



# **Increasing Compliance with Company rules in a Multi-cultural Group of Floor workers. Case company: Caternet Finland Oy**

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Bachelor's Thesis  
DP in International Business  
May 2012



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<p><b>Title</b> Increasing Compliance with Company rules in a multi-cultural group of floor workers. Case company: Caternet Finland Oy.</p>	<p><b>Number of pages and attachments</b> 73+2</p>
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<p>This thesis is a piece of research done whilst working for Caternet Finland Oy, a food company located and operating in Helsinki, Finland. The thesis originates from the researcher's experience in the company. While working for the company the author realized a problem with in-house compliance of company rules, mainly when it comes to the floor workers.</p> <p>The main objective of my research was to study how Caternet Finland Oy can increase internal compliance within its multi-cultural group of floor workers through improving the communication of rules and regulations. The purpose is therefore to detect weaknesses and loopholes in the entire structure, but mainly in the communication of company rules to the multi-cultural group of shop floor workers.</p> <p>The research was carried out by using the qualitative research method. The data was collected through face to face interviews by the researcher himself. The interviews followed major themes, which included the following: rules and compliance employee communication and intercultural communication.</p> <p>The results revealed that rules in Caternet Finland Oy are formulated from what the law stipulates, customer demands and what the management wants. There has not been through communication of these rules to floor workers. The few rules which have been communicated have not effectively reached the entire group of floor workers.</p> <p>The research concludes that even though there are weaknesses in the formulation of rules, the company has more problems in the communication of rules to the workers. Intercultural communication has been viewed as the most urgent area for the company to check in order to achieve compliance from its multicultural group of floor workers. Suggestions are given for the company on how to improve the communication of rules.</p>	
<p><b>Keywords</b> Compliance, Company rules, Corporate communication, Internal communication, Intercultural communication, Floor workers.</p>	

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# 1 Introduction

The world today is facing a drastic movement of workers from place to place, looking for better working conditions. Here, we are looking at “Global labour mobility” as a trend. The world has become more globalised, becoming a small village where the movement of capital has become more flexible. The increasing number of international organisations has also contributed to the fact that companies are creating a network of different people to move freely from one country to another to work for these global investors. Several economies have also become more flexible towards immigrants, making it more easy for foreigners to join their work forces.

In Europe, the declaration of the EU as a single labour market has led to the free movement of work force, primarily from less developed countries to more developed economies in search of greener pastures. Stable economies in the EU are the culprits of this free labour movement. It is evident that many people from weaker economies have seen it as an advantage to move to better economies, work there, and bring fortunes home.

Finland joined the European Union in 1995 and is one of the countries being affected by this free movement of the work force who mainly come from Russia, Estonia, Ukraine, Africa and other parts of the world. The stable economy, better social system, better education, stable political status has resulted in attracting many immigrants to come and work in Finland leading to Finnish labour becoming more diversified with people from all sorts of cultures .

With such diversity in the Finnish labour force, many companies, big, medium and small have not escaped a cultural mix among the people they employ as workers. This mix has caused a big “float” of intercultural encounters in many companies, due to the mixture of nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

As Guider (2005, 12) points out, that globalization of both marketing and production, plus increasing diversity of domestic work forces, market and populations mean that

few organisations or individuals at work can afford to ignore cultural differences. Therefore; cross cultural encounters with their related problems inspired the researcher to develop the following topic:

**“Increasing Compliance with Company rules in a multi-cultural group of floor workers. Case company: Caternet Finland Oy.”**

With this topic the researcher has performed a qualitative research, where he has gathered the necessary data, and has analyzed and presented the finding to the school and the case company, following the university’s guidelines and the general rules and procedures for writing a business thesis.

### **1.1 Objectives of the research**

The main objective of this research is to study how Caternet Finland Oy can increase internal compliance within its multi-cultural group of floor workers through improving the communication of rules and regulations. The main focus is on how these rules are formulated and how they are communicated in order for the multi-cultural floor workers to understand and abide by them, enabling the company to achieve the objectives for which it hired this particular group of workers.

The purpose is, therefore, to detect weaknesses and loopholes in the entire rules structure, but mainly in the communication of company rules to the multi-cultural group of shop floor workers, so as to work out solutions on how to achieve a better structure which will help to increase the responsiveness of workers to these rules, hence increased efficiency of the company’s entire work force.

In addition to the above, the research also looks at cross cultural factors which influence communication and how different people from different cultural backgrounds respond to the rules. Giving consideration to these in improving the formulation and communication of rules can help to bring about increased compliance by a multi-cultural group of workers.

The long-term benefits of this research aim to improve the internal communication of employees within the case company. The research also aims at improving the efficiency of its employees which would result in an improved cost-effective productivity, with better customer service and increased sales. The overall aim would translate into a highly competitive company for both the short and long term.

Improved communication would lead to compliancy to company regulations and rules amongst employees which would also result in freeing up middle managers to focus more on attaining and utilising skills which can aid them to improve on their performance.

## 1.2 Research problem

The research mainly concentrates on how rules in Caternet Finland Oy are formulated and subsequently communicated to the shop floor workers. The factors influencing the formation of these rules are explored, and different communication channels and media have been investigated to best identify the most appropriate ways of effectively passing the rules to the company's multi-cultural floor workers. It also focuses on factors which help communication, to increase compliance within a culturally diverse work environment. The main research problem therefore is:

**“How can managers achieve compliance within a multicultural group of floor workers through improving the formulation and communication of company rules?”**

The research problem is further divided into sub-investigative questions which would specifically address a respective research problem.

- 1) What compliance rules are needed and why?
- 2) How are they communicated to floor workers?
- 3) What intercultural factors should be taken into account when formulating and communicating rules to workers?

- 4) How do floor workers perceive the rules and how they are communicated to them?

### 1.3 Overlay Matrix

This section indicates how the investigative questions can be linked with the theories and Themes which will later be discussed in the coming chapters.

**Table 1:** Overlay Matrix indicating the link between Investigative questions, Theories and Interview themes

<b>Investigative questions</b>	<b>Theoretical questions</b>	<b>Connection with the interview questions</b>	<b>Themes</b>
1) What compliance rules are needed and why?	Rules and compliance Corporate communication	Q1, Q2, Q3	Compliance
2. How should they be communicated to the floor workers?	Internal Communication	Q3, Q4, Q5	Employee communication
3. What intercultural factors should be taken into account when formulating rules and communicating these to workers?	Employee communication, Intercultural communication	Q1, Q2, Q6, Q7,	Intercultural communication
4. How do floor workers perceive the rules and how they are communicated to them?	Compliance and Employee communication	Q1, Q2, Q3,	Effective employee communication



The above investigative questions concentrate on how Caternet perceives the formulation of rules how the rules should be effectively communicated to a culturally diverse group of floor workers and how compliance can be achieved. Having used the above investigative questions to collect data and make the analysis, the researcher will give suggestions on how the whole system of rule formulation and communication can be further developed to achieve more compliancy among the multicultural group of floor workers.

#### 1.4 **Scope of the research**

The problem of compliance with company rules by shop floor workers in Caternet Finland Oy is a vast and complex problem. It originates from several factors which include: national cultural factors, process of structuring rules, internal communication structure, management structure, motivation from workers, company culture and values and many other related factors. So to increase compliance, all these factors have to be investigated and better solutions be implemented to achieve better results.

However, due to the broad and complex nature of the problem, not all issues could be covered within this research project. Although the process of structuring the rules involves several different stages such as formulation, communication, implementation and enforcement, this research mainly concentrates on two stages: Rules Formation and Communication. Rules formulation focuses on how the new rules and regulations to be passed on to the shop floor workers are created, what methods are used, who is involved in making them, and which factors influence the formation of these rules. Rules communication tends explore how the formulated rules can be effectively passed on down to the floor workers. Different channels and types of communication are investigated, who communicates, and how and when they communicate.

Since the major problem is to get a multi-cultural group of floor workers to comply with the company rules, Intercultural communication issues become important in this investigative research. It is important to note that culture at its broad nature is not handled in this research, although few cultural dimensions related to rules compliance and communication is handled. Intercultural communication in relation to communica-

tion barriers are explored in this section to best define the basis at which compliance with company rules can be achieved among a multi-cultural group of workers.

Whilst other stages of rules structure process are beyond the scope of this research (as explained above) it is very important to note them because they go hand in hand with the first two stages covered in this research. For example, rules formation and communication become useless if their implementation is handled poorly. Each process has to be successful for the next stage to work out.

Due to the ongoing changes still taking place in the case company, the researcher chooses to independently and theoretically explore viable rules and communication that could be utilized without compromising or conflicting with the Company culture perspective which might result in to unreliable results.

## 1.5 Key concepts

The main key concepts are going to be explored through this research. A number of theories will be discussed in relation to these concepts and these will help on structuring a basis for answering the investigative questions and the main research problem.

**Company rules:** This is going to be the major concept on which the researcher will focus most, since it is the focal point of the problem in question. Seson (2000, 84) defines company rules as special guides intended to govern conduct or action which is aimed to guide operating supervisors and employees in the performance of their designated activities. He further asserts that they are laws with penalties attached for non-compliance. The study will look at the importance of company rules and how they benefit the company if they are well observed by all stakeholders. Much of the literature review will look at how they are formed, communicated and implemented to a multi-cultural group of floor workers.

**Compliance:** is another key concept which is looked at in this research. Compliance has been described as a state of being in accordance with established guidelines, specifications, or legislation, or the process of becoming so.

**Employee communication:** According to Åberg (2000, 96) Employee communication is a process through which one interprets the situation of items that concern activities of the work community or its members' activities and in which the interpretation is made aware to others through interactive, message-delivering networks.

Employee communications also means the provision and exchange of information and instructions which enable an organisation to function efficiently. It involves the information to be provided, the channels along which it passes and the way it is communicated (ACAS, 2009, 4.) Employee communication is one of the most important concepts which are tackled in this research. Its importance to the company will be explored. Different channels in employee communication are analysed and discussed to show their relevance to this research.

**Intercultural communication;** this concept becomes important to this research because it helps to define the link between employee communication and multicultural group of floor workers who are the target population in this research. Intercultural communication is defined as a symbolic exchange process between people of different cultures with the general goal of creating a shared meaning between dissimilar individuals in an interactive situation (Ting-Toomey 1999, 21).

Varner & Beamer (2011, 35) define intercultural communication as communication by members of different cultures for work place purposes. Cleary (2008, 11) defines intercultural communication as communication between people who belong to different cultures, who thus have different values, beliefs, behaviors and ways of communicating. The importance of intercultural is looked at and the barriers to intercultural communication are fully discussed. The theories from this concept will help on answer some of the investigative questions hence covering the main research question.

## **2 Caternet Finland Oy**

Caternet Finland Oy is a Finnish company founded in 1999. The company came as a result of the merger of two small companies, i.e. Valio Vihanes founded in 1926 and Kala market founded in 1989. Valio Vihanes dealt in only the vegetables supply business, and Kala Market specialized in fish production. These two companies formed the present day Caternet Finland Oy.

With such a background, the company has grown into a medium scale enterprise with a population of over 110 employees, and with a business concept of providing its esteemed customers with readily-graded fresh vegetables and all fish products. This is done through two different production units: the vegetable unit, where fresh vegetables are cleaned, sliced and packed according to the customer's demands, and the fish unit where fish is prepared in different forms, cold and warm smoked, and/or sliced, depending on what particular customers need.

Caternet Finland Oy serves a line of customers who include: hotel restaurant catering services, hotel chains, big restaurants operating lunch services, universities, cities, and other organisations that may require these services. With further new developments, the company is also planning to extend its services even to food chain stores with fresh products. Clearly, the company provides a business-to-business service with no direct final consumers as customers.

The company has competitors like Salico, Freshman, Fresh-sell want and many others, although it has managed to secure a competitive advantage to hold its position as the leading company in its area of business.

### **2.1 Company Structure**

As explained above, the company is a wholly private enterprise operating in Finland, with no subsidiaries in either domestic or international markets. Located in Kiviko, Eastern Helsinki, the company is under the management of a CEO who is answerable to the owners, who are not engaged in the day to day running of the business. The

CEO works with a group of managers who are responsible for different roles and departments. These managers form the top management of the company and are basically the main decision makers.

Below the top managers are the supervisors responsible for the management of different units within departments of the company. These supervisors are answerable to the top management and they function as the link between the top management and the floor shop activities. These supervisors, however, work with the shift managers who are responsible for the day to day operations of different sections of production. The shift managers are answerable to the supervisors, and below them are the shop floor workers who do the production.

## **2.2 The Employees**

Caternet Finland Oy has a population of over 110 employees, who are recruited for different positions and tasks in the company. Through the Human Resource Personnel, the company recruits workers either directly from to the company or through agencies. Most of the floor workers are recruited directly to the company though a number of them get to join the company's workforce through agencies.

