

Developing effective interventions for mitigating the psychological impact experienced by a redundancy envoy during redundancy situations.

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Abstract

This thesis provides an analysis and evaluation of the development of effective interventions for alleviating the psychological impact experienced by redundancy envoys. Redundancy envoys for this purpose included management, employee collective representatives and HR professionals with roles specific to the implementation of the redundancy process.

The aim of this study is to investigate the key stressors for redundancy envoys, identify the idiosyncrasy of redundancy envoys, explore the best coping methodologies deployed by redundancy envoys and finally to identify the best strategies to alleviate the negative psychological impact for redundancy envoys.

The data for this thesis was collected through action research where four iterations of restructures took place within a specific organisation. Through the process of action research, I designed and tested various redundancy models to drive continuous improvement. The main source of data collection was through semi-structured interviews with a total of 36 interview respondents from various industries and organisations. Additional sources of primary data collected included; ethnography through observation and diary keeping, 'lessons learned' sessions, employee committee consultative meetings, restructure and change management workshops, workshop feedback questionnaires, management strategy workshops and director application interviews.

Analysis of data led to the design of three bespoke restructure stakeholder models to address key stressors and challenges for redundancy envoys. This model was piloted within the second and third iteration with the final amendments taking place in the fourth iteration. The implementation of the model resulted in an increase in engagement during a challenging time of change. Evidence indicates that the business has improved its financial position by 21.7 % over a 4 year period, from loss to profit making whilst undergoing four redundancy programmes. The data highlighted that this research project is one of the rare examples where a company can reap economic success through the implementation of redundancies, which is the exception to the rule in accordance with Gandolfi's findings (2008) that most firms adopting downsizing strategies do not reap economic and organisational benefits.

Knowledge is contributed in several areas with the key focus on the implementation of the restructure stakeholder model which addresses emerging themes which demonstrated that the mitigation of guilt during the implementation of redundancy programmes is one of the most powerful methods to reduce the psychological impact on redundancy envoys. Contribution to knowledge also indicate, contrary to existing knowledge that physical distancing was not favoured (Claire and Dufresne; 2004) and that the use of empathy reduced the negative impact on redundancy envoys.

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Abbreviations

BAU	Building Automation
BDA	Building Design and Automation
BDAP	Building Design Automation Products
BDAPS	Building Design and Automation Projects and Services
BPS	British Psychological Society
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
EAP	Employee assistance programme
EEF	Engineering Employers' Federation
FD	Finance Director
FSS	Fire and Security Services
GEP	Global Engineering Products
HR	Human Resources
HVAC	Heating, ventilation and air conditioning
IE	Ireland
MD	Managing Director
NLP	Neuro Linguistic Programming
PIS	Participant information sheet
PMP	Performance management process
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations
UK	United Kingdom
VR	Voluntary redundancy
VUCA	Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity

1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the rationale for writing this thesis and will cover the main aspects of the phenomenon of redundancy as a human resource management strategy. This will include a summary of research findings where I will explore contradictory evidence of the success of redundancy programmes and the idiosyncrasy of the redundancy envoy, the person responsible for managing and implementing a head count reduction, highlighting their importance during the redundancy process. The chapter will also aim to highlight the shortage of literature in this area and following this, I will draw on the research approach. Finally, I will conclude with a summary of the contents of each of the chapters to follow.

The purpose of this thesis is to provide an analysis and evaluation of the development of effective mechanisms for alleviating the psychological impact experienced by the redundancy envoy during redundancy situations. Redundancy envoys for this purpose included management, employee collective representatives and HR professionals with roles specific to the implementation of the redundancy process. The research focussed on the critical role of the redundancy envoy during redundancy situations, identifying what the key stressors were for redundancy envoys during the process of managing a redundancy exercise. In addition, the research conducted as part of this thesis contributes to existing knowledge on how to mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys which were tested within an organisation after the implementation of the restructure stakeholder model.

In addition, this thesis evaluates which coping strategies are most successful to reduce the psychological impact and contradicts areas of existing knowledge (Claire and Dufresne; 2014).

Through my occupation of working in Human Resource Management, I have experienced the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys when running redundancy programmes and have witnessed several cases of related long-term absence due to depression and stress, as well as numerous resignations as a consequence. These experiences generated a field of interest which I continue to pursue with the ultimate aim of helping organisations to mitigate the psychological impact of redundancies. The purpose of this research is to extend existing literature and to explore the psychological impact of redundancies on the redundancy envoys.

I propose that the psychological impact on redundancy envoys of having to go through the process of dismissing employees needs to be assessed uniquely due to different variables; for instance, the values of redundancy envoys carrying out redundancies will, in all probability, have an influence on their perceptions. Brockner, Tyler and Cooper-Sneider (1992); Brockner, Wiesenfeld, Reed, Grover and Martin (1993); Brockner and Siegel (1996) have all worked on the responses to restructuring and redundancies and confirm that victims and survivors are influenced by their perception of justice and the fairness of the process. A question that arises is whether redundancy envoys experience responses analogous to that of the redundancy survivor. A further question addressed in my research is whether redundancy envoys are

themselves faced with job insecurity and fear of further downsizing, a typical reaction amongst redundancy survivors as found by Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans and Van Vuuren (1991).

1.1 Downsizing or redundancy?

In literature, the terms 'redundancy', 'downsizing' and 'restructuring' are used interchangeably, and various definitions apply that refer to dismissal of employees or a head count reduction. Typically, the term 'downsizing' is used in the USA, whereas 'redundancy' is more aligned to language used in the United Kingdom and Europe. 'Restructuring' is also frequently found in the UK lexicon and, although a restructure may not necessarily lead to a reduction in employees, it can still cause significant organisational distrust.

Shaw and Barrett-Power (1997:109) define downsizing as a "constellation of stressor events centering around pressures toward workforce reductions which place demands upon the organisation, work groups, and individual employees, and require a process of coping and adaptation." Freeman (1999:1507) complements the definition of downsizing as an "intentional reduction in the number of people in an organisation. It is accomplished via a set of managerial actions, which may include the use of hiring freezes, layoffs, and normal or induced attrition."

Kets de Vries and Balazs (2004) make an interesting challenge to the definition of downsizing by stating that downsizing refers to a reduction of size and costs of an organisation and that head count reduction is a strategy within the

downsizing process, whilst Cameron (1994) agrees that downsizing often involves a reduction in personnel. For the purpose of limiting this potentially convoluted definition, which is not entirely indistinguishable in meaning, my preference is to use the term of 'redundancy'.

Redundancy, as demarcated in legalistic interpretation Employment Rights Act, 1996, section 139 :1 is defined as a reason for dismissal of an employee attributable wholly or mainly to:

- (a) the fact that the employer has ceased, or intends to cease
 - (i) to carry on the business for the purposes of which the employee was employed by him, or
 - (ii) to carry on that business in the place where the employee was so employed, or

- (b) the fact that the requirements of that business -
 - (i) for employees to carry out work of a particular kind, or
 - (ii) for employees to carry out work of a particular kind in the place where the employee was employed by the employer have ceased or diminished or are expected to cease or diminish.

(Employment Rights Act, 1996, section 139 :1)

Associated with the language of downsizing and redundancy is the language that refers to those employees impacted by the process. They are referred to in numerous ways; 'laid off' is typically used in the USA and 'dismissals' or 'terminations' are more often used in Europe, the UK and Australia. For the purpose of writing this thesis, I will use the UK terminology of 'dismissal'.

A critical literature review indicated that there are very limited studies that specifically examine the idiosyncrasy, implications of stress and mitigation

interventions for redundancy envoys. The relevant literature is around fifteen years old, with the most recent literature emerging from Ashman (2016; 2012) and Waraich and Bhardwaj (2011). The literature that is available tends to focus on the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys and coping strategies deployed. Literature in the area of interventions to mitigate the negative impact is limited to a handful of studies addressing individual areas only with no single study providing a comprehensive overview of interventions; such as Baruch and Hind (1999), Cameron et al. (1991) recognising the importance of business rationale, Appelbaum et al. (1999a), Gandolfi (2013), Weide and Abbott (1994) addressing involvement and participation, Labib and Appelbaum (1993), Baruch and Hind (1999) recognising EAPs and Gandolfi (2009), Weide and Abbott (1994) promoting training for redundancy envoys as an intervention.

1.2 An exploration of the redundancy phenomenon

Baruch and Hind (1999) state that redundancy is not a new phenomenon; however, it should be recognised that the scope and pace of redundancies have accelerated in recent years. The management strategy of restructuring, often resulting in downsizing [redundancies], has been used globally for more than two decades (Gandolfi, 2009; Williams, 2004) and more frequently deployed as a human resource management strategy. (Allen et al, 2001; Orlando, 1999; Tourish et al., 2004).

The economic crisis that began in 2008 impacted on numerous companies that faced tough trading circumstances, posing a direct threat to their survival

in some cases (Schoenberg, Collier and Bowman, 2013). To cope with increased competitive pressure, demand for cost savings, and high performance, many organisations have come to rely on the strategy of restructuring and downsizing [redundancies]. Kets de Vries and Balazs (1997) argue that downsizing has become an inevitable part of living in a global economy with continual adjustments. The Office for National Statistics UK (2017), in the period January 2014 to May 2017, reported an average of 109,000 redundancies every trimester in the UK. In June to August 2017, four out of every 1,000 people were made redundant through either voluntary or compulsory redundancy (Office for National Statistics UK, 2017). With the increase of redundancies in the business world, it becomes more important to focus on methods to mitigate the psychological impact for redundancy envoys.

More recently in the business lexicon, we refer to this phenomenon as living in a VUCA world: a world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (Bennett and Lemoine, 2014). Personally, I argue that restructuring as a strategy to optimise business performance should always be a consideration for any business operating in the VUCA world. Restructuring does not always have to lead to a head count reduction; however, it often does.

The objectives of downsizing are to promote organisational efficiency, productivity and improve market competitiveness by making changes that impact on costs, such as the size of the workforce (Allen et al., 2001; Cameron, 1994). Downsizing [redundancy] rationale also typically includes benefits such as reducing costs, improving productivity, better service and aligning the

business with the changing economy (Gervais, 2004). Nelson & Burke (1998) add that companies also restructure to lower overhead costs and improve communication.

1.3 Success of redundancies as a business strategy

Findings on the success of redundancies are varied and mixed. Cost savings and improved efficiency are reported by some, whilst others reported high organisational costs due to issues of employee morale and trust (Henkoff, 1994; Cascio, 2013, Cascio, 1993; Brockner, Davy and Carter, 1985). Research literature mostly demonstrates that headcount reduction as a method to improve organisation performance, productivity or cost competitiveness tends not to achieve these aims, highlighting a gap between actual results and intentions (Bennett, 1991; Tourish and Hargie, 2004). Braithwaite et al. (2005) agree that there are few studies to provide evidence that restructuring demonstrates productivity improvement or improvement outcomes; in fact, studies tend to challenge the validity of a reduction in personnel more than support restructuring.

Morris et al. (1999) reviewed the restructure implications for 3,628 companies and their findings indicated a negative impact on the average return on assets for the year of implementation and the subsequent year, with a slight improvement in the second year. However, despite this increase, the return on assets was still lower than prior to the year of downsizing [redundancies]. Gandolfi (2008: 4) argues that there is significant empirical and anecdotal evidence to propose that the “consequences of downsizing are negative at

best and disastrous at worst” with Cascio (1993) agreeing that the research regarding downsizing [redundancies] has proved consistently that the anticipated benefits of downsizing [redundancies] have not been realised. Kabanoff et al. (2000) reviewed 300 downsizing cases [redundancy programmes] to identify what impact the redundancies had on the performance of the respective organisations. Kabanoff et al. (2000) found that positive results such as a gain in productivity are usually short lived. Generally, the implementation of redundancies resulted in no improvement to the organisation’s performance within their industry or compared with their performance prior to downsizing [the redundancy programme].

1.4 The impact of redundancies on the employees

According to Gandolfi (2008), there are three groups of employees impacted by downsizing [redundancies]:

- a) The first is ‘survivors’. These are the individuals that remain in the company during and after the redundancy programme (Astrachan, 1995; Baruch and Hind, 1999; Brockner, 1992). The survivors of a restructure often experience the adverse effects of being subject to the process as profoundly as those who were made redundant. This may include feelings of anger, anxiety, cynicism, resentment, resignation and retribution (Brockner, 1992; Baruch and Hind, 1999).
- b) ‘Victims’ are the next group and are the ex-employees who have been unsuccessful in remaining employed by the organisation and as a result have been made redundant.

c) The last group, 'redundancy envoys', are the group this thesis focusses on. Literature refers to 'grim reapers' (Clair & Dufresne, 2004; Folger and Skarlicki, 1998), 'executors' (Downs, 1995), 'downsizers' (Burke, 1998), 'downsizing agents' (Clair and Dufresne, 2004) and 'executioners' (Gandolfi, 2006; Kets de Vries and Balazs: 1997). Personally, I have even been called 'Darth Vader' in my role of redundancy envoy, seen as the bearer of bad news. All of the above labels refer to the individuals who plan and implement redundancies, with the main focus on the act of consulting and dismissal of employees (Gandolfi, 2008; Downs, 1995). For the purpose of this thesis, I am using the terminology of 'redundancy envoy'. Redundancy envoys fall into both groups of redundancy envoys and survivors and are quite often also victims themselves in the process of restructuring. The title of 'redundancy envoys' was a concept that required many personal efforts of exploring various definitions of words and took many attempts before I found a terminology that accurately reflects a title for a study undertaken in the United Kingdom. I wanted to steer away from the typical language of 'downsizing' and 'executioners' and recognise the origin on this study. The closest terminology I have come across was Ashman (2012) who makes use of the language of 'downsizing envoys'.

The impact of redundancy on the employees is typically shown in a loss of loyalty and commitment, an impact on continuity (Gandolfi, 2008; Hitt et al., 1994; Luthans and Sommer, 1999) and a decline in employees' attitudes

(Petzall et al., 2000). If the attitudinal and motivational issues facing survivors are understood, organisations will be able to manage the processes better in order to enhance the performance of the organisation (Doherty and Horsted, 1995). There is thus a clear need for more intervention in this area of study, where it is recognised that more understanding on the psychological impact on employees could enhance the success of redundancy programmes.

Cross and Travaglione (2004) argue that one reason for not achieving the anticipated success after a redundancy exercise is that it is not beneficial to the company to have 'survivors' remain who experience negative emotions and behaviours of typically cynicism, demotivation and decline in organisational commitment (Baruch and Hind, 2000; Gandofi, 2008). This destructive impact on organisations has been referred to as 'survivor syndrome' – the negative impact on the emotional and attitudinal behaviour of the employees who remain in the company after a downsizing event [redundancy programme]. (Allen et al., 2001; Baruch and Hind; 2000 and 1999).

Conversely, the literature also indicates that headcount reductions can be successful if the exercise encourages the least valuable employees to leave. Cross and Travaglione (2004) indicate that management can use existing knowledge, such as knowledge of employee commitment, satisfaction, absenteeism and turnover intention to guide their redundancy programmes towards a more productive outcome.

1.5 Idiosyncrasy of redundancy envoys

Redundancy envoys are the individuals entrusted with the planning and implementation of the redundancies. Redundancy envoys are normally responsible for activities such as strategy, planning, process, implementation, communication and consultations. They are also the individuals responsible for dealing with the consequences of restructuring activities. I define redundancy envoys as the research participants typically in three categories: Human Resources Professionals, Business Managers or Directors and Employee Consultative Representatives.

Torres (2011) refers to the emotion of 'laying off' [dismissal of] people as almost always painful. The most recent research by Ashman (2016; 2012) agrees that redundancy envoys describe the experience as "traumatic, nerve wracking, dreadful, very upsetting and hideous." (Ashman; 2012: 9). Torres (2011) found from undertaking a critical literature review of research and articles on the impact of redundancy envoys of almost forty journals specialising in business and SMEs as well as 383 theses, that there was an incredible lack of research in this area. Like Torres (2011), my critical review of literature revealed a significant lack of literature in the area of redundancy envoys.

Research suggests that the work of downsizing [redundancies] places considerable professional demands on executioners [redundancy envoys] and provokes long-term emotional effects (Wright and Barling, 1998). Distancing as a coping method for executioners [redundancy envoys] is prevalent in literature (Clair and Dufresne, 2004; Torres, 2011). Research has suggested

that redundancy envoys use 'emotional numbing' as a coping technique which is a direct result of persistent, major stressful change (Kets de Vries, 1999). Coping literature clearly links the negative impact of being a messenger of redundancy with the scope and extent to what coping techniques are used. Ironically, Moran (2000) in her study of 101 managers of whom 85 were redundancy envoys, found that redundancy envoys who utilise coping techniques of distancing during a redundancy situation reported a negative correlation of job satisfaction with their co-workers. Moran (2000) utilised two instruments in data gathering; a coping questionnaire and a job descriptive index.

Although research in this field is limited, there is recognition in ad hoc areas of the importance of the role of the redundancy envoy and the significant impact they can have on the success of a redundancy exercise through the following links:

- a) Redundancy envoys have different roles and experiences
- b) They can positively influence victims and survivors
- c) This can positively impact the success of the business

It is invaluable to understand the experiences of executioners [redundancy envoys] as their experiences are different and distinct (Clair and Dufresne, 2004); they largely adopt more than one role, that of survivor and change agent (Dewitt, et al., 2003).

Doherty and Horsted (1995) suggest that leaders that understand the impact of downsizing [redundancies] on the attitudes and motivation of its employees

are in a better position to manage the process in order to enhance the performance of their survivors and thus, ultimately, the business. Frost (2003) describes redundancy envoys as unsung corporate heroes who try to limit the negative impact on victims during major change programmes. According to Holbeche (2009), the role of the redundancy envoy can help to enrich jobs and keep people motivated during restructures by helping employees to develop a more positive approach to lateral career development. Brockner (1992) found that executioners [redundancy envoys] have the capacity to influence employees' perceptions of fairness and justice. The tension experienced with these intense, negative situations impacts on how an individual emotionally engages with their responsibility within the role, thus the benefit of reducing the tension will be beneficial for the redundancy envoy, as well as the organisation.

Clair and Dufresne (2004) further argue that research on redundancy envoys is important and valuable as their experiences are distinct and their methods can influence the success of a downsizing [redundancy] programme (Wright and Barling, 1998). Gandolfi (2008 and 2006) argues that research on the executioners [redundancy envoys] of downsizing [redundancies] is imperative as they have an impact in a variety of ways; they are likely to have a pivotal impact on the success and outcomes of the redundancy strategy as well as on employees' reactions (Dewitt et al., 2003).

1.6 Research limitations

Copious research has evidenced the need for good information during headcount reduction. However, research is limited in findings with regard to systematic communication requirements by different groups impacted by the reductions (Cameron, 1994; Johnson et al., 1996 cited in Tourish et al., 2004). Research examining the impact on the specific population of redundancy envoys within the survival population is remarkably limited. This is consistent with the findings of Buckley (2011), Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Gandolfi (2008), prominent scholars in the area of redundancies and redundancy envoys. In this respect, this thesis adds another dimension to the existing research on the redundancy envoys of redundancies and seeks to apply and extend the findings of academic researchers.

1.7 Research questions

1. What is the psychological impact on redundancy envoys during the implementation of redundancy situations?
2. What are the key stressors for redundancy envoys?
3. What coping techniques do redundancy envoys deploy during redundancy situations?
4. What interventions are best placed to alleviate and minimise the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys?

1.8 Context

The majority of data collection was conducted within Global Engineering Building Design and Automation (BDA). BDA's portfolio is focused on

delivering the automation of safe, energy efficient and environmentally friendly systems for buildings and infrastructure. BDA offers a range of services, including the supply of services for fire safety, security, building automation, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) as well as energy management GEP and services.

Schoenberg, Collier and Bowman (2013) argued that the economic crises that began in 2008 impacted on numerous companies that faced tough trading circumstances, posing a direct threat to their survival in some cases. The financial crash of 2008 subsequently impacted on BDA during the period 2009 – 2012, which led to the exploration of business turnaround and recovery strategies. The UK market in 2012 reflected high levels of unemployment and low investment. The lack of investment in the development of new property across the UK and Ireland meant a decline in business opportunities for new projects for BDA. The construction market's key indicators suggested a forty percent reduction in private commercial sectors and a sixty percent reduction in the public non-housing market such as local authorities, police forces and government driven by austerity measures (NFB and UKCG, 2012).

OD4 (2016) explains that the overall market in the construction industry reduced by approximately fifty percent with two significant implications for BDA, market opportunities decreased, and the competitor market became far more aggressive in pricing. In addition, BDA's product portfolio was limited and not providing the necessary competitive edge to retain customers' interest. The result was a low order income for larger projects.

The views of LM9 (2014) complemented OD4's (2013) assertion that a further factor that impacted the business overall was that the security business had not kept up to date with current trends in the market and the business strategy was not in place to address the industry dynamics. BDA was a principal supplier to government contracts and when austerity in 2008 impacted the budgets of the government, this led to the government seeking more cost-effective alternatives and better negotiation in procurement. Corporate structure, the crash in the market and competitive advantage of cheaper pricing solutions all lead to an overall decline in business performance for BDA.

BDA's financial performance in UK and Ireland was on the decline with a reduction in orders, profit and cash. Due to the financial crash and associated lack of orders, BDA's backlog was being depleted with a reduction from £13.5 million over twelve months to £5.2 million. An accumulation of all of the above factors led to a loss in profit of £8 million.

BDA had attempted to rectify the loss-making situation by implementing various cost saving strategies. Some of these strategies included pay freezes, recruitment freezes and change of suppliers for lower-priced goods. Other initiatives to change the financial position was to change the terms of payment to a more favourable position for BDA, implanting recycling of goods to generate income, increasing productivity to reduce travelling and associated costs such as fuel consumption. Margins were improved in sales, marketing

activity was reduced and budgets were cut where appropriate. All these initiatives helped to build a strong team with a common goal or survival, however the cost savings and cost cuttings did not keep up with the decline in the market and increased competitiveness. Once the various initiatives were exhausted work continued to decline and the loss in revenue continued, therefore a more dramatic decision was taken as the only option and last resort to implement a redundancy programme. The redundancy programmes were staged for various reasons on which I expand within the context chapter.

1.9 Research methodology

My ontological assumption adopts the phenomenological paradigm of a qualitative approach (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Redundancies in the workplace are not only complex but are unique. For this thesis, there was a necessity to discover “the details of the situation to understand the reality or perhaps a reality working behind them” (Remenyi et al., 1998:35)

Business restructure timeline	Research development and iterations
Phase 1: November 2011 – April 2012 Restructure driven by need to improve efficiency and productivity: merging of two businesses	Iteration 1: June 2010 - November 2012 Initial data collection
Phase 2: November 2012 – April 2013 Restructure driven by need to improve efficiency and productivity: removal of duplication	Iteration 2: January 2012 – April 2013 First restructure stakeholder model designed with further data collection
Phase 3: April 2013 – July 2013 Restructure driven by profitability targets	Iteration 3: July 2013 – August 2013 Second restructure stakeholder model piloted with further data collection
Phase 4: August 2013 – January 2014 Restructure driven by profitability targets	Iteration 4: January 2014 – July 2017 Final amendments leading to design of completed restructure stakeholder model with further data collection

Figure 1: Research Journey

My research commenced with the first iteration in 2011 and 2012 where I initially explored primary data from a range of different industries and companies (Figure 1). As an action researcher (Brydon-Miller et al.; 2003) this was the start of my journey to drive continuous improvement. (Reason and Bradbury; 2001)

Combined with a literature review and an initial review of primary and secondary research data, a proposed solution to mitigating the psychological impact on redundancy envoys was implemented as a model in an engineering and technology organisation between 2013 and 2014, which formed part of the second iteration. During this time, my research continued as an embedded, inside researcher within the organisation. After the first implementation, my

research continued to evaluate the impact of the proposed solutions on the organisation, which was followed by the third iteration that lead to a modified restructure stakeholder model being implemented. Subsequent to the final restructure, research analysis continued with follow up interviews arranged with senior directors in the organisation to ensure the impact was not just a quick solution, but sustainable and to measure the effectiveness of the model.

Figure 2 below demonstrates the approach adopted as an action researcher, by collecting data through four iterations:

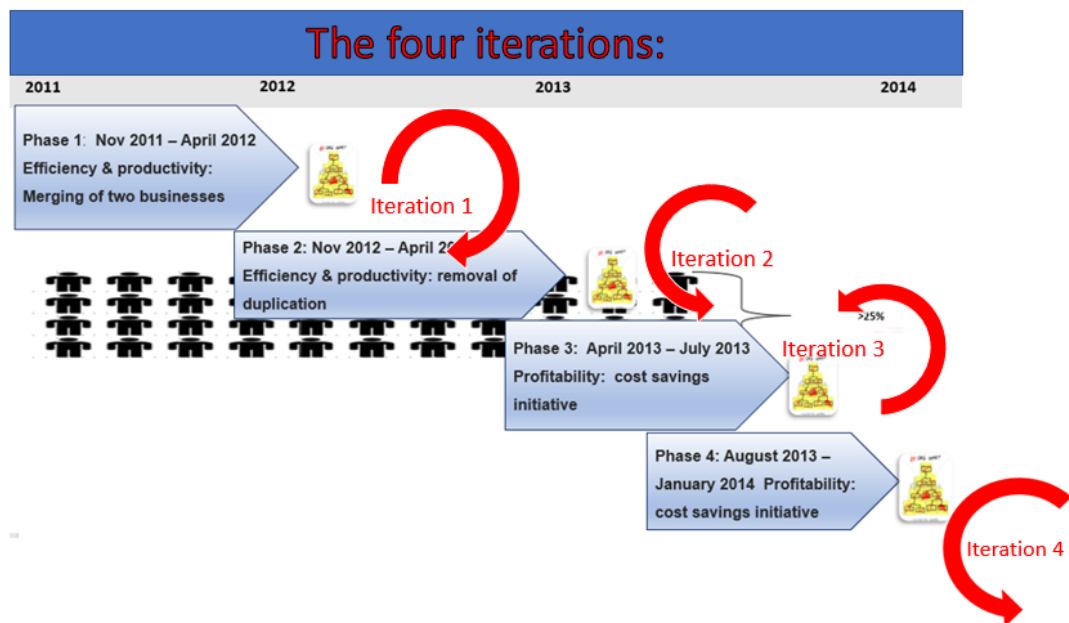


Figure 2: Action research overview of four iterations

During the process of action research, I used a combination of critical ethnography and semi-structured interviews for primary research, a total of 36 participants were interviewed comprising of 15 HR professionals, 17 managers and 4 employee representatives. From this group, 13 held director

positions and 6 had dual disciplines, where a participant may, for example, be a manager and also fulfilling the role of an employee consultative committee member. Additional sources of primary data collected included: ethnography through observation and diary keeping, ‘lessons learned’ sessions, employee committee consultative meetings, restructure and change management workshops, management strategy workshops and director application interviews (Figure 3). Secondary data collected included: feedback from the mood indicator tool, engagement surveys, performance management process and an internal employee recognition system.

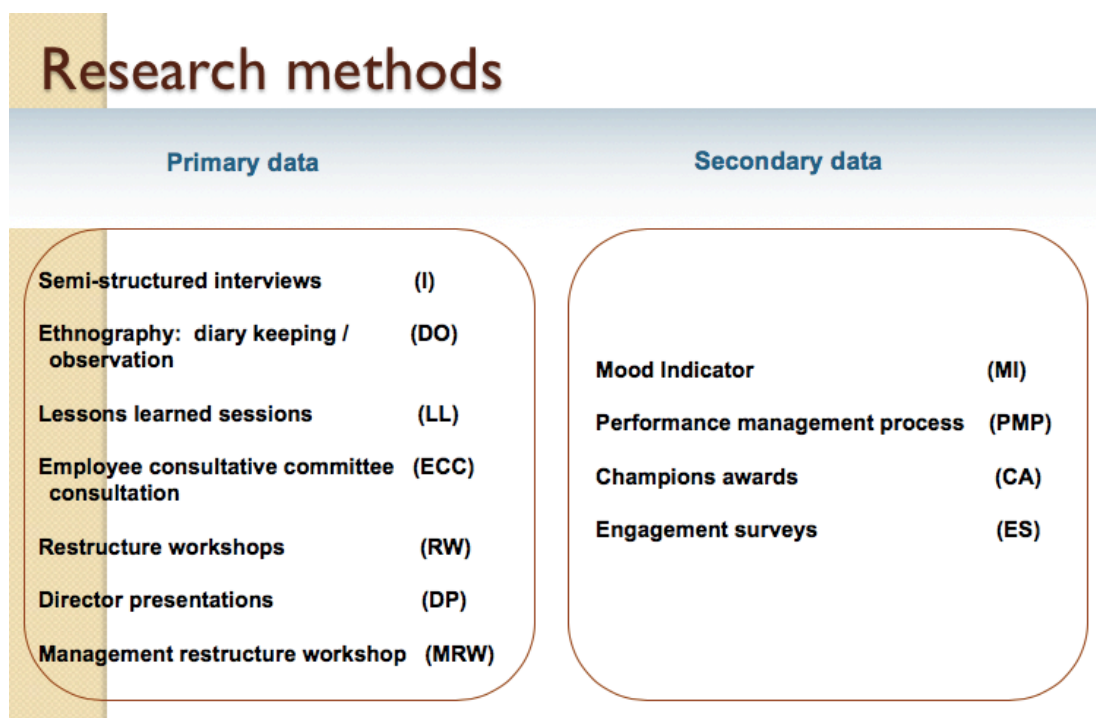


Figure 3: Research methods

1.9.1 Autobiographical note

Assuming a qualitative approach with an epistemological assumption, I adopted the view of the interpretivist and a qualitative and inductive approach was applied. My approach was dominated by a non-positive application, recognising that the debate between the positivist and non-positivist approach to research on human social matters is very controversial. I believe that non-positivism contributes much more than simply a rebuttal of positivism. Positivists contend that natural science assumptions can be made about social science subjects: that people and social phenomena are not particularly distinctive from a research subject in the natural or pure sciences (Babbie, 1998). Consistent with the findings of Alessandrini (2012), I recognise that data collected using a positivist approach is important and relevant, but disagree with the positivist treatment. My view is that there is no single, 'true' position when it comes to researching human beings, their behaviour, their roles and their social construction of the truth. Interpretation and meaning should be applied to data collected to truly understand the context. Utterly different meanings may apply to the same event depending on the context and the interpretation of the social actors involved (Babbie, 1998). My approach aligns with that what Evered and Louis (1981) describes as 'multisensory holistic immersion' where you make sense of a situation by listening, observing and questioning the outcome of actions. Coghlan (2016) points out that questioning is the primary skill in organisational studies. The observations and notes from diary keeping were given context and meaning by following up with semi structured interviews and fresh questions to avoid underlying

assumptions. The opportunity to inquiry and gain insight was thus exponentially enhanced by being an embedded researcher.

My approach as an embedded and action researcher was essential to drive continuous improvement to the success of the organisation. Adelman (1993:7) defines action research as “the means of systematic enquiry for all participants in the quest for greater effectiveness through democratic participation.” Alongside my role as researcher, I was employed as Head of Human Resources (HR) for the organisation at the time of implementing the model to mitigate the psychological impact. I partnered the board of directors of an organisation with a business volume of 550 million Euros and 2,250 employees. A more comprehensive overview of the organisation and my specific role within the business is provided in the context chapter. I had full culpability for the success of the redundancy programmes and thus had an invested interest to do everything within my power to ensure the successful turnaround of the organisation. Lycett (2003) explains that as an action researcher the student is part of the study, actively participating and attempting interventions. In this research, I was an integral part of the study and have implemented a model to mitigate the psychological impact on the redundancy envoy within the organisation where I was employed full time. The model was tested in the organisation amidst their restructuring journey, directly after their first redundancy programme was initiated in November 2011 – April 2012 (Figure 4). The interventions I implemented were piloted through three further redundancy programmes between November 2012 and January 2014. During these three redundancy programmes, I was responsible for designing the

people strategy, writing the project plan and implementing the redundancy programmes from conception to fruition.

Having worked predominantly in Human Resources for the last twenty years, I have personally made hundreds of employees redundant, operating in the role of the redundancy envoy. I have experienced the impact of 'proximity' (level of interpersonal relationship between redundancy envoy and victim) on the redundancy envoy (Gandolfi, 2009) when I had to personally dismiss a close friend who had provided me with a work permit and employment many years before. The dismissal of this individual, whom I would call a friend, was a very painful experience. The thought that I probably would not be where I was in my career if it were not for this friend, and then having to end her employment, was the opposite of how one would personally want to express gratitude. She never forgave me and terminated all contact with me. This was despite the business rationale for the redundancy being apparent, anticipated and not a surprise. One can only wonder whether the personal betrayal of trust would have been felt so strongly if someone else had delivered the news. I experienced the powerful guilt associated with being a redundancy envoy (as expressed by Harrison, 1986; Morgan, 2000; Noer, 1993; Tomasko, 1987) and I still do, even if the decision was not mine.

My role as Head of HR gave me the opportunity to become an action researcher, embedded in the organisation with a rare opportunity to pilot meaningful interventions. Similar to Lycett's (2003) research on organisational effectiveness where operational ineffectiveness was highlighted to him as an

action researcher, I was given the benefit of being advised of the negative impact on the redundancy envoy from their most recent redundancy programme upon joining the organisation. This provided me the fortunate position to implement interventions to not only reduce the negative impact on the redundancy envoy, but also have a positive impact on the related financial performance of the overall business. The interventions were piloted during three subsequent redundancy programmes whilst constant learning took place as further research on the success of the interventions was conducted on a continual basis. During the research journey, the organisation was unaware of my research, with the exception of the Finance Director. The rationale for the covert approach was an awareness that participants may not be as forthcoming and transparent if they knew of my research intentions. Using a covert approach to observation was proposed and agreed with my director of studies, as well as with the European HR Director of Global Engineering.

My role in employment was a first priority and this included being a trusted partner to the senior team. I believed that if this team felt that they were being observed for the purpose of research, the trust between myself and the team would diminish. My passion and drive for the business to succeed as the focus of my employment, was intrinsically linked to my research goals.

1.9.2 Writing style

Due to the proximity of my roles of researcher and the head of the HR function, this thesis has been a dominating focus of my life for the past five years. I therefore found it completely natural to write in the first person. The experiences were observed through my eyes and through my daily contact

with the participants. Of course, I was conscious of any bias from my side and specifically undertook a training course and subsequent assessments in unconscious bias to help manage this. This complemented my skillset by drawing attention to any unconscious bias I may have had against participants. I drew on this training and awareness particularly when participants were displaying typical symptoms of survivor syndrome, such as anger, resentment and lack of trust towards management.

To test my accuracy of data collected and possible misinterpretations, the different elements of the model implemented were always agreed upfront with the board of directors. This provided an opportunity for any misinterpretation of data to be corrected.

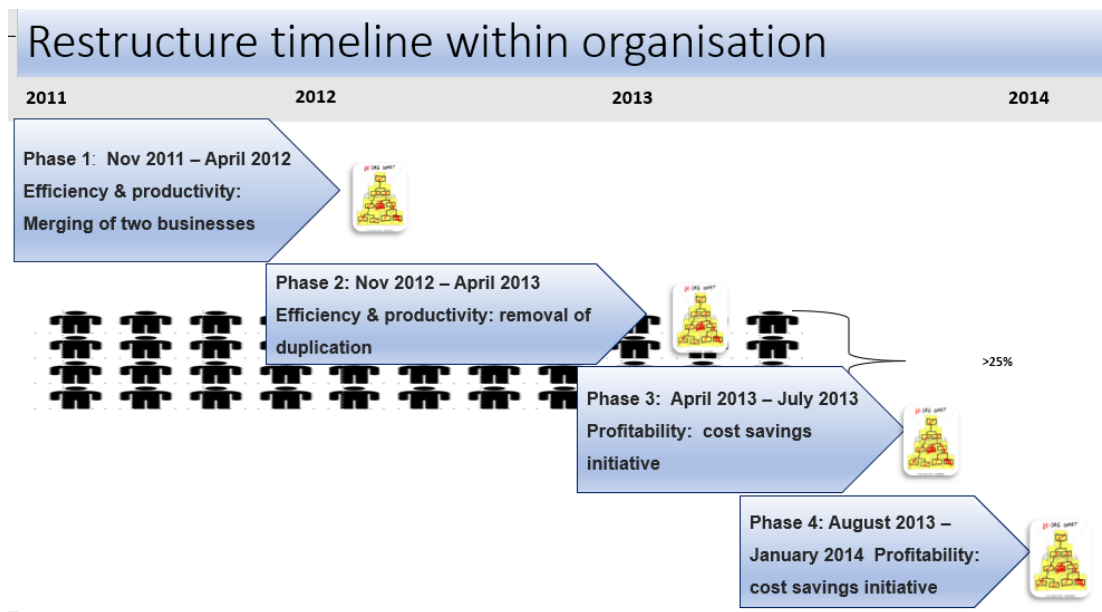


Figure 4: Restructure timeline within organisation

1.10 Conclusion:

The importance of the role of redundancy envoys during redundancy programmes, cannot be under estimated. This thesis has two aims. First, to highlight the extent of the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys. The second aim is to demonstrate how impactful the role of redundancy envoys are in determining the overall success of the implementation of redundancy programmes.

1.11 Summary of Chapters

This thesis presents itself in 7 chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter provides an overview of the literature and the rationale for the thesis. It explores the phenomenon of redundancies and the likely reasons why they fail to reap economic success (Gandolfi, 2008; 2006). The idiosyncrasy of the redundancy envoy is explored as well as the approach taken to data collection and the subsequent research journey.

Chapter 2: Context. This chapter aims to give the reader an insight into the organisational settings in which the research was conducted. I will highlight the different research settings: where data was collected at the initial stages from various, different organisations and then piloted within a dedicated organisation. This chapter also elaborates on the requirement and passion for this topic. Within the organisation concerned, there were four different redundancy programmes and this chapter will elaborate on

the four different redundancy programmes, the reasons why they were implemented and the complexity in turning the business around. This chapter also expands on the key stakeholders involved and my specific role as embedded researcher.

Chapter 3: Literature review. Within this chapter, I undertake a critical review of existing literature on redundancies and more specifically literature that highlights the psychological impact on the messenger of redundancies. I review the critique on why redundancies are typically unsuccessful in achieving their intended results (Bennett, 1991; Braithwaite et al., 2005; Tourish and Hargie, 2004). The other main areas of literature reviewed are the stressors identified for redundancy envoys and, more importantly, an analytical review of what is known about mitigating the psychological impact for redundancy envoys. Finally, I review the literature on coping methods deployed by redundancy envoys to evaluate the research concerning the most successful methods for redundancy envoys to combat stress and negative psychological impact during the process of redundancy.

Chapter 4: Methodology. This chapter explores the research journey and approach taken to collect primary and secondary data. I explore the rationale for the use of action research and detail of the qualitative method and elaborate on the interview participants and their respective experience of redundancies. The coding used to provide anonymity is explained. The various forms of data collection are explored and evaluated with ethical

considerations taken into account and explained. Rationale is provided for using observation and ethnography and I draw on Silverman's (2001) perspective that to really understand, one must engage in an extended period of observation.

Chapter 5: Findings. Within the findings, you will find a detailed analysis of the data. Here I bring together the data from semi-structured interviews to either align with or challenge that of anonymous comments from the secondary data. Diary keeping and observation is linked to confirm either anecdotal or empirical findings. This was implemented after the initial findings were collected.

Chapter 6: Analysis. In this chapter the research findings are analysed in relation to the extensive literature review. Emerging themes are identified and research literature is either challenged or confirmed through extensive discussion and an analytical approach. The four research questions will be answered within this chapter.

Chapter 7: Contribution to knowledge and practice. This chapter concludes the thesis and a summary is provided that highlights the contribution to research on how the psychological impact on the messenger of redundancies could potentially be mitigated. Limitations are considered and opportunities for future research discussed.

2 Research context

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to give the reader an insight into the organisational setting in which the research was conducted. This chapter will clarify why this research project is important and what contribution it brings to existing literature. I will explain my personal perspective and why I undertook this research project within Global Engineering (name changed to protect identity), a global engineering firm. The market conditions associated with Building Design and Automation (BDA) (name changed to protect identity), the primary research setting where a 25% head count reduction of approximately 100 employees took place is looked at closely. This chapter will also provide an overview of the global and local market conditions and challenges in Global Engineering that led to the various restructures that forms the foundation of the research setting.

2.2 Research subject

2.2.1 Rationale for subject area

To cope with increased competitive pressure, demand for cost savings and high performance, many organisations have come to rely on a range of the strategies, such as globalisation of product and capital markets, work intensification (Burchell, Ladipo and Wilkinson, 2002) restructuring and downsizing. The management strategy of restructuring, often resulting in downsizing, has been used globally for more than two decades (Williams, 2004). Macky (2004) describes downsizing as deceptively complex construct.

Restructuring usually involves major change for an organisation often including multiple departments, locations, IT platforms and networks (Anon, Business and Finance, 2016). Associated with restructuring, legal ramifications and major changes in procedures and processes are not uncommon. Restructuring is often a consequence when organisations merge and there is an overlap of positions. Restructuring can lead to the removal of jobs and subsequently the dismissal of employees.

In this research, the terminology of redundancy, restructuring and downsizing [redundancy programmes] are used interchangeably and various definitions apply. Downsizing [redundancy programmes] are fundamentally a deliberate action taken by management to reduce a firm's number of employees (Macky, 2004). Redundancy, as demarcated in legalistic interpretation, is defined in the Employment Rights Act of 1996, section 139 (1) as applicable when an employee is dismissed wholly or mainly for the reasons that the employer has ceased or intends to cease the operation of the business for the reason for which the employee was employed or due to the business not continuing to operate in the same location where the employee is employed or that the requirement for the employee to conduct work of a particular kind has ceased, diminished or is forecasted to cease or diminish.

According to Gandolfi (2008), there are three groups of employees impacted by downsizing: survivors - the individuals that remain in the company during and after the redundancy programme. Victims are therefore the ex-employees who have been unsuccessful in remaining employed by the organisation and

as a result have been made redundant. Finally, executors are the individuals entrusted with the implementation of the redundancies, also referred to as redundancy envoys. The research focuses on the redundancy envoy of restructures. I define redundancy envoys as the research participants typically in three categories; Human Resources Professionals, Business Managers and Employee Consultative Representatives. Redundancy envoys fall in both categories of executors and survivors and quite often are also victims themselves in the process of restructuring.

Redundancy envoys are normally responsible for activities such as strategy, planning, process, implementation, communication and consultations. They are also the individuals responsible for dealing with the consequences of restructuring activities. Restructures often result in redundancies which is a form of dismissal.

2.2.2 Redundancy envoys

Redundancy envoys are specified and coded as follows:

Table 1: Responsibility remit of redundancy envoys

Abbreviation Code	Role profiles included under this code	Typical areas of responsibility in redundancy activities
HRD	Human resources director within small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and large enterprise businesses. Director of HR services firm Proprietor of HR consultancy	Strategy Planning Implementation Communication
HR	Human resources advisor Human resources specialists Employee and change consultant Human resources manager Human resources business partner	Implementation Coordination Consultation Planning
OD	Organisation director Managing director Head of a business unit / function	Strategy Planning Implementation Communication
LM	Line manager	Communication Implementation Consultation
ECC	Employee consultative committee representative	Consultation Advisory role Communication

2.2.3 Research focus and contribution to this field

Research examining the impact on the specific population of the redundancy envoy within the survival population is remarkably limited, consistent with the findings of Buckley and May (2011), Gandolfi (2008) and Clair and Dufresne, (2004), prominent scholars in the area of downsizing executioners. Gandolfi (2008) makes the profound statement that most firms adopting downsizing strategies do not reap economic and organisational benefits.

My research focuses on the psychological impact on redundancy envoys during the process of restructuring and I will be exploring the critical role of the

redundancy envoy during redundancy situations and what the key stressors for the redundancy envoy during the process of managing a redundancy exercise are. It is important for this research project to identify how to alleviate and minimise the impact for the redundancy envoy and to identify which coping strategies are deployed to help mitigate the psychological impact on the redundancy envoy.

Literature available on the psychological impact of redundancy envoys is very limited; however, there is evidence that organisations who adopt restructuring as a cost cutting exercise tend not to be successful in this aim as demonstrated by Gandolfi (2008). Guthrie and Datta (2008) agree with the fact that firms view downsizing [redundancies] as a quick way to improve performance, however the reality demonstrates that redundancies as a strategy to improve organisational performance often fail to achieve the desired economic objectives. According to Gandolfi (2008), the main reason for this is that companies focus on the victims and do not pay sufficient attention to the survivors and the redundancy envoys. My research demonstrates and contributes to existing knowledge that to mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys, organisations should support the alleviation of guilt for redundancy envoys. My research highlights that guilt can be minimised through deploying various strategies such as limiting proximity to the victims, ensuring a robust business rationale, utilising voluntary redundancies and strong leadership. Through applying my research model to mitigate the psychological impact during the specific redundancy exercises in BDA, the global engagement surveys highlighted that my piloted interventions had a

positive impact on the engagement levels within BDA. (Global Engagement Survey 2012, 2015). It should also be recognised that engagement scores were higher during the restructure, despite the fact that we were reducing headcount and whilst making a significant financial loss in 2012, than prior to the restructure and three years after the restructure when the business was making a profit and in a position of financial growth. The main reason for this success was the necessary support and communication structures incorporated into my research model in place to help the organisation successfully transition through the change process. According to Holbeche (2009), the role of the redundancy envoy can help to enrich jobs and keep people motivated during restructures by helping employees to develop a more positive approach to lateral career development. Clair and Dufresne (2004) further argue that research on redundancy envoys is important and valuable and as their experiences are distinct and through their methods can influence the success of a downsizing programme (Wright & Barling 1998).

A wide range of event studies documenting the effect of takeovers on shareholders are already in existence with a smaller number of studies discussing the impact of takeovers on survivors. The purpose of this research is to enhance, complement and extend Gandolfi's (2008) work and to continue to explore the psychological impact on the redundancy envoys of downsizing.

2.3 Personal perspective

I was the principal researcher in this project and am also the author of this document. At the point in time where I was starting to collect the preliminary data for this project, I was working as a Human Resource Business Partner (HR BP) in a division of Global Engineering, Transportation (name changed to protect identity). The role of business partners differs significantly in the business world, with typical responsibilities ranging from day to day operational HR to strategy. Within Global Engineering, an HR BP's role is to design and implement the people strategy that supports and underpins the strategy for the business. The role's key focus is on strategy to enable the business to succeed. The core skills that this role requires, are those of empathy, consultation, curiosity and coaching. The role of an HR BP requires a proactive approach rather than the more typical reactive day to day focus of typical operational HR. In the instance of a restructure, the HR BP would agree the amount of people to reduce the headcount by, which areas of the business, the best approach to managing engagement and design of the project plan to ensure successful delivery within set timescales. I elaborate more about the organisation in the section 'organisational context'; however, it is advantageous to gain an understanding of the overall structure of Global Engineering and the dynamics between the various divisions and Human Resources (HR) to appreciate the full context. HR operates as part of the corporate functions unit that support all nine divisions and is therefore a different business unit not directly linked to a specific divisions' profit or loss, portfolio or their headcount figures. HR is a business unit in its own right, albeit not a profit centre. Divisions are charged an annual fee for HR services.

Having personally witnessed and experienced the psychological impact of being a redundancy envoy during restructures myself as well as on some of my colleagues and direct reports, the results have been most fascinating, ranging from being motivated to expand in their personal and career development to the complete opposite of resigning from their posts due to a significant personal impact. A personal experience with managing a redundancy situation in 2007 resulted in an unwanted outcome, where the HR advisor who was leading the redundancy process was left despondent and the line manager of the employee who was subject to the redundancy were signed off with stress. As a consequence of this coupled with similar experiences, my awareness and exposure to the psychological complexity and emotionally charged situations associated with redundancies increasingly developed with this resulting in my curiosity and interest to help people through this difficult time being borne.

At the time of starting this project, October 2012, I was subject to a restructure within the HR department which had a direct impact on me. Being put at risk for the first time in my life, gave me a very valuable and unique perspective to gain understanding and insight of what it feels like as an employee when your ability to generate an income is threatened. Not only was it a challenging situation due to the threat of losing my income, but even more significantly so due to me also being the main breadwinner in the household at that time.

I believe that this experience contributed profoundly to my ability to have empathy and to relate to the unique perspectives of how employees at risk of

losing their jobs feel and how they experience the process of going through consultation. I could relate to Paulsen et al's (2005) research that highlights the significance that survivors and victims of redundancy experience relating to levels of job uncertainty and that of personal control which had a direct relationship with emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Having significant experience of making employees redundant and very limited exposure to sitting on the other side of the table, I believe that being put at risk of redundancy myself, provided me with a far deeper insight into the range of various perspectives from the employee at risk as well as from the view of the redundancy envoy. I was also able to draw on previous research undertaken for my master's degree which focussed on occupational stress and the typical "flight or fight" symptoms that manifest themselves in the situation of redundancy. I consider myself privileged from an embedded researcher perspective to have experienced the emotional trials and tribulations associated with going through the process of being at risk. Ironically, it also gave me the opportunity to observe my own line manager and his peers who were placing me and my colleagues at risk and how they managed the process – what worked well and what did not and how their actions impacted on us within the "at risk pool".

Four of the research participants within the HR community shared this experience with me of being placed at risk ourselves and provided valuable input and insight into how we as HR Professionals can mitigate the psychological impact for not only individuals at risk, but also for the manager who is carrying out the redundancy process. These participants shared their

views and experiences through semi-structured interviews. This provided me with the privileged opportunity to interview the HR director who instigated the redundancy programme whilst we were in direct consultation regarding the future of my own role being at risk of redundancy. Subsequently, I had the further privileged opportunity to interview another HR director who conducted one specific consultation with me in the capacity of being at risk. This gave me the advantage of gaining a very personalised account of the process by asking probing questions such as: “How did it feel to you to put me at risk?”

Ironically, the outcome of the HR restructure where I was at risk resulted in me being promoted in February 2013. Another personal lesson learned for me, that a restructure where redundancies are involved could also result in better opportunities for an individual within their organisation and the common belief associated with redundancies that redundancy programmes only have negative impact on individuals' careers are not always true. My research also significantly contributes to knowledge in this field where it highlights that there are also positive implications for redundancy envoys, such as promotions and career development. My new position meant that I would move to a new division within Global Engineering, Building Design and Automation (BDA) as Head of HR, responsible for eight countries. My role was to be the strategic business partner to the Managing Director (MD) and Finance Director (FD) and supporting the rest of the board of directors of this circa 550 million EURO business. Essentially, I was responsible for the strategic people plan and the successful identification and implementation of HR projects to ensure the people agenda aligned with the overall business strategy.

2.4 The organisation

2.4.1 Global Engineering UK divisions:

Most of the research undertaken in stage one of the data collection stages was within the division in Global Engineering, called Transportation. Global Engineering Transportation allows for the efficient and integrated transportation of people and goods by rail and road – all products, solutions and services regarding transportation are handled by the Transportation division.

The portfolio of the Transportation division includes:

- Maintenance and service of vehicles and infrastructure
- Road traffic control and information systems, parking space management as well as electronic payment and toll systems for urban and interurban traffic
- Integrated transportation solutions for intermodal networking of different traffic systems

Within this division in Global Engineering, various restructures were in operation during the research stage across three different business units, including commercial functions, the engineering department and the field service operations. Within commercial functions, there was a reduction of seven employees and twelve employees within the engineering department. Within field service operations, several restructures were being implemented to facilitate leaner working across the country in various pockets in our offices in Manchester, Hayes and Edinburgh with an overall reduction of twenty-five

employees. These reductions were driven by workforce optimisation to align with changes in customer needs and the loss of certain contracts where the resources were no longer required. The reductions were therefore more a strategy of reacting to business changes by department on a smaller scale rather than an overall Transportation strategy to save costs, and local management made their own decisions to restructure or implement headcount reductions. In summary, Transportation is a stable, mature business and restructures were normally small in scale, driven by workforce optimisation rather than as a cost saving initiative.

Data was also collected based on restructures undertaken in Global Engineering Products (GEP) (name changed to protect identity). GEP is one of the leading vendors of British Standards wiring accessories, circuit protection systems and switches and sockets, with brands Crabtree, Wylex and Volex, and has been a wholly owned subsidiary of Global Engineering since January 2006. With sites in Cannock (Staffordshire), Hindley Green (Lancashire) and Wythenshawe (Greater Manchester), GEP offers a complete range of low voltage installation products from a simple light switch to the main switchgear in an industrial installation. GEP are designed to satisfy the needs of specifiers, wholesalers, contractors and end-users in domestic, commercial and industrial markets alike.

Within GEP, restructures and associated redundancies were more prevalent than in Transportation due to the lack of stability in the business. GEP reduced their headcount with 80 employees that represented 15% of their workforce

due to a financial impact of market conditions changing in 2012. Prior to this, smaller headcount reductions were not unknown to the business as they continually adjusted and realigned the workforce to address market changes.

2.4.2 Primary research setting - Global Engineering Building Design and Automation

The majority of data collection was conducted within Global Engineering Building Design and Automation (BDA). BDA's portfolio is focused on delivering the automation of safe, energy efficient and environmentally friendly systems for buildings and infrastructure. BDA offers a range of services, including the supply of services for fire safety, security, building automation, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) as well as energy management GEP and services. BDA delivers in providing high building performance levels combined with low operating costs thus resulting in optimising the energy costs for their customers. They help them achieve these goals with energy management services as well as integrated and automated building solutions that are tailored to specific customer requirements. Key areas of the division include industry-specific solutions for data centers, hospitals, life science companies, airports, hotels and energy suppliers, commercial buildings for international companies, as well as infrastructure in cities.

In the fire safety segment, BDA offers product, systems and integrated solutions and service for fire and gas detection, automatic extinguishing and for alarm and danger management systems. These are sold direct through a

range of distribution channels as well as through value added partners. BDA's headquarters in the UK are based in the south of London with four regions across the country, including mid England (Manchester), Scotland (Edinburgh), Ireland (Dublin) and south England (London and South of London).

In February 2013, reaching stage 2, solutions, of this research project, the BDA organisation comprised of circa 450 employees. Although I was responsible for eight countries, the research was only undertaken within the UK. The majority of employees are based in the south of London to accommodate the majority of their customer base, which is situated in London and includes some major brands within retail and the banking sector. About a third of the employees work from home or are site independent; i.e. they do not have a fixed base and normally work at a range of customer sites.

BDA UK and Ireland forms part BDA Area North West Europe (name changed to protect anonymity), which comprises of Poland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands and Finland. From a matrix perspective, BDA UK and Ireland reports into the Global Engineering UK CEO as well to the BDA Area North West Europe CEO. The headquarters for BDA Europe is situated in Switzerland. The structure comprises of a complex matrix organisation with the research focusing on the area London, the fourth tier in figure 5 below.

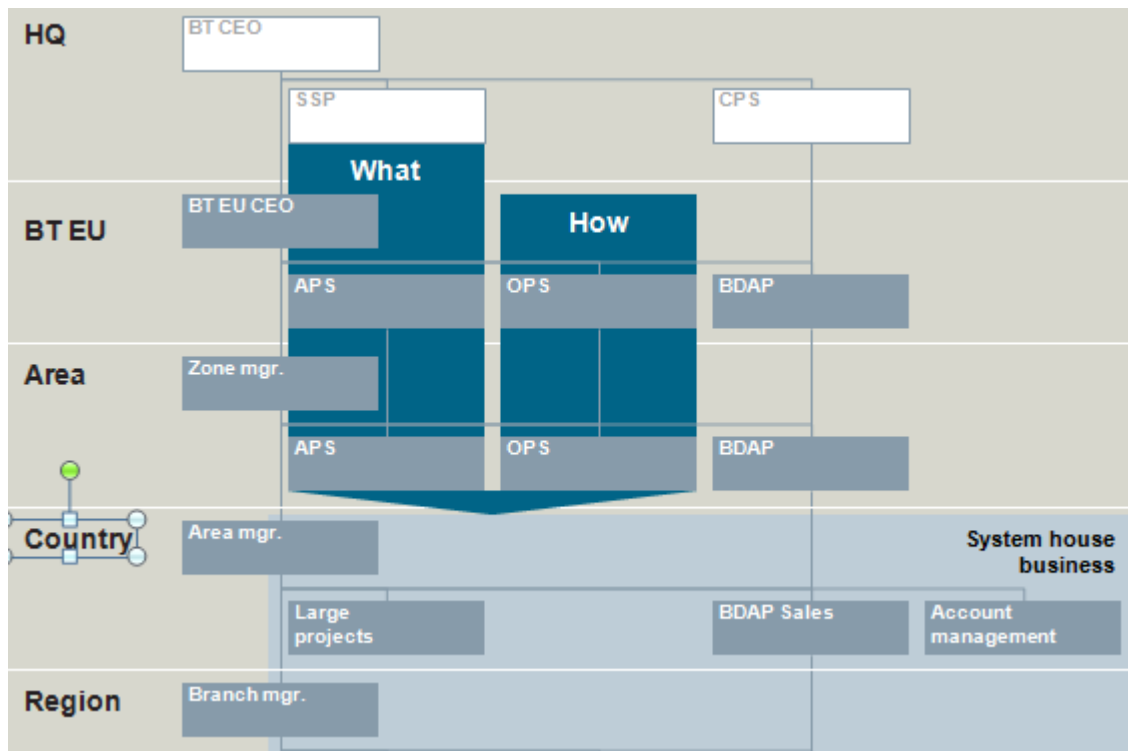


Figure 5: Building Design and Automation Reporting Structure

2.5 Organisational history

By 2006, BDA had grown their portfolio extensively and could offer a great range of products and solutions from predominantly a series of acquisitions and mergers as argued by OD2 (2016). Typically, mergers and acquisitions led to duplication of skills and functions which often result in restructures to harmonise functions and remove duplication. BDA originated in Global Engineering as a small business focusing in the fire industry that developed through growth through acquiring various companies over a period of time predominantly in the last 20 years. Subsequently, in 2012, the three different portfolios Fire, Security and Building Automation merged into one business. Within the three different business units, business processes, profit and loss

processes, employee culture, route to market, value added partners and operating styles, including leadership styles were all operating autonomously. The synergy between the three portfolios were limited which resulted in various business challenges especially as strategy, organisational vision and culture were not aligned or harmonised.

