally, the company’s 2015 Organizational Health Survey reviewed improved results from the same survey presented company-wide in 2012.

### **Summary**

This study revealed several data points that aligned to traditional theories on leadership. The participant responses and changes observed during this study identified key opportunities for improved leadership communication that could help close gaps between associates within the company’s 2015 population. The participant responses and my direct observations provided hundreds of pages of data, direct quotes, and information to help determine ideas and perspectives that I will share to support social change.

I summarized the data from this study in Chapter 4, stating that (a) associates experienced and expressed the impact from globalization and mobile technology at the company level, but participants felt that the social media did not have significant impact on their work; (b) many saw opportunity in adopting the collaboration strategy at work and hoped to see more use, guidelines, and structure to influence more interactive

communication between employees; (c) many employees did not feel a direct impact from globalization, mobile technology, and social media on their work or work performance, although they appreciated the tools because they helped facilitate communication and therefore made their jobs easier, especially when communicating with employees outside of their office location; (d) mobile technology provided great flexibility in how information is communicated and received at work; (e) more frequent, direct, and two-way communication helped to drive better performance; and (f) there could be opportunity for social media use at work if adapted for the right purpose and implemented strategically.

In Chapter 5 I discuss my assessment of this information as well as recommendations on how this information could be used to inform leaders about potential gaps and ideas to trigger better communication and performance.



## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of my case study was to assess Millennial employees and leaders in a Fortune 100 company to determine their preferred leadership communication style in light of globalization, mobile technology, and social media. This study explored how leadership communication with Millennials can be improved through better understanding of available leadership communication methods and current impacts in the context of this study.

The use of a case study design allowed me to build on theories about effective leader communication by uncovering new information about effective leader communication with Millennials. Some key findings were that the employees were enthusiastic about embracing change, using new technology, and shifting the communication style to promote new ideas and improve associate performance. However, many expressed frustration with understanding how to implement strategy that could best leverage the technology, tools, and talent available in the company.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The findings from this study included the following:

1. Most associates preferred direct communication
2. Although some had not fully embraced the technology, all agreed that technology was necessary to communicate most effectively in their role
3. Leaders' individual communication skill, and their implementation or adaption of process, tools, and technology makes communications effective, not the technology alone.

4. While Millennials appreciate the focus and changes put in place to attract and retain them, they are eager to prove themselves as contributing employees, not just as Millennial employees.
5. Many employees are eager to use mobile technology and social media if guidelines are produced and there is a purposeful strategy employed to incorporate them into their work.
6. Most employees feel that globalization has had some effect on the company's strategic direction, however it has not affected their day-to-day job, tasks or performance.

Therefore the adaption and use of newer technology has influenced leadership communication effectiveness. Globalization created the need for better technology and tools to allow employees to share ideas and best practices that would help improve company performance. The data revealed that mobile technology and collaboration tools have made communication across company locations simpler and facilitated globalization. Additionally, the influence of social media has permeated the workplace. The company created specific forums and training to facilitate two-way communication and hear ideas from Millennials.

The company also trained leaders to promote better adaption of a collaborative work culture and improve communication with employees throughout the cultural shift from purely top down directives to collaboration. The data showed that leadership communication style and frequency has changed throughout the company. This has had a

positive impact on employees as the workforce shifted and communication had to shift to accommodate the company needs to allow for better performance.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study included a diverse group of participants. However, the sample did not represent the full population of company employees since participation was voluntary and I employed purposeful sampling selection. Although as with most case studies the data is not generalizable, the targeted sample was appropriate in the context of this case study. The interview and observation protocol enabled me to collect sufficient data with the given sample size to reinforce its validity. Due to the rapid changes in technology and in the workforce during the course of the study, the gathered data was only suitable for examining the then current thoughts, views, and experiences to determine future trends and possibilities.