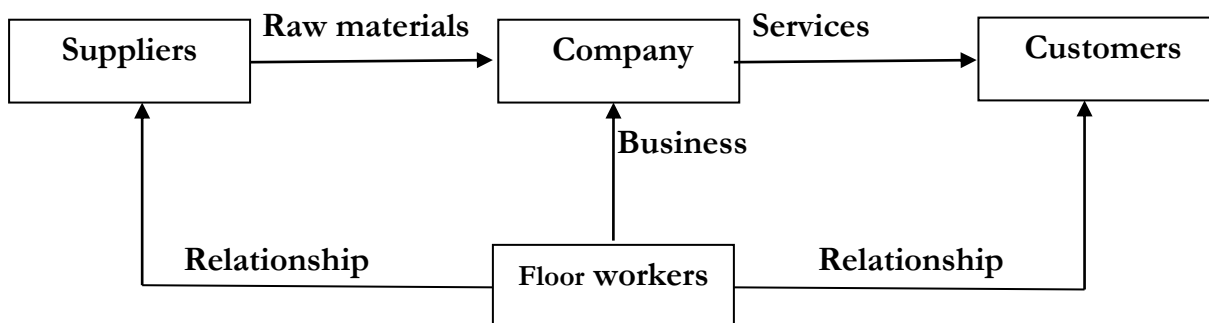
### **Floor Workers**

The company's population of floor workers is composed of people from different cultural background. From the Human resource manager it was hard to determine which particular numbers contribute to what cultures but it is assumed that 50% of the floor shop population is made up of Finnish nationals and the rest of the 50% is divided among the foreigners who include Russians and Russian speaking who amount to almost 50% of the foreign population and the rest are Asians and Africans. It is this group of multi-cultural workers that are engaged in the day to day production of the final products the company supplies to its esteemed customers.

The importance of this group of workers is seen stretching from the supply chain to the customer service. When looking at the entire business process of the company, this

group of floor workers, stand at the center and their activities equally affect every part in the entire business process of the company as seen in the figure below.

**Figure 1:** Floor workers in the business process of Caternet Finland Oy.



As seen from the above diagram, the floor workers have a very important role to the business existence of the company. Since they are at the production level they are at the heart of quality checking and proper utilization of the raw materials supplied from the suppliers. Proper use of these materials maintains a continuous relationship between the company and the suppliers. From this angle it can be thought that they help the company on cost reduction if they handle the materials responsibly hence keeping the costs of production low.

The floor workers are also important due to the fact that they are highly responsible for providing the final services offered to the company's customers. They make the final products the company supplies. It should be noted that the company's core business is in selling tangible food products to the customers. The company promises quality and efficiency to the customer. The floor workers, therefore, make sure that what the company promises to the customers is delivered. The customers to the company will only stay if they get the right products, in the right quality and quantity and at the right time. That is why it is important for the floor workers to keep quality and proper production in order to maintain the relationship the company has with the customers.

The company's business can only exist if the work at the floor level is done perfectly and responsibly. That's why it becomes important to make sure that the floor workers comply with the company rules and policies because they are the major guideline to

proper business conduct. This thesis therefore, concentrates on how to improve compliancy of this particular group of employees to company rules in order to get the value the company expects from them because for the company to operate normally and gain from the entire business process, this group of people has to be highly compliant.

### **3 Compliance through rules and communication**

This chapter seeks to explore the theories related to compliance, rules and communication as related to a multicultural group of floor workers in a company. Compliance as a concept is explored to see how important it can be to any organisation. It is also important to have a look at rules, how they come about, their importance and what they mean for any organisation. This chapter also explores organisational communication and how it draws down to Employee communication which will be further analysed. Intercultural communication will also be looked at. The major objective of this chapter is analyzed how the above mentioned concepts can be linked to the major research question.

#### **3.1 Compliance**

It is important to look at the term “Compliance” - its importance, and why any organisation should work towards achieving it for its employees. Compliance has been described as a state of being in accordance with established guidelines, specifications, or legislation, or the process of becoming so. In the legal system, compliance usually refers to behavior in accordance with legislation. Within an organisation, compliance means following the rules, regulations and organisational policies. Employee Compliance is the degree to which employees adhere to the Organization’s defined policies, processes, and procedures. Compliance means following the rules, regulations and organizational policies. Compliance training is essential, to ensure that members of the organization do not break the law and to maximize productivity. Companies as well as nonprofit organizations can be held liable for the unlawful conduct of their employees, even if they have policies in place which prohibit such conduct. Such liability can be minimized if the employees receive sufficient compliance training and counseling. (Pink Link 2007, 3.)

When thinking of compliance in any organisation there is need to consider the system of cooperate activities and individual behaviour of employees. Management needs to know all the activities, in which the company’s employees engage and identifying the



business activities that give rise to compliance risks. This means that any compliance program should start with all the activities in the company.

There is a need for the management to be certain that every employee understands how breaking the company policies can injure the entire business process and can present serious personal consequences and by making sure that every employ understands the legal obligation related to his/her job. When employees are aware of compliance issues connected to their job, and all significant processes are designed with early check points or control to prevent out puts that create compliant risks you are well on the way towards creation of corporate culture to support compliance (Banks & Banks 2008, 1-3.)

In analyzing business security, Coombs (2008, 223) discusses the need of compliance program in any organization. In his discussion he links compliance to ethics where he argues that both share the focus on what should and what should not be done. He continues to assert that both Ethics and Compliance guide employee behavior. Employee behavior is very important to be managed because it can damage the image of the company, result into fines, company can loss customer and at some critical cases it may lead employee to prison. This explains the reason to why any company should have a well-structured and controlled compliance program.

In defining the Compliance program, Coombs (2008, 226) identifies components for the effective compliance program, developed by the U.S department of commerce. The components include;

- a) A set of standards and procedures that guide employee conduct and help stake holders understand what to expect from the company employees.
- b) A system that holds employees accountable for living up to the program's requirement.
- c) Clear communication of the program and the policies to the employees
- d) Active monitoring of the employee conduct
- e) Encouraging employees to seek advice when they have compliance questions.

- f) Due diligence in hiring employees
- g) To encourage the employees to follow the policies and guidelines
- h) Management taking appropriate action when the policies and guidelines are violated.
- i) Regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

With these components, Coombs (2008, 226) seeks to clarify fact that the compliance program should be clearly written down. He adds that different employees from different areas of the company should be involved in the process of drafting the policies. This should be followed by effectively communicating the program to every employee and relevant stake holders like suppliers, customers and shareholders. Coombs suggests that the communication effort should include management speeches, print outs, wall hangings in key locations of the company, creation of an intranet free for every employee. It is emphasized that the communication should be two ways to enable the employees give feedback and also encourage them to report any violation of the compliance program. However, anonymity should be encouraged through creating a channel where employees can post their reports with no one identifying who did it.

The management should speak in support of the program and acting as an example. There should be appointed a committee that overlooks the compliance program. Coombs also adds that incentives to employee compliance should be initiated. He also suggests for procedure in place for investigating complaints and pushing or correcting violation. Employees must believe that something will be done if there is violation. (Coombs 2008, 223-227.)

### **3.2 Company rules**

This is going to be the major concept on which the researcher will focus most, since it is the focal point of the problem in question. Seson (2000, 84) defines company rules as special guides intended to govern conduct or action and that are aimed at guiding operating supervisors and employees in the performance of their designated activities. He further asserts that these are laws with penalties attached to non-compliance

In organisations, company rules benefit both the company and the workers. Rules set standards of conduct at work; therefore, it becomes important that managers are aware of organisational rules and the procedures for dealing with those who break them.

Palmer (1998, 199) states that it is important to have rules at work to ensure that everybody knows what is expected of them and that things run smoothly. Importantly, rules are needed which cover the whole range of human resourcing, such as what work is done, how jobs are constituted, training and promotion, hours of work, health and safety, and standards of behaviour and performance.

Palmer (1998, 199) asserts that rules need to be clear, written down, and available particularly to new employees. He emphasizes that rules should be non-discriminatory and that they need to be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are still relevant and to check if any new rules need to be added. Here, Palmer makes a very important point: that rules need to be communicated clearly to all the staff, and those responsible for applying the rules should be trained appropriately to ensure that they know the rules and deal with staff fairly.

Rules set standards of conduct at work and are made to facilitate successful performance of the job. Rules at work cover areas like time keeping, absence, health and safety, misconduct, use of organizational facilities, discrimination, and security (Palmer 1998, 199.)

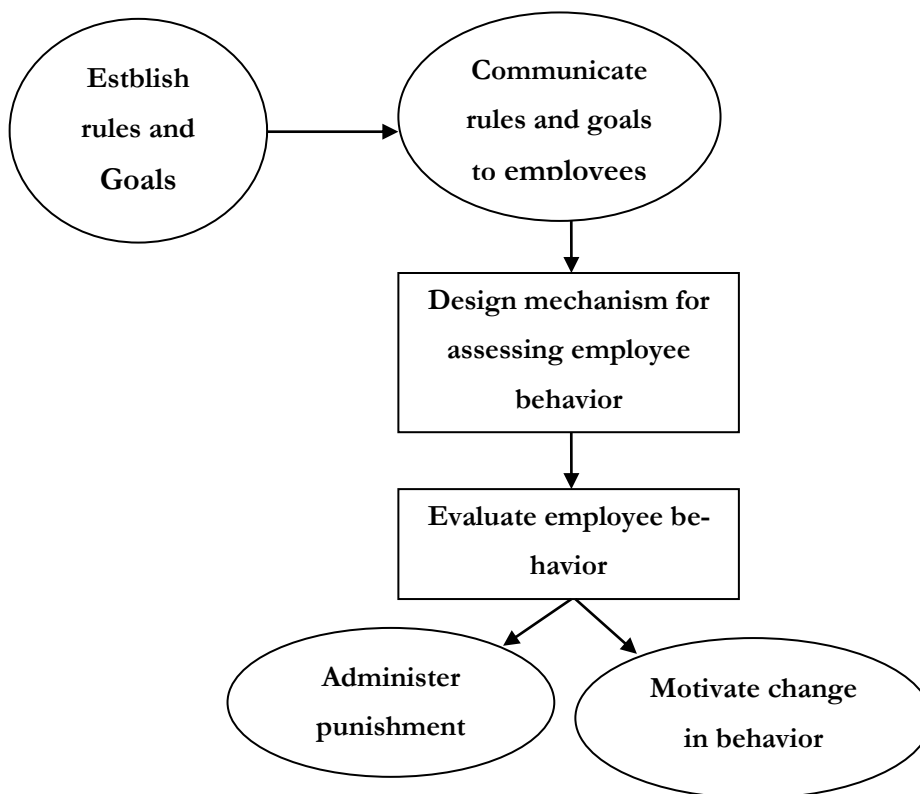
### **Rules as a Disciplinary Procedure**

Although discipline is often understood as something negative, because it means punishment for unacceptable behavior, Medina (2006, 200) explains it as something also positive in the sense that it means that the behavior of the members of the organisation conforms to what is expected. He continues on to describe it as an activity aimed at developing the individual employee so that he may behave properly.

According to Marchington and Wilkinson (2008, 297) a procedure is defined as a set of rules whose purpose is to influence the behaviour of management, employees and trade union representatives in a defined situation. They continue to add that the rules

are in effect, an agreed code of voluntary restraint on the use of power. This therefore proves the fact, which the main objective of any procedure is to establish an agreed set of rules so as to channel any discussion or discontent through the appropriate mechanism for its resolution.

Through the disciplinary procedure, management ensures that the rules are followed and standards are maintained. Palmer (1998, 200) maintains that a disciplinary procedure provides a method of dealing with breaches of the rules and can help someone who is not performing well to become more effective at work.



**Figure 2.** The Discipline Process (adapted from Medina 2006, 203)

From the above diagram it is important to note that rules represent a big role in the disciplinary procedure in an organisation. The first step in the disciplinary process creates a basis for work behaviour. Therefore it becomes important for management to determine the goals and objectives of the organisation so that individual employees get to know what specific behaviors to exhibit. (Medina, 2006.)

## **Factors influencing the formation of rules**

A number of factors can be identified when considering why a company needs to have a disciplinary procedure for its employees. Medina (2006, 200) identified the major factor to be difficult employees. He analyses this by discussing different categories of difficult employees, whose existence requires a company to have a proper and a well-functioning disciplinary procedure.

Although employees are expected to display good and proper conduct at work, there are individuals who may display poor behaviours at work. This may be traced to low morale caused by a number of internal factors like unfair treatment by superiors, lack of incentives, family problems and many others. This creates a situation of difficult employees, and to man such situations a disciplinary procedure has to be in place.