2.6 Organisation's strategy

2.6.1 Global Engineering Global Strategy

In response to the decline in markets globally, Global Engineering launched a programme called "VISION2014" which aimed to deliver an increase to the profit margin and a reduction in costs of 6 billion Euros by fiscal year 2014. This Global Engineering Global programme applied to all divisions, including BDA, where it was implemented as "BDA2014". In addition to this, the global business model for BDA also changed. For BDA, further global changes included Building Design Automation Products (BDAP), a business unit within BDA, optimising its manufacturing facilities and streamlining administration by combining five business segments into three. In addition, two business units Building Automation (BAU) and Fire and Security Services (FSS) merged into global Building Design and Automation Projects and Services (BDAPS). All these changes in BDA Global meant rationalization of the project delivery and associated reduction in the head count and were rolled out to each country, including UK and Ireland.

2.6.2 Global Engineering BDA UK and Ireland

In anticipation of the VISION2014 project and under financial pressure, BDA in the UK and Ireland in February 2013 were already on a roadmap of continuous improvement with various cost savings and capital optimisation initiatives underway. This included initiatives such as an office relocation from Sunbury-on-Thames to south of London to drive productivity and the integration of Fire and Security. Other initiatives included the implementation of a cross selling incentive scheme throughout BDA, process improvement in the delivery of projects and crossover of project managers to Fire and Security, sourcing cheaper overheads for the warehouse and reducing stock levels. Cost savings were also realised in the way BDA disposed waste and a reduction in fuel expenditure for field service engineers by the implementation of vehicle trackers.

In addition to local BDA initiatives, Global Engineering plc looked at reducing costing, which in turn reduced the shared services allocation of costs for BDA. Despite all the various cost saving initiatives, the benefits would only be appreciated in the financials the following financial year. The reduction in allocated costs attributed to employee head count per employee such as desk space, use of IT and HR costs from Global Engineering central functions would only be realised the following financial year and thus the immediate financial pressure was still prominent. From a people perspective, the organisation implemented a series of four restructures in BDA UK and Ireland in the period 2011 to 2013 as part of the people strategy to address the organisational challenges.

2.6.3 My role as part of the strategy

Whilst embedded as a researcher in the company, I had three different areas of responsibility. I was the strategic Human Resource Business Partner for BDA in the UK and Ireland, responsible for approximately 450 employees and supporting a business with a volume of approximately £100 million. In addition, I partnered the Area North West Europe Head Quarters Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer based in Malmoe, Sweden, overseeing HR for Area North West Europe, which comprises of Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Poland as well as the United Kingdom and Ireland. The overall remit included responsibility for the people strategy for 2250 employees and supporting a business with a volume of EURO 550 million. The predominant focus of both these roles was to design, implement and take accountability for the people strategy for both areas. My third area of responsibility was to support the internal HR function in its transformation journey, driving management self-sufficiency and automation and championing various internal, corporate programmes, such as Wellbeing for HR.

Specific to these restructures, my role as strategic business partner was to help define the strategies used to turn the business from a loss-making position to a profitable organisation. Action research lent itself naturally to the process of continuous improvement where the theory and concepts emerged from the data collected and objectives. (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015)

I represented HR on the board of directors and design the overall business strategy along with the board. Specifically, during the restructures, I worked very closely with the Managing Director and Finance Director as the amount of people we could involve in the strategy was very limited, considering we reduced the size of our board of directors by 25% as well from a board of 12 directors to 8. My role often focused on adopting a coaching style complemented by business acumen gained in my previous career as a general manager in the hospitality trade.

2.7 Restructuring as part of the solution

2.7.1 Restructure timeline

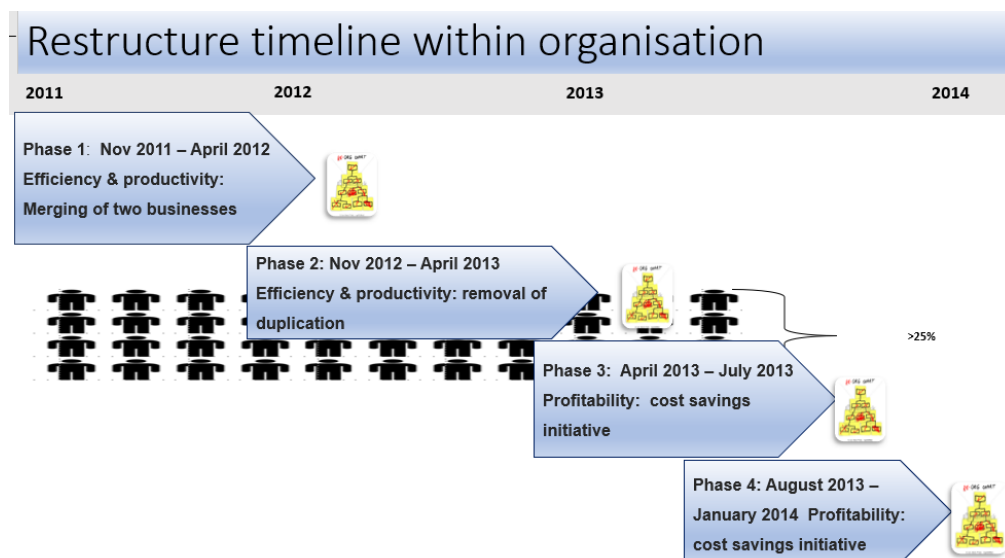


Figure 4: Restructure timeline

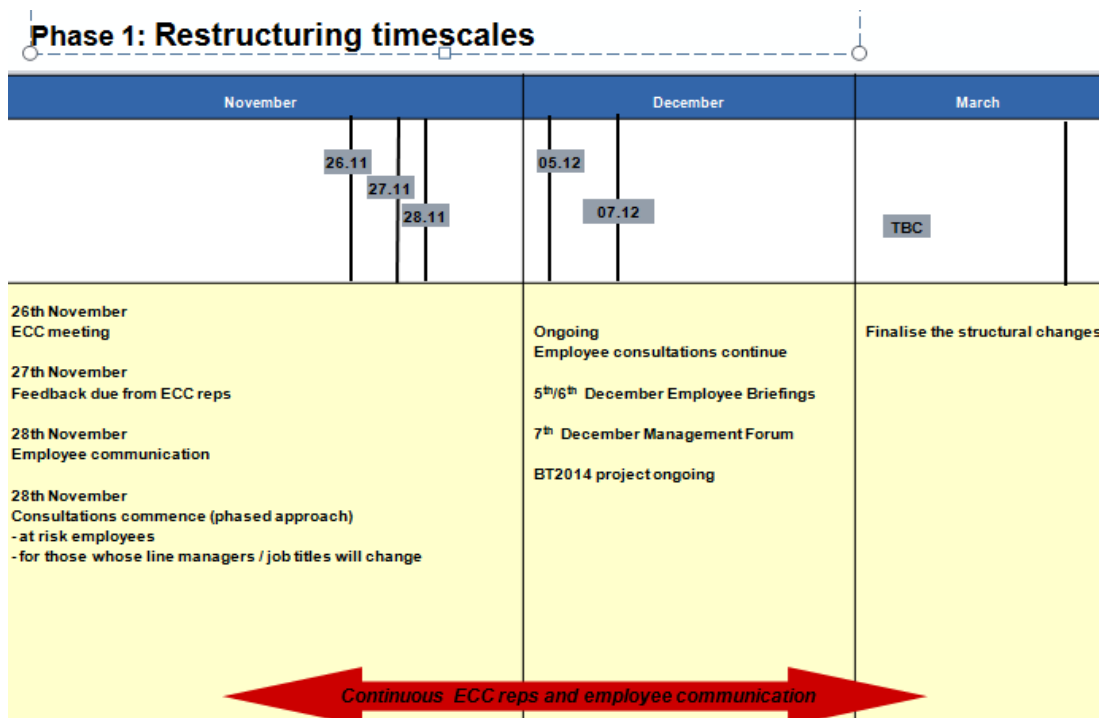
Table 2: Restructuring process

Restructure process	Objectives
Strategic Decision to restructure	Determine if this is the right / best solution to address organisational challenges
Business workshop	Determine timeframe, number of employees at risk, identification of areas of the business where employees are at risk, at risk pool
Communication plan	Draft plan of all employees communication, agreeing logistics
All employee communication & individual communication for at-risk employees	Inform all employees of restructure and specifically the impacted employees
Consultation period for employees at risk	One to one meetings with impacted employees, line managers and HR, review selection criteria, discuss alternative options, agree exit dates, etc.
Employees exit organisation	

A more detailed analysis of the rationale behind the phases is outlined below.

2.7.2 Restructuring Phase 1

November 2011 - Efficiency & Productivity: Merging of two business units Fire and Security



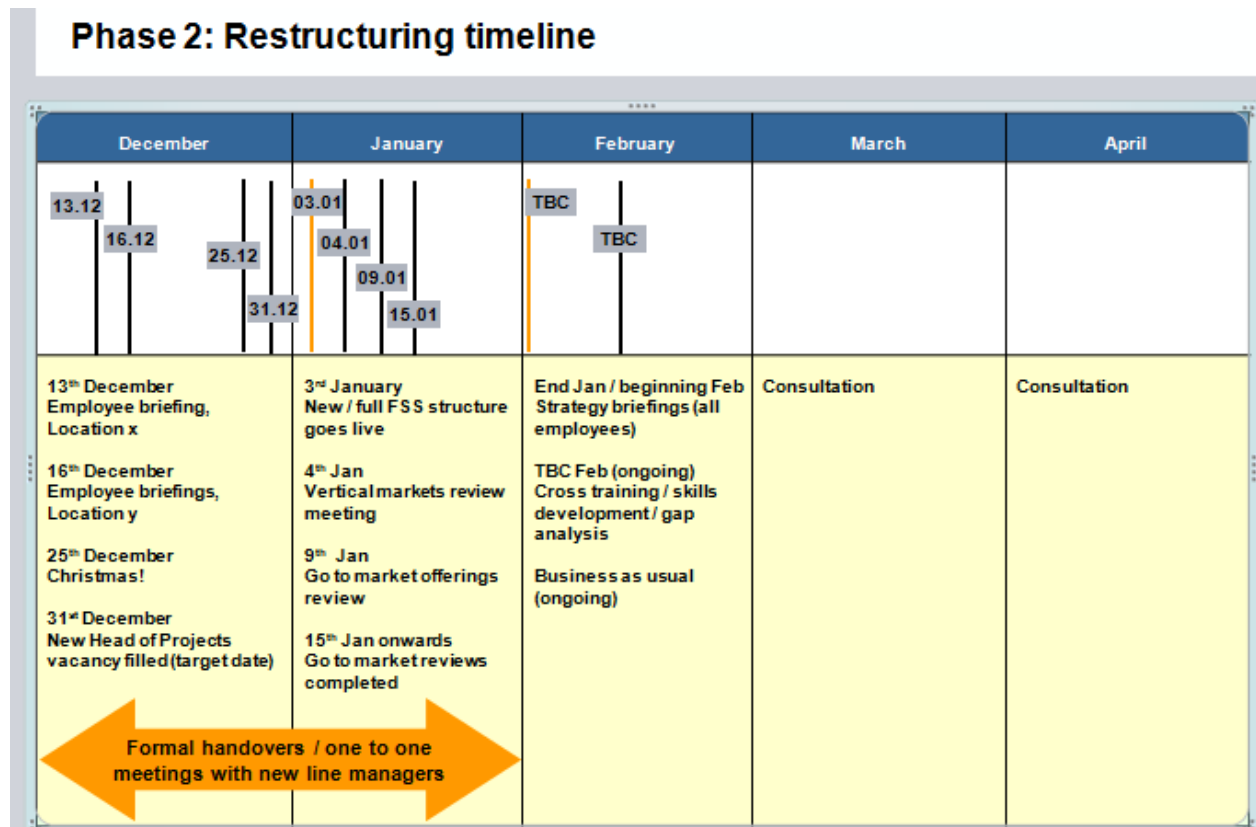
Although there were many restructures in BDA prior to this date, the first restructure prevalent to this project took place in November 2011 as a result of two business units merging; Fire and Security. The Fire business unit focused on solutions and service of fire prevention technology such as evacuation systems and public announcement services to test fire alarms or to facilitate building evacuation. The Security business unit focused on technology such as CCTV, access controls and number plate recognition. The business principles were similar in the sense that funds were generated from service contracts supporting the installed base. The market shift also meant that Fire and Security customers were moving to an integrated solution and it became more evident that the same provider was often used for both solutions. The merging of the two business units thus not only offered a competitive solution for BDA's customers but also allowed for a more productive and efficient way of working which meant we could train our engineers to master both disciplines and thus send one engineer to service a customer who had both solutions rather than sending two separate engineers on two separate occasions. The potential customer satisfaction and business benefits to BDA with the integration of the two business units thus formed part of the five-year strategy for BDA in laying solid foundations within the market.

The aim of this restructure was to remove duplication in the business and to optimise resources as a natural process when two business units merge. Headcount reductions affected areas within central functions, such as Health and Safety, Compliance and Finance, as well as removal of duplication of line

managers in certain disciplines. In total, there were twenty-five employees affected.

2.7.3 Restructuring Phase 2

November 2012 - Efficiency & Productivity: Removing of duplication/harmonisation

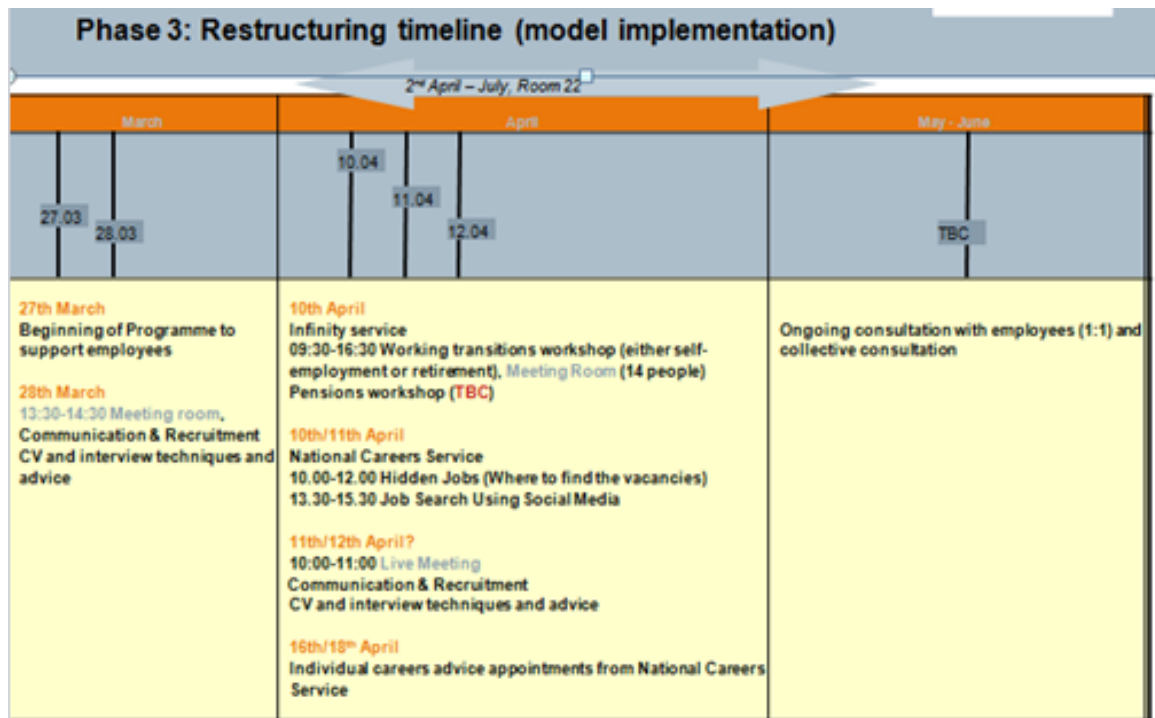


In November 2012 the second restructure was implemented with the primary aim of reducing costs within the business to help enable financial stability, increase productivity and optimise profitability. This restructure also allowed for structural improvement. The headcount at this time was approximately 450 employees. The thought process was that this reduction in human capital would be sufficient to put the business in a strong enough financial position to continue delivering a reasonable profit in the challenging market conditions. In parallel to the changes in market conditions, the business had to “rethink” its strategy which resulted in focusing on more sophisticated markets which

demanding for faster and better technology to meet the market demand. The lack of capability and skills in the business meant that the delivery of projects was under pressure which resulted in the increase of slippage costs, adding to the already difficult financial situation. Redundancies in this restructure totalled twenty employees, some of which were driven by the rationalisation of locations to bring two teams together. The BDA headquarters was based in the south of London with the fire business unit also based in the south of London. The security business unit, based at that point in time in Sunbury-on-Thames, was relocated to south of London. Headcount reduction was a consequence of the office relocation, where employees did not wish to move with the company and as a result opted for redundancy. The organisation was nearing the end of this phase of restructuring and some of the victims of the restructure were just exiting the organisation, at which point I joined BDA in February 2013.

2.7.4 Restructuring Phase 3

April 2013 - Profitability: Cost savings initiative



According to OD4 (2014), it was anticipated that the market crash would have an impact on the business for approximately six months before an increase in sales would be delivered and the status quo would be reestablished. OD4 (2014) confirmed that unfortunately, the market did not recover fast enough and the sales pipeline did not improve sufficiently to support the overheads of the business as was anticipated. The forecast suggested that further cost savings were required to balance out the volatile situation with lack of income generation. Subsequently, a further restructure of twenty-three employees was instigated in April 2013. Despite the measures taken in the first two phases to reduce costs through various initiatives as well as through head count reduction, the financial impact of lack of orders continued. As a result, the cost base of the business was too high and reducing the profit

substantially. Subsequently, a reduction was planned to reduce the head count by a further thirty-one employees as a cost saving initiative to enable continued financial success for the business. This continued reduction in the work force was unfortunately necessary as the previous cost savings initiatives, combined with continued losses and lack of orders, did not sufficiently support the cost base of the business.

Culturally, there was increased amount of job insecurity, lack of faith and a general feeling of turmoil within the business (anon, Mood Indicator, 2013, 2014; LM5, LM9, OD3 2013, 2014). This is not surprising, considering the constant fast change of pace within the organisation, office moves and involuntary and voluntary staff turnover totalling a headcount reduction of a hundred employees. In addition, the lack of stability in the organisation was driven due to a high turnover in Managing Directors with the typical tenure being eighteen months, which meant that the company's vision and strategy were constantly realigned to the goals of the new Managing Director. At this point in time, employee morale was at rock bottom, evidenced through the mood indicator, an online tool which elicited the views of employees on their morale. I will explore the results and indicators from this online platform in later chapters, including Methodology and Findings and Analysis.

Despite various other cost saving initiatives, such as negotiating cheaper rental rates, reduction in work force travelling, reducing operational costs, trackers in vehicles (which reduced travelling and improved productivity) there was no alternative option but to reduce headcount further. The first two phases

of the restructures provided the easier selection for redundancies, as removing duplication of the same roles is relatively straightforward to identify. Of course, selecting the right individual to stay with the company is not always that straightforward. The third and fourth stages of the restructures relied on a much more difficult selection process and the decisions around where and how to reduce personnel generated the requirement for more analysis, conflict and increased stress for the organisation and redundancy envoys. The original analysis suggested that a hundred and twenty-five employees would be at risk to reduce the headcount by thirty-one employees. This amounted to over a third of the organisation's workforce being at risk of redundancy, which is a rather significant figure and will have a high risk to further damage employee morale.

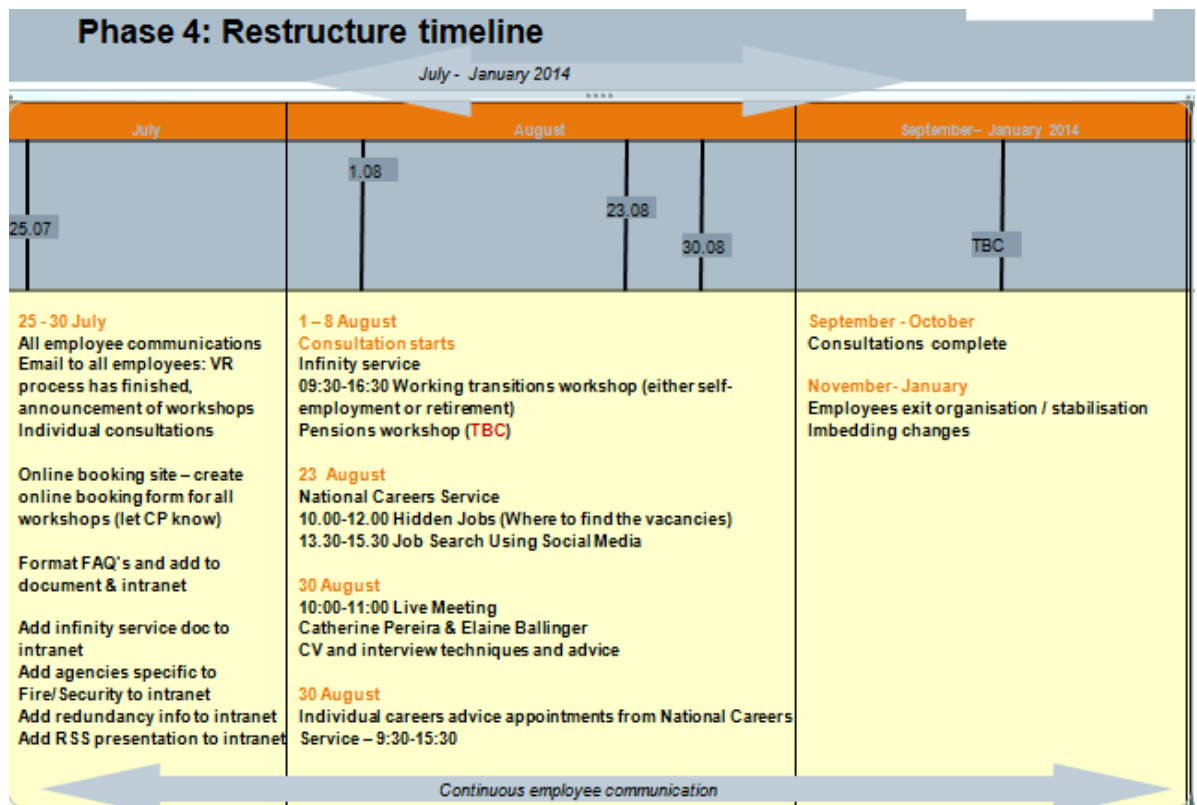
The reason for this high number of employees at risk was due to the fact that in a pool of, for example, sixteen commissioning engineers, only two roles were at risk; however, due to the size of the pool and with the aim to follow a fair process, the entire population of employees who delivered the role of a commission engineer would be at risk. Employee legislation which was aimed at a fair and transparent process did however have a significant detrimental impact on affecting BDA's employee morale.

The potentially high number of employees at risk would cause significant damage to the engagement and related productivity of employees. A strategic decision was thus taken by the management team to consider voluntary redundancies within selected pools of people to reduce the disruption in the

business and to limit the number of employees at risk. The aim of this strategy was that by getting suitable volunteers in the right groups of affected people, it may mean that we could save putting the whole group at risk of redundancy, thus reducing the psychological impact on redundancy envoys as well as on the workforce.

2.9.5 Restructuring Phase 4

August 2013 – Profitability: Cost savings initiative



The continuation of inaccurate forecasting in the business, lack of income generation, decline in orders and sales, compounded with losses in projects lead to the last tier of the restructuring of eighteen employees in August 2013. An overall cost saving of four million pounds was achieved at this stage. The significant impact on the business of broken psychological contracts, continuous change, lack of faith in the business, left employees subject to

“survivor syndrome” and lead to a total headcount loss of just over a hundred employees, 61 redundancies and an additional 40 voluntary resignations. Unfortunately, many of the individuals that left during this time were in business-critical positions and had to be replaced. No doubt some of these resignations added to cost savings and meant a reduction in the compulsory diminution in the work force; however, one could argue that the loss of talented and skilled employees had a far greater cost to the business.

The four phases of restructuring allow for many debates. The management strategy was to reduce the headcount in smaller quantities at a time and to be reserved as once the organisation have lost talented and or knowledgeable employees, it is highly unlikely that they would return to BDA. In addition, redundancy legislation also prevented us reappointing employees for a period of six months after the redundancy. It was also very carefully considered that if BDA reduced their headcount by too many employees at the early stages of the restructure and the market conditions major decision driver was the impact it would have on the organisation if they were to announce a headcount reduction of a hundred employees. The risk is that BDA may lose more employees than desired through voluntary turnover due to low morale and lack of engagement. The employees most likely to leave through voluntary resignation will typically be the most talented employees who are likely to find alternative employment first (OD4, LM9, OD2, OD1, HR2, HR6; 2013; 2014). The impact of such a large restructure would be very damaging and demoralising to the “survivors” of such a restructure.

One could further argue that there were several benefits of carrying out the restructures in four phases, such as reducing the consultation periods; as if over a hundred redundancies were initiated at once, the consultation period would have been more complicated and over an extended period of time. According to the MD (2016), the phases also allowed enough time for the restructures to facilitate natural attrition which realised into cost savings for the business with regard to redundancy costs. The MD (2016) also argued that another benefit of not removing too many employees and then subsequently having to recruit new employees, also allowed for a saving on high recruitment costs and the ability to retain existing customers by delivering to their needs. When implementing a redundancy programme like this, careful consideration was of course also given to the public perception and the views of our customers, as stated by OD4 and OD5 (2014) and it was thus argued that it was better to restructure in small quantities and keep a lower profile than to unnecessarily raise concerns with our customers who may choose not to renew contracts or stay loyal to BDA if they felt the business would not be a future provider.

The four phases were however not necessarily a premeditated strategy but merely a consequence of reacting to market conditions and a pipeline that did not realise fast enough. In reality, the four phases over an extended period of time caused organisational fatigue and created a very challenging environment to keep engagement and productivity moving in a positive direction. The mindset of employees became one of “restructuring in BDA is just business as usual.” Unfortunately, this had an impact on natural attrition

where employees previously may have sought new employment opportunities for the purpose of development, higher salaries or to mitigate job insecurity. The impact this had on the mindset was that employees tended to stay in the business with the “hope” that they may be made redundant with a financial package that ultimately supports their aim of leaving the business.

The different phases were also a reasonable business approach to remove resources in a controlled manner by limiting the impact on the business and managing change in an organised approach to allow the survivors in the business to adjust to the change over a period of time, increased workload and changes in the organisation.

2.8 Key stakeholders in the strategy and implementation

There were five key work streams in the strategy and implementation of the restructures. The project teams that were responsible for the strategy of restructuring and how to implement the restructures included the MD, FD, Communications partner and myself. Once the strategy was agreed, our key stakeholders in the successful implementation of the restructure included four work streams: the senior management team, Employee Consultative Committee (ECC), Communications and HR project team. The senior management team had the responsibility of initially proposing where the headcount reductions would take place and providing rationale for their proposals. These discussions were facilitated through workshops and often very contentious as most managers wanted to protect their own resources. What complicated this situation further was the fact that more than half of the

senior management team were at risk of redundancy themselves and it was a major challenge to keep them engaged and focused on the importance of the project. The management team had to validate their decision making by presenting solid business rationale back to the project team on their proposals for reductions. Their decision making in where to make reductions within their teams needed to be impartial to personal relationships and carefully considered on how this would impact the business in the short and long term.

2.8.1 Board of directors

The initial strategy to address efficiency and improve productivity in phases one and two of the restructuring was a controlled and planned strategy by the MD and FD in BDA, as local management. The third and fourth phases of restructuring which were focused on cost reduction were directed as a head count reduction from BDA Headquarters in Switzerland and the local management was not necessarily in agreement with the approach or the headcount reduction numbers. This allowed for a further complication and conflict at a senior level. BDA UK and IE Management felt that any further restructures would result in cutting the resource levels too low and the impact on the engagement levels of employees would potentially result in losing talented and highly skilled employees who are at risk of becoming skeptical of the organisations future. There was also a concern of organisational fatigue and a consequence that a further restructure would have too significant an impact on the success of the organisation with such a large reduction in the workforce.

2.8.2 HR project team

The HR project teams varied throughout the different phases of the restructure in BDA. During the first two phases of restructuring, the project team consisted of the Divisional HR Business Partner (my predecessor), one dedicated project consultant, an employee relations advisor, recruitment partner and several administrative support. In the third and fourth stages of the restructure, I was heading the HR project team as Divisional HR Business Partner with a similar support structure. Working closely with the MD and FD, I was responsible for the strategy, project plan, implementation and supporting them specifically with any redundancies within their direct reports, which consisted of the board of directors. Overall, I was accountable with the MD and FD for achieving our headcount reduction targets within a set timeframe.

2.8.3 Employee Consultative Committee

The ECC group consisted of four representatives which acted as the voice for the organisation. Each of the four ECC representatives covered a different constituency which reflected geographical demographics as well as representation by business units. This included a representative for the headquarters in the south of London where the majority of employees were at risk, a representative for a business unit, Building Design and Automation Products (BDAP), and two representatives for the largest business unit, Building Design and Automation Projects and Services (BDAPS). They had an active interest in the success of the organisation as well as challenging

management on decision making and ensuring where possible the correct processes were followed and implemented. The ECC had strong links to unions although formally the organisation did not recognise unions.

BDA believes that the success of the company is dependent upon the commitment, performance and dedication of its employees. Together, these factors contribute directly to achieving a high-performance culture within the organisation. This is fostered by all of our employees being well informed and involved in matters that affect the business and its future. It is the role of the ECC representatives to keep employees informed of important decisions taken by management. The ECC has the purpose to improve communication, in particular to ensure communication is two way. They therefore represented an important channel of communication and consultation between management and employees on matters relating to the plans and performance of each business unit and of the business as a whole. The Forum is intended to complement and not replace other channels of communication such as team meetings. Management will consult with the ECC on topics such as business objectives, business performance and financial results, operational policies, feedback and advice on proposed communications, helping monitor the extent to which communications are reaching everyone. The company has a statutory duty to conduct collective consultation with representatives of employees on topics such as Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 (TUPE) and Redundancy issues.

In this research context, the ECC representatives form part of the data collection process as, in their roles of representatives, they also carry the responsibility of contributing to decisions that impact the employment of their colleagues and the extended workforce. With communication being a key part of their role, they face similar challenges to those of managers and HR, such as being the bearer of unpleasant news, being in the position of knowing who will be impacted by the restructure, yet have to keep the confidentiality. For this reason, I have included the ECC representatives as part of the research setting of redundancy envoys.

ECC members also acted as colleagues in individual consultation meetings and provided a route for upwards feedback and questions on an anonymous basis. Specifics related to the implementation of the restructures, such as selection criteria, whether through interviews or a selection matrix, including the best methods of communication, were all part of the consultation process with the ECC members. What made this situation quite unique was that some of our ECC reps were at risk of redundancy themselves whilst in parallel were also responsible for making employees redundant within their own teams. In a similar fashion to the management team, the personal stress for these individuals were complicated and increased through the different roles they had to account for in this restructure; i.e. making employees redundant, acting as a voice of the business making and participating in the strategic vision, acting as leadership role models, yet having to deal with the complexity of how personally they may be in conflict with all the behaviours the organisation is

expecting them to display, due to their own situation of potentially losing their employment status.

2.8.4 Communications team

The communications team consisted of the head of communication as well as a technical communications partner who updated our specific and dedicated intranet site to host communications and policies relevant to the restructure. The communications process underpinned the success of the restructure delivery. We ensured communications were aimed at reaching as many individuals as possible by using various forms of communication, despite the challenge that geographically our employees were dispersed over the UK and Ireland with a third of our work force home based. Most of the workforce was in field service and thus the engineering population and sales force were mostly out at customer sites with some working night shifts. Any important announcements such as breaking the news of a headcount reduction were conducted face to face in our onsite auditorium in the south of London for the onsite employees. For the employees at other Global Engineering offices or perhaps customer sites and home workers, a live-meeting was used where they could hear the communication and follow the slide presentation on their laptops, which were also recorded in case this had to be cascaded further in the organisation. Employees who missed the original communication or who were not clear could access the recording on our intranet when convenient. For employees who were not able to attend the face to face, typically our engineers and sales force, we conducted a conference call where they could dial in via phone. To follow up, the final communication on an announcement

would then be emailed out to all employees who could either access this on their laptops or mobile phone devices, with the links to the recorded version embedded in the email. We noted all employees who were off for absence reasons, be it sickness, maternity, sabbaticals, etc. to which managers made personal calls and followed up with printed communications to home addresses.

The communication programme was executed consecutively, one method after the other to ensure that we reached all our employees in a few hours and so that we knew they received the announcement without any filters or misinterpretation.

We facilitated several other forms of communication to allow for two-way communication and feedback, such as weekly ECC meetings with our reps and open sessions with our MD and FD, named “Tea with Dan” where up to eight employees were invited from different areas of the business to talk about how they feel, what is working and what is not. We also ensured we tailored our communications to our respective audiences, keeping it high level to the senior teams and removing jargon and complexity for other populations. In addition, we ran constant lessons learned sessions for managers to ensure we address the needs of all of our population.

2.9 Challenges with restructuring implementations

2.9.1 Legal impact

It is worth noting the legal impact on the implementation of a restructure. I refer to this variable as employment law changes on average twice per year and

legislation does have a major impact on how a redundancy programme will be implemented. Key factors for BDA to consider included ensuring a fair and robust process was followed and that the transparency of the business rationale on why the restructure was pivotal to the future sustainability of the business was clearly defined and communicated. The processes of selecting the redundancy pool, which is all the employees who will be placed at risk and the criteria used to identify those roles that will be made redundant, all requires solid arguments for justification. Criteria could, for example, be by selecting candidates through interviewing (selecting in) or by using a selection matrix (selecting out).

The role of communicating and consultation with individuals, underpinned by the Employment Rights Act, 1996, section 139 (1), often includes group and individual consultation, which is a key area of focus for the redundancy envoys. The law specific to consultation states that there's no time limit for how long the period of consultation should be, but where the minimum is 20 to 99 redundancies, the consultation must start at least **30 days** before any dismissals take effect. Where there will be 100 or more redundancies, the consultation must start at least **45 days** before any dismissals take effect. Within BDA, we consulted for a minimum of 30 days each time we implemented a restructure, thus over the four phases for a minimum of 120 days. The challenge with this legal driven process is that during this time of consultation the workforce is in a state of turmoil and uncertainty and often employees would rather just know where they stand, so they can plan ahead.

A key part of the role of redundancy envoys is to communicate the news that a redundancy process is to be instigated and then follow the process of placing individuals “at risk” – essentially informing the employee that they are part of a selection pool of employees that are at risk of losing their job. During the time of these four phases of restructuring, UK legislation required that in BDA at least three individual consultations with an employee are conducted as a minimum requirement and in addition to follow a process of collective consultation through our ECC committee.

2.9.2 Financial impact on the restructuring programme

Quite often in larger enterprise companies, enhanced redundancy packages are offered. In Global Engineering, the redundancy policy allowed for enhanced packages; i.e. pays more than statutory requirements. The Global Engineering policy was thus also applicable within BDA. The enhanced reward element acts as a small incentive to the victims of redundancies and reduces the guilt that redundancy envoys experience.

Further elements to consider are that many large enterprise companies have got generous budgets for supporting the redundancy victims with factors such as outplacement support, training vouchers, various supporting training opportunities, such as resume writing training, interviewing skills, etc. Within BDA, we had to honour the enhanced redundancy packages as they were a contractual requirement. With BDA being in a position of financial loss, it is not surprising that there was a very limited budget for supporting employees at risk or being made redundant. Despite these challenges, we offered a very

comprehensive support structure to our employees through smart resourcing and creative solutions. More details of the support structure can be found in appendix A.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a synthesis of the literature that focusses on organisational restructures and redundancies and the implications and significance of psychological wellbeing for the redundancy envoys of such programmes. A critical review of the literature shows that not many recent studies that explicitly focus on redundancy envoys have been conducted with a few exceptions such as Ashman (2016; 2012) and Waraich and Bhardwaj (2011). Ashman (2016; 2012) adopted the methodology of qualitative approaches with data collected via interviews. None of the studies however included the findings being tested as per my research. The knowledge claims made by Waraich and Bhardwaj (2011) was based on statistical analysis of two questionnaires with a sample of 68 respondents within India. Cascio (2013) produced some recent work pertaining to downsizing, although his area of focus is more on the causes of downsizing and the factors that influence the decisions to downsize and thus not a directly attributable to the area of mitigations of the psychological impact of redundancy envoys. Despite the recent publications by Ashman (2016; 2013; 2012), Gandolfi (2013; 2009) and Gandolfii and Hansson (2011; 2010) are still the most prolific authors and researcher on executioners [redundancy envoys]. Gandolfi based his arguments on the utilization of evidence from extensive cross-sectional and longitudinal reviews of literature as well as through his own research where he adopts the use of qualitative approaches, conducting semi-structured

interviews, specifically a case study methodology in his 2006 study in an Australian bank.

A critical evaluation takes place to identify what the key stressors are for redundancy envoys and what support mechanisms and coping strategies have previously been proven successful in reducing the psychological impact on the messengers of redundancies. Once there is a clear understanding of the stressors and how redundancy envoys cope, the literature is then critically reviewed with an emphasis on factors to help mitigate the impact assessed previously. To truly understand the complexity for redundancy envoys with the knowledge that they are often subject to being at risk of redundancy themselves, I have paid particular attention to the literature on the victims (the individuals that leave the organisation) and survivors of redundancies. 'Survivors', sometimes referred to with the term 'survivor syndrome', are the remaining employees in an organisation after it has been subject to a restructure, resulting in redundancies (Allen et al., 2001; Baruch and Hind, 1999; Brockner, 1992). As Gandolfi (2008) highlights, executioners [redundancy envoys] experience a combination of what victims and survivors do. Contradictory literature is identified and reviewed with particular impetus on research that demonstrates successful mitigation of the psychological impact on the redundancy envoy.

The literature review is constructed in three parts. In the first part of the literature review, I critically review the impact of redundancy programmes on the three affected groups, paying particular attention to the redundancy envoy.

The second part of the literature consequently follows the next stage in the individual's process of being made redundant which is how they cope. This part thus seeks to understand how redundancy envoys cope with the impact and explore different coping techniques. The third part of this chapter focuses on a synthesis of literature of proven, successful strategies for mitigating the psychological impact for the redundancy envoy. The design of the literature follows a logical order of how redundancies are experienced by individuals, i.e. what is the significance of the impact of redundancies and what are the solutions to mitigate the impact.

The key themes in redundancy literature focus on the success of redundancies as a business strategy and the impact on the victims and survivors. More specifically, a review of the literature on redundancy envoys focuses on emotional impact, workload and pressure, proximity to the victims, a lack of communication and understanding of the business rationale.

3.2 Redundancies as a business strategy

Organisations facing competitive pressures use redundancies as a business or human resource management strategy in an attempt to reduce costs and increase profitability (Waraich and Bhardwaj, 2011). Filipowksi (1993) describes the strategy of implementing redundancies as a way of life, with Datta et al. (2010) contending that redundancies are a complicated, multidimensional business phenomenon.

The findings on the success of redundancies as a cost savings initiative are wide-ranging and inconsistent. Redundancy has profound consequences and yet relevant literature includes numerous examples where organisations fail to demonstrate an improvement of financial performance, organisational effectiveness, profitability and productivity, as a result of implementing redundancies (Cascio, 2013; Gandolfi, 2009; Gandolfi and Hansson, 2011; Macky, 2004). Harter et al. (2002) support this by arguing that multiple changes of managers, structures, performance indicators, targets and policy can have a negative impact on productivity and profits.

Literature demonstrates contradictory views on the research conducted on the impact of redundancies. Although there is literature available looking at the human consequences of redundancies (Brockner, 1998; Brockner et al., 1993; Clair and Dufresne, 1994; Gandolfi, 2007; Gandolfi and Hansson, 2011; Labib and Appelbaum, 1993), Vickers and Parris (2007: 114) argue that “much of the literature focusses on the downsizing of organisations, as opposed to the human experience of being made redundant.”

Some literature also looks at alternative strategies employed by businesses to achieve cost savings such as Schoenberg et al (2013) who reviewed 22 empirical studies investigating business turnaround situations and found the most prolific strategy deployed is that of cost orientation with the aim to obtain a quick impact to stabilise finances. Other popular cost reduction strategies in literature include reducing research and development, optimising accounts receivable, reducing inventory, stretching accounts payable, reducing marketing activity and pay freezes. (Hambrick and Schechter, 1983; Hofer,

1980; O'Neill, 1986a; Stopford and Baden-Fuller, 1990; Sudarsanam and Lai, 2001 cited in Schoenberg et al., 2013).

Thanassoulis (2013) argues that medium to long-term losses are often caused by a focus on short-term profitability. Literature indicates that a short-term focus where the aim is to improve the organisation's financial position, typically by reducing personnel, is short sighted and does not reap sustainable results. 'Short-termism' is an overly short-term focus where the organisation's strategy is focussed on immediate successes, not necessarily complementing the long-term sustainability of an organisation (Nieto, 2014; Sudarsanam and Lai, 2001). Barker and Mone (1994) warn, however, that solely focussing on cost cutting during a turnaround is likely to reduce employee morale and commitment, resulting in higher staff turnover. Labib and Appelbaum (1993) further contend that downsizing is seen to have a major negative impact not only on the organisation, the employees, the government and its survival, but also on society overall.

Research tends to focus on how to downsize but is limited when it comes to redundancies being planned and implemented with a focus on people and what should be done before, during and after the programme (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993). Fielden and Davidson (2011) contribute by highlighting concern that despite the increase in redundancies among middle and senior level managers, the impact of unemployment on these managers has received minimal consideration.

It must be recognised, however, that despite few reported cases in literature, some firms do reap financial reward after implementing a redundancy programme (Gandolfi and Hansson, 2011). Waraich and Bhardwaj (2011) contend that the negative consequences of redundancies can be reduced by proper management. Cameron (1994) further states that the implementation of redundancies has derived from the objective to obtain a new organisational structure that allows for a competitive edge. To achieve the continued competitive edge in the global and local markets, quite often organisations reduce their headcount in multiple phases (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993).

Despite the known negative impact of redundancies (Clair and Dufresne, 2004; Gandolfi, 2008; Gandolfi and Hansson, 2011; Labib and Appelbaum, 1993), there are prevalent expectations that organisations will continue to implement redundancies as a human resource strategy (Gandolfi and Hansson, 2010). It is of paramount importance for organisations to succeed in achieving their aims of implementing redundancies, as they need to maintain their position locally and globally and promote a positive corporate image (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993). On this basis, there is a real need to focus on the redundancy envoy of redundancies and the significant impact redundancy may have on them.

3.3 The impact of redundancies on the employees

3.3.1 Victims

'Victims' are defined as the ex-employees who have been unsuccessful in remaining employed by the organization and as a result have been made redundant (Gandolfi, 2008). Literature on downsizing [redundancies] is abundant when it comes to representing the impact on 'survivors' and 'victims' of redundancies, as asserted by Clair and Dufresne (2004). Parris and Vickers (2010) expand by describing a myriad of feelings experienced by victims, including that of anger towards employers, sadness at leaving colleagues and staff, fear for future employment and financial worries.

Literature on the effect of redundancies on victims is plentiful. Paulsen et al. (2005), Waters (2010), Parris and Vickers (2010) and Vickers and Parris (2007) have found that the key elements are:

- psychological stress
- ill health
- family and personal problems
- reduced self-esteem
- depression
- helplessness and anxiety
- feelings of social isolation
- damage to career
- loss of earning power
- feelings of cynicism
- uncertainty and

- decreased loyalty in future employment (Gandolfi, 2008).

The psychological impact experienced is influenced by a range of factors, unique to each individual and which should be recognised, such as age, gender, career status, social support, financial position, previous occupational level, education level, length of employment, individual ability to cope with stress and job satisfaction with most recent employment (Leana and Feldman, 1988). Findings on the uniqueness of the impact are supported by Waraich and Bhardwaj (2011) who state that organisations must remember that each employee is affected differently based on their personal characteristics or their ability to manage the situation.

Redundancies can have different effects on individuals. Appelbaum et al. (1987) contend that besides the repercussions of depression and hardship, the situation is often exacerbated when employees do not find new jobs, which impacts on their confidence. Due to the fast pace of technological development, victims also reported a need to retrain and acquire new skills to remain marketable (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993). Parris and Vickers (2010) found that victims of redundancy reported a feeling of shock at the point of being made redundant. Victims of redundancy often follow the grief curve (Kuber-Ross, 1969), commencing with shock (Vickers and Parris, 2007). However, it was the feeling of assault on their identity that had the biggest impact, as their ability to demonstrate achievement through work and showing competence and capability were being removed. Furthermore, the impact of lowered self-esteem experienced by victims of redundancy is linked to their

feelings of loss of control, shame, a sense of failure and feelings of rejection (Kates et al., 1990). Vickers and Parris (2007) also claim that all the respondents in their study who were victims of redundancy experienced alienation; however, it represented itself individually as feelings of social isolation, powerlessness, betrayal, shock, shame and humiliation.

There are a few rare cases where victims have reported their job losses as a positive outcome. In these cases, the redundancy gave them the opportunity to re-evaluate their career goals and make changes in a more gratifying direction (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993). Leana and Feldman (1988) found that offering retraining programs for the victims can have a big impact at reducing their stress levels and that less stressed victims help ameliorate the impact on the redundancy envoy.

3.3.2 Survivors

Literature on the survivors' responses to downsizing [redundancies] is also abundant; for instance, see Mishra and Spreitzer's (1998) theoretical model of survivors' response to downsizing [redundancies], as well as research by Bedeian and Aremnakis (1998); Brockner, Tyler and Cooper-Sneider (1992); Brockner, Wiesenfeld, Reed, Grover and Martin (1993); Brockner and Siegel (1996); Horsted and Hoherty (1994); Gottlieb and Conkling (1995); Tal (1996) and Tourish et al. (2004).

Literature strongly suggests that the survivors of a restructure often experience the adverse effects of being subject to the process as profoundly as those who

were made redundant (Astrachan, 1995; Baruch and Hind, 1999; Brockner, 1992) in the form of:

- increased workload
- survivor guilt
- survivor envy
- anger
- relief
- job insecurity
- managing higher levels of stress, absenteeism and mistrust
- working in an environment with possible decreased work quality, morale and productivity
- decreased employee involvement and
- decreased trust towards management (Gandolfi, 2008).

Vickers and Parris (2007) contend that survivors are often left emotionally damaged from witnessing colleagues lose their jobs and Devine et al. (2003) even suggest that survivors experience more stress than the victims, who have inevitably moved on. Kets de Vries and Balazs (1997), however, found that both survivors and victims reported high levels of stress.

Ugboro (2006) describes the responses of the employees impacted by redundancies as either constructive or destructive. Brockner, Tyler and Cooper-Sneider (1992); Brockner, Wiesenfeld, Reed, Grover and Martin (1993) and Brockner and Siegel (1996) found that constructive responses range from obliging (calm, relief, committed, loyal, following order and routine

behaviour) to hopeful responses (hope, excitement, optimism, problem solving and taking initiative). Destructive responses range from fearful (worry, fear, anxiety, helplessness, withdrawing, procrastinating) to cynical (anger, disgust, moral outrage, cynicism and retaliating) responses. Furthermore, survivor behaviour also includes increased levels of absenteeism (Campbell-Janison et al., 2001) and less innovation (Cascio, 1993).

3.3.3 Redundancy envoys

Some of the literature that looks at the elements of perception of justice and fairness in the responses to restructuring and downsizing of victims and survivors, such as Brockner, Tyler and Cooper-Sneider (1992); Brockner, Wiesenfeld, Reed, Grover and Martin (1993) and Brockner and Siegel (1996) (cited in Ugboro, 2006), may also, arguably, bear relevance to the redundancy envoy community. Despite managers also being survivors of redundancy programmes, the managers that are doing the firing [dismissals] seem to be an understudied population (Morgan, 2000).

Noer's (1993) research indicates that managers who are part of a redundancy programme, quite often experience some of the same feelings as the survivors and victims. Gandolfi (2007) concurs with Noer's (1993) findings that the impact on executioners [redundancy envoys] are a combination of both the findings on victims as well as survivors; yet, research that explores the emotional responses and reactions of redundancy envoys is limited (Gandolfi and Neck, 2008). Torres (2011:181) support this by stating that the very real suffering of the redundancy envoy remains "unspoken and unheard." The most

recent research by Ashman (2016; 2012) agrees that redundancy envoys describe the experience as “traumatic, nerve wracking, dreadful, very upsetting and hideous.” (Ashman; 2012: 9)

A possible reason suggested for the shortage of literature in this area is that redundancy envoys themselves rarely admit to experiencing suffering during redundancies, as arguably this could be regarded as a weakness (Torres, 2011). Torres (2011) argues that employers’ [redundancy envoys] suffering during the process of redundancies is ignored by specialists in the field on the basis of their theoretical preconception that because the employer is dominant, they are unable to experience the suffering. It is argued that redundancy envoys’ suffering is very real but can be deceptive as they can appear insensitive to employees during a redundancy programme, due to their own fear of rejection (Morgan, 2000). Although literature on the impact on redundancy envoys is very limited, only one known argument supports the majority of findings, the role of the redundancy envoy during redundancies is unique, underestimated and extremely stressful.

Some literature compares and refers to the role of the redundancy envoy as similar to that of ‘death tellers’, similar to doctors who may inform others about the death of a loved one (Clark and LaBeff, 1982). Executioners [redundancy envoys] report finding it difficult to deal with the emotional trauma of the victims and survivors (Gandolfi, 2009). The tension experienced with these intense, negative situations impacts on how an individual emotionally engages with their responsibility within the role.

Deems (1995) states that when managers get asked to implement a layoff [dismissal], some managers undergo a personal crisis. Gandolfi (2009) found that executioners [redundancy envoys] felt anxious and uncomfortable when they were pursuing executioners' responsibilities. Clair and Dufresne (2004) describe the responsibility of making people redundant as professionally challenging and emotionally taxing.

Torres (2011) adds that the decision to make people redundant is one of the hardest to make and to live with, the reason being that redundancies are often seen as personal failure with potentially disastrous psychological and mental consequences for the redundancy envoy and the victim. Sometimes managers experience burnout after the implementation of a redundancy programme, which could be due to a lack of qualifications or experience and skill to cope with the demands of the job when it comes to downsizing [redundancies] (Cameron et al., 1999; Morgan, 2000)

Downs (1995) states that middle management in particular have a challenging role during layoffs [redundancy programmes] as they are often responsible for managing and enforcing the layoffs [redundancies] but are rarely involved in making the initial decisions. In addition, middle management are quite often concerned with their own job insecurity (Downs, 1995) and, whilst having to manage their own survivor syndrome, they have to assume a leadership role in managing the downsizing [redundancy programme] (Noer, 1993). Appelbaum et al. (1999c) agree that there may be concerns about their own positions tenure as survivors, which can add to their stress.

There are differing perspectives for senior management. Gordon (1996) argues the opposite, however, that senior management is not suffering. Gordon's (1996) rationale for this view is that there has been a surge in managerial employment and their wages, with the ordinary worker bearing the brunt with reduced wages, making organisations meaner but not necessarily leaner (Palmer et al., 1997).

3.3.4 The psychological contract and trust

The 'psychological contract' refers to an individual's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between an individual and another party. A belief exists that a promise has been made and in return a commitment is offered, binding the parties to a set of reciprocal obligations, as defined by Rousseau (1989). The concept of the 'psychological contract' was first presented by Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl and Solley (1962) and later developed by Kotter (1973); Nicholson and Johns (1985); Robinson, Kraatz and Rousseau (1994); Rousseau (1995, 1996) and Schein (1980). Harter et al. (2002) argue that when employees' psychological contracts are impacted due to insecurity of tenure, the organisation is less likely to be successful than with a stable workforce.

Studies assessing organisational change (Connell and Waring, 2002; Tourish et al., 2004) and the psychological contract (Conway, Neil and Briner; 2005) are plentiful and will help support the critical relationship of change that is related to significant change brought on by redundancies. Survivor reaction to

redundancies often results in a breach of the psychological contract, as suggested by Mishra and Spreitzer (1998). When rationale for change is not understood by employees, their psychological contracts become reformulated and that makes them more cynical about further organizational change proposals (Connell and Waring, 2002). Without appropriate and targeted interventions to help employees to see rationale for change, this phenomenon, which is described in Connell and Waring's (2002) paper as the 'BOHICA syndrome', may significantly reduce employee preparedness to consider new change proposals. 'BOHICA' is an acronym that stands for "Bend over, here it comes again" which is used to indicate that an adverse scenario is about to repeat itself.

Baruch and Hind (1999) explain that the typical psychological contract implies that employees offer loyalty, conformity and commitment. In return, employers offer career prospects, employment security and training and development. The psychological contract relationship is based on "trust". In a redundancy situation, it is often perceived that the "contract" and "trust" has been breached due to the potential of loss of employment. Levine (1992) reported that survivors stated that their contract with the organisation was broken after a redundancy programme was implemented. The risk and stress caused by lack of commitment is a high propensity to leave the organisation (Ugboro, 2006). Gandofi (2013) explains that the risk is compounded if younger, possibly more creative individuals choose to leave the organisation, as this could have an impact on the organisation's competitive edge.

The role of trust has been studied quite extensively and in different contexts (e.g. Larson, 1992; Swan, 1995; Sydow, 1998; Morgan and Hunt 1994 and O'Brien, 1995). The Reina Trust and Betrayal Model (Reina and Reina, 2006) looks at betrayal as a breach of trust or the perception of a breach. A redundancy resulting in layoffs [dismissals] is classified as a major form of betrayal, albeit unintentional, according to the Reina Trust and Betrayal Model. Torres (2011) explains that when the relationships between employer and employee were good prior to the redundancy situation, the perception of betrayal by the employee is even greater.

With deteriorating psychological contracts and a perceived breach of trust, emotional attachment is often impacted as well. Employees tend to detach themselves emotionally from the organisation, often due to their perception that the people in charge have a disregard for their concerns. (Gervais, 2004).

3.3.5 Job insecurity and motivation

Baptiste (2008) draws attention to the negative impact of reorganisations on employees' sense of security and wellbeing. Survivors and victims reported a similar level of job insecurity and uncertainty in a study conducted by Tourish et al (2004). The level of ambient uncertainty that comes when an organisation's management structure is under review can have a profound, detrimental impact on motivation and job security within the organisation, irrespective of the remuneration on offer (Deci and Ryan, 2012). The threat of further downsizing [redundancies] adds to the levels of job insecurity as found by Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans and Van Vuuren (1991).

3.3.6 Morale and performance

Nieto (2006) states that during a head count reduction, the survivors are less likely to give their unconditional commitment to the organisation and this is likely to reduce morale, and subsequently performance. Brockner et al. (1992) found an inverted-U relationship with regard to work effort and the threat of redundancies in their study. Besides the experience of low morale, there is a possibility of a further consequence: behaviours of sabotage (Downs, 1995). Macky (2004) contends that employees also experience increased resistance to change during a redundancy, a behaviour that is counterproductive for a redundancy programme.