Since the study focused on Millennials exposed to leadership communication in the context of the target company, the opinions expressed do not represent worldwide views of other Millennial professionals. Most of the Millennial participants had limited experience at the company and some of their views may be a result of their lack of familiarity with the company as opposed to a gap in the company. However, the participants provided useful insights about communication phenomena. Since I am not a Millennial, I was able to counteract any personal bias by leveraging the participants' input as the primary data source.

### **Recommendations**

One recommendation that I have is that companies should determine the effect of social media on communication effectiveness within a corporate environment. This may help to determine if a strategy for using social media as a communication vehicle at work, for work purposes and internal communication could elevate the performance by improving communication at all levels within a company. Social media may not be appropriate for use in daily functions at the role level, but allowing employees to set up accounts or join certain groups and share information via social media might be useful. There must be a strategy for this with specific guidelines outlined for this to work. Also, it cannot be forced upon employees, but promoted and used as another tool or vehicle for communication.

### **Implications**

This study promotes social change in two ways 1) I shared information about leader communication and encouraged new thoughts by asking questions during interviews and 2) I influenced social change when I shared the resulting information about how globalization, Millennials, social media, and mobile technology use might impact leadership communication style and effectiveness in the corporate environment. The information observed and derived from themes uncovered in the interview process showed opportunity for improved communication and performance given better application of tools available, resource knowledge, and guidelines for its use.

The data implied the need to extend leadership communication to include all employees. Some employees noted the lack of connection to the company strategy or big

picture. Instead of the traditional top-down approach, many would appreciate getting the information or strategy directly. Associates would also prefer face-to-face communication as often as possible. Follow-up research could determine the effectiveness of having all employees involved in leadership updates by studying a group that would have direct access to leader communications and comparing the performance of this group versus the performance of a group that only hears the information indirectly.

Another implication from the study is a need to grow collaboration forums by promoting them and setting up guidelines. Many of the Millennial participants expressed interest and delight in engaging in forums at work and outside of work. The forums, where implemented, allowed for faster and broader communication, answers to questions, and exchange of information and innovative ideas. Additionally, other study's that track the progress of the employees that participate in the forums and the number of ideas generated from such forums could serve management and leadership communities as well as employees overall.

### **Conclusions**

This case study was designed to study leadership communication through significant changes in the corporate environment. Data were collected from 17 respondents and analyzed through the lens of four theoretical frameworks. Emergent themes and patterns revealed 10 obvious themes relative to the theories discussed within this qualitative study. While there is no set formula for creating effective communication at work, the participants in this study as well as leaders and employees that were observed provided information that helped identify some gaps and strategy to minimize

the effects. The significance of this study was that it exposed information that had not previously been documented.

Good communication helps organizations succeed. Where corporate associates communicate well, employee performance is improved. This study helped identify some best practices and strategy for improved use and effectiveness of tools and technology and educate participants and anyone exposed to it. As corporate employees think about global strategy they can leverage the information learned in this study to help influence positive change and better employee performance.

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## Appendix A: Observation Worksheet

Observation Notes	Observation Interpretations
<p>What technology/social media or other tools are used to facilitate communication? How do participants interact throughout the meeting/ discussion? (Leadership panel, leader to participants, guest presenter, participant to leader, participant to participant)</p> <p>Are participants in the same location?</p> <p>Are all participants in the same time zone?</p> <p>Are some participants on a telephone call/conference?</p> <p>Is there a web presentation? Are there PowerPoint presentations?</p> <p>Is video technology used? (Telepresence, video teleconference, video streaming, video recording, Skype?)</p> <p>Can participants participate using mobile technology?</p> <p>Is collaboration software used?</p> <p>What other meeting materials are used?</p> <p>Is there opportunity for participants to ask/answer questions?</p> <p>Does subject matter include global company, globalization, and/or world?</p> <p>Does subject matter include social technology, social networking, and/or social media?</p> <p>Does subject matter include mobility, mobile technology, mobile usage, and/or mobile tools?</p> <p>Does subject matter include changes or impacts of globalization, social media, or technology over time?</p> <p>Does subject matter include organizational changes, organizational performance, or organizational impacts?</p> <p>Who discusses the topics? Employee? Leader? Both?</p> <p>Do participants express ideas/topics/answers clearly?</p> <p>Is there a two-way flow of information?</p> <p>What methods are used to ensure clarity of information, performance, and tasks?</p> <p>Does communication appear to be executed effectively?</p>	
<p>How many forms of communication are incorporated into the discussion?</p> <p>Do the participants/leaders always use the same format?</p> <p>Is there any difference in method or style observed from previous meetings?</p> <p>How do new communication tools facilitate or complicate communication?</p> <p>Is communication more or less effective when leveraging social media, mobile technology, both?</p>	