Medina also identifies another category of difficult employees as those who violate the law while at work. These may include those who steal from the company or co-workers, or commit physical abuse of employees or property (whether employee- or company-owned). The company incurs a lot of losses when its property is stolen. Likewise an employee who commits physical abuse on another employee also affects the performance of the abused employee.

The third category identified by Medina (2006, 200) is the category of difficult employees who break the company rules. As mentioned earlier on, rules are established to provide an environment conducive to making work efficient and effective. To achieve this, a set of rules which help to maintain these standards has to be established. Medina (2006, 2002) points out that a worker who breaks rules causes disruption in the operations inside the factory. When there is a consistent breaking of company rules, the supervisor has a problem.

## **Legislation**

For a long time, the European Community has worked towards achieving a high level of employment and social protection, improved living and working conditions, and economic and social wellbeing among its members. The European Union has set up

legislation governing each economic sector, among which companies and labour markets are included.

A number of legislations have been put in place, among which is the labour law. The labour law is aimed at ensuring that the rights of individuals involved in the labour market are well protected by employers.

Legislation setting minimum requirements is aimed at improving labour standards and strengthening workers' rights. Today labour laws also have a key role in ensuring that a high level of employment and sustained economic growth is accompanied by continuous improvement of the living and working conditions throughout the European Union.

Finland, as a member state of the European Union, has an obligation to ensure that the labour law is followed by its citizens. The role of the European Community is as seen in the quote below:

To this aim, the EC adopts legislation defining minimum requirements at EU level in the fields of working and employment conditions and the information and consultation of workers. The Member States then transpose the Community law into their national law and implement it, guaranteeing a similar level of protection of your rights and obligations throughout the EU (EU commission, 2012.)

Related to the above extract, now it remains the responsibility of the member state to ensure that different stakeholders follow the legislation so as to uphold the labour law. However it is important to note that the states work hand in hand with companies and labour unions to make sure that employees receive their rights as stipulated by the labour law.

### **3.3 Corporate Communication**

Communication is one of the most important work-related activities in today's business world. This is due to several roles it plays in the success of any business. In any organisation communication is necessary for effective management. Communication

has been defined by Hargie, Dickson and Tourish (1999, 13) as the scientific study of production, processing and effect of signal and symbol systems used by humans to send and receive messages. Guirdham (2005, 6) defines communication as a collective and interactive process of generating and interpreting messages. Both definitions hold the meaning that communication is a process of passing on messages from one person to the other.

Communication, more than any other subject in business, has implications for everyone in the organisation, from the newest administrative assistant to the CEO (Paul A. Argenti, 2009, 27). Evidently, communication has become a very important discipline in relation to company strategy.

With the above facts in mind, Keyton (2005, 105) defines organizational communication as a complex and continuous process through which organisational members create, maintain, and change the organisation by communicating verbally, nonverbally, electronically, and in writing with individuals and groups of people engaged in roles as internal and external stakeholders.

Communication has three major components; the sender, the message and the receiver. Corporate communication is about strategically thinking about these three components. According to Argenti (2009, 28) the sender is the organisation, the second component is the person to whom the end or object of the message is directed (referred to as the constituency) and the message as the third component in corporate communication. It is important to note that these components are highly connected to each other and this connection usually determines which message will be effective and which will not be.

The main **components of communication process** are as follows:

1. **Context** - Communication is affected by the context in which it takes place. This context may be physical, social, chronological or cultural. Every communication proceeds with context. The sender chooses the message to communicate within a context.

2. **Sender** - is a person who sends the message. A sender makes use of symbols (words or graphic or visual aids) to convey the message and produce the required response. For instance - a training manager conducting training for new batch of employees. Sender may be an individual or a group or an organization. The views, background, approach, skills, competencies, and knowledge of the sender have a great impact on the message. The verbal and non verbal symbols chosen are essential in ascertaining interpretation of the message by the recipient in the same terms as intended by the sender.
3. **Message** - is a key idea that the sender wants to communicate. It is a sign that elicits the response of recipient. Communication process begins with deciding about the message to be conveyed. It must be ensured that the main objective of the message is clear.
4. **Medium** – The means used to exchange or transmit the message. The sender must choose an appropriate medium for transmitting the message otherwise the message might not be conveyed to the desired recipients. The choice of appropriate medium of communication is essential for making the message effective and correctly interpreted by the recipient. This choice of communication medium varies depending upon the features of communication. For instance - Written medium is chosen when a message has to be conveyed to a small group of people, while an oral medium is chosen when spontaneous feedback is required from the recipient as misunderstandings are cleared then and there.
5. **Recipient** - The person for whom the message is intended/aimed/targeted. The degree to which the recipient understands the message is dependent upon various factors such as knowledge of recipient, their responsiveness to the message, and the reliance of messenger on recipient.
6. **Feedback** - is the main component of communication process as it permits the sender to analyze the efficacy of the message. It helps the sender in confirming the correct interpretation of message by the decoder. Feedback may be verbal (through words) or non-verbal (in form of smiles, sighs, etc.). It may take written form also in form of memos, reports, etc.



Effective corporate communication requires the setting of effective organisation strategies. According to Argenti (2009, 29) there should be three subsets of strategy-setting, which include: determining the objectives for a particular communication, deciding what resources are available for achieving the objectives, and diagnosing the organisation's reputation.

### 3.4 Employee Communication

It is argued by Argenti (2009, 60) that as companies focus on retaining a content workforce given changing values and demographics, they have to think strategically on how they communicate with employees through internal communication. He further stresses the fact that strong internal communication has always generated a more engaged, productive and loyal workforce.

Employee communication (internal communication) is defined as a process through which one interprets the situation of items that concern activities of the work community or its members' activities and in which the interpretation is made aware to others through interactive, message-delivering networks. Considering the changes in the business world, employee communication is more than memos, publications and broadcasts; it is about building a corporate culture based on particular values and having the potential to drive organisational change, Argenti (2009, 183).

Unlike 50 years back, employees of today are different in both values and needs as compared to employees of earlier days. Employees today are more educated and have higher expectations from the companies they work for. The work dynamics have also changed with tighter staffing, longer hours, and greater workloads with increased responsibilities. It is true, as Argenti puts it, that employees are increasingly demanding participation in the conversations that are driving change. This calls for effective employee communication at all levels of the organisation, regardless of the job role or responsibility (Argenti 2009, 183-184.)

In today's business, there is a need for leaders to be in close relationships with their employees. This connection can be achieved effectively through communication. Ac-

According to Quirke (2008, 73) if a company wants high performance leaders must demonstrate the connection between the company's success and that of its employees. He explains the connection as providing everyone with a shared understanding of the organization's strategic business issues and ensuring that they understand the "whys" and the "whats". Holtz (2004, 4) throws the ball back to the leaders, who should foster an environment in which communication is effective because communication that simply happens rarely achieves measurable, bottom-line results. He continues on to assert that companies that communicate well with their employees perform better in the measures that count, such as profitability, customer acquisitions and retention.

Holtz (2004, 5) sees employees as the most important audience for an organisation. Communication of any kind will not succeed if employees don't understand and agree with the message the company is delivering and act accordingly. Two reasons are given for this: first, employees are the company's face to all its various constituencies, and second, employees execute the business plan that is at the heart of all the communication aimed at other audiences.

Effective employee communications must achieve three results which are critical to an organization's success:

- a) Employees represent the company to its external audience in a manner consistent with the image the company's leaders want the outside world to see.
- b) Employees produce quality work that satisfies the needs of the customer.
- c) Employees don't quit and go to work someplace better.

The goal of employee communication as related to the above is to positively influence employees into achieving the goals set by the company (Holtz 2004, 5-7.)

### **3.4.1 Channels for Employee Communication**

Earlier on, communication was described as the process of passing on messages from one person to another. It is true that the message which has to be passed on to the other person goes through a particular channel for the receiver to get and understand

it. A communication channel is the route or the technology that is used to convey the message to the receiver. Communication channels include face-to-face meetings and conversations, letters, telephones, emails, blogs, reports, posters, brochures, and video conferences, among others. (Blundel and Ippolito 2008, 6.)

In any organisation, communication and communication channels play an important role in determining the effectiveness of the whole communication process. Communication channels can alter the message, and some channels accentuate certain attributes of the message while de-emphasizing others. Communication channels can also radically alter the organisation's social structures. Certain channels restrict access to key individuals whereas others encourage interactions. Communication channels therefore have an impact on organisational efficiency and effectiveness. It is therefore important to know which particular channels work best for a particular company's internal structure, mainly when it comes to employee communications. (Clampitt 2001, 102)

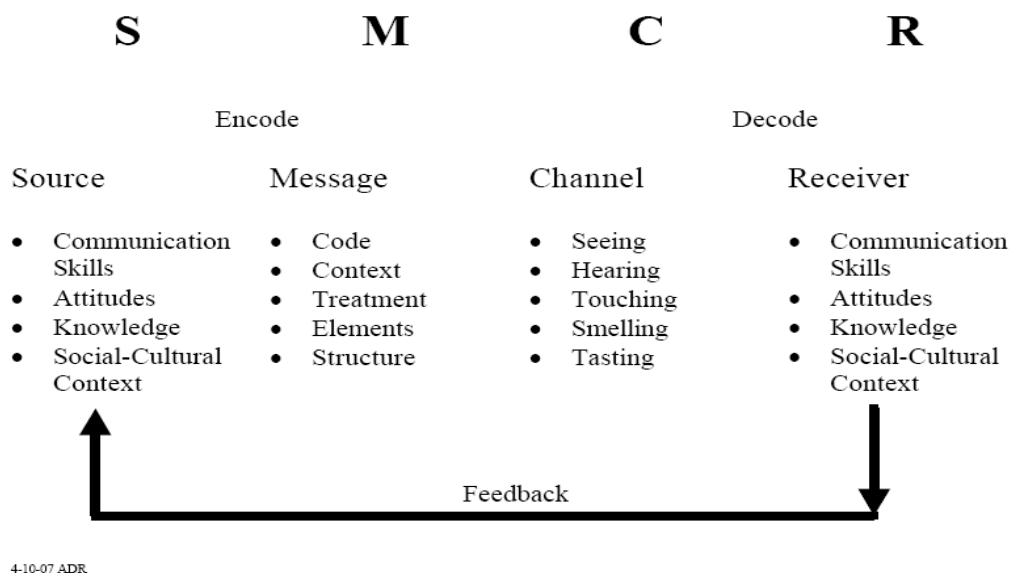
As Clampitt (2001,102) explains, learning to manage communication channels effectively may present major challenges, and Holtz (2004, 67) affirms the fact that communication channels should never be selected based on solely how much they cost but the most important measure is how effective they are. He continues on to assert that knowing which channels to choose requires an understanding of each channel's strengths and weaknesses, what they do best and where they fit in a strategic employee communication.

### **Selecting appropriate channels: SMCR Model**

Managers have the very important role of deciding what channel to use in communicating with employees. Clampitt (2001) analyses the SMCR model as a useful tool in selecting the most appropriate channels for a particular organisation. (See fig 2) To be able to use this model Clampitt (2001, 103) outlines four very important elements to be considered. These are:

1. The objective of the sender
2. The attribute of the message

3. The attribute of the channel
4. The characteristics of the receivers



**FIGURE 3:** Berlo's communication model,

According to figure, these elements can be analysed through relating them to each other and effectiveness measured by assessing the relationship between each, as below:

**The Sender- Message Test:** Clapitt seeks to analyze whether the sender's objectives are compatible with the attributes of the intended message. He looks at messages as having attributes that characterize their content and can vary along numerous dimensions, including levels of complexity, length, personal worth, formality, and degree of ambiguity. The senders of the messages also have a wide variety of intentions in communicating messages, which may include: motivating, informing, persuading, and soliciting ideas. On this note, the needs of the sender should harmonize with the characteristics of the message.

**The Message-Channel Test:** The model shows that each channel has limitations that filter the message. Clapitt (2001, 104) indicates that channels which are non-dynamic, such as memos or bulletins boards, are not effective in communicating complex mes-

sages, but can be useful and efficient in communicating fairly simple messages. Therefore, managers must be alert to the dynamic interplay between the message and the channel attributes in order to achieve effective communication.

**The Sender-Channel Test:** the purpose of this test is to measure if the objectives of the sender are compatible with the channels utilized. The senders must be sure that their intentions are congruent with the dynamics of the channel. For example: formal intentions require formal mediums, dynamic intentions require dynamic mediums.

**The Message-Receiver Test:** the messages should be compatible with the receiver's characteristics. The message's level of specificity should be adjusted to the receiver's knowledge base.

**The Channel-Receiver Test:** the test seeks to look at the relationship between the channel and the receiver. The channels utilized to deliver the intended message should be compatible with the receiver's characteristics.