3.3.7 Employee satisfaction

Tyson and Doherty (1991) raises the point that when organisations use terms such as 'shake out', 'getting rid of dead wood' or 'housekeeping' it evokes a sense of inferiority for the victim which impacts on employee satisfaction with the overall redundancy programme. Downsizing [redundancies] in hospitals had a negative impact on the impacted employees who reported greater internal conflict and lower employee satisfaction (Wagar and Rondeau, 2000). Research further supports that even employees who are not subject to the full impact of a downsizing exercise report a decline in commitment and job satisfaction and vicariously feel its effects (Hitt et al., 1994; Mullaney, 1989; Petzall et al., 2000).

3.3.8 Blame and guilt

Literature clearly recognises the correlation between guilt experienced by the redundancy envoys and the impact this has on their emotions during a redundancy programme (Harrison, 1986; Morgan, 2000; Noer, 1993; Tomasko, 1987). Morgan (2000) states that managers are often blamed for layoffs [redundancy dismissals] due to the perception that the management has made poor decisions. Noer (1993) supports this by stating that even though the implementation of a downsizing exercise [redundancy programme] may be successful, a great deal of pain and guilt is still felt by many managers [redundancy envoys] over what they think they have done to the employees. The perception and feeling that the managers [redundancy envoys] are harming others, provokes not only guilt but also anger and denial (Morgan, 2000). Harrison (1986) explains that the guilt is derived from having to fire [dismiss] employees who are productive and employees who have long tenure with the organisation which often correlate with being more senior in years.

3.3.9 Workload and pressure

Waraich and Bhardwaj (2011) state that the major stress that survivors experience in relation to downsizing is job demand, where the demand exceeds their ability to cope and can easily lead to overworking (Downs, 1995). Ashton (2016; 2012) states that the issue of workload was identified as the most common stressor for redundancy envoys. Managers who are already responsible for a large remit including multiple functions, large employee numbers and smaller units, experience an increased workload with a more significant area of responsibility during and after the layoffs

[redundancies] (Cameron et al., 1991). Waraich and Bhardwaj (2011) found that the maximum pressure in relation to workload was felt by middle-level executives. Workload and pressure are attributable to factors such as managing the redundancy programme whilst having to continue with the day job, as well as potentially picking up additional work due to fewer resources.

Besides the normal pressures of the job, redundancy envoys have to put extra effort into managing employees who have low morale, commitment and job satisfaction. In addition, employees who are at risk of losing their jobs might be inclined to perform unethical behaviour that could be detrimental to the organisation's long term (Sumit, 2017). Downs (1995) found that disgruntled employees may even be tempted to sabotage the success of the organisation. This puts additional pressure on managers to be vigilant in managing people during a redundancy situation (Sumit, 2017).

3.3.10 Decision making

Clair and Dufresne (2004) found that another challenge that redundancy envoys are faced with is making tough decisions about who to make redundant. Redundancy envoys report it is particularly difficult to make decisions around who should exit the organisation when there is no clear indication of who is a less effective employee, among equally effective employees (Clair and Dufresne, 2004). Pivert (2004:79, cited in Torres, 2011) refers to the direct account of a redundancy envoy explaining how tormented they found the decision making: "I spent night after night going through the list of people in my mind. I could not sleep. It was a terrible experience." The

decisions and selection of whom to make redundant is described as complex, confusing and chaotic and is exacerbated as names of those selected to be made redundant change at a moment's notice (Clair and Dufresne, 2004).

3.3.11 Proximity

Several studies agree that the proximity of the redundancy envoy to the employee could influence the redundancy envoy emotionally (Ganfolfi, 2009). Pivert (2004) states that the closer we are to a certain situation, the more significant the emotional impact, whereas with a certain distance, the dimensions and implications are not as significant. This is supported by Bandura, Barbarnelli, Caprara and Pastorelly's (1996) work. They found that redundancy envoys that had deeper connections with employees and insights into employees' private lives found it harder to make the redundancies (Clair & Dufresne, 2004). Torres (2011: 286) refers to a well-known metaphor used in the military to describe the impact of proximity very effectively: "it is always more traumatic to kill someone with a blade than with a rifle." For some redundancy envoys, proximity meant that they knew personal facts about the employees at risk and whether they were facing hard times (such as financial difficulties or divorce), and this made the process of redundancy even more stressful (Clair and Durfreshne, 2004).

Torres (2011) explains that the emotional challenge of proximity during redundancies quite often occurs in small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) due to the close proximity of relationships, whereas in large companies the redundancy envoy may potentially not even know the employee or employees

being made redundant. Redundancy envoys and the employees at risk of redundancy are less likely to see or know each other in larger organisations. The additional burden on the person making the decision to implement redundancies in an SME is thus even more challenging, as they cannot pass on the blame and have to accept responsibility as the owner or director in charge (Torres, 2011).

Torres (2011) found in his study of redundancies in SMEs that decision makers stated that depending on the proximity to the employees, the approach in the implementation of redundancies changes significantly. Torres (2011) refers to the difficulty of making redundancies in a small village or community where the organisation implementing the redundancies is the main employer in the town. The employer becomes a notable figure in their community and this puts even more pressure on their social responsibility and symbolic status. A situation like this can damage the status of the person/employer in and out of the work context.

3.3.12 Lack of communication and information

Isabella (1989) highlighted that some of the challenges that survivors are faced with links to poor communication and being misinformed about issues, such as their role in the newly restructured organisation and information about key people leaving or changing. Dennis et al. (2004) supports these findings in their research that found that middle managers received less information during the redundancies than senior managers in all aspects. The lack of convergence between the implementation of a redundancy programme and

the communication plan is often a cause of stress for the employees (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993).

3.3.13 Additional stressors

The above stressors for redundancy envoys are the most commonly found in the limited literature available on the psychological impact on redundancy envoys. There are, however, a few additional stressors that are recognised as causing significant stress for the redundancy envoy which I will explore below. The impact and extent of these stressors specific to redundancy situations has received very little attention in literature. Johnson et al. (2005) argue that although the emotional component of work is almost certainly relevant to work stress, it should not be considered as the only explanation for high stress levels and that other stressors will undoubtedly play an important role in the experience of work stress. Not very popular in literature, but very valid, is Torres' (2011) study that indicates that isolation for the redundancy envoy during redundancies should be recognised as having a significant impact as well. Torres (2011) contends that directors often find themselves alone with regard to making difficult decisions around redundancies but also alone in the sense of whom they can trust and talk to about their feelings and the situation.

Another significant stressor that has received limited recognition in literature in the context of redundancies is poor leadership. Poor leadership or lack of leadership during a redundancy programme can lead to an increased level of resistance to change, individualism and disconnectedness which have a negative impact on teamwork (Cameron, 1994; Hannson, 2008). Survivors

also sometimes have feelings of envy towards the victims (Campbell-Janison et al., 2001). This is due to the perception that victims may be receiving generous retirement incentives, generous settlement packages or new jobs with attractive compensation (Littler, 1998). Labib and Appelbaum (1993) state that it is not so much the loss of employment that causes the negative impact on employees; instead, it is the structure of the project implementation plan and how it is executed that causes the biggest impact. Fried et al. (2003) found in an organisation undergoing major restructuring that employee performance was negatively impacted as a result of low levels of job security and role clarity and when both role clarity and job security were high, job performance increased periodically.

3.3.14 Positive impact on redundancy envoys

Contrary to all the negative indications found in literature, there is evidence to suggest some positive indicators associated with redundancies. Noer (1993) found managers [redundancy envoys] expressed optimism as tough decisions were made and there was a belief that the organisation was on a road to recovery. Vickers and Parris (2007) also acknowledge that redundancy could be a convenient managerial strategy for dealing with problem workers. One could question, however, whether these perceived positive attributes associated with redundancies are perhaps, in fact, a form of 'coping'.

3.4 Coping techniques

Despite the profound evidence that argues the negative psychological impact on the messenger of redundancies, there are also many managers who have successfully implemented downsizing [redundancy programmes], who continue in their employment and continue to implement such programmes. The success of their implementation is arguably linked to the coping strategies they have deployed to cope with their emotions whilst implementing downsizing [redundancy programmes] (Morgan, 2000).

Various definitions of coping exist. Coping is defined by Waraich and Bhardwaj (2011) as the steps that individuals take to change a stressor or to mitigate its impact. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as the way an individual changes their cognitive and/or behavioural efforts to deal with internal and/or external demands that are considered as taxing or challenging to the individual's resources. Folkman et al. (1986) add that coping is defined by an individual's attempt to manage a stressful ordeal irrespective of their success in managing it or not.

The literature on coping methodology has a valuable presence, however few studies were conducted in the last ten years specific to coping. (Clair and Dufrense, 2004; Gandolfi, 2009; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984 and Waraich and Bhardwaj, 2011). Clair and Dufrense (2004) found that during a redundancy programme, typically three different strategies of coping are deployed by redundancy envoys: emotional, cognitive and distancing. Emotional distancing refers to the redundancy envoy detaching him/herself from the situation.

Typically, they would demonstrate sympathy and shy away from empathy. Cognitive distancing would allow for three types of approaches: 'normalising', 'denial of injury' and 'justice and fairness'. Normalising would include rationalising the situation, using arguments such as 'this is my job and this is what is expected of me' or 'redundancy is an inevitable reality of business today'. Denial of injury would include rationalisation by thinking 'it is better for him this way – he needs a new challenge'. With the approach of justice and fairness, the redundancy envoy would endeavour to act and behave as humanely as possible. Physical distancing would include the 'avoidance of contact' where redundancy envoys try to avoid the impacted people or work from home or away from the office. Physical distancing also involves 'sanitising behaviours' such as a very clear business rationale, the business has no choice, being straight to the point with no 'packaging' of the message. Physical distancing takes place according to Clark and LaBeff (1982) and Clair and Dufresne (2004), when redundancy envoys take actions in order to avoid or remove themselves from situations where difficulties and anxieties were expected.

Gandolfi (2009) also found three areas of distancing in executioners [redundancy envoys]: emotional, cognitive and physical. Clair & Dufresne (2004) refers to a popular coping technique known as; detached concern, which is where one disconnects one's emotions from a situation in order to maintain objectivity and balanced decision-making. Literature however points to the use of physical distancing as the most discovered method utilised by

redundancy envoys to date. Torres (2011) equally found in his study that physical distancing was often deployed by SMEs as a coping strategy.

Despite its popularity amongst redundancy envoys, Morgan (2000) found that the use of distancing as a coping strategy during redundancies has a negative impact on the correlations with job satisfaction and co-workers and that the behaviour of distance is counterproductive during a time of redundancies. The advantages of being present during redundancies outweighs the benefits of trying to avoid the situation. Being present, allows for more effective relationship building with colleagues during a turbulent time, whilst this opportunity is missed when redundancy envoys are not in the office. Torres (2011) refers to a manager that did not have the courage to dismiss his secretary so instead sent her a letter whilst she was on annual leave. Literature strongly supports the importance of visibility during a redundancy programme. (Cameron et al.,1991)

Literature points to other coping techniques specifically preferred and adopted by redundancy envoys. Torres (2011) found that redundancy envoys cope by addressing their consciences. In his study, two managers had to dismiss their secretary, but instead found her another role. This coping technique helps to address the guilt experienced by redundancy envoys.

Although the redundancy envoys adopt various coping techniques that they may believe help them in addressing their own anxieties, limited literature has explored the potential negative consequences for the organisation or impacted

individuals and sometimes the coping techniques could be counterproductive for the redundancy envoys themselves. Morgan (2000) explored the use of confrontative coping, a positive approach to coping which includes trying to figure out different ways to handle a situation and trying to find out more about the problem so you can deal with it better. Morgan (2000) found that the use of confrontive coping had negative implications on the wellbeing and job satisfaction of the redundancy envoy. Redundancy envoys are in better position if they accept the decision to implement a redundancy programme, and the less aggression is used or acting in haste, the more satisfied they are with their jobs.

Torres (2011) found that in larger organisations a technique of evasion or circumvention is deployed where redundancy envoys cope by using a degree of disempowering arguments: 'head office decided' or 'it is not really my decision'. Torres (2011) argues that a popular coping technique used by redundancy envoys is associated with the level of ownership taken during the decision-making process. The argument is that even if redundancy envoys are willing to accept responsibility, the acceptance is only partial and it is the partial nature that eases the redundancy envoys conscience and makes it easier to face up to the harshness of the situation.

Clair & Dufresne (2004) found that the more organisational managers were exposed to downsizing activities, the more frequently and regularly this led to the development of 'coping mechanisms' in itself. This is supported by Gandolfi (2009) who found that redundancy envoys reported a direct

relationship between previous downsizing experience and personal emotional impact.

Folkman and Lazarus (1988) identified eight coping modes: confrontive coping, distancing, positive reappraisal, accepting responsibility, self-controlling, seeking social support, escape-avoidance and planful problem solving. Folkman and Lazarus (1988) found that the three most popular coping strategies deployed when stakes are high is that of escape-avoidance, seeking social support and self-control. Bandura et al. (1996) found that executioners [redundancy envoys] utilise cognitive reframing as a coping technique, where they neutralise the situation which involves an individual replacing the more negative aspects of a situation with more positive or at least neutral aspects. Other theories of coping include Latack, et al. (1992) who argue that there are four main coping strategies: positive thinking, avoidance / resignation, direct action or help-seeking. Sronce and McKinley (2006) argue another coping method for redundancy envoys is to perceive redundancies as having a low impact on the breach of the 'psychological contract' (Rousseau, 1995) which will allow the redundancy envoy to reconcile themselves.

Studies specific to coping and the psychological impact on redundancy envoys during redundancy situations are limited. Torres (2011) makes a plea that the complete absence of research into the suffering felt by those obliged make individuals redundant, gives the impression that this is an aspect that simply does not exist and that there is a significant need to explore this area further.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have the most popular coping model used in research, known as the cognitive model of coping. The Lazarus model (Lazarus et al., 1985; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) proposes three types of cognitive appraisal: primary, secondary and reappraisal. Primary appraisal is used when the individual evaluates a situation with respect to the impact on their own wellbeing, assessing if they are okay or in a position of threat. Depending on the emotions experienced, the individual may then undertake a secondary appraisal that assesses the question of what the individual can do about the situation. It is at this stage where the coping responses are determined. Reappraisal is essentially another cycle including new information assessing the success of the initial coping strategies.

Folger and Skarlicki (1998) found in their study the use of distancing behaviours, consistent with Clair and Dufresne's (2004) theory, where managers coped during redundancy exercise when acknowledgements were given to the need of a head count reduction. They also displayed distancing behaviours during the course of the redundancy process by truncating dismissal meetings. Gandolfi's (2009) study on a large Australian bank found similar results when it came to distancing; executing downsizing activities is emotionally taxing work and that executioners tend to distance themselves from the tasks emotionally, cognitively, and physically as a form of coping.

3.4.1 Emotional cognitive dissonance

Weaver and Agle (2002) and Clair and Dufresne (2004) found that redundancy envoys express emotional dissonance as they experience conflicting

cognitions such as having the burden of keeping information confidential, resulting in having to deliberately lie to colleagues and employees. For instance, in a study by Gandolfi (2008), redundancy envoys expressed that they found the need to keep information confidential and subsequently to have to deliberately lie to the workforce to maintain confidentiality in conflict with the key focus of their roles, causing cognitive dissonance.

The cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957; Harmon-Jones and Mills, 1999) contends that an individual will feel discomfort when he/she experiences two inconsistent cognitions or a cognition that is dissimilar to their active behaviour. Zapf (2002) reports that emotional dissonance can be experienced by employees if they are required to express emotions that they do not genuinely feel, which may cause a feeling of hypocrisy and may ultimately lead to lowered self-esteem and depression. This reflects prior research that the volitional presentation of non-felt emotions and the continuous self-control of one's own feelings is demanding and may lead to lower task performance (Tice and Bratslavsky, 2000; Zaph 2002).

Kets de Vries and Balaza (1997) applied the cognitive dissonance theory to redundancy situations and rationalised that organisational senior managers often see themselves as the creators of an organisation, assuming a role of responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of their employees. Torres (2011) adds that it is not easy as a director to look someone in the eye, announce a redundancy situation and acknowledge your own failings, which promotes strong feelings of guilt.

As this cognitive dissonance is uncomfortable, an individual will find a way to reduce it (Sronce and McKinley, 2006). According to Festinger (1957) and Harmon-Jones and Mills (1999), there are various methods deployed by individuals to cope with this discomfort: the individual can adapt their behaviour to be more aligned with the cognition, they can adapt the cognition to be more consistent with the behaviour or they can reduce the importance of the dissonant cognition. Sronce and McKinley (2006) contend that to deal with this emotional dissonance, a coping technique deployed by redundancy envoys is to view the situation as having minimal harm to the victims. Redundancy envoys thus adopt a position to perceive the positive attributes of the redundancy situation and often argue that the redundancies will have a positive impact on the financial prospect of the organisation.

Although it is clear from the existing research that various coping strategies exist, research that assesses the effectiveness of coping techniques, specifically in redundancy situations, is limited. Having an understanding of the unique stressors experienced by redundancy envoys and how they cope, creates a good foundation for how to mitigate the psychological impact on the messengers of redundancies.

Noer (1993) recommends that to help heal the wounds of redundancies, employees should be made aware of the benefits that the victims of the redundancy receive, such as more interesting job, or that the survivors stay but may be very unhappy in their role. Noer (1993) thus argues that this

storytelling helps promote redundancies as a liberating event. Baumol et al. (2003) found in their studies that the victims of redundancies are also promoted in a positive light due to their subsequent success as entrepreneurs after being made redundant. Sronce and McKinley (2006) suggest that this approach would reduce the cognitive dissonance experienced by redundancy envoys.

3.4.2 Proximity

There are very limited recommendations in literature regarding the circumvention or mitigation of the impact of proximity on the redundancy envoy. Torres (2011) refers to a technique of using localisation tactics for executives whose primary role is to implement redundancies. The strategy here is to use geographical space between the implementation of redundancies to reduce proximity between the redundancy envoy and the employees. In this situation, the redundancy envoy will constantly move between locations, so that there is no real opportunity to build relationships with victims.

3.4.3 Redundancy envoys as veterans

Although debatable if this is an intervention, Kets de Vries and Balazs (1997) found that the more exposure redundancy envoys have to downsizing, the more disassociation they experience. Sronce and McKinley (2006) argue that disassociation is a condition that may reduce cognitive dissonance and the internal pressure to reduce it. Torres (2011) contends that implementing redundancies often becomes a common job for human resource professionals

when working for a large organisation and therefore the impact of reduces due to the amount of exposure to the situation. Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Gandolfi (2008) found that there was a direct correlation between the impact of the redundancies on redundancy envoys in relation to their previous experience of implementing redundancies and, as such, their experience allowed for a reduced negative impact. This is explained by the relationship between recurrent repetition of experiencing an event and the consequently emotional numbness that develops (Bandura, 2002). Sronce and McKinley (2006) contend that it may, therefore, be a viable solution for organisations to hire employees with previous experiences of redundancies based on the expectation that they may be more capable of implementing redundancies.

The first part of the literature review answered the research questions of what the key stressors are for the redundancy envoy and what the critical role is of the redundancy envoy of redundancies. The second part of the literature review will explore the third research question: 'What can organisations do to alleviate and minimise the impact for the redundancy envoy?'

3.5 Interventions to mitigate the psychological impact

Literature makes it clear that to ensure success after a redundancy programme, the people factor needs to be addressed:

A major factor that contributes to the failure of most organisations to achieve their corporate objectives after downsizing is that they do not adequately and effectively address the 'people factor' throughout the process as it relates to surviving employees." (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993: 8)

Doherty and Horsted (1995) suggest that organisations that understand the impact of downsizing on the attitudes and motivation of its employees are in a better position to manage the process in order to enhance the performance of their survivors and thus ultimately the business. Cascio (1993) complements this by stating that restructuring should be responsible with an impetus on understanding the value of employees as assets instead of just regarding them as costs. Labib and Applebaum (1993) contend that redundancies should be implemented in an ethical manner, causing the least amount of negative impact on the workforce.

It should be recognised that redundancies in themselves are not enough to improve the profitability of an organisation; instead, the manner in which the organisation operates after redundancies is more likely to have an impact on the future success of the organisation. Waraich and Bhardwaj (2011) add that organisations must remember that each employee is affected differently based on their personal characteristics or their ability to manage the situation. To address each employee's needs takes a lot of effort from organisational managers. This chapter will explore interventions that have been found to be successful in contributing to the successful outcome of redundancies, recognising that redundancy envoys are the key instruments of success.

3.5.1 Leadership

3.5.1a The importance of effective leadership

Kouzes and Posner (1995) describe leadership as the art of rallying employees to attain shared aspirations. Leadership is central to the success

of implementing a redundancy programme with the intention to improve organisational performance. The earlier review on the destructive impact of redundancy programmes clearly highlights the momentous demand for the presence of strong leadership during the execution of a significant change agenda. Strong leadership can address various negative emotions within the survivor and victim community, such as low morale, emotional distancing from the organisation, and improve trust and commitment. Gandolfi (2008, 2006) confirms that executioners [redundancy envoys] can have an instrumental impact on the success and outcome of the redundancy strategy.

During a time of change, it is important for senior managers to demonstrate transformational leadership behaviours such as making sense of the change and helping employees to understand what the new developments are in the organisation and the implications for the teams and the individuals (Royal, 2013). Brockner (1992) found that executioners [redundancy envoys] have the capacity to influence employees' perceptions of fairness and justice and this is where leadership capability is really critical in the implementation of a redundancy programme. Mishra et al. (1998) support these findings by stating that the overall vision, strategy, and direction have to come from top managers who are highly visible, supportive, aggressive, and confidence-building leaders, familiar with the business and its people. Also, the presence of senior managers signals to employees that top management is concerned about them. Top management's support and commitment during a redundancy programme is of utmost importance (Freeman, 1994).

It is recognised that research on charismatic leadership has been criticized widely due to the perception of ambiguity of its central construct (Sy et al.; 2018). According to Flynn and Staw (2004), the presence of a charismatic leader can alleviate any existing doubts with regard to the survival of an organisation, help motivate employees towards commitment and help to focus efforts during challenging circumstances. Dunn & Schweitzer (2005) support Flynn and Staw's (2004) theory by recognising that charismatic leadership draws followers to trust in the correctness of the leader's beliefs and confidence in success of their mission. Eliciting this fellowship from employees could be very important to gain the support from employees during a redundancy situation.

Clair and Dufresne (2004) contend that staying connected and present for employees is one of the bigger challenges for downsizing agents [redundancy envoys]. Ironically, Brockner (1992) found that typically during a redundancy programme, supervision from managers decreases. However, to truly increase trust and open communication, it is not enough for senior managers merely to be present, they must also be willing to address emerging concerns.

Poor leadership can compromise organisational performance (Haslam and Reicher, 2016) and thus the opposite is true that strong leadership can have a positive impact on organisational performance. As Bennis (2003) observes, effective leadership is when a leader has the ability to engage followers, and without followership, special leadership is nothing. Haslam and Reicher (2016) expand that leaders must shape and articulate what they jointly believe and the followers will then do for themselves what they believe. An attribute of

effective leadership is to have the ability to adopt the perspective of others, as well as to empathise, states Trevino (1992). This is of course a very important quality especially during a restructure. Baptiste (2008) found in her studies that there was strong evidence to suggest that management relationship behaviour, in the form of support and development of trust, promoted employee wellbeing.

Bywater and Lewis (2017) refer to the importance of leadership characteristics needed to cope during times of change, named the HERO model (Luthans and Youssef-Morgan, 2017). The HERO model encapsulates traits that have been linked with coping and psychological resilience:

HOPE is described as a positive motivational state.

EFFICIACY is defined as an individual's belief of their own capability to motivate employees to successfully execute a task.

RESILIENCE refers to the positive psychological capacity to bounce back from misfortune.

OPTIMISM is described as having a positive approach and style (Luthans and Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

Haslam and Reicher (2016) submit that leadership emerges from an understanding between leaders and followers that they are bound together as members of the same social group. Leadership will be effective when employees identify with the organisation. In summary, leadership will be effective when leaders are able to communicate three things:

- that they are one of us – that they share our values and our concerns and understand our experience;

- That they are doing it for us – that their efforts are aimed at advancing the good of the group; and
 - That they are making us matter – that their actions and achievements are a practical expression of our shared beliefs and values.
- (Haslam and Reicher, 2016: 448)

3.5.1b The impact of a change in leadership

The agenda of the person in a leadership role needs to be transparent and sincere. Braithwaite et al. (2005) warn about the leader who wants to restructure as a desire to demonstrate their control and perceived great leadership to the world, which he refers to as 'restructuring as gratification'. If employees feel that top management is acting solely in self-interest, employees are more likely to demonstrate behaviours of resentment towards top management and the organisation as a whole (Appelbaum et al., 1999a). Palpacuer et al. (2007) cited by Torres (2011) state that in today's business world, large organisations have dedicated managers/directors that come into organisations to implement redundancies. Employees are suspicious of this strategy and for that reason are not engaged with this person or their leadership; they know that in a couple of years they will be moving on to the next operation to 'spring clean'. Leadership, especially during turbulent times of redundancies, therefore has to be authentic and sincere to be effective.

If the people in a leadership role demonstrate counterproductive behaviour, it may be time for a change. Bywater and Lewis (2017) warn of the danger of assuming that senior leaders have high levels of engagement. Engagement is defined as the level of commitment and an employee's willingness to give discretionary effort (Royal and Agnew, 2011). Disengaged leaders and

managers are likely to display actions or words that signal to employees that they do not believe in the organisational change, which will have a significant impact on the trust of employees (Royal, 2013).

Schoenberg, Collier and Bowman (2013) reviewed various business turnaround and recovery strategies in their work 'Strategies for Business Turnaround and Recovery: A Review and Synthesis' and found six strategies that were consistently identified in literature as effective in helping to achieve a sustained improvement in a company's performance. These successful strategies included a focus on cost efficiencies, asset retrenchments, the firm's core activities and building a sustainable business for the future. The other two strategies to drive a successful turnaround strategy are reinvigoration of firm leadership and culture change. If the leadership is not effective during a redundancy programme, changes may be required to give the organisation the best opportunity to perform.

There are contradictory views in literature with regard to whether it is constructive or destructive to change leadership during a redundancy situation. When an organisation wishes to invigorate leadership and culture (Schoenberg, Collier and Bowman, 2013), it is recognised that changing senior managers can have positive implications for the business. As Johnson (1987) explains, managers can fall foul of taking for granted past assumptions and beliefs in their organisation, which can blind them from identifying or taking action that is out of the ordinary. Mathews and Duran (1999) contend that eliminating senior employees and middle managers are viable solutions that

could have a positive effect on the future growth and direction of the firm. Hofer (1980) argues that a useful strategy to ensure success during a turnaround is to replace the senior management team for two main reasons. Firstly, the senior management team in place will have a set of beliefs on the firm, which have to be wrong, as these beliefs led the firm to the point where turnaround is required. Secondly, it is hard for the senior team to admit mistakes and poor decisions they made which may lead to denial and obstruction, as found by Kesner and Dalton (1994). Grinyer et al. (1990) support these arguments further as they found that new leadership brought a fresh and positive approach demonstrating commitment for action which was closely linked to a new vision and values and a strong drive for improving motivation and communication.

Kesner and Dalton (1994) and Castrogiovanni et al. (1992) have, however, argued that change in the CEO and senior management team can cause internal disruption with additional stress for employees already worried about their own job security and status, which will have an overall impact on instability in the organisation. Schoenberg et al. (2013) make a very valid statement that a successful turnaround strategy should include a judgement on whether a change of leadership team is required or whether the organisation's decline is simply a reflection of the current market and business environment.

3.5.1c The leadership role of HR

Bevitt (2014) states that during redundancy programmes, the responsibility normally falls to the HR department to pick up the pieces in an honorable and legally compliant manner. The real challenge, however, is for the HR professionals to organise, motivate and provide reassurance to a workforce that feels embittered. The same argument applies to Holbeche's (2009) view that the role of HR professionals can help to enrich jobs and keep people motivated during restructures by helping employees to develop a more positive approach to lateral career development. The role of keeping people motivated is a leadership skill that expands to all incumbents who have the responsibilities of a redundancy envoy.

3.5.2 Planning and Analysis

Literature highlights unequivocally the importance of effective planning and comprehensive analysis to allow for the successful implementation of redundancies (Appelbaum et al. 1999b; Bevitt, 2004; Cameron, 1994; Freeman, 1994; Gandolfi, 2013). Freeman (1994) points out that it is critical to the success of the redundancy implementation plan to ensure that the organisation has developed a long-term strategic plan which takes into account how department units, areas, and processes will be structured after a reduction in headcount. Bevitt (2014) adds that during the planning stages of redundancies, careful consideration should be given when assessing the effects that redundancies may have on employees. This will help to simplify the process later and help with addressing difficult questions.

Another important part of the planning process is to ensure any risks against legal action are investigated to protect the organisation against any potential claims (Bevitt, 2004; Labib and Appelbaum, 1993). Bevitt (2004) adds that to protect the organisation against any potential claims, a detailed strategy is required including how and why these redundancies will take place. In the UK, for example, discrimination legislation prevents dismissals on the grounds of, among other things, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or age, and organisations will need to provide discernible evidence that their actions are objectively justified.

Mone (1994) and Schmenner and Lackey (1994) emphasise that it is important to include staff analysis and realignment into the planning phase to enable the organisation to retain vital skills and knowledge. Freeman (1994) contends that it is important in the planning stage to represent all the members' interests and Cascio (1993) adds that all of the organisation's members should be involved at the planning stage to ensure this representation. Labib and Appelbauam (1993) state that once the decision is made to reduce the headcount, a proper analysis of all job functions should take place to establish which positions can be eliminated and in which departments. This also helps to produce the training needs required in the new organisation. When deciding on the areas where redundancies will take place, there should be a strong focus on ensuring the organisation does not lose employees with special skills, abilities and expertise (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993). Bevitt (2014) argues that preparation is crucial to keeping staff onside during a large-scale redundancy

and a key part of the planning is having a good idea of who is likely to be impacted and the potential development of the situation.

Labib and Appelbaum (1993) draw attention to the importance of planning as how the redundancy programme is implemented is very important in the perception of justice by all employees and a major element in the success of the plan. Mishra, Spreitzer and Mishra (1998) contend that planning should involve the participation from a cross-functional team, who are agreed on the reasons for downsizing and whom identify all constituents and address their concerns effectively. Bevitt, (2014) highlights the importance of communicating effectively with either the unions and/or an organisation's collective employee committees during the planning stages of the intended redundancies. Early involvement and transparency in the planning stages will allow for a strong ongoing relationship, which is essential due to the influence the union or the collective employee committees have over the employees' perceptions.

Timing during redundancies is also of great importance and should be considered in the planning stages. Once decisions are made and communicated, implementation of redundancies must be carried out as quickly as possible, with due consideration to the victims where a gradual implementation allows employees more time to adjust to the change (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993). Baruch and Hind's (1999) findings are consistent regarding survivors: it is important to minimise survivor syndrome by implementing decisions swiftly.

3.5.3 Managing change through anticipation

Research suggests that to reduce the negative impact of survivor syndrome, it is important for the organisation to manage anticipation of change. The need for change should be acknowledged and expected (Baruch and Hind, 1999; Cascio, 1993). By implementing the news of redundancies well ahead of time in a generic way so that the change is not a shock, organisations will help to protect themselves from potentially angry and shocked staff that may show behaviour of reprisals and sabotage (Vickers and Parris, 2007).

Cascio (1993) contends that firms who surprise employees with unanticipated downsizing activities reap overwhelmingly negative consequences. In Vickers and Parris' (2007) study on the impact of redundancies on victims, one respondent stated that he felt betrayed as he had been promoted into a new position eleven days prior to him being made redundant and up until the actual redundancy, had only received positive feedback on his performance. This is where it is important to manage expectations and to minimise the element of surprise.

Mishra, Spreitzer and Mishra's (1998) recommends that to help reduce the impact and element of shock on the victims and survivors, employees should be notified in advance where possible. This is confirmed in literature where the expectations of employees have been shown to also have a significant impact on the responses of survivors with regard to the announcement of redundancies (Doherty, 1996).

3.5.4 Communication

The recognition for the importance of communication during a redundancy is prevalent in literature (Cameron, 1994; Isabella, 1989; Labib and Appelbaum, 1993; Mishra et al., 1998). Several researchers draw attention to the importance of sufficient communication and that the absence of such communication could lead to employees feeling excluded, disillusioned and rumors spreading (De Meuse et al., 2004; Appelbaum et al., 1999a). Mishra, Spreitzer and Mishra (1998) actually advocate over communication, but to remain honest during communications.

3.5.4a Communication plan

Cameron (1994) discusses the importance of good communication during a downsizing exercise. When designing the communications plan, it is important to address the needs and concerns of the survivor population in order to maintain motivation and productivity, which may include management–employee dialogues sessions, information sessions and publications (Isabella, 1989). The commencement of the communication plan sets the foundations for the employees to psychologically prepare themselves for the implementation of redundancies (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993). Appelbaum et al. (1999a) advocate establishing a communication plan that keeps employees, suppliers, customers, and investors up to date on the affairs surrounding the redundancy situation, whilst Baruch and Hind (1999) and Nair

(2008) reinforce the importance of honesty and transparency in communication.

5.3.4b Announcement of the redundancies

Weide and Abbott (1994) highlight that there is a training need when it comes to the communication of tough decisions. Managers are rarely shown or coached on how to break the news of tough decisions such as redundancies or dismissals, which therefore puts the case forward for managers and supervisors to receive training on critical communication and interpersonal skills.

Bevitt (2014) contends that the announcement of redundancies should be delivered with transparency and in a thoughtful manner. Mishra et al. (1998) assert that management must announce a downsizing endeavor after mature consideration and in a convincing manner. By sharing financial and competitive information and by showing a willingness to communicate openly, management establishes a sense of trust and honesty. This, in turn, encourages employees to cooperate and to help the company survive the temporary, unhealthy situation (De Vries and Balazs, 1997; Mishra et al., 1998). Bevitt (2014) further suggests that when the first communications are made regarding redundancies, the communication methods take on prime importance. Even if content of the message is forgotten, the way in which the message was delivered plays a role in winning the hearts and minds of employees.

Several researchers concur on the importance of breaking the news with confidence (Gandolfi, 2009; Mihaly, 1995; Niento, 2004; Torres, 2011; Weide and Abbott, 1994). It is of utmost importance that redundancy envoys are in a strong and confident position to deliver the news of redundancy and support this with the ability to give succinct answers as to the typical questions of why, what, where and when. Gandolfi (2009) found that one of the areas that frustrated executioners was the lack of objectivity and information in the entire process.

Weide and Abbott (1994) found several cases in their research where people that were fired returned to work the next day after being made redundant, purely as they did not understand the message given to them. They therefore recommend that managers should rehearse what message they want to get across during critical communications to avoid misplaced words and immeasurable damage. Torres (2011) argues that with the implementation of redundancies, the meeting should take place with someone who took part ownership for the decision to avoid any technique of evasiveness. Polland and Levine (1994) add that by managers owning the statement that redundancy is a business decision and final, it helps to deflect guilt.

Weide and Abbott (1994) suggest that when giving bad news to employees, managers must ensure the message comes across with confidence and that the decision is communicated as irrevocable and backed by the most senior levels in the company. Mihaly (1995) contributes and agrees that managers should deliver the message of redundancy as a decision with final terms and

refuse to have a follow up discussion at a later meeting. Niento (2014) states that a boardroom strategy will only succeed if the messengers who deliver the strategy, firstly, believe in the strategy and, secondly, have the correct knowledge and skills to communicate the initiative to the organisation's stakeholders.

During the redundancy process, literature indicate that communicating with empathy and making staff feel valued is of high importance. When delivering bad news, managers should aim to let employees feel that that they are treated with fairness and with genuine concern as people, not just employees (Weide and Abbott, 1994). Correspondingly, management ought to communicate to employees the organisation's commitment and intent on retaining high performers (Mone, 1994).

Murphy (1994) investigated the specific impact on the perception of downsizing and found that greater communication and improved staff participation had a positive impact on how a redundancy exercise is being perceived. It is pivotal to ensure the communication programme demonstrates the organisation's vision and commitment to the employees (Labib and Appelbaum,1993). Cameron et al. (1991) and Gopinath & Becker (2000) expand that communications from a variety of sources, which include e-mail, staff meetings and personal interactions, helps employees to understand the process and increase the perception of procedural justice. Communication needs to be frequent and timely (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998).

Schweiger et al. (1987) found that it was not necessarily the redundancies that created a sense of bitterness, but rather the manner in which they were handled. When handling critical communications, the redundancy envoy must engage and involve himself. (Weide and Abbott, 1994) It is not an academic exercise – recognise that you are dealing with people's lives and livelihood. A good manager is also a human being. Labib and Appelbaum (1993) contend that sometimes frequent dialogue with a key member of the senior team may be sufficient to appease the needs of the employees.

3.5.5 Business rationale

Literature on the importance of a solid and clear business rationale with a clear vision when communicating redundancies is plentiful (Baruch and Hind, 1999; Cameron et al., 1991; Mishra and Spreitzer, 1998), along with the importance of being able to demonstrate that the redundancies are implemented as a last resort (Baruch & Hind, 1999; Mishra, Spreitzer and Mishra, 1998; Sronce and McKinley, 2006).

During the implementation of a redundancy programme, clear explanations on the rationale for the headcount reduction is necessary (Mishra and Spreitzer, 1998). Cameron et al. (1991) state that to be successful in downsizing [redundancy programmes], it is important to emphasize that the programme is a means to an end and only a temporary mechanism to help the firm survive through a challenging time. Baruch and Hind (1999) refer to their best practice framework for implementing redundancies which proposes that it should be conveyed to employees that redundancies are a necessity for business

survival, with a clear business rationale and that this measure would only be implemented as a last resort.

Being able to demonstrate the use of redundancy as a last resort only and that all other cost savings options have been considered and utilised where possible, minimises the impact on the survivors (Baruch and Hind, 1999). The organisation should be able to demonstrate that all other alternatives were considered or deployed, such as early retirement, selling off a part of the company (which is often the most preferred option by employees), reducing or stopping recruitment for a limited period, job-sharing, voluntary redundancies, and internal cost-cutting exercises. Labib and Appelbaum (1993) agree that it has an important impact on the stakeholders in the organisation to see that all alternative methods for reducing the headcount have been considered and deployed, such as voluntary redundancies, early retirement options, redeployment and bumping. Grinyer et al. (1990) add that, typically, reducing production costs and overheads as well as streamlining processes should all be included under a cost saving strategy. Bevitt (2004) warns, however, that voluntary redundancy is not always straightforward as employers can find themselves either flooded with volunteers or with no takers. The primary advantage of voluntary redundancy should be enhanced flexibility for both employers and employees. The approach should be adopted that restructuring is needed rather than just a reduction in headcount to achieve a reduction in costs (Sronce and McKinley, 2006).

O'Neil (1986) argues that during a turnaround, it may be necessary for the organisation to restructure itself more around its core purpose, which may lead to the rationalisation, divestment or closure of operations, functions, product line or assets that are no longer appropriate for the business. Schoenberg et al. (2013) suggest that in implementing turnaround strategies, it is important to note that changing systems and structures is not enough to succeed; the behaviour and attitudes of the employees also needs to change. Kabanoff et al., (2000) reviewed 300 downsizing cases and found that typically in the companies where the focus was on cost-cutting alone, there was no sustained improvement, whilst the companies that had a managerial focus on increasing productivity and/or restructuring showed an improvement in the organisation's financial performance. Cameron et al. (1991) state that downsizing [redundancy programmes] is more likely to be successful if the organisation looks at reducing other elements as well, such as unnecessary products, rather than just the people. Literature supports this by demonstrating that implementing a combination of strategies, such as a focus on the firm's core activities (Boyne and Meier, 2009) and cost efficiencies, typically referred to as 'belt-tightening' with the aim to gain 'quick-wins' to stabilise the business in the short term (Sudarsanam and Lai, 2001) has proven a positive change of tone from employees.

3.5.6 Involvement and participation

The importance of involvement and participation during redundancies is well documented with a link to perceived control for employees (Appelbaum et al., 1999a; Freeman, 1994; Gandolfi, 2013; Weide and Abbott, 1994). Involvement

and participation during redundancy programmes should commence with the strategic planning, where contributions should come from all levels of management (Appelbaum et al., 1999a). Cascio (1993) contends that firms that involve organisational members actively from the planning stage gain better buy-in from the stakeholders and this leads employees to buy into the redundancy programme, thereby increasing the probability of success (Freeman, 1994).

It is recommended that full participation should include all organisational members (Freeman, 1994). Weide and Abbott (1994) agree that to create a better work environment, organisations must ensure that employee involvement and empowerment programmes are in place to give employees the feeling of more control and subsequent reduced stress. Mishra et al. (1998) and Freeman (1994) make the recommendation broader by suggesting that even customers and suppliers could be consulted during redundancy programmes as they may offer innovative ways for a firm to accomplish its mission.

According to Jalajas and Brommer (1999) who base their knowledge claim after analysing the questionnaire results of 140 survivors in engineering firms, after implementing a redundancy programme or reorganisation, it is important to incorporate a degree of empowerment when creating new roles. Allowing for empowerment within the new job designs will increase motivation and is more likely to lead to the desired aspirations. When employees have perceived control over work demands or aspects of the work situation, the negative

impact is reduced (Devine et al., 2003). Studies that have looked at successful redundancy implementations have found that a key element in the success is to encourage active participation from all stakeholders, including a healthy information exchange (Cameron, 1994; Appelbaum et al., 1999b).

A contributing factor for the successful implementation of a redundancy programme is to ensure the implementation is top-down as well as bottom-up. Redundancy envoys should therefore be visible and share their vision with the workforce, and employees should be involved in the decision making regarding which jobs are eliminated (Cameron et al,1991). Organisational justice is often perceived as fair, when employees feel they are involved or have a voice when decisions are made during a redundancy programme (Greenberg, 1990).

3.5.7 Support programmes

Cameron et al. (1991) state that to ensure the implementation of a successful redundancy programme, the focus on victims as well as survivors must remain, with specific support in place for each group: outplacement, counselling and relocation expenses for victims and support with training and development and incentives for learning new tasks for survivors. Baptiste (2008) found that the decision by management to embrace employee wellbeing at work is likely to improve employee attitudes and productivity, which in turn can enhance organisational effectiveness and decision making.

3.5.7a Employee assistance programmes (EAP)

EAP services provide support through one to one counselling sessions for individuals, either face to face or through telephone appointments. They also provide general advice with regard to managing financial difficulty, retirement and general areas of law. Another measure to ensure a better working environment during a redundancy programme is to have good networks of support in place, such as an Employee Assistance Programme, so employees know where to turn to during times of crisis and when pressure becomes too much (Weide and Abbott, 2004).

Labib and Appelbaum (1993) suggest that counselling services should be made available to employees when needed. Baruch and Hind (1999) agree that the provision of counselling to the survivors as well as the leavers during a redundancy is very important to help mitigate survivor syndrome. Weide and Abbott (2004) add that EAPs are not just there for employees, managers should also use them to get advice on how to deal with difficult or unfamiliar situations, thereby helping them to become more effective in their role.

3.5.7b Support groups for redundancy envoys

Morton (1983) states that discussions through support groups can alleviate some of the anxieties and fears that managers [redundancy envoys] experience during redundancy situations. Boyd and Gumpert (1983) agree that it is important to share experiences with others and that by listening to the successes and failures of others, greater objectivity will prevail. To further

support the workforce through redundancies, organisations would benefit from setting up forums and social support groups (Clair and Dufresne, 2004).

3.5.7c Outplacement services

Outplacement services support employees who are being made redundant with finding alternative employment and offer a range of services from CV writing, career coaches, support with job hunting and interviewing skills. Leana and Feldman (1988, 1989) found that outplacement assistance can be critical to help reduce stress in the victims as they help to minimise the shock of the job loss but also support the employee in their efforts to find new alternative employment. Harrison (1986) and Tomasko (1987) found that when organisations use the services of an outplacement company for the victims of redundancy, it helps to alleviate the guilt experienced by redundancy envoys. Labib and Appelbaum (1993) add that outplacement services such as financial counselling and job search training may be a cost-effective option to support the victims of redundancies.

3.5.7d Financial support

To mitigate the negative impact of redundancies, most organisations offer settlement packages; however, Labib and Appelbaum (1993) found that financial issues are a small part in the overall impact caused by job losses. Leana and Feldman (1988) have a contradictory view that severance pay and extended benefits can have a big impact on reducing the stress levels of the victims. Severance packages also help with addressing the guilt experienced by redundancy envoys. Labib and Appelbaum (1993) warn, however, that a

clear budget must be set for the implementation of a redundancy programme, whilst Mishra et al. (1998) advocate being generous to leavers.

3.5.8 Training and development

3.6.8a Training for redundancy envoys

Studies on the topic of training requirements for organisational managers are limited with ad-hoc recommendations that are varied rather than empirical research. Gandolfi (2008) who states that more research is needed in this area, based on an overview of the literature on the reported organisational, financial and human consequences post downsizing [redundancy programmes]. Weide and Abbott (1994) found in their study of 32 cases of homicide at work, that careful handling is required when giving news of redundancy or end of employment. It was found that in 80% of these cases the homicide was either due to communication problems or something going wrong between the manager and the employee. This supports the need for management development programmes on how to communicate unpleasant news or how to resolve conflict. Weide and Abbott (1994) contend that managers should learn how to dismiss employees with sensitivity and effectively whilst minimising the consequence of violence. In addition, Jalajas and Brommer (1999) argue that it is especially important during a redundancy exercise to ensure the redundancy envoys are trained with the skills to redesign jobs. Redesigning should incorporate enough room for empowerment and motivation in the roles and if this is implemented effectively, the positive results will be visible.

Morton (1983) states that helping managers reduce their fears and anxieties when having to undergo the difficult conversations associated with redundancy related dismissal, will help them appear more sensitive to the impacted employee. This will provide a win-win solution for the redundancy envoy, as well as the victims and survivors of the process. Pollan and Levine (1994) contribute to this requirement by adding that managers must learn to deflect guilt. Deems (1995) suggests, on the other hand, that managers should be trained on how to deal with emotional responses, such as anger, crying, refusal to speak or leaving the building, wanting to talk to someone more senior, displays of aggression or acts of gross misconduct. Gandolfi (2009) supports this by stating that organisations that are planning to run a downsizing [redundancy programme] should provide the necessary training and emotional support and at least raise awareness of the range of emotions that the executioners [redundancy envoys] will experience themselves. The training must incorporate the acquisition of skills that helps managers to address the concerns and needs of their staff (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993). Cameron et al. (1999) also support this notion by adding that managers should be given training on how to act during difficult situations such as during the consultation process and dismissal meeting.

Redundancy envoys need specific focused management training, such as fine-tuning the process of delivering tough decisions, managing expectations and negotiating skills (Baruch and Hind, 1999). As change becomes more constant (Briner, 2015), so is the need for redundancy envoys to be resilient and able to cope with change, and where change management skills will be

advantageous for the organisation and employees. Baruch and Hind (1999) contribute that finely focused management training is required during redundancy situations, for example tuning the process of delivering tough decisions, how to manage expectations and how to effectively negotiate. It is important for a successful redundancy programme to ensure that the Human Resource Management function have the right skills and training to support the new organisation and the knowledge of how to deal with dismissals and minimal external hires and retrain the survivors (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993).

3.5.8b Training for survivors

Offering retraining to employees during a redundancy programme has a positive impact on their motivation and loyalty as they perceive they are being upskilled with highly valuable skills at no cost to themselves (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993). Keidel (1994) agrees that it is important when redesigning work during a redundancy programme to consider individual growth needs and individual strengths, rather than an impetus on organisational units and processes. This approach will have a positive impact on the motivational levels of individuals. Once it is clear who the employees are that are likely to leave the organisation, it is important to establish the training needs of the survivors to ensure the organisations strategic goals are met (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993).

3.5.8c Development

Baruch and Hind (1999) argue that during a redundancy situation, it is important to focus on team and group development and this will support the

re-creation of 'updated' psychological contracts between employee and management, which is critical for the successful management of change and will reduce the negative impact of survivor syndrome.

3.5.9 Fairness and trust

Literature that recognises the importance of the perception of fairness during the redundancy stages is abundant (Bevitt, 2004; Gopinath and Becker, 2000; Greenberg, 1990; Labib and Appelbaum, 1993; Spreitzer and Mishra, 2002). According to Greenberg (1990), survivors are in a unique situation to assess the fairness of redundancies and it is found that if they feel the process is fair, it impacts on their increased commitment to the organisation. Isabella (1989) concludes that addressing survivor needs is essential to the success of an organisation after a redundancy programme. De Clercq and Belausteguigoitia (2017) found that high levels of goodwill, trust, the perception that colleagues are trustworthy, innovation propensity and procedural justice reduced the desire for employees to seek new employment. Bevitt (2004) states that the redundancy process is naturally an emotionally difficult and challenging time, which can pose a range of challenges to redundancy envoys. An important factor during this time is mutual trust. Employees need to know and feel that the redundancy envoys are aware of their needs, whilst the redundancy envoys need to know they can trust their workforce in order to protect the reputation and future of the organisation.

Labib and Appelbaum (1993) found that perceived fairness, especially on how the redundancy decisions are made, can lead to improved levels of

productivity and job performance. Murphy (2014) adds that perceived fairness also leads to improved employee attitude and has a positive impact on levels of absenteeism. Gopinath and Becker (2000) found that perceived fairness in improved processes and procedural justice during a redundancy exercise resulted in higher levels of trust and commitment towards the organisation. Greenberg (1990) adds a very strong point that the perception of organisational justice is intrinsically linked to how a decision is made, instead of what the decision actually is, and perceived fairness has a direct impact on survivor commitment to the organisation.

3.5.9a Selection process

When referring to fairness and trust, studies quite often link these values to the selection process during redundancies. Jackson, (1997) argues that one of the most important factors in a downsizing programme is the perception of the selection process. The selection methods need to demonstrate a process of clear performance- and operational-related criteria and the links to the business case and rationale needs to be transparent (Baruch and Hind, 1999). Literature indicates that perceived fairness of selection criteria is important to keep employees engaged during the process of redundancy (Gopinath and Becker 2000; Spreitzer and Mishra, 2002). Murphy (1994) investigated the specific impact on the perception of downsizing and found that when it comes to selection criteria, clear communication and participation helps employees to perceive the process in a fairer light. Schweiger, Ivancevich and Power (1987) agree that the selection criteria for redundancy selection is a very

important factor in the extent to which employees feel the process is fair. The criteria must be clear, appropriate and fair.

3.6 Recognition

Isabella (1989) contends that the value of the survivors' expertise to the new organisation is often not understood or appreciated. Baruch & Hind (1999) argue that to recognise survivors adequately, a review of performance feedback and appraisal systems should take place as part of a redundancy programme. Recognition can also take the form of employee development that is linked to performance (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993).

In Isabella's (1989: 39) model 'Employee Needs After Downsizing' she addresses the needs of survivors as crucial to organisational success. These needs include the importance of transforming the meaning of job security in the business, ensuring success is recognised, being understood and adequately rewarded, driving ownership for career self-management and fostering an innovative approach to loyalty and commitment to the new organisation. Thus, applying Waldman and Spangler's (1989) reinforcement theory, when there is visible, immediate, positive reinforcement for good performance, people will continue to perform well.

3.7 Evaluation

During the literature review, only one known study made a direct link to the use of an evaluation process after implementing a redundancy programme:

Labib and Appelbaum (1993) recommend an evaluation six months after implementation of the redundancies to establish any lessons learned, which may be useful if there is a subsequent wave of redundancies.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted that the literature on the negative psychological impact on the victims and survivors of redundancies are plentiful and at the same time limited specifically to redundancy envoys (Clair and Dufresne, 2004; Gandolfi, 2008; Gandolfi and Hansson, 2011; Labib and Appelbaum, 1993). The literature that reviewed coping techniques, was found to be abundant with Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984), later ratified by Gandolfi (2009), being the leading providers of coping models that are most applicable to redundancy envoys.

Although there is literature exploring the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys, the literature is limited (Gandolfi and Neck, 2008). The limitation is further exacerbated as it mostly draws attention to the fact that there are negative consequences for redundancy envoys, but how to mitigate the impact is only touched upon in literature with a few researchers enriching this literature. In addition, very few articles were found within recent years on this topic. The leading researchers are Ashman (2016), Baruch and Hind (1999), Clair and Dufresne (2004), Gandolfi (2009) and Labib and Appelbaum (1993). There is no complete, pragmatic model within literature for organisations to adopt to mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy

envoys. Although existing researchers offers individual contributions to knowledge, a complete solution for organisations is non-existent.

This thesis proposes and introduces a unique, new model that builds on existing literature with new, relevant research to help mitigate the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys. During the second iteration of my action research, the first restructure stakeholder model was piloted after a review of literature combined with initial data analysis and presented itself as follows:

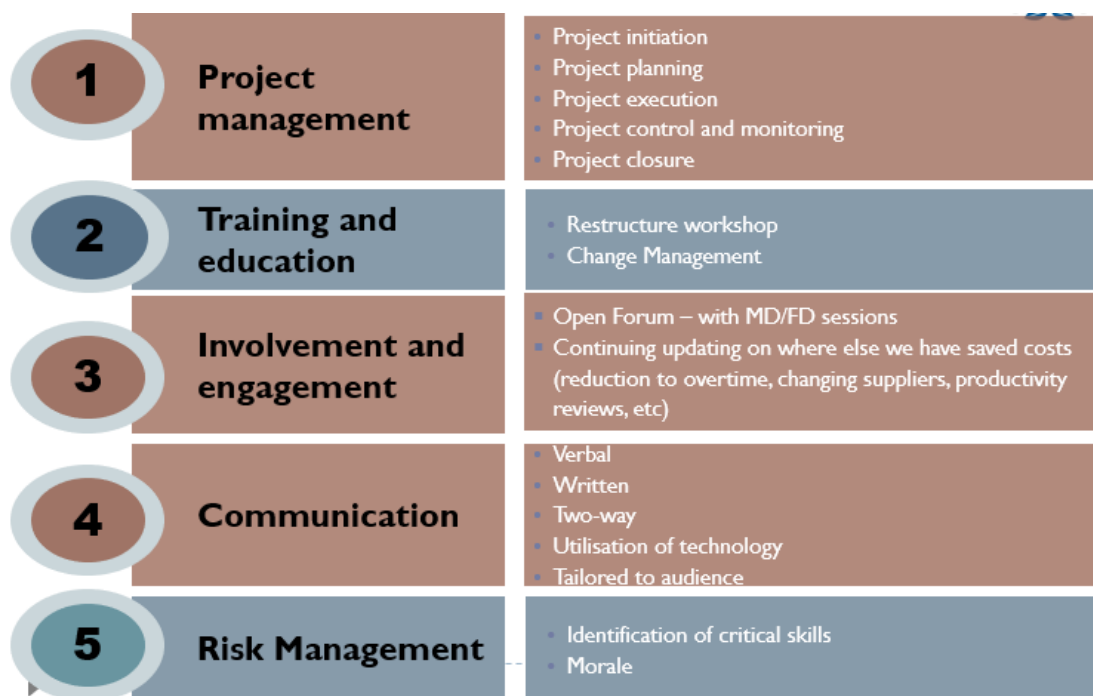


Figure 6: First restructure stakeholder model

The following chapter will explain the approach taken to collect the data which aided in formulating this model.

4 Methodology

This chapter explores the methodology and approach taken to collect primary and secondary data. I explore the rationale and detail of the qualitative methods used and elaborate on the interview participants and their respective experience of redundancies. This section builds on the previous chapter which explored the literature which has influenced the approaches taken to my research by giving me the insight to design the right research questions and the key themes to investigate. The coding used to provide anonymity is explained in this chapter in the section on ethics. The various forms of data collection are explored and evaluated with ethical considerations taken into account. Rationale is provided for adopting the approach of action research.

4.1 Research philosophy, ontology and epistemological position

My research philosophy is consistent with my ontological and epistemological position and I adopt the approach taken of an interpretivist. I consider myself to be an anthropologist by nature. Rationale is provided for using observation and ethnography and I draw on Silverman's (2013) perspective that to really understand, one must engage in an extended period of observation. Arguably a personality preference in my DNA, developed my being fascinated with psychology as a young reader, studying my dad's social and developmental psychology books from university and testing my knowledge on watching and

observing people. Further education in studying industrial, developmental and applied psychology further nurtured the anthropologist spirit in me.

My approach was dominated by a non-positive application (Ashworth, 1997), recognising that the debate between the positivist and non-positivist approach to research on human social matters is very controversial.