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Observation Notes	Observation Interpretations
Is there good leader communication?	
What changes are observed or experienced in leadership communication style?	
Are participants engaged in two-way conversation with employees/leaders? Is it effective (how do you know it's effective)?	
Do globalization, social media, and mobile technology factors allow for more effective communication?	
How does this meeting compare to other meetings? (Number of participants, employee grade level of participants, proximity of participants, engagement of participants)	

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## Appendix B: Interview Questions

Category	Question
Workplace	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you consider the company global?</li> <li>2. How do you think the globalization of your company has influenced the way you work?</li> <li>3. How does mobile technology influence the way you work?</li> <li>4. How has social media influenced the way you work?</li> <li>5. What changes have you experienced as a result of mobile technology and social media?</li> <li>6. Have globalization, mobile technology, and social media changed the communication style of company leadership?</li> </ol>
Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. In what ways has social media influenced company leader communication?</li> <li>8. How have company leaders used mobile technology in the last three years?</li> <li>9. Do you use your smart phone, social media, or tablet at work? For work purposes?</li> <li>10. How does mobile technology impact the work that you do?</li> <li>11. How has the company used social media in the last three years?</li> <li>12. How has social media impacted the work that you do?</li> </ol>
Associate Role Impacts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. How do globalization, technology, and social media impact leadership communication effectiveness in your role?</li> <li>14. What makes a good leader?</li> <li>15. What changes have you experienced in leadership communication over the last three years in your organization?</li> <li>16. What changes have you experienced in leadership communication with senior executives over the last three years?</li> </ol>
Communication Changes Experienced or Observed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. How are leadership communication styles different than the communication you yourself use in your daily tasks at work?</li> <li>18. How do social media and mobile technology impact work communication?</li> <li>19. What changes have you observed in the last three years in communicating with employees across the globe?</li> <li>20. What changes do you expect to see in the near future?</li> </ol>
Job Performance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. How much communication is needed to implement tasks you perform?</li> <li>22. How are tasks implemented most effectively when working with associates globally?</li> <li>23. Has communication become more complex or easier due to these factors?</li> <li>24. In what ways has communication changed in the last three years?</li> <li>25. How much of the change do you feel is attributable to globalization? Mobile technology? Social technology?</li> </ol>