### 3.4.2 Face-to-face Communication

Face-to-face communication tool has been viewed by Clampit (2001, 109) as the most effective tool in knowledge sharing in employee communication. Clampit affirms that face-to-face communication provides a wide variety of cues such as visual images, vocal tones, body movement, language and even smell. The unlimited access to these signals allows the audience to understand even complex issues.

Holtz (2004, 67) supports Clampit's argument by stressing the fact that much of the information gained in communication is derived from non-verbal cues where postures and body language, tone of voice, facial expressions all communicate as much as the words themselves. He adds that without face-to-face component of communication, information recipients are left to interpret an incomplete message. Although Holtz (2004, 68) argues that face-to-face communication with its essential characteristics is diminishing due to the ongoing trend of online communication tools, he maintains the

fact that face-to-face communication serves as a key communication tool in any organisations.

Leaders who intend on developing strong organisations that perform beyond expectations need to understand that face-to-face communication at every level of the company plays a key role in communication. Person-to-person connection and interaction is very important. Trust is the outcome of face-to-face communication where by employees that can associate a message to the person who delivered it. (Holtz 2004, 68-69.)

According to Holtz (2004, 69-70) the effectiveness of face-face communication depends on factors like; if an environment of trust already exists, if employees already feel involved in the company's communication system and if face-to-face communication is in the culture of the company. The role of this tool of communication depends on who is doing the communication. Here, Holtz (2004, 70) affirms that face-to-face communication is handled by senior managers, Middle managers and front-line supervisors.

**Middle managers:** Communication from middle managers plays a vital role in the process of cascading information from the highest level to the lowest level of the organisation. It is the middle managers who explain to the front-line supervisors what the message from the top leaders mean to the business. On that point middle managers should be provided by the details, resources and tools to communicate. In addition to that middle managers should be held accountable for communicating face-to-face with their direct reports.

Forums for the middle managers to communicate with their employees face-to-face include staff meeting, wandering around, one-on-one and team meetings. In wandering around middle managers feel out employees to see how well they understand their roles in executing the company's business plan then deliver the key message that that explain or reinforce their commitment to the plan's achievements. With one-on-one, middle managers have opportunities to make sure that their reports incorporate core business messages reflective and appropriate in the workplace as well as give redress to

any questions their reports may have about the meaning or the substance of the messages.

**Front-line Supervisors:** Further down the line a message is communicated, the greater the responsibility the individual doing the communication has for adding context to the message that started at the top. It is at the front line that employees turn to their supervisors and ask the most significant questions in the communication process. With this fact, it means that front-line supervisors should be the focus of significant communication efforts. They need the resources, information, tools and training to ensure that they are able to translate messages answer questions and build employee trust and commitment.

Front-line supervisors have opportunity for face-to-face communication through daily briefings, staff meetings and performance evaluation, and wandering around. With daily briefings shifts often begin with a briefing to cover the daily production goals, safety issues and other important topics. Supervisors can also use these briefings to reinforcing front-line employees' importance in the larger scheme of things. Wandering around for front-line supervisors is done as a part of their job thus supervisors need to be ready at any time to answer employee questions. They must also be prepared to take advantage of any occasion to chat up an employee about how his/her job affects the department's performance and how in turn, the department's accomplishments drive plant or business unit achievements and ultimately the success of the entire organisation. (Holtz 2004, 70-78.)

### **3.5 Intercultural communication**

In this section, intercultural factors will be analysed with regard to how they affect communication. Much of the analysis will focus on intercultural communication barriers and how they affect communication in the work place.

Ting-Toomey (1999, 21) refers to intercultural communication as a symbolic exchange process between people of different cultures with the general goal of creating a shared meaning between dissimilar individuals in an interactive situation. It is also viewed by

Varner & Beamer (2011, 35) as communication by members of different cultures for work place purposes. Cleary (2008, 11) defines intercultural communication as communication between people who belong to different cultures, who thus have different values, beliefs, behaviours and ways of communicating. Ting-Toomey (1999, 22-24), holds the view that intercultural communication can best be understood through five core assumptions which he presents as follows:

**Intercultural communication involves varying degrees of cultural group membership differences.** He explains that intercultural communication takes place when our cultural group membership factors affect our communication process on either conscious or unconscious levels. He continues on to say that cultural differences may include deep-level differences such as cultural traditions, beliefs and values, and that they can also include the mismatches that occur when different norms, rules and interaction scripts are applied in particular situations.

Ting-Toomey (1999, 22) asserts that we need to develop an understanding of the valuable differences that exist between identity groups yet at the same time continuously recognize the commonalities that exist on a panhuman identity level.

**Intercultural communication involves simultaneous encoding and decoding of verbal and nonverbal messages in the exchange process.** Ting-Toomey (1999) asserts that an effective encoding and decoding process leads to shared meaning, and ineffective encoding and decoding by one of the transceivers can potentially lead to intercultural misunderstanding. On this note Ting-Toomey points out that communicators need to cultivate additional awareness and sensitivity along multiple levels of intercultural understanding.

Ting-Toomey's other assumption is that **many intercultural encounters that are well-meaning can nevertheless result in clashes.** Well meaning clashes are said to be misunderstandings arising out of encounters in which people are behaving properly and in a socially skilled manner, (Ting-Toomey 1999, 22.)



Behaviors that are considered proper or effective in one culture can be considered improper in another culture. It is true, as Tin-Toomey puts it, that members of different cultural communities tend to use their cultural scripts, often on unconscious levels, to evaluate the appropriateness of others' conversational openings or exist. Effective intercultural communication starts with the practice of mindful interpersonal communication, which in turn starts with conscious monitoring of our reactive emotions in negatively judging or evaluating communication differences that stem from cultural differences. **Intercultural communication always takes place in a context.** This means that patterns of thinking and behaving are always interpreted within an interactive situation or context.

### 3.5.1 Barriers to Intercultural Communication

In attempting to interact in any organisation, often the resulting messages are somehow lost or misunderstood. These failures are expensive but the cost of ineffective communication is not just in time and resources wasted in preparing messages. There are also cumulative effects including those experienced by the intended receiver who may have been relying on information contained in the message, and by the sender who assumes that the message has arrived intact. (Blundel and Ippolito 2008, 27)

Barriers are seen as noise in communication. Unlike other elements which help the process of communication, noise interrupts the success of the communication process. Hargie, Dickson and Tourish (1999, 16) describes noise as anything which distorts or interferes with meaning and message. Here, noise is categorized into physical noise, psychological noise and semantic noise. Cleary (2008, 11) defines communication barriers as factors which hamper or prevent the smooth flow of the message from the sender to the audience.

As Guirdham (2001, 805) states, cultural differences affect intercultural encounters usually by leading to a misunderstanding or conflict at both the individual and the group level. She continues on to point out that interpersonal misunderstanding and conflicts can arise at the individual level as different values, beliefs or worldview are manifested in communication behaviours, and as culture creates differing expectations

and differing styles or patterns of speech. At the group level, intergroup processes can be triggered by, for example, an individual's non-verbal behaviour or way of speaking, which stereotypically represent a group (Guirdham 2005, 180).

Intercultural communication barriers cause miscommunication. According to Guirdham (2005, 180) miscommunication includes the following cases:

1. Communication is intended but none occurs
2. The receiver makes no sense of the message
3. The receiver misunderstands the message
4. The speaker's communicative intention is not understood
5. Information imparted by the speaker which s/he intended to have believed is not believed.
6. An attempt to persuade fails
7. An attempt to exert power fails
8. A communication is understood but provokes unintended conflict.

The above is not an exhaustive list, and miscommunication includes many other instances. In brief, miscommunication is described as all cases where barriers to communication are effective. (Guirdham 2005, 180)

### **Stereotyping**

Stereotyping is described by Toomey (1996, 161) as an exaggerated set of expectations and beliefs about the attributes of a group membership category. She also adds that it can refer to subconsciously-held beliefs about a membership group. Guirdham (2008, 150) holds the view that stereotyping is a stable set of beliefs or preconceived ideas that the members of a group share about the characteristics of a group of people. Stereotyping can lead to distortion of communication in an organisation. It may lead people to base their messages, their ways of transmitting them and their reception of them on false assumptions. Jandt (2010, 89) outlines some ways through which stereotyping is harmful to intercultural communication, as follows:

- a) Stereotypes cause us to assume that a widely-held belief is true when it may not be.
- b) Continued use of stereotyping reinforces the belief.
- c) It can be a self-fulfilling prophecy for the person stereotyped. This may lead to stereotype-confirming communication.

The above factors are supported by Guirdham (2005, 184) where she points out that stereotyping can influence how information is processed. More favourable information is remembered about in-groups and less favorable information about out-groups.

Guirdham also points out that stereotyping creates expectations about others and that individuals often feel pressure to confirm these expectations. In addition to this, she continues on to assert that stereotyping constrains others' patterns of communication. Conventions and politeness may prevent people who perceive they are being treated in accordance with a stereotype from disputing it.

### **Prejudice**

This is yet another intercultural factor which can cause distortion in the intercultural communication process. Prejudice, according to Guirdham (2005, 185), is a thoughtless, derogatory attitude towards all or most of the members of a group. Prejudice gives rise to myths such that some dialects or accents indicate lower intelligence.

Prejudice can affect communication in the way prejudiced people distort and misread communication from those about they hold prejudiced views. On the other side people who become aware of others' prejudices about themselves or others are likely to develop negative attitude to the prejudiced individual's opinions in general regardless of how soundly based those other opinion may be. Prejudice is also often displayed in negative micro-messages which are subtle, semi conscious, devaluing messages which discourage and impair performance, possibly leading to damage self-esteem and withdrawal. Micro-messages can affect things like employee productivity, morale, absenteeism and turnover all critical to the success of the company. Prejudice naturally affects

the response of members in of the minority groups to communication they receive at work. (Guirdham 2005, 184-188.)

### **3.5.2 Language in Intercultural Communication**

Language according to Varner and Beamer (2011, 45) plays a major role in effective intercultural communication. They assert that language and culture are intertwined and shape each other. Much as Varner and Beamer (2011, 44) agree that language helps in communicating with people from different background; they also stress the point that cultural literacy is necessary to understand the language being used. They support this view by pointing out that if we select language without being aware of cultural implications, we may at best not communicate well and at worst send the wrong message. Ting-Toomey (1999, 85) supports this view through pointing out that while language and verbal communication can easily create misunderstandings, it is also fortunately can clarify misunderstandings. Sensitive language usage is a pivotal vehicle in reflecting our mindful attitudes in communicating with dissimilar others Ting-Toomey (1999, 85).

A language is an arbitrary, symbolic system that names ideas, feelings, experiences, events, people, and other phenomena and that is governed by the multilayered rules developed by members of a particular speech community Ting-Toomey (1999, 85). Language reflects the environment in which we live, where by the environment influence the development of technology, products and appropriate vocabulary. Language is also reflects cultural values, Varner and Beamer (2011, 46).

In intercultural communication, Guirdham (2005, 227) discusses the choice of a language as one of the skills in achieving effective intercultural communication. She further discusses that using a language understood by both parties increases understanding. She later asserts that language choice has implications for the nature of the relationship that bilingual speakers develop and for weather they are included in informal communication channels. In communicating with a nonnative speaker Varner and Beamer (2011, 70) argue that the success of the communication will depend to a great

extent on how well one is adapts to that person. They assert it that communicating with a nonnative speaker in any language takes skills and experience.

While communicating with a nonnative speakers there are number of things to be noted so as communication can be successful mainly in face-to-face communication and these may include; **speaking slowly**, slowing down helps a nonnative speaker comprehend what you say. A native speaker must adjust his/her speed to the level of the other side. **Avoiding slangs and colloquialisms**, slangs change and therefore the other person may not be familiar with them. Foreign language instructions in most countries emphasize correct and formal language rather than colloquial language, a nonnative speaker may not understand when communicated in a colloquial language. **Being Sincere**, genuine sincerity helps to create a positive atmosphere and helps to overcome obstacles. When both sides are sincere both will work hard to communicate verbally. **Being culturally sensitive** is yet another very important point to note. The more one knows about the culture of the other side the easier will be for one to speak with a foreigner who speaks only a little of one's language. One should note that cultural mistakes sometimes drown out the verbal message. (Varner and Beamer 2011, 70, 71, 72, 73.)

Much as the above can help language in the face-to-face communication, there are other factors listed by Varner and Beamer (2011, 73-74) which work as very important tools in communicating with a nonnative speaker in written communication. These include; Use plenty of white space, use of correct titles and spelling of names, understanding patterns of organisation, being careful with dates, numbers, and avoiding abbreviations. These guidelines according to Varner and Beamer (2011, 73) help to reduce errors which can be serious hurdles for a nonnative speaker. They add that to avoid confusion for a nonnative speaker, one must proofread carefully for spelling, punctuations and grammar.