Ashworth (1997:219) suggests that non-positivistic qualitative research consists of a number of different strands: “research sometimes aims at producing a description, sometimes seeks to generate an interpretation, and sometimes to uncover cultural discourses”. The use of an interpretive methodological framework for me included conducting semi-structured interviews and identifying themes to answer my research questions. This data was validated through other forms of data including diary keeping, observation and data from the Mood Indicator.

My view is that there is no single, ‘true’ position when it comes to researching human beings, their behaviour, their roles and their social construction of the truth. Interpretation and meaning should be applied to data collected to truly understand the context. Utterly different meanings may apply to the same event depending on the context and the interpretation of the social actors involved (Babbie, 1998). My approach aligns with what Evered and Louis (1981) describe as ‘multisensory holistic immersion’ where you make sense of a situation by listening, observing and questioning the outcome of actions. Coghlan (2016) points out that questioning is the primary skill in organisational studies. The opportunity to inquire and gain insight is thus enhanced

exponentially by being an embedded researcher within Global Engineering and BDA.

My approach as an embedded and action researcher was essential to drive continuous improvement to the success of the organisation. Adelman (1993:7) defines action research as “the means of systematic enquiry for all participants in the quest for greater effectiveness through democratic participation.” As an embedded researcher, it gave me the advantage of truly experiencing and understanding the culture of the organisation. As Coghlan (2016:11) explains, “culture is much deeper than open doors, plants and bright colours and mission statements and strategic plans.” Being inside the organisation gave me the opportunity to decipher the meaning of behaviours and ask questions about the behaviour (Coghlan, 2016), which I believe gave me better insight and the opportunity to uncover the truth.

The implementation of redundancy programmes in the workplace are not only complex, they are also unique. For this research project, there was a necessity to discover the details of the situation to fully understand the reality, or potentially even the reality working behind the front (Remenyi et al.,1998 It was important to me to gain depth and detail of why individuals behave the way they do. My beliefs reflect the idea that behind every action, there is either conscious or unconscious motivation and my particular interest lies in what the motivation is that drives the behaviour. My initial understanding of my own approach was ratified by the output of my Strength Deployment Indicator (SDI), which suggested that my style is best suited to detail and analysis. SDI

is a suite of psychometric tests and a practical methodology for empowering people to improve. SDI is rooted in the theory of Relationship Awareness, a self-learning model for effectively and accurately understanding and inferring the motive behind the behaviour (SDI, 2018).

As the psychological impact of redundancies on redundancy envoys is 'unknown', an inductive approach was best suited where the theory was developed from observation of empirical reality, through general inferences that are induced from various situations, as explained by Collis and Hussey (2013). The nature of the research was therefore consistent with the view derived from anthropologists, that to understand human affairs it is insufficient to rely on quantitative statistics as it is necessary to instead delve deep into the subjective qualities that govern behaviour, as found by Holliday (2002). Inductive methods have the capacity to build insights grounded in the experience of study participants (Miles et al., 2013).

The research is not gender biased, as I believe that each case is unique to the individual their particular experience. Age is also not of relevance as arguably it is a precarious and incongruous assumption to make that because a redundancy envoy is older, they have more experience in undertaking and managing redundancy situations and therefore the psychological impact is of less significance. In fact, some of my data includes the experience of a redundancy envoy amidst a restructure who stated: *"I have been a manager for 30 years and very experienced, but despite this occasion, I only ever had to make people redundant once before."* (OD6)

In accordance with Jankowicz (2000), it is the nature and content of what is said and its meaning that is paramount, rather than the number of people who are saying it, hence a qualitative approach.

My ontological assumption adopts the phenomenological paradigm of a qualitative approach in accordance with Collis and Hussey (2013), who argue that the world is socially constructed and that 'understanding can only be generated by examining the perceptions of the human actors. In my opinion, each person has their own reality and can interpret the same situation differently. My dad telling me not to play next to the river as a child was interpreted as him being controlling and trying to ruin my fun, whilst his version was likely that he was a responsible parent, trying to protect me from falling in. Each person will experience the same event uniquely as a human actor. Seventy thousand people may watch a football game live, yet they will each have their own unique interpretation of how the game was played and how they experienced the event. On this basis, I wanted to give my research participants the opportunity to express their own realities through their own experiences. My epistemological assumption adopts the view of the interpretivism approach in accordance with Bryman and Bell (2015), who suggest that interpretivist writers apply a logic or research procedure that reflects the distinctiveness of humans as against the natural order. As suggested by Jankowicz (2000), a person's beliefs will determine what should count as knowledge, which will establish what counts as evidence or proof. Collis and Hussey (2013) state that phenomenologists attempt to minimise the

distance between the researcher and that which is being researched, an approach that I agree with. I felt it was important to me to fully understand my research topic so that when interacting with my research participants, I had a better understanding of their experience. I minimised the distance between me and the participants by being an embedded researcher, understanding the organisation, its culture and the context for the redundancies. I therefore combined my data collection with not just semi-structured interviews, but also with observation and diary keeping.

At the outset of this research study, my thought process was to use a mixed methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative research by using qualiquantological methodology or 'Q methodology' (Stenner and Staiton Rogers, 2004). Q methodology appealed to me in the earlier stages of my research as I thought it would be valuable to combine the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The analysis of quantitative data is facilitated by computer software and filtered to give one the opportunity to investigated trends identified through qualitative methods. (Brown, 1996). Stenner and Watts (2005) suggest that Q methodology was designed specifically to challenge the outmoded Newtonian 'testing' traditions often used in psychology and based on epistemological and ontological presumptions, as well as mathematics, more commonly attributed to quantum mechanics of physics (Watts and Stenner, 2003; Stephenson, 1963a, 1963b, 1988, 1989 cited in Watts and Stenner, 2005). Using quantitative research, I could gather initial data to identify the key stressors for redundancy agents and gain intelligence regarding the support measures in place in organisations

during redundancy situations. I believed that gathering this information via software would be a fast and effective method to gain the initial insights which would then assist in forming the key areas to explore during interview. Brown (1996) explains that Q methodology is designed to reveal the subjectivity involved in a given situation; it is the experience of life from the viewpoint of the person experiencing it, which is often passed over by quantitative procedures and something I particularly appreciated within the context of gathering data that was subjective in nature.

Whilst in the process of writing the questionnaires for the Q methodology, I consulted with research participants to identify important themes, finding that the consultations lead to a more natural interview by default. The outputs of the consultations also replaced the quantitative method I was initially considering. I need to create my own understanding of how an individual got to this moment in time. Without the opportunity to ask why, how, when, what drove this, my understanding cannot be formed and thus a quantitative approach did not align with how I process data.

This brought me to the realisation of my own values and personal preferences of curiosity and questioning which is to speak to people and to pursue their thoughts and experiences through asking questions. This realisation aligns with Johnson and Duberley (2000) who explain that our underlying epistemological assumptions influence how we come to ask particular questions and consequently how we assess the relevance and value of different research methodologies. Hammersley and Atkinson's (1983) argue

that if a researcher sets out on an expedition determined to prove certain hypotheses, incapable of changing his views constantly and casting them off ungrudgingly under the pressure of evidence, needless to say, the work will be worthless. I therefore believe that my change in approach was a result best suited to my personal preferences. Gandolfi (2009) confirms that the lack of research being conducted in the area of executioners [redundancy envoys] requires a distinctive approach to research. I agree with Gandolfi's (2009) view and thus believe that inductive approach is best suited to researching redundancy envoys.

Alternative approaches to answering the aims could have included statistical analysis, an approach adopted by Waraich and Bhardwaj (2011) where they analysed appraisal questionnaires to measure motivational factors and coping. Many researchers in this area of redundancies recommend a theory-building approach, such as Macky (2004) Brockner and (1992) Littler (1998). Gandolfi (2009) argues that due to the lack of research being conducted specifically on redundancy envoys, a distinctive approach is required which validates an inductive approach. The most adopted method of data collection pertaining to data collection is that of an inductive approach, using interviews, Gandolfi (2009) adopted a case study methodology of his study in an Australian bank, making use of interviews where as Rodriqugues-Ruiz (2015) also used a case study methodology collecting data from a dataset of company reports and records. The case study methodology could arguably also have been successful in my study if my research was just limited to BDA. This was however not the case as most of the initial stages of data collection through

interviews took place from participants not associated or employed within BDA. De Vries and Balazs (1997) conducted 200 clinical interviews in their study.

4.2 Action research:

This section aims to give the reader an insight into why and how the approach of action research was adopted. Reason and Bradbury (2001) define action research as;

“participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.” (2001, p.1)

The use of action research design was driven by Brydon-Miller et al. (2003) whom proposition that action research drives how we go about generating knowledge on implementing change with the aim of promoting well-being. My research approach is consistent with that of Brydon-Miller et al. (2003) as it focusses on mitigating the impact on redundancy envoys during redundancy situations that is both valid and vital to the well-being for the promotion of the redundancy envoys and the community of larger-scale democratic social change. My aim to promote well-being for individuals and large-scale change equally aligns with Coghlan’s (2016) definition of the theory of action; where assumptions are made, which leads to action strategies and subsequent consequences.

This chapter will clarify the different iterations used and how this developed and impacted on my research journey. It may be helpful to emphasise that the order in which the thesis is presented is not necessarily identical to the order in which the data was collected. Instead, the data represents the chronological order of the research questions; to identify what the psychological impact is on redundancy envoys, what the key stressors are which lead to an exploration of effective interventions.

4.2.1 The development of four iterations:

The research developed into four iterations as indicated in figure 2 below:

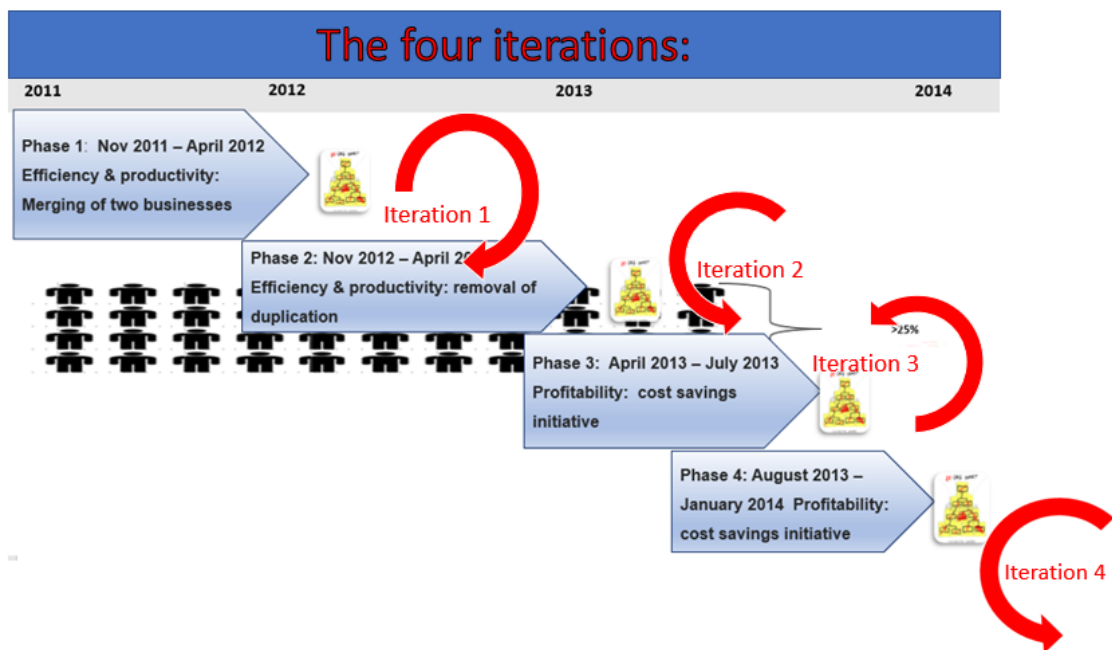


Figure 2: Action research overview of four iterations

4.2.2 First iteration:

The initial iteration commenced after the implementation of the first restructure programme November 2011 to April 2012, which was in the period when I

joined the organisation. During this iteration I explored the following research questions:

- * What the psychological impact is on redundancy envoys during the implementation of redundancy situations?
- * What are the key stressors for redundancy envoys?
- * What coping techniques do redundancy envoys deploy during redundancy situations?
- * What interventions are best placed to alleviate and minimise the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys?

The majority of the data collected for the first iteration consisted of semi-structured interviews and lessons learned exercises with the aim to identify the key issues to be addressed, solutions identified and implemented before the commencement of the next restructure, which launched in November 2012. The participants of these semi -structured interviews were from a range of industries and various business to get a broad perspective of what works well and what does not. The data from semi structured interviews were collected from participants outside of BDA, whilst the lessons learned exercises were specific to BDA with the aim to delve deep into the specific experiences of the redundancy envoys within the BDA organisation. Data was also collected through anonymous comments reviewed from the Mood Indicator, minutes from ECC meetings and observation. The following flow of events drove the process of data collection as per figure 7 below:

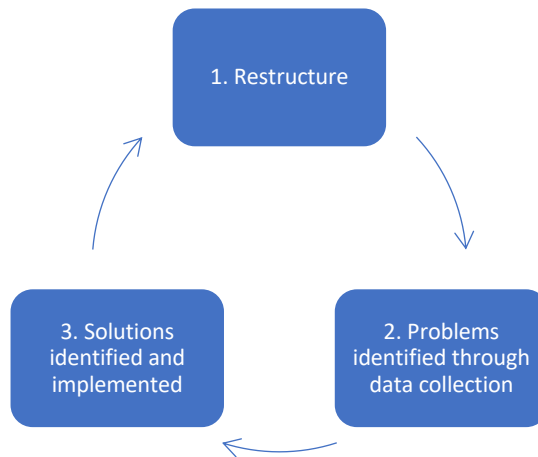


Figure 7: Iteration one process flow

4.2.3 Second iteration:

The second iteration took place after the second phase of restructuring; November 2012 to April 2013, whilst data was collected through observation throughout the restructure.

During the data collection process for the second iteration, the data gathered more meaning as application and impact was more visible once data was being analysed. As more data was gathered and solutions trialed, this led to the design of the first restructure model which was implemented, compared to unstructured solutions implemented after the first iteration. The process flow presented itself as per figure 8 below:

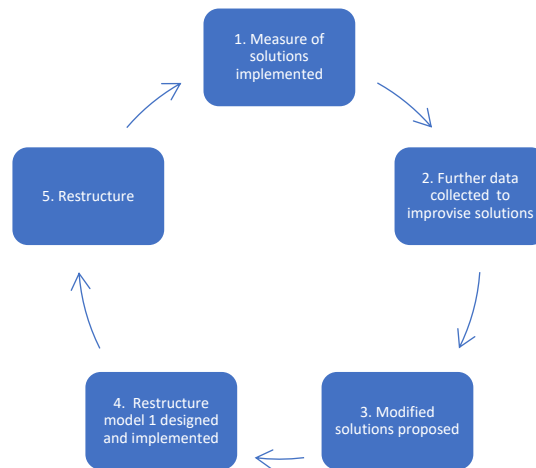


Figure 8: Iteration two process flow

During the first stage, the solutions that were implemented in the first iteration were measured by gathering further data to measure the level of success of the previously implemented solutions.

Futher data was collected by drawing on semi-structred interviews; specifically addressing the research questions of:

- What coping techniques do redundancy envoys deploy during redundancy situations?
- What interventions are best placed to alleviate and minimise the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys?

Second interviews and follow up interviews were held with some of the initial pariticipants to gain more insight or to explore comments that were first mentioned in more depth, such as:

During our last conversation, you told me that it was a good idea to have job centres come into the office to help with the search for new employment; could you expand on what this looked like? (I-HRD3)

I combined the findings from my data with the latest concepts and insights presented through existing knowledge from literature.

1. The measure, review and collection of further data informed my initial restructure model which lead to the implementation as a pilot within BDA. The first model had five key pillars as demonstrated in figure 6 below:

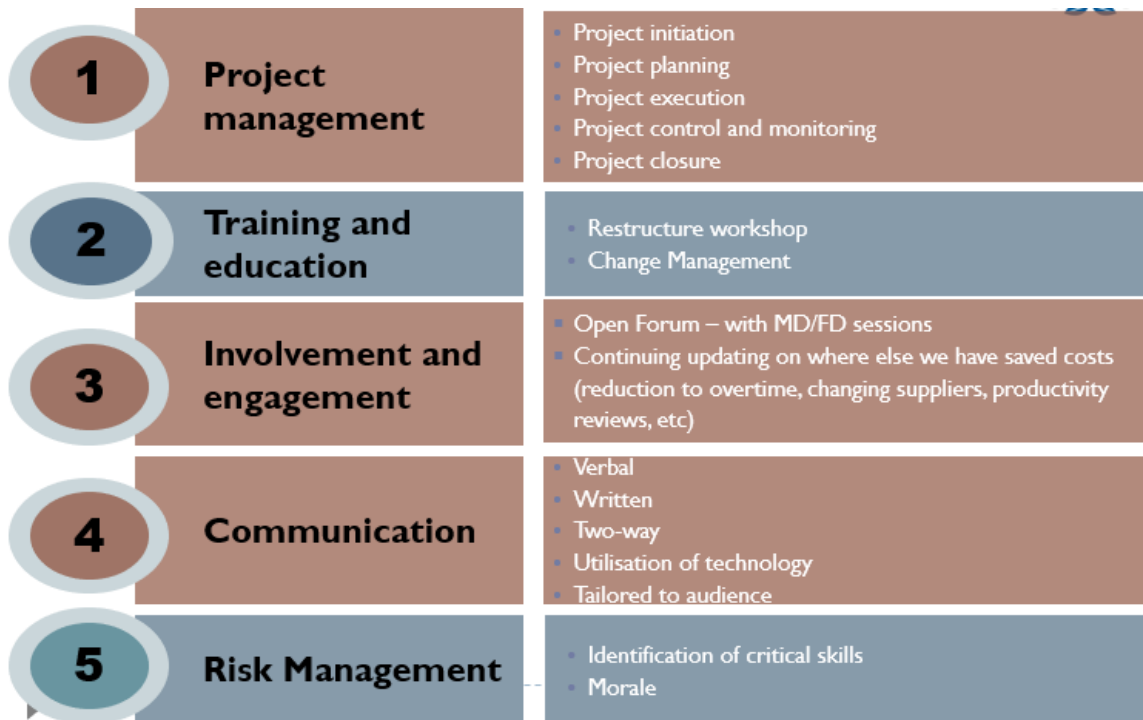


Figure 6: First restructure stakeholder model

The pillars consisted of the following initiatives:

1. **Project Planning:** A clear and robust project plan is necessary for the successful implementation of a redundancy programme. I adopted the

project management processes from the PMI's PMBOK guide (cited Kerzner and Kerzner; 2017) with their various activities;

“a, Project Initiation

- i. Selection of the best project given resource limits
- ii. Recognising the benefits of the project
- iii. Preparation of the documents to sanction the project
- iv. Assigning the project manager

b. Project Planning

- i. Definition of the work requirements
- ii. Definition of the quality and quantity of the work
- iii. Definition of the resources needed
- iv. Scheduling of the activities
- v. Evaluation of the various risks

c. Project Execution

- i. Negotiation for the project team members
- ii. Directing and managing the work
- iii. Working with the team members to help them improve

d. Project control and monitoring

- i. Tracking progress

- ii. Comparing actual outcome to predicted outcome
 - iii. Analyzing variances and impacts
 - iv. Making adjustments
- e. Project closure
- i. Verifying that all the work has been accomplished
 - ii. Contractual closure of the contract
 - iii. Financial closure of the charge numbers
 - iv. Administrative closure of the paperwork”

(PMI’s PMBOK guide; cited Kerzner and Kerzner; pg. 2)

Successful project management under this definition means achieving a continuous set of objectives within time, cost and the desired performance with the effective use of resources, resulting in satisfied customers and stakeholders. (Kerzner and Kerzner, 2017)

2. **Training and education:** The second element of the first model was the to ensure that the managers at BDA were fully trained in the various elements of how to deal and cope with redundancy situations as well as change management. Training therefore included two core modules; a restructure workshop and a training on change management.

a) **Restructure workshop:** This training was specifically designed and delivered to address the stressors experienced by redundancy

envoys that was identified through the data collection for redundancy envoys. The main aims of the restructure workshop were to reduce stressors for redundancy envoys and to build their confidence in managing the redundancy processes. The course included the following modules:

- Understanding the drivers behind restructuring activities
- Understanding the emotions that each of the affected groups might experience
- Exploration of the change curve (Kubler-Ross;1969)
- How redundancy envoys can offer support to individuals in affected groups
- Understanding the legal framework for conducting redundancies
- Preparation for the challenges in managing individual redundancy consultation meetings
- Practicing how to "give bad news" and dealing with situations of conflict
- How to create a strategy for coping personally during the management of a restructure
- Creating a personal action plan for the future

b) **Managing people through organisational change:** The aim of this workshop was to provide redundancy envoys with a framework for managing the human aspects of change within the organisation, ensuring employee motivation and engagement are maintained during and after the implementation of the redundancies. The workshop covered the following modules:

- Common drivers for change
- Why change can fail
- Understanding the problem before implementing change
- Implementing effective change by utilising John Kotter's (2012) 8 steps for effective change
- Managing key stakeholders
- Leaders role in creating motivated employees
- How to positively influence changes in the workplace
- HR/legal implications to some changes
- Coaching techniques for motivating employees during change

3. **Involvement and engagement:** My data clearly indicated the importance of involvement and engagement with particular focus on the redundancy envoys. The focus on driving engagement was a priority across the entire workforce with the intention to reduce the pressure on redundancy envoys. With leaders engaging with the workforce directly, they took the burden of answering difficult questions amongst themselves, alleviating the associated stress for redundancy envoys. Providing transparency in the restructuring process was high on the

agenda. To focus on involvement, the MD, FD and myself implemented management workshops with the senior management team where we explored the rationale of the restructure, following general principles of change management, such as building a sense of urgency and why restructuring was essential to the survival of the organisation. In the management workshops we asked various head of departments to identify how many reductions were necessary and where it is best suited to make them. We provided a safe platform for difficult discussions and debate with the opportunity to draw of the opinions and views of peers. Redundancy envoys had the opportunity to take ownership of the decisions made for the company which was critical for them to feel involved. The model also included involvement and with the ECC representatives where a more structured approach was adopted in seeking involvement and engagement. The approach with the ECC representatives adopted a style of consultation where proposals were put forward and reviewed and control and influence were provided on elements such as the selection matrix and what criteria would the ECC representatives wish to see included. The final part of the involvement and engagement pillar was to facilitate interaction with the wider workforce. This was created by running sessions named "Tea with Dan" where a random group of employees were invited to share their thoughts, ideas and concerns with the MD and FD directly. The aim of these sessions was to improve transparency and build on the relationship factors of belief and trust within the decisions being taken. Throughout all the involvement and

engagement activities the MD, FD and myself asked, consulted and shared how and where the business have and can save costs. We demonstrated where the business saved money on reducing overtime and limiting contractors, by changing to more cost-effective suppliers, recycling initiatives and shared how we have improved productivity ratings. The intention was to make it clear that reducing the headcount, was a last resort for the organisation to save costs and continued to give employees the opportunity to come up with ideas to reduce costs elsewhere.

4. **Communication:** Delivering important updates during a restructure is critical for success. A clear strategy for communication was applied as per figure 9 below:

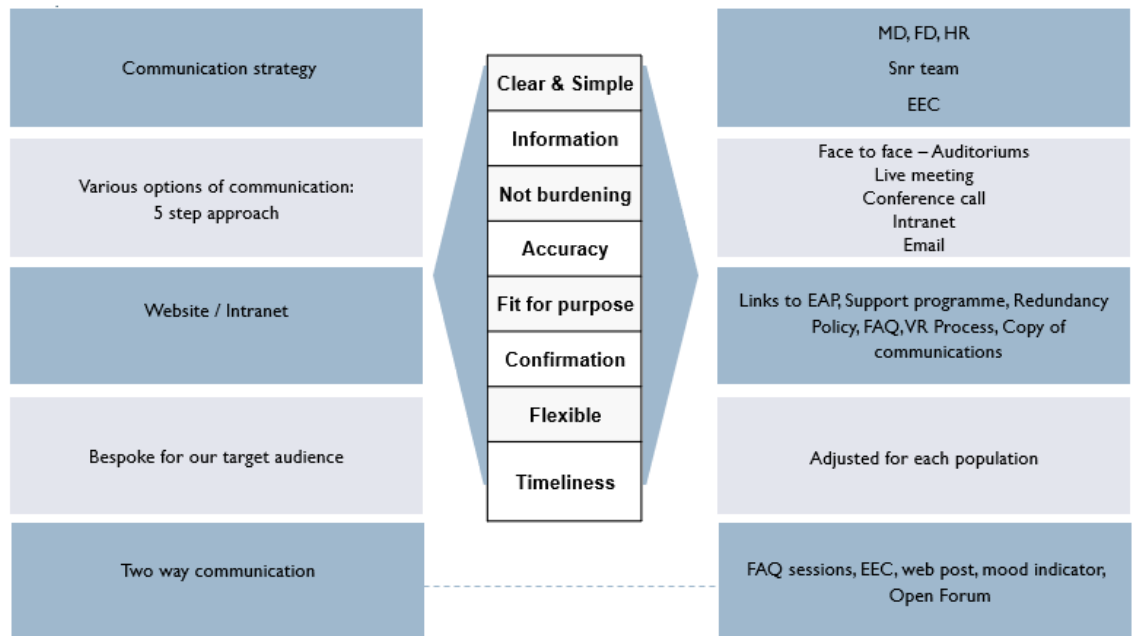


Figure 9: Communication strategy

The communication strategy had a unique approach for the respective stakeholders. The MD, FD and I lead the strategy, designed and supported by the communications team. The communication was tailored to the specific audience and thus varied in pitch to the senior team, the ECC and the wider workforce. We tailored each communication with the aim to ensure that the key messages were understood by the respective stakeholder group. We adopted a five staged approach to communications; commencing always with a face to face approach; utilising large auditoriums and running several repeats of the same session to allow for all employees, especially non-office-based employees the opportunity to attend. We kept records of attendance for each session and diligently ensured that we included all the employees. For the employees who could not attend the face to face sessions; we ran a live meeting and conference call immediately after the face to face sessions to capture engineers on the road and non-office-based employees who were not willing to travel, such as sales professionals and project managers. This allowed employees to view the slides as we presented them and others just an opportunity to dial in and talk or ask questions. The live meeting sessions were recorded and stored on a bespoke intranet site, dedicated to the restructure so that employees could refresh their understanding if necessary or view the sessions if they were not able to attend any of the deliveries. We then followed up with an email communication to all employees, summarising the key points with a link to the recordings, FAQs document and related policies. For all employees who were on leave of absence, such as due to sickness, maternity or

paternity leave, holidays and military duties, managers reached out directly and had a conversation to keep them informed. Each communication platform allowed for questions to be presented via anonymous means and we ensured that this were published where appropriate and not of personal nature. The messaging was consistent and comprehensive. Aware of different preferences in learning styles; we also designed and maintained a bespoke intranet site, where all the communications were stored to facilitate easy access for employees who preferred to read through the material. We stored information such as who are the ECC representatives for each area and their contract details, details of the EAP support providers; help guides to finding work; all relevant policies and processes; such as the voluntary redundancy process, the redundancy policy, flexible working policy and a list of updated FAQs. We also published a time line of key dates to keep redundancy envoys and employees informed.

5. **Risk Management:** The model incorporated a process for risks to be identified, assessed and addressed throughout the restructuring programme. We particularly looked at the risks around losing talented employees and ensuring we retained the right skills for the future. As part of this process we identified all our single-point of failures and carefully considered suitable successors should these employees exit the organisation by their own accord. We also monitored and measured morale through the anonymous Mood indicator, which gave us a steer on weaknesses in the process that needs addressing.

4.2.4 Third iteration:

The third iteration took place between the third and fourth restructures with the review and design period taking place June to August 2013 and followed the same process flow, driving continuous improvement as per figure 10 below:



Figure 10: Iteration three process flow

The solutions that were implemented in the previous iteration, were measured against the new data collected. The data collection techniques in the third iteration included some additional forms of data collection, such as minutes and observation from the management workshops, the

restructure workshops and change management training sessions. Data collected at this stage were from within the BDA organisation.

The voice of the employees were measured through the Mood Indicator, which provided an indication of areas that require further improvement and also validated the pillars of the model that were successful. This comment indicates for example, positive perception of the success of improved communication:

Relieved to not be at risk within BDA, I do appreciate the unrest and distress it causes those affected. Considering recent announcements, including those made today, the mood is far less negative and 'down' than I had expected. A reflection on the extremely professional way that it has been handled this time around and the improved communication as a whole that has been maintained throughout the process. (MI-anonymous. Iteration three)

Feedback from the Mood Indicator also highlighted further areas in the model that required improvement such as this example below, where more communication was requested specific to the next staged of the restructure.

Feedback Good, because today I am Excellent Yesterday (when I received the indicator) I was not good. Looking forwarding to rowing the boat together in the same direction, I'm sure we can draw some strategy from the rowing technique and philosophy! Can we have more communication on the next steps of the business restructure please. (MI-anonymous. Iteration two)

Another example of how data contributed to the improvement of the model is shown here in this comment below:

To keep survivors motivated, a clear vision needs to be set (where do we want to be). A strategy should then be defined with clear objectives: who, when, what needs to be done by when. (WS-group participants. Iteration three)

Others sources of data that were used to improve the model, were collected from directors' presentations such as in this example:

When communicating redundancies, try to use the change curve as a reference point in understanding where the employee is at. (DP-OD10. Iteration three)

New data collected were introduced into the penultimate model which resulted in a nine pillared redundancy stakeholder model with a value model attached as per table 3 below:

Table 3: Restructure stakeholder model two

	Description of model stages
A	Pre-redundancy implementation
1.	Implementation strategy 1.1 Robust business rationale 1.2 Exploring all other options of cost reductions 1.3 Decision making and time scales 1.4 Use of redundancy veterans 1.5 The use of voluntary redundancies 1.6 Financial package strategy for redundancy costs 1.7 Limiting proximity of redundancy envoys to the victims
2.	Planning and analysis 2.1 Planning workshop – agreeing the redundancy pools, selection criteria, time scales, number of redundancies. 2.2 Preparation – cost calculations, room bookings, letters. 2.3 Skills analysis – which skills are critical for the future. 2.4 Risk mitigation – where are the single point of failures in the business.
3.	Producing a robust project plan as outlined in the first module.
4.	Training and education 1.1 Restructure workshop as outlined in the first module

	1.2 Change management workshop as outlined in the first module
B	Delivery and implementation
5.	<p>Involvement and engagement through effective communication</p> <p>5.1 Communicate through various media, including face to face, emails, live-meetings, conference calls, website, text messaging, videos, recordings and printed material</p> <p>5.2 Face to face communication as the preferred method</p> <p>5.3 Continuous updates on progress</p> <p>5.4 Tailor communication to the specific audiences</p> <p>5.5 Two ways – demonstrate willingness to listen and provide answers, follow up if unknown</p> <p>5.6 Open forum focus groups – a platform where various employees can raise ideas and concerns</p>
6.	<p>Leadership</p> <p>6.1 Ownership of the issues and the situation</p> <p>6.2 Creating a clear and positive vision for the future</p> <p>6.3 Visibility and open-door policy</p> <p>6.4 Prioritising and setting goals for the immediate future</p> <p>6.5 Delivering the programme with authenticity and transparency</p> <p>6.6 Swift and committed decision making to minimize the period of unsettledness</p>
7.	<p>Support structure for victims as per appendix A</p> <p>6.1 Education, skills and training</p> <p>6.2 Advice and counselling</p> <p>6.3 Support in finding new roles</p> <p>6.4 Financial support</p> <p>6.5 Moral support</p> <p>6.6 Support networks</p> <p>6.7 Professional support</p> <p>6.8 Outplacement support</p>
8.	Support structure for survivors as per appendix A

	8.1 Providing new skills and cross training 8.2 Advice and counselling 8.3 Support in prioritizing responsibilities 8.4 Moral support 8.5 Support networks 8.6 Professional support
9.	Support structure for redundancy envoys as per appendix A 9.1 Education, skills and training 9.2 Advice and counselling 9.3 Support in prioritizing responsibilities 9.4 Moral support 9.5 Support networks 9.6 Professional support 9.7 Strong relationships between HR and management 9.8 Promoting positive implications, such as new skills and career development
	Value model
	Values of operation Respect Empathy Trust Transparency Fairness

4.2.5 Fourth iteration:

The fourth and final iteration followed the process of measuring data; collecting final data through post restructure interviews, applying minor amendments that resulted in the completion of the action research iterations as per figure 11 below:

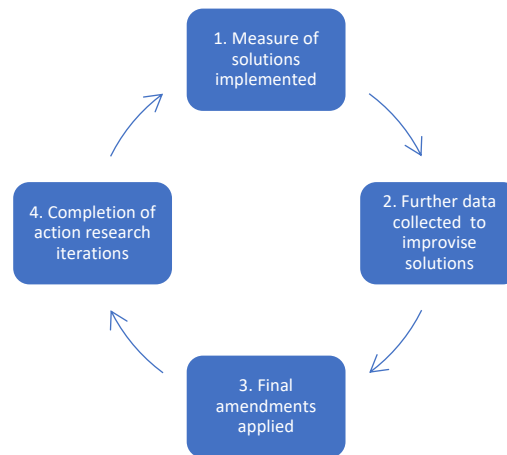


Figure 11: Iteration four process flow

The final iteration was developed after all the restructuring and redundancies were complete after January 2014. Further data was collected at this stage through semi-structured interviews, interpreted and analysed by consolidating anonymous feedback from the Mood Indicator with other means of data collected such as through observation, diary keeping, performance management process feedback, workshop feedback and director presentations.

The interviews at this stage were specific to research participants who were part of BDA restructures. This included the views of the senior HR business partner who implement phase one of the BDA redundancies as well as the HR consultant (HR9) who delivered the BDA redundancies in phase two, three and four. Only after the completion of the last restructure, was the data collected from the ECC representatives through semi-structured interviews. The rationale for this was that I did not want to influence their views or potentially cloud their roles as ECC representatives whilst amidst the redundancy process, as this may have added to their stress and could be perceived as a conflict of interest. After the completion of the restructures,

the views were sought from the directors of the business to gain an understanding of how they perceived and experienced the implementation of the restructure model and to gain an understanding of effectiveness of the restructure models implemented.

The data collected at this stage lead to minor tweaks in the previous model, with regard to content. The most significant changes were tweaking the content and prioritising the different activities and contributory elements of the model. The end result was thus a more sophisticated development of the content. These changes were made following feedback from directors that model presentation should be easier to comprehend and resulted in the following output, as per figure 12 below:

Restructure stakeholder model[©]

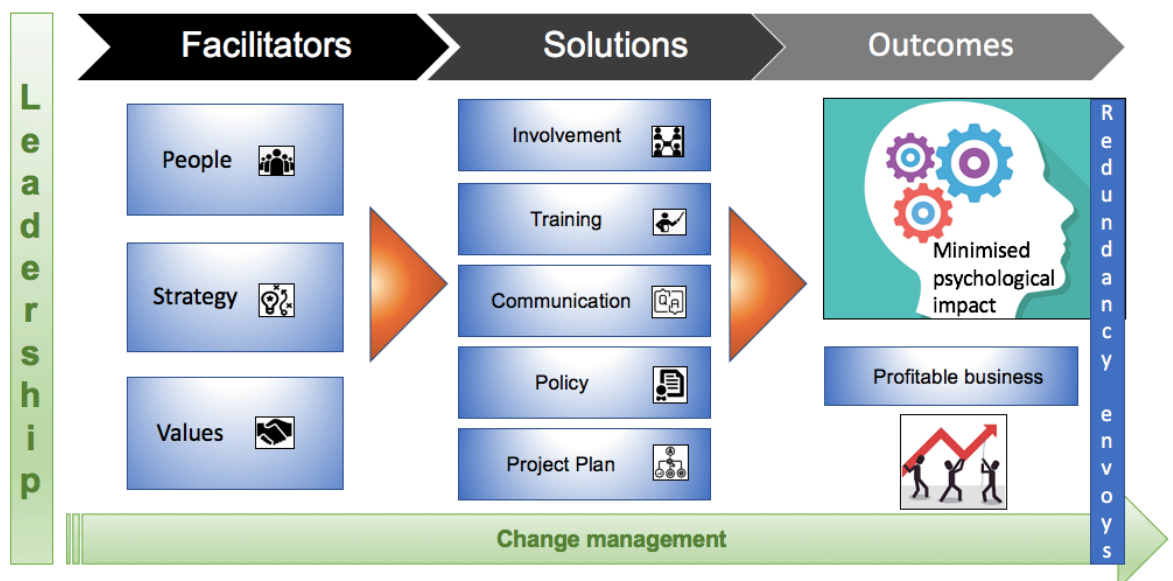


Figure 12: Final restructure model

Reflection that were part of the final interview process lead to the believe that the organisation should not forget once all the redundancies were complete, to ensure it builds the organisation up again. A key part of this was to ensure survivors were recognised and that employees were rewarded appropriately.

Survivors often feel that they are a victim of their own success. They may get to keep their jobs, but perhaps they would have rather opted for a redundancy package and were refused due to having a valued skillset that were essential to the company. The model incorporated steps to ensure that these survivors know that they are appreciated for their skills and recognised through reward, development and promotion opportunities. Understandably cost cutting prior and during the redundancy programme were a necessary means to the survival of the organisation, however once the programme is complete, the business needs to ensure that employees are being developed and supported with faith restored in the building up of the business in its entirety, including the development of the people.

Thus, the changes to the model in the fourth iteration, were primarily focused on post restructure initiatives, such as employee training, development, reward and recognition. The final model presented itself as follows and included eleven stages as well as a value model as per table 4 below:

Table 4: Final restructure model presented as a table

	Description of model stages
A	Pre-redundancy implementation
1.	Implementation strategy 1.8 Robust business rationale 1.9 Exploring all other options of cost reductions 1.10 Decision making and time scales

	<p>1.11 Use of redundancy veterans</p> <p>1.12 The use of voluntary redundancies</p> <p>1.13 Financial package strategy for redundancy costs</p> <p>1.14 Limiting proximity of redundancy envoys to the victims</p>
2.	<p>Planning and analysis</p> <p>2.1 Planning workshop – agreeing the redundancy pools, selection criteria, time scales, number of redundancies.</p> <p>2.2 Preparation – cost calculations, room bookings, letters.</p> <p>2.3 Skills analysis – which skills are critical for the future.</p> <p>2.4 Risk mitigation – where are the single point of failures in the business.</p>
3.	<p>Producing a robust project plan as outlined in the first module.</p>
4.	<p>Training and education</p> <p>1.3 Restructure workshop as outlined in the first module</p> <p>1.4 Change management workshop as outlined in the first module</p>
B	<p>Delivery and implementation</p>
5.	<p>Involvement and engagement through effective communication</p> <p>5.1 Communicate through various media, including face to face, emails, live-meetings, conference calls, website, text messaging, videos, recordings and printed material</p> <p>5.2 Face to face communication as the preferred method</p> <p>5.3 Continuous updates on progress</p> <p>5.4 Tailor communication to the specific audiences</p> <p>5.5 Two ways – demonstrate willingness to listen and provide answers, follow up if unknown</p> <p>5.6 Open forum focus groups – a platform where various employees can raise ideas and concerns</p>
6.	<p>Leadership</p> <p>6.1 Ownership of the issues and the situation</p> <p>6.2 Creating a clear and positive vision for the future</p> <p>6.3 Visibility and open-door policy</p>

	<p>6.4 Prioritising and setting goals for the immediate future</p> <p>6.5 Delivering the programme with authenticity and transparency</p> <p>6.6 Swift and committed decision making to minimize the period of unsettledness</p>
7.	<p>Support structure for victims as per appendix A</p> <p>6.1 Education, skills and training</p> <p>6.2 Advice and counselling</p> <p>6.3 Support in finding new roles</p> <p>6.4 Financial support</p> <p>6.5 Moral support</p> <p>6.6 Support networks</p> <p>6.7 Professional support</p> <p>6.8 Outplacement support</p>
8.	<p>Support structure for survivors as per appendix A</p> <p>8.1 Providing new skills and cross training</p> <p>8.2 Advice and counselling</p> <p>8.3 Support in prioritizing responsibilities</p> <p>8.4 Moral support</p> <p>8.5 Support networks</p> <p>8.6 Professional support</p>
9.	<p>Support structure for redundancy envoys as per appendix A</p> <p>9.1 Education, skills and training</p> <p>9.2 Advice and counselling</p> <p>9.3 Support in prioritizing responsibilities</p> <p>9.4 Moral support</p> <p>9.5 Support networks</p> <p>9.6 Professional support</p> <p>9.7 Strong relationships between HR and management</p> <p>9.8 Promoting positive implications, such as new skills and career development</p>
C	Post redundancy implementation
10.	Reward, recognition and development

	<p>9.1 Realigning reward and recognition with new roles and responsibilities</p> <p>9.2 Continuous development for employees</p> <p>9.3 Supporting promotional opportunities</p> <p>9.4 Evaluation of model</p>
	Value model
	<p>Values of operation</p> <p>Respect</p> <p>Empathy</p> <p>Trust</p> <p>Transparency</p> <p>Fairness</p>

4.2.6 Literature on action research:

In this section, I will investigate the literature on action research with the aim to rationalise why I believe it is the most appropriate methodology for developing effective interventions for mitigating the psychological impact experienced by redundancy envoys. I will also address the limitations of action research and address any ethical considerations that may be prevalent from the use of action research.

‘Action research recognises the importance of recognising groups as a web field of human interactions collectively working toward shared goals within a general community framework.’
(Glassman et al. 2012:272)

Quality action research is described as:

“proceeds from a praxis of participation,
is guided by practitioners’ concerns for practicality,
is inclusive of stakeholders’ ways of knowing,
and helps to build capacity for ongoing change efforts.”

(Bradley Huang, 2010:99)

The application of action research as defined by Glassman et al. (2012) to redundancy situations are very apt, where specific groups are recognised as victims, survivors and redundancy envoys. Action research lend itself well to the collection of data though qualitative research which are often contextualized in the knowledge of practitioners as argued by Bradbury Huang (2010). Applied to my research project, I was fortunate to have access to an plenty of HR practitioners in the field and collecting rich data through the knowledge of practitioners were not a particular challenge. J. Mackenzie et al. (2012:17) model cycle of adaptive participatory research as per figure 13 below, were of similar nature to the approach adopted by me in figure 10 and 11 presented earlier in this chapter, designed by me through natural progress.



Figure 13: Adaptive cycle of participatory research. J. Mackenzie et al. (2012:17)

Glassman et al. (2012) contend that the use of action research perspective is the best method to change goal-driven activity. In the situation of redundancy, very specific goals are identified to achieve, such as a specific number in the amount of employee reductions. Action research are best suited to address the goal of changing the community patterns as well as individual roles (Glassman et al. 2012) which was suitably applied to my research approach and goals to mitigate the psychological impact experienced by redundancy envoys.

The action research methodology was most appropriate for this study as my process included the identification of areas of improvement by asking the research questions of what the key stressors for redundancy envoys are and what can be done to mitigate them. Through the process, I applied and tested various redundancy models to drive continuous improvement. At the outset of the research project, my aim was to gain an understanding of the problem by conducting lesson-learned exercises and examining the feedback from the various groups of redundancy stakeholders. Bradbury Huang (2010) describes action research as the creation of knowledge that arises in a context of practice that requires researchers to work with practitioners with the desire to change a path in generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders. As a practitioner and embedded researcher, I had the benefit to drive the journey

of desired change of generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders by implementing and measuring the success of progressive redundancy models.

The process of four iterations allowed for critical reflection which provided the platform to probe and exam the views of redundancy envoys further and continued to deliver improved and desired changes to knowledge. Tindall (1994) states that reflexivity is arguably one of the most distinctive features of qualitative research and an essential process of action research. (Lycett, 2008)

MacColl et al. (2005) raises concerns with regard to ethical issues in ethnographic action research where obtaining consent from participants could be problematic during a process of change. Their view is that change in itself is fundamentally risky, which could increase the risk of harm to participants. I believe that in my research project the aim was mutually understood; to support redundancy envoys by mitigating the negative psychological impact. On this basis, participation from redundancy envoys were mostly volunteered due to a mutual desire to change the process for the better and improve the support for redundancy envoys.

Mackenzie et al. (2012) adds that the role of the participatory action researcher often consists of multiple actions, including facilitation of dialogue, knowledge exchange and organisation tasks which could become all-consuming and could lead to the researcher becoming more of a facilitator which could have an impact to the extent of the research activity. This is a risk that I was aware

off and consciously addressed in ensuring I set sufficient targets and aims to meet my research needs and questions, although I would concur that the role of participatory action researcher did involve working a significant number of extra hours above and beyond a forty hour week to meet the different responsibilities. To conclude, I do believe that the output of the ten pillared restructure model and the positive feedback and validation received by the organisation post restructure activities was well worth the investment in extra time and commitment to help redundancy envoys during this specific restructure and hopefully in future.

4.3 Research methods

This research project adopted an inductive methodology with a qualitative approach. Primary and secondary research methods were utilised, as can be seen in figure three which shows the respective methods used and the coding used within the findings chapter.

Figure 3: Research methods and coding

Research methods

Primary data	Secondary data
Semi-structured interviews (I)	Mood Indicator (MI)
Ethnography: diary keeping / observation (DO)	Performance management process (PMP)
Lessons learned sessions (LL)	Champions awards (CA)
Employee consultative committee consultation (ECC)	Engagement surveys (ES)
Restructure workshops (RW)	
Director presentations (DP)	
Management restructure workshop (MRW)	

It was important to get rich and insightful data from the participants and therefore an initial screening of experience was undertaken before deciding to approach candidates to participate in the study. All participants in this study had relevant experience in redundancies and had acted in the capacity of a redundancy envoy and thus had the responsibility of redundancy decision making, planning, consulting, implementation or communication. The participants ranged in their experience of redundancy from having their first exposure to a redundancy situation to veterans with years of experience in the role as redundancy envoys. Table 1 below highlights the typical responsibilities and coding of redundancy envoys.

Table 1: Responsibility remit of redundancy envoys

Abbreviation Code	Role profiles included under this code	Typical areas of responsibility in redundancy activities
HRD	Human resources director within small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and large enterprise businesses Director of HR services firm Proprietor of HR consultancy	Strategy Planning Implementation Communication
HR	Human resources advisor Human resources specialists Employee and change consultant Human resources manager Human resources business partner	Implementation Coordination Consultation Planning
OD	Organisation director Managing director Head of a business unit/function	Strategy Planning Implementation Communication
LM	Line manager	Communication Implementation Consultation
ECC	Employee consultative committee representative	Consultation Advisory role Communication

4.4 Primary data

Primary data collection techniques for this research included:

- a) Semi-structured interviews
- b) Critical ethnography including diary keeping and observation
- c) Employee consultative committee consultation
- d) Lessons learned sessions
- e) Restructure workshop observations, findings and outputs
- f) Director presentations
- g) Management restructure workshop feedback

a) Semi-structured interviews

Using a qualitative approach for collecting data, by way of interviewing, allowed the opportunity to capture real experiences and perceptions and gain depth of understanding semi-structured interviews were used rather than unstructured, with the intention to maintain control, as suggested by Bryman and Bell (2015). Holloway and Jefferson (2013) discuss the clinical case-study approach to interviewing which recognizes the importance of unconscious dynamics in the research interview. Berg and Smith (1988), Devereux (1967) and Holloway and Jefferson (2013) incorporate the awareness of defences against anxiety when interviewing psychosocial subjects and I feel that with a sensitive issue such as individual perception on redundancies, defences against anxiety are likely to be experienced by the participant, especially as there may be a concern with redundancy envoys to admitting a view of a breach of trust or a damaged psychological contract. To overcome such a challenge, Holloway and Jefferson (2013) suggest that the characteristics of a counselling relationship should be established with the interviewer, demonstrating the capability of listening well, paying attention to emotional significances and the ability to reflect back in questions and comments to show recognition of the individual's experiences. Holliday (2002) warns of the risk of sociological blindness where the researcher risks meeting her objectives by clouding the process with technologised discourse (vocabulary and procedures), which may underlie her notion of participant-centeredness, but is likely to be very much created by a discourse which is ethnocentric to her own research culture. Bryman and Bell (2013) explain that semi-structured interviews have many advantages over other qualitative data techniques as it enables the interviewer to get a detailed, unbiased view of the person's

opinions. Appendix B provides an overview of typical questions asked. Although I had a clear vision of what data I wanted to collect, I allowed participants to feel empowered with what they wanted to share and took an approach of a combination of steering and listening.

The interviews were conducted in person rather than by telephone, to allow the interviewee to observe the physical surroundings of the participant for additional data or validation evidence, as suggested by Frey (1989). One of the concerns about interviewing as a form of data collection is how you know if your participant is telling the truth. Holloway and Jefferson (2013) suggest that one of the good reasons for believing what people tell you, as a researcher, is a democratic one; who are we to know any better than the participants when it is, after all, their lives? My view is consistent with using this approach, which was paramount when interviewing individuals with regard to this potentially emotive topic.

For the purpose of collecting data via interviews, an 'overt' research approach was adopted. Weber (1946, cited in Silverman, 2013) explains the risk of research being contaminated by the values of the researcher. According to Jankowicz (2000), one of the most common ethical issues that is likely to be encountered is people's expectations, which are likely to amount to the hope that some form of resolution will be evident as a result of the project. After interview data was collected, further analyses took place to identify trends and common themes in accordance with Pepper's (1942) World Hypotheses where he argues that objectivity is a myth because there is no such thing as

pure, objective fact. Consequently, analysis is required to understand how to interpret the facts.

Later in this chapter, I elaborate on the various cycles of data collection and explain who was interviewed at which stage and what their relevant experience was. Appendix C provides details of all the interview participants and also highlights the various roles of the participants in a consolidated document.

b) Critical ethnography

In addition to interviews, critical ethnography was utilised, including diary keeping, observation and any relevant emails that provided context. Early ethnographers such as Whyte (1943) explored the social world by way of naturalistic techniques in a consistent manner with anthropologists who have sought to understand different cultures through personal experience. Covert observation was used with difficult-to-access or deviant groups (Davidson, 2004). The benefit of covert observation is to give credibility to data gained by interviews, which is why I chose to combine observation with interviews. Trowler's (1998) work on 'Academics Responding to Change' influenced me positively on the approach and benefits of qualitative data and using in-depth analysis to make sense of the data, complementing the data collected from interviews. There is, however, a limitation to diary keeping; participants are unlikely to admit the truth of their respective situation in written format as they may feel it could be used as evidence against them at a later stage if the company embark on a formal procedure, such as performance management, capability or ill-health as per Collis and Hussey (2013). In response to this, I

employed diary keeping as a personal activity undertaken by myself rather than overtly requesting subjects to keep a diary when I fully understood they had enough pressures on them already. By utilising this method, I addressed the limitation of diary keeping by recording my own observations.

Observation also adds value and provides background details to support diary keeping, emails and interviews; for instance, one subject stated after a redundancy consultation meeting: “I really needed a stiff drink after that!” (HR9). Diary keeping allowed me to note the context of the conversation and add reference to what that meant – in this case a very difficult consultation that subsequently led to an appeal. I concur with Silverman’s (2013) perspective that to really understand, one must engage in an extended period of observation. Adopting this approach was a crucial link to getting uninhibited truth from situations. Collis and Hussey (2013) suggest that although diaries can be useful to generate qualitative data, their best use may be as a basis for subsequent in-depth interviews. This approach did in fact work very well, as I could refer back to comments made during specific events associated with the redundancy process; for example, “Yesterday, you told me that you have not slept for a week” (OD4). This gave me the opportunity to open dialogue, using a coaching approach, and elicit valuable insight into the data and comments made. The observations and notes from diary keeping gave context and meaning when following up with semi-structured interviews and bespoke questions to avoid underlying assumptions. Table 5 provides an overview of ethnography subjects, their coding used within the findings chapter and also

highlights where the ethnography subjects were also interviewed to compliment and challenge data gathered.

Table 5: Ethnography subjects and their coding

	Job title of ethnography subject	Participated in interview	RE code:
1	Head of Projects		LM120
2	Managing Director	Yes	OD4
3	Finance Director 1		OD7
4	Finance Director 2	Yes	OD5
5	PA to MD / FD		IC1
6	Communications partner		LM104
7	Snr bid manager		LM105
8	HR business partner 1		HR10
9	HR consultant	Yes	HR9
10	Head of quality and business excellence	Yes	OD3
11	Head of service		LM106
12	Commission Engineer		IC2
13	Head of BDAP	Yes	OD6
14	Service Engineer		IC3
15	Head of marketing		LM107
16	Head of commissioning		LM108
17	Project manager		IC 109
18	UK service administration manager		LM110
19	Service manager		LM111
20	ECC Rep 1	Yes	ECC1
21	ECC Rep 2	Yes	ECC2
22	ECC Rep 3	Yes	ECC3
23	ECC Rep 4		EEC5
24	Customer service manager		LM103
25	Head of customer service managers		LM102
26	Head of service - Ireland	Yes	LM101
27	Technical head of products	Yes	LM5
28	Commercial head - Service	Yes	LM9
29	Snr HR business partner	Yes	HR2
30	Head of sales		LM112

c) Employee consultative committee meetings

Another valuable source of data was obtained through the employee consultative committee (ECC) meetings. The ECC group consisted of four representatives who acted as the voice for the organisation. Each of the four ECC representatives covered a different constituency within BDA, which reflected geographical demographics as well as representation by business units. They had an active interest in the success of the organisation as well as challenging management on decision making and ensuring where possible the correct processes were followed and implemented. All the ECC representatives were trained on their roles and responsibilities as ECC representatives through the company's employment law solicitors, which allowed for a professional and constructive relationship between the business and the ECC representatives. When the business is in a stable state, the frequency of meetings is normally every two months. During the restructuring phases, the ECC group met weekly with the management representatives as part of collective consultation process. Meetings were more frequent due to high levels of turmoil and uncertainty in the organisation, which the management team wanted to address on a sustainable and regular basis. I acted as the chair for the ECC and was responsible for the legal and consultative process. This gave me the opportunity to seek feedback on the views of the wider workforce, through the ECC, from a unique perspective. The ECC were able to provide a balanced perspective, having the best resolutions in mind to ensure the company remain sustainably successful whilst ensuring individuals get treated with due fairness and equality. Subsequently, three of the four ECC members of this committee also

participated in semi-structured interviews where their individual thoughts and reflections were gathered after the redundancy programmes were complete.

The consultation meetings with the ECC served two main purposes. Firstly, they ensured compliance with a legal obligation to consult through a nominated employee representative group. Secondly, the ECC represented an important channel of communication and consultation between management and employees on matters relating to the plans and performance of each business unit and to the business as a whole. Management consulted with the ECC on topics such as business objectives, business performance and financial results, operational policies, feedback and advice on proposed communications and monitoring the extent to which communications were reaching everyone. The ECC thus served the purpose of being a voice of the extended workforce. Specific to the ECC meetings during redundancy consultation, the ECC provided a helpful representation of risks, opportunities and the overall mood within the organisation. All meetings were recorded via note taking, with a set of minutes provided to all parties. For the purpose of this research project, all ECC representatives remain anonymous.

d) Lessons learned sessions

I conducted “lessons learned” sessions within the organisation with various redundancy envoys to gain insight into their previous experiences of redundancies. As an action researcher, this put me in a wonderful position to drive continuous improvement. The lessons learned sessions were very productive as they helped to establish trust and commitment and identify

suitable candidates to select for interviewing. As the first redundancy programme in BDA created a lot of upset for redundancy envoys, they were very enthusiastic to share their experiences and drive towards continuous improvement. Most of the participants in these sessions had been involved in the most recent preceding redundancy programme, whilst many had experiences of several prior redundancy programmes and I gained valuable insight into what worked well, but mostly what did not work well and areas for improvement. One of the key benefits of these sessions was an opportunity to demonstrate my genuine interest in the topic and desire to work with the redundancy envoys to improve the subsequent redundancy programme, which resulted in the building of trust. The lessons learned sessions were held on site with an open invitation to redundancy envoys to participate on a bi-weekly basis over the first two months of my appointment in BDA and formed part of the first cycle of data collection. The redundancy envoys were very committed and followed up comments made in the sessions with subsequent emails to provide further evidence to support their views. Where emails were introduced, they were equally anonymised.

e) Restructure workshop observations, findings and outputs

Within the pilot cycle of the research, I designed a bespoke restructuring workshop for the redundancy envoys of BDA. This workshop took on board all the data collected from literature, lessons learned sessions, interviews and ethnography within cycle one, and the end result was a tailor-made solution that covered specific areas of restructuring and redundancy that would help

alleviate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys. Figure 14 elaborates on the overview of the course.