Category	Question
Collaboration	<p>26. What changes have you experienced with respect to leader communication?</p> <p>27. How have these factors changed organizational communication?</p> <p>28. How have collaboration tools impacted the way you work? Has their use increased over the last three years?</p> <p>29. In what ways have collaboration tools been used most effectively?</p> <p>30. Are there other uses for collaboration tools that are not being used?</p> <p>31. Are collaboration forums necessary for effective communication in your organization?</p>
Globalization and Diversity	<p>32. Do globalization, technology, and social media collectively influence the way you work?</p> <p>33. Have globalization, technology, and social media influenced the way you work with different demographic groups?</p> <p>34. Do you work differently with various employees to be more productive?</p>
Organizational Communication	<p>35. Have you observed or experienced changes in leadership communication style in the past three years?</p> <p>36. Do you engage in two-way conversations with employees?</p> <p>37. Do globalization, social media and mobile technology factors allow for more effective communications?</p> <p>38. Are certain communication methods or styles more effective than others for leaders, individual contributors, or both?</p> <p>39. How often do you hear from leadership? Do you feel that it is adequate?</p> <p>40. Can current leaders communicate more effectively? How?</p> <p>41. How do new communication tools facilitate or complicate communication?</p> <p>42. Is communication more or less effective when leveraging social media, mobile technology, both?</p>
Leadership	<p>43. Do you feel you could influence changes that could make you or your organization more effective? What are some of the challenges you face?</p> <p>44. Are globalization, mobile technology, and social media changing leadership influence?</p> <p>45. How do globalization, mobile technology, and social media influence leadership communication style for Millennials? Is the impact of the three combined greater than the individual impact?</p> <p>46. What do you think about your current leadership and their use of the latest mobile technology and social media?</p> <p>47. How can leaders [you] leverage technology and media innovation in ways that make them more successful?</p> <p>48. How can company leaders work better with Millennials?</p>
Organizational Effectiveness	<p>49. Do you feel that you are as effective as you could be in your current role?</p>



Category	Question
Opportunities	50. Do you feel that your organization is as effective as it could be? 51. What do you consider the biggest hurdle or change that you face in being more effective in your current role? 52. How can mobile technology and social media be used optimally at work? 53. What are some opportunities to use mobile technology differently? 54. How can leaders work better with employees overall? 55. How can leaders work better with Millennials?
Demographic Info	56. Are you part of the Millennial demographic (born between 1977 and 2000)? 57. How long have you been employed at the company?
Technology Savvy	58. Do you own a smart phone? How often do you use it? 59. Do you have active social media accounts? How many? How often do you use them? 60. Do you own a tablet? How often do you use it?
Employment Information	61. What is the most common way that you attain information at work?

## Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation from a Community Research Partner

The Company  
Contact Information

Date

Dear Rasheedah Dunston,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled *The Possible Impact of Globalization, Mobile Technology, and Social Media on Leadership Communication Involving Millennials* within the company. As part of this study, I authorize you to recruit employees for interviews, observe meetings and other communication forums to collect data, and use nonproprietary company data for triangulation and analysis as part of the study. The results will be reported as part of this study. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: allowing use of personnel, rooms, and resources that the partner will provide at various sites within the company. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,  
Authorization Official  
Contact Information

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff will verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).

## Appendix D: Informed Consent Form for Interviews

You are invited to take part in a research study of the possible impact of globalization, mobile technology, and social media on leadership communication involving Millennials. The researcher is inviting company leaders and/or employees that fit the Millennial demographic to be in the study. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Rasheedah Dunston, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as a Director, but this study is separate from that role.

### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to build on theories about effective communication using a case study methodology to assess Millennial employees and leaders in a Fortune 100 company to determine their preferred leadership communication style in light of globalization, mobile technology, and social media.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in an interview that requires about 60-90 minutes of your time. Here are some sample questions:
  - How do you think the globalization of your company has influenced the way you work?
  - In what ways has social media influenced company leader communication?
- Be available for future follow-up questions, clarification, and review of your responses.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the company will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

Being in this study would not pose risk to your job, safety, or well-being.

The potential benefits of being in this study and sharing your valuable perspective would help me produce new information about how globalization, Millennials, social media, and mobile technology use might impact leadership communication style and effectiveness.

### **Payment:**

There is no compensation for participating in this questionnaire.

**Privacy:**

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. Your identity will not be used in this study. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. You will be given an opportunity to review your answers after it is transcribed to an electronic format. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by only allowing one person, the researcher, to review the raw data. It will be stored on my personal devices, which will be kept secure at all times. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

**Contacts and Questions:**

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone or email. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Walden University's approval number for this study is 02-10-14-0225043 and it expires on February 1, 2016.

Please print or save this consent form for your records.

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By replying to this email with the words, "I consent," I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.