## **4 Research methodology**

This chapter discusses the methods used to write this research, why these particular methods were considered over others and how they helped to achieve the success of this research.

### **4.1 Qualitative approach**

The research was done using the qualitative research method. The data was collected, analyzed and discussed using the same method. Qualitative research is defined as research which pursues objectives through techniques which allows the researcher to provide elaborate interpretations without depending on numerical measurements (Zikmum, Babin, Carr, and Griffin 2010, 133). They continue to affirm that qualitative research does not rely on self-response questionnaires containing structured response formats, but is rather less structured than quantitative research.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007, 480) view qualitative data as the kind of data which has not been quantified and can be a product of all research strategies. Bearing in mind the nature of this study, the researcher collected qualitative data from both primary and secondary sources

#### **4.1.1 The Interviews**

The interview form of data collection is described as a purposeful discussion between two or more people. The use of interviews can help a researcher, mainly in a qualitative research project, to collect valid and reliable data that are relevant to the research question and objectives. The researcher chose to use interviews for their ease, and because he hoped to get the most reliable data using this method if he structured them well.

Since the population the researcher was dealing with was such a multi-cultural group, he chose to use both structured and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews are interviews where the researcher uses questionnaires based on a predetermined and

standardized set of questions. The researcher reads the questions and then records the responses on a standardized schedule. By contrast, semi-structured interviews are where the researcher has a list of themes and questions to be covered, but the actual content may vary from interview to interview (Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill 2007, 320.)

The researcher employed structured interviews when interviewing the top managers because they had limited time and were not the main target of this research, although the data collected from them was instrumental to the whole process. For the floor workers, the researcher decided to use the semi-structured interview method because he had much more time with them, and they were interested in the whole project and willing to give as much information as he wanted.

The face to face interview approach was thus the most suitable for this research, since the target population was very free and relaxed. It was selected over others approaches because it was easy for the researcher to freely interact with the interviewees and hence gather more reliable data from them (Miles and Huberman 1994, 11.)

Six people were interviewed, of whom two were top managers, two were Floor managers, and two were floor workers. The managers and floor workers had separate questionnaires, but both were structured to collect data related to the same themes. All the interviews took place at the company premises and during working hours. This was because the researcher didn't want to encroach on the interviewees' free time from work, as this would affect their responses when interviewed.

The floor managers allowed the researcher to book time when he wanted to take someone off work for their interview. All interviews were structured to take 30-40 minutes, although some took a little longer due to the activeness of some respondents. However, none of the interviews lasted more than an hour.

All the respondents to the interviews were selected with great care to enable the success of the whole process. They were chosen because of their potential to be really in-

formative, they had been in the company for some time, (in the case of the managers) they had specific data that was needed, and because they were in the middle of the problem being investigated and so it was important to collect data from them. The floor workers interviewed had been very active with the company activities, understood English, and they were really informative since they had always been involved in discussions concerning changes in the company and had been very interactive with different people. By choosing to interview these people the researcher hoped to get very reliable and relevant data. The interviews were scheduled differently due to changes which were taking place within the company structure. To avoid bias in the data collected, the researcher had to take time and wait until the storm caused by the change had settled.

#### **4.1.2 Participant observer**

This is where a researcher attempts to participate fully in the lives and activities of the subjects and thus become a member of their group, organisation or community. This enables the researchers to share their experiences by not merely observing what is happening but also feeling it (Saunders, Lewis and Adrian Thornhill 2007, 283).

Being an employee of the case company, the researcher gathered some of the data through this method. It was easy to collect some data by being amidst of the problem. The researcher found this method important to use because he was involved in the activities of the company on a daily basis. Many events provided a lot of data which could be useful in the analysis of the problem.

This method was also used to collect some data from some groups of the population whose languages the researcher did not understand well and who do not use English much. The researcher gathered the data by observing their behaviour and attitudes concerning the problem in question.

However, as Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007, 283) put it, it is important that the target group gets to know that they are being observed for a certain purpose. Therefore, the researcher made sure that all the target population was informed about the



ongoing research on them and that he would be observing their activities in some situations. This helped to make them feel free with the researcher and act naturally, since they didn't feel like they were being spied on.

## **4.2 Interview Themes**

The interview themes are related to the relevant theories of rules and compliance, employee communication and intercultural communication, in order to answer the research question and the investigative questions stated in Chapter 1.2. The theories discussed how rules can be formulated and effectively communicated to employees, taking into consideration some intercultural factors which can help boost the whole internal communication within a multicultural group of floor workers. The major focus was put on employee communication as the main avenue to achieving a compliant group of workers, and intercultural communication as one of the tools which can be used to promote employee communication in an organisation with culturally diverse teams.

Even though two different questionnaires were used, both of them had questions which were highly related to the themes presented in the theory. Here, it should be seen that the interview questions were sorted into three themes. Below, it is explained why it was thought important for the researcher to ask these questions.

### **4.2.1 Rules and Compliance**

Being at the core position of the research problem, it was important to know how rules are formulated and which characteristics they have. Factors which influence the formation of these rules in an organisation were discussed. On this note, therefore, it was important for the interview to explore the sources of rules and regulations which exist for the workers in Caternet Finland Oy. As seen in attachment 2, the questionnaire for the managers involved questions like:

- Who makes the rules to be given to the floor workers? How do you categorize them?

- What major factors are considered when making these rules?
- Is there a structure followed while formulating these rules? Who decides what should be included in the rules?
- How often are new rules made? What factors cause the new rules to be made? Are the old ones usually reviewed? How often?

The interview starts with a straight-forward question which seeks to find out how the company comes up with the rules and regulations which are given to the floor workers. The theories on rules analysed how important it is to know how these rules are formulated, and who is responsible for their existence in the company. It is also crucial to know how the company decides to categorize these rules, with the aim of knowing which ones are more important to the company and which ones are given more attention when being communicated to the floor workers.

The interview questions go on to scrutinize the process through which these rules are made and how often they come into existence. The importance of this will be seen in how the floor workers perceive these rules and their existence in the company. Palmer (1998, 199) asserts that: rules need to be clear and well written down and available particularly to new employees. The questions also needed to analyze the importance of these rules during their formulation to the managers and other people involved in their formulation, and what specific factors influence this particular company to come up with new rules for this particular group of floor workers.

The theme of rules and compliance is also investigated from the floor workers' point of view. It is true that the rules in question are formulated for the floor workers to comply with, and so it was important to investigate if the floor workers understood the rules as they exist, and how they feel about new rules. The following questions were addressed to the floor workers:

- What is your nationality? How long have you been living in Finland? How long have you been working for the company?

- How well do you read, write and speak Finnish? What other languages do you speak?
- How well are you familiar with the company rules and policies? What do you have to say about them?
- How did you receive your first set of rules? Who gave them to you and were they clear to you?

There are a number of issues these questions seek to investigate. By starting with simple and straightforward questions, the interview seeks to understand the respondent's background and how familiar s/he is with Caternet Finland Oy.

In order to check for clarity of the rules, it was important to find out exactly when the floor workers received them and whether the rules had been formulated in a manner that was easy for them to understand. Knowing the language in which they are written was also important, since it measures how easy or difficult it might be for floor workers to interpret and comply with the rules. (See attachment 1 for the questions)

#### **4.2.2 Employee communication**

Employee communication is a very important theme throughout this research. Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of employee communication in Caternet Finland Oy would help to pave the way for improvement. During the interviews, both managers and floor workers were questioned on matters concerning this particular area. Communication of these rules to floor workers is a real issue that reflects the communicator's understanding of the general principles of employee communication. From the interview with the managers the following questions were asked in relation to employee communication:

- Could you briefly explain the communication process of these rules from top management to the floor workers?
- Could you describe the medium used when communicating rules to floor workers? How are these media selected?

- How is the communication of company rules handled on an everyday basis?

It is clear that the above questions were aimed at getting to know if the company had a clear path for employee communication. The managers were required to explain what kind of methods they employ in communicating to workers. They also needed to understand which communication channels are used for communication of these rules. To achieve compliance of workers to the company rules, there has to be a means of continuously sustained communication and evaluation. That is why the interviews also sought to know how the communication of company rules is handled on an everyday basis.

From the floor workers' perspective, it was important to know how they felt about employee communication. A number of questions were asked during the interview to detect if what the managers said tallied with what the floor workers said. It was also important to investigate if what the management thinks works best for the floor workers really does work. The following questions analyzed employee communication from the floor workers' point of view:

- How did you receive your first set of rules? Who gave them to you and were they clear to you?
- In what language are these rules written? Do you understand them?
- How often do you receive new rules? Who brings the new rules to you? How do you receive them, through:
  - a. Email
  - b. Word of mouth
  - c. Written on paper
  - d. Phone calls
  - e. Through meetings?
- Do managers explain the rules to you? How?

Holtz (2004, 5) sees employees as the most important audience for an organisation. He continues on to say that communication of any kind will not succeed if employees don't understand and agree with the message the company is delivering, and act accordingly. In this case the messages are the rules and the communicators are the managers, the audience being the floor workers. Data was gathered from the above question to identify how floor workers perceived the methods used by managers to communicate rules to them.

### **4.2.3 Intercultural communication**

This is yet another very important theme which was well explored throughout the interviews with reference to the relevant theories. In this research, intercultural communication is seen as a supportive tool to employee communication, and insights are given to pave the way for effective employee communication. It was important to explore this area because Caternet Finland Oy employs such a wide range of people from different cultural backgrounds, which mean that there is a great need to understand how to communicate with such a multi-cultural group of workers. The following questions were posed to the managers:

- Briefly explain how workers from different cultural backgrounds are handled in the day-to-day communication of rules.
- Explain how floor workers from different cultural background respond to rules. Has there been a problem in how different people respond to rules? What has been done to solve the situation?
- What problems do managers experience from workers of different cultures in the day-to-day communication of company rules?

The above questions were used to interview the managers who engage in the day-to-day communication with the above-mentioned multi-cultural group of floor workers. The major intention of these questions was to explore the extent to which intercultural issues are catered for in Caternet Finland Oy, mainly while communicating the rules. The theories fully explore various intercultural communication barriers; the researcher thought that addressing these barriers could help to iron out the communication prob-

lems within Caternet which managers might be experiencing while communicating with the multi-cultural group of floor workers.

To investigate these themes, it was also important to collect data from the employees' side to measure how they felt about some problems in communication. Some questions were incorporated into the interview, and these helped to collect data about intercultural communication issues.

### **4.3 Data Analysis**

The next phase of this research involved the challenging task of having to analyse all the gathered data conducted from the interviewees. Whilst the interviews had been conducted in English, most of the interviewees were not native English speakers. However most of the errors identified from the analysis was down to phonetics or language mistakes.

In order to detect where the similarities or the differences were, I transcribed each interview word for word and combined all the answers from the interviews, question by question. . This helped identify more easily how the answers related to the themes. An interview diary having been used, some of the data collected through this was incorporated with written data from the interviews to see how they related.

Having also used the observation data collecting method, there was a need to combine the data from the observations with the data from the interviews. This required that I condense the data as a whole into a more manageable and controlled data set by summarising the data into key points and condensing longer phrases into fewer words, whilst retaining the overall meaning but making it easier to draw meaning from the overall data collected. A point to note is that the main scripts transcribed from the interviews and the observation were retained and kept alongside with the summary for further reference, so as to maintain the validity of the data during the analysis.

Having compiled the data and matched it with the relevant themes, the results could be examined. Presentation of the results follows below. The results are presented in the

order of the interview themes as discussed in Chapter 4.3. The three main themes discussed in the previous chapter will be discussed through the investigative questions outlined in Chapter 1.2, since each interview question aimed at answering the themes and the four investigative questions.

#### **4.4 Reliability and Validity**

Reliability and validity are very important factors in the trustworthiness of any research. Saunders et al (2009, 156) have described reliability as the extent to which data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings.

**Cultural diversity:** It is true that the sample population is highly culturally diversified; this increases the difficulty in finding appropriate techniques that would suit each cultural subgroup and enable collection of the most reliable data. Different cultures perceive and interpret information differently, and therefore there was a risk that the research might fail to find the most suitable way to reflect all the groups, thus creating bias in the data collected.

It was therefore important in this research to select the most informative member of the population regardless of their cultural background. Being familiar with most of the people in the target group the researcher was able to take a clear observation on who can be more informative basing on the issues concerning the company. This was made possible through engaging different workers in small talk so as to measure their participative levels and also check how much informative they could be.