Figure 14: Course overview of restructure workshop

Restructure Workshop

Course Overview

This course is designed to give you as a line manager confidence in managing the processes and the personal interactions during a restructure.

At the end of the course participants:

- Will be able to describe the drivers behind restructuring activities
- Have described the emotions that each of the affected groups might experience
- Will have examples of supporting behaviours that you can offer individuals in affected groups
- Will know the legal framework for conducting redundancies
- Will be prepared for some of the challenges in managing individual redundancy consultation meetings
- Will have practiced "giving bad news"
- Have a strategy for coping personally during the management of a restructure
- Have a personal action plan for the future

This workshop was held twice during cycle two of the pilot implementation with sixteen redundancy envoys attending in total and feedback obtained afterwards was used as secondary data. I personally ran the workshop with the support of an external trainer. During the workshop, I took intensive notes, made observations and gathered outputs which were to be used in the refinement of the redundancy model. The workshop also presented the opportunity for the lead HR consultant and the managing director to support sessions which helped in gaining trust and commitment from the redundancy envoys.

f) Director presentations

Another primary data collection method was implemented during the process of restructuring the board of directors. Due to a redundancy situation within the board of directors as well, two roles were consolidated into one; head of service and head of projects merged into head of projects and service. In this process, I asked all existing directors and new candidates interested in applying to present their thoughts on what strategy they would adopt and implement to ensure a successful outcome of the several redundancy programmes. These presentations, of which there were four in total, gave useful insights on strategies, experiences and thoughts on areas that would alleviate the stressors on redundancy envoys. They also provided objectivity and highlighted blind spots in our redundancy programme where, arguably, as an embedded and action researcher, I was not able to identify weaknesses in my own redundancy model. Table 6 below explains the coding used for director presentations within the findings chapter.

Table 6 Director presentation coding

1	Presentation 1	OD7
2	Presentation 2	OD8
3	Presentation 3	OD9
4	Presentation 4	OD10

g) Management restructure workshop

This workshop was run by the MD with his board of directors and was facilitated with my help. The aim of this workshop was to encourage active

involvement and participation from the board of directors instead of the decision making coming just from the MD. As part of the pilot implementation, this was a response to data collected in cycle one which indicated a strong requirement for active involvement and ownership within the senior team. To gain trust and ownership the workshop proposed the financial challenges the organisation was faced with and a summary of the position of having to make redundancies. As a team, the workshop led to a suitable outcome on where, by whom, how and when redundancies would take place. Data was collected through observation and note keeping, as well as direct questions from me to the team. Despite the workshop being collectively part of the pilot implementation to mitigate the psychological impact on the redundancy envoy, the MD was the driving force of this workshop and thus I considered this to be secondary data, although no doubt this is debatable amongst academics.

4.5 Secondary data

Secondary data collection was extracted from the company documents already in existence as follows:

- a) Mood Indicator
- b) Performance management process
- c) Champions awards
- d) Engagement surveys

Limitations to using company data as a collection method include the potential lack of value to specific individual cases and general lack of detail where there

may be many variables involved, which could dilute validity. Briner (2013) states that the point of collecting evidence-based data is to collect the data in a manner that is conscientious, explicit and judicious, yet to be aware of its limitations as internal organisational data, such as performance measures, are often flawed, limited or partial. I was conscious of the limitations of using organisational data and aware of the necessity to make my own informed judgements on the relevance and quality of such data.

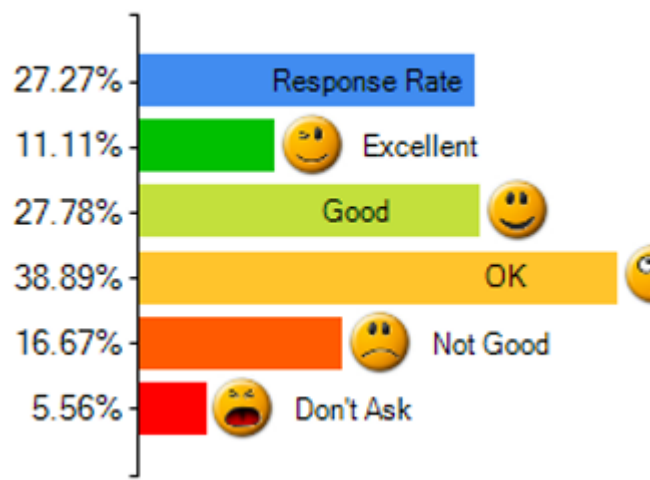
a) Mood indicator

I gained a significant amount of knowledge from comments posted on the company's mood indicator. The mood indicator is an online platform where employees have the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on how they feel, what concerns them and what makes them happy. Employees can respond with an emoticon and/or leave a specific comment in an open text box. Members of the senior team provide a management response to the views expressed or issues raised. Figure 15 demonstrates an example of top level results and the emoticons used in the tool to represent the following options: 'excellent', 'good', 'ok', 'not good' or 'don't ask'.

Figure 15: Example of Mood Indicator tool results:







Current Results



Any employee can respond to an individual's post with a thumbs-up or thumbs-down response to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the post. After management's feedback is posted, any employee in the company can also rate management's response with a thumbs-up or thumbs-down response, as can be seen in figure 16 which shows a real example post. This type of feedback was interpreted to validate or challenge the main form of primary data collection; semi-structured interviews.

Figure 16: Example Mood indicator post from 11 June 2015.

Feedback	Date	Response from Management	Agree With
Same old, yet another restructure. All the good people are leaving. No doubt this restructure will say all the right things but nothing will change, the few remaining good people will leave, more customers will be lost and then we will have another restructure. Still too much red tape, no decent product portfolio. Profitable jobs turned away because they don't fit the current business model which is ? Losing the will to live, morale all at an time low. "Don't ask" doesn't even cover it	11 June 2015	We will continue to deliver to the customer as we have done before; the difference this time being that with a regional focus we can respond quicker to the customer and the customer will experience continuity in delivery and service. Hopefully the Town Halls have given you some clarity on how this structure will work and on our product portfolio. Do speak to your Branch Manager if you need more detail for your area.	Feedback 1  0  Response 0  0 

All feedback the business receives that is not anonymous (occasionally employees would include their name in the feedback) is handled in a different way and does not appear in the tool (unless it is positive feedback). The company arranges to deal with it on a one-to-one basis. Sixty-six employees are invited on a weekly basis to post feedback. The average response rate is around 50%, meaning that nominally there is a response from approximately thirty-three employees per week.

Online discussion forums (ODF) are forums where individuals can post messages which become threads, as defined by Veyreda and Antaki (2009). Goodlad (2013) found in her study that ODF led to a more accurate account of the chosen research topic and subsequently a richer dataset in comparison with interviews. The reason for this is potentially that data is not influenced by external factors such as fear of being judged (Marcell and Falls, 2001). I also recognised the use of emoticons alone (see figure 17 with the absence of text to provide context as a complex form of data analysis as it is subject to much interpretation (Zaltman and Leichliter, 2011). For this reason, emoticons presented in the Mood Indicator without any supporting comments or text such

as this example below were not used in my data collection as I believed it added no real meaning of significant value worthy of interpretation.

Figure 17: Emoticon used as a sole response on the Mood Indicator.

The users mood response was: 

b) Performance management process (PMP)

Initially, I did not make the obvious connection of investigating the PMP appraisals as a valuable source of data, until the PMP process commenced in November 2014 after the end of the redundancy programme in BDA. The PMP process is an internal company process where an annual review of individual performance takes place. The performance results have a direct correlation to a discretionary bonus. Performance achievement is categorised typically based on 50% individual performance against set targets and 50% based on company of business unit performance. The performance appraisal timeframe aligns with the business' financial year, commencing 1 October until the end of September. After the end of the financial year, a review of an individual's performance takes place in a roundtable discussion with the board of directors. In preparation for the roundtable discussions, individuals have to complete a document where they report their achievements against their targets, including a section called 'personal perspective'. Within the PMP roundtable discussions, it became apparent that a significant number of managers referred to the redundancies as the cause for poor financial and personal performance. At the point of realisation that this data may potentially be very

insightful, I started to explore data from the PMP process. Data in this study collected from the PMP process is presented in an anonymous basis to support or challenge the other data collected. The subjects are coded as follows in table 7 below:

Table 7: PMP appraisals for redundancy envoys

	Job title	Code
1	Sales manager	LM1000
2	Training manager	LM1001
3	Technical manager	LM1002
4	Account development manager	LM1003
5	Bid manager	LM1004
6	Sales account manager	ECC2
7	Sales account manager	LM1005
8	Head of design	LM1006
9	Account development manager	LM1007
10	Bid manager	LM1008
11	Sales account manager	LM1009
12	Sales assistant	LM1010
13	Sales manager	LM1011
14	Sales customer service manager	LM1012
15	Accountant	LM1013
16	Financial controller	LM1014
17	Financial controller	LM1015
18	Project controller	LM1016

c) Champions awards

Champions awards is an internal recognition system within Global Engineering. It consists of an online platform where any employee can nominate another employee as a 'champion' under three categories that reflect the values of the organisation: responsible, excellent and innovative. This recognition system is designed to recognise an act or contribution by an

individual or team that makes a contribution above and beyond the individual's day job. When an employee nominates an individual as a champion, the nomination goes to the head of department to approve the nomination with a certain financial value attached. The reward can range from a card to financial amounts of £50, £100 or £150, called an 'instant award'. Based on the impact and value of the contribution of the nominated individual, the head of department will make an assessment on a suitable financial reward. If the head of department feels the contribution is worth more to the organisation than the gesture of £150 recognition, he/she can put the nomination through to a secondary process where there are three categories: bronze, silver and gold. At this level, the financial reward increases and the approval is undertaken by an objective board to award the nomination. All awards are published on the company's intranet.

This form of data collection is included as I received an instant award from the MD of the organisation for my work as embedded researcher after implementation of the redundancy pilot. In addition, I received a bronze award from the organisation's HR director in recognition for the redundancy model designed. The content and feedback of the awards provide valuable insight as to the success of the redundancy pilot to reduce the psychological impact on the redundancy envoys.

d) Engagement surveys

Global Engineering run engagement surveys every two years on a global scale. Employees had the opportunity to participate anonymously by completing feedback on a rating scale, as well as free text boxes. In addition to the global surveys, BDA ran several pulse checks and internal engagement surveys on a smaller scale every six months. These engagement surveys provided valuable, insightful data on how employees perceived the organisation, the changes being made and the success of the redundancy programmes. This data was helpful in complementing the data collected from the mood indicator.

4.6 Ethics

In compliance with the British Psychology Society (1996, cited Holloway and Jefferson, 2013), the integrity, impartiality and respect for persons and evidence are valued and the proper interests of those involved are safeguarded through an accurate and truthful account of the findings. The identities of all participants and the respective companies they represent are kept anonymous. There is no benefit to this study if the participants are named. I therefore informed all participants of this fact as a matter of reassurance prior to commencing any research. In addition, company names were not required as only company sector and industry details will add value to the research context; however, most participants had no reservation to share the details of the companies where they were involved in redundancies. A brief description of the sector of the relevant company where the redundancies were applicable is sufficient to explain the research setting. Interviews aimed to last one to one

and a half hours and were recorded with a dictaphone with the permission of the participants for the ease of reference. No participants objected to the use of a dictaphone to record the conversation.

The following process to approaching interview participants was adopted:

1. Verbal conversations took place first where I explained my project and goals, verifying the value that may reasonably be expected to be added as a result of undertaking this project. At this point, potential participants were also made aware that they may find the conversation emotive.
2. Potential participants had the opportunity to reflect on the conversation prior to making any commitments to participate.
3. Holloway and Jefferson (2013) propose making use of a 'prompt sheet' to provide introductory information and ensure consistency. I support this approach and if initial interest was expressed by participants, a brief outline of my research project, the 'Participant Information Sheet' (PIS – Appendix D), was sent, which included the aims, objectives, research context and an example of typical questions. The aim of the PIS was to give potential participants the opportunity to prepare mentally and to stimulate thinking prior to the actual interview. It was my intention to ensure participants felt comfortable during the interview and that no surprises presented themselves. Included in the PIS is a small section on ethics which confirms anonymity, that no note takers would be present and that, with permission, a dictaphone would be utilised.
4. At the interview, I asked participants whether they were comfortable and willing to continue with the project and reminded them that they had the right

to withdraw from the project at any stage up until an agreed date, December 2016.

5. At the interview, I reassured participants that the conversation would be typed up and offered visibility of the typed-up version, to make final amendments. Despite this precaution, all participants declined this offer and agreed and signed the data consent form at interview stage or before when receiving the data consent form.

It is worth noting that the majority of participants had access to Employee Assistance Programmes where they are entitled to free counselling, should they feel that they require further support. I believe that my experience of working in Human Resources for over fifteen years, dealing with numerous emotive situations and associated training has provided me with a solid background and basis for picking up signs of stressors in participants. In fact, talking to many of the participants as an imbedded researcher gave me an opportunity to help and support redundancy envoys who were having difficulty dealing with the process. If any signs of distress were detected during the interview or observation stages, the correct measures were applied to manage the situation and limit risk to the individual, such as taking a break or providing the necessary support. As most participants understood that the objective of the study is to alleviate the psychological impact for redundancy envoys, the willingness to participate and contribute to a positive project to help colleagues and themselves was incredibly constructive. I also have an ethical responsibility of compliance towards my company and if I become aware of

any emotional distress, I have a legal responsibility towards my employer to address any work-related stress or psychological issues.

In my occupation, I often have to investigate or facilitate difficult conversations between employees, specialising in occupational stress and post-traumatic stress disorder. I also wrote and run training courses for line managers on how to deal with difficult situations. I am registered as an occupational psychologist (MBPsS, 235516) with the British Psychological Society (BPS) and I am a member of the Association of Business Psychologists and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (MCIPD, 22239620). I also completed a Master's Degree in Personnel and Development (MAPD) with a focus on mitigating and preventing occupational stress and I believe that this has given me a solid basis for dealing with participants who may potentially be at risk. In addition, I had access to occupational health services should this be a necessity. I am trained in coping techniques such as visualisation and relaxation and have undertaken a course in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and a coaching course. Finally, having copious experience in making employees redundant and having been at risk of redundancy myself several times, including being made redundant, I believe I have the necessary empathy required to relate to and support employees.

Cross (2005) suggests that when it comes to measuring attitudes through self-report methodology, participants may modify their responses as a result of the awareness of being under investigation and that answers are often influenced by motivational factors. Within this particular chosen topic of the impact on the

envoys of redundancy, I was conscious that participants may, in a similar fashion, not always be truthful, due to motivational factors such as career advancement and social status within their respective human resource communities. To mitigate guarded responses and encourage truth, I ensured that a relationship of trust was well established and also clarified that there is no correlation between the research and work implications.

When it comes to using ODF as a method of data collection, there are significant ethical issues to consider as participants may suffer distress if they discover they participated in research unknowingly (Goodlad, 2013). Due to the anonymity associated with forums, the matter is further convoluted as users cannot provide informed consent. Rodman and Gavin (2006) point out, however, that ODF that are 'open' forums can be accessed by anyone and no formal registration to access content is necessary. This study complied with BPS (2007) guidelines in that the identification of forums and individual usernames were not disclosed, which helped to ensure confidentiality.

4.7 Research journey

The research journey of data collection involved four iterations as per figure 1 below:

Business restructure timeline	Research development and iterations
<p>Phase 1: November 2011 – April 2012 Restructure driven by need to improve efficiency and productivity: merging of two businesses</p>	<p>Iteration 1: June 2010 - November 2012 Initial data collection</p>
<p>Phase 2: November 2012 – April 2013 Restructure driven by need to improve efficiency and productivity: removal of duplication</p>	<p>Iteration 2: January 2012 – April 2013 First restructure stakeholder model designed with further data collection</p>
<p>Phase 3: April 2013 – July 2013 Restructure driven by profitability targets</p>	<p>Iteration 3: July 2013 – August 2013 Second restructure stakeholder model piloted with further data collection</p>
<p>Phase 4: August 2013 – January 2014 Restructure driven by profitability targets</p>	<p>Iteration 4: January 2014 – July 2017 Final amendments leading to design of completed restructure stakeholder model with further data collection</p>

Figure 1: Research Journey

Research journey the first iteration: Initial findings

This iteration addressed the research question exploring what the key stressors for redundancy envoys are within their respective categories. Within this cycle, I built my data collection from a range of methods, including lessons learned sessions, mood indicator feedback, ECC meetings, diary keeping, observation, engagement surveys and semi-structured interviews. I kept a diary with me at all times, capturing reflective field notes, observations which I later used reflectively and compared this with my data captured through interviews where some interesting anecdotes were found.

Besides reviewing internal Global Engineering data, my preliminary interviews involved data collection from a range of heterogeneous sources, including, but not limited to, Global Engineering, which involved gaining insight from markets such as retail, transportation, aviation, shipping and information technology. I wanted to gain insight and gather experiences from a broader perspective than just one company and was conscious of not limiting my research, thus allowing for the opportunity of gaining richer data. To gain a multi-dimensional perspective, the initial research settings included a range of industries and sectors to provide the finest opportunity to learn best practice from an assortment of influences, such as organisational culture and values of the specific business. The gathering of this data informed me of specific themes to further explore and supported me in designing specific areas to research through further primary data collection.

Research setting during the first iteration:

The preliminary research settings varied as per table 8 and table 9.

Table 8: Research settings and redundancy envoy experience during cycle one of data collection excluding Global Engineering

RE code	Research setting	Redundancy experience
HR6	Telecommunications	Responsible for redundancy of a thousand employees, including herself and colleagues.
HR3	Aerospace Sector, in fuel tank inerting systems	Project managed nationwide redundancy programme affecting 110 employees across 2 locations over 12 months – Bournemouth and Teeside.
HR5	Aviation: helicopter manufacturing	Redundancy programme where 60 employees were made redundant.
LM3	Shipping and Transportation	Only one experience of redundancy programme where workforce was reduced by 10%: 80 employees were made redundant out of a population of approximately 800 employees.
HR4	Aviation	Redundancy programme where 50 employees were subject to redundancy.
HR4	Education	Various small-scale redundancies
HRD2	Industrial Metals	Part of a global redundancy project where 4000 employees were made redundant within Industrial Metals.
HRD2	Cosmetics / Retail	Responsible for implementing a takeover where 400 employees were made redundant.
HR7	Transportation and Engineering	10 years of experience in redundancies in UK, Middle East, South Africa and the Netherlands.
HRD1	Engineering and Technology / Energy - Global Organisation	Exposure to numerous redundancy projects on a global scale.
HR1	Metals	Responsible for several redundancies, including the closure of a factory.

HR2	Transportation, Engineering, Construction, Technology, Retail	More than 30 years of redundancy experience in various organisations.
HRD3	Engineering and Technology, Medical procurement	More than 30 years' experience involved in redundancies throughout career.
LM7	Engineering and Technology	Only one experience of redundancy

In addition to external sources, research was also conducted within Global Engineering across three divisions, including Transportation, Global Engineering Products (GEP) and Building Design and Automation, with Building Design and Automation being the main research setting. Table 9 shows the participants internal to Global Engineering during the second iteration of data collection who participated in semi-structured interviews.

Table 9: Research settings and redundancy envoy experience during the first iteration of data collection internal to Global Engineering

RE code	Research setting	Redundancy experience
LM4	Transportation and Engineering	Involved in several redundancy programmes ranging in a reduction of 10 - 15 employees per case over a period of nearly 30 years.
LM1	Transportation and Engineering	Involvement in several redundancy programmes, including the closure of a site involving 200 redundancies as well as the carve out of a business unit involving 40 employees.
LM2	Manufacturing and Production	Involved in three redundancy programmes. The largest of the three programmes involved the reduction of personnel by 30%.
OD1	Transportation, Engineering and Manufacturing	30 years of experience in redundancies at various scales, ranging from strategic decision making to implementation of redundancies.
HR3	Transportation and Engineering	Project managed and led HR and management teams through a

		redundancy programme affecting three geographical regions where 40 employees were made redundant.
HR6	Transportation and Engineering	Involved in several redundancy cases
HR1	Transportation and Engineering	Involved in several redundancy cases
LM7	Transportation and Engineering	Only one experience of redundancy
HRD5	Healthcare	30 years of experience in redundancies.
HRD4	Engineering, Manufacturing	Over 30 years' HR experience in large corporations with several restructures leading to redundancies. Estimate responsibility of thousands of redundancies, including his own team.

Data collection during iteration two:

Data collection during this iteration focussed on semi-structured interviews, as well as continuing to analyse existing organisation data that informed the research question. The data collected in iteration one and two was combined with a review of literature to design a restructure stakeholder model whose aim was to mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys.

Research setting during the second iteration:

This stage of research was conducted within Global Engineering across three divisions, Transportation, Global Engineering Products and BDA, with BDA being the main research setting due to the unique opportunity to pilot a model to mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys. Table 10 includes a summary of redundancy envoys interviewed at this iteration with their relevant experience.

Table 10: Research setting and redundancy experience during stage two of the data collection process within Global Engineering.

RE code	Research setting	Redundancy experience
LM4	Transportation and Engineering	Involved in several redundancy programmes ranging in a reduction of 10 - 15 employees per case over a period of nearly 30 years.
LM1	Transportation and Engineering	Involvement in several redundancy programmes including the closure of a site involving 200 redundancies as well as the carve out of a business unit involving 40 employees.
HRD5	Manufacturing and Engineering	Involved in several redundancies. Most significant was the closure of a factory of 1200 employees, including assuming responsibility for his own redundancy. In addition, ran own business providing outplacement support for victims of redundancy.
LM10	Technology and Building Automation	3 years' experience in managerial role with limited exposure to redundancies
HR8	Transportation and Rail	15 years' experience in HR with several experiences of redundancies including carve outs and closure of business units
OD7	Technology, Products and Building Automation	Over 20 years professional experience, with exposure to a few divestments, closures of business and redundancies

The pilot implementation was specific to Global Engineering Building Design and Automation. During the implementation of the restructure stakeholder model, data collection continued by consulting people through various forums, interviews, observation and diary keeping. During the second and third iteration of the research journey, I focussed more on my role as action researcher by making notes of observations through diary keeping, reviewing relevant emails and captured data from thirty ethnography subjects of which

twelve contributed to interviews at the relevant iteration of the data collection, as per table 10.

No interviews took place with any redundancy envoys connected to the specific redundancy programmes in BDA during pilot implementation as I was concerned for their wellbeing with poor timing of the interview process. I thus only continued the interview process after completion of the implementation of the redundancy model and redundancy programme.

Data collection during iteration three:

During the third iteration, the collection of data was to gain feedback on what worked well and what did not. The research answers gained, up to that point, of how to mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys were thus further explored and modified. This involved using primary and secondary data by interviewing key stakeholders of the redundancy and analysing data from the most recent engagement results and comparing that with the results at the outset of the redundancy programme. Further sources of data at this stage were PMP appraisal documents, engagement surveys, Mood Indicator data, restructure workshop actions and observations, management restructure workshop observations, champions awards with general diary keeping.

Table 11: Research setting and redundancy envoy experience during iteration three of data collection within BDA

RE code	Research setting	Redundancy experience
ECC2	Technology and Building Automation	Over 30 years' experience as a manager and a representative having witnessed several redundancies.
OD3	Technology and Building Automation	20 years in Global Engineering having managed teams of up to 36 people, yet first experience of redundancies.
ECC3	Technology and Building Automation	Over 30 years industry experience with 25 within Global Engineering in the role of manager and engineer and 10 years as a representative. Involved in several redundancies during this time.
LM5	Technology and Building Automation	Over 25 years professional experience and although exposed to several redundancies within BDA, never personally responsible for any redundancies until the last five years and only on a small scale.
OD6	Technology and Building Automation	Over 30 years' experience in the industry, with only one direct experience of having to implement redundancies.
OD5	Technology and Building Automation	Several experiences of redundancies in UK, Switzerland and Hungary within Global Engineering.
LM6	Technology and Building Automation	16 years within Global Engineering with several exposures to redundancies.
LM9	Technology and Building Automation	10 years' experience in managerial positions with only one experience of implementing redundancies.
ECC4	Manufacturing, Technology and Building Automation	ECC representative for seven years with significant exposure to redundancies including the closure of a factory.
HR9	Civil Engineering, Construction, Technology and Building Automation	21 years' experience in HR and plenty of exposure to redundancies, including the closure of seven business and responsible for making 400 employees redundant within a two-year period as part of the business closure.
OD4	Manufacturing, Industrial Automation,	Over 30 years professional experience with taking ownership of

	Technology and Building Automation	redundancy decisions and implementations in the past 10 years.
ECC1	Manufacturing and Transportation	Over 20 years of work experience and involved in several redundancies, regular frequency with small numbers involved (one – two people).
OD2	Technology and Building Automation	Extensive management experience on a global basis, including UK, Canada and Switzerland with experience of two large-scale redundancies in UK and Canada.

Data collection during iteration four:

This iteration involved completing a comprehensive review of all the data collected and challenging different data streams with anecdotal data or ratifying findings through different sources as follows: I analysed the interview data first, highlighting emerging themes and used this as my foundation for primary data. I then identified data from the mood indicator based on the same themes which either concurred with interview data or complemented it. I then compared the interview data with the notes from my diary, and this is where I found the biggest area of contradiction between what participants told me versus observing them in real life dealing with the redundancies. I had for example a few participants telling me that the implementing redundancies had no negative impact on them, yet they made comments in reality, not subject to interview such as *“Glad that is over... I can’t do this again (OD4)... I need a stiff drink....I am going through hell here (HR9)”* which contradicted how they stated they felt. After analysing the observations, I reviewed and challenged my interview data and key themes by investigating the other sources of data collection such as director presentations, workshop feedback, performance management reviews.

4.8 Data analysis

The approach used in the analysis of this chapter was qualitative (Collis and Hussey,2013) and inductive, using interpretivism (Jankowicz, 2000) to align with the methodological approach as discussed in section 4.1 of this chapter.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented a comprehensive overview of the data collected, how, when and why this data was used and the methodological approach and collection methods. Ethical considerations were also discussed. This chapter will provide helpful insight for the next chapter which will present the findings.

5 Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the data collection and will build on the previous chapter where methods of data collection were discussed. This chapter follows the same structure as the literature review and is constructed in three sections to address the research questions in the following chronology. Each section highlights the impact of the restructure stakeholder models where relevant. Where positive changes on mitigation of the psychological impact were observed, these sections were highlighted in a lightly shaded box.

Section 1: What is the psychological impact and key stressors for redundancy envoys during the implementation of a redundancy programme?

Section 2: What are the coping techniques deployed by redundancy envoys and what are the best strategies to mitigate the impact?

Section 3: What can organisations do to alleviate and minimise the impact for redundancy envoys?

Section 1:

In the first section, I analyse the data that looks at the psychological impact on the three identified groups affected by redundancies. Before one can truly understand how to mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys, one has to understand their emotions, views and experiences, what are they exposed to and how they feel during the process of implementing a redundancy.

Section 2:

The second section of the findings addresses the next stage of the natural process for redundancy envoys: how do redundancy envoys cope with making people redundant? This part analyses the data collected and investigated how redundancy envoys cope with the impact and what coping techniques they adopt.

Section 3:

The third section of this chapter focuses on the data collected regarding what strategies for mitigating the psychological impact on the redundancy envoys have worked best and which interventions redundancy envoys require when implementing redundancies.

In this chapter, I will be illustrating points made with illustrative quotes from interviews, diary keeping and observation as well as drawing data from the Mood Indicator and any other sources such as workshop material.

5.2 The psychological impact

My data indicated that the psychological impact on redundancy envoys is significant. Redundancy envoys describe the impact as a 'rollercoaster of emotions' (I-ECC3 and I-HRD4) which is clearly evident in the findings where redundancy envoys spoke about their journeys with heartfelt emotion, displaying tears and talking about sleepless nights. Redundancy envoys

articulated a range of emotions including regret, sadness, anger, frustration and guilt with a few redundancy envoys also recognising positive elements such as career development and enjoying the challenge of successful redundancy implementation. This section highlights that the significance of the psychological impact on redundancy envoys was always present, irrespective of the iteration stage. The findings do however indicate that the psychological impact is alleviated after the implementation of the first and second restructure model.

5.2.1 Emotionally challenging

Aligning with the research aim to identify the psychological impact on redundancy envoys, it was important to explore the emotions felt by redundancy envoys. There was a significant response in this area where participants made clear statements on the profound physiological and psychological impact, such as sleepless nights, taking leave of absence to cope with stress and even taking steps as radical as moving town to distance themselves from the situation. Many people spoke with intensity and, as a researcher that has probably adopted a veteran approach (with lots of previous experience) at this stage with regard to my resilience in the process, I was surprised about the number of people in tears through the process of talking to me. These tears were associated with emotional distress and were apparent through ethnography and observation, typically in a safer environment during the one-to-one, semi-structured interviews with me. The data in this section focus on the emotional impact of redundancies in general.

Despite what was verbally expressed in the excerpts below, emotions also surfaced where I observed that the memories associated with their unique redundancy experiences were unpleasant. Some participants were visibly upset and expressed this through tears, whilst others were emotionally shaken, bitter, angry and resentful, which I will explore in more depth later. The different variants of emotions experienced are captured below in some of the data gained through interviews in answer to the question 'what do you feel is the psychological impact of implementing redundancies for you?'

The majority of participants found implementing redundancies stressful and emotional and describe the situation of causing a personal impact on them:

It is a very stressful job. It almost always has an impact on me. There are a lot of emotions one has to deal with. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

Redundancy envoys referred to the difficulty of having to deal with angry employees:

People raise their voices and get very angry. You absorb a lot of emotion. You cannot live through all of that without it not having an impact on you. (I-HRD1, Iteration one)

Other redundancy envoys referred to finding the implementation of redundancies frustrating:

The people were not treated fairly and it caused a lot of bitterness. It affected me personally. It became very frustrating. (I - ECC3, Iteration four)

Several redundancy envoys referred to the difficulty of dealing with the emotions that influence the behaviour of the employees:

There were lots of emotions involved in the redundancies at the company. We dealt with shock, horror, anger and then acceptance.

It upset me. It was a very stressful situation. I could not sleep at night and I had to go to a doctor and get medication. It was very stressful and too harsh on my soul. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

Sleepless nights as a result of implementing redundancies, were often noted in the interviews:

I lost a lot of sleep, I did not sleep well. Things mull over in your head all the time: is it the right decision, wrong decision. (I-LM2, Iteration one)

In some cases, redundancy envoys found the impact so severe, they sought professional help from psychologists to help them cope:

I suffered and developed acute stress from implementing redundancies. I had to get help from a psychologist. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

The data also showed that the negative impact of implementing redundancies extended itself out of office hours, impacting on redundancy envoys' personal lives:

My resilience impacted on my brain and I made myself ill...probably not eating the best, eating late at night...I think it was systematic to being so busy in the day, I made myself ill. Psychologically, a big meal at the end of the night was my reward for doing a hard day's work. I put on two and a half stone as a result. I used to go to the gym and go running 4 times a week. I just could not get the inclination to go again and had no time either. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

I found it very unpleasant. I lived in a small town and I kept bumping into people after hours whom I was making redundant. This one guy I had to make redundant lived in the same town and kept threatening me, everywhere I saw him in town. I ended up not wanting to go out at night or on weekends and eventually moved away. (I-HR5, Iteration one,)

There was no doubt that participants disliked having to make people redundant and found the situation unpleasant, especially when behaviour turned physically threatening:

It was very difficult, especially when people got very aggressive, shouting and swearing and almost physically threatening. (I-LM5, Iteration four)

Redundancy envoys declared that even after going through the process for many years, the implementation of redundancies was still an unpleasant experience:

It does not matter how seasoned a professional you are if you have no feelings, you should not be doing the job. I still don't like it. Redundancy is one of the hardest things to do, even after 30 years. (I-HR2, Iteration one)

Redundancy envoys also categorise the implementation of redundancies as hard and difficult whilst feeling emotions of nervousness:

Putting people at risk of redundancy, at best, is a horrible thing to do. In my first few redundancy meetings, I found it nerve-racking. I was nervous of whether I am doing the right thing, whether I am saying the right thing. I was nervous about my own skillset as well. I was nervous if they would break down in tears and how to handle it. (I-LM4, Iteration four)

Guilt was most prevalent in the impact experienced by redundancy envoys. In some cases, this was exacerbated when redundancy envoys themselves secured a position:

Although I had to make them redundant, we were all leaving the company and in the same boat, until I applied for a job to run the new depot and was successful. No one actually said that I sold them out, but I felt like it. I got too emotionally involved in the closure of that site. (I-LM1, Iteration one)

Guilt is also exacerbated when redundancy envoys have a close relationship proximity to the victims:

I felt a huge amount of guilt having to make my friends redundant... I was getting on in life, being promoted, whilst they were losing their jobs. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

In this particular situation, a manager was promoted into a new role and five months later was at risk of redundancy. This is the view expressed by the director who promoted the employee and then had to make him redundant five months later:

I felt a personally responsible for putting him in that position. It was hard at the last meeting when he thanked me for the opportunity and apologised for letting me down. That was harder to deal with than someone saying 'go to hell'. (I-OD4, Iteration four)

It was very interesting to find that employee consultative representatives equally experienced the impact through a weight of responsibility:

If I think I have not done enough to challenge the business on their rationale and the individual selection of a colleague, I feel like I have let that individual down. What is difficult is that it feels that everyone is watching you and I question myself if I am doing the right thing. (I-ECC1, Iteration four)

ECC representatives equally reported an impact of implementing redundancies as an emotional roller coaster:

It is difficult. It can be quite emotional at times being a staff rep. I think I lost a few nights sleep over it, things mulling in my mind about people. It is especially difficult when people are upset; it is not something you are expected to deal with at work. It's been an emotional rollercoaster. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

Despite the majority of redundancy envoys expressing that the impact of implementing redundancies are emotionally taxing, an unpleasant experience and hard to do, there were redundancy envoys who stated that implementing redundancies did not have an impact on them. By contrast, the participants who stated it did not have an impact, acknowledged later during their interview that it was hard, unpleasant and described emotions they felt. Some also contradicted their statements through their behaviours, observed during the actual process of implementation. In the case of LM3, he was at risk

himself and, as he clearly states, his primary focus was on himself and his own survival rather than that of the employees he was making redundant.

I was not really concerned; my primary focus was me and my redundancy. I didn't care really. All I know is that I was stitched up ... (I-LM3, Iteration one)

OD3 contradicted himself by starting the interview with a statement, of 'that was not difficult' and later stated that he felt 'he failed':

No, it was not difficult. I say professionalism makes everything a lot easier. Both was not difficult because I knew I have to do the right thing and have to say what I have to say and have the evidence to substantiate the decision. I was prepared for it so it gave me a lot of confidence about what I have to say. It is obviously stressful because you don't want to do it. (I-OD3, Iteration four)

Later in the interview OD3 stated:

It felt like 6-9 months of additional pressure. It drains your energy and you felt tired. It sucks the life out of you. We all have to take a bit of responsibility for the business situation. I felt that I failed. (OD3, Iteration four)

During informal meetings, captured through diary keeping, OD4 made various statements to suggest that he was experiencing the situation as difficult and stressful:

The pressure is three way ... actually you can also include my wife. She is constantly texting me at work and I have enough pressure to deal with. Now, she thinks I am having an affair when I am working my b*** off. (DO-OD4, Iteration two)

In response to more people in his team opting for voluntary redundancy:

My whole team is crumbling around me. Everyone I trust is leaving. (DO-OD4, Iteration two)

A comment made after a redundancy announcement:

Glad that is over. (DO-OD4, Iteration two)

A statement made later during the interview referring to redundancies:

I am not doing another redundancy programme in this company. That I guarantee you. I am not doing it. (DO-OD4, Iteration four)

One of OD4's direct reports shared the following heart-felt statement during interview:

One of the reasons I kept going was seeing the strain in OD4's face... someone who trusted in me... and you actually see the pain and anxiousness and stress in his face. As respect from a man to man perspective, you don't like to see people struggle so you try and do everything you can to help someone else. He looked gaunt, drawn and tired in his facial expressions...(I-LM6, Iteration four)

A similar situation was identified with HR9 – the lead HR consultant that was responsible for most of the redundancy consultations at BDA - who stated that redundancy implementation had minimum impact on her; however, the observations and comments captured through diary keeping suggested otherwise. She stated the following:

I think the impact is minimum on me as I have done it so many times; however, it remains sad. (I-HR9, Iteration four)

Contradictory to stating it had no impact, signs of distress were noted through her comments during the consultation process below, which was captured on separate occasions:

I am going through hell here. (DO-HR9, Iteration two)

I am ready for a stiff drink. (DO-HR9, Iteration two)

I need a mental break – it has been very stressful for the last few months, especially with the appeals. (I-HR9, Iteration two)

HR9 had several very complicated cases to deal with and it is worth noting the context of the situation to fully appreciate her challenges during the redundancy implementation at BDA. I refer to HR9 as Cathy to provide some personality to the situation.

Cathy had joined BDA on a temporary contract to support the redundancy programmes after having a career break during which she was receiving cancer treatment. Her hair was just starting to return. Cathy was a veteran of redundancies, hence her appointment in this role. Despite her having extensive professional experience in implementing redundancies, she was still faced with some very sensitive cases, including a very unpleasant scenario where she had to make an employee redundant who has been diagnosed with cancer and was receiving chemotherapy whilst consultations were taking place. Cathy had to undertake three home visits to the employee's home whilst she was receiving treatment. Having just entered the remission stage of her own cancer, this was particularly challenging. Cathy also had to make a new mum on maternity leave redundant. As if this was not challenging enough, during the redundancy consultation process with another employee, her husband had a stroke and the employee took time off to be with her husband. Cathy received several champion awards for her outstanding resilience and support and her approach was very well respected by managers. How Cathy coped is covered later in this chapter.

The manager that Cathy supported in this case, stated how difficult this was for her as manager and commented on Cathy's support with the redundancy case of the employee with cancer:

It was so hard, but to be fair, Cathy did most of the talking. I just found it too hard. It was really hard to do it in her home. It is her own personal space and it felt like an invasion of privacy..... (DO-LM110, Iteration two)

Cathy's view on this was:

There is no real impact on me....I don't take it personally. You can't take it personally. These managers are not bad; they are just very nervous and don't have a clue and in these cases I take over.

The psychological impact and negative atmosphere in the office was also observed by fellow colleagues:

You know I try not to get sucked into the negativity and it should be easier for me to do so, as I am not part of the business, but I do. I just cannot help myself. (DO-LM104, Iteration two)

This redundancy envoy experienced stress with having to deal with absences in her team which had a consequence on her own wellbeing:

I have 2 employees off with stress now and if you look at the stress policy of what causes stress, we tick every box. I have now spent my whole weekend looking at how I am going to pick up the work and I am starting to crack myself. (DO-LM120, Iteration one)

Negativity also crept into management meetings and this redundancy envoy felt the need to physically move her desk to distance herself from negativity:

Everyone being so negative at management meetings, it is just draining. Last week was so bad. I actually moved my desk to sit somewhere else. (DO-LM104, Iteration two)

The director expressed concern about one of his direct reports (LM120) who was in the role of redundancy envoy and finding it very difficult.

I am worried about him. I think he is losing the plot. He said he wanted to come in to catch up with me, as he is scared of going over the edge. (DO-OD4, Iteration two)

This was supported in a conversation between LM120 and myself:

I have been a pretty good employee – for 5 months now I do not know if I am coming or going, do I have a job or not; yet, I have to continue with this dysfunctional working. (DO-LM120, Iteration two)

From the restructure workshop, the discussion around impact was very interesting and, collectively, the group felt that their increased workload and

lack of direction were the two biggest factors that impacted on them. My analysis of the impact was categorised in the following order of significance:

1. Increased workload
2. Longer hours
3. Increase in stress
4. Loss of focus on the day job
5. Lower motivation / morale
6. Avoiding issues/ head in the sand
7. Survivor guilt
8. How do we move forward?
9. How do we improve to realise strategy?
10. How do we show the strategy is working?
11. How do we plan for future growth?

(RW – group participants,
Iteration two)

5.2.2 The experience of guilt as a redundancy envoy

Within the previous section looking at the impact on redundancy envoys, broadly, the emotion of guilt is identified as a regular, often expressed in relation to a burden of responsibility:

As a management team we could have watched out. The matter was not taken seriously, had we responded earlier we might have saved jobs. As a big manager in a big business it felt like failure and I felt the pressure on a day-to-day basis I felt that I failed. (I-OD3, Iteration four)

Guilt is quite often experienced when redundancy envoys doubt if sufficient steps were taken to explore alternative options prior to implementing redundancies:

I got to a stage where I was wondering if we had done enough to save costs, to plan ahead before we got to making people redundant. If we had pulled up our socks 6 to 9 months ago, we would not be in this situation. (I-LM2, Iteration one)

Feedback from the Mood Indicator where blame and critique of the management team are captured is likely to add to the guilt being experienced by redundancy envoys:

Mixed feelings at the moment. Frustrated that management still haven't got around to actioning certain things they said they would do over a year ago and still acknowledge need to be done. Feels like dept managers are too busy helping other depts rather than focusing on their own. (MI-Anonymous. Iteration one)

The Mood Indicator also captured disappointment in management which will add to the experience of guilt:

The low morale I believe is due to bad management. Individuals not Doing their jobs. No one accountable, not focusing on the real reason BDA exists. The customer...Where is the management for these individuals. I am dismayed at the way things are and I am not the only one. (MI-Anonymous. Iteration one)

The experience of guilt might be exacerbated by employees criticising management decisions and blaming management for the status of the organisation:

The BDA reorganisation is in shambles. There has been zero change management. ABSOLUTE DISASTER!!! (MI-Anonymous. Iteration one)

Employees were forthcoming in the Mood Indicator about their disappointment in management skills:

Feeling very down about management skills..... (MI-Anonymous. Iteration one)

Findings revealed that management were frequently criticised on the Mood Indicator for not delivering or practising bad management:

The management team is not doing enough. I can't see where the business is going and I have had enough... Customer complaints going through the roof. We don't make enough changes where it is needed. (MI-Anonymous, Iteration one)

5.2.3 The impact of proximity to the victims

A clear theme emerged that the closer the redundancy envoy's relationship is with the impacted employee, the more significant the psychological impact is on the respective redundancy envoys. Responses from redundancy envoys were as follows:

It was harder if you knew the people... some of the guys being made redundant joined the company at the same time as me. Our kids have gone to the same schools and you are sitting there having to make them redundant. (I-LM1, Iteration one)

Having to make friends redundant were observed as a painful process for redundancy envoys:

You find yourself having to make your friends redundant and you have to tell them they are not good enough to stay. That was really painful, really, really painful. There were tears when I had to wave goodbye in the parking area. It was horrible. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

Even if a clear business case were identified for the redundancies, the findings suggest that the impact of making friends redundant was still very challenging for redundancy envoys:

It was terrible to make friends redundant. That was a lesson learned – don't get too friendly with people at work. I hated every minute of that. It is very difficult to do that. There was a clear business case but it was just the worst thing. (I-HR2, Iteration one)

The findings demonstrated that the impact of implementing redundancies when friends are involved, also had a consequence on relationships outside of work:

My journey continued, but I had to leave my friends behind. I had to tell them they were not good enough after years of working on the

same level. One of the people I made redundant, my friend, invited me to his wedding and after the redundancy I never heard back and I was left in a really difficult position. I decided not to go to the wedding as there would have been other people there that I made redundant, not my friends, but still ... (I-LM6, Iteration four)

Contradictory to the majority of views, HR9 felt different:

I felt it was easier to make people redundant that I knew, because they knew and trusted me and I knew what to expect from them. (I-HR9, Iteration four)

5.3 Stressors for redundancy envoys

The findings highlighted that the key stressors for redundancy envoys identified are:

- Being at risk as a redundancy envoy
- Stress of losing good colleagues and talent
- Stress of increased workload and responsibilities
- Pressure in the role of a redundancy envoy
- Dealing with low morale
- Job insecurity
- Lack of communication and information
- Complexity and size of redundancies

5.3.1 Being at risk as a redundancy envoy

My findings show that quite often in redundancy situations the redundancy envoy may have an additional burden of being at risk themselves, whilst also having to implement redundancies. Being in this situation has added to the pressure of being a redundancy envoy. Redundancy envoys are expected to continue to behave in a professional manner and keep the business moving in

a positive direction whilst having to manage a redundancy situation when they themselves have concerns about their own job security. This can have a significant impact on the morale and engagement of the redundancy envoy and how they conduct themselves during the redundancy programme. In response to the question: 'how did you cope with being at risk yourself whilst having to manage a redundancy exercise?' Illustrative responses are given below.

This redundancy envoy expresses her dichotomy of having to make herself redundant whilst dealing with circa 80 redundancies herself:

What made it really hard is that I had to write my own redundancy letter, do my own redundancy consultation and then manage nearly 80 people who were being made redundant. (I-HR1, Iteration one)

In this case the manager had to close a site where he had to lead the redundancies making 200 people redundant. He secured an alternative role within the company and was then faced with employees assuming that he got preferential treatment, which made it harder for him to deal with the redundancies as he felt obligated to help others also find work:

It was very difficult for me to deal with a team of 200 people at risk when I myself was at risk. When I secured a job... they all thought I had preferential treatment, which made it even harder. (I-LM1, Iteration one)

In this excerpt, the redundancy envoy had to close a site and make himself redundant after only opening it 2 years before. Having headhunted and relocating most of the employees, he found the experience very traumatic, especially after he himself relocated to join the company:

Not only have I been on both sides of the impact of restructures, but also as a personnel manager of a team making myself redundant along with 1200 employees. It does give you a unique perspective. I am sure in the eyes of most people this would be the most turbulent and

traumatic experience of their lives. No one could believe that you would spend 7 million pounds on opening a factory and then closing it within 2 years. There was a huge sense of disbelief. From a personal point of view, I was devastated. My family was devastated. My daughter was 6 months old when I moved her for this new role. It was a real major disaster. (I-HRD5, Iteration one)

This manager's personal experience and perception of being treated unfairly had an impact on how he helped others during the process. His role was to act as a support agent for employees at risk, but his own experience made him adopt the approach of not caring.

Well, of course I had to stay professional in the meetings, but was going 'bastards' under my breath! (I-LM3, Iteration one)

5.3.2 Stress of losing of good colleagues and talent

A visible stressor for redundancy envoys was the impact of losing team members, colleagues and talented employees. During the redundancies, headquarters decided to relocate the Finance Director (FD) to another business. Although this was done with clear intention, to bring fresh blood in, it was very painful for the incumbent FD.

I don't think I have a choice if I want to stay in the company. I can read between the lines. If I want to stay in this company, I should keep my mouth shut and go with the flow. (DO-OD7, Iteration two)

I asked the Managing Director (MD) how he felt about this, to which he responded with:

My whole team is crumbling around me. Everyone I can trust is leaving. (DO-OD4, Iteration three)

Similarly, the following statement shows the MD's reaction to the Head of Business Excellence's request for voluntary redundancy – a bittersweet scenario.

Well, I did not see it coming and I am really sad to see him go. Sure, we will save a lot of money, but he is one of our positive managers that tries to improve things at least. He contributes positively. He has been with the company for over 30 years. It will be hard to see him go. (DO-OD4, Iteration two)

Further views were expressed in interviews regarding the impact of losing good colleagues such as by this redundancy envoy who highlights the implication of employees losing loyalty once being placed at risk:

The problem is that if you put a group of people at risk, you will lose another 20 you did not intend to lose because as soon as you put them at risk, you have lost their loyalty and they ask themselves 'if the company is not loyal to me, why should I stay?' So, they will leave over the next year, as soon as they found a new position, and it is usually the most talented employees that find work the easiest, so first to go. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

This redundancy envoy reiterates the difficulty of unsettling the workforce by having to put employees at risk of redundancy to comply with legislation:

The difficulty we have in the UK is that the law dictates we have to put everyone in the selection pool at risk. Where the law has tried to be fair, it actually has the opposite impact, because you unsettle so many more people and end up upsetting the good ones as well, who then start to look around. (I-HR2, Iteration one)

The previous examples looked at good employees who leave the company to seek new opportunities or who took voluntary redundancy. This redundancy envoy is losing good people due to absenteeism, which clearly has a personal impact on her as well:

I just don't know how I am going to deal with this workload and two guys off with stress. We are going to continue to lose good people now to stress if we do not do something. I understand that you have to side with the business, but what do I do? This is starting to affect my motivation. (DO-LM120, Iteration two)

The impact of losing good colleagues was also expressed via the Mood Indicator where the concern of losing skilled people was recognised:

Yet again we are losing skilled individuals and keeping those who need to be trained to bring them half way up the level of those we lost. (MI-Anonymous, Iteration one)

The company is shedding talented and skilled people when the staff we already have are overloaded with work. (MI-Anonymous. Iteration one)

A consequence of losing not only good colleagues and employees is the negative impact on redundancy envoys in having to manage a reduced workforce with an increased workload due to less human resources.

5.3.3 Stress of increased workload and responsibilities

In addition to the challenge of managing the workforce, redundancy envoys themselves pick up a significant amount of extra work with covering for colleagues leaving and also in just managing the process of redundancies, which is very time consuming. The work generated during a redundancy programme is quite significant due to various activities such as group and individual consultations, project planning, workforce planning and dismissal meetings. As part of the process, redundancy envoys need to undertake workforce planning and address how the business is going to reorganise work with a reduced workforce. In this example from an interview, the redundancy envoy expresses his frustration that he highlighted his concern of having no plan to manage the workload based on the reduction in people and did not receive any support:

We took people out with one objective, to hit the target, but with no plan how to manage the workload and how to reorganise afterwards. I flagged this up and was told 'oh, I don't know'. (I-LM9, Iteration three)

This redundancy envoy expressed feeling very demotivated with the increased workload:

We have fewer people to deal with the work ... I can't see the light at the end of the tunnel. (I-LM10, Iteration two)

For this redundancy envoy, there was a domino effect with increased workload; she was already under a lot of pressure, coupled with her staff going off with stress in addition to the people leaving due to redundancies:

I just don't know how I am going to deal with this workload and two guys off with stress. (DO- LM120, Iteration two)

This redundancy envoy had increased responsibility due to headcount reductions and expresses difficulty with additional pressure as a consequence:

There was a lot more pressure taking on a bigger area of responsibility. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

Mood indicator comments posted amidst the redundancies from survivors and redundancy envoys are significant in identifying the perceptions of increased workload and support the findings from interviews:

Overloaded with work (too much to do and not enough time). Working between 9.5 hours and 12 hours a day pretty much as the norm (sometimes more). (MI- anonymous, Iteration one)

This comment highlights the impact of increased stress levels as a consequence of high level of workloads:

Lack of staffing in the office leading to stress levels due to the increase of work load. One person covering three people's jobs. (MI-anonymous. Iteration one)

Although there was not a shortage of data linking to workload, the best description of this emotion was provided at the restructure workshop as a collective group:

We feel overwhelmed, driven by a lack of resources, skills and too much responsibility. (WS-group participants, Iteration two)

The lack of resources and increased workload feedback was equally very strongly fed back as a direct implication on performance during the performance management process (PMP), which includes feedback from redundancy envoys as well as their employees' personal perspectives:

Mark has performed with distinction bearing in mind that he has been short of staff... (PMP – LM1000, Iteration three)

Dave has been able to still achieve his objectives with access to fewer people to do training and support. (PMP – LM1002, Iteration three)

LM 1002's personal perspective is reflected here, recognising a busy, difficult year, with less employees to deliver:

It's been a busy and, at times, difficult year, with the loss of some colleagues and the increasing expectations of our customers (PMP-LM1002, Iteration three)

5.3.4 Pressure in the role of redundancy envoy

In addition to workload, redundancy envoys often experience pressure, generated from other sources such as headquarters, customer complaints, appeals and tribunals. This redundancy envoy expresses fear of being taken to tribunal, especially when victims react badly to the redundancy with threatening behaviour:

There is also the risk of doing something wrong and being taken to tribunal, which can be a real fear, particularly if you feel that you have been engaging in a 'risky' strategy, or you are dealing with some individuals who are very feisty or likely to cause trouble. (I-HR6, Iteration four)

In an interview with an employee representative he explained about the pressure he had to deal with due to calls from engineers about how 'rubbish everything' is, wearing the burden of responsibility for the redundancies:

Besides having to manage my day job, I got on average three to four calls per day from engineers asking me if I had any news on the redundancies. It just felt like it went on forever. You would get your ear bent for at least half an hour about how rubbish everything is. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

During the latter stages of the redundancies, an employment tribunal was brought on by an employee who was made redundant. One of the managers dealing with this stated:

This was just additional pressure. It was just another thing that I felt I had to do really well. I didn't know how I was going to give time to this and how I would be able to do this properly...I had to prepare for the case at 1:30 am in the morning after flying all over the place and not being very well. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

Feedback from the Mood Indicator supported the difficulties and pressure that redundancy envoys were put under due to unhappy employees they had to manage and keep engaged:

The low morale I believe is due to bad management. Individuals not doing their job. No one accountable, not focusing on the real reason BDA exists. (MI-anonymous, Iteration one)

I asked OD4 if his boss appreciates everything he is doing to turn this business around with the long hours he worked, to which he responded:

Yes, you mean like the text I got last night at 19:00 saying: 'You promised me a profit this month. What happened?' I had to explain that the redundancy costs are still hitting us to which he said, 'hang in there'. That is the most encouraging response I ever had from him. (DO-OD4, Iteration two)

Pressure was observed several times by observations made through diary keeping in a discussion after OD4 returned from holiday when I asked him how his holiday was.

I only managed to relax after the third day ... I had all these customer complaints to deal with. It also does not help that on my first day back at 8 am I have had a business review with headquarters and a sector review the next day. (DO-OD4, Iteration two)

On another occasion, OD4 explained that the pressure he was under came from several directions, including customers, his superiors as well as from his wife with little escape in between:

The pressure is three ways: from headquarters, customers as well as disgruntled employees. Actually, then add my wife as well. (DO-OD4, Iteration two)

5.3.5 Dealing with low morale

During the implementation of a redundancy programme, one of the biggest stressors for redundancy envoys is to keep staff motivated and support a culture of high performance and customer care. Feedback captured through interviews and through observation regarding this difficulty included this employee representative who was also a manager who expressed the difficulty in keeping employees motivated over a prolonged period of time:

It is very difficult to motivate people wherever there is a restructure. If the process keeps going on they think it is them who will be losing their jobs next. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

This redundancy envoy explains that it is was really difficult to keep employees motivated as you still have to keep the business performing well and to achieve that you need motivated employees:

Keeping people positive was difficult. It was hard because you still have to do your best to keep the business going. Just to keep them motivated was not easy. (I-OD3, Iteration three)

This manager was so demotivated by not being able to keep her staff motivated, she applied for voluntary redundancy (VR) as she was no longer willing to deal with the employee challengers:

I am just telling you, it is really unpleasant out there and I can't keep anyone motivated, not even myself. I have put in for VR myself today again. Who knows, I might be lucky this time. (DO- LM110, Iteration two)

Motivation levels were also impacted by employees' fear that the business will be sold:

I have this feeling that we are cutting all the heads in preparation to sell us. (I-LM10, Iteration two)

Low morale and lack of motivation has a very strong presence within the Mood Indicator:

Staff morale is very low; we're all wondering who is next. (MI-Anonymous, Iteration one)

This employee felt very strongly about low morale, using language of "being ripped apart":

This company is being ripped apart. I have never seen morale so low. The management are not helping get the work and the people at the bottom are paying for this lack of effort with their jobs. (MI-Anonymous, Iteration one)

Dismay regarding low morale is expressed very strongly in these two excerpts:

Morale is at an all-time low! I mean on the floor! Seems nobody is prepared to want to help anymore or even wants to be here. (MI-Anonymous, Iteration one)

I feel totally neglected by the company, even going as far to say pushed out. It is just bad news after bad news, with the normal people playing the blame game and covering their own backs. (MI-Anonymous, Iteration one)

5.3.6 Job insecurity

The challenges of low morale are exacerbated by both employees and redundancy envoys experiencing feelings of job insecurity. This redundancy envoy expresses how employees were not willing to support each other as they're all fighting for their own positions:

Employees were not interested to support each other during the restructures as they were all very concerned about their own future employment. (I-HR3, Iteration one)

This manager got a promotion and a year later he still felt exposed to job insecurity:

It has been a year since the restructures and I still really feel very unsettled. I know that no one can guarantee a job, but it is just the way I feel, despite me getting a promotion. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

Even at director level, whilst leading the redundancies, job insecurity was experienced:

I only wonder how long it is before they get rid of me next. I will probably get 2 weeks' notice, if I am lucky! I must start to reduce my standard of living to be able to just live on my wife's wages! (DO-OD4, Iteration two)

At the restructure workshop this concern was reinforced by redundancy envoys as a collective group:

Feelings of insecurity – could I be next? (WS-group participants, Iteration two)

5.3.7 Lack of communication and information

A prominent stressor identified throughout the data is the lack of communication and the cascading of information. A particularly strong aspect of this stressor is related to the lack of communication and subsequent understanding of the business rationale for implementing redundancies. This employee representative expressed frustration with good communication, putting undue pressure on the representatives to answer employee queries:

There had never been until recently any good, consistent communication. The communication was terrible and the announcements that were agreed never happened. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

This redundancy envoy was completely shocked by the announcement of redundancies as this was not passed down via his director and yet he was in a role where he was accountable to implement redundancies. Subsequently, he was subject to unnecessary pressure to come up with a new structure due of communication not being cascaded to him:

It was a complete shock to me and I only had two hours to come up with a new structure. I was not involved in the previous strategy discussions and nothing was shared with me, so yes, I was completely unprepared (I-LM5, Iteration three).