In order to collect the most reliable data from the target population, there was need to have a common language fully understood by all the people and the researcher. However, there was a problem that the floor workers understand different languages and there was hardly a common language for all of them. Finnish seems to be the main language in the company, but a large number of the employee population does not understand it well enough to communicate effectively in it. This means that most workers cannot express themselves well in Finnish or English. The researcher also cannot communicate in Finnish (understood by most of the sample population) or

Russian (the second most widely used language among floor workers). There was, therefore, a risk in getting less information or missing information as a result of the language barrier.

The solution was to divide the employee population into language sub-groups, where those who understand English were interviewed separately from those who did not. The purpose of this was to find out who spoke English more fluently. To avoid confusion, time wastage and resources I decided to interview only those who spoke English or even minimal. This could help in narrowing the risks which could be faced in conducting the interviews in different languages which could cause much time wasted on translating the data. There was also a threat that some information could be lost or misinterpreted during the whole process of translating the data into English.

**Inadequate information:** It is evident that most workers become skeptical about their jobs when it comes to answering questions concerning their performance. Many might fail to give honest answers in fear of losing their jobs. Middle managers might fear to answer certain questions, worrying about their weaknesses. This may lead to getting wrong information, which may jeopardize the entire research.

To address these issues, a confidentiality clause was agreed upon for protection towards whoever took part in the survey. There would be no need for disclosure of the subjects' names, or identification of them on a personal basis. Apart from the researcher, their answers would not be showed to anybody else.



## 5 Results

This chapter will present the results from the interviews and discuss them as related to the theories presented in Chapter 3. The discussion in this section intends to answer the four investigative questions in relation to the interview themes.

### 5.1 The Need for compliance rules

This investigative question explores the kind of employee rules and regulations which Caternet Oy has, and how and when they come into existence. It also seeks to measure the extent to how important these rules are to the company.

The results from the interviews reveal that the main rules in the company which workers have to comply with are mainly categorized into Safety rules, food and general Hygiene rules, quality and production control among others which govern the entire work environment. However, the managers stressed the point that Food and Hygiene rules are very important to the company and are given a fore front priority in emphasis. Being a food company, there are regular procedures which have to be put into practice on a daily basis so as to keep the standards set by the food control legislations. When asked why these particular rules are important to the company one manager puts it that;

There are these ISO standards which are the biggest influences to the hygiene rules because we have yearly inspections. If we talk about cleaning we have these papers where u have to sign –is this cleaned, and is it okay, it's in Finnish law we have to obey . We have a supervisor coming here each month to see how we have filled the papers, do we have all the papers in order and then they give a report and if we don't obey these rules we can lose these certificates and if we lose them we lose clients.

When asked what compliance rules there are and where they come from, the managers answered that most of the rules they have come from applicable legislation. One of the managers narrated the EU legislation which governs food production and also local authority controls, as being the main sources of the rules and regulations. It was noted that the main regulations lay down the general principles and requirements of food

legislation and procedures in matters of food safety. It is these general principles set by the European Union and the local authorities that the company interprets into rules and regulations which are given to the workers to follow through the in-house control plan.

Rules have also been influenced by the customers themselves. In many cases the company's big customers come to the premises to check on how the operations are going on. They also involved in checking if the company is following the required standards. Through this inspection, the customers can suggest what should be done and this has in many cases resulted into new rules given to the workers as suggested by the customer. As one manager puts it;

We have clients coming here, they have their own inspections and they give us instructions on how to do some things. One example is selleri is very allergic and a group from Fazer, they inspected our place and they were scared to see that we have selleri and parskeli nakka near each other. They instructed us to create new place for selleri and then the rule came concerning selleri as you know. It is very important.

New products from the customers have in most cases resulted into compliance rules. The main company customers can dictate on how they want their product to be made and which instruction or procedure should be followed. This has not only brought about new methods to work on these particular customers but instructions have also come with rules to workers on how to implement the new production methods as wanted by the customers.

Furthermore, to know how rules in Caternet Oy are formulated, there was need to investigate if there was a formal structure followed while formulating these rules and as seen from the above, there was no any formal structure since rules come from different angles of the entire business process. Another way mentioned in the interviews was the different managers who get hired from different companies come in with their rules which they have been using in their previous work places. The company has been going through a number of changes mainly with the upper management. These managers have come from companies who do related business like Caternet Finland

Oy. So, in their move to Caternet they come with new rules and try to implement them to the floor workers.

On this particular point one middle manager was asked if he was part of the group that makes these rules and in his answers he responded that he only receives instructions from the top management as seen below

I don't make the rules by myself I just get orders from my supervisors and then I try in my own way to see that people follow these rules. As you said it is a big company and we have a very big room it is a difficult to check that everybody obeys these rules.

When the respondents were asked on what they thought the management selected those particular rules are they given one responded answered that;

I think it is in line with different companies they have worked in, maybe or where they have worked before, they bring these rules here and of course it is competition. If we have better hygiene for example we have an advantage over different companies.

The above is an indication that the rules can come anywhere in the company depending on the need which may arise anytime. This can be supported from the data collected through observation where it has occurred a number of times rules and regulations have come after some incidents have happened to either workers or after a visit of the customers or even the owners of the company. Managers find it easy to form rules and send down to workers. Here is where the question on: *How often do new rules come into existence?* The middle manager answered that they come so often and almost every time there has been something done wrong by the workers, in his answer he is quoted;

I think weekly. We have new inspections each week. I don't know did you see what we got 2 weeks ago. Big list with photos what we had wrong in this place and we had to write how we can correct these and who will supervise it and how we are going to prevent that it's not going to happen again and so we had to form some rules for correct the situation

From the above, having a formal structure which governs rules formation in the company becomes impossible.

On the question of how they are formulated: Rules and regulation to be given to floor workers are written down in Finnish language to be later printed out on paper and circulated to respective floors. However as it will be shown later, some of the rules are just talked out by word of mouth.

## 5.2 The communication of rules to floor workers

The second Investigative question: *How should the rules communicated to floor workers?* seeks to research on how the rules are communicated to the floor workers. As already seen in the interview themes section (sub chapter 4.2), both managers and floor worker were interviewed.

Presently there is no official communication structure designed to communicate rules to floor workers. The rules can be communicated in anyway which suits the communicator or the situation and purpose for what particular rules are made for. As already seen from above, rules are made by the upper management and passed onto the middle managers to communicate to the floor workers. It becomes the role of the floor managers to find particular ways through which the floor workers get these rules.

However, it is evidenced that rules have been passed on to workers through two major ways i.e. word of mouth (meetings) and paper on walls and some have had a chance to be handed a script where these rules are written. A point to note here is that not every employee of the company has got a chance to have the rules in written form to themselves to read through at their convenient time. One respondent when asked; *How did you receive your first set of rules? Who gave them to you?*, he answered that;

I don't have any memory if the supervisor who received me on the first day explained anything about the first set of rules. S/he handed me a knife, chopping board, garbage bin and showed how to work.

From the observation the researcher discovered that the rules are truly written and glued or some pinned on walls in different parts of the company. Inside the production premises, different areas are reserved for communication purposes. Text is written on

paper and put in these areas and in Finnish language. However, just like rules even other information is put in the same areas. This has caused congestion of materials in such a small place since almost all the paper material is put in the same area. This congestion has let some papers to drop off the walls including the rules and there is no one caring to put them back.

Furthermore, there are several times when new rules have been brought and just put on the kitchen table. This has happened when a pile of papers are printed out and get dropped on the table where all workers come for their break. This happens and no one takes the burden to inform workers of what they are and what they should do for them.

**Meetings** have been another way through which rules are communicated to the workers. As one of the policies of the company, there has to be weekly meetings for the floor workers where they get informed about things going on in the company. The results from the interviews show that new rules also get communicated to workers during these meetings. It is happening that new rules are read to the workers by the managers who are conducting the meeting. This is where it was noted that a copy won't be printed out to each of the member in the meeting but everyone is expected to listen and remember.

On the question of how effective these meeting are as a communication channel for the rules to floor workers, the results show that the management has been disappointed on how people respond. One manager asserted it that they haven't been the best means to communicate rules since people don't listen what is being communicated during the meetings; she went further to say that;

Keeping meetings is not effective because I have seen if we keep meetings for big group maybe 2 people listen and the rest sleep or doesn't care and they ask from the 2 people who were interested what was that about, and that's it.

It was also revealed that the top management doesn't want the meetings to take place because they waste a lot of production time and if they should take place they should

be as short as possible. This has led to less information to be communicated to the floor workers. In most cases rules have just been read to the workers and not well explained for them to understand.

The above is the same reason why language groups meetings were removed. One middle manager mentioned that they used to hold meetings in different language groups i.e. the English speakers, the Finnish speakers and the Russian speakers but the top management ordered only one language (Finnish) to be used so as to reduce time wasted on meetings even though they all used to take place simultaneously and for the same duration.

Another point comes from the observation where the researcher found out that not all the floor workers get the same chance to attend these meetings every time they happen. This is because of the shifts system. The company has different shifts; the early morning shift which starts from 06:00- 14:00, the morning shift from 08:00 -16:00, evening shift 14:00- 22:00 and the Night shift 22:00-06. A point to note here is that most of the meetings take place during day time at 14:00 only on Wednesdays; another point is that although some people rotate in those shifts every week, some workers who do night shifts are fixed there, they don't do any other shift. Some workers who usually have day off on Wednesdays also miss the meetings. Some workers who are also students only work on weekends where there are no meetings since most the managers are having weekends free.

Following on from such findings, it was imperative for my research to seek ways in which it would be possible for workers who had missed meetings due to the shift patterns in place to keep abreast with the information shared at these meetings. This appeared to be difficult to attain because there was no written account of the information or minutes from such meetings, whereby no way of continuity or communication of any rules required to be implemented.

### 5.3 Intercultural factors in formulating and communicating rules

The above investigative question aimed at finding data on how cross cultural issues are taken into account in Caternet Oy while the rule are being made and then communicated to the workers. As already seen in the previous chapters, the company employs such a wide range of people from different country with different cultural backgrounds. So it becomes important to know how cultural issues are handled in rules and communication.

Even though the floor level is composed of such a wide range of different cultures of workers, it was clear that intercultural issues are not considered while formulating and communicating rules. The data reveal that all the formulation and communication is approached from one perspective.

From the interviews it was reported that there has not been much done to consider cultural issues into the formulation and communication of rules to the workers. One manager thought that it was not necessary to care for each culture in the company because it was time wasting. The top managers knew that it was important to consider different cultures but thought it will take time since they are still dealing with other important issue.

The middle managers who deal with the floor workers were divided on this issue, one was concerned about intercultural issues and the other just didn't see any problem related with cultures. When asked on what problems do managers experience from workers of different cultures in the day-to-day communication of company rules he was quoted saying;

I haven't seen cultural related problems. They are the normal problems. Somebody just doesn't like you and we have to work together, so it's the only I think. Each one has his personality, it doesn't Matter are you are Finnish or from Nigeria or Vietnam Russia.

**Language,** Finnish is the main official company language in Caternet Oy and it is supposed to be used in every form of communication. Every new worker who comes

to work for the company has to know the Finnish language fluently. It was discovered from the interviews that this policy has just come 9 months ago when there was a change in the top management.

The data also indicate that there are quite a big number of old workers who don't use the Finnish language but are still working for the company and are obliged to follow the same policy. This is evidenced from the manager who has had a number of problems with floor workers due to language as she puts it below;

Biggest problem I have is with Russian workers because they don't speak English very often and they don't understand Finnish, it's a problem I think. And I don't speak Russian.

The data also reveal that even though the policy about language is in existence, a number of workers who don't understand Finnish are still employed even though all the communication is still done in Finnish. However, it should be noted that during production workers can use their convenient languages. Whereby, Russians can communicate to each other in Russian, English speakers, in English and others in their mother languages. But supervisor to worker is in Finnish.

#### **5.4 Floor workers perception of rules and communication**

This investigative question seeks to look into the floor workers' perception towards rules and their communication within the company. It was important for the researcher to get data on how what the floor workers thought on the current rules and how they are communicated to them.

The first thing to look at was if the floor workers were familiar with the rules. This was a direct question and the responses from all the interviewees reveal that some were familiar with the rules and others just new a little about the same rules. However, this was measured with how long the interviewees had been working in the company. Floor workers who had been working for the company for more than two years were very familiar with the rules and those who were less than a year in the company had less knowledge about the entire rules.



The reason the respondents gave for not being well familiar with the rules were, among others, that they had never been given to them. In the question; *How did you receive your first set of rules? Who gave them to you and were they clear to you?*, all the respondents confessed that no one had ever handed them a copy of these rules but had got to know some of the them through fellow workers, sometimes supervisors and the new ones which get communicated in meetings. One respondent went a head to say that;

Honestly, No one has said about the company's rules and policies. I have asked to supervisor when necessary and discusses with co-workers. After I got this questions I started looking at the rules in printed paper somewhere inside the company where we have access. I found the list of rules written in font 8 in A4 size paper in locker room. After 11 months of working in company I found the rules. No one has said or explained to me. After I found I asked my coworkers if they know about the rules, everynody's answer was NO.

One respondent gave a reason of language barrier as one of the reasons to why he was not well familiar with the company rules. He mentioned that he did not understand Finnish language and so he didn't understant when the rules are said to him in Finnish language or even written on paper.

From abservation, the researcher was forced to enter into a group discussion with Finnish workers and the same question was asked. Some members in the discussion were familiar with rules but said they are too many to remember. The workers were concerned about how new rules keep on coming almost everyweek. The other members were just not concerneed about the rules whether they existed or not since most of them answered, " I don't Care"

In the interviews, the researcher thought it important to investigate whether the floor workers thought the rules were worthy following. The questions; *How important do you think these rules are; to you and the company? Are they worthy to follow?* The respondents thought that the rules are worthy following. It was interesting to know that the floor workers were ready to follow them. They were of the view that the company should put efforts into making sure that everyone gets to know the rules and that they should

improve on the implementation. They thought rule are guideline to their work and they are also important to the company. As one of the floor workers put it that;

They are important to me because, one: I have to know what to do and what not to do. The rules are the regulations of the company. It serves as a guide for me. Then I think for the company spells out the rules just to meet their set goals and objectives. It is good to have rules because without rules there wouldn't be no direction. So for planning and everything there must be rules.

They were however concerned about those who don't take efforts to follow the rules and regulations of the company. From the results it is clearly seen that there is a particular group of workers who defiantly chose not to follow rules. A point was noted that even the supervisors who would spear-head the following of rules have been the one who break some them, something which has not encouraged the floor workers to comply to the expected level. One respondent commented on that same issue that;

It doesn't give you kind of motivation in a situation where some stick to the rules some don't. You'll be demoralized not to contribute your best. Sometimes you want to follow but you give up because others around you don't simply care.

This indicates that some of the workers are much affected by the fact that there exists others who don't follow the rules and in the end it has increased none compliance since many have given up.

On the **communication process** of these rules, the floor worker think that the company is not doing enough to make sure that the rules get to everyone on the floor level. The results indicate that not every one has a chance to get to know the rules due to different obstacles in the communication process of the company.

The interviewees were asked to comment on what they thought should change in the communication process of the rules and one asserted that;

Before setting rules, I think it is essential to discuss with floor level workers as they are main responsible person for the production of good product. The floor level workers exactly know

what the problem is and hence it might be easier for management level to set the rules as needed for company. But company always set the rules without consulting workers, so there is only one way to receive the rules, either meeting or in written paper.

When the rules are made they have to reach to every workers of the company but it has not been so. The company has to figure out the way so that everyone gets the rules.

More communication channels should be used in communicating these rules as it is indicated in the quote above that meetings and paper are not enough for the workers.

## 6 Discussion

In this chapter, the key findings are going to be discussed further in relation to the theories as discussed in chapter 3. The aim of this discussion is to present the key finding in a more detailed way, analyze it further while relating it to the theories. It is from this discussion that the conclusions and recommendations will be drawn.

### 6.1 Rules and Compliance

**Rules** for floor workers in Caternet Finland Oy are very vital to the entire business process and it becomes very important that floor employees comply with them. The results have well indicated that Food safety and hygiene rules stand at the center of all other rules. Seson (2000, 84) defines company rules as special guides intended to govern conduct or action and that are aimed at guiding operating supervisors and employees in the performance of their designated activities and here it has to be added that for caternet Finland Oy Food safety and hygiene rules are the business.

The importance of these rules go beyond governing conduct or action and guiding operating supervisors and employees but as results indicated, they determine the existence of the business for the company just as one of the managers put it that;

If we talk about cleaning we have these papers where you have to sign –is this cleaned, and it okay, it is in Finnish law we have to obey. We have a supervisor coming here each month to check if we have filled, do we have all the papers in order and then they give a report and if we don't obey these rules we can lose these certificates and if we lose them we lose clients because it is the main reason they are here.

This means that the company has a big obligation to structure rules and regulations which are in line with what the law demands. In this, the in-house rules and regulations have to be centered on the main legislations demanded from any food company. With these rules in place and well complied with by the workers Caternet business will survive. Palmer (1998, 199) asserts that rules need to be clear, written down, and available particularly to new employees. The management in Caternet has tried to structure rules in a clear way but they are too many for workers to remember. Palmer also adds that

rules need to be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are still relevant and to check if any new rules need to be added. This has not been the case in Caternet, new rules come and the old ones still exist. It becomes confusing for the workers on which one to follow or which ones to ignore since some new rules contradict with some old ones.

The company has been going through a number of changes, from new manager on all levels to new customers, new products and more new floor workers but the old rules are still being displayed together with the new ones which come in from time to time. The workers need to know the line between the old rules and the new one, mainly when new methods of working come with new products.

**Compliance** from floor workers with rules is very vital in Caternet Finland Oy having seen the importance of rule to the company and the whole business process. From the observation it is clear that there is a problem of a big number of floor workers breaking the rules on a daily basis which puts the company at huge risk in many cases. As discussed by (Banks & Banks 2008, 1-3) that Companies as well as nonprofit organizations can be held liable for the unlawful conduct of their employees, even if they have policies in place which prohibit such conduct. Such liability can be minimized if the employees receive sufficient compliance training and counseling

A number of workers seem not to understand what it means for them to comply with the existing rules and regulations. The management hasn't invested enough effort to make sure that all employees get to know how important it is to adhere to the rules. This is centrally to what Banks & Banks (2008, 1-3 ) emphasize that there is a need for the management to be certain that every employee understands how breaking the company policies can injure the entire business process and can present serious personal consequences and by making sure that every employ understands the legal obligation related to his/her job. This situation has left a chance for some workers to defend their actions that they don't know anything concerning compliance with the company policies.

Even though Caternet Finland Oy's business process is highly dependent on clear response to Food legislations and other legislations which as well act as the major origin of the in-house rule and regulations, there is no clear compliance program set for the floor workers or if there is, it has not been communicated anywhere for floor workers to view. Floor workers have not been trained on compliance issues and because the company has not created a compliance program for its employees there is less knowledge on what should be done with none compliance cases this is mainly exhibited by the front-line supervisors who encounter the floor workers on a daily basis.

Coombs (2008, 223) discusses the need of compliance program in any organization as a guide to employee behavior. By not having a well-structured compliance program is putting the business process at a high risk. Employee behavior is very important to be managed because it can damage the image of the company, result into fines, company can loss customer and at some critical cases it may lead employee to prison. This explains the reason to why Caternet Finland Oy should have a well-structured and controlled compliance program.

## **6.2 Employee communication**

Employee communication has been discussed by Åberg (2000, 96) as one of the most important functions of any organization the company has goals and leaders need employees, Caternet Finland is no exception. One of the investigative questions was to check on how rules are/should be communicated to a multicultural group of floor workers

The results revealed that there are basically two ways through which rules are communicated in the company; through printing outs hanged on walls and also word of mouth through meetings. Employee however felt that these channels have not been very effective and not all workers have had a chance to understand the content of these rules due to some problems like language barrier. Palmer (1998, 199) points out that rules need to be communicated clearly to all the staff, and those responsible for applying the rules should be trained appropriately to ensure that they know the rules and deal with staff fairly. This gives the challenge to the company to make sure that all

floor workers have equal chance to receive all the rules. There is a need to revisit the current channels and measure their effectiveness pertaining to rules communication.

All workers need to have avenues through which they can get both the new and the old rules. For the new workers, rules should be given to them well written on paper and an initiative should be taken to explain these rules in details for them to understand them fully. It is important to let the new workers know where to find these rules for referral. It is not enough to hang copies of rules somewhere on company walls and keep quiet about it. Floor workers should be reminded now and then to visit these walls so as to remind themselves about the rules.

The use of meetings as a channel through which rules are communicated is good and can be even more effective if it is structured better. Clampit (2001, 109) asserts it that face-to-face has been said to be the most effective form of knowledge sharing due to its advantages it has over other channels. However, the results revealed that meetings haven't been well utilized as one of the ways of passing rules to workers. Meetings take place in times when some workers are absent which means that many don't get a chance to get the information communicated to fellow employees. Even after the meeting there is no way through which those who were absent can get the information that was communicated. Likewise those that attend the meetings do not have hard copies to reference to either during the meeting or during the course of their duties. This creates a problem of lack of knowledge of what is going on in the company to mainly those who don't get communicated to. Imbalances in knowledge sharing are most likely to happen in such a situation.

Considering Intercultural communication, a big number of floor workers are faced with a problem of language barrier. The results show that in all cases, communication is done in one language; Finnish language. Communicating to floor workers who don't understand anything one says is a waste of time and stores more problems the whole communication process. Holtz (2004) sees employees as the most important audience for an organization. Communication of any kind will not succeed if employees don't understand and agree with the message the company is delivering or act accordingly.

Rules are meant to be communicated to the floor workers and according to their importance the management expects the floor workers to comply. However, this becomes impossible since there is no common language shared by both the floor workers and the management. All channels through which communication has been done have become less functional and less effective due to the language problem.

Varner and Beamer (2011, 88) have discussed the importance of communicating with a multicultural workforce. They highlight a fact that in most cases some immigrant groups cling to their native language, others don't give up their cultures which makes it even more challenging to communicate to such workers. Varner and Beamer (2011, 88) affirms that it is in the best interest of the business to educate the foreign work force in the goals of the organization. The business must see to it that all nonnative employees understand instructions and follow them. It should either be stipulated in company's recruitment process to hire only persons that can prove efficacy to communicate and understand Finnish or provide translation for all documented company rules or policies pertaining to the job(s).

The other problem has been the less **cultural sensitivity and awareness** from the management. Although the company has done a great deal in employing such a wide range of cultures mainly on the floor level, there have not been practical measures introduced to cater for this cultural diversity among workers. As asserted by Varner and Beamer (2011, 44) that cultural literacy is necessary to understand the language being used and that the more one knows about the culture of the other side the easier will be for one to speak with a foreigner who speaks only a little of one's language, there is need for Caternet management to venture into cultural awareness at all levels of the company but mainly the floor level. At the moment the results reveal that even though the floor level is dominated with cultural diversity, all the communication is done from only one perspective which is the Finnish perspective. This has led to many intercultural factors to be ignored hence causing barriers to communication.



## **Conclusion**

This research has been conducted to help the management secure means to improve rules and how they are communicated to floor workers so as to achieve compliance. The main research problem seeks to find how managers in Caternet Finland can achieve compliance within a multicultural group of floor workers through improving the formulation and communication of company rules. Through the four investigative questions stated in chapter 1 (sub chapter 1.2) the main research problem has been investigated and the results have helped to answer the question.

Although a number of loop-holes have been detected in the way rules are formulated and structured, the main problems this research has found is in how the rules are communicated to floor workers. The whole communication of rules and regulations in the company lacks direction on how to help the floor workers fully comply with the rules. Due to different communication barriers discussed, a number of workers on the floor level don't get equal chances to know which company rules they are and how to abide with them. The communication channels through which rules and regulations are passed to the floor workers have not been very effective and they are few as to reach all the worker. There is also no Compliance program which could work as a guide for workers to fully comply with the company policies.

Whats does this mean to the company? The results indicated that every single daily rules are violated by floor workers means that the entire Caternet business process is at a risk. The risk starts from the supply chain, quality management, customer service, company image to employee-employer image. All these functions are at the heart of the company's business process.

It costs a company quite a lot when forexample rules are broken on break times. There is a rules on how long workers should stay on breaks but every single day worker have stayed longer atleast 10 minutes which is a costly as seen before if:

**Table 2:** cost of extra time spent on breaks per an employee (time and money)

<b>Extra time spent on breaks (one worker) in a day (time and money wasted by the company if one worker earns 10.41 euros/hour)</b>	<b>In a week</b>	<b>In a months</b>	<b>In a year</b>
10 mins	50 mins	200mins	2,400 mins
1.735 euros	8.675 euros	34.7 euros	416.4 euros

The above figure indicates how much the company loses on paying for the time spent by each floor worker if they spend extra time on breaks than stipulated. This is quite a lot of money spent on one individual yet it can be avoided if the worker can abide by the stipulated break times. But the trend doesn't end here, it continues to affect the company in terms of redundancy time spent by the machinery because the worker who is supposed to use them has spent more time on breaks. If a machine can pack 50kgs in 10 minutes it means it will not pack them because there is no one to use it when the operator is away. This affects the whole production capacity of the machine yet the company is losing on the effectiveness of the machine.