The topic of communication is not just limited to sharing information, but also ensuring there is buy in and involvement in the decision-making process that drives a redundancy situation. It becomes evident that not being involved or understanding the business drivers for a redundancy programme acts as a predominant stressor for redundancy envoys. A lack of control is perceived when redundancy envoys do not feel involved in the process and feel like they are executing an instruction with which they do not necessarily agree.

If I did not agree with the business rationale, I asked not to be involved. It makes it much, much harder if you do not accept or agree with the business rationale. (I-LM4, Iteration two)

This HR consultant did not have sufficient information to explain the reasons for the redundancies and therefore were not bought into the decision and subsequently found it really hard to implement:

It was really difficult having to communicate to employees who work in profitable departments where good margins for the business are being made and work is in excess of resource that the restructure exercise was part of a strategic business decision which I and other senior UK stakeholders don't necessarily believe in. (I-HR3, Iteration one)

In this example, it is reinforced how important ownership is for redundancy envoys; being part of the change decision makes it easier to implement redundancies and reduces the impact of stress:

I find it harder to facilitate someone else's change rather than my own. I find it easier to be part of the change rather than being responsible for someone else's decision. I find that much more difficult and stressful, especially if I am not completely aligned with their decision. (I-HRD1, Iteration one)

Due to the lack of involvement and communication, redundancy envoys expressed a conflict with their personal values. In this interview this HR professional reveals they are having sleepless nights due to not believing in the company's business rationale to make employees redundant:

The business rationale was not always solid. Sometimes it was purely about faces not fitting in. I had to fire people without due cause and this was in conflict with my personal values, which caused me a lot of stress. And I knew if I was not going to do it, someone else would have to. It caused me to have sleepless nights and I got prescribed sleeping tablets which made me feel awful. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

This line manager did not agree with the reason for the redundancies and therefore found it 'emotionally the hardest' to implement:

I found the redundancies with the commercial admin team emotionally the hardest...simply because I thought what we were doing was wrong; I did not get the logic of what we were doing. It made no sense. There was a total lack of business rationale (I-LM9, Iteration three)

This redundancy envoy felt that the redundancies were forced upon them to implement which caused a lack of ownership and therefore he found it very difficult to implement when he did not stand behind the decision:

It was an example of complete top down approach: dictatorship. It was an example of not being confident in the business rationale and why we were doing it and it made it much more difficult. (I-LM5, Iteration four)

5.3.8 Complexity and size of the redundancies

The size of the redundancy programme does not necessarily have a direct correlation with the stress caused for the redundancy envoy. LM2 debated this myth:

It was only 3 people I had to make redundant, but because we were moving in close circles and socialised together, it was harder for me. It was harder because the team was smaller and therefore the impact was more visible. Everyone in the team shared the pain. This was far more emotional and had a major impact on me. (I-LM2, Iteration one)

On the other hand, there are clear indicators that where redundancy envoys have to implement large scale redundancies, a different kind of tension is experienced. Interview feedback from a redundancy envoy managing a large-scale redundancy is captured below:

I just remember that the 400-odd people had a sharp intake of breath as he told them that they will be losing their livelihoods and even today I shiver just to think about it. That is an experience you don't want to think about or don't want to have. (I-HRD5, Iteration two)

5.3.9 Impact on redundancy envoys performance

The impact of redundancies on redundancy envoys and their subsequent performance was prevalent in nearly every performance management process (PMP) discussion. The data captured from this particular PMP process was specific to BDA and collated during iteration three. It is recognised that the reflection of the participants captured here would include the last three redundancy programmes within the business. his redundancy envoy refers to the year as 'challenging due to the restructures':

A combination of factors have made the 2013 year a particularly challenging year: tough market conditions leading to slower than normal customer processes and buying cycles, and BDA restructuring causing at times internal hostilities and operational gaps that have

required a lot of time and effort to simply retain as opposed to grow customers. (PMP-LM1003, Iteration three)

The comment here also acknowledges the implications of the redundancy on the individual who felt it impacted on their personal development:

The business year ending 30/09/13 was, in a nutshell, an 'annus horribilis'. The mood in the business was negative, with pockets of over loaded and under-utilized colleagues. Such a scenario, coupled with the extensive BDA2014 redundancy programme, did not support an environment for me to develop. (PMP-LM1015, Iteration three)

Here, the redundancy envoy highlights that the restructuring took priority over other projects which impacted on his overall success, suggesting that although the targets were fair, the weighting of the impact of the restructure were not recognised up front:

Overall, another tough year with lots of business change. Targets set were appropriate to business needs at the time, but there were some key programmes that required more attention, namely the restructuring part of BDA2014. (PMP-LM1016, Iteration three)

5.4 Mitigation of psychological impact; post model implementation:

Some positive changes to the psychological impact were captured after the implementation of the restructure stakeholder model. This survivor felt that things were improving – suggesting the second restructure stakeholder model that was piloted did make a difference to morale:

We were struggling to accommodate several changes in the last couple of months as needed by the business. Things now seem to be getting into the right place which means the mood is improving as well. Not excellent but still probably on the track. (MI- anonymous – Iteration three)

This comment on the Mood Indicator suggests that despite feeling stretched in the team, moral is good:

I would say overall morale in the team is generally good. Some changes have stretched our field team and change is always difficult. Other than that, everything is ticking over as best we can and with any luck the sun will keep shining! (MI- anonymous – Iteration three)

Positive impact on redundancy envoys

Various redundancy envoys expressed some of the positive aspects of being part of the redundancy implementations, such as promotions, being challenged, gaining experience, added responsibilities, personal development and improved negotiation skills. This HR director suggested that she gained skills of resilience and balance through implementing redundancies:

With my second redundancy, it toughened me up in a way that I learned that I never want to be in a position where I felt that the company owed me a living and if they took it away, I had nothing else. (I-HRD3, Iteration one)

During this interview, the redundancy envoy expressed trauma of having to close a site of 1200 employees, however acknowledges that going through the process he got offered a new opportunity as a partner in a new company:

Ironically, when you go through the process of closure, I was quite fortunate as carrying out the redundancy, lead me to become a partner in new firm. (I-HRD5, Iteration one).

This line manager felt he gained new skills going through the implementation of redundancies:

It was enlightening from a learning experience as I have never gone through a redundancy round before, so I did learn a lot. (I-LM3, Iteration one)

Here, the challenge to resolve the issues associated with the redundancies was appreciated and enjoyed by this director and line manager:

I enjoyed the challenge to resolve, influence and find appropriate solutions to the various challenges posed by the redundancy situation. (I-OD7, Iteration two)

I must admit, I enjoyed the challenge.... Yeah... the challenge was making a bad thing good. (I-LM9, Iteration four)

In this case, the HR director got promoted due to her success in implementing a redundancy programme:

I got a significant promotion and moved to France to implement a restructure there. Redundancies are such a big part of HR and the experience can only do you good. (I-HRD3, Iteration one).

This redundancy envoy improved her skills on various aspects by implementing a redundancy:

I gained improved influencing and negotiation techniques and skills. My assertiveness levels increased. In addition, my attention to detail increased significantly as decisions required were not only based on business knowledge but also employment law technicalities. (I-HR3, Iteration one)

This HR professional felt that she gained experience which is essential to the HR remit of today's challenges:

Restructures is a way of the world today. It's not nice, but it is really good for your personal development. It is really important to your career if you work in HR as it is a key piece of what HR does, so it is great to get experience in redundancies. It also makes you stronger as a person. I also learned about compromise agreements, which I have never done before, so that was great to add something to my toolkit. (I-HR6, Iteration one)

Feedback from the Mood Indicator also supported the interviews that some aspects of getting a new role from a restructure could allow for positive interpretation of the situation:

My current feelings are very positive! I am in a new role, have found new challenges and have a spring in my step! It's also great to see the business from a different angle and meet some of the people that work behind the scenes! (MI-anonymous, Iteration four)

5.5 Coping techniques

This section explores the data on how redundancy envoys cope during the implementation of a redundancy programme and which techniques were most popular amongst redundancy envoys to help mitigate the negative psychological impact.

5.5.1 Emotional and physical distancing

The data indicated that many redundancy envoys cope during redundancy implementation by distancing themselves emotionally such as this manager who states that the drive home helped him clear his head by listening to music which then helped him to switch off by the time he got home:

I have been quite fortunate that I can divorce work and home life. I commute for 45 minutes and I find that quite therapeutic; I can clear my head, turn the music on. (I-LM1, Iteration one)

This HR director used visualisation techniques which helped him relaxed during stressful times:

I use visualisation techniques to cope when I am under stress. I close my eyes and imagine I am floating in the sea. You have to relax when you are floating. It makes me feel refreshed. It works very well for me. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

This HR professional described stepping back from the situation and following the policy as a basis for decisions; i.e. removing a personal view on the situation. The policy says “x”, so I have to do “y”:

I try to step back from the situation, keep a healthy distance, stay professional, follow the policy directive. (I-HR1, Iteration one)

This employee representative tries to take his mind off things and try to focus on something else in his private time:

I try to keep some perspective and try not to think about it too much when I go home, but it is not easy to be honest. I try and occupy my mind at home by doing something else. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

Redundancy envoys stated that a coping technique that worked well was to allow themselves a physical break from the situation such as this redundancy envoy who prefers a short break during meetings:

Sometimes it's really good to just take a break during meetings, to give yourself a few minutes to clear your head. A mental break, like some people go for a smoke. (I-HR6, Iteration one)

This HR consultant rewarded herself with personal activities over weekends which gave her a physical and mental break from the stressful situation:

Ensuring that I made time for myself where I was able to switch off from the task at hand - for example, specific times over the weekend or evenings, arranging personal activities outside of work that would take my mind off the work project, arranging beauty treatments, haircuts, dinner with friends, movies, etc. (I-HR3, Iteration one)

This director coped with balancing the stressful environment with exercise:

If I feel I need a break, I go down to the gym and have a run. Equally, I work hard in the week and play hard over weekends to get a kind of balance. (I-OD4, Iteration two)

Sport was also used as a calming influence for this director:

How to cope? Sport is a good medicine. It is a good balance. I also started to do yoga once a week which supports my inner balance and how to calm down and it helps you to get out of your own thoughts - hamster wheel. Everyone copes differently. For me, I need the physical like sport and then the mental side too which is calming. (I-OD2, Iteration one)

Redundancy envoys strongly expressed that they prefer not to hide from the difficult situations with employees. This redundancy envoy felt it was wrong to hide and would rather address issues directly:

I don't feel it is the right thing to hide and I would rather talk issues through. (I-HR4, Iteration one)

This director made a concerted effort to reach out to people to give them the opportunity to raise their concerns:

My own strategy is to get people to engage with me. Make contact with people, stay with it and trust it, even if you just approach people in the canteen or over coffee and just ask them how they are. It gives them the opportunity to then raise concerns. (I-HRD1, Iteration one)

Employee representatives equally felt that hiding was the wrong thing to do and made an effort to be available for impacted employees:

I don't agree with hiding. You can't have this role and hide. I do the opposite, I try to come down to the office more, have a chat, get a feeling for the mood. (I-ECC4, Iteration four)

This director actually volunteered to pick up redundancies, demonstrating ownership and commitment:

One thing I have never done in my career is hide. I have never hidden from anything. In fact, I picked up some of the redundancies for my team. I am the senior manager, so I will do it. No one asked me to do it. (I-OD3, Iteration four)

5.5.2 Easing Consciences

A theme identified with several redundancy envoys is coping through easing their consciences. They believe that doing the best they can for the victims alleviates guilt and helps with a clear conscious, which enables better coping:

I coped personally with the process of redundancy, because of the ability to help others. One of the key elements of my coping was to keep myself focused on positives. I took the employees successes as my success. (I-HRD5, Iteration two)

This HR professional felt rewarded if she could help victims find new jobs:

I cope by doing everything I can to help the employees. If I can help them get jobs and get back in the market place, then to me, that is what I get out of it. I also cope by knowing I have done well, even if no one tells you. If you have had no tribunals, you have done well. (I-HR9, Iteration four)

This manager stated going the extra mile and helping victims find work alleviated his guilt significantly:

I cope by doing everything I can for the people, by going that extra mile. I was looking for jobs for them myself to try and help them out. It was a big weight of my shoulders. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

5.5.3 Support to facilitate coping

Redundancy envoys cope better when they receive the required support and the data suggests a strong focus should be placed on the importance of good support systems for redundancy envoys. This HR professional argues that moral support from her line manager is very important to facilitate coping:

Moral support from your line manager or colleagues who are participating in the same process is very important. I got very good support from you. (I-HR9, Iteration four)

Regular team meetings where redundancy envoys could share their experiences in a safe environment worked well for this HR team:

In my team we met regularly during the redundancies and just talked about what was going on and shared experiences. Just talking about it, sometimes having a laugh as well, that is a great way to cope. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

In this case, the line manager felt the support that helped him cope came from his HR partner:

It is far less stressful when you have a good HR partner with you. It's like you know there is someone there to keep you safe. You need a true partnership with HR, someone who can question you or validate what you are doing. (I-LM4, Iteration two)

5.5.4 Cognitive distancing

Redundancy envoys claim that coping is easier if they believe in the business rationale, that it is the correct business decision and when the process is conducted professionally with a fair and consistent approach. This director did not find implementing redundancies difficult, if it was done for the right reasons – he can rationalise the reasons, which mitigates the negative psychological impact:

I don't find it difficult to implement a redundancy programme if it is done for the right reasons. If you employ 800 people and you have to get rid of a small amount of people, but the business will survive, it is better to do that than having to close the business or sell it. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

This HR director coped by being professional and ensuring buy in and understanding from the impacted employees:

I cope by making professional business decisions and ensuring that everyone understands the implications. (I-HRD4, Iteration one)

With a business rationale that redundancy envoys buy into and agree, their guilt is reduced and therefore this redundancy envoy felt more confident in delivering the message of redundancy:

If you can deliver the message and your emotions are clean and not clouded with guilt, it is better. Still emotional, but easier. If you can stand behind what you are doing with authenticity, it is better. (I-HRD1, Iteration one)

Rationalising the decision and being convinced redundancies are being implemented for the right reasons helps this HR professional to cope:

I don't want to make people redundant, but I do it because it is necessary. I would rather downsize an organisation for the future, than not downsize and then having to close it. It's about doing it for the right reason – to protect the business and make it more profitable. (I-HR2, Iteration one)

This director reduced his guilt by focusing on the best interest of the people who remain in the organisation after the redundancies are implemented:

It was not that difficult, probably because I know it had to be done. So, it was the right thing for the business and I always think that you have to remember the people who are remaining in the business. The small percentage that leave are in the interest of those who stay. (I-OD3, Iteration three)

Using a live-saving analogy helped vindicate the process for this redundancy envoy:

I think of redundancies as if I was a surgeon; if I have to remove someone's leg or arm, it is not a nice thing to do but if it is going to save the patient's life, then it is good news and therefore you have to do it to save someone's life. But when you are going to do it, you do it as painless as possible. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

Justifying your actions comes back to a strong business rationale that helped this manager deal with the implementation of redundancies:

Coping is also easier if you can justify your actions and can remove elements of guilt. I was quite comfortable that I was the right person to do that. We were moving in the right direction. The people we had to remove were necessary due to cost savings. I knew we had done everything possible to save people by reducing costs elsewhere in the business. (I-LM5, Iteration three)

5.5.5 Previous experience of being made redundant

It has emerged that having previous experience of being made redundant appears to help mitigate the psychological impact for redundancy envoys. Having previous experience removed some of the nervousness associated with the unknown. This HR professional felt the ability to be more genuine and empathetic after being made redundant herself:

It helps being on the other side of the table and makes you come across more genuine and empathetic as you really understand the emotions they are feeling and the pitfalls. (I-HR6, Iteration one)

Having been exposed to a redundancy with poor treatment helped this redundancy envoy to be more empathetic during redundancy situations:

I was made redundant and the way I was treated was not great. Having been at risk yourself, you know what emotions people are going

through. Although each person reacts differently, you can help the situation by being empathetic. (I-HR1, Iteration one)

5.5.6 Redundancy envoys as veterans

Redundancy envoys claimed that having gone through the experience of implementing redundancies had helped them build resilience for implementing further redundancies. This manager stated that through implementing redundancies a few times, he learned to not get so emotionally involved which made the process easier:

With the third restructure, I had done it twice before, so it was an easier process to follow. It's harsh to say, but because I have done it before, I did not get so emotionally involved. I did still treat everyone with empathy. (I-LM2, Iteration one)

This HR professional explained that the more he made people redundant, the more thick-skinned he became:

When you first have to make people redundant, it is very difficult and then you get used to it, you become more thick-skinned. It just becomes your job. (I-HR5, Iteration one)

Previous experience of either being on the receiving end or witnessing redundancies being implemented poorly, appeared to help redundancy envoys in learning from others' mistakes:

I was once made redundant myself. I was made redundant not the way Global Engineering is doing it. It was quite brutal. So, I can honestly say that I know how it feels to sit on that side of the table and have experienced what it is like to be treated brutally. That was useful as past experience. (I-OD3, Iteration four)

I have been made redundant more than once and I have seen the right and wrong way to do it. It is horrible. From then onwards, I decided that if ever I was going to make people redundant, I will treat them the way I was and would be expected to be treated. I know what people are going through, I know how they feel and that has given me the empathy to help them with what they are going through. This has really helped me in how I deal with people. (I-HR9, Iteration four)

This manager stated that by being put at risk, he has learned to implement redundancies with more empathy and sympathy:

Having been put at risk myself has changed my approach in one major way; that I will show much more empathy and sympathy to all the people at risk. Being put at risk, taught me how to do it better. (I-LM4, Iteration two)

5.5.7 The reason for dismissal

An interesting theme that emerged was the association with dismissal being easier if the reason was more justifiable for the redundancy envoy. It appears that the emotional impact on the redundancy envoy is uniquely less when dismissal is due to the employees own wrong doing, such as misconduct. Redundancy envoys reported less guilt associated with such dismissals as opposed to redundancies where the employee had no or very limited control over the situation. This redundancy envoy explains that when an employee is dismissed for reason of disciplinary, there is a justification for the dismissal, where the employee is culpable which makes it easier for the redundancy envoy to implement:

The hardest thing is to make people redundant where it is not a fault or mistake of the employee. Normally, the individual will look for justification why this is happening to them, which is difficult. Whereas, when you dismiss employees because of a disciplinary, normally the individual has contributed to the outcome. There is a justification why this is happening to them. (I- HR2, Iteration one)

Implementing dismissals where it is perceived as deserved by poor conduct makes it easier for this redundancy envoy:

With disciplinaries, it is the right thing to do to dismiss employees, but with redundancies it could be all hard workers and you would like to keep them all, except if they deserve it, in like bullying cases. Dismissals usually have a cause, a reason, may be the people deserve it to happen, with redundancy it not deserved and therefore potentially more difficult. (I-HR5, Iteration one)

This director feels that it is easier to dismiss lower performers than employees who are doing well at work:

In the case of dismissing a poor performer, there is not so much guilt. I don't feel so bad about poor performers – dismissal is normally more deserving. The guilt I experience is directly related to the level of where they sit in the performance scale. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

5.5.8 Voluntary redundancies and enhanced packages

Offering voluntary redundancies also helped alleviate stress for redundancy envoys and helped to remove some of the emotional impact. Employees are more likely to apply for voluntary redundancies when the redundancy packages are enhanced and incentivising. This director's guilt was alleviated when a pregnant employee at risk asked for voluntary redundancy, thus he was saved from having a difficult conversation:

I had to put somebody who was pregnant at risk of redundancy and I felt uncomfortable doing this. She volunteered she made it much easier and I felt more comfortable about it. (I-OD3, Iteration four)

The redundancy envoy here felt that offering voluntary redundancies reduces stress for the redundancy envoy:

Offering voluntary redundancy is also a great way to help reduce stress in the situation. Nowadays, we don't know what suits people's lives, so it gives individuals a bit more control. (I-HR4, Iteration one)

This redundancy envoy experienced a big reduction in compulsory redundancies as a consequence of offering enhanced packages:

In my experience where I had to make 60 people redundant, we paid really enhanced redundancy packages so everyone wanted to go and opted for voluntary redundancies. Out of the 60, we actually only had to make 4 people compulsorily redundant, which of course was not very nice, but for the rest everyone was actually really excited about it! (I-HR5, Iteration one)

This HR director agreed that offering enhanced packages made it easier as a redundancy envoy and reduced workload and stress:

The company I worked for had very generous redundancy packages in place, which did make it easier for me to be honest. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

5.5.9 Professional help with coping

In a few instances' redundancy envoys needed more professional support to help them cope. LM6 refers to himself as resilient and unemotional, yet contradicts this in reality where he took months off work with stress related absences:

I became an iceberg at home and everything.... I... uhh. I was very cold and very unemotional in every sense. I see myself as very resilient, probably due to my upbringing... It was noted that I was a pretty miserable character. My joints and my ankles got really bad. I don't know if that is stress related. The doctor said it could be a secondary impact of the stress as I was dehydrated. Psychologically, a big meal at the end of the night was my reward for doing a hard day's work. It means a lot to me; that it is my reward. I was criticised for this a lot and I did make myself ill, but it was my reward. Sometimes, that is all I could think about, was that meal and a nice glass of wine. I never felt I had to go home and binge drink. I was stressed, yes... I got diagnosed with stress and I tried to do meditation and stuff like that, all of that never worked for me so I have just been dealing with it myself, that is why I am an 'iceberg'. All the text book stuff on how to cope never worked for me. It's like I go into a cave. I could not share my workday with my partner and I still don't. Sometimes I do lash out; I shout and just let it out. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

I asked LM6 whom he lashes out at and he responded as follows:

At anyone or myself...As I said last time, I found this process very, very, very painful of having to make my friends redundant. I would get home and sit on the settee and I would ask myself, why am I not crying? I was too cold, I was so unemotional. It was not emotionally wise. Have I gone too far? ... Now I am a completely different person. ...I have grown and developed... I find myself frustrated with my father, I am frustrated with my friends... (I-LM6, Iteration four)

LM6 got very emotional in these meetings. LM6 continued to give his best to the company until he resigned a few months later, taking a role at a similar level with far less travel and stress which I believe was the best move

he could make to look after himself. Another example is where this manager had to resort to sleeping tablets to help him cope:

In my second restructure, I did not cope very well at all. I definitely did not sleep for a while... you know, properly. I probably needed sleeping pills. (I-LM2, Iteration one)

This HR director used the services of a psychologist to help him cope and even still got very emotional during the interview:

It caused me to have sleepless nights and I got prescribed sleeping tablets which made me feel awful. When that did not work, I started to see a psychologist to help me cope. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

5.6 Interventions to mitigate the psychological impact

This section focuses on the data that demonstrates what worked well in the successful implementation of redundancies.

5.6.1 Leadership

Strong leadership was recognised as a prerequisite of the successful implementation of a redundancy programme. Arguably, many of the topics in this section will be part of leadership, such as communication, delivery, involvement and engagement. For the ease of the reader, I have broken them into sub categories under leadership later in the section. This director felt that of the importance of strong leadership is visibility and impactful communications:

I am a strong believer, that there is no successful turnaround, without a visible leader. What was really important to me, was to be a visible leader, hold a lot of townhall meetings, communicate well, discuss issues with people, showing people the vision of how successful the future will be. You have to keep sharing the positive news and show them how it is becoming better and better and better. (I-OD2, Iteration two)

This HR director had strong values around leadership and being present and there for people to talk to:

When we ran the redundancy programme, I made sure I went down for lunch – no idea who is impacted or not and just touched base with people, see what they think and how they feel. I really liked that. Most people were quite happy to talk and share their feelings. (I-HRD1, Iteration one)

The management restructure workshop feedback also supported the need of a clear vision with clear goals to demonstrate leadership and keep survivors motivated:

To keep survivors motivated, a clear vision needs to be set (where do we want to be). A strategy should then be defined with clear objectives: who, when what needs to be done by when. (MRW-group participants, Iteration two)

Authenticity in how the message is being delivered with reassurance of the future is a key part of leadership for this HR director:

The delivery of the message with authenticity is very important; you have to believe in the reasons and be able to explain that if we don't take these measures, I will be in front of you in twelve months' time and close the business or we can cut some costs now and, yes, there will be less people in the business but we will have a sustainable future and we will grow again. It is not about lying to people because I can't do that; it is about how you communicate difficult messages. It's about being confident about the message that you are delivering is the right one. (I-HRD4, Iteration one)

The Mood Indicator also supported feedback post implementation of the second restructure stakeholder model that the vision for the company was better understood:

Better clarity on how we as BDA are going to move forward. I'm mega busy but enjoying it. (MI – anonymous. Iteration four)

This post suggests a positive change as he/she agrees with structural changes in the organisation:

Good because I am pleased with the structure change. It is the right direction for the business. (MI – anonymous. Iteration four)

This survivor felt that management understood the business and thus felt optimistic about the future:

For the first time ever, I have upgraded my response to 'Good'. Work is going well. I feel the management team understands the business and am optimistic about the future. (MI – anonymous. Iteration three)

At one of the director application presentations, this director shared his success of what worked really well in delivering a successful redundancy programme:

Engage and communicate company vision. Facilitate acceptance and ownership of strategy. Implement secure initiatives. If our people do not understand the strategic goals and vision of the business, how can they know the part they are to play in its success. (DP-OD9, Iteration three)

Another director with extensive success in implementing redundancies, equally put a strong focus on the importance of leadership:

	Pre announcement	Implement Re-structure	Post Re-structure
Management	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be sensitive and honest Create open, consistent, stable, secure workplace Trust, empower and develop open relationships Reward, recognise and appreciate Set clear vision and business expectations Create opportunity Think ahead and manage expectations

(DP – OD7, Iteration three)

At the restructure workshop the participants prepared a flipchart on how to an effective leader during redundancies:

1. Regular pulse survey, feedback, and action plan – deliver.
2. Realign and agree goals and objectives. Commitment and acceptance.
3. Clearly communicate the vision, and short/medium/long term gains and challenges
4. Regular dialogue, not just team talk!! No hiding!

5. Publicly celebrate successes, reward ideas/hard work. Address shortfalls. Develop individuals/career paths. Canvass and encourage ideas. Team building events.
6. Back to the floor exercises at all levels. Open door policy. (RW – group participants, Iteration two)

During the interview with the MD, I presented him with some of the positive comments on his leadership style and asked how he managed this. His reflection on his own success was as follows:

I genuinely believe that the pitch you make to the employees is critical. If you are doing that with the right professionalism, you will get engagement and buy-in. When making the announcements, I follow a very clear structure. I have learned this through years of delivering sales pitches. (I-OD4, Iteration two)

Positive implications after model implementation:

Several employees fed back their faith in the MD's leadership style and the data would indicate that his leadership motivated people to give their best. This manager expresses a great amount of respect for the MD:

OD4 is one of these characters, when he tells you to do something, he always does so with a smile on his face. He once asked me to help him with a project in another area, late at night it was and I could not say no, I would do anything to help him. I don't know what it was and I can't put my finger on it, but there is obviously somewhere in life where you earned respect, and I don't know why and there was nothing specific, but I had a huge amount of respect for OD4. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

This employee representative appreciated the open and transparent approach of the MD:

Something I have never seen before, which worked really well, is the "Open Forum with OD4". (This is an open forum lead by the MD to discuss any concerns and the status of employees' morale with employees and ECC representatives present.) (I- ECC4, Iteration four)

Great communication style by the MD is recognised by another employee representative:

I have not seen many MDs good at this, but OD4 has been very proactive in his communication style, despite things dragging on, which no one could have foreseen. OD4 was there, getting information out. (I-ECC4, Iteration four)

Using different forms of communication was appreciated by another employee representative which alleviated stress for representatives as the key messages of the redundancies were understood by the employees:

What really worked well this time was communication that was more vocal, more live meetings, more face to face meetings. OD4 did quite a few of those and not just emails. (I-EEC2, Iteration four)

The findings from the interviews that employees were feeling more involved and there was the presence of an ownership culture was supported by anonymous feedback from the Mood Indicator, after the third redundancy announcement and whilst the restructuring stakeholder model was being trialled. The comment from this post demonstrates strong leadership being observed by helping employees focus on priorities and building a guiding coalition:

It's a time for all pulling together to meet our business targets. Worry about what I can change and not what I can't has helped refocus. A message I am getting from management down, it is down to us all to embrace and drive forward, not just senior management. (MI-anonymous, Iteration three)

This survivor felt positive about the transparent approach of OD4 which made him/her feel that the business was turning into a positive direction:

Are we turning the corner? Perhaps. Some encouraging signs showing for me. Very much appreciating OD4's live meeting updates. I really appreciate the openness of the feedback and the willingness to listen. (MI-anonymous. Iteration three)

Feedback on the Mood Indicator supported the success of OD4's leadership style and delivery of the message with a very clear trend in an increase in

positive views and feelings. This was after a communication keeping employees on track with the rationale of why we were restructuring and giving hope and vision for the year, such as this comment that indicates appreciation for feeling informed and thus feeling more positive:

I feel considerably better now than I did two weeks ago. OD4's Live Meeting is the main reason for this. It is nice to be informed! (MI-anonymous. Iteration three)

Another comment indicated appreciation not just from the employee representatives, but also survivors of the regular communication and transparency of the redundancy progress, keeping survivors motivated:

The response to OD4's broadcast has indeed been very positive and his openness and honesty was well received we know by many people. The results from last week's Mood Indicator to this week's already gives an indication of that. (MI-anonymous. Iteration three,)

Strong leadership is very important to keep a workforce with low morale motivated. Feedback from the Mood Indicator shows success in the way the pilot restructure was implemented such as in this comment where hope is expressed:

Things are moving in the right direction. Let's hope it keeps going that way. (MI-anonymous. Post model implementation)

Another indication of survivors feeling engaged and positive about the future is noted here:

Once things settle down and people start feeling loved again I am sure we will be in a better place. For now, business opportunities are looking better and orders always put a smile on everyone's faces! (MI-anonymous. Iteration three)

Strong leadership amongst the management team is noted here by this survivor:

Although fully aware of the current situation regarding restructure, I think it's important to take lead from some members of management that are showing a positive and continually driven attitude. (MI-anonymous. Iteration three)

Passion is noted within the leadership team by this survivor:

Senior management have consistently expressed a passion and desire for growth and development. (MI-anonymous. Iteration three)

Improvement in the way the business performs was also noted by survivors:

I believe overall there has been massive improvement since new management has come on. (MI-anonymous. Iteration three)

The BDA Management Forum lead by OD4, which provides strategic direction and focus, was held amidst the restructures and forms a foundation for the business targets. Feedback regarding the meeting was captured on the Mood Indicator demonstrating positive leadership with a strong focus on team targets to drive collective performance:

I recently attended the BDA Management Forum. It included a good mix of reality check, encouragement, debate and focus on key team targets for 2013. Excellent opportunity to meet fellow managers and to agree that 2013 is the year that we turn our business performance around. MI-anonymous. Iteration three)

One direct report stated the following about OD4 and, when he resigned a few months after the successful implementation of the series of redundancies in BDA, she took months off with work related stress stating that she could not cope with the thought of him leaving and working under a new MD who had a very poor leadership style. She resigned shortly after the absences.

I would have done anything for OD4. I felt like he kept everything together and even when things were hard, he kept us motivated. (DO-LM104, Iteration four)

When OD4 announced his resignation, another employee commented:

It feels like a divorce. Happening for the right reasons, but so painful. (DO-LM6, Iteration four)

Feedback from the Mood Indicator tool also supported OD4's leadership approach to implementing a new leadership team:

All seem to be going in the right direction. Thanks to the new leadership team. (MI- anonymous. Iteration three)

The restructure workshop outputs equally supported the importance of visionary leadership:

Create a vision for the future: strategy, plan and clear goals. Create 'team confidence' and rebuild trust. (RW-group participants, Iteration two)

Leadership focus also includes a focus on generating income and looking at different perspectives:

I think to do things better, we should focus more on how to generate money, rather than just how to cut costs. (I-LM9, Iteration three)

5.6.2 Planning and analysis

Planning of the redundancy programme and undertaking sufficient analysis before to implementation was strongly supported within the data collected as a factor that helped mitigate the negative impact on redundancy envoys. This director stated that planning significantly reduced stress amongst redundancy envoys which supports some of the success after the implementation of the restructure stakeholder model:

The planning made a massive difference to the stress levels of the managers and our stress was far less. (I-OD6, Iteration four)

An HR business partner stated that proper planning makes her calmer and thus alleviating the negative impacts of implementing redundancies:

The planning is key for me. If everyone is properly prepared, it makes me calmer, knowing that everyone knows what we are doing and how. (I-HR2, Iteration one)

Feedback from an employee representative suggested positive implications of implementing the restructure stakeholder model within BDA as he believed the process worked better:

From the moment, you came along and got involved in it there was more organisation, there was more planning, more consideration for all and more thought, because the process seemed to work quite well. You said what you are going to put into it and that is how you did it. If you said you are going to do something, it happened, and for a lot of people it was a breath of fresh air. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

Part of the planning prior to implementing a redundancy programme is to ensure that cost savings were undertaken everywhere possible in the organisation, before you start reducing people. Giving redundancy envoys this confidence alleviates some of the negative elements of making people redundant as expressed by this redundancy envoy:

I will always explore with managers and the consultative committee members all areas where we could save money, before we start the redundancy programme. (I-HR7, Iteration one)

This HR director makes a valid point that spending the time to plan upfront is a worthwhile exercise as it impacts how the rest of the workforce perceived the company and they tend to make a judgement on whether they would like to stay in the company:

In redundancies, it takes no more time to do it right than it does to do it wrong. It is really important that you do it in the correct way as when people leave the organisation, the people who stay form a view of the organisation and how their colleagues were treated and make a judgement on whether they want to stay with the organisation. (I-HRD4, Iteration one)

Feedback from the Mood indicator also supported better clarity post restructure stakeholder model implementation:

There are lots of changes in the business at the moment but we're changing for the better! (MI- anonymous. Iteration three)

This survivor suggests that he/she feels connected to the vision and understands their role to achieve the overall goals:

I'm feeling that I understand what the board are trying to achieve and the part I can play in support. No barriers in my way for supporting the best I can. (MI- anonymous. Iteration three)

Part of the planning is to explore the organisational design for the organisation as suggested by this redundancy envoy who states that organisational design was considered for 12 months prior to implementation to ensure they retain the right skills:

For 12 months prior to the redundancy, we looked at organisational design to see how we can optimise staff with the skills we needed to keep and moved people around. So, when we were ready to make the redundancies, we were already in a position where we only had to put the people at risk that we were happy to let go. (I-HR5, Iteration one)

This manager argued that sufficient timing for redundancy planning should be allowed to ensure that the employee structure compliments the business needs:

We should allow sufficient timing for preparation to be done. There should be enough time to plan and share our analysis with all the departments, rather than working in silos. We need to make sure that rather than just focusing on how many people we have to reduce by, what is our strategy for the business and then what does the structure look like before we can decide which roles we no longer need. (I-LM5, Iteration three)

Planning and preparation for consultation meetings was also recognised as a very important step for redundancy envoys. This redundancy envoy wants to be prepared for any eventualities prior to entering into the meeting:

Before I go into any conversation, I need to be prepared with the reason, answers to all potential questions and then details of the selection matrix. (I-LM4, Iteration two)

Another manager highlights how well this element of the restructure stakeholder model worked, which looked at preparation for the consultations which allowed for a more controlled meeting:

What worked well is that we met beforehand, she was prepared, she took control of the situations. She explained it in a way that people understood it. They really understood what was going. (I-LM5, Iteration three)

The timing of redundancies also came up as a moral issue and as having an impact on redundancy envoys. Considerate timing helps to alleviate stress for both redundancy envoys and victims, as alluded to by this redundancy envoy:

Personally, I would never make people redundant over Christmas because people should be happy over Christmas. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

This director refers to the challenge of wanting to speed up but recognises that the pace of implementation is dependent on the size of the organisation and the ability to reach all employees effectively:

Once you have your plan in place, of course is the challenge of bringing in the changes, but at a reasonable pace. You have to slow down, depending on the size of the organisation – the bigger, the harder, as you have to bring the message to each and every person in his or her language, in his or her business environment. So, you have to adapt your communication and this takes a while. It is more important, even if it takes a while, but settles each individual with conviction. PowerPoint can't do this; you have to do it with conviction. (I-OD2, Iteration one)

This employee representative draws on the need to reduce the timescales to limit the unnecessary impact on employees:

If possible, it would be easier on the people to reduce the timescales during which they are unsettled. (I-ECC4, Iteration four)

Feedback from the Mood Indicator supports the case that prolonged redundancies cause more stress:

I have mixed feelings at the moment as everything is uncertain and unknown for everyone. This is a difficult time as we don't know if we are

going to be out of a job soon; however, I am doing my utmost to be upbeat and still giving 100% in everything I do. Whatever the outcome, I will feel better as soon as I know how the future lies for me, whether it be with BDA or not; I just need to know either way. I understand that you are trying to turn this around and advise people as quickly as possible. This means a lot to me personally. (MI – anonymous. Iteration two

During the planning stage, the business must agree on their strategy around what else can be done to avoid compulsory redundancies: using voluntary redundancies (VR) or compromise agreements. Different views were observed on this topic. Exploring alternative options to redundancy was recognised as a worthy step by this HR professional to mitigate the psychological impact for redundancy envoys:

Other than offering voluntary redundancy, you can also offer flexible or part time working, which is often not explored enough. The company must look at alternatives first. Often people work it out amongst themselves. (I-HR4), Iteration one

VR worked well for this redundancy envoy, where most of the team accepted this option, reducing the requirement for the difficult redundancy consultations, thus effectively reducing the negative psychological impact:

What worked really well was the opportunity for people to take VR. In my team, I only had to make one compulsory redundancy and the rest all took VR. (I-OD4, Iteration four)

In contradiction to the previous redundancy envoys, this director felt that VR was not good for motivation as if applications for VR are denied, employees motivation are likely to be affected as they have already decided to leave the company:

I do not think the VR process adds any value. This is because it is not good for motivation. Once people decided they want to go and you turn their application down and make them stay and work, they have already lost their motivation. It cost me the same money if I make them redundant or they take VR so why do it. (I-OD5, Iteration four)

Exploring the reduction of contractors prior to implementing headcount reductions is also a good strategy proposed by this HR director:

Explore all possible ways of reducing compulsory redundancies, such as revisiting the use of contractors and offering voluntary redundancies, if it suits the business strategy. (I-HRD6, Iteration two)

This director proposes the use of compromise agreements instead of redundancies as a method to reduce headcount as it limits upsetting the majority of the workforce in the same manner as redundancies:

I would always try to avoid redundancies or putting people at risk. You have to apply the law intelligently. If you know where you want people to go, try to limit putting people at risk and only approach the low performers with compromise agreements. That way, you protect the rest of the organisation against the negative impacts of a redundancy programme. As soon as you put someone at risk, their loyalty changes towards the company so I would always try to do compromise agreements where we are talking about small numbers of people. You could argue the termination packages are bigger, however, you save so much more by not having put more people at risk. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

Preparation and alignment prior to entering the process and meetings are key elements of relieving stress for redundancy envoys. This redundancy envoy suggests having the details of the redundancy package ready for the meeting as it may help drive decision making by the victim:

It is important to be prepared – have all the calculations ready and make sure the package is correct as this might help people with their decision making. (I-HR8, Iteration two)

In these lessons learned exercise, the need to plan for change and a new way of doing things after the redundancies is highlighted as important:

Something that is often missed with restructures is that after the people have left the business, is to look at the future, and change management is really important. If you take out 80 heads, you have to implement new processes and ways of doing things. You cannot continue to do the same stuff after removing all these people from the business. This causes unnecessary pressure on people. (LL-OD5, Iteration one)

Feedback from the MD on the success of the implementation of the redundancies, post restructure stakeholder model implementation during iteration four, also supports the importance of preparation and the success of the restructure model piloted:

You deserve some positive feedback. Without a shadow of doubt, you were far more organised than any previous redundancies. Not only that, but you were thinking ahead, anticipating what was going to happen next. As leading this from an HR perspective, you are that person responsible for the planning. You have to think about strategy and execution, you have got to think about what the fall out is going to be and how to prepare for that. That was a big lesson learned for me: having a quality person in place to have that support. Previously, we were completely disorganised... Maybe that is why it worked, because you were looking out for us better and you were part of our team. You understand how we think and were integrated in the team. You were strategically connected with what we want to do. You did not sit there waiting for us to tell you what to do. You were ahead of the game. Two things that really worked well was the structure you brought to the redundancy process and your professionalism. (I-OD4, Iteration four)

5.6.3 Communication

The importance of effective communication was a very strong part of a successful redundancy programme. The method and frequency of communication each have their own significance in the successful implementation. This employee representative experienced less stress due to improved communication after the implementation of the restructure stakeholder model as the message reached the employees directly which meant he had less pressure to communicate or bridge the gap in what is understood:

The regularity and good communication made my life easier as employees were not coming to me every 5 minutes with questions and knocking, knocking and knocking at my door as the information was out there. That was a real plus. This time it was a vast improvement and I would say the main reason for that was the communication, the increased level of communication. (I-ECC4, Iteration four)

Support packs that contained bespoke information about the redundancy programmes and where to get support were recognised by this employee representative as being good:

The communications in general have been better this time. The communication shared at the ECC meetings was also fine and worked well. The support packs that went out to the employees with all the information were really good. It showed to people that a lot of thought has gone in the process and that the company cared. (I-ECC2, Iteration four)

This redundancy envoy expressed the importance of tailoring communications to meet the specific requirements of each individual:

I can understand how people feel when they are bombarded with information, which is often the case in redundancies. If you overwhelm them with information, they go into a state of panic and anxiety kicks in and nothing goes in with the influx of emotions. Each person has their own tolerance and we need to respect that when communicating the information. You have to have the right pitch for the right person and recognise each person has different needs. Q & A doc really helps people too if they want to refer to it later. (I-HR4, Iteration one)

There was no doubt either that when it comes to communicating redundancies, the best approach is face to face as shared by this redundancy envoy who initiated a meeting remotely and learned his lesson:

One thing I would never do again is sit at the other end of a phone when putting a team at risk. Remember the time I had to go away for a meeting? I could not read your faces; I could not anticipate anything. A big mistake. (I-OD5, Iteration four)

This director confirms the importance to talk to people directly:

For me it was important that where there were redundancies, that I sit with the impacted people and talk eye to eye, rather than call them or do it via live meeting because I owed this to my direct reports. It was important that I be there in person. (I-OD2, Iteration one)

Communication is particularly important when it comes to the consultation meetings. This manager highlights that most people won't be able to absorb

much information in the first meeting, so it is helpful to have some material for them to take away:

Most people don't hear a word you say in the first meeting so it is good to have some material ready for them to take away. You have to be ready to adapt your style as you just don't know how people will react. Some might react completely the opposite to what you anticipated. (I-LM4, Iteration one)

The need to tailor the communication based on the individuals on the receiving end is promoted by this redundancy envoy:

You have to look with whom you are dealing with and adapt your communication and style. On one hand, you could be dealing with a senior manager, then an administrator, then a man who digs holes for a living. You cannot have the same meeting with all those three people. You have to change how you say things and how you do things. You cannot use acronyms or abbreviations when talking to a ground digger. He wants to hear it in basic, broad English. You need to adapt and change. (I-HR9, Iteration four)

This director advises on the best steps on how to break the news of redundancy using awareness of transactional analysis:

The communication of redundancies is significant. The most difficult is the first meeting and you have to be fully prepared. The message should be delivered with empathy and remind people that it is not personal. It is worth being aware of the grief cycle, understanding where they may be on this journey so you can help people move along. At this meeting, people tend to go into a state of shock. It is not so much about what you say, but rather what they hear that is important. Using language such as, appreciate this is concerning times...it is not your fault...it is hard to provide certainty... to break the message up. Be considerate with what you say as people hook on to every word you say. Another model that can help is being aware of transactional analysis. Understand that you are the adult in this conversation and remain in that space. Try to get the employee to move to an adult state too. Be aware of people masking their true behaviours. When you communicate the news, take people through a journey; set the scene, talk timelines, next steps, recap and summarise the key messages. Try to create an understanding of what this means to 'you', what are the implications and potential outcomes and end with an opportunity for questions. (I-HRD6, Iteration two)

Feedback from the Mood Indicator suggested that communications definitely improved during the trial of the first restructure stakeholder model:

Comms improving – however need to continue with this strategy (MI-anonymous. Iteration two)

This comment suggests that new management is doing well and making good changes, encouraging a positive psychological contract:

The new management is performing well, making good changes and really pushing everyone hard. Lots of promise in the pipeline.....but can they deliver? I think so! I am feeling positive about the future of our business and am almost starting to feel secure. Communication is improving. (MI-anonymous. Iteration three)

Recognition of the change in more frequent communication since implementing restructure stakeholder models two and three is evident here:

Workload is high. It's reassuring to be busy even if it's often a touch hectic. What is also evident is the willingness of all to communicate more frequently and effectively to help the business progress in 2014. (MI-anonymous. Iteration four)

Excellence in communication during the pilot of the second stakeholder model was also appreciated from the MD as noted in this award through an internal system in BDA:

Maddy you're a champion!

OD4 was really impressed by the way your team, Comms and HR team, have shown how responsible they were recently. Their thoughts were:

Reason Summary: for doing an outstanding job supporting the business during difficult circumstances to ensure our team were communicated to, well informed, provided with support information and dealt with in a highly professional way.

Full Reason: Both the HR team and the Communication team worked well together during our recent business restructure to enabled this with a sensitive and empathetic viewpoint throughout, ensuring that communications were clearly thought out, delivered and prepared in a timely fashion and all activities and promises fulfilled. This was especially important for the employees involved and for that it

deserves extra recognition so on behalf of the business and the team
- THANK YOU. (CA – OD4, Iteration four)

A few redundancy envoys make reference to the change curve/grief cycle and being aware of the different stages people go through as this could help tailor communication based on where they are on their personal level of acceptance of the redundancies:

When communicating redundancies, try to use the change curve as a reference point in understanding where the employee is at. (DP-OD10, Iteration three)

The output from the restructure workshop proposed the following elements for communicating redundancies in the consultation meetings after the working group produced a flipchart with their summary findings:

- Stay professional and polite
- Be supportive and understanding, whilst confident
- Know the reasons and facts and be concise
- Engage in active listening
- Take as much time as is necessary and don't rush
- Don't allow for any distractions – maintain the focus
- Don't share opinions and stick to facts
- Reinforce support channels
- Ask if everything is understood
- Summarise

(WS – group participants, Iteration two)

Some redundancy envoys believe that trying to provide a positive perspective on the situation also helps with victims accepting and dealing with the communication. This redundancy envoy highlights concern if victims get too demotivated:

You should try to put a positive spin on the situation. What you don't want to happen is for people to get so demotivated that it impacts on them finding another job. (I-HR2, Iteration one)

Rationalising the situation by trying to emphasise the positive elements such as a good package help this HR director with delivery of the message of redundancy:

I try to share with people the reality of life – things happen, it is out of our control. Sometimes people who committed their lives to work get made redundant. It is not personal. It's family and friends that are a priority. I also share my experience; I received a good package where I could put that down as a deposit on my flat. (I-HRD3, Iteration one)

Regular spot checks of measuring the understanding of the redundancy programmes also works well as it indicates areas where further communication is necessary:

During the big HR restructure, we ran pulse checks to identify, for example, are we communicating enough, which helped to indicate areas of improvement during the process. (I-HRD1, Iteration one)

The findings also suggested that communication should be transparent and collaboration between the business and HR is pivotal as expressed by this director:

Communication between HR and the senior team is essential during a redundancy programme and critical to a successful implementation. (I-OD4, Iteration four)

This employee representative highlights how good collaboration and transparent communication alleviates stress for redundancy envoys:

I have been in situations where there has been very good collaboration between HR and us, and the company has been very open and honest as to why this is happening and it has to happen. That has helped mitigate my stress and it does make you feel better. Openness between the company and us is a key part. (I-EEC1, Iteration four)

Another key part of the communication is to include reassurance to the survivors, as recognised by this redundancy envoy:

It is very important during the communication process to reassure the people that are not at risk, to clarify to them that they are not impacted, as people are not sure. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

5.6.4 Business rationale

The need for a strong business rationale is highlighted by redundancy envoys as being of high importance. Being able to explain why redundancies are necessary and what was done to avoid the situation helps to reduce guilt for redundancy envoys. This director draws attention to the idea that redundancies are implemented to save a business and this message needs to come across to the business as not an ideal situation, but a must-do:

When making redundancies, the decision is driven by business needs, not because you want to make people redundant. It is because you need to get the business from A - B and you explore various options to reduce labour, over-time and sub-contractors, and this needs to be understood by all the employees alike. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

This employee representative agrees that they need to understand the business rationale to be able to successfully get employees on board:

It is important for us ECC representatives to understand what is going on, whether we agree with it or not. It's about understanding where this is coming from, why is this being done and then you can kind of put that forward to employees. (I-ECC4, Iteration four)

The business rationale forms the crux of the conversation and is critical to this manager:

I need to know and understand the reason why people are at risk before I am willing to have a conversation with them, because that is the crux of the conversation. (I-LM4, Iteration two)

By being absolutely convinced of the business rationale is the only way this HR director will front a redundancy programme:

My stance has always been that if you want me to front a redundancy programme, I will only do it if I am absolutely convinced of the business reasons behind it and with no alternatives to explore. (I-HRD4), Iteration one)

Understanding the business reasons for redundancies removes stress and empowers redundancy envoys to deliver the message with confidence:

One of the most critical things to implement redundancies in the least stressful way is to understand the challenge to identify why this needs to be done. You can then rationalise your actions. This gives you the base to have an honest discussion. You can then deliver the message with authenticity, empathise and be genuine in how you come across. (I-HRD1, Iteration one)

Feedback from the Mood Indicator supported the views that the business rationale was better understood after the implementation of the second restructure stakeholder model. This comment indicates that the employee understood the business rationale:

Just had an interview for my current position so fingers crossed. I understand the reason for the restructure so let's hope it works as I agree that we need to change our current processes. (MI – anonymous. Iteration three)

This employee had a clearer understanding of how decisions were made:

Feeling more understanding of the way forward and how decisions are made. (MI – anonymous. Iteration three)

5.6.5 Fairness, trust and respect

Redundancy envoys declared that if they agreed with their moral compass and treated employees with fairness and trust, it also alleviated guilt and was easier to implement the redundancies. This redundancy envoy felt strongly about standing by her values when it came to implementing redundancies:

I would fight for the employee if the company was wrong or for the company if the rationale was strong for the redundancy. It is about what is right or wrong. (I-HR4, Iteration one)

The practice of fairness on how victims are treated is noticed by survivors and has an impact on the whole organisation, as shared by this HR professional:

If the people who stay in the business think that the process was not fair, you have a massive problem on your hands to try and motivate them. Our responsibility as HR is to ensure the process and selection criteria is fair. (I-HR2, Iteration one)

This manager feels that treating people with fairness and consistency gives you confidence in how you deliver the message:

My view has always been, if you are fair and consistent with people, you can look them in the eye and give them the reason for the situation with confidence. (I-LM1, Iteration one)

Treating people with respect and fairness is also supported by this director:

If you have to put someone at risk, be fair and transparent. Treat them the way that you would want to be treated. As an employer, we have to be fair and we have to be straight. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

When redundancy envoys refer to fairness, the importance of selection criteria is often the focus of what employees at risk consider to be fair or not. This redundancy envoy felt treated well after the implementation of the restructure stakeholder model, due to a transparent process of sharing the selection criteria:

When I was at risk most recently, I was treated well, and I was given a copy of the selection criteria which was nice as I could understand how we were measured and you could understand where you were strong or weak. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

Working collaboratively between HR and representatives allowed for a transparent process which helped alleviate stress for all the redundancy envoys as the representatives would help to give employees reassurance of fairness:

We used to work with the managers to decide on the selection process and then ran this past the union reps. This really worked as if they could see the process was fair and transparent and if they were happy, it prevented a lot of appeals later. The reps would give the employees reassurance that the process was fair. (I-HR5, Iteration one)

5.6.6 Involvement and participation

Part of a successful redundancy programme is to ensure your redundancy envoys feel involved and part of the journey. Disappointment is expressed by this manager for excluding him from discussions where he felt he could have contributed more:

I was really disappointed that I was not consulted on and involved more in the discussions with regard whom to keep in the business. I have years of experience in this business and definitely know who the people are that would take this business forward... but it is too late. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

This director recognises the need to empower managers during redundancies:

To have a successful turnaround, you have to empower your people as you cannot do it all by yourself. It has to become a self-sustainable momentum. (I-OD2, Iteration two)

5.6.7 Support for victims

Providing good support to the victims reduces the guilt for redundancy envoys and also takes away some of the pressure they have with queries. Every employee that leaves the company in a good frame of mind or with a new job, reduces the impact on redundancy envoys. This HR director has a range of ideas of how to support victims during redundancies, all which helps to alleviate guilt:

Support you can offer to employees includes giving ideas on where to job hunt, giving them access to websites and publications of jobs within their industry, how to undertake interviews and write CVs. It is also good to give them some space to take calls in the office, such as a dedicated meeting room, and the necessary time off to go for interviews, so you can promote the statutory time off. You can help them with their financial planning or perhaps how to approach self-employment. Information from the pension department should be readily available so people can explore the different options. Look at options for what education or retraining is available and put people in touch with the Job Centre. (HRD2 – 2nd interview, Iteration two)

This employee representative appreciated the dedicated room and laptop that was set up for victims during the implementation of the second restructure stakeholder model:

The confidential phone line was really good where people could get support, as well as the ability for people to go and access a laptop with links to jobs in a dedicated room. That was good and nice to see. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

Another employee representative commented that support from HR during the second restructure model implementation made his life easier:

The support that you and Cathy made available to employees was a real step forward, that was a real positive which made my life easier. (I-ECC4, Iteration four)

This director highlighted the importance of support in his presentation about how to successfully mitigate the negative impact on redundancy envoys:

Support



Be sensitive
Listen and act on concerns
Understand individual expectations
As much as is reasonably practicable meet needs
Be approachable, open-door,
Reward and recognise
1-2-1's and team events

(DP-OD7, Iteration three)

Outplacement services are also a great intervention to support the victims, which also alleviates pressure on redundancy envoys due to the feeling of guilt being reduced, especially when employees can find new employment. Many redundancy envoys focused on supporting victims with finding new jobs. In this site closure eighty-two percent of employees found new jobs through good outplacement support:

We used different levels of outplacement support depending on your role. The HR team switched overnight to a professional, in-house job centre. Eighty-two percent of the employees were in meaningful employment within 12 months of closure. (I-HRD5, Iteration two)

This HR director had great success in finding a new job for every victim:

Setting up job shops worked really well. We found a new job for every single person in that company. (I-HRD4, Iteration one)

This HR director was incentivised to find employees alternative employment:

I had a long-standing relationship with the union, which really helped. It was a collaborative partnership approach; they understood we were offering really good packages and they had one key expectation, which was related to a transition internally, and they knew that we had a particular focus to find people jobs. In fact, I was incentivised on that. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

5.6.8 Support for survivors and redundancy envoys

Despite the positive impact of supporting victims, support needed for survivors and redundancy envoys should not be underestimated, as argued here by redundancy envoys. This employee representative felt that there was a steep change in support since the implementation of the restructure stakeholder models:

I must admit the process this time is much better the past few times, because of the support mechanism; the support for us is much better. (I-ECC2, Iteration four)

This director felt that strong support from HR is critical as you may be a manager for many years, however, that does not mean you are experienced in redundancies:

Managers need strong support from HR. Although they may be a manager for many years, they might only do it once in their life. They don't have the experience as they don't deal with it every day, so they don't know the latest HR law. Even if you train managers, that is great, but no good when they only do it once in their lifetime. This is where they need strong HR support. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

Pressure is alleviated for redundancy envoys when there is a strong relationship between HR and the manager as stated by this manager:

The best solution for successful redundancy consultations is to have a strong relationship of a trusted partner between the manager and the HR partner. They should be able to complement and read each other and support each other in meetings. The pressure is then shared between both partners. (I-LM4, Iteration two)

From an HR perspective, management support was equally recognised as alleviating stress for redundancy envoys:

Support from line managers is really important. What worked for me is where I help managers where they feel really uncomfortable to talk and I take the lead and they fill the gaps of the person that I don't know. As long as the line manager tells you what their capabilities are, then it is not a big ordeal and it is not hard. (I-HR9, Iteration four)

Employee representatives felt that HR had a fundamental role in supporting representatives in a safe environment:

As representatives, we need support where there is a safe platform and there is no risk of business bias to get advice. This is where HR have a fundamental role. (I-ECC1, Iteration four)

This HR professional felt that supportive colleagues are very important to provide a safe platform to vent:

The most important thing to me is to have supportive colleagues, somewhere where you can just vent. To have a support team around you and people that you can talk to is very important. (I-HR5, Iteration one)

This director agrees that a well-supported consultation reduced stress for all parties involved:

The manager and HR person who ran the consultations planned and did it well. The person who carried out the redundancies from the management side felt well-supported with less stress and the person who received the notice of redundancy also felt a lot better than it otherwise would have felt. (I-OD6, Iteration four)

Support referred to here, looks at additional support as well, such as external suppliers providing employee assistance. This redundancy envoy appreciated the services of the legal advisors:

I really like the support of the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF). That is something I have not had before and it really helps. The (Employee Assistance Programme) EAP also offers support to us and managers and they will give you advice on which approaches work best. (I-HR4, Iteration one)

This HR director argues that internal support is still the best solution:

Of course, we have the EAP but I don't think that is sufficient. Ideally, you want someone to offer support who has gone through this process and has empathy with the experience. The EAP is good for supporting the people who are being made redundant and of course takes pressure off the managers. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

5.6.9 Training for redundancy envoys

One of the biggest areas for training identified for redundancy envoys was on the aspect of how to deal with the emotional side. This manager explains that managers need training on how they would feel during the process of making people redundant:

Managers would benefit from some training on how they would feel during the process; i.e. you will feel like shit, you will feel nervous and that kind of thing. Managers should get trained on how to deal with difficult conversations and learn how they would feel and how the employee would feel and that it is ok to feel uncomfortable and nervous in such situations. (I-LM4, Iteration one)

This HR professional agrees that as a redundancy envoy, you may be faced with every emotion thinkable:

We need to train our managers that when entering a redundancy programme, you may be faced with any emotion under the sun; you may get silence, anger, tears, so managers need to be prepared for this. (I-HR7, Iteration one)

Unpredictability of the situations and how to handle difficult situations are an important training requirement of this redundancy envoy:

We should train people on the reactions. Even if you think people will be okay, they may not be and it is completely unpredictable as each person's way of dealing with it is different and depends on their personal circumstances at the time. What you can't train people on is how to have a natural instinct or how to handle difficult situations, like I once had someone throw a chair in a meeting. You have to train people how to deal with the awkward and difficult situations as this kind of training is not standard. (I-HR2, Iteration one)

Change management and the change cycle is recognised as a training need for this redundancy envoy:

The key thing managers and HR need to be trained on is change management and understanding the process people go through when they face change. They need to understand that each person goes through the cycle at their own pace and managers need to learn how they can help people move through the cycle. Managers also need training on how to deal with difficult conversations. (I-HR7, Iteration one)

This HR director highlights that this training requirement was not included in the core training for HR professionals through the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD):

HR professionals need preparation training to go through redundancies. I don't even think it is covered by the CIPD. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

There is also a recognition to include employee representatives on training for how to deal with redundancies, not just the legal process:

ECC reps should be trained on what their responsibility is during a redundancy process and where to go if they need support. They need to understand how they can support the employees. (I-HR7, Iteration one)

This HR director felt that you cannot always train people how to deal with difficult situations:

Some people have a natural ability to deal with difficult situations. Sometimes you can't train people how to deal with this. As someone once told me, you cannot put in what God chose to leave out. (I-HRD1, Iteration one)

Emotional intelligence was also recognised as a specific training need by this

HR director:

We should train HR professionals about emotional intelligence. How much energy or emotion do you invest from yourself and that you can manage this. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

The benefits of training on the change curve was mentioned several times through interviews, such as in this excerpt from an interview:

It would be good for managers and HR to learn of the different stages of the change curve you know, shock, denial, depression, anger, etc. That way, they can kind of anticipate the different stages that they might be facing at redundancy meetings. (I-HR6, Iteration one)

Feedback on the value of the restructure workshop which was implemented in the first restructure stakeholder model as a training module was ample. This employee representative felt the workshop gave him insight into how his colleagues felt, which gave him reassurance:

In my case, the emotional support structure I got from the restructure workshop definitely helped because I was enabled to get the honest opinions from the other people that were on the course who were directly and indirectly affected in the past. I felt that everybody who attended the training was honest and open about how they felt about how they were personally affected then and afterwards. It gives you the reassurance that other people, like you, went through exactly the same. But, it affected them in different ways and from that point of view I thought it was very, very good as it gave us insight into other people's feelings and emotions. People are always very reluctant to talk about their feelings and emotions in general. I think what you can get from that as well is also to see that you are not the only person that is affected. If people were able to understand that they were not the first person to be put in that situation and are able to accept it, then I think it would be less of a trauma. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

Another employee representative commented that the workshop really helped:

The restructure workshop was a really good idea and really helped us. (I-ECC4, Iteration four)

BDA's lead HR consultant felt that the workshop should be made compulsory:

I would recommend that we make the restructure workshop compulsory. (I-HR9, Iteration four)

This redundancy envoy felt that he learned elements from the restructure workshop he did not get exposure to before:

The restructure workshop was like a breath of fresh air that people could get. It was things that we did not get the exposure to before. (I-ECC3)

The HR board of directors within Global Engineering also recognised the value of the restructure workshop which was rolled out by the training centre available to circa 500 thousand employees globally to provide redundancy envoys with support:

Maddy you're a champion!