If employees do not get enough clear communicated guidelines the company is going to waste a lot of resources and time on firing and hiring. It has happened and will happen that floor employees who defy rules and regulation get fired which creates a gap and the need for new workers. It takes time to find a worker with the required skills and if found it takes more than a month for him/her to settle in and get familiar with how work is done in caternet which means that production is delayed while training new workers. This time wasted in hiring and firing can be saved through improving the communication methods used. The trend of firing and hiring greatly damages the company's image and constant firing greatly damages the employer-employee relationship. With poor communication many workers will see the company as a bad employer so many will be discouraged to even apply for a job in the company hence the employer brand damaged so greatly.

### 6.3 Recommendation

The research has revealed where most of the weakness are and the theoretical frame worked helped much in discussing how to go about with some of these loopholes in the formulation and communication of rules to floor workers. From the research and the researchers view points, here are some of the recommendations which I suppose if the company takes a look at them, can help improve on the situation.

The management should work towards establishing clear set of rules in a structure which can be easily understood by all stake holders. They should not be too many for workers because it is hard to always remember all of them. This should be accompanied by a well designed compliance program which will enable every employee at all levels regardless of their cultural background, to know how to follow company policies. Employees should know what will happen if rules and regulations are not followed. Through the compliance program, they should know how the company can be affected and how it can also affect them as employees. From the start, the new employees should get to know the company's vision and goals and hence be trained to work together with the management to achieve them. A set of rules should be handed to every employee in person and whenever a new employee joins the company he/she should get the rules.

The management should invest enough in the communication of rules and regulations. The investment doesn't mean financial resources alone, but effort, time and in-house training. Communication at floor level should not be an option but a number one priority. It is upon the management to realise how much the floor level activities affects the entire business process. Poor communication affects the floor level activities and this means that all other business functions are also affected for example, the supply of raw materials will either be delayed or wrong products will be supplied or raw materials will be wasted. Production will go wrong, poor quality products supplied to the customers and hence will be returned back, the company will lose customers.

Communication should not end on walls and papers, the truth is that most employees don't read them because in the first place they have limited time at work. The time they

have is divided into on production time and breaks for refreshment and they go home. A number other channels should be introduced in the company for floor workers to have enough time to revisit the rules. These other channels may include more pictures on walls, hand books signed and handed over to the employees, intranet for all workers and many others. The existing channels need to be revisited and restructured to fit all floor employees.

Face-to-face communication should be improved mainly by floor supervisor. Learning to communicate in a proper and professional manner should be one of the first things for floor managers to train in. In such a multicultural environment, managers need to understand that the way they conduct themselves while communicating to floor workers contributes quite a lot to how the workers receive and interpret the message they are communicating. The company management should equip the floor managers with Face-to-Face communication tools through constant training on communication skills and many other managerial and leadership skills.

The top management need to engage themselves more in the communication of company policies and values to floor workers. Drafting policies and leave them for floor managers to take care of is a bit risky and yields less. There needs to be constant supervision from the top managers to check how effective the floor managers are communicating the policies. However, the job should not be left to only the floor managers. Top management needs to constantly visit the floor to help deliver the company policies and goals to floor workers. Getting themselves acquainted with the floor activities helps them to check weaknesses and help in ironing them out. This also draws them closer to the floor workers which can help them in understanding their problems. Walking around often, talking with floor workers face-to-face helps to build a close working relationship and it also helps floor employee to feel that they are part of the company and they are valued, hence increase compliance.

The company has grown and so more challenges have come in. There many new customers, many new products and the production capacity has increased which has called for new workers to be employed on the floor. These changes have brought

about new challenges on the floor mainly for the managers mainly with communication. This calls for professionalising the floor level, by this, the researcher means that the floor level should be reorganised into more professional production area. A standardised production system should be put in place, this helps in creating a more manageable environment since it is easy to trace where the weakness could be. Employees need to be trained on the values of the company and customer service. They need to be trained on work ethics and how they help in making them effective workers. Hiring of professional managers and retraining the old ones in managerial skills.

Cross-cultural literacy should be attained by all managers at all levels. The management should very much look into intercultural factors and how they affect the work environment. These should also be employed in communication. If the company took the trouble to employ people from different cultural backgrounds, it is also their duty to plan for how to make such workers more effective.

One might argue that it is the role of any foreign worker to fit into the host culture but it should be remembered that the main goal of employing workers is to help management in achieving the business goals and vision but not “Finnishizing” the foreigners. Much as the a foreign work force may be required to understand the Finnish language, it is also true that it takes time and many of them won't even get eloquent in it which limits the level of their communication using that language. On this note therefore, the management should endeavour to help the foreign workers fit into the work environment. The use of language groups should be taken advantage of, at least the use of three languages on the floor level should be made official. Meetings should go back to the initial way where by three languages were used; English , Finnish and Russian.

Documents to floor workers should be written in an easy way so that even those who understand little of Finnish can be able to read them and understand the message. Rules should be structured in short sentences and with easy vocabulary which foreigners can understand easily. Intercultural interactions should be encouraged on

floor level to help workers get well familiar with each since this improve intercultural communication. Floor managers should be trained in cultural intelligence, this is a great tool in managing a multicultural work force. Knowledge sharing should be for all employee in the company not only those who understand Finnish as it is now.

Senior/ old employees can be very instrumental in effective communication of rules and company policies to fellow workers mainly in intercultural communication. Caternet Finland Oy has an advantage that it has many workers who have been working for the company for a long time and these are also from different cultural background. Some do understand Finnish language well. So, the management should enjoy this advantage by helping to train this work force in communication skills, since they need them to pass on rules to their fellow employees in their mother languages hence effecting the communication of rules and policesies.

The company also lacks a well planned induction process for the new workers and so it has been old employees who have always helped in teaching the new workers. This means that if the old workers are well trained and communicated to, they can greatly help the company in a chieving compliance. The management there for, needs to empower the old employees with skills and knowledge about the company goals and vision and make them feel more responsible for the business continuity.

The above recommendations, if implemented by the company management, will help the company on achieving compliance from its multicultural floor workers. But all will work if the management can marry them with the general company business goals and vision. These in the long run will help the company to create a pool of very effective multicultural group of floor workers hence business continuity.

#### **6.4 Ideas for further researcher**

As seen from the scope in chapter 1.4, this research has concentrated mainly on Rules formation and communication and how they can be improved to achieve compliance from a multicultural group of floor workers. It remains important that the entire rules process and compliance is not complete more so when it comes to a multicultural

group of workers. On this note, the researcher would suggest a numbers of search topics which could help support this research.

Within the rules communication, the researcher finds it important to investigate **how the induction process can be used as a major tool for improving rules compliance among workers**. From the time the worker enters a company, they need to know the company policies and values but the success of this comes from how the whole induction process for a new worker and how it is structured to benefit both the company and the new worker. From the experience of the researcher, Caternet Finland Oy still lacks a well structure induction process for all workers on the floor, regardless of their position.

A well planned induction process for floor workers could be one most effective avenue to achieve a highly compliant work force for the company. The floor level has a lot of things to learn together with the rules for any new person. This research suggestion could be handled as a project based research where one could offer to design the company's induction process for the floor workers or a multicultural group of floor workers or one could do an investigative research on the induction process for a multicultural group of floor workers as tool for compliancy to company rules.

**The influence of national cultures to rules compliancy in a work place** is yet another area where one could decide to make a research. From this area the researcher is suggesting for more in-depth study on cultural dimensions as related to rules compliance in a production work place. This research has not fully explored the effect of culture on rules compliance. However, it is true that people from different cultural background respond more positively to rules and other cultures don't. The researcher therefore suggests that a research should be carried out on how culture affects rules compliance in a multicultural group of floor workers. This could help the company in designing a more flexible structure for communicating rules to different workers from different cultural backgrounds. It would also help the company in adjusting the factors influencing the formation and communication of rules from just legislative factors to also intercultural factors hence achieving a more compliant work force.

It is up to any company to build a stronger and accommodative company culture and values which maintain compliance of its workforce. Even though this research ruled company culture and values as major tools to compliancy, it is suggested from the researcher that one could make an investigation on **how compliancy can be achieved through Company culture and values**. This could be extended down to the floor employee. This same research could also be redone from the company culture perspective. Any researcher may decide to use company culture dimensions as theories to investigate the same problem.

Among many others research topics; this research can be complemented with many other investigations to complete the problem of compliance from a multicultural group of floor workers to help Caternet Finland Oy or any other similar organization in achieving a compliant pool of workers.

## **6.5 Evaluation of the research process**

This research like any other research has had a number of limitations and challenges which have made the whole process a little hard journey to accomplish. However, through creative measures and personal motivation combined with guided efforts the researcher has managed to overcome some of the limitations and challenges.

The main Limitation has been the language barrier for both the researcher and the target population. This research would have yielded even more results if the entire target population and the researcher shared a common language they both spoke fluently. Although English was the common language used in this research many respondents were not fluent and comfortable to elaborate within it. Much effort was put in trying to understand what the respondent wanted to mean which was time-consuming.

I believe that if this research was conducted in Finnish language a lot would have come out and much time would have been saved. This is because Finnish language is official language in the case company and most of the information is written in Finnish and a number of people in the company speak and understand it.



Time has been another challenge of which I have been faced by throughout the process. Every stage of this research has been affected by either limited time or almost no time. There needed to be a specified time limit for the research process but due to some factors, the process has been slow and it has wasted a lot of time. This time lag has caused so many challenges to the whole process both with the research and the researcher. Motivation has been shaken, change of ideas here and there hence getting stuck at some point.

It is important to note that in the last two years the company has been undergoing some changes. Many new workers have come and many old ones have changed positions. New customers have come in and new products have been introduced. All these changes have been a threat but also an advantage to the whole process. Even though some things have changed which I thought would make the research irrelevant to the case company, the changes have just provided me with much better positions to view and analyze things which have made the research process more meaningful and successful.

Having been involved in the daily activities of the company, as a floor worker, put me at the center of the problem to analyze issues alongside my personal experience. Initially this seemed to be a disadvantage thinking it would bias the results but it has instead been a very strong tool used to even look at issues from a broader perspective. I strongly believe that it would pose a number of challenges if an external person came to the same company to do the same research.

The positive aspect to this research has been the great learning process especially in relation to the fact of my being business student and aspiring human resource personnel. There are many practical issues which have been involved in this process and it has been an opportunity for the researcher to analyze them. This has at the same time worked as job training opportunity for me because it is true that similar problems can be experienced in any other work place. There are a number of good managerial practices which have been encountered in this process and have been a good model to my

career development. Writing a work-related research from outside the work environment makes one miss out on many real, both practical and non-practical issues to learn from and being involved within the work environment teaches one more beyond the theories because one gets to be part of the practical problem.

Although a number of challenges and problems have been encountered in this research process, there has been a great deal of lessons and good things gained from the whole process and this has greatly contributed to my learning process. The process has not been easy putting me to task with great innovative thinking and creative working hence enabling the process end successfully.

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## Attachments

### Attachment 1. Questionnaire to floor workers

Dear fellow workers, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions in contribution to ongoing research to make our workplace an environment conducive to everyone's well-being and satisfaction. Everything you say is confidential and won't be released or shown to anybody but the researcher and no names are required.

- What is your nationality? How long have you been living in Finland? How long have you been working for the company?
- How well do you read, write and speak Finnish? What other languages do you speak?
- How familiar are you with the company rules and policies? What do you have to say about them?
- How did you receive your first set of rules? Who gave them to you and were they clear to you?
- In what language are these rules written? Do you understand them?
- How often do you receive new rules? Who brings the new rules to you? How do you receive them, through:
  - a. Email
  - b. Word of mouth
  - c. Written on paper
  - d. Phone calls
  - e. Through meetings?
- Do managers explain the rules to you? How?
- Are the rules easy to follow? Why do you think so? How important do you think these rules are; to you and the company? Are they worthy to follow? Why? Do other people follow them? If not, why do you think they don't follow them?
- From your view point, what is the best way for you to receive these rules? Why?

What do you think should change in the way rule are made and **communicated** to you?

## Attachment 2. Questionnaire to managers

- Who makes the rules to be given to the floor workers? How do you categorize them?
- What major factors are considered when making these rules?
- Is there a structure followed while formulating these rules? Who decides what should be included in the rules?
- How often are new rules made? What factors cause the new rules to be made? Are the old ones usually reviewed? How often?
- Could you briefly explain the communication process of these rules from top management to the floor workers?
- Could you describe the medium used when communicating rules to floor workers? How are these media selected?
- How is the communication of company rules handled on an everyday basis?
- Briefly explain how workers from different cultural backgrounds are handled in the day-to-day communication of rules.
- Could you explain how floor workers from different cultural background respond to rules? Has there been a problem in how different people respond to rules? What has been done to resolve the situation?
- What problems do managers experience from workers of different cultures in the day-to-day communication of company rules?