HRD5 was really impressed by the way you've shown how excellent you were recently. Their thoughts were:

Reason: Maddy has developed a new workshop programme to be delivered by Learning Campus. This module helps Line Managers understand their roles in Restructures and Reorganisation and builds on Maddy's research for her PhD in this area. Maddy has developed this in her own time and alongside an already full workload as she supports the BDA organisation through difficult restructuring. Maddy is to be commended for the dedication and effort given in developing this piece of work which is now held as best practice in the field of supporting restructuring activities. (CA- OD4, Iteration four)

This employee representative also commented that the workshop gave them more skills to do their job well:

I think the restructure workshop worked quite well. It gave us more tools to work with and point employees in the right direction. The role of the ECC rep is to help people through the process, point them in the direction, you have this, you can do that, CV writing workshops, interview skills. I recommend them to do the training course. This part of the redundancies has improved significantly. (I-ECC2, Iteration four)

There was also a requirement for an understanding of the legal process:

One of the things that was very important to me before I started the restructuring was to understand the legal framework. I cannot do this

job with confidence if I don't understand the legal framework. (I-OD2, Iteration one)

Both directors and employee representatives mentioned the importance of understanding the legal framework several times:

I think it is really important for all the managers to understand the legal framework and what can't and can be done. (I-OD5, Iteration four)

We get very good training through the union but if you are not a union rep, we should train the representatives. People need to know what they are doing. (I-ECC1, Iteration four)

5.6.10 Training and development for survivors

The aftermath of redundancies leaves employees with increased workload and it is important to ensure the survivors feel motivated and gain the right skills to deliver against their new roles. This director draws attention to the importance of keeping survivors motivated through training and showing them how things can be done differently:

You need to keep them survivors motivated. They need to see the vision and the future because you cannot carry on with the same amount of work with less people, unless you make the changes. Redundancies are only a success if the business can perform the same or better as before with less people. What needs to happen is that managers need to establish which people can prioritise and who needs to be told to stop doing certain things. With less people, you have to stop doing certain things and most people don't know what to stop, so you have to give them that guidance. It is really important to identify which processes can be done differently after a redundancy and then to drive and implement new and better ways to drive process or additional tools. (I-OD2, Iteration one)

Bolstering the organisation up after a redundancy programme is also recognised by this HR professional:

The key thing after the redundancies is to bolster the organisation up after the event. It is just as much about the people that stay. (I-HR2, Iteration one)

This HR professional draws on her own experience of being retrained and how much that was valued:

When I was at risk of redundancy, I was offered an opportunity to train in a different career and get the support for the training. Being in that position myself helped me to realise how valuable this is for employees. (I-HR9, Iteration four)

Continuing to invest and train people was recognised by the lessons learned after the first redundancy programme in BDA:

An important part is to address motivation, which I think can be done by making sure we continue to invest and train the people that stay in the business after the restructure - make sure they have the right skills to do their new jobs. (LL-OD5, Iteration one)

Recognising individuals and their value to the organisation is recommended by this director:

You should show people that stay in the new structure that their individual jobs are important to run the business. This has to be done in discussions and townhall meetings. This is a very important ingredient in a turnaround. (I-OD2, Iteration one)

Positive impact observed from implementation of the restructure stakeholder model:

The Mood Indicator feedback suggested an appreciation for some of the positive aspects with regard to training, initiated as a result of the restructure stakeholder model, such as this survivor who felt pleased to get training:

I am also finally getting trained to do my job next week (after 3 years plus of asking for it) but nevertheless am feeling positive about it. (MI-anonymous. Iteration three)

Another survivor expresses joy after feeling his/her career goals are met:

My career goals and objectives are finally being met. Happy with the company at this point even with its current state. It shows that the company are still looking to develop for the future. (MI- anonymous. Iteration four)

5.6.11 Limiting proximity to the victims

Many redundancy envoys have learned to keep a professional distance from colleagues at work and do not engage socially or limit the extent to which they make friends at work. This director deliberately does not make friends at work:

I don't make friends at work, deliberately. I have lots of colleagues and associates, but we don't socialise out of work. It is just because you cannot stay impartial. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

An HR professional agrees after she has learned a valuable lesson to keep a healthy distance from work colleagues:

My rule is, even if you like people at work, don't get too close. People at work don't often understand why I don't want to socialise with them, but for me, I learned a lesson. It was just the worst thing to make a friend redundant. (I-HR2, Iteration one)

This manager states that he copes better with redundancies by keeping a professional distance at work:

It has got easier for me to cope with redundancies as I got more senior in my positions. I have not built close relationships with the people I work with so in some respects the coping method is to keep your distance. I have many good friends in work, but not with people that work for me. (I-LM4, Iteration one)

Protecting yourself by keeping a relationship distance is the logic for this redundancy envoy:

In our roles you have to keep your distance and you can't really get too close to anyone. To keep yourself sane and professional in our roles, you have to keep your distance. Of course, you can be nice and pleasant and have a joke, but there has to be a dividing line to protect yourself as we just don't know what is going to happen tomorrow. (I-HR1, Iteration one)

Redundancy envoys also claimed that it was easier to implement redundancies when they were new in an organisation as they did not have the relationships with the people.

It was relatively easy for me as I was new to the business so no one knew me, so no one came to me to complain. (I-OD5, Iteration four)

This director felt it was far easier to implement redundancies when you do not have the close relationships:

It was also easier for me to do in a new organisation where I did not know the people. It is by far harder to do a restructure where you have worked with the people for ten, fifteen years. For me this is a good recipe to do a restructure – bring in a new face, not one that is tied to old history. You can be more neutral. (I-OD2, Iteration two)

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the findings to address the research questions and highlighted the impact of the implementation of the restructure stakeholder model through the various iterations.

1. What is the psychological impact on redundancy envoys during the implementation of redundancy situations?
2. What are the key stressors for redundancy envoys?
3. What coping techniques do redundancy envoys deploy during redundancy situations?
4. What interventions are best placed to alleviate and minimise the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys?

What is the psychological impact on redundancy envoys during the implementation of redundancy situations?

The findings indicate that the negative implications of implementing redundancies are significant and emotionally taxing, often resulting in long term absences, stress related illnesses, resignations and sometimes redundancy envoys have to seek professional help. The biggest cause for the

distress is due to the experience of guilt as a redundancy envoy. Guilt is experienced because redundancy envoys feel culpable for the business position, they feel they have not done enough to save the business. This position is exacerbated by having to make close friends or colleagues redundant.

What are the key stressors for redundancy envoys?

The findings indicate that redundancy envoys are subject to a significant number of stressors. In many cases, redundancy envoys are at risk of redundancy themselves and not only do they have to deal with low morale and job insecurity within their teams, but they also have to deal with their own personal challenges of being made redundant. Pressure is experienced when redundancy envoys lose good colleagues and talent in their organisations. This adds to their level of guilt, but also the pressure they feel to compensate for the loss of talent which then has to be addressed under budget restraints and with a reduced workforce. Due to the reduced workforce, redundancy envoys experience additional pressure of increased workload and responsibilities, not just for themselves, but also for their areas and teams. Consequently, like a domino effect, the pressure builds with employees feeling stressed, customer dissatisfaction and often it impacts on their personal relationships outside of work. Another stressor that has a significant impact on redundancy envoys is when they are not involved or communication is not cascaded to them on why the business is having to make redundancies. If redundancy envoys cannot understand or do not believe in the business rationale they are put in a position of emotional dissonance, causing more stress. The complexity and size of redundancies vary and sometimes this may

also have a unique impact on the stress for the redundancy envoy. Not surprisingly, all these stressors result in a drop in performance and arguably in certain companies this has a further impact on individual performance ratings for redundancy envoys, which may be connected to bonuses, which has a further negative financial impact. Ironically, my findings also showed that there are several positive implications for redundancy envoys as a consequence of implementing redundancies, such as promotions, career development, intellectual stimulation and building relationships.

What coping techniques do redundancy envoys deploy during redundancy situations?

Redundancy envoys often cope by keeping a healthy perspective by using emotional distancing. My findings indicate, very interestingly, that redundancy envoys prefer to cope by removing physical barriers from the victims. Instead of hiding, they wanted to engage with the victims, communicated more openly and had open door policies. The most successful coping strategy identified in my findings is for redundancy envoys to help victims. This may include various offers, such as offering personal support, enhanced financial packages, job shops, training on CV writing, interviewing, financial advice, outplacement support or counselling. All these elements that contributed to finding a new job or securing a new life afterwards had a significant impact on how redundancy envoys coped. Removing guilt by easing consciences offered the biggest resolve to mitigating the psychological impact for redundancy envoys. Findings also highlighted that the more experience redundancy envoys had in

implementing redundancies, the easier it was to protect themselves from any negative impacts.

A very interesting finding was the importance for redundancy envoys to feel aligned with the business rationale. If this alignment and understanding was established, there were clear indicators that helped redundancy envoys cope much better with the process. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, some redundancy envoys did not cope very well and either resigned, suffered with long term health issues, used a psychologist, medication and in one case, a redundancy envoy even moved town.

What interventions are best placed to alleviate and minimise the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys?

The pilot that was implemented in BDA had proven to be very successful in mitigating the psychological impact on redundancy envoys. This pilot was designed to alleviate guilt and the findings suggests that the best strategies to mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys are as follows:

- Ensure a robust business rationale is in place and understood by the redundancy envoys.
- Strong support networks and systems are in place for redundancy envoys.
- Guilt is reduced when the victims of redundancy are treated well and good support is in place to help them find new jobs, such as outplacement services, support networks and enhanced redundancy packages.

- Strong leadership is essential during redundancy programmes.
- Keeping employees informed and onboard through effective communication and a consultative approach reduces the stress on redundancy envoys.
- Implementing training programmes for redundancy envoys to educate them on the legal processes, change management and how to deal with their own personal emotions as well as the emotions of the victims.
- Careful planning and analyses before, during and after the process of implementing redundancies.

If all these strategies are deployed, redundancy envoys cope better and the psychological impact is reduced.

The impact of the implementation of the restructure stakeholder model:

The findings demonstrated that the implementation of the model, contributed to alleviating the negative psychological impact. The findings demonstrate how different tiers of the module and feedback was evident which indicated that the mood and morale of the workforce had improved. A workforce with improved morale, reduces pressure on redundancy envoys and thus help to alleviate the psychological impact.

Initiatives within the model that were recognised as being successful included: Training received for survivors who felt that there was opportunity for development.

Restructure workshop training received by redundancy envoys which created a support network and provided confidence regarding the legal aspects of implementing redundancies. The demonstration of strong, charismatic leadership, providing a clear vision for the future of the organisation. Providing a clear business rationale for the restructures that were understood by the workforce helped to keep employees motivated. Providing strong leadership with a clear vision for the future was expressed as valued by survivors in the business. Improved communication was highlighted as a positive aspect, where feedback recognised that communication to the organisation was more regular with more face to face sessions. Employees stated they felt more informed and the information received was better than prior to the implementation of the restructure stakeholder models. The frequency, effectiveness and transparency of communication were also mentioned as being appreciated.

Recognition as having a positive impact on morale, was also given to the open forums; "Tea with OD4" where the MD provided opportunities for employees to raise their concerns and share ideas. Reduced stress was reported as a result of proper planning, including project management and preparations. Support packs issued to victims were well received and support structures across the three impacted groups were commented on as a positive change.

6 Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will critically analyse the data revealed in the previous chapter and compare and challenge currently known literature. It will highlight the significance of the impact on redundancy envoys and my contribution to existing knowledge. I answer my ultimate research question regarding how to mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys and in the process, identify my contribution to existing knowledge. The discussion will illustrate that the data analysis suggests that the key success in mitigating the psychological impact is to reduce the emotion experienced by redundancy envoys, reducing the most significant impact: guilt.

The restructure stakeholder models implemented demonstrate that the negative psychological impact can be reduced for redundancy envoys. The analysis chapter will follow the same structure as the literature review and findings chapters, where three key parts are reviewed: discussion on the psychological impact and key stressors for redundancy envoys, discussion on coping techniques deployed by redundancy envoys and, finally, a discussion on the best strategies to mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys.

6.2 The psychological impact

6.2.1 The psychological impact on redundancy envoys

This section explores my data in respect of literature on the significance of the psychological impact on redundancy envoys. An area where I felt my data

contributed positively to recognise the emotional impact on redundancy envoys. I fully support Buckley (2011), Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Gandolfi's (2008) arguments that literature examining the impact on the specific population of redundancy envoys is remarkably limited.

6.2.1.1 The psychological contract and trust

The 'psychological contract' refers to an individual's belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between an individual and another party. A belief exists that a promise has been made and in return a commitment is offered, binding the parties to a set of reciprocal obligations, as defined by Rousseau (1989). My data equally found evidence to suggest that employees tend to detach themselves emotionally from the organisation, often due to their perception that the people in charge have a disregard for their concerns (Gervais, 2004).

Due to questionable redundancy decisions in the service department, I have now totally lost faith in my management to assist me if I have a problem on site and I have genuine fears for the future and success of our department, and in turn my career at Global Engineering. (MI Anonymous, Iteration one)

This redundancy envoy has detached themselves emotionally from the company as per Gervais' (2004) research:

I don't think I have a choice if I want to stay in the company. I can read between the lines. If I want to stay in this company, I should keep my mouth shut and go with the flow. (DO-OD7, Iteration two)

My findings indicate that participants found the psychological impact very stressful and unpleasant with many experiencing sleepless nights and some having to seek professional help to cope, yet in agreement with Buckley (2011), Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Gandolfi (2008) very limited literature

exists that highlights how significant the impact is on redundancy envoys. My data makes a significant knowledge contribution to the emotional experiences or redundancy envoys, thus filling a gap in the literature where redundancy envoys refers to 'sleepless nights' (I-HRD2) and 'high levels of stress' (I-HR6).

6.2.1.2 The experience of guilt as a redundancy envoy

Literature clearly recognises the correlation between guilt experienced by the redundancy envoy and the impact this has on their emotions during a redundancy programme (Harrison, 1986; Morgan, 2000; Noer, 1993; Tomasko, 1987). My contribution to knowledge is to make the connection that if the emotion of guilt can be mitigated, the impact on redundancy envoys can be significantly reduced. The findings, combined with the implementation of my restructure stakeholder models demonstrated that the factors that alleviated guilt and made a significant impact on reducing the negative impact on redundancy envoys. This will be discussed further in the last section of this chapter concerning how to mitigate the psychological impact of redundancy envoys.

My data highlights and builds on existing data that the emotion of guilt is one of the strongest emotions experienced and had the biggest impact on redundancy envoys.

6.3 Stressors for redundancy envoys

This section presents a discussion of the key stressors identified for redundancy envoys where my data makes a contribution to knowledge and

thus filling a gap in literature. My data makes a significant knowledge contribution to the emotional experiences of redundancy envoys.

6.3.1. Being at risk as a redundancy envoy

My findings showed that often in redundancy situations, the redundancy envoy may have an additional burden of being at risk themselves, so they also have to live with a concern for their own job security. My data contributes to existing knowledge by recognising this dichotomy. Redundancy envoys in this situation have to manage their own redundancies as well as those that they are responsible for:

What made it really hard is that I had to write my own redundancy letter, do my own redundancy consultation and then manage nearly 80 people who were being made redundant. (I-HR1, Iteration one)

In this excerpt the redundancy envoy describes how hard it was to deal with redundancies when he was at risk himself and explains that once he secured a job, he was treated as if he received preferential treatment:

It was very difficult for me to deal with a team of 200 people at risk when I myself was at risk. When I secured a job... they all thought I had preferential treatment which made it even harder. (I-LM1, Iteration one)

6.3.2 Stress of losing of good colleagues and talent

A noticeable stressor for redundancy envoys is the impact of losing team members, colleagues and talented employees. This is an area that was not recognised in literature which I would argue deserves to be noted as a significant stressor. The MD expressed this heartfelt statement when his own leadership team were subject to redundancy:

My whole team is crumbling around me. Everyone I can trust is leaving.
(DO-OD4, Iteration three)

He later elaborated on the difficulty of a bittersweet scenario where the business will achieve positive savings with a fellow director's redundancy, however reveals some of the significant personal impact of sadness and a feeling of loss with the redundancy:

I am really sad to see him go. Sure, we will save a lot of money, but he is one of our positive managers that tries to improve things at least. He contributes positively. He has been with the company for over 30 years. It will be hard to see him go. (DO-OD4, Iteration two)

6.3.3 Pressure in the role of a redundancy envoy

My data contributed to knowledge where it recognised some of the additional pressures that redundancy envoys are faced with, such as pressure from headquarters:

The pressure is three ways; from headquarters, customers as well as disgruntled employees. Actually, then add my wife as well. (DO-OD4, Iteration two)

The MD elaborates on the pressure he was exposed to by headquarters:

Yes, you mean like the text I got last night at 19:00 saying, 'You promised me a profit this month. What happened?' I had to explain that the redundancy costs are still hitting us, to which he said 'hang in there'. That is the most encouraging response I ever had from him. (DO-OD4, Iteration two)

Another source of pressure was the fear of tribunals or appeals:

This was just additional pressure. It was just another thing that I felt I had to do really well. I didn't know how I was going to give time to this and how I would be able to do this properly...I had to prepare for the case at 1:30 in the morning after flying all over the place and not being very well. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

6.3.4 Dealing with low morale and job insecurity

Literature recognising the stress of managing low morale is acknowledged (Sumit, 2017), but significantly under represented and my data contributes positively in this area. My findings indicated that during the implementation

of a redundancy programme, one of the biggest stressors for redundancy envoys is to keep staff motivated:

The hardest thing during the closure was to keep people's motivation up. (I-LM1, Iteration one)

Motivation is important to deliver a culture of high performance and customer care and this redundancy envoy found it hard to deliver the best for the business and keep survivors positive and motivated:

Keeping people positive was difficult. It was hard because you still have to do your best to keep the business going. Just to keep them motivated was not easy. (I-OD3, Iteration three)

The was also supported by feedback captured in the Mood Indicator:

Staff morale is very low, we're all wondering who is next? (MI-Anonymous, Iteration one)

The level of ambient uncertainty that comes when an organisation's management structure is under review can have a profound, detrimental impact on motivation and job security within the organisation, irrespective of the remuneration on offer, as found by Deci and Ryan (2012). My data confirmed that job insecurity was high amongst survivors which had an impact on the competitive edge of who can remain in employment, resulting in a lack of cooperation:

Employees were not interested to support each other during the restructures as they were all very concerned about their own future employment. (I-HR3, Iteration one)

6.3.5 Lack of communication and business rationale

Literature on the importance of a solid and clear business rationale with a clear vision when communicating redundancies is plentiful in literature (Baruch and Hind, 1999; Cameron et al., 1991; Mishra and Spreitzer, 1998). However, my knowledge contributes in this area by demonstrating the significant impact on

redundancy envoys of not understanding or agreeing with the business rationale. This redundancy envoy would, for example, ask not be involved if he did not agree:

If I did not agree with the business rationale, I asked not to be involved. It makes it much, much harder if you do not accept or agree with the business rationale. (I-LM4, Iteration two)

This redundancy envoy did not agree with the business rationale and thus found it hard to deliver:

It was really difficult having to communicate to employees who work in profitable departments that the restructure exercise was part of a strategic business decision which I and other senior UK stakeholders don't necessarily believe in. (I-HR3, Iteration one)

My data complements the known area that a strong business rationale is critical with taking it to the next stage: to mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys, a strong business rationale increases their ability to cope and rationalise the decision.

With a strong business rationale where redundancy envoys buy into the decision and are able to take accountability for their actions, taking ownership, they are therefore able to deliver the message with more conviction and authenticity as explained by this redundancy envoy:

If you can deliver the message and your emotions are clean and not clouded with guilt, it is better. Still emotional, but easier. If you can stand behind what you are doing with authenticity, it is better. (I-HRD1, Iteration one)

6.3.6 Complexity and size of the redundancies

My data contributed to knowledge by identifying the impact on redundancy envoys depending on the size or complexity of the redundancy programme.

My data indicated that this is a topic that had an influence over the impact

experienced by redundancy envoys, such as the comment below referring to the closure of a factory in a large-scale redundancy.

I just remember that the 400-odd people had a sharp intake of breath as he told them that they will be losing their livelihoods and even today I shiver just to think about it. That is an experience you don't want to think about or don't want to have. (I-HRD5, Iteration two)

6.3.7 Impact on redundancy envoys' performance

A new area that my data identified was the impact of redundancies on the performance of redundancy envoys. My data indicated that an additional stressor for redundancy envoys during redundancy programmes is that due to fewer employees and increased workloads, this consequently impacted on their overall performance ratings. Although this may not be relevant in all companies, my findings indicated that the negative impact of the redundancies resulted in redundancy envoys being unable to meet their personal and business targets. Where this was linked to a bonus, redundancy envoys suffered on financial payouts as well. Feedback from some redundancy envoys on their performance through a redundancy programme makes a clear connection to the redundancies implemented.

6.4 Positive impact on redundancy envoys

There is very little literature to evidence positive indicators for redundancy envoys associated with redundancies and this is an area where my findings bring a fresh and very exciting new perspective on the positive impact, such as promotions, career development and personal growth. Noer (1993) found redundancy envoys expressed optimism as tough decisions were made and

there was a belief that the organisation was on a road to recovery. My findings contained a lot of reference to the appreciation of positive changes:

Are we turning the corner? Perhaps. Some encouraging signs showing for me. Very much appreciating Dan's live meeting updates. I really appreciate the openness of the feedback and the willingness to listen. (MI-anonymous, Iteration three)

The area that I found very interesting was specific to the positive consequences of redundancies for redundancy envoys in terms of promotions and increased responsibilities. This redundancy envoy had a business opportunity present itself, due to his exposures to redundancies:

Ironically, when you go through the process of closure, I was quite fortunate as carrying out the redundancy lead me to become a partner in a new firm. (I-HRD5, Iteration one).

In this example, the redundancy envoy was promoted due to the experience gained in redundancies:

I got a significant promotion and moved to France to implement a restructure there. Redundancies are such a big part of HR and the experience can only do you good. (I-HRD3, Iteration one).

Another development is when redundancy envoys refer to an appreciation of their personal development, such as improved negotiation skills, and enjoying the challenges as a result of exposure to redundancies, as demonstrated by the redundancy envoys below who specially enjoyed resolving the challenges associated with the redundancies:

I enjoyed the challenge to resolve, influence and find appropriate solutions to the various challenges posed by the redundancy situation. (I-OD7, Iteration two)

This redundancy envoy enjoyed the learning experience associated with implementing redundancies:

It was enlightening from a learning experience as I have never gone through a redundancy round before, so I did learn a lot. (I-LM3, Iteration one)

I believe this is a very important area to explore as potentially these positive elements further helped to mitigate the negative psychological impacts on redundancy envoys.

6.5 Coping techniques

6.5.1 Emotional distancing

Clair and Dufresne (2004) found that during a redundancy programme, typically three different strategies of coping are deployed by redundancy envoys: emotional, cognitive and distancing. My findings support but also challenge some of the thoughts around the use and popularity of these strategies. Clair and Dufresne (2004) state that emotional distancing refers to the redundancy envoy detaching themselves from the situation, which my findings support as a popular strategy deployed during redundancies within this context. This redundancy envoy suggests keeping a healthy, emotional distance:

I try to step back from the situation, keep a healthy distance, stay professional, follow the policy directive. (I-HR1, Iteration one)

Keeping a distance by occupying his mind by doing something else, was used as a coping technique in this excerpt:

I try to keep some perspective and try not to think about it too much when I go home, but it is not easy to be honest. I try and occupy my mind at home by doing something else. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

Clair and Dufresne (2004) also state that, typically, redundancy envoys would demonstrate sympathy and shy away from empathy as part of emotional distancing. My findings challenge this specific point as a coping technique. Data demonstrated that redundancy envoys felt the opposite and that

implementing redundancies with empathy was actually a critical part of how they coped and a more successful strategy in the overall delivery. Redundancy envoys in my study refer specifically to their previous experience of being made redundant which helped them to realise the best approach in the delivery of redundancies. This redundancy envoy learned by having experienced 'what good looks like' and a not so positive approach which helped them understand how employees feel during redundancy situations:

I have been made redundant more than once and I have seen the right and wrong way to do it. It is horrible. From then onwards, I decided that if ever I was going to make people redundant, I will treat them the way I was and would be expected to be treated. I know what people are going through. I know how they feel and that has given me the empathy to help them with what they are going through. This has really helped me in how I deal with people. (I-HR9, Iteration four)

Equally, this redundancy envoy has learned from their own experience how to use empathy to deliver the difficult message with more compassion:

Having been put at risk myself has changed my approach in one major way, that I will show much more empathy and sympathy to all the people at risk. Being put at risk taught me how to do it better. (I-LM4, Iteration two)

6.5.2 Physical distancing

Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Torres (2011) contend that another popular strategy is physical distancing which involves the 'avoidance of contact' where redundancy envoys try to avoid encounters with the impacted people by, for example, working from home or away from the office. My findings offer a big contribution to knowledge on this topic as it shows that the strategy of avoiding or limiting contact was not favoured by redundancy envoys and, in fact,

redundancy envoys completely disagreed with this strategy, in contradiction to the majority of literature on this topic. Views expressed included:

My own strategy is to get people to engage with me. Make contact with people, stay with it and trust it, even if you just approach people in the canteen or over coffee and just ask them how they are. It gives them the opportunity to then raise concerns. (I-HRD1, Iteration one)

I don't feel it is the right thing to hide and I would rather talk issues through. (I-HR4, Iteration one)

One thing I have never done in my career is hide. I have never hidden from anything. In fact, I picked up some of the redundancies for my team. I am the senior manager, so I will do it. No one asked me to do it. (I-OD3, Iteration four)

Interestingly, Morgan (2000) found that the use of distancing as a coping strategy during redundancies has a negative impact on the correlations with job satisfaction and co-workers and that the behaviour of distancing is counterproductive during a time of redundancies, which is more consistent with my findings. This redundancy envoy clearly disagreed with the approach of hiding:

I don't agree with hiding. You can't have this role and hide. I do the opposite; I try to come down to the office more, have a chat, get a feeling for the mood. (I-ECC4, Iteration four)

My findings confirmed a 'physical distancing' of a different type; however, I do not believe this is classed under the same definition as 'physical distancing' as defined by Clark and LaBeff (1982) or Clair and Dufresne (2004). Although it involves a physical break from the situation, I would rather refer to it as a strategy of 'planned relief'. This is applicable where redundancy envoys preferred a physical break or a break from the activity and remove themselves from situations where difficulties and anxieties were expected. In this example,

the redundancy envoy preferred a break during meetings to provide the necessary mental break:

Sometimes it's really good to just take a break during meetings, to give yourself a few minutes to clear your head. A mental break, like some people go for a smoke. (I-HR6, Iteration one)

In this example, the redundancy envoy focussed on their personal activities over weekends to take their mind off the redundancy programme:

Ensuring that I made time for myself where I was able to switch off from the task at hand - for example, specific times over the weekend or evenings, arranging personal activities outside of work that would take my mind off the work project, arranging beauty treatments, haircuts, dinner with friends, movies, etc. (I-HR3, Iteration one)

6.5.3 Cognitive distancing

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) found the cognitive coping model as the most popular, which my findings support. Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Bandura et al. (1996) found that redundancy envoys utilise cognitive reframing as a coping technique whereby they neutralise the situation involving an individual, replacing the more negative aspects of a situation with more positive or at least neutral aspects. Cognitive distancing includes three types of approaches: 'normalising', 'denial of injury' (Clair and Dufresne, 2004) and 'justice and fairness' (Clair and Dufresne, 2004). Examples of normalising include: rationalising the situation, using arguments such as 'this is my job and this is what is expected of me' or 'redundancy is an inevitable reality of business today'. My findings are very similar, such as in this excerpt where the redundancy envoy rationalises the business decision:

I don't find it difficult to implement a redundancy programme if it is done for the right reasons. If you employ 800 people and you have to get rid of a small amount of people, but the business will survive, it is better to do that than having to close the business or sell it. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

Literature refers to 'denial of injury' Clair and Dufrense (2004) as an example where one would include rationalisation by thinking 'it is better for him this way – he needs a new challenge'. An example from my findings under 'denial of injury' can be seen here:

I don't want to make people redundant, but I do it because it is necessary. I would rather downsize an organisation for the future, than not downsize and then having to close it. It's about doing it for the right reason – to protect the business and make it more profitable. (I-HR2, Iteration one)

The approach of 'justice and fairness' (Clair and Dufrense, 2004) is where the redundancy envoy would endeavour to act and behave as humanely as possible. My findings support this. In the following example the redundancy envoy suggests that his professional decisions followed a 'humane' action of ensuring the implications are understood:

I cope by making professional business decisions and ensuring that everyone understands the implications. (I-HRD4, Iteration one)

6.5.3.1 Cognitive distancing - The reason for dismissal

An interesting theme that emerged was the association with dismissal being easier if the reason was more justifiable for the redundancy envoy. Although this aspect is not present in literature, I have included this method of coping under cognitive distancing relating to 'justice and fairness'. It appears that the emotional impact on the redundancy envoy is uniquely less when the reason for the dismissal is due to the employee's own wrong doing, such as misconduct. Redundancy envoys reported less guilt associated with such dismissals as opposed to redundancies where the employee had no or very limited control over the situation. This redundancy envoy felt that dismissing

an employee for a disciplinary reason was easier, due to the employee having contributed to the outcome:

The hardest thing is to make people redundant where it is not a fault or mistake of the employee. Normally the individual will look for justification why this is happening to them, which is difficult. Whereas, when you dismiss employees because of a disciplinary, normally the individual has contributed to the outcome. There is a justification why this is happening to them. (I- HR2, Iteration one)

However, this redundancy envoy equally felt that dismissing employees for reason of redundancy is harder, as it is not necessarily a consequence of a direct action by the employee:

With disciplinaries, it is the right thing to do to dismiss employees, but with redundancies it could be all hard workers and you would like to keep them all, except if they deserve it, in like bullying cases. Dismissals usually have a cause, a reason; maybe the people deserve it to happen. With redundancy it not deserved and therefore potentially more difficult. (I-HR5, Iteration one)

6.5.4 Easing Consciences

A major contribution to knowledge is sharing and promoting one of the most successful coping strategies found in my research which was for redundancy envoys to address their consciences; I refer to this as “Easing Consciences”. Torres (2011) also mentions this coping strategy. In his study, two managers had to dismiss their secretary, but instead found her another role. This coping technique helps to address the guilt experienced by redundancy envoys and supports my key contribution to literature: the best strategy to mitigate the impact on redundancy envoys is to limit the factor of guilt experienced. Some of the very many examples covered in my findings are below. In this example, the redundancy envoy explains that he coped better by helping others:

I coped personally with the process of redundancy because of the ability to help others. One of the key elements of my coping was to keep

myself focused on positives. I took the employees successes as my success. (I-HRD5, Iteration two)

This redundancy envoy even looked for jobs for victims to alleviate his guilt:

I cope by doing everything I can for the people, by going that extra mile. I was looking for jobs for them myself to try and help them out. It was a big weight of my shoulders. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

6.5.5 Support to facilitate coping

Latack, et al. (1992) contend that another technique utilised is direct action or help-seeking. Although this technique is not prevalent in literature on coping, my findings support that this technique of coping was prolific for redundancy envoys. This relates to Torres' (2011) study which indicates that isolation for the redundancy envoy during redundancies should be recognised as having a significant impact as well. Torres (2011) contends that directors often find themselves alone with regard to making difficult decisions around redundancies but also alone in the sense of whom they can trust and talk to about their feelings and the situation. My findings thus build on and complement Torres' (2011) work in that support networks are a very successful strategy in coping with redundancies. This redundancy envoy refers to support from line management and colleagues as being very important:

Moral support from your line manager or colleagues who are participating in the same process is very important. I got very good support from you. (I-HR9, Iteration four)

This redundancy envoy refers to the success of sharing experiences:

In my team we met regularly during the redundancies and just talked about what was going on and shared experiences. Just talking about it, sometimes having a laugh as well. That is a great way to cope. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

6.5.6 Redundancy envoys as veterans

Clair & Dufresne (2004) found that the more organisational managers were exposed to redundancy programmes, the more frequently and regularly this led to the development of 'coping mechanisms' in itself. My findings agreed with literature that there is a direct correlation between previous redundancy experience and a reduced impact on redundancy envoys:

When you first have to make people redundant, it is very difficult and then you get used to it; you become more thick-skinned. It just becomes your job. (I-HR5, Iteration one)

6.5.7 Professional help with coping

The findings discussed earlier in this chapter looking at the psychological impact on redundancies support Torres' (2011:181) view that the very real suffering of the redundancy envoy remains "unspoken and unheard". The acknowledgement of the significance of the impact on redundancy envoys is underrepresented in literature and subsequently the necessary techniques to cope are equally an area not well researched. My findings show that in some instances redundancy envoys needed the support of professionals to help them cope. This redundancy envoy was diagnosed with stress and recommended to use mediation as a method to help with coping:

I became an iceberg at home I... uhh... I was very cold and very unemotional in every sense ... I got diagnosed with stress and I tried to do meditation and stuff like that, all of that never worked for me so I have just been dealing with it myself, that is why I am an 'iceberg'. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

6.6 Demonstration of knowledge contribution: Interventions to mitigate the psychological impact

6.6.1 Leadership

My findings during iteration two, three and four support the literature which identifies that good leadership is critical during the implementation of a redundancy programme. Although there are ad-hoc pieces of research with regard to the importance of leadership during redundancies, I found the literature limited. Within BDA, the MD's leadership style proved to have a momentous positive impact on the morale, trust and commitment of the survivors. The impact of the MD's leadership style thus expressly contributed towards mitigating the psychological impact on redundancy envoys. Gandolfi (2008, 2006) argues that great leadership can address various negative emotions within the survivor and victim community, such as low morale, emotional distancing from the organisation, and improve trust and commitment. Here we can see an example of the MD's success in achieving positivism in the business:

Are we turning the corner? Perhaps. Some encouraging signs showing for me. Very much appreciating OD4's live meeting updates. I know there is not that much to say much of the time but I really appreciate the openness of the feedback and the willingness to listen. (MI-anonymous., Iteration three)

The findings from iteration three agreed with Luthans and Youssef-Morgan's (2017) HERO leadership model where great leaders lead with optimism, having a positive approach and style. This was notable in employee feedback, which specifically draws on the success of the HERO leadership model to drive optimism:

Once things settle down and people start feeling loved again, I am sure we will be in a better place. For now, business opportunities are looking better and orders always put a smile on everyone's faces! (MI-anonymous, Iteration three)

Kouzes and Posner (1995) describe leadership as the art of rallying others to attain shared aspirations such as in this example where there is appreciation from this employee that management understands him/her and consequently there is a shared aspiration between the management team and the employee about their joint future. A great example where the leadership was successful after the implementation of iteration two, within the business promoting a feeling of a collective journey:

Work is going well, I feel the management team understands the business and I am optimistic about the future. (MI – anonymous, Iteration three)

My findings concurred with Mishra et al. (1998) who stated that the overall vision, strategy, and direction have to come from top managers who are highly visible, supportive, aggressive and confidence-building leaders, familiar with the business and its people. This strategy was applied within BDA during iterations three and four and was lived and breathed by the management team:

I am a strong believer that there is no successful turnaround without a visible leader. What was really important to me was to be a visible leader, hold a lot of townhall meetings, communicate well, discuss issues with people, showing people the vision of how successful the future will be. You have to keep sharing the positive news and show them how it is becoming better and better and better. (I-OD2, Iteration two)

Particular recognition was noted in my findings, which aligned with literature, on the importance of creating a clear vision with clear objectives:

To keep survivors motivated, a clear vision needs to be set (where do we want to be). A strategy should then be defined with clear objectives: who, when, what needs to be done by when. (WS-group participants, Iteration two)

My findings observed in iteration three contribute to knowledge by showing that a new management team can have a positive impact on the organisation. Kesner and Dalton (1994) and Castrogiovanni et al. (1992) argue that change in the CEO and senior management team can cause internal disruption with additional stress for employees already worried about their own job security and status, which will have an overall impact on instability in the organisation. Within BDA, we changed the senior management team from 12 directors to 8 as part of the restructure in the first phase. The change was welcomed with in BDA and supported with comments such as:

I believe overall there has been massive improvement since new management has come on. (MI-anonymous, Iteration three)

Recognition is also attributed to the new management team by this survivor who comments on new management performing well and that communication is improving and subsequently alleviating the negative elements of job insecurity:

The new management is performing well, making good changes and really pushing everyone hard. I think so! I am feeling positive about the future of our business and am almost starting to feel secure. Communication is improving. (MI-anonymous, Iteration three)

6.6.2 Limiting proximity to the victims

Several studies agree that the proximity of the redundancy envoy to the employee could influence the redundancy envoy emotionally (Ganfoli, 2009), and therefore limiting the proximity to victims, reduces the negative impact on redundancy envoys. Torres (2011: 286) refers to a well-known metaphor used in the military to describe the impact of proximity very effectively: "it is always more traumatic to kill someone with a blade than with a rifle." My findings argue

that where possible, organisations can help mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys by assigning redundancies to managers to allow a professional distance from colleagues. For some redundancy envoys, proximity meant that they knew personal facts about the employees at risk and whether they were facing hard times (such as financial difficulties or divorce), and this made the process of redundancy even more stressful (Clair and Durfresne, 2004). I would argue, based on my findings, that to limit proximity is a positive strategy to mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys. This redundancy envoy has adopted a deliberate strategy not to make friends at work:

I don't make friends at work, deliberately. I have lots of colleagues and associates, but we don't socialise out of work. It is just because you cannot stay impartial. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

In this example, the redundancy envoy learned a lesson not to get too close to people at work, after previously making a friend redundant:

My rule is, even if you like people at work, don't get too close. People at work don't often understand why I don't want to socialise with them, but for me, I learned a lesson. It was just the worst thing to make a friend redundant. (I-HR2, Iteration one)

6.6.3 Planning and analysis

My findings contributed meaningfully in the area with regard to the planning and preparation required for redundancy meetings. This redundancy envoy argues the need to be prepared prior to entering into a redundancy meeting:

Before I go into any conversation, I need to be prepared with the reason, answers to all potential questions and then details of the selection matrix. (I-LM4, Iteration two)

Redundancy envoys suggested that being prepared, meant that they could take better control of any queries and questions posed during the redundancy

meetings. A success of this element was recognised as part of the implementation from iteration two onwards:

What worked well is that we met beforehand, she was prepared, she took control of the situations. She explained it in a way that people understood it. They really understood what was going on. (I-LM5, Iteration three)

6.6.4 The use of voluntary redundancies (VR)

Although literature regarding the use of voluntary redundancies during redundancy programmes exists, my data makes a useful contribution to knowledge and suggests that making use of voluntary redundancies does help in mitigating the psychological impact on redundancy. Bevitt (2004) warns that voluntary redundancy is not always straightforward as employers can find themselves either flooded with volunteers or with no takers, and that the primary advantage of voluntary redundancy should be enhanced flexibility for both employers and employees. My data also found that the enhanced flexibility BDA offered during iteration two and three, where the restructure model was implemented that Brevitt (2004) refers to, does indeed have a positive impact in reducing the negative impact on redundancy envoys. In this example, the need to implement compulsory redundancies was reduced to only one employee:

What worked really well was the opportunity for people to take VR. In my team, I only had to make one compulsory redundancy and the rest all took VR. (I-OD4, Iteration four)

My data gathered after the implementation of the restructure stakeholder model two and three contributed to knowledge by highlighting that redundancy envoys also argued that strategies to reduce compulsory redundancies are effective in mitigating the negative impact on employees:

Explore all possible ways of reducing compulsory redundancies, such as revisiting the use of contractors and offering voluntary redundancies if it suits the business strategy. (I-HRD6, Iteration two)

6.6.5 Communication

My findings after the implementation of restructure stakeholder models two and three contributed to knowledge on the topic of communication by recognising the need for such communication to be frequent and timely (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998) where this redundancy envoy reports that regular and good communication made his life easier which was perceived as a vast improvement:

The regularity and good communication made my life easier as employees were not coming to me every 5 minutes with questions and knocking, knocking and knocking at my door, as the information was out there. That was a real plus. This time it was a vast improvement and I would say the main reason for that was the communication, the increased level of communication. (I-ECC4, Iteration four)

A few redundancy envoys made reference to the change curve/grief cycle and being aware of the different stages people go through as this could help tailor communication based on where victims are on their personal level of acceptance of the redundancies. This contrasts to the literature where no direct reference is made of communicating redundancies. I would argue this is due to a lack of appreciation in literature of the complexity of emotions experienced during redundancies, but which can be seen in my findings as proposed here by a redundancy envoy who felt passionately that managers and HR will benefit from the knowledge of understanding the different stages of the change/grief cycle (Kubler-Ross; 1969) below:



It would be good for managers and HR to learn of the different stages of the change curve you know, shock, denial, depression, anger, etc. That way, they can kind of anticipate the different stages that they might be facing at redundancy meetings. (I-HR6, Iteration one)

My findings specifically pointed to the importance of good communication between the business, HR and employee representatives. This level of granularity with regard to communication between HR and the business has not been explored in the literature. After the implementation of the restructure stakeholder models two and three, his redundancy envoy highlights that communication between HR and senior management is essential:

Communication between HR and the senior team is essential during a redundancy programme and critical to a successful implementation. (I-OD4, Iteration four)

This excerpt draws a direct correlation that good collaboration and honesty in communication mitigated stress for this redundancy envoy, which was captured after the implementation of model two and three:

I have been in situations where there has been very good collaboration between HR and us and the company has been very open and honest as to why this is happening and it has to happen. That has helped mitigate my stress and it does make you feel better. Openness between the company and us is a key part. (I-EEC1, Iteration four)

6.6.6 Business rationale

My findings support literature on the importance of a solid and clear business rationale with a clear vision when communicating redundancies (Baruch and Hind, 1999; Cameron et al., 1991; Mishra and Spreitzer, 1998). In this example, the redundancy envoy clearly draws on the reduction in stress if the business rationale is understood:

One of the most critical things to implement redundancies in the least stressful way is to understand the challenge to identify why this needs to be done. You can then rationalise your actions. This gives you the base to have an honest discussion. You can then deliver the message with authenticity, empathise and be genuine in how you come across. (I-HRD1, Iteration one)

The cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957; Harmon-Jones and Mills, 1999) contends that an individual will feel discomfort when they experience two inconsistent cognitions or a cognition that is dissimilar to their active behaviour. Zapf (2002) reports that emotional dissonance can be experienced by employees if they are required to express emotions that they do not genuinely feel, which may cause a feeling of hypocrisy and ultimately lead to lowered self-esteem and depression. This confirms that believing in and understanding the business rationale is critical to mitigating the psychological impact as it reduces guilt for a redundancy envoy. My data contributes to knowledge and indicate that if redundancy envoys do not agree with the business rationale, they are at risk of experiencing cognitive dissonance and to remove that feeling of discomfort, a clear and agreeable business rationale is essential in reducing the psychological impact on redundancy envoys. This participant states the importance for him to understand the business rationale prior to being confident to put employees at risk of redundancy:

I need to know and understand the reason why people are at risk before I am willing to have a conversation with them, because that is the crux of the conversation. (I-LM4, Iteration two)

Even if redundancy envoys don't agree with the business rationale, they argued the need to understand it very carefully so that they are position to deliver the message to employees:

It is important for us ECC representatives to understand what is going on, whether we agree with it or not. It's about understanding where this is coming from, why is this being done and then you can kind of put that forward to employees. (I-ECC4, Iteration four)

6.6.7 Fairness, trust and respect

My findings agree with the literature that the importance of the perception of fairness during the redundancy stages is of high importance (Bevitt, 2004; Gopinath and Becker, 2000; Greenberg, 1990; Labib and Appelbaum, 1993; Spreitzer and Mishra, 2002). Here is an excerpt from a redundancy envoy's interview who concurs with the importance of treating employees with fairness and transparency:

If you have to put someone at risk, be fair and transparent. Treat them the way that you would want to be treated. As an employer we have to be fair and we have to be straight. (I-OD1, Iteration one)

6.6.8 Involvement and participation

Literature on the importance of involvement and participation during redundancies is well documented with a link to perceived control for employees (Appelbaum et al., 1999a; Freeman, 1994; Gandolfi, 2013; Weide and Abbott, 1994) and is supported by my data. People empowerment as a key part to a successful turnaround was supported by this redundancy envoy:

To have a successful turnaround, you have to empower your people as you cannot do it all by yourself. It has to become a self-sustainable momentum. (I-OD2, Iteration two)

My data is also in agreement with Cascio's (1993) view that firms that involve organisational members actively from the planning stage gain better buy-in from the stakeholders and this leads employees to buy into the redundancy programme, thereby increasing the probability of success (Freeman, 1994). My data here demonstrates the disappointment of a redundancy envoy when not being consulted during the planning stages of the redundancy:

I was really disappointed that I was not consulted on and involved more in the discussions with regard who to keep in the business. I have years of experience in this business and definitely know who the people are that would take this business forward... but it is too late. (I-LM6, Iteration four)

6.6.9 Support for victims

My data concurred with Cameron et al. (1991) who state that to ensure the implementation of a successful redundancy programme, the focus on victims as well as survivors must remain, with specific support in place for each group: outplacement, counselling and relocation expenses for victims and support with training and development and incentives for learning new tasks for survivors. This redundancy envoy had extensive experience in redundancies and his guidance of how to support victims were comprehensive and detailed as opposed to what was identified in literature:

Support you can offer to employees includes giving ideas on where to job hunt, giving them access to websites and publications of jobs within their industry, how to undertake interviews and write CVs. It is also good to give them some space to take calls in the office, such as a dedicated meeting room and the necessary time off to go for interviews, so you can promote the statutory time off. You can help them with their financial planning or perhaps how to approach self-employment. Information from the pension department should be readily available so people can explore the different options. Look at options for what education or retraining is available and put people in touch with the Job Centre. (I - HRD2 – 2nd interview, Iteration two)

Providing good support to the victims reduces the guilt for redundancy envoys and also takes away some of the pressure they have with queries. Every employee that leaves the company in a good frame of mind or with a new job, reduces the impact on redundancy envoys as demonstrated by this redundancy envoy with the data captured after implementation of the restructure stakeholder models:

The support that you and Cathy made available to employees was a real step forward, that was a real positive which made my life easier. (I-ECC4, Iteration four)

6.6.10 Support for survivors and redundancy envoys

Literature relating to support for survivors and redundancy envoys is limited. However, Morton (1983) states that discussions through support groups can alleviate some of the anxieties and fears that managers experience during redundancy situations. This redundancy envoy confirms the benefit of having better support mechanisms in place, which was part of the second restructure stakeholder model :

I must admit the process this time is much better than the past few times because of the support mechanism; the support for us is much better. (I-ECC2, Iteration four)

A safe platform to vent and talk to supportive colleagues is recognised by this redundancy envoy:

The most important thing to me is to have supportive colleagues, somewhere where you can just vent. To have a support team around you and people that you can talk to is very important. (I-HR5, Iteration one)

Boyd and Gumpert (1983) agree that it is important to share experiences with others and that by listening to the successes and failures of others, greater

objectivity will prevail, which was a view also established in my data as stated by this redundancy envoy who claims that the opportunity to talk about the challenging cases is great support in itself:

The only real support we have is each other. The opportunity to just talk about these difficult cases, not necessarily expecting an answer back, but just to share the experience. (I-HR1, Iteration one)

An area that I have not identified in literature, however came across as a key point with regard to support mechanisms for redundancy envoys, was the importance of the relationship between HR, the business managers and the employee representatives, as stated here:

The best solution for successful redundancy consultations is to have a strong relationship of a trusted partner between the manager and the HR partner. They should be able to complement and read each other and support each other in meetings. The pressure is then shared between both partners. (I-LM4, Iteration two)

Besides the ability to share emotions and case details with colleagues, support from line managers is also noted as being really important:

Support from line managers is really important. What worked for me is where I help managers where they feel really uncomfortable to talk and I take the lead and they fill the gaps of the person that I don't know. (I-HR9, Iteration four)

6.6.11 Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP)

Baruch and Hind (1999) suggested that the provision of counselling to the survivors, as well as the leavers, during a redundancy is very important to help mitigate survivor syndrome, a view that received anecdotal responses in my findings. This redundancy envoy is supportive of EAP as good support:

The EAP also offers support to us and managers and they will give you advice on which approaches work best. (I-HR4, Iteration one)

Another redundancy envoy felt that the EAP services were not sufficient to offer support for redundancy envoys:

Of course, we have the EAP, but I don't think that is sufficient. Ideally, you want someone to offer support who has gone through this process and has empathy with the experience. The EAP is good for supporting the people who are being made redundant and of course takes pressure off the managers. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

Ultimately, my findings agree with Weide and Abbott (2004) that EAPs are not just there for employees. Managers should also use them to get advice on how to deal with difficult or unfamiliar situations, which helps to address emotions of guilt.

6.6.12 Outplacement services

My findings support Harrison's (1986) and Tomasko's (1987) who found that when organisations use the services of an outplacement company for the victims of redundancy, it helps to alleviate the guilt experienced by redundancy envoys. This redundancy envoy vouches for outplacement services as an effective method to alleviate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys on the basis that outplacement services helps find victims alternative employment, which subsequently reduces the guilt for redundancy envoys:

We used different levels of outplacement support depending on your role; so, we had a service for blue collar workers, middle management and director level, not to be hierarchal, but to recognise the individual needs at each level. Within 24 hours we had job shops set up on site within 3-4 upmarket portacabins with computers set up with links to jobs. Eighty-two percent of the employees were in meaningful employment within 12 months of closure. (I-HRD5, Iteration two)

Another redundancy envoy confirms that through outplacement services, every employee at risk of redundancy secured alternative employment:

Setting up job shops worked really well. We found a new job for every single person in that company (I-HRD4, Iteration one)

6.6.13 Training for redundancy envoys

Studies on the topic of training requirements for organisational managers are limited with ad-hoc recommendations rather than empirical research. Gandolfi (2009) argues that more research is needed in this area, which is a statement fully supported by my findings. My data highlighted an immense demand for training on various topics, which would help alleviate the negative impact of implementing redundancies for redundancy envoys.

One of the biggest areas for training identified for redundancy envoys was on the aspect of how to deal with the emotional side, which supports Pollan and Levine's (1994) findings that managers must learn to deflect guilt. Deems (1995) suggests that managers should be trained on how to deal with emotional responses, such as anger, crying, refusal to speak or leaving the building, wanting to talk to someone more senior, displays of aggression or acts of gross misconduct, which was a view strongly represented in my data. This redundancy envoy refers to the importance of training that deals with uncomfortable, emotional situations:

Managers would benefit from some training on how they would feel during the process; i.e. you will feel like shit, you will feel nervous and that kind of thing. Managers should get trained on how to deal with difficult conversations and learn how they would feel and how the employee would feel and that it is ok to feel uncomfortable and nervous in such situations. (I-LM4, Iteration one)

A further redundancy envoy complements data by stating that how to deal with the emotional side of redundancies are not included in traditional HR courses:

We do not do enough training to prepare people for this. Especially the emotional side, how to deal with people who cry, going through the change curve, people who share their personal circumstances. It is really tough to deal with these things. Traditional HR training focuses more on the positive side of HR, such as development, but very little is

done on how to deal with emotions in difficult situations. (I-HRD3, Iteration one)

My data also showed a demand for change management training, which aligned with Briner's (2015) view that when change becomes more constant, so is the need for redundancy envoys to be resilient and able to cope with change and where change management skills will be advantageous for the organisation and employees. The argument for change management is strongly advocated by this redundancy envoy:

The key thing managers and HR need to be trained on is change management and understanding the process people go through when they face change. They need to understand that each person goes through the cycle at their own pace and managers need to learn how they can help people move through the cycle. (I-HR7, Iteration one)

This redundancy envoy builds on previous data of the need to train HR professionals on a more strategic perspective, including business coaching and strategic coaching skills:

That HR professionals are expected to be resilient through tough business transition processes but in having this approach, businesses forget that HR professionals are employees themselves who also need to be engaged in the change process, need to understand the reasons for change and future business vision and ultimately may need emotional support or debriefs after the ordeal. That businesses will continue to undergo significant changes given economic outlooks but fundamentally to ensure that the HR community continues to be a value-added partner during this process, they invest in HR Generalists through aspects such as Change Management, Business Coaching and Strategic Change coaching/workshops. (I-HR3, Iteration one)

My findings also pointed to a requirement for process and legal training, which was not identified in literature, as confirmed by this redundancy envoy:

One of the things that was very important to me before I started the restructuring was to understand the legal framework. I cannot do this job with confidence if I don't understand the legal framework. (I-OD2, Iteration one)

Feedback on the value of the restructure workshop as a successful training module was in agreement with literature on the need for training:

In my case the emotional support structure I got from the restructure workshop definitely helped because I was able to get the honest opinions from the other people that were on the course who were directly and indirectly affected in the past. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

This redundancy envoy confirmed that he picked up knowledge from the redundancy workshop that he had not had exposure to before:

The restructure workshop was like a breath of fresh air that people could get; it was things that we did not get the exposure to before. (I-ECC3, Iteration four)

6.6.14 Training and development for survivors

Offering retraining to employees during a redundancy programme has a positive impact on their motivation and loyalty as they perceive they are being upskilled with highly valuable skills at no cost to themselves (Labib and Appelbaum, 1993). My data concurred that having engaged and skilled survivors removes some of the stress of redundancy envoys. This redundancy envoy declares the need to train and invest in people, which has a positive impact on employees' motivation:

An important part is to address motivation, which I think can be done by making sure we continue to invest and train the people that stay in the business after the restructure - make sure they have the right skills to do their new jobs. (LL-OD5, Iteration one)

This survivor confirms his satisfaction due to his career goals being met and expresses the positivity associated with the company continuing to invest in people which was implemented as part of the second restructure model:

My career goals and objectives are finally being met. Happy with the company at this point even with its current state. It shows that the

company is still looking to develop for the future. (MI- anonymous, Iteration four)

6.6.15 Enhanced redundancy packages

Literature proposes opposing views when it comes to enhanced or redundancy packages and whether offering this to employees helps mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys. To mitigate the negative impact of redundancies, most organisations offer settlement packages; however, Labib and Appelbaum (1993) found that financial issues are a small part in the overall impact caused by job losses. Leana and Feldman (1988) have a contradictory view that severance pay and extended benefits can have a big impact on reducing the stress levels of the victims, which is consistent with my findings. My findings contribute to knowledge by advocating that generous severance packages can have a big impact on the guilt experienced by redundancy envoys as expressed by this redundancy envoy who states that due to enhanced packages, it reduced the need for compulsory redundancies from 60 to 4, consequently alleviating a lot of stress for the organisation:

In my experience, where I had to make 60 people redundant, we paid really enhanced redundancy packages so everyone wanted to go and opted for voluntary redundancies. Out of the 60, we actually only had to make 4 people compulsorily redundant which of course was not very nice, but for the rest, everyone was actually really excited about it! (I-HR5, Iteration one)

Another redundancy envoy confirms that generous packages helped to mitigate the negative psychological impact of redundancies:

The company I worked for had very generous redundancy packages in place, which did make it easier for me to be honest. (I-HRD2, Iteration one)

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided a critical overview of how my data challenges and contributes to knowledge. The highlights of my contribution to knowledge is as follows. The shortage of literature on the topic of redundancy envoys is known. Gandolfi (2009) argues that further research is needed to understand the specific details of what training is needed for executioners [redundancy envoys] based on the range of emotions they experience during downsizing [redundancy programmes]. Morgan (2000) argues that the managers doing the actual firing are an understudied population. I chose to explore this topic in more depth as the acknowledgement in the shortage of literature was known. An area that I found was significantly under emphasised in literature was the tremendous impact on redundancy envoys and I fully support Buckley (2011), Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Gandolfi's (2008) arguments who state that literature examining the impact on the specific population of redundancy envoys is remarkably limited. My findings clearly indicate that participants found the psychological impact very stressful and unpleasant with many experiencing sleepless nights and some having to seek professional help to cope, yet there is very limited literature that highlights how significant the impact is on redundancy envoys.

I highlight some of the key themes where my findings contribute to existing knowledge with sub-themes in each section:

1. Inclusion of employee representatives
2. Minimising guilt
3. Emotional impact
4. Leadership

5. Positive impact on redundancy envoys
6. Being at risk as a redundancy envoy

6.7.1 Inclusion of employee representatives

My study is the first study that incorporates and recognises employee representatives within the definition of 'grim reapers' (Clair and Dufresne, 2004; Folger and Skarlicki, 1998) 'executors' (Downs, 1995), 'downsizers' (Burke, 1998), 'downsizing agents' (Clair and Dufresne, 2004) and 'executioners' (Gandolfi, 2006; Kets de Vries and Balazs, 1997). My research clearly contributes to existing knowledge that this unrecognised group experience the 'pain of redundancies' as much as management and human resources professionals who have responsibilities during the implementation of redundancy programmes. It was very interesting to find that employee representatives equally experienced the impact through a weight of responsibility by making comments such as "I feel like I have let that individual down" (I-ECC1). Employee representatives equally reported an impact of implementing redundancies as an "emotional roller coaster" (I-ECC3).

The insight into the process of implementing redundancies by employee representatives is often more in depth than managers as employee representatives have a 360-degree view of the situation. Not only do they get exposure to the decision-making process with early communication, but they also hear and represent the collective voice of employees. Insight is expressed here by a representative who states, "It is very important during the

communication process to reassure the people that are not at risk, to clarify to them that they are not impacted, as people are not sure” (I-ECC3).

6.7.2 Minimising guilt

Summarising my contribution to knowledge whilst drawing on previous literature and jointly interpreting my findings, one of my key contributions is that to successfully mitigate the negative psychological impact for redundancy envoys is to minimise the emotional impact of guilt for the redundancy envoy.

Various elements of my research pointed to this:

- **Experience of guilt**
- **Use of voluntary redundancies**
- **Easing consciences**
- **The reason for dismissal**
- **Limiting proximity to the victims**

The experience of guilt as a redundancy envoy

Literature clearly recognises the correlation between guilt experienced by the redundancy envoy and the impact this has on their emotions during a redundancy programme (Harrison, 1986; Morgan, 2000; Noer, 1993; Tomasko, 1987). However, I found that existing knowledge does not make enough of a connection that if the emotion of guilt can be mitigated, the impact on redundancy envoys can significantly be reduced. The findings proved that the factors that alleviated guilt made a significant impact on reducing the negative impact on redundancy envoys, which contributes and advances existing knowledge immensely. My data highlights that guilt is one of the

strongest emotions experienced and had the biggest impact on redundancy envoys. In this example, the redundancy envoy describes how he felt like a failure, “As a big manager in a big business, it felt like failure and I felt the pressure on a day-to-day basis. It sucks the life out of you” (I-OD3).

The use of voluntary redundancies (VR)

My data shows that the use of voluntary redundancies reduces the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys and makes a contribution in this area. My data however suggested that making use of voluntary redundancies does help in mitigating the psychological impact on redundancy envoys as it removes the need to have the unpleasant conversations. Redundancy envoys also argued that strategies to reduce compulsory redundancies are effective in mitigating the negative impact on employees, an area where my data also contributes to knowledge.

Easing Consciences

A major contribution to knowledge is sharing and promoting one of the most successful coping strategies found in my research which was for redundancy envoys to address their consciences; I refer to this as “Easing Consciences”. This coping technique helps to address the guilt experienced by redundancy envoys and supports my key contribution to literature: the best strategy to mitigate the impact on redundancy envoys is to limit the factor of guilt experienced. Some of the very many examples covered in my findings are below. Redundancy envoys coped much better when they felt they did as much as they can to support victims, which included various elements such as

offering training, support with finding jobs, offering time off for interviews, interview and CV writing training, morale support, good references, coaching and counselling skills. An additional benefit that my data promotes in this field is that treating victims well has a direct impact on survivors' morale, which is a very important contribution to knowledge.

The reason for dismissal

An interesting theme that emerged was the association with dismissal being easier if the reason was more justifiable for the redundancy envoy. My data contributes to existing knowledge here and I would argue this method of coping should be classed as cognitive distancing relating to 'justice and fairness' (Clair and Dufresne; 2004). A new contribution to existing knowledge was recognising that the emotional impact on redundancy envoys is considerably less when the reason for the dismissal is due to the employee's own wrong doing, such as misconduct. Redundancy envoys reported less guilt associated with such dismissals as opposed to redundancies where the employee had no or very limited control over the situation. This redundancy envoy felt that dismissing an employee for reason of disciplinary was easier. The contribution here is connecting business rationale with the reason for dismissal. The stronger the business rationale, the lesser the negative impact on redundancy envoys which may help in alleviating guilt for redundancy envoys.

Limiting proximity to the victims

My findings show that limiting proximity to the victims could significantly reduce the impact on the redundancy envoy. Torres (2011: 286) refers to a well-known metaphor used in the military to describe the impact of proximity very effectively: "it is always more traumatic to kill someone with a blade than with a rifle." My findings enhance known literature by arguing that, where possible, organisations can help mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys by assigning redundancies to managers to allow a professional distance from colleagues, for example, to let managers implement redundancies for unknown teams.

6.7.3 Emotional impact

The second primary contribution to knowledge was the identification of the importance of the emotional roller coaster for redundancy envoys. Victims of redundancies are exposed to a variety of emotions and redundancy envoys not only have to deal with employees going through this crisis, but are often themselves experiencing these emotions. The emotional impact is sometimes so significant for redundancy envoys that it can result in long term absences, stress related illness and professional help is needed to help them deal with the negative emotional impact. The key topics in my research that pointed to this conclusion are as follows:

- **Valuing the grief cycle/change curve**
- **Deploying empathy as a coping technique**
- **Contradicting knowledge on physical distancing**
- **Professional help with coping**

- **Stress of losing good colleagues and talent**
- **Planning**
- **Communication between HR and management**
- **Training for redundancy envoys**

Valuing the grief cycle/change curve

I believe a very important contribution to knowledge is the recognition to utilise the grief cycle when dealing with redundancies. A few redundancy envoys made reference to the change curve/grief cycle and being aware of the different stages people go through as this could help the approach taken with victims based on their personal level of acceptance of the redundancies. I would argue this is due to a lack of appreciation in literature of the true complexity of emotions experienced during redundancies, but which can be seen in my findings.

Deploying empathy as a coping technique

Clair and Dufresne (2004) states that, typically, redundancy envoys would demonstrate sympathy and shy away from empathy as part of emotional distancing. My data demonstrated that redundancy envoys felt the opposite and that implementing redundancies with empathy was actually a critical part of how they coped and a more successful strategy in the overall delivery. Redundancy envoys in my data refer specifically to their previous experience of being made redundant as helping them to realise the best approach in the delivery of redundancies, which is a new complement to existing knowledge. Redundancy envoys expressed that by having experienced what good looks

like and a not so positive approach, it helped them understand how employees feel during redundancy situations and they can therefore deliver the message with more empathy and come across as more genuine.

Contradicting knowledge on physical distancing

Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Torres (2011) contend that a popular strategy is physical distancing which involves the 'avoidance of contact' where redundancy envoys try to avoid encounters with the impacted people by, for example, working from home or away from the office. My data suggests that redundancy envoys completely disagreed with this strategy, in contradiction to the majority of literature on this topic, and in fact went out of their way to travel to offices to connect and talk to people when opportunity for distancing themselves physically was readily available. I thus believe that for my findings to contradict respected authors' work in this field, this is definitely an area for further research.

Professional help with coping

The findings looked at the psychological impact on redundancies and support Torres' (2011:181) view that the very real suffering of the redundancy envoy remains "unspoken and unheard". My data acknowledge the significance of the emotional impact on redundancy envoys and my findings show that in certain instances the impact was so severe, it resulted in long term stress related absences, resignations, medication and professional help such as psychologists.

Stress of losing of good colleagues and talent

A noticeable stressor for redundancy envoys is the impact of losing team members, colleagues and talented employees, often beyond their control. My data contributes to existing knowledge in this area by recognising that redundancy envoys grieve the loss of their long-standing colleagues which are often a support network that is taken away through redundancies. In addition to what is known, redundancy envoys experience pain and loss within their known environment and teams. The loss is also extended to losing talented people who 'jump ship' due to the unsettled environment.

Planning

My findings contribute meaningfully in the area of planning and preparation required for the actual redundancy meetings. My data highlights the importance of preparation prior to entering redundancy consultation meetings with facts such as redundancy calculations, understanding the selection matrix, being prepared for all questions and answers. Under the topic of planning, my data also contributes specifically to the area of planning that pertains to organisational design: which talent and skills to keep and forward thinking about the company's ideal structure to deliver to an optimum level. My data fills a gap in knowledge on this topic.

Communication between HR and management

My findings specifically point to the importance of good communication between the business, HR and employee representatives. This level of granularity with regard to communication between HR and the business has

not been explored in literature and my data adds valuable knowledge to this area.

Training for redundancy envoys

Gandolfi (2009) argues that more research is needed in this area, which is a statement fully supported by my findings. My data highlighted an immense demand for training on various topics, which help alleviate the negative impact of implementing redundancies for redundancy envoys and complements existing knowledge meaningfully. The key contribution here is recognising that training provides knowledge which builds confidence. One of the biggest areas for training identified for redundancy envoys was on the aspect of how to deal with the emotional side. The pilot of my restructure workshop and the very positive feedback in itself provide a unique contribution to knowledge on how the training provided empowered redundancy envoys to feel more confident about what they were doing.

6.7.4 Leadership

My data contributes to knowledge on leadership by demonstrating through my pilot implementation the significant impact strong leadership can have on mitigating the negative impact on redundancy envoys. My data shows that the impact is so powerful because it reduces pressure on redundancy envoys as the majority of the pain of redundancies is absorbed by strong leaders. Within BDA, the MD's leadership style proved to have a significantly positive impact on the morale, trust and commitment of the survivors.

6.7.5 Positive impact on redundancy envoys

There is very little literature to evidence positive indicators for redundancy envoys associated with redundancies, such as promotions, career development and personal growth, and this is an area where my findings bring a fresh and very exciting new perspective. This area that I found very interesting was specific to the positive consequences of redundancies for redundancy envoys in terms of promotions and increased responsibilities. Redundancy envoys expressed positive implications, such as improved negotiation skills, and enjoying the challenges as a result of exposure to redundancies, promotions and career development. I believe this is a very important area to explore as potentially these positive elements further helped to mitigate the negative psychological impacts on redundancy envoys.

6.7.6 Being at risk as a redundancy envoy

My findings showed that quite often in redundancy situations, the redundancy envoy may have an additional burden of being at risk themselves, so they have a concern for their own job security as well as for their teams. My data brings a new dimension to this dichotomy and contributes positively in this area where it highlights the stress caused for redundancy envoys who are in this difficult situation.

7 Contribution to knowledge and practice

In this chapter I consolidate the beginning of my research and my research questions with the analysis of my data. I summarise the critical points in literature and my methodology and I draw particular attention to the strengths and contribution of my research to existing knowledge, highlighting shortages in existing knowledge, and include my suggestions for future research. My contribution to knowledge provides the basis for improving my own professional practice and that of HR professionals by sharing knowledge of best practise through the model that was piloted (Appendix A), highlighting that with the correct practice, a business can achieve an improved, profitable position as a result of implementing redundancies. I conclude with my personal reflections.

7.1 Research questions

The primary research questions I sought to address were:

1. What is the psychological impact on redundancy envoys during the implementation of redundancy situations?
2. What are the key stressors for redundancy envoys?
3. What coping techniques do redundancy envoys deploy during redundancy situations?
4. What interventions are best placed to alleviate and minimise the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys?

7.2 Summary review of literature

Research literature mostly demonstrates that headcount reduction as a method to improve organisational performance, productivity or cost competitiveness tends not to achieve these aims, highlighting a gap between actual results and intentions (Bennett, 1991; Tourish and Hargie, 2004). Braithwaite et al. (2005) agree that there are few studies to provide evidence that restructuring demonstrates productivity improvement or improvement outcomes; in fact, studies tend to challenge the validity of a reduction in personnel more than support restructuring. Gandolfi (2008: 4) argues that there is significant empirical and anecdotal evidence to propose that the “consequences of downsizing are negative at best and disastrous at worst” with Cascio (1993) agreeing that the research regarding downsizing [redundancies] has proved consistently that the anticipated benefits of downsizing [redundancies] have not been realised. Cross and Travaglione (2004) argue that one reason for not achieving the anticipated success after a redundancy exercise is that it is not beneficial to the company to have ‘survivors’ remain who experience negative emotions and behaviours of typically cynicism, demotivation and decline in organisational commitment (Baruch and Hind, 2000; Gandolfi, 2008).

Research examining the impact on the specific population of redundancy envoys within the survival population is remarkably limited. This is consistent with the findings of Buckley (2011), Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Gandolfi (2008), prominent scholars in the area of redundancies and redundancy envoys.

7.3 Critical review of methodology and methods

I set out this thesis with a research philosophy which is consistent with my ontological and epistemological position and I adopted the approach taken of an interpretivist. My approach was dominated by a non-positive application (Ashworth, 1997), recognising that the debate between the positivist and non-positivist approach to research on human social matters is very controversial. My approach as an embedded and action researcher was essential to drive continuous improvement to the success of the organisation. The implementation of my restructure model had proven to be successful and did drive continuous improvement. Within BDA the intention of the four phases of restructuring was to save costs and increase business performance. The undisputable result was that the business transformed from loss making to profit making with a difference of 21.7% return on sales. The engagement results were higher during the pilot implementation of the redundancy programme than ever before in the organisation. Contrary to Gandolfi (2008) stating that most firms adopting downsizing strategies do not reap economic and organisational benefits, BDA succeeded in achieving economic and organisational benefits.

Adelman (1993: 7) defines action research as “the means of systematic enquiry for all participants in the quest for greater effectiveness through democratic participation.” As an embedded researcher, it gave me the advantage of truly experiencing and understanding the culture of the organisation. My research methods involved a qualitative approach, with my primary form of data collection being semi-structured interviews. I

complimented this data with diary keeping and observations. I also used feedback from restructure workshops and director presentations as sources of rich data. Secondary data collection included feedback from the Mood Indicator. On reflection, I was in a very fortunate position to collect a wealth of data. Although I was an embedded researcher, no one in the organisation, including the MD were aware of my research until after the restructuring was complete. Only my line manager, who did not work within this division, was aware of the research being undertaken. This was a purposeful strategy as to not tarnish data or influence responses. I am of course aware that I have biases and trust that my training in unconscious biases has helped to address any chances of contaminating data. I have also shared my work with managers in the business afterwards with the purpose of allowing them to challenge my perceptions and interpretations. There were no challenges, just gratitude and agreement.

7.4 Contribution to knowledge

The shortage of literature on the topic of redundancy envoys is known. Gandolfi (2009) argues that further research is needed to understand the specific details of what training is needed for executioners [redundancy envoys] based on the range of emotions they experience during downsizing [redundancy programmes]. Morgan (2000) argues that the managers doing the actual firing are an understudied population. I chose to explore this topic in more depth as the acknowledgement in the shortage of literature was known. An area that I found was significantly under emphasised in literature was the tremendous impact on redundancy envoys and I fully support Buckley

(2011), Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Gandolfi's (2008) arguments who state that literature examining the impact on the specific population of redundancy envoys is remarkably limited. My findings clearly indicate that participants found the psychological impact very stressful and unpleasant with many experiencing sleepless nights and some having to seek professional help to cope; yet, there is very limited literature that highlights how significant the impact is on redundancy envoys.

Personal reflection on contribution to knowledge

My research highlights that in practice redundancies are implemented mostly as a 'box ticking exercise'. I believe this is the primary reason why redundancies fail to reap economic and organisational benefits. The implementation of my restructure model has demonstrated that with strong leadership that drives accountability and ownership, redundancies can be implemented with a successful outcome. When redundancies become a 'box-ticking exercise', the human element is lost. Managers follow process and instructions and their aim is on saving costs and treating people like numbers. The contribution my research makes is that to be successful in the implementation, organisations need to focus on the people, not just the victims but each group as identified: victims, survivors and especially redundancy envoys.

Gandolfi (2008 and 2006) argues that research on the executioners [redundancy envoys] of downsizing [redundancies] is imperative as they have an impact in a variety of ways; they are likely to have a pivotal impact on the

success and outcomes of the redundancy strategy as well as on employees' reactions (Dewitt et al., 2003). My contribution has proven that providing confidence through training and aligning with a person's moral compass can have a significant impact on the process. By moral compass, I refer to respecting the redundancy envoy's values; they want to be honest and open as to why redundancies are happening. If the organisation empowers them with a valid and strong argument, their moral compass is aligned and they can deliver the redundancies with intimacy and authenticity. The consequence is a more pleasant exit of the victims and building the vision with survivors. Training for redundancy envoys includes training on the legal process, but mostly the emotional ramifications they will experience and how to deal with the change curve of the victims they have to deal with.

The ultimate success is removing or limiting guilt for redundancy envoys as to why a redundancy programme is needed and then delivering it with dignity and conviction, ensuring that to reduce people is the last resort. To therefore be so blunt as to critique practice today, my research shows that organisations need to remember that redundancies are about people and not just process. The process in the UK is convoluted and HR needs to provide strong support to the business when it comes to process, but also on a moral basis. Consequently, if guilt is limited for redundancy envoys, fewer coping techniques are necessary and coping can become more positive, for instance the use of support groups and doing enough sport, rather than sleeping tablets and psychologists. My contribution highlights the need for strong support networks for redundancy envoys, whether that be external help or internal

informal platforms, which were one of the most popular methods of coping. My research draws attention to the analogy “tall trees catch the most wind”. Being a redundancy envoy is a very lonely position and due to the confidentiality of redundancies, there are not many people a redundancy envoy can confide in or talk to whilst undergoing a significant amount of stress. Organisations need to recognise this dichotomy by providing the right guidance and support to redundancy envoys, such as a strong business rationale, a clear plan and transparency of communication.

Employee representatives have a very important role as redundancy envoys. Recognising their importance in this emotive role, is a major contribution to knowledge where they have to represent an organisation’s objectives as well as be the voice of the people.

The evidence from this research that is demonstrated by the change in employee morale and perception and the business reaping successful economic benefits as a result of the four restructure programmes, clearly highlights that implementing the changes below can have a big impact on the successful implementation of redundancies. In this section I highlight some of the key themes where my findings contribute to existing knowledge with sub-themes in each section:

- 1. The positive impact by the restructure stakeholder models**
- 2. Inclusion of employee representatives**
- 3. Minimising guilt**
- 4. Emotional impact**
- 5. Leadership**

6. Positive impact on redundancy envoys

7. Being at risk as a redundancy envoy

7.4.1 The impact of the implementation of the restructure stakeholder models:

The findings demonstrated that the implementation of the model, contributed to alleviating the negative psychological impact, by introducing different tiers of the module and feedback was evident that the mood and morale of the workforce had improved. Nowhere within existing knowledge is a single model that presents 'how to steps' on the interventions that can be utilized to mitigate the psychological impact for redundancy envoys. Neither is there any presence that takes it to the next step of validating a model that demonstrated success.

My restructure stakeholder model, implement during various stages, resulted in the final design as presented in figure 12:

Restructure stakeholder model[©]

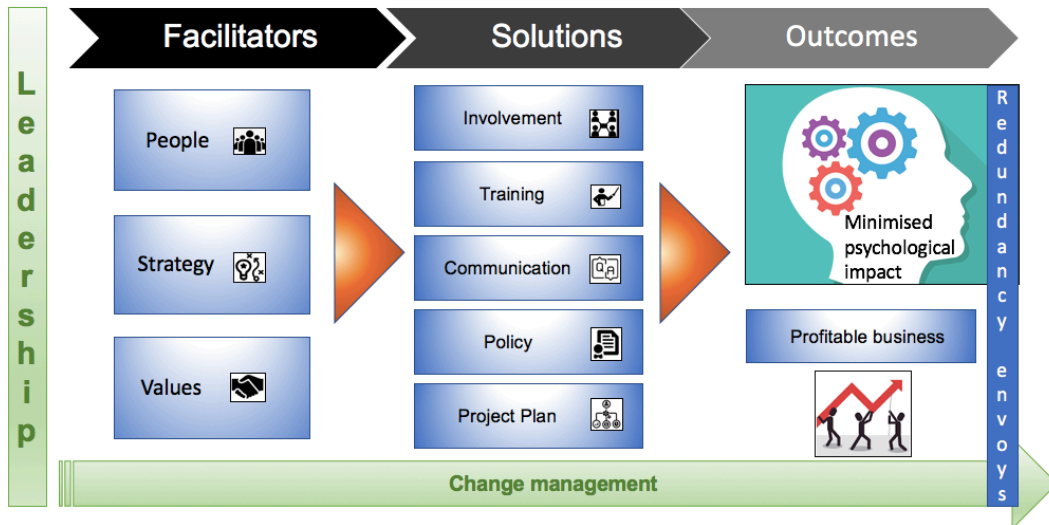


Figure 12: Final restructure stakeholder model

The output of the model demonstrated a workforce with improved morale and a model that helped to alleviate the psychological impact for redundancy envoys.

Initiatives within the model that were recognised as being successful included: Training received for survivors who felt that there was opportunity for development.

Restructure workshop training received by redundancy envoys which created a support network and provided confidence regarding the legal aspects of implementing redundancies. The demonstration of strong, charismatic leadership, providing a clear vision for the future of the organisation. Providing a clear business rationale for the restructures that were understood by the workforce helped to keep employees motivated. Providing strong leadership with a clear vision for the future was expressed as valued by survivors in the

business. Improved communication was highlighted as a positive aspect, where feedback recognised that communication to the organisation was more regular with more face to face sessions. Employees stated they felt more informed and the information received was better than prior to the implementation of the restructure stakeholder models. The frequency, effectiveness and transparency of communication were also mentioned as being appreciated.

Recognition as having a positive impact on morale, was also given to the open forums; “Tea with OD4” where the MD provided opportunities for employees to raise their concerns and share ideas. Reduced stress was reported as a result of proper planning, including project management and preparations. Support packs issued to victims were well received and support structures across the three impacted groups were commented on as a positive change.

7.4.2 Inclusion of employee representatives

My study is the first study that incorporates and recognises employee representatives within the definition of ‘grim reapers’ (Clair and Dufresne, 2004; Folger and Skarlicki, 1998) ‘executors’ (Downs, 1995), ‘downsizers’ (Burke, 1998), ‘downsizing agents’ (Clair and Dufresne, 2004) and ‘executioners’ (Gandolfi, 2006; Kets de Vries and Balazs, 1997). My research clearly contributes to existing knowledge that this unrecognised group experience the ‘pain of redundancies’ as much as management and human resources professionals who have responsibilities during the implementation of redundancy programmes. It was very interesting to find that employee representatives equally experienced the impact through a weight of

responsibility by making comments such as 'I feel like I have let that individual down' (I-ECC1). Employee representatives equally reported an impact of implementing redundancies as an 'emotional roller coaster' (I-ECC3).

The insight into the process of implementing redundancies by employee representatives is often more in depth than managers as employee representatives have a 360-degree view of the situation. Not only do they get exposure to the decision-making process with early communication, but they also hear and represent the collective voice of employees. Insight is expressed here by a representative who states 'It is very important during the communication process to reassure the people that are not at risk, to clarify to them that they are not impacted, as people are not sure. (I-ECC3)

7.4.3 Minimising guilt

Summarising my contribution to knowledge whilst drawing on previous literature and jointly interpreting my findings, one of my key contributions is that to successfully mitigate the negative psychological impact for redundancy envoys is to minimise the emotional impact of guilt for the redundancy envoy.

Various elements of my research pointed to this:

- **Experience of guilt**
- **Use of voluntary redundancies**
- **Easing consciences**
- **The reason for dismissal**
- **Limiting proximity to the victims**

The experience of guilt as a redundancy envoy

Literature clearly recognises the correlation between guilt experienced by the redundancy envoy and the impact this has on their emotions during a redundancy programme (Harrison, 1986; Morgan, 2000; Noer, 1993; Tomasko, 1987). However, I found that existing knowledge does not make enough of a connection that if the emotion of guilt can be mitigated, the impact on redundancy envoys can significantly be reduced. The findings proved that the factors that alleviated guilt made a significant impact on reducing the negative impact on redundancy envoys, which contributes and advances existing knowledge immensely. My data highlights that guilt is one of the strongest emotions experienced and had the biggest impact on redundancy envoys. In this example, the redundancy envoy describes how he felt like a failure: 'As a big manager in a big business, it felt like failure and I felt the pressure on a day-to-day basis. It sucks the life out of you' (I-OD3).

The use of voluntary redundancies (VR)

My data shows that the use of voluntary redundancies reduces the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys and makes a contribution in this area. My data however suggested that making use of voluntary redundancies does help in mitigating the psychological impact on redundancy envoys as it removes the need to have the unpleasant conversations. Redundancy envoys also argued that strategies to reduce compulsory redundancies are effective in mitigating the negative impact on employees, an area where my data also contributes to knowledge.

Easing Consciences

A major contribution to knowledge is sharing and promoting one of the most successful coping strategies found in my research which was for redundancy envoys to address their consciences; I refer to this as “Easing Consciences”. This coping technique helps to address the guilt experienced by redundancy envoys and supports my key contribution to literature: the best strategy to mitigate the impact on redundancy envoys is to limit the factor of guilt experienced. Some of the very many examples covered in my findings are below. Redundancy envoys coped much better when they felt they did as much as they can to support victims, which included various elements such as offering training, support with finding jobs, offering time off for interviews, interview and CV writing training, moral support, good references, coaching and counselling skills. An additional benefit that my data promotes in this field is that treating victims well has a direct impact on survivors’ morale, which is a very important contribution to knowledge.

The reason for dismissal

An interesting theme that emerged was the association with dismissal being easier if the reason was more justifiable for the redundancy envoy. My data contributes to existing knowledge here and I would argue this method of coping should be classed as cognitive distancing relating to ‘justice and fairness’ (Clair and Dufresne; 2004). A new contribution to existing knowledge was recognising that the emotional impact on redundancy envoys is considerably less when the reason for the dismissal is due to the employee’s

own wrong doing, such as misconduct. Redundancy envoys reported less guilt associated with such dismissals as opposed to redundancies where the employee had no or very limited control over the situation. This redundancy envoy felt that dismissing an employee for reason of disciplinary was easier. The contribution here is connecting business rationale with the reason for dismissal. The stronger the business rationale, the lesser the negative impact on redundancy envoys which may help in alleviating guilt for redundancy envoys.

Limiting proximity to the victims

My findings show that limiting proximity to the victims could significantly reduce the impact on the redundancy envoy. Torres (2011: 286) refers to a well-known metaphor used in the military to describe the impact of proximity very effectively: "it is always more traumatic to kill someone with a blade than with a rifle." My findings enhance known literature by arguing that, where possible, organisations can help mitigate the psychological impact on redundancy envoys by assigning redundancies to managers to allow a professional distance from colleagues, for example, to let managers implement redundancies for unknown teams.

7.4.4 Emotional impact

The second primary contribution to knowledge was the identification of the importance of the emotional roller coaster for redundancy envoys. Victims of redundancies are exposed to a variety of emotions and redundancy envoys not only have to deal with employees going through this crisis but are often

themselves experiencing these emotions. The emotional impact is sometimes so significant for redundancy envoys that it can result in long term absences, stress related illness and professional help is needed to help them deal with the negative emotional impact. The key topics in my research that pointed to this conclusion are as follows:

- **Valuing the grief cycle/change curve**
- **Deploying empathy as a coping technique**
- **Contradicting knowledge on physical distancing**
- **Professional help with coping**
- **Stress of losing good colleagues and talent**
- **Planning**
- **Communication between HR and management**
- **Training for redundancy envoys**

Valuing the grief cycle/change curve

I believe a very important contribution to knowledge is the recognition to utilise the grief cycle when dealing with redundancies. A few redundancy envoys made reference to the change curve/grief cycle and being aware of the different stages people go through as this could help the approach taken with victims based on their personal level of acceptance of the redundancies. I would argue this is due to a lack of appreciation in literature of the true complexity of emotions experienced during redundancies, but which can be seen in my findings.

Deploying empathy as a coping technique

Clair and Dufresne (2004) state that, typically, redundancy envoys would demonstrate sympathy and shy away from empathy as part of emotional distancing. My data demonstrated that redundancy envoys felt the opposite and that implementing redundancies with empathy was actually a critical part of how they coped and a more successful strategy in the overall delivery. Redundancy envoys in my data refer specifically to their previous experience of being made redundant as helping them to realise the best approach in the delivery of redundancies, which is a new complement to existing knowledge. Redundancy envoys expressed that by having experienced what good looks like and a not so positive approach, it helped them understand how employees feel during redundancy situations and they can therefore deliver the message with more empathy and come across as more genuine.

Contradicting knowledge on physical distancing

Clair and Dufresne (2004) and Torres (2011) contend that a popular strategy is physical distancing which involves the 'avoidance of contact' where redundancy envoys try to avoid encounters with the impacted people by, for example, working from home or away from the office. My data suggests that redundancy envoys completely disagreed with this strategy, in contradiction to the majority of literature on this topic, and in fact went out of their way to travel to offices to connect and talk to people when opportunity for distancing themselves physically was readily available. I thus believe that for my findings to contradict respected authors' work in this field, this is definitely an area for further research.

Professional help with coping

The findings looked at the psychological impact of redundancies and support Torres' (2011:181) view that the very real suffering of the redundancy envoys remains "unspoken and unheard". My data acknowledge the significance of the emotional impact on redundancy envoys and my findings show that in certain instances the impact was so severe it resulted in long term stress related absences, resignations, medication and professional help such as psychologists.

Stress of losing of good colleagues and talent

A noticeable stressor for redundancy envoys is the impact of losing team members, colleagues and talented employees, often beyond their control. My data contributes to existing knowledge in this area by recognising that redundancy envoys grieve the loss of their long-standing colleagues who are often a support network that is taken away through redundancies. In addition to what is known, redundancy envoys experience pain and loss within their known environment and teams. The loss is also extended to losing talented people who 'jump ship' due to the unsettled environment.

Planning

My findings contribute meaningfully in the area of planning and preparation required for the actual redundancy meetings. My data highlights the importance of preparation prior to entering redundancy consultation meetings

with facts such as redundancy calculations, understanding the selection matrix, being prepared for all questions and answers.

Under the topic of planning, my data also contributes specifically to the area of planning that pertains to organisational design: which talent and skills to keep and forward thinking about the company's ideal structure to deliver to an optimum level. My data fills a gap in knowledge on this topic.

Communication between HR and management

My findings specifically point to the importance of good communication between the business, HR and employee representatives. This level of granularity with regard to communication between HR and the business has not been explored in literature and my data adds valuable knowledge to this area.

Training for redundancy envoys

Gandolfi (2009) argues that more research is needed in this area, which is a statement fully supported by my findings. My data highlighted an immense demand for training on various topics, which helps to alleviate the negative impact of implementing redundancies for redundancy envoys and complements existing knowledge meaningfully. The key contribution here is recognising that training provides knowledge, which builds confidence. One of the biggest areas for training identified for redundancy envoys was on the aspect of how to deal with the emotional side. The pilot of my restructure workshop and the very positive feedback in itself provide a unique contribution

to knowledge on how the training provided empowered redundancy envoys to feel more confident about what they were doing.

7.4.5 Leadership

My data contributes to knowledge on leadership by demonstrating, through my pilot implementation, the significant impact strong leadership can have on mitigating the negative impact on redundancy envoys. My data shows that the impact is so powerful because it reduces pressure on redundancy envoys as the majority of the pain of redundancies is absorbed by strong leaders. Within BDA, the MD's leadership style proved to have a significantly positive impact on the morale, trust and commitment of the survivors.

7.4.6 Positive impact on redundancy envoys

There is very little literature to evidence positive indicators for redundancy envoys associated with redundancies, such as promotions, career development and personal growth, and this is an area where my findings bring a fresh and very exciting new perspective. This area, which I found very interesting, was specific to the positive consequences of redundancies for redundancy envoys in terms of promotions and increased responsibilities. Redundancy envoys expressed positive implications, such as improved negotiation skills and enjoying the challenges, as a result of exposure to redundancies, promotions and career development. I believe this is a very important area to explore as potentially these positive elements further helped to mitigate the negative psychological impacts on redundancy envoys.

7.4.7 Being at risk as a redundancy envoy

My findings showed that quite often in redundancy situations, the redundancy envoy may have an additional burden of being at risk themselves, so they have a concern for their own job security as well as for their teams. My data brings a new dimension to this dichotomy and contributes positively in this area where it highlights the stress caused for redundancy envoys to be in this difficult situation.

7.5 Research limitations

The restructure workshop and restructure model were piloted in one business, BDA. Running a pilot that indicated success may be a limitation as it was only trialled in one business and other variables may have influenced this. Ideally, the restructure model and workshop pilot would have benefited from being trialled in more businesses facing redundancies; however, this opportunity did not present itself within the timescales of the PhD journey.

Arguably, the use of a qualitative approach has limitations due to its subjective nature and the risk of influencing data analysis with my own values and beliefs. I accept the limitations of a qualitative approach and believe that the approach of validating interview data with observations, diary keeping and comments from the Mood indicator helped to address some of the limitations of a qualitative approach and highlighted inconsistencies in data.

7.6 Opportunities for future research

Below I highlight some potential areas for future research:

- **Positive impact on redundancy envoys**
- **The role of employee representatives as redundancy envoys**
- **Complexity and size of the redundancies**
- **Impact on redundancy envoys' performance**
- **Knowledge on physical distancing**
- **Stress of losing good colleagues and talent**
- **Unique role of employee representative**

Positive impact on redundancy envoys

There is very little literature to evidence positive indicators for redundancy envoys associated with redundancies and this is an area where I feel further research would be very interesting. It would be fascinating to identify whether the promotion of the personal benefits to redundancy envoys helps in alleviating some of the negative elements of implementing a redundancy programme.

The role of employee representatives as redundancy envoys

As my study is the first that focuses on and recognises the weight of responsibility for employee representatives as redundancy envoys, I would recommend a focused study on this group and their unique dichotomy during redundancy situations representing the best interests of the business as well as employees.

Complexity and size of the redundancies

Literature on the impact on redundancy envoys that measures the significance of the impact depending on the size or complexity of the redundancy programme was not identified anywhere. My data indicated that this is a topic that had an influence over the impact experienced by redundancy envoys and is thus worthy of further research, such as the comment below referring to the closure of a factory in a large-scale redundancy:

I just remember that the 400-odd people had a sharp intake of breath as he told them that they will be losing their livelihoods and even today I shiver just to think about it. That is an experience you don't want to think about or don't want to have. (I-HRD5)

Impact on redundancy envoys' performance

My data indicated that an additional stressor for redundancy envoys during redundancy programmes is that due to fewer employees and increased workloads, this consequently impacted on their overall performance ratings. Although this may not be relevant in all companies, my findings indicated that the negative impact of the redundancies resulted in redundancy envoys being unable to meet their personal and business targets. Where this was linked to a bonus, redundancy envoys suffered on financial pay-outs as well. This point was not established in existing literature and provides for further research opportunities.

Knowledge on physical distancing

My data contradicted the existing knowledge on physical distancing. My findings found that the strategy of avoiding or limiting contact was not favoured

by redundancy envoys and, in fact, redundancy envoys completely disagreed with this strategy. Due to this contradiction, I believe further research in this field would add value to understanding why my data is so different from existing knowledge.

Stress of losing of good colleagues and talent

A noticeable stressor for redundancy envoys is the impact of losing team members, colleagues and talented employees. This is an area that was not recognised in literature and which I would argue deserves to be noted as a significant stressor. I thus believe that this topic warrants further research and analysis.

Unique role of employee representative

The unique role of employee representatives during redundancies is an area that deserves further research. It is not clear how torn employee representatives are in their role of representing the organisation as well as being the voice for the workforce.

7.7 Personal reflections

Deciding on the topic for research took a long time; however, once I caught the bug, the research journey has only been a pleasure. My endless passion towards mitigating the impact and pain for redundancy envoys has made the research and data collection enjoyable, writing up about it less so. Throughout this journey, I have discovered a lot about myself, my strengths and weaknesses, and the personal learning will not be lost. Gaining a PhD is about

passion and commitment and I hope that this is evident through my work. I really hope that this journey does not end here and further opportunities for research on this topic present themselves along the way.

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Appendix A: Redundancy Support Structure

This appendix summarises the support structure offered to victims, survivors and redundancy envoys during the pilot implementation within BDA.

It is worth noting that due to the challenging financial situation that the company found itself in, the budget for a redundancy support structure was very limited and no additional funding was available, other than the standard company offering, which included a basic outplacement service and enhanced redundancy pay as per company contracts. Support offered beyond the company standard is indicated in the table below as well as support that was arranged at no cost to the company.

Initiative	Description	Support beyond company standard	Support arranged at no additional cost
	Support structure for all victims, survivors and redundancy envoys		
Communication	All employees had the opportunity for monthly face to face updates from the MD & HR BP directly through town hall meetings. For employees travelling or not available to attend face to face communication, the MD and HR BP would follow up with live meetings, where employees could dial in through their laptops or phones and follow the live presentation with a slide show. These sessions were also recorded and saved on our local intranet to enable any employee could access them afterwards. To ensure all employees were reached, we followed up with an email on the same day to cover the key messages and an updated frequently asked questions document. We kept a live update on our intranet with easily accessible information	x	x

	regarding communications, town hall meetings, relevant information such as, who the ECC reps were and how to contact them, where to get counselling and support, the redundancy policy, contact details for dedicated HR employees.		
Involvement and engagement	Dedicated two-way communication sessions, biweekly with the MD and FD. We invited 6-8 employees from different departments to provide open feedback on any issues during the process of restructuring.	X	X
Morale and engagement	To support employees with an element of control, we offered an elaborative voluntary redundancy programme which significantly reduced the amount of compulsory redundancies which reduced stress in the organisation for all three groups of impacted employees.		
Advice and counselling	All employees had access to the company's employee assistance provider where they could obtain relevant confidential advice and legal services seven days per week, at all hours. In addition, every employee was entitled to six free face to face or telephone counselling sessions.		
Morale and engagement	A mood indicator tool was in operation where employees could feedback how they felt, their concerns of jublations whilst remaining anonymous. Random individuals were invited to post feedback on a biweekly basis. This gave the opportunity for any employee to be heard in a safe environment and for management to respond to the issues or successes and keep a close eye on the organisation's morale.	X	X
Support provided for victims:			
Education and training: Free publications	The following publications were made available free of charge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borrowing money • Getting financial advice • Making the most of your money 	X	X

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems paying your mortgage • Income withdrawal • Your retirement options • Redundancy Support 		
Education and training: Internal publication	<p>Within the company we prepared a handbook for all employees at risk, which was designed to help them through the practical implications of the business re-organisation proposal. The handbook covered details of the redundancy process, consultation periods, time scales, redeployment opportunities, where to look for work internally, CV writing skills, external links to job websites, alternative options to redundancy, retirement, financial advice and many more relevant aspects. To compliment the handbook, we provided a frequently asked question and answer list that were bespoke to the respective redundancy phases.</p>	x	x
Education and training: Workshop	<p>Self-Employment all day workshop: Workshop covered the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal consideration • What is self-employment? • Skills required and challenges • What does success mean? • Business formats • Organising the business • Your workplace • Equipment you will need • Setting up an office • Employing others • Professional advice • Record keeping • Insurance • VAT • Marketing and selling principles • Unique selling points 	x	x

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handling objections and closing the sale • Market research • Pricing • Creating a professional image and advertising • Business plan preparation 		
	<p>Active Retirement all day workshop: Workshop covered the following elements: Areas covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retirement – what it means • Reflections • Retirement readiness • Identifying the issues • Feelings and emotions • Adjusting the balance • Accentuating the positives • Making better use of time • Looking after yourself • Looking after your finances • Budget planning • Work options • Career options for the mature • CV production • Skills and strengths • Example CVs • Job finding • Setting Goals • What next • Realise your dreams 	X	X
Education and training: Training	Two-hour career advice training session on how and where to look for work: “Hidden Jobs (Where to Find the Vacancies) 70% of jobs are not advertised – so, where are they?”	X	X
Education and skills: Training	Two-hour career advice training session on how and to look for work using social media: “Job Search Using Social Media “ This session focussed on maximising opportunities by using social media to help in job searches.	X	X
Education and skills: Workshop	Lunch workshops on CV writing and interview techniques and advice	X	X

One to one support: Individual career advice	Each employee at risk was entitled to three private and individual career advice sessions with an external provider.	x	x
Advice and counselling	Each employee had access to the company's employee assistance provider where they could obtain relevant confidential advice and legal services seven days per week, at all hours. In addition, every employee was entitled to six free face to face or telephone counselling session.		
Advice and counselling	In addition to the employee assistance support, each employee that were put at risk of redundancy received outplacement support. The service consisted of access to a career web site portal, a personal career coach and each employee was assigned a personal recruitment campaign manager, 24/7 helpline and remote job and company search. These services were available to employees up to ninety days after they have found a new role.		
Time off	All employees at risk were offered time off to allow attending interviews, training, counselling or workshops.		
Moral support:	All employees were entitled to use a private room in the office for participating in telephone interviews, counselling or career advice. The room was equipped with a telephone, a personal computer that was preloaded with links to recruitment websites in general and recruitment sites specific to the specific industry where skills were likely to be highly transferable. We also provided publications and magazines specific to the business industry that employees could use for job searching opportunities.	x	x
Financial support:	The company offered enhanced redundancy pay on a corporate level		
	Support provided for redundancy envoys:		

Education and Skills: Workshop	Two-day workshop on Managing People Through Organisational Change Course Objectives included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common drivers for change • Why change can fail • Understanding the problem before implementing change • Implementing effective change John Kotter's 8 steps for effective change • Managing key stakeholders • Leader's role in creating motivated employees • How to positively influence changes in the workplace • HR/legal implications to some changes • Coaching techniques for motivating employees during change 	x	x
Education and Skills: Workshop	A one-day Restructure Workshop Workshop objectives included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be able to describe the drivers behind restructuring activities • Have described the emotions that each of the affected groups might experience • Will have examples of supporting behaviours that you can offer individuals in affected groups • Will know the legal framework for conducting redundancies • Will be prepared for some of the challenges in managing individual redundancy consultation meetings • Will have practised "giving bad news" • Have a strategy for coping personally during the management of a restructure • Have a personal action plan for the future 	x	x
One to one support	All managers had full support of HR in the preparation and attendance of all consultation meetings.		

Advice and counselling	Each manager had access to the company's employee assistance provider where they could obtain relevant confidential advice and legal services seven days per week, at all hours. In addition, every employee was entitled to six free face to face or telephone counselling session.		
Involvement and Leadership	Redundancy envoys had the benefit of being involved in strategy workshops to determine impacted workforce and collectively coming to an agreement on the turnaround strategy.		
Structure and Planning	Redundancy envoys had the benefit of involvement, visibility and planning of a comprehensive project plan with clear milestones and achievable timescales. The project plans were reviewed on a weekly basis with clear communication of any implications.		
Structure and Planning	Risk assessment workshops were conducted with managers to understand any single points of failure in the organisation or critical resources and a necessary strategy was put in place to ensure we don't lose critical skills.		

Appendix B

PhD research..... Madeleine Petzer

Example interview questions

Developing effective mechanisms for mitigating the psychological impact experienced by the redundancy envoy during redundancy situations.

1. Research aims

Redundancy envoy for this purpose included management, employee collective representatives and HR professionals with roles specific to the decision making, planning and implementation of the redundancy process.

The research aim is to focus on the mitigation of the psychological impact on the redundancy envoy during the process of redundancies and will aim to address the following research questions:

1. What is the psychological impact on redundancy envoys during the implementation of redundancy situations?
2. What are the key stressors for redundancy envoys?
3. What coping techniques do redundancy envoys deploy during redundancy situations?
4. What interventions are best placed to alleviate and minimise the negative psychological impact on redundancy envoys?

1.2 Research context

To cope with increased competitive pressure, demand for cost savings and high performance, many organisations have come to rely on a range of the strategies, such as capitalism (Gilpin, 2000), globalization of product and capital markets, work intensification (Burchell, Ladipo and Wilkinson, 2002) restructuring and downsizing. This management strategy of restructuring, often resulting in downsizing [redundancy programmes] has been used globally for more than two decades (Williams, 2004).

Literature on downsizing [redundancy programmes] is abundant when it comes to representing the impact on “survivors” (Clair and Defense, 2004) and “victims” (Paulsen et al., 2005; Waters, 2010). “Survivors” or sometimes referred to with the term “survivor syndrome” refers to the remaining employees in an organisation, after it has been subject to a redundancy programme as stated by Baruch and Hind (1999). “Victims” are therefore the ex-employees who have been unsuccessful in remaining employed by the organisation and as a result have been made redundant. On the other hand, research conducted on the impact on redundancy envoys is very limited.

It is my intention not only to create a clearer understanding of the impact on the envoys of redundancy, but also to develop a strategy to support redundancy envoys to be in a better position to protect themselves from the negative impact of redundancies and consequently have a better outcome for the individuals impacted as well as the organisation.

1.3 Research ethics

In compliance with the British Psychology Society (1996, cited Holloway and Jefferson, 2003), the integrity, impartiality and respect for persons and evidence will be valued and the proper interests of those involved will be safeguarded through an accurate and truthful account of the findings. The identities of all participants and the respective companies they represent will be kept anonymous, unless express permission is given that anonymity is not required. A brief description of size and sector of the company would suffice to explain the research setting. Interviews aim to last one to one and a half hours and will be recorded with permission of the participant for the ease of reference. If participants object to making use of a dictaphone, I will take written notes.

2. Data collection

2.1 Profile of redundancy envoy

Job Title:

Experience in HR / Business / Employee representative:

Experience in redundancies:

Any other related experience of redundancies that you feel may be relevant.

2.2 Context of the redundancy exercise

Company 1:

(Brief overview of the company, i.e. sector, number of employees, etc.)

Company 2 (if relevant):

(Brief overview of the company, i.e. sector, number of employees, etc.)

Number of years of experience of working in HR / Business / Employee representative

Number employees at risk of redundancy.

Number of employees being made redundant.

Reason behind the redundancy.

What was your specific role during the redundancy exercise?

Please copy above for any further companies.

2.3 Specific impact of participating in the redundancy programme on the participant

What was the impact of being involved in the redundancy experience on you?

If you have personally been put at risk or have been made redundant before, how do you think this has impacted on the manner in which you handle redundancies?

How did you prepare yourself for the process?

How did you find the process?

How did conducting the process impact on you emotionally?

How did conducting the process impact on your psychological wellbeing?

How did the exercise impact on your relationship with work?

How did the exercise impact on your relationships outside of work?

What part of the process did you find particularly difficult?

What part of the process did you find particularly easy?

What was the impact on your career?

How did the exercise impact on your personal development?

2.4 Coping techniques deployed by the participant

How did you cope with the process?

What coping strategies worked for you?

What coping strategies did not work for you?

If you had to do this again, what would you do differently?

2.5 Strategies for mitigation of the psychological impact

What support did you receive during the process?

Did you ask for support when you found it difficult?

If you did, what kind of support did the organisation offer?

If support was offered, did you make use of it?

What kind of support did you find most effective?

Was there any particular support the company did not offer, that you thought would have been appreciated?

What support do you think facilitators of redundancies require?

What would you like to see as outputs from this research project?

Appendix C: Interview participants

Interview participant group	Code
HR Directors	
HR Director (EU Director for Global Engineering)	HRD1
HR Director (Owner– HR consultancy)	HRD2
HR Director (Owner – HR consultancy)	HRD3
HR Director (Transportation division – Global Engineering)	HRD4
HR Director (Electrical products – Global Engineering)	HRD5
HR Director (Healthcare – Global Engineering)	HRD6
HR Professionals	
HR Consultant (Transportation division)	HR1
Snr HR Business Partner (Building Design and Automation)	HR2
Snr HR Business Partner (Avionics services company)	HR3
HR Business Partner (Transportation division)	HR4
HR Business Partner (Avionics manufacturing company)	HR5
HR consultant (Transportation division)	HR6
Snr HR Business Partner (Building Design and Automation)	HR7
HR consultant (Rail division)	HR8
HR consultant (Building Design and Automation)	HR9
Business Directors	
Global Finance Director (Transportation and Electrification)	OD1
Global Strategy Director (Building Design and Automation)	OD2
Head of Quality and Business Development	OD3
Managing Director (Building Design and Automation)	OD4
Finance Director 2 (Building Design and Automation)	OD5
Head of Building Design Automation and Products	OD6
Finance Director 1 (Building Design and Automation)	OD7
Line Management	
Head of Operations (Rail division)	LM1
Head of Safety and compliance (Global Engineering Products)	LM2
Labour Manager (Logistics and shipping company)	LM3
Head of Field Service (Transportation)	LM4
Head of Technical Products (Building Design Automation)	LM5
Head of Projects 2 (Building Design Automation)	LM6
Engineering manager (Transportation)	LM7

Head of Finance – Service (Building Design Automation)	LM9
Engineering manager (Building Design Automation)	LM10
ECC reps	
ECC and EU Union rep (Transportation)	ECC1
ECC – Building Design Automation Corporate Functions	ECC2
ECC – Building Design Automation Engineers	ECC3
ECC – Building Design Automation Products	ECC4

Appendix D

PhD research..... Madeleine Petzer

Participant information sheet

Developing effective mechanisms for mitigating the psychological impact experienced by the redundancy envoy during redundancy situations.

1. Research aims

Redundancy envoy for this purpose included management, employee collective representatives and HR professionals with roles specific to the decision making, planning and implementation of the redundancy process.

The research aim is to focus on the mitigation of the psychological impact on the redundancy envoy during the process of redundancies and will aim to address the following research questions:

1. What is the psychological impact on redundancy envoys during the implementation of redundancy situations?
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1.3 Research ethics

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2. Data collection

2.1 Profile of redundancy envoy

Job Title:

Experience in HR / Business / Employee representative:

Experience in redundancies:

Any other related experience of redundancies that you feel may be relevant.

2.2 Context of the redundancy exercise

Company 1:

(Brief overview of the company, i.e. sector, number of employees, etc.)

Company 2 (if relevant):

(Brief overview of the company, i.e. sector, number of employees, etc.)

Number of years of experience of working in HR / Business

Number employees at risk of redundancy.

Number of employees being made redundant.

Reason behind the redundancy.

What was your specific role during the redundancy exercise?

Please copy above for any further companies.

2.3 Typical questions that may be used

If you have personally been put at risk or have been made redundant before, how do you think this has impacted on the manner in which you handle redundancies?

How did conducting the process impact on your psychological wellbeing?

How did the exercise impact on your relationship with work?

What part of the process did you find particularly easy / difficult?

What kind of support did you get during the process?

How did you prepare yourself for the process?

2.4 Consent to use data

- I understand that my participation in the study is entirely voluntary. I am free to withdraw from the study up until December 2016 without giving a reason.

- I understand that my responses will be treated as confidential and understand that all data will be presented as anonymous to protect my identity.
- I understand that data storage will comply with the Data Protection Acts (1998). All recordings on the dictaphone will be wiped once the event has been transcribed by me the researcher. Any hardcopy documents will be anonymised and stored on an encrypted external hard drive.

“Herewith I, give the researcher, Madeleine Petzer, permission to use the data collected from me on through interview, anonymously, in the above-named project. I understand that I may withdraw from the project at any time up until December 2016.”

Signed:

Date: