AN EXPLORATION OF THE ROLE OF A STRATEGIC INTERNAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM IN THE MERGING WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY

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An exploration of the role of a strategic internal communication system in the merging Walter Sisulu University

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DECLARATION

I, Sandi Soha, student number 20691727, hereby declare that the treatise/dissertation/theses for my qualification is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

Signature________________________________________

Date____________________________________________
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ABSTRACT

The merger of institutions of higher learning in South Africa has demonstrated to the study an exploration of the role of strategic internal communication system – in the merging of the Walter Sisulu University. The purpose of the study is to determine to what extent employees of the Walter Sisulu University have perceived that the internal communication system of this university has contributed towards an effectively merged organisation. The study was conducted after three historically disadvantaged institutions of higher learning merged to form one comprehensive university.

The three merged institutions are: the Border Technikon, the Eastern Cape Technikon and the University of Transkei. It was foreseeable during the process of the merger, that combining three institutions could possibly result in lower staff morale and uncertainty.

The study has explored the theoretical framework for understanding the role of strategic internal communication systems in an organisation. The study was approached from a systems’ perspective and that of a transformational model.

A survey research design was utilised for the purpose of this study – in order to assess the validity and reliability of the data. A qualitative research design was used for the purpose of this study – in order to acquire the desired outcomes of the research. Questionnaires were used and the sample was drawn from a large population of the Walter Sisulu University – from, four campuses – with the aim of allowing one to make inferences about the population as a whole.

The questionnaire was structured in four main sections namely: Biographical information, internal-communication systems, tools of internal communication, and line-management communication.
The findings of the study aids the understanding behind the view of internal communication systems as having contributed – or not contributed – to a successfully merged university.
CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND, RESEARCH PROBLEM, AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 Introduction

This study will attempt to explore the role of strategic internal communication system in the merged Walter Sisulu University (WSU), focusing on both the academic and administrative staff. This research will be conducted after three historically disadvantaged institutions of higher learning merged to form one comprehensive university. The three institutions, the Border Technikon, the Eastern Cape Technikon and the University of Transkei are situated in one of the least-developed parts of South Africa. They operated independently of one another with different organisational cultures.

This situation caught the researcher’s attention; and it motivated a study of the internal communications system in the aftermath of the merger. The comprehensive university is faced with challenges on how to harmonise structures and programmes – to ensure that members of the university would be able to carry out their activities in a working environment.

The WSU was established to comply with the transformation of higher education throughout South Africa. The process began in 2002, and was completed in 2005. The previous 36 South African universities and Technikons have been reduced to 22 – through mergers and incorporations – in terms of the Higher Education Act No 101 of 1997, as amended.

It was foreseeable during the process of the merger, that combining three institutions could possibly result in lower staff morale and uncertainty. Structures and lines of communication were not clearly defined; and this could also have resulted in many of the employees not putting sufficient effort into the execution of their duties.

In deciding on a choice of topic for conducting this research, a number of factors were
taken into consideration.

Firstly, the researcher’s current field of interest in Public Relations in general and internal communications in particular; secondly, the researcher’s experience in this field of Public Relations; and lastly, how this research would be of use in the future for researchers, especially for institutions of higher learning and those that have undergone the process of merging.

In our modern era there are few organisations that can survive without effective strategic internal communication. In some organisations, senior management, in particular, does not feel that there is any need for strategic internal public relations. This is due to a failure to understand the role of strategic internal communication, especially in regard to the effectiveness of internal communication as a function of public relations.

1.2 Background to the research question

Communication within an organisation plays a very crucial role. Mersham and Skinner (2001:8) stated that communication permeates all activities in an organisation; it represents an important work tool, through which individuals can understand their organisational role; and it also co-ordinates organisational sub-units.

Today, organisations have a wide choice of different communication strategies and tools for communicating at all levels within an organisation. Mersham and Skinner (2001:70) states that (communication technique or tools) selected would depend on the subject matter that needs to be communicated to employees. Of the many communication techniques available, induction programmes and printed or graphic communication appear to be more commonly used, either alone or in combination, to convey an important or complicated message.
This research focuses on the Walter Sisulu University and will propose an internal communication model to enable the institution to begin to address issues that need improvement in the internal communication system.

It is clear from the available sources on organisational communication (e.g. Kitchen 2001:81; Theaker 2001: 135; Seitel 2004:266), that an organisation’s internal communication system is an important contributing factor to staff morale and productivity. Employees tend to have higher morale and are more motivated in the workplace if all the channels of communication are open. Some messages contain general information about the organisation; while others, are intended to motivate staff or to boost the organisation’s general morale (Frost et al. 1997:149).

A modern organisation, therefore, cannot function effectively without a positive internal climate and well-functioning channels of internal communication. To reach these goals, an organisation’s internal communication strategy should be responsive to employee needs and concerns. Seitel (2004:288) states that in the new information era, managers have realised that the assets of the institution lie very much in the hands of the employees.

Seitel (2004:261) points out that the internal communication systems, then, have become the key to nourishing the organisation. Management cannot afford to ignore the aspirations, attitudes and preferences expressed by its employees. It has to gain from satisfied employees, working at jobs to which they are best suited. When organisations commit themselves to effective communication with their employees, a number of important benefits can result. Well-informed employees are usually satisfied employees (Baskin et al. 1997:229).

It may, therefore, be concluded that, in order to be effective, an organisation should have a strategic internal communication system that is developed, implemented and monitored, according to the industry’s best practice, as well as the needs of the staff.
The organisation whose strategic internal communication system is relevant to this study is the Walter Sisulu University (WSU).

The WSU has a staff complement of 2000 members, including both academic and administrative employees. It has campuses in Mthatha, Buffalo City (East London), Butterworth, and Queenstown. The courses that are offered by the WSU comprise Engineering Sciences, Business Management, Law and Health Sciences.

1.3. Problem statement

A merged institution like the WSU with diverse employees is more likely to be affected by internal communication problems than the organisations that are not undergoing the same process, because structures and internal communication lines have not been finalised. The merging of large institutions usually means a merging of different organisational cultures, which may leave employees uncertain about the new institution’s culture and future. Employees may also feel threatened by a merger, because job security may be affected.

The period following the merger may be characterised by rumours of looming retrenchments, lower staff morale – and ultimately, lowered productivity.

Bergh and Theron (2000:191) stated that job satisfaction may be defined as a predominantly positive attitude towards the work situation. An individual may be dissatisfied with some aspects of his or her work and be satisfied with others, but if he or she feels or thinks positively about relatively more aspects, it may be deduced that there is a general factor that can be labelled “job satisfaction”.

At the WSU specifically, the author as an employee, has observed that after the recent merger, confusion existed among the staff members regarding new job descriptions and available channels of communication.
As a result of the significance of internal communication as an independent variable affecting employees’ behaviour and attitudes, an investigation into the effectiveness of strategic internal communication at the merged WSU would be useful in assisting this organisation towards higher staff morale, improved productivity; and ultimately, greater effectiveness.

The problem statement of this study reads as follows:

“An exploration of the role of a strategic internal communication system in the merged Walter Sisulu University”

1.5. Research objectives

The research objectives will attempt to explore the role of the internal communication system at the WSU; and specifically, emphases will be placed on the following issues:

- To determine whether the strategic internal communication system at the WSU has contributed to a positive organisational climate.
- To determine whether the strategic internal communication system at the WSU has contributed to staff morale.
- To determine whether strategic internal communication system at the WSU has contributed to higher staff productivity.

1.6. Thesis statement

This study will attempt to give academic insight into the role of strategic internal communication system when three different organizations merge, as well as insight into leadership development in the department – those who were expected to undertake these functions.

Hypothesis: “An effective strategic internal communication system within an organisation leads to an effective organisation.”
This statement rests on the following assumptions:

1. It is assumed that employees will be more **productive** if all the channels of communication are open.
2. It is assumed that the open lines of communication will lead to a positive organisational climate.
3. It is assumed that staff morale will improve if all the channels of communication are open.

1.7. Delineation and limitations of research

The study will attempt to evaluate the strategic **internal communication** system at the WSU, focusing on both the academic and administrative staff on all the campuses. Staff members from the department of Communication and Marketing, as well as students and temporary staff members, will not be part of the research project.

Members from the departments mentioned above are largely responsible for managing the strategic **internal communication** system; and they would therefore, probably not provide altogether accurate responses to the survey.

The temporary staff members and students at the WSU will not be included in the research project, as their position in the WSU is temporary. Data will be collected from a sizeable population of employees at the WSU. Structured questionnaires will also be administered.

1.8. Definition of terms and concepts

The following definitions of key theoretical concepts relevant to this study will be used in this research:

6
Internal communication: All kinds of interaction that take place between members of a big or small organisation (Skinner, Von Essen and Mersham, 2003:96).

Employee relations: The goal of employee relations is to identify, establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between the organisations and the employees on whom its success and failure depend (Theaker, 2001:132).

Corporate communication: The process by which the identity of an organisation is translated into its image. Its exclusive aim is to project the image and identity of the organisation (Skinner, Von Essen, and Mersham, 2003:388).

Public relations: Public relations practice is the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisational leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action, which would serve both the organisation and the public interest (Skinner, Von Essen and Mersham, 2003:4).

Organisational communication: Communication in an organisation is the transfer and receiving of ideas, feelings and attitudes between management and the workers. It also involves the understanding of information (Frost, Vos and Dreyer, 1997:147).

Downward communication: A means of directing information/messages to the subordinates. Messages include job instructions, individual expectations and evaluation (Barker and Gaut, 2002:182).

Upward communication: This is defined as any message sent from a subordinate to the supervisor or manager (Barker, 2002:183).

Lateral/horizontal communication: Communication between departments of an organisation (Barker and Gaut, 2002:184).

Organisational climate: The dominant philosophy that applies within an organisation and is responsible for the nature of the relationships within it (Skinner, Von Essen and Mersham, 2003:390).

Organisational change: Organisational change is defined as the adoption of new ideas or any new behaviour by an organisation.

Organisational culture: Organisational culture represents the ‘social glue’ that binds members of an organisation together (Reece and Brandt, 1999:153).
1.9. Significance of the study

The results of the study will be presented to the management of the WSU as a proposed model or as suggested guidelines, from which all may learn. These results will also be submitted to an accredited journal (such as Communicare) in the form of an article.

1.10. Brief chapter overview

Chapter 1: Background, research problem and problem statement: The notion of internal communication can have an impact on how organisations behave during the process of acquisition and mergers. This chapter, therefore, attempts to give an indication of why this process of internal communication at the WSU would need to be evaluated.

Chapter 2: Literature review. This looks at what has already been written on the subject, and on what really complements the study being undertaken.

The literature review focuses on internal communication in the organisation and its impact on the success and development of the merged institution. Current literature on corporate communication, public relations, employee relations and organisational communication will, consequently, be consulted.

Chapter 3: Walter Sisulu University’s internal communication systems. This chapter focuses on the WSU’s internal communication systems, and how they have contributed to the merged university. The chapter will also look at marketing, communication and development department; and on how they have implemented the internal communications strategies, during the process of the merger.

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology. This chapter will discuss the research design and the sample. The population of the research comprises both academic and administrative employees from four WSU campuses: Mthatha, Buffalo City (East London), Butterworth and Queenstown.
A questionnaire will be distributed to members of the WSU on all four campuses.

Chapter 5: Findings. This chapter will focus on the findings from the research questionnaires distributed among the participants – in an effort to evaluate the internal communication systems at the WSU.

Chapter 6: Demographical information analysis. The objective of this chapter is to explore the demographical representation of the Walter Sisulu University – especially, of those members participating in the research project.

Chapter 7: Internal communication analysis. This chapter will analyse the questionnaires distributed among the workforce at the WSU. The Likert scale will be used, where all the respondents will be asked to rate a particular statement by selecting responses, in which each will be given a code number.

Chapter 8: Tools of communication analysis. This chapter will focus on the tools of communication utilised to ensure that there is proper communication within the WSU.

Chapter 9: Line management communication analysis. This chapter will explore some of the statements in the questionnaire on line-communication management. The Likert scale, with the ratings from one to five, will be employed.

Chapter 10: Summary of findings. The primary objective of this chapter is to highlight the summary of the findings from this study. It will also provide the information in an abbreviated form, as well as the information which the reader has to bear in mind.

Chapter 11: Conclusion. This chapter will look at the background to the research question, the literature review, the research design, the methodology, and the findings in the context of the problem statement of the research. It will also offer a final conclusion.
Chapter 12: Recommendations and implementation. This chapter will focus on the recommendations; and how they should be implemented at the WSU, as seen from the findings of this study. This chapter will also name each recommendation, and explain where and how these suggestions should be implemented.
CHAPTER 2
THE LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

This chapter will explore the theoretical framework for understanding the impact of internal communication on an organisation. The merging of institutions of higher learning is a new phenomenon in South Africa. This chapter will enable us to understand how internal communication has affected the workforce.

Various theoretical approaches have been used by researchers to contextualise internal communication and its effectiveness in an organisation. Those theoretical perspectives may be divided into the systems theory and the transformation theory. An organisation is a system that consists of sub-systems; and all of them are expected to function in order for the whole system to function well. The WSU as an institution that has resulted from the merging of three historically disadvantaged universities. It has to go through the process of transformation, so that it is in line with the new trends in the new dispensation of higher education in South Africa.

This chapter also looks at some of the factors that make internal communication effective in an organisation. It will also look at issues related to culture, climate and change – in an attempt to create an effective organisation, organisational communication, employee relations and internal communication. All the points raised above are contributing factors to effective internal communication in an organisation.

2.1 Theoretical perspective of the study:

2.1.2. Systems theory

This study will be approached from a systems perspective, based on the work of Von Bertalanffy (1969), who is generally regarded as the father of the general systems theory.
Von Bertalanffy (1969: 37-38) defined a system as a set of elements standing in interaction. He proposed the general systems theory as a science of wholeness. Cybernetics studies how a system uses messages to control and maintain itself. The theoretical framework selected for this study ties in with the adoption of public relations in general, as well as internal communication – as they apply to this study.

Ludwig von Bertalanffy is generally regarded by many scholars as the founder of the general systems theory. He made a distinction between closed and open systems. He made special reference to the closed system, as a system that does not interact with its environment, because its boundaries are semi-permeable. An open system maintains itself in a continuous inflow from, and outflow to, the environment (Von Bertalanffy, 1969:39).

According to Von Bertalanffy (1969:91), the general systems theory tries to derive, from a general definition of systems as a complex of interacting components, concept characteristics of an organised whole, such as interaction, sum, mechanisation, centralisation, competition, finality, etc. – and to apply these concepts to concrete phenomena.

What do Cybernetics and systems science comprise? The systems theory or systems science argues that however complex or diverse the world is that we experience, we will always find different types of organisations in it. Such an organisation may be described by concepts and principles which are independent of the specific domain at which we are looking. The systems approach distinguishes itself from the more traditional analytical approach, by emphasising the interactions and connectedness of the different components of a system.

The systems approach, in principle, focuses on the more complex, adaptive, self-regulating systems, which we might call cybernetic (What are cybernetics and systems theory? module 2008).
Cutlip et al. (1985:233) stated that organisations adjust and adapt to new conditions, dependent in part on how open organisations are to their environment.

They suggested that differences in how sensitive organisations are to their environment provide a useful basis for further system analysis of their public relations functions.

The ultimate goal of systems, of course, is survival. But because they exist in changing environments, open systems must continually adjust, in order to maintain a state of equilibrium or balance (Cutlip et al. 1985:234).

They further state that to differentiate the dynamic states of relatively open systems from the static states of relatively closed systems, systems theorists refer to the changeable goal state as homeostasis. This term is used to avoid the static connotations of equilibrium, and to bring out the dynamic, processual, potential-maintaining properties of a basically unstable system (Cutlip et al. 1995:234-235).

Changes in educational policies and framework, as experienced by the WSU, affect the way the institution will respond to its environment, and its relationship with its various publics.

Cutlip et al. (1985:231) stated that organisation-public relationships change in response to environmental pressures. If they do not change, old relationships become dysfunctional, because the organisation acts and reacts in ways inappropriate to the new circumstances. Systems theorists typically define the environment as anything that generates change pressures - information, energy, and matter inputs on a system (Cutlip et al. 1985:230).

They further stated that environmental inputs to organisation-public relation systems take many forms. As a result of the new education act, which requires the institutions of higher learning to reposition themselves, in response to the demands of the country, in terms of the Higher Education Act No 101 of 1997, as amended, the changes in turn affect relationships with various publics.
All systems -- mechanical, organic, and social – may be classified in terms of the nature and amount of interchange within the environment. The continuum ranges from closed systems at one extreme to open systems at the other. Closed systems have impermeable boundaries, so they cannot exchange matter, energy, or information with their environments. Open systems, on the other hand, exchange inputs and outputs through boundaries that are permeable (Cutlip et al. 1985:234).

Botha et al. (2007:61) stated that the more open the system’s boundaries are, the greater the influence the environment has on the system. So the influence is mutual. This is what characterises an open system.

Open systems exchange information with their environment. The public relations practitioner helps with this exchange. Information is gathered and processed through scanning the environment. Environmental scanning involves a detailed examination of the internal and external environment – to find issues or opinions that may be seen as opportunities or threats to the organisation, or that the public outside the organisation would find worth knowing (Botha et al. 2007:62).

As stated earlier, this model will be based on the systems perspective and cybernetics, based, in turn, on the work of Von Bertalanffy (1969). Cybernetics studies how a system uses messages to control and maintain itself. The study of the input-output regulation process in systems is referred to as cybernetics.

According to Buckley (1973:173), a general cybernetics model tends to occur or would occur, “…were it not for complicating factors” in goal-seeking systems.
Such a model contains five elements: (1) Goals established in a control centre; (2) Output related to the goals, which has impact on the state of the system and its environment; (3) Feedback to the control centre on the effects of the output; (4) A comparison of the new system state with the goal state; and (5) A control centre determination of the need for corrective output.

Some public relations programmes are routinised to a point regardless of the problem, and without regard to environmental conditions. In other words, the response is both predetermined and applied indiscriminately, from one situation to another situation (Cutlip, 1985:237).

Cutlip (1985:238) added that another quality of open systems becomes apparent when social systems are compared with mechanical systems and many living organisms. Simple, relatively closed systems react to outside events only if the input-change pressure is sufficient to penetrate the system’s boundaries. Complex, relatively open systems monitor – and in some cases actively probe – their environment to detect and predict changing conditions. In other words, sophisticated open systems anticipate changes in their environments and initiate corrective actions designed to counteract or neutralize the changes, even before they can become major problems.

Barker and Gaut (2002:9) declared that when considering communication systems, it is important to keep in mind the principle of holism, or the idea that systems exist as whole entities rather than as isolated parts. Thus, to understand communication, we are forced to study the parts separately.

However, we should constantly consider how the components of communication relate to each other, and try to conceive a “whole” that is greater than the sum of its parts (Barker and Gaut, 2002:9).
2.1.2 Transformation model

The notion of transformation is central to merged universities like the WSU. The complex dimensions of diversity, which include different organisational cultures, have all contributed to the transformation of the newly formed institution.

Many South African organisations are grappling with transformation. The challenges posed by the diversity of the workforce have been the focus of researchers and writers on the subject. Some organisations simply ignore the situation and treat their diverse workforce as if it were homogeneous. The results are usually reflected in poor performance of individuals, as well as the organisation as a whole (Smit & Cronje, 2002:267).

Hersey et al. (1996:520) maintain that transformation requires significantly different, and even entirely new, sets of actions by the members of the organisation, rather than those of more or less existing behaviour patterns. Examples are changes to the norms and core values of an organisation. These are brought about through acquisition, deregulation, and privatisation.

Transformation starts beyond the current organisation in that it deals with changes in the external environment; and it includes realignment of the mission, strategy and structure of the systems; and it requires the re-creation of the culture and behavioural processes of the organisation as a whole (Hersey et al. 1996:520-521).

Transformation design modules (2008) stipulate that transformation design is human-centred; and that it is a interdisciplinary process that seeks to create desirable sustainable changes in the behaviour of individuals. It is a multi-stage, interactive process applied to big, complex issues and is – often, but not always – limited to social issues.
Because transformation tackles complex issues involving many stakeholders and components, expertise beyond that of the user and the designer is nearly always required. People such as, but not limited to, policy-makers, sector analysts, psychologists, economists, private business people, government departments, agencies, front-line workers and academics, are all invited to participate in the entire design process – from problem definition and solution development to transformation design module (2008).

What is transformation? A genuine dialogue (module 2008) states that transformation should involve the willingness, together with an effort by all parties, to immerse themselves in the life and world of the others as equals. It is not a process whereby one group adapts to or assimilates another’s way of life. It involves transformation of our modes of being “in-the-world” with those of others.

Transformation is like a metamorphosis, a radical change involving structure, function, and every other aspect of an organisation’s being. There is usually a disruption in the way of downsizing, closure, restructuring and other activities that have many unintended consequences, along with some degree of success with intended outcome organisational change (genuine dialogue module2008).

De Beer (2002:376) maintains that today all over the world, but even more so in post-apartheid South Africa, people have to cope with change, ranging from fundamental restructuring to revolutionary shifts in traditional values. Yet, it is this climate change that offers the communication managers unique opportunities to effect short-term success outcomes, as well as long-term survival and growth of the organisation, in which they operate.
Vogt and Murrel (1990:156) stated that although transforming organisations is extremely difficult, within the context of the framework of enacting empowerment, it could be a natural process that brings people and their institutions together in ways that remind them of their wholeness and the connections among them.

Vogt and Murrel (1990:155) described the foundations of transformation as:

- Create a vision;
- Prepare the culture;
- Implement participation;
- Understand the nature of the work.

2.2 Corporate communication

Corporate communication is the process of facilitating information and knowledge exchange with internal and key external groups and individuals that have a direct relationship with an enterprise. It is concerned with internal communication management, from the standpoint of sharing knowledge and decisions from the enterprise with employees, suppliers, investors and partners (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia module (2008).

It is evident from the above statement, that for the WSU to have a workforce that is dedicated to its work, it must have a good corporate communication strategy – to ensure that the workforce has the right attitude.

Lattimore et al. (2004:351) maintain that the 21st century corporate communicator must be proactive, anticipating issues and events – so that the corporation is prepared to deal with them. The 2000 Best Practice in Corporate Communications report cites the following areas that will be of the greatest importance for the public relations practitioner:
- **Corporate image/reputation:** Understand how the corporation is perceived by various corporate constituencies (surveying, polling, focus groups).
- **Message measurement:** Measuring the effectiveness of messages, as they are communicated, and then using this information for revising them (message measurement and adoption based on feedback).

- Using these perceptions to develop *target messages* to distinct groups.
- **Communication and message management:** Creating the capacity for reaching large, diverse constituencies with precision and speed, and managing the communication message through pre-emptive activities to influence the news, as it is reported.

According to the Resource-Public Relations Institute of Australia (2008) manual, for organisations involved in a merger or acquisition, capturing the synergies of the deal, and doing so quickly, can become major hurdles. However, driving such synergies requires complex changes that have a direct impact on employees and their work, and can create an environment of confusion, anxiety and distraction.

Communication is, therefore, important for managing people’s issues during the merger. This has resulted in complex organisational change, and would allow the organisation to realise its value. Effective communication can help employees of the WSU to make a personal transformation as the organisation strives to build confidence, and works on issues related to resistance to change.

Heath (2001:427) states that corporate communication has a large impact on organisational performance, culture, and wellbeing. Large organisations are made up of interacting units that co-ordinate their efforts to produce products, serve clients, and maintain organisational structure.
Research that explains the relationships among employees’ needs, perceptions, and communication can be of substantive value – when, developing a system to accurately assess communication needs and problem areas – and to provide recommendations that can be used to re-engineer communications systems (Heath, 2001:427).

Steyn and Puth (2000:234) stated that corporate communication managers need to prove their strategic worth by their ability to convert the corporate communication strategy into actionable plans and defendable budgets that would show measurable returns on the bottom line of the organisations.

In short, corporate public relations/communication is a means whereby organisations seek to improve their ability to do business. Effective corporate public relations smooth and enhance a company’s operations, as well as ease and increase its sales. They enable a business to better anticipate and adapt to societal demands and trends (Lattimore et al. 2004:350).

Using the concept of mutual understanding through corporate communication, organisations gain competitive advantage by winning loyalty from all the stakeholders, harness value through corporate communication and supporting organisational change (Olivier, 1997:170).

Steyn and Puth (2000:20) claim that the two roles of manager and technician have been the cornerstone of role’s theory in the field of corporate communication for the past 20 years. Recent role’s research in the South African environment indicates that CEOs now expect three roles from corporate communication practitioners:

- The role of the strategist;
- The role of the manager;
- The role of the technician.
The strategist’s role is played at the macro- or top-management level of an organisation. Having a practitioner in this new role should help to overcome the shortcomings of practitioners, as defined by CEOs, and remove most dissatisfaction with the lack of strategic direction displayed by the corporate communication function (Steyn and Puth, 2000:20).

They add that the manager’s role is played at the functional level, the departmental or divisional levels of an organisation.

A corporate communication practitioner in this role has the responsibility of developing a corporate communication strategy and policy for the organisation. This places more emphasis on message identification – by deciding what should be communicated to stakeholders – to solve problems that develop in the relationship or to capitalise on any opportunities that are presented.

Steyn and Puth (2000:21) conclude that the technician’s role is played at the implementation or programme level. A corporate communication practitioner in this role is responsible for implementing communication plans or campaigns directed at the organisation’s stakeholders. This cannot be done before being familiar with the organisation’s internal environment (e.g. the profile, vision, values, philosophy, mission, corporate culture and corporate policies).

It is, therefore, evident that for corporate communication to function effectively, all three roles of the corporate communication practitioner, as mentioned above, should be considered.

The popularity of corporate communication is also based on the idea that the term is broader than public relations, which is often incorrectly perceived as only media relations.
Corporate communication encompasses all communications of the company, including, advertising, marketing, communications, public affairs, community relations, and employee communications (Wilcox et al. 2003:10).

2.3 Barriers to effective corporate communication

A first observation is that knowledge is power. An equally formidable barrier to corporate communications perhaps, is the absence of knowledge.

Many people fail to communicate, because they have nothing to communicate, and are fearful of betraying their lack of power or their incompetence (Awad, 1995:71).

Another very basic barrier to corporate communication is risk. Every communication involves a risk of some sort, because every communication, in the long haul, represents a commitment (Awad, 1995:73). But, in the long run, refusal to communicate encourages the formation of information vacuums that feed on misinformation, gossip, rumour, and speculation.

Every communication is also a commitment. Closely linked with, and reinforced by risk as a communications barrier, is excessive legalism. A great many corporate public relations disasters can be traced to a deference to overcautious and overzealous lawyers who prevent the organisation from speaking out at the right time, and from saying what it really means (Awad, 1995:72).

Awad (1995:72) further maintained that institutional arrogance is most dangerous when it refuses to recognise the right to know, either of its constituencies, or of external publics – whose welfare may depend on having the withheld knowledge or information.
2.4 Public relations as a management function

The WSU as an organisation will certainly require a public relations department that would serve the needs of all its stakeholders – in order to develop a new working environment. This could be made possible if there were an interaction between the management and the workers.

Awad (1985:1) claimed that public relations flow out of the confluence of several developments in the last century. The rise of democratic societies, where public opinion wields the power, both in the voting booth and in the marketplace, provided the matrix.

The proliferation of organisations, institutions, and associations in almost every field of human endeavour created the need. The growth of mass communication, the unprecedented literacy of hundreds of millions in industrialized societies, and the rapid development of the social sciences combined – both to make the public relations function possible and to enlarge the need for public relations (Awad, 1985:1).

Botha et al. (2007:26) state that public relations may be described as the planning or management of relationships between an organisation and everyone the organisation requires to succeed in its task. This includes the management of relationships with staff, but also with customers, suppliers, shareholders, neighbours, the government and the greater community. Public relations constitutes one of the communication functions needed to make a success of any organisation.

Folkerts and Lacy (2004:63) state that public relations messages, which can be informational or persuasive, are created by interacting with the public being addressed. The continuous process involves the surveying and monitoring of publics, creating messages, and evaluating the feedback.
Public relations is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organisation with the public interest, and plans and executes a programme of action to earn public understanding and acceptance (Seitel, 2004:5).

Public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the public on whom its future depends (Cutlip et al. 2000:6).

Public relations practice is the art and science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organisational leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organisation and the public interest (Newsom & Carrel, 2001:4).

Public relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between the organisation and its publics, both internally and externally (Mersham et al. 1995:11).

From the above definitions, the common words are management, mutually beneficial relationships, planned programmes, public interest – both internally and externally, and action. With a merged organisation like the WSU, openness and honesty are important to build employee confidence, as well as any action being taken to promote the continuous two-way communication needed to prevent any alienation, and to build relationships.

Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and co-operation between an organisation and its publics.
This requires that management should be kept informed on and responsive to public opinion; it defines and emphasises the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; it helps management keep abreast of any trends; and it uses research, as well as sound and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools (Seitel, 2004:4).

Seitel (2004:4) states that communication Professor John Martson, suggests a four-step model based on specific functions:

- **Research.** Firstly, research attitudes are required on the issues at hand.
- **Action.** Secondly, identify the actions of the client in the public interest.

- **Communication.** Thirdly, communicate that action, in order to gain understanding, acceptance and support.
- **Evaluation.** Fourthly, evaluate the communication to see if opinion of staff members has been influenced.

An organisation like the WSU requires a large communication department, as it has to deal with the workforce from three different and distinct institutions of higher learning. The WSU communication department has a challenge to conduct an environmental research audit and evaluation within its workforce - to determine the necessary actions to be taken to ensure that there is social harmony, and also positive attitudes, among its workforce.

### 2.5 Employee communication

Hendrix (2001:107) states that public relations conducted inside an organisation falls into two general categories: employee relations and member relations. Employee relations include all communications between the management of the organisation and its personnel. Members’ relations refer to communications inside a membership organisation between the officers and the members.
Theaker (2001:136) states that a survey of employee attitudes may reveal issues, such as low morale and frustration with policies that could spell out the objectives for the programme such as:

- To increase employee knowledge of organisational activities and policies;
- To enhance favourable employee attitudes towards the organisation;
- To receive more employee feedback.

Output objectives could be:

- To recognise employee accomplishments in employee communications;
- To distribute communications on a weekly basis;
- To schedule interpersonal communication between management and a special employee group each month.

Research on employee relations concentrates on client research, studying the reasons for communication, and identifying the employee audiences to be targeted for communication (Hendrix, 2001:108).

Client research for employee relations focuses on information about the organisation’s personnel. A questionnaire should be developed with regard to organisational personnel. These questions might guide the initial research in preparation for an employee relations programme (Hendrix 2001:108).

Hendrix (2001:108) suggests a second reason for the research is to conduct an employee-relations programme. A survey of employee attitudes may reveal a variety of issues, including low levels of satisfaction and morale, dislike of the physical surroundings, and/or frustration with internal policies.
The survey results may thus demonstrate a strong need for an employee-relations programme.

The final area of research involves defining precisely the employee audience to be targeted for communication. These audiences can be identified by using the following terms:

- **Top Management**;
- Non-management staff;
- Union representatives;
- Other non-management personnel.

Jefkins (1994:356) stated that a number of companies today take the trouble to invite professional research units to conduct internal communication audits.

It is often surprising how little management knows about its own company; and likewise, how little the employees know about the company in which they work.

If such audits are conducted by an outside organisation, then there might be some implications on the side of the internal communication section in an organisation. Outside professionals do not have the interests of the organisation at heart; and in some cases, they are even being driven by the desire for financial gain.

Skinner (2003:92) states that the reputation of a good employee has to be earned like goodwill towards the organisation itself. The company is rewarded by having good internal public relations, since employees are encouraged to make their contribution to the productivity and prosperity of the company. The internal climate or atmosphere of an organisation has a vital bearing on the individual employee’s level of motivation.
Skinner (2003:93) adds that to create this climate, companies must look at the following three objectives with regard to employee communication:

- To help employees understand their job and their company.
- To help employees realise that their personal success is inseparable from the company’s success.
- To help employees realise that their job is worth doing, because their company’s products are essential to society.

Quirke (1995:71) believes that “The flow of ideas, information and knowledge around the organisation is crucial to success. The role of communication, as the process by which this flow is achieved is central to the management of the organisation”.

Quirke (1995:72.) reflected in the shift from a limited number of internal communications techniques, such as notice boards, memos and company newsletters, to more interactive media, such as meetings, forums, video conferencing and e-mails.

According to Mersham and Skinner (2005:70), the source of information selected will often depend on the subject matter that needs to be communicated to employees. Of many communication techniques available, induction programmes and printed or graphic communication appear to be more commonly used, either alone or in combination, to convey an important or complicated message.

According to Smith (2006:45), internal communication is an imperative for even the smallest of organisations. It is arguably more difficult to manage a recalcitrant team of one, two or three than a much larger organisation. They, in theory, should have the required links with those who make decisions, and also with those who have the relevant information – not necessarily always the same people.
Both managers and employees of a company continually make decisions. The decision affects the company’s production and services, and the lives of the people who work in the company. Employees deserve to know the truth about the company in which they work, and managers must know their employees – if they are to motivate them (Folkerts and Lacy, 2004:77).

Wilcox et al. (2003:343) state that in these days of corporate turmoil, unrest and uncertainty among employees creates a greater need than ever before for effective employee communication. Surveys indicate a drop in employees’ loyalty to their companies, based in part on their belief that remote corporate managements feel no loyalty to them.

Job security and financial protection against illness are two principal concerns among employees. As the facts indicate, there is a need to be reassured. The company magazine, brochures, newsletters, and policy manuals written for employees, are fundamental forms of internal communication (Wilcox et al. 2003:343).

Smith (2006; 99) indicates that there is a tendency among companies and communicators to overlook the fact that many employees are now shareholders in their own right. Transmitting conflicting messages to different audiences will no longer work – if it ever did. The entire senior management team should become the focus of communication training by the communication specialists.

2.6 Effective internal communication

Internal communication is communication between management and staff at various levels of the organisation, in order to reach organisational goals. An important factor in employees’ job performance, and therefore, organisational success, is the extent to which workers find communication within the organisation to be satisfactory (Van Staden et al. 2005:15).
Smith (2006:48) claims that an effective internal communication department needs to raise its credibility -- especially inside the organisation. Many outsiders, and quite a few insiders for that matter, do not understand that keeping a workforce informed can be, and should be, as rewarding a job as carrying out essentially the same function with an external audience.

Botha et al. (2007:208) state that employee relations are the aspect of public relations that deals with communicating with an organisation’s internal stakeholders. While most public relations professionals tend to focus mainly on external stakeholders, the public relations practitioner has an important role to play in helping an organisation communicate with its most important resource: its people.

A positive reason for having a dedicated internal communication team would be one of immediacy. If they have been allowed to do the job properly they will have all the channels open and the communication vehicles ticking over and ready to go (Smith, 2006:48).

Internal public relations is a broad field embracing near-neighbour activities, like human resources, labour relations, and internal education; and in many respects, it serves as a bridge between them. Internal climate, or the atmosphere of an organisation, has a vital bearing on the individual employee’s motivation. Experienced managers have found that they are not really able to motivate people, but can merely create the right climate and provide the right tools for individuals to motivate themselves (Skinner et al. 203:93).

It is evident from the above statement that employees of any organisation, like the WSU have an important role to play in keeping up the positive image of the institution. This can only be realised if the workforce is kept up-to-date on the activities in the organisation: and this requires having an effective internal communication strategy.
“Employees are also the means of success for an organisation” (Botha et al. 2007:208).

Misunderstandings and jealousies can occur between the staff of the original company and that of the acquired. A major bad employee-relations situation may exist, which might be resolved by good communications and using some of the media techniques (Jefkins, 1998:139).

The internal communication techniques that can be used include: notice boards, closed circuit TV, radio stations, phone-in-news, an idea box, a speak-up scheme, work committees, video presentations, induction literature, visits by management, staff visits, staff events.

Du Toit et al. (2003:73) claim that it is important to bear in mind that internal communication must be well managed to ensure its effectiveness. This is the reason why the element of management must be investigated in every component of internal communication. For example, the functions of internal communication would have no purpose if they were badly managed.

31 Van Staden (2004:16) internal communication methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Hints</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Speak clearly</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Keep the message simple</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Conversations</td>
<td>Do not use slang or jargon</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>If you speak with an accent remember to speak slightly more slowly,</td>
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<td>to pronounce words carefully and to check the understanding of</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>your message.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal mail, e-mail or memoranda</td>
<td>Plan your message carefully</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Keep it short and simple</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone messages</td>
<td>Write as you speak</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Slips</td>
<td>Proofread carefully</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reports</td>
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<td>Minutes Notice boards and staff magazines</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-verbal</strong></td>
<td>Show that you have respect for yourself, your colleagues and the company, by making sure that you look neat, businesslike and professional. Show interest by making eye contact. Show positive attitudes and empathy Use a warm tone of voice, a friendly, open face, a comforting arm on the shoulder.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Appearance Face expression Gestures</td>
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### 2.7 Organisational communication

Mersham and Skinner (2005:8) have stated that organisational communication is the lifeblood of an organisation; if we could somehow remove the communication flow from an organisation, we would not have an organisation. Communication permeates all activities in an organisation; it represents an important work tool through which individuals understand their organisational role, and it also integrates organisational sub-units.

The Walter Sisulu University, as a merged institution, needs to have an organised organisational communication structure that will ensure that there is a free flow of information within the organisation.

Poor organisational communication can sometimes create conditions of uncertainty among the workforce.
Tubbs and Moss (1991:336) stated that an organisation has been defined as a collection, or system, of individuals who commonly, through hierarchy of ranks and division of labour, seek to achieve a predetermined goal. The WSU, as an organisation, is required to act in a certain manner to achieve its goal and objectives. It is, therefore, pertinent for the communication division at the WSU to formulate a well-structured organisational communication strategy that will ensure that the activities of its members are co-ordinated, in order to achieve the common goal.

The WSU organisational communication can assist the workforce in integrating into the new system, and be able to adapt the new structure to a different climate, as well as culture.

Barker and Gaut (2002:173) say that organisations have grown and changed over time in many significant ways. If you could journey back through time from 1800 to the present, the time period during which organisations have been studied formally, you would see an evolution in thought of monumental proportions. You would also see how four major groups have shaped twenty-first century organisational life: The classical/scientific management; human behaviour; integrated perspectives; and post-modernism with its critical, and feminist schools of thought.

Communication in an organisation is the transfer and receiving of ideas, feelings and attitudes between management and the workers. It also involves an understanding of the information (Frost et al. 1993:149).

Organisations that are in operation today have different methods of communication and; the most common modes of communication are: Upward communication, downward communication and vertical communication.
According to Tubbs and Moss (1991:339), several studies in widely divergent organisations have further documented the important role of communication in job performance. Given the state of the changes in higher education in South Africa, it is of paramount importance to have communication systems that will motivate employees to be able to perform their duties, and also to be conversant with the state of the organisation in relation to any uncertain issues.

The WSU, as an institution that has undergone a similar process must ideally have a well-documented organisational communication strategy that can be implemented and understood by all in the organisation. Organisations are linked through a series of communication channels, and such channels are absolutely essential.

Channel selection and organisational-network usage affect communication effectiveness. Networks are interconnected channels or lines of communication used in organisations to pass information from one person to another. The flow of communication operates downwards, upwards, laterally, and by means in an informal network (Barker & Gaut, 2002:182).

2.7.1 Upward communication

*Upward communication is defined as any message sent from a subordinate to a supervisor or manager (Barker & Gaut, 2002:183).*

Upward communication has a variety of functions: it is often used by the employees to communicate valuable information to management. This communication’s direction enables the employees to communicate their concerns to the management. With the WSU as a merged institution, upward communication is important, because the institution is undergoing the process of transformation – where different cultures are being merged together.
Smith (2006:99) states that more and more attention is now being paid on how communication is channeled back up an organisation from the employees. Attitude surveys are now being seen as a vital way of hearing the voices of the employees.

### 2.7.2 Communication tactics

According to Barker and Gaut (2002:183), Waldron (1991) noted four major tactics that subordinates use to develop and maintain relationships with their supervisors: (1) *personal tactics*, that is to say information sharing, and social conversations; (2) *contractual tactics* that is to say conforming to formal requirements, expectations and any general conversation associated with the subordinates’ role; (3) *regulative tactics* - limiting or managing the amount of contact, communication, or emotional displays with their supervisors; (4) *direct tactics* - revealing personal views, opinions, expectations, and perceptions of injustice present in the workplace.

Frost et al. (1997:150) believed that upward communication provides a valuable feedback mechanism, and helps provide information for decisions. It also helps employees to **relieve some of the pressures and tensions** of work; and it adds to their sense of participation in the organisation.

Reece (1999:48) claimed that upward communication, however, is valuable in any organisation, because it gives employees the opportunity to **contribute valuable ideas that may lead to substantial savings for the organisation**.

When employees can participate in decisions that directly affect their work, they feel as if **they are part of the organisational community**, not just individuals collecting a paycheck (Reece, 1999:48).
2.7.3 Downward communication

Tubbs and Moss (1991:346) stated that after supervisory communication, the second most important factor in determining the communication climate in an organisation is downward communication. Such communication is initiated by the organisation’s upper management; and it then filters downward through the “chain of command”.

Organisations have an obligation to implement channels of communication to ensure that the tensions that exist are voiced; and also that policies and procedures are clearly explained to the employees. As result of the merger, confusion persisted among the employees—especially with a university that has merged three historically disadvantaged institutions with limited resources, and without any clearly defined lines of communication.

Downward communication messages include job instructions, individual expectations and evaluation, organisational procedures, training, and company-directed propaganda, (Tubbs & Moss 1991:182).

The vertical channel of communication is one of the most important channels of communication in any organisation. If a smooth flow of communication is maintained at all times, this will ensure a healthy work environment, free of conflict and frustration (Van Staden et al. 2005:22).

Downward communication can be especially useful to a recently merged institution like the WSU, which strives to have effective communication structures in place. The information sent from the management could be interpreted in different ways.

Vecchio (1991:476) mentions that another problem with downward communication is that its recipients tend to interpret it as a sign of dissatisfaction in the upper levels of the organisation.
This common practice reflects the belief that if the upper management takes the time to send a memo, they must have detected an exception to the norm that needs correction.

### 2.7.3 Lateral/horizontal communication

People on the same level of authority communicate across horizontal channels. This communication may take place during structured meetings or informal conversations, just as it often takes place higher up in the organisation.

Frost et al. (1997:153) claim that horizontal communication is very often particularly informal, as questions of relative status do not arise – it is, by definition, communication between equals. (Of course, this depends on the company’s culture to some extent.)

A smooth flow of horizontal communication between departments will ensure that there is a **culture of co-operation and that team work exists** between departments. This will contribute to the general productivity and success of the organisation (Van Staden et al. 2005:22).

Frost et al. (1997:154) maintain that the functions of horizontal communication are:

- **Task co-ordination**: Departmental or divisional heads may meet to discuss the ways in which they and their teams can co-operate to achieve organisational goals.
- **Problem-solving**: People on similar levels in an organisation often have comparable qualifications and years of experience. Their pooled knowledge can be very useful in solving each other’s problems, or problems common to all of them.
- **Information sharing**: People may share information about their own or their subordinates’ doings, or anything else that will improve their effectiveness.
• **Conflict resolution**: Companies can be seen as being composed of sub-organisations and individuals, who are all in competition with each other for control over scarce resources. This competition inevitably gives rise to conflict.

### 2.8 Organisational communication and the new technology

Mersham and Skinner (2005:149) state that the digital world is forcing organisations to react to change and giving them the tools to stay ahead, acting as a kind of digital nervous system connecting business strategy and organisational response. Some South African organisations have already actively responded to the challenges of the digital world.

Also, government has realised that a prosperous future for South Africa lies in its adoption of an information-based economy, and has invested in the necessary digital infrastructure for education and training (Mersham and Skinner, 2005:149).

Smith and Mounter (2006:199) maintain that it will probably be a bit of both in the internal communication world of the near future. It is definitely up to the practitioners themselves to seize the opportunities, as they come up, so that they are in charge of the technology – rather than the technology being in charge of them.

### 2.9 Organisational change

*Organisational change is defined as the adoption of new ideas or behavior by an organization (Draft, 1998:366).*

There are four events that make up the change sequence:

- Internal and external forces for change exist.
- Organisational managers monitor these forces and become aware of a need for change.
The perceived need triggers the initiation of change.

Implementation.

In today’s borderless competitive and highly complex environment, organisations like the WSU need to continuously adapt and adjust to new environments in order to survive.

Fletcher (1999:60) believed that organisations have to be prepared for change, then identify and prioritise the required alterations. Furthermore, organisations also have to develop internal, as well as external, skills – such as listening, effective communication, and leadership to uphold the new service-quality improvement strategy.

Organisations are not static, but are continuously changing in response to a variety of influences coming from both inside and outside the organisation. Change is an inevitable feature in both the lives of individuals and the lives of organisations (Vecchio, 1991:580).

Draft (1998:365) stated that change can be managed. By observing external trends, patterns, and needs, managers can use planned change to help the organisation adapt to external problems and opportunities. When organisations are caught flat-footed, failing to anticipate or respond to new needs, management is nearly always at fault.

Lattimore et al. (2004:208) state that employee communications expert Gary Grates, believes that organisations of the future will be structured to accommodate change, and employee communication will have an integral role to play in this process. This role should be forecasting and monitoring relationships with key audiences and planning flexible communication structures, so that employees will understand and support new situations and organisational environments.

According to Hodson and Sullivan (2002:310), changes in organisations also affect the number and type of managers needed.

Re-organisation, especially acquisition and mergers, are often followed by lay-offs.
If before the merger, both firms already had a full set of managers, there are usually lengthy negotiations over how many managers need to be retained.

This will certainly raise uncertainty in the workforce, not knowing to whom they are accountable, especially if the lines of communication are not maintained open properly. More recently, organisational changes have affected the long-term job security of managers as well. Mergers and acquisitions often result in the laying off of ‘redundant managers’. These lay-offs followed the decision by many executives that their companies were too fat and needed to became ‘lean and mean’. Interestingly, the willingness to lay off more workers has come to be identified as a sign of managerial talent (Hodson and Sullivan, 2002:310).

2.10 Organisational culture

A culture is the unique pattern of shared assumptions, values, and norms that shape the socialisation activities, language, symbols, rites, and ceremonies of a group of people. Culture can only be inferred from the more-visible and observable elements – its socialisation activities, symbols, language, narratives, and practices. It develops in both large and small groups of people (Hellriegel et al. 2004:357).

Organisations are made up of people – and not simply of buildings, production facilities, products, markets, strategic analyses, and technological innovations. Every organisation has its own unique personality, which is known as its corporate culture. The heart and soul of an organisation is its people (Smit and Cronje, 2002:228).

Mersham et al. (1995:20) maintained that since the early 1990s, the management of cultural change in South African business has been left largely to management consultants. Increasingly, management will have to make dedicated efforts towards owning the process for themselves.
Often, culture – change management – takes place as an afterthought or on an insufficient scale (Mersham, 1995:20).

Olivier (2001:71) claims that although the concept of change took root fairly readily, with writers such as Rosabeth Moss-Kanter, Barry Stein and Todd Jick, the proliferation of models that followed has sometimes assumed that all organisations are being affected by change to the same degree, and in the same way, because of new technologies and the fall-out following the long period of global economic depression.

This is patently not the case; but clearly, the larger the organisation, the larger the change needed to alter the character and performance-driven organisational complexity (Olivier 2001:71).

Fineman and Mangham suggest that there are four approaches that can be taken: a structural approach, a human-resource approach, a political approach and a symbolic approach (Olivier, 2001:71).

Smit and Cronje (2002:228) further add that each of these individual has his or her own value system and code of conduct. Furthermore, there are certain fixed patterns of behaviour, and leaders also have their own value systems in the organisation. A combination of all these factors gives an organisation its definitive and collective personality – the corporate culture.

Hellriegel et al. (2004:365) suggest that the extreme corners of the four quadrants represent four pure types of organisational culture:
However, some employees may prefer one culture to another. Employees who work in organisations with cultures that fit their views of ideal culture tend to be committed to their organisations and to be optimistic about their futures.

Smit and Cronje (2002:227) state that the changes that many organisations are forced to make in an ever-changing business environment are often so fundamental that they involve transforming an organisation’s very essence – its corporate culture. Because the culture of an organisation plays such an important role in both organisational performance and change, an examination of this concept is now necessary.

An organisational culture should be well aligned with the organisation’s strategy and structure. If not, the culture can be a potent source of resistance to change. Vecchio (1991:555) stated that organisational researchers recognise the importance of an organisation’s culture in shaping the organisational strategy. The manner in which culture and strategy influence each other is thought to be quite complex.

### 2.1 Organisational climate

Studies of organisational climate, according to Hodson and Sullivan (2002:323) are very important in understanding managerial occupation. A good climate may boost productivity and morale, just as a poor climate may lead to deterioration in the quality of products and in the relationships among its workers.

This study suggests that an institution like the WSU, that has just merged, must create a good climate for its workforce – in order for better productivity to be forthcoming.
New managers learn to work within an organisational climate, and their success usually requires being able to reproduce that climate (Hodson & Sullivan, 2002:323).

The organisational climate (2008 module) states that organisational climate is about the perceptions of the climate and about absolute measures.

The absolute climate may suit one person, but not another.

2.12 Efforts towards improving employees’ attitudes

Reece (1999:162) stated that many companies are now realising that an employee’s attitude and performance cannot be separated. When employees have negative attitudes about their work, their job performance and productivity inevitably suffer. When they have positive attitudes, job performance and productivity are likely to improve.

Employee values have shifted. If employers want to count on a productive workforce in changing times, they have to understand why employees will work for an organisation and give the commitment they desire (Lattimore, 2004:208).

In the information era that we are living in today, employees need important information immediately, because tomorrow it will be obsolete. New technologies, such as the Internet, the intranet, the electronic newsletter and e-mails complement the printed house journals, by providing immediate and daily information to employees. This is a communication medium in this new millennium in which the printed house journals cannot be up-to-date (Scriven, 2002:319).

2.13 Conclusion

The effectiveness of internal communication has been a major challenge for many organisations. With the new changes in our environment, organisations now have a responsibility to be in line with the changes that are taking place.
The literature has shown that organisations cannot survive without an effective internal communication system. It also emphasises the importance of the information flow within an organisation, which could play a significant role in motivating the workforce.

Also, issues related to adaptation and adjustment play a critical role – especially, during the process of change. The employees are expected to adjust to the new culture that is not fully developed yet, as well as to the new organisational climate.

The literature also shows that if all channels of communication are open, organisations can operate in a harmonious working environment and workers can be more productive.

The study has been conducted from the systems perspective model, as well as the transformational model. The systems theory states clearly that for the system to function effectively all the interdependent parts that form the system (sub-systems) should function together. It is evident that for the WSU’s internal communication strategy to be effective, all the departments directly affected should play a significant role – to ensure that all necessary communication tools are made readily available.

This study also touches on the transformational model. This model is used as a result of the educational landscape in South Africa. South African universities are expected to transform, and be able to meet the challenges that are facing the country: those of developing institutions that are career-focused.

This chapter has also focus on some of the elements of public relations that ensure that there is effective communication, especially in the newly merged universities like the WSU.
Different definitions of public relations have been clearly defined – to enable the WSU management, community and the reader to have a clear approach to the research undertaken. Employee relations are important, because this concept includes all communication between the management and the workforce.

Organisational communication is significant in the study of public relations. The primary focus is placed on three major factors: upward, downward and lateral communication.

Other important elements mentioned are: organisational change, organisational climate and organisational culture. The next chapter will look at the WSU internal communication strategy.
CHAPTER 3

THE WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY’S INTERNAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the internal communication systems at WSU, and on the role of the strategic internal communication system during the merger process. As indicated earlier, in the study, WSU has four campuses and eleven sites – as a result of the merger of three historically disadvantaged Technikons, the Border and Eastern Cape Technikons and the University of Transkei. This chapter outlines the role played by the Marketing and Communication Division (MCD) in the effective internal communication -- as it is called in the University.

This introduction will focus on the strategic function of the Marketing and Communication Division, the internal media communication system, as a tool used for effective internal communication, the relationship between the MCD and the internal Information Communication Technology (ICT) department and other staff functions as they relate to the positioning of the MCD.

3.2 THE MERGER OF THREE DIFFERENT AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTIONS

As a result of the merger of the three institutions: the Border Technikon, the Eastern Cape Technikon and the University of Transkei, a challenge has risen on how the three communication department should merge, in order to drive and assist the merged university to realise its goals of becoming a single university. The top management position of a Director and Manager for Marketing and Communications were advertised. Directors and Managers from the previously merged institutions were not considered for this position. A new MCD Director and Manager were appointed.
3.3 THE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION DIVISION AT THE WSU

The MCD has a staff complement of fourteen members based on two campuses: Mthatha and Buffalo City, with the division headquarters situated at the Buffalo City Campus. The department has a Director as the head of department, a manager, a senior communications officer, and assistant communication officers. The department is accountable to the Vice-Chancellor: Planning and Quality Assurance.

At times, they work directly with the Vice-Chancellor and the Principal on matters of media-crisis management.

3.4 ORGANOGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

Key staff members:  The Director

Manager Communications

Senior Communications Officer

Communications Officer

Student Recruitment Officers

Convocations Officer

According to the organogram, the person responsible for internal communication matters at the WSU is the Communications Manager.
Beard (2009:16) states that internal communication is concerned with the relationships between an organization and its employees. Another function is to ensure that the workforce is well informed, so that performance and job satisfaction can be maximized. “A sense of involvement and belonging makes for a happier and more successful working environment,” said Beard (2009:16).

The MCD operates on two of the four campuses. Staff shortages prevent the MCD from having a presence on all four campuses, which would be the ideal set-up. The operations are centralised in strategy, but most of the units are present on the two campuses – as mentioned previously. The staff then travel, when necessary, between the different campuses, as and when the need arises.

### 3.5 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION POLICY AT WSU

According to the Policy Document on Internal Communications at WSU, “All internal communication at the WSU carries the approved brand imagery of WSU as per the Corporate Identity. Internal communication is the responsibility of every manager as a basic management skill”.

The department of Marketing, Communication and Development is accountable for the following internal communication channels:

- Official newsletter, bulletins and posters.
- Official announcements via the website and other media.
- Support to the vice chancellor’s office in special circumstances.

The policy document further states that the department of Marketing, Communication and Development offers consultancy/advisory services to all faculties and departments to advise on best practices.
3.6 MCD STRATEGIC PLAN ON INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Responses from this sub-section were obtained after a questionnaire was presented for input from the department. When this research was under way, the MCD was undergoing a review on its positioning and functions at WSU. The department was also engaged in a turn-around strategy, as they could not have a plan yet, a strategic plan for effective internal communication.

However, the department has numerous platforms in place, and the internal communication at the WSU worked, as follows during the merger:

- **Helpdesk:** This is an ICT service to the entire WSU community; it is open for any staff member to utilize. The messages, with the assistance of the ICT, reach every computer in the WSU network.

- **The Office of the Vice-Chancellor** also makes use of this medium for the distribution of significant memoranda.

Smith (2005:12) states that strategic planning for Public Relations provides a systematic technique for setting priorities among various publics, helping one select those most important for the particular issue being dealt with. This includes an analysis of each public in terms of their wants, needs, and expectations about the issue, their relationship to the organization, their involvement in communication and with various media, and a variety of social, economic, political, cultural and technology trends that may affect them.

3.7 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND MEDIA FOR INTERNAL PUBLICITY

When this research study was being developed, WSU’s MCD department was not a well developed department, as it was undergoing drastic transformations.
Discussed below are some of the activities that MCD at the WSU practised during the merger, as they were in the process of developing an internal communication strategy that would conform to the vision, mission, goals and values of the merged university.

The WSU has the following internal communication media in place:

- The latest news features on the website homepage. This is updated as news breaks: at least weekly, but usually more often.

- An Event Tab on the website homepage – where all the university events are published.

- A monthly WSU newsletter, which is uploaded onto the website and also printed in hard copy and distributed campus-wide.

- The distribution of posters advertising certain events is also a medium that is effective in a multi-campus situation, since not all the staff members have access to computers. So the department accommodates both e-communication and hard-copy communication.

The MCD has a good symbiotic relationship with the ICT department. The MCD and the ICT had a period of four months collaboration during the merger – in order to establish the new WSU website. This collaboration resulted in the identification of niche areas of responsibility, and made it possible to hold regular meetings.

3.8 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE WSU INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The WSU’s department of Marketing and Communication was not a fully fledged department, when the study was being undertaken. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether the department contributed to the merged university.
The MCD only focused on limited tools of effective communication. However, there exists a variety of tools than can be used to ensure that there are effective internal communications in place.

According to the response from the MCD Communication’s manager, the department focused only on the website homepage, the monthly WSU newsletter, as well as on posters.

However, some of the most effective media were not considered for the purpose of internal communication. Seitel (2007:220) says that “in the 21st century, employee relations matter a lot. Approximately 60% of the corporate CEOs, according to a well-regarded survey, reported spending more of their time communicating with employees”. The WSU actions, as experienced by the staff, revealed that senior management at WSU spent less time communicating with the employees than they had done before the merger. “Research indicates that companies that communicate effectively with their workers financially outperform those that don’t. One study found that companies with the most effective internal communications programmes return 57% more to their shareholders than companies with least-effective programs” (Seitel, 2007:221).

Some of the major points that WSU should have considered for effective internal communication were:

- **Management conferences are not possible, since they are dispersed over many campuses and sites.**

- **Briefing groups on all sites so that they can reach everyone.**

- **Notice boards should have been properly managed on all sites.**
• Advisory groups to visit sites at intervals.
• Internal communication audits.
• Online communication, ensure that all members have an access to the intranet.
• Face-to-face communication takes place between members from different sites
• Internal videos

All the points listed were not considered for internal communications at the WSUs MCD department.

Seitel (2007:220) states that the move towards globalization, including the merger of geographically dispersed organisations, is another reason for an increased focus on internal communications. If some of the activities are not considered, this might lead to a grapevine scenario.

Although the WSU’s MDC did not have a fully fledged internal communication strategy, they nevertheless managed to use limited tools of communication for appropriate communication during the merger. The use of new media, such as the regular updating of the website homepage, had a significant role in ensuring that the workforce received information consistently and on time.

The print media, like the internal newsletter for example, also contribute to the effective internal communication, as this encourages feedback from the workforce. It is clear that the collaboration with the ICT department is of paramount importance, as it communicates with the entire university quickly and systematically.

The following chapter will look at the research design, as well as the methodology selected for the purpose of the study.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This study will articulate a description of the internal communication systems of the Walter Sisulu University (WSU), as seen by the employees of this University. The WSU was established in July 2005, through the merger of the Border, and Eastern Cape Technikons and the University of Transkei.

According to Welman and Kruger (2002:2), research involves the application of various methods and techniques – in order to create scientifically obtained knowledge by using appropriate methods and procedures. This study will employ solely a qualitative research method.

The problem statement of this study is: “An exploration of the role of a strategic internal communication system in the merged Walter Sisulu University”. It was derived from a preliminary literature review which showed that an organisation’s strategic internal communication system is a contributing factor to organisational climate, staff morale and productivity, and ultimately, the effectiveness of the organisation.

4.2 Research design

This section describes the research design that will be used to test the problem statements of this study. A survey-research design will be utilised for the purpose of this study, in order to obtain data.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2004:29) maintain that a research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research.
Research designs are plans that guide the arrangement of conditions for collection and the analysis of the data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure (Terre Blanche, 2004:29).

This study will be developed in accordance with scientific principles, to ensure that the findings will stand up against criticism.

A survey research method will be used to obtain qualitative data, which will allow the collection of a substantial amount of data for a large sample size.

Kent (2007:182) states that a survey entails the capture of data based on the addressing of questions to respondents in a formal manner and taking a systematic record of their responses. The recording instrument would normally be a questionnaire. The focus will be on the mail survey and the self-administered questionnaire sent to individuals. They will fill these in and return them by a given date.

Wilmer and Kruger (2002:84) state that in this survey design, variables, such as age, gender, socio-economic status, the respondent’s manufacturing sector, and so on, are of great importance, especially to non-experimental research in the business and administrative sciences.

The survey research design will be used to gather the necessary information, as to what extent employees of the WSU perceive that the internal communication system of this university has contributed towards an effectively merged organisation.

This information can, therefore, be utilised by the communication division in the university, in order to improve the lines of communication at the WSU.
The survey research design has its strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of this research design are that comparative costs are only those of a medium order. The researcher as an employee of the institution, in which the research is to be undertaken, will have an opportunity to hand out and collect the questionnaires from the respondents. Also, a large sample can be drawn, as the WSU has four campuses and different sites situated in different areas in the Eastern Cape. Furthermore, it is an advantage that the responses can be standardised.

The weakness of the design is that respondents could make errors in an attempt to answer the questionnaire. The time allocated for collecting the data is too long – because the WSU is uniquely positioned in different areas of the Eastern Cape, and spans four campuses with various delivery sites in these areas. One of the major weaknesses is that the researcher cannot ask follow-up questions of the respondents, because the respondents will be drawn from all four campuses and eleven sites of the WSU.

There are two most commonly used types of questions in research – open-ended and closed-ended questions. This study will focus on both the open-ended and closed-ended questions to collect and analyse the data.

Matrix questions will be used, which consist of a number of closed-ended questions, and each question’s option will be scaled. Respondents are asked to select the option that reflects their attitude, opinion or judgment. The Likert scale will be employed for this study.

Open-ended questions allow respondents to communicate their experiences or opinions about a specific issue in their own words, without any restrictions, while the closed-ended questions do not allow the respondents to provide answers in their own words, but they force the respondents to select one or more choices from a fixed list of options provided.
This study will use the Likert scale, where subjects as respondents are asked to rate a particular statement by selecting one of the responses given: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree on a structured questionnaire. A Likert scale, therefore, assesses the degree to which respondents agree or disagree with statements about a specific topic or issue (Du Plooy, 2002:128-129).

Also open-ended questions will be subjected to pre-test in order to ensure content validity and to seek factual information about a particular issue or topic.

Do Plooy (2002: 143) states that the reason for asking an open-ended question in an interview is the same as that when asking it in a self-administered questionnaire: to invite the respondents to answer in any way they wish.

4.3 Methodology

This section describes the research design that will be used to test the thesis statements of the study. A qualitative research design will be utilised for the purpose of this study in order to acquire the desired outcomes of the research.

Qualitative designs are based on reasoning, which begins with the formulation of a hypothesis that identifies the constructs, variables and relationships to be measured. As a result of the significance of strategic internal communication as an independent variable, affecting employees’ behaviour and attitudes, an investigation into the effectiveness of internal communication at the WSU would be useful in assisting this organisation towards higher staff morale and productivity, and ultimately effectiveness, leading presumably to better productivity.

The qualitative research design might be considered a warm (i.e. human) approach to the central problem of research.
It is considered to be warm, because in part it is concerned with human beings: interpersonal relationships, personal views, meanings, beliefs, thoughts, and feelings (Leedy, 1993:142).

For the purpose of the study, the methodology section will be divided into three sections, namely: the research instruments to be used, how the data will be collected and how the data will be analysed.

4.3.1 Research Instruments

The research instrument that is used for the purpose of this study comprise a questionnaire. All respondents will answer the same questions to measure the different variables. The respondents will read the questions themselves and mark the answers on the questionnaire.

In this study, the variable will be formulated in the form of a question – in order to gather data. The respondents are given the information and any necessary instructions needed for completing the questionnaire.

Neuman (2003:286) states that survey research can be complex and expensive, and it can involve co-ordinating many people and steps. The administration of survey research requires organisation and accurate recording.

A track record for each respondent’s questionnaire is safely kept, as each respondent will be given an identification number which also appears on the questionnaire. A good survey of the questions is developed – to avoid any confusion among the respondents, and to enable them to give valid and reliable answers.

Zikmund (2002:330-331) states that a survey is only as good as the questions it asks. The importance of wording questions accurately can be easily overlooked, so questionnaire design is a critical stage in the survey research.
Determination of the questions that should be asked will be influenced by the requirements for data analysis. As the questionnaire is being designed, the researcher should be thinking about the type of statistical analysis that will be conducted (Zikmund, 2002:331).

The study will employ the descriptive research, which is usually characterised by a concern with measuring or estimating the size, quantities or frequencies of things. Wilmer and Kruger (2002:19) maintain that by using descriptive methods, one tries to understand the way things are; while by using experimental methods, one tries to understand the way things could be – if only one changed and/or manipulated them.

The descriptive research module (2008) is so constructed in such a way that descriptive research, also known as statistical research, can be relied on to describe the data and the characteristics of the population or phenomenon being studied. It answers questions, such as Who? What? Where? When? and How?

The study on the WSU focuses on the opinion survey and the descriptive research methods to be utilised. This research method will enable the study to be more reliable and to be able to ensure its validity with few additional requirements.

Although the data descriptions are factual, accurate and systematic, the research cannot describe what caused the situation. Thus, descriptive research cannot be used to create a causal relationship, where one variable directly affects another. In other words, descriptive research can be said to have a low requirement for internal validity (Descriptive research module, 2008).

The description is used for frequencies, averages and other statistically relevant calculations. Often the best approach, prior to writing descriptive research, is to conduct a survey investigation (Descriptive research, 2002 module).
The descriptive research approach is more appropriate for the WSU study in investigating the opinions of the employees, because it allows a description or the summarisation of the data obtained for a group of individual units of analysis.

4.3.2 Data

The sample used in this study will be drawn from a large population of the WSU employees from four campuses – with the aim of allowing one to make inferences about the population. The population from which the study will be conducted comprises academics and non-academics from all four campuses of the WSU.

The sample made up of members of the non-academic staff will comprise the middle management, supervisors and support staff members from all the departments at the WSU. Meanwhile, the academic sample will begin with the professors down to the junior lecturers. The reason for choosing this sample was that it is a true representation of the university community. The issue of the merger has impacted directly on them.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2004:44) maintain that the main concern in sampling is representivity. The aim is to select a sample that will be representative of the entire population from which the researcher aims to draw conclusions.

For the purpose of this research, the sample will be drawn from a larger sample of the WSU community, as this will enable one to make inferences about the population as a whole.

Sampling is that part of statistical practice concerned with the selection of individual observations intended to yield some knowledge about the population of concern, especially for the purposes of statistical inference (Sampling statistics, 2008 manual).
Zikmund (2006:379) maintains that there are several alternative ways of taking a sample. The major alternative sampling plans may be grouped into probability techniques and non-probability techniques.

The researcher intends to use a probability sampling method, where every element of the population has a known non-zero probability selection rating.

To achieve representivity, the researcher has chosen random sampling because of its importance in a descriptive survey. In the simple case of random sampling, each member of the population has the same chance of being included in the sample, and each sample of a particular size has the same probability of being chosen (Welman and Kruger, 2002:53).

Questionnaires will be distributed by hand to all members of the WSU, both academic and administrative. In this case, every member of the university has an equal chance of being selected as a member of the population of the study.

Keyton (2006:122) maintains that with every member of a population being assigned a known and non-zero chance of being selected to participate, the sampling error can be calculated. This is sometimes referred to as the margin of error.

Below are the strengths and the weaknesses of the random-sampling method applied by the researcher.
Simple Random Sampling

**Source:** Du Plooy (2002:108).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages or Strengths</th>
<th>Disadvantages or Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Easy to draw if the population is small and the sampling frame exists</td>
<td>1. Time-consuming when the population is large, unless a computer is used to automatically draw the sample.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The possibility of selection bias is eliminated.</td>
<td>2. A list of population parameters has to be compiled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A representative sample can be obtained.</td>
<td>3. If a sampling frame does not exist, the data-collection costs increase, because each unit drawn has to be checked to determine whether it belongs to the population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A sample can be drawn via a computer.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**4.3.3 Analysis**

The issue of data analysis was carefully considered when designing the study, as this will assist in transforming all the data into an answerable form relevant to the original research question.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2004:57) maintain that a quantitative research proposal should include an account of which statistical procedures will be employed to analyse the data, and to explain why these are appropriate.
Numbers are assigned to ensure that the numbers are able to fit in and represent the quantities that they are supposed to. For the purpose of this study, numbers represent quantities.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2004:72) highlight the point that measurement involves assigning numbers to objects to represent how much the object has of a particular attribute.

A Moonstats computer programme with a data grid is to be used for the purpose of this study. It is the stand-alone statistical programme that operates in Windows 95 or higher.

Kruger and Welman (2002:309) add that the Moonstats is designed for novice computer users, and provides a suitable statistical tool for data exploration and data description, while it also allows for data to be assigned entry as numeric values into a data sheet of more than 100 variables and 1000 cases.

It performs the standard descriptive statistical computations and the selection of bivariate descriptive inferential statistics.

4.4 Limitations

The first limitation of this study is the lack of financial support. All the finances were paid by the researcher, as all other avenues for financial support were exhausted. Financial support could have contributed to a much more extensive research project and enabled one to get a much larger population for the study. Expenses include: telephone calls, paper for questionnaires, printing, travelling and remuneration of the research assistants for the distribution of questionnaires.

As a result of work-related commitments, some staff members might not be given the amount of time required to answer the questionnaires. Some of them might even submit after the time that had been allocated for submission had already expired.
4.5 Ethical considerations

Kent (2007:38) maintains that ethics are those moral principles or standards that guide ways in which individuals treat their fellow human beings in situations where they could cause actual or potential harm.

This study adheres to the ethics standards. A written submission was forwarded to the institution from which the population was drawn for their ethical consideration, as well as for the necessary permission to undertake this study.

A research committee, after a series of meetings for consideration, granted the required permission.

All the participants are guaranteed their confidentiality, when answering the questionnaires. Population elements are not expected to write their names on the questionnaires.

It is the standard procedure that an ethics committee has to grant ethical approval after the normal procedures have been followed in applying for such approval. Normally, the approval is granted before the questionnaires are distributed, as they have by then already been studied by the research committee.

Ethical considerations are very important, as the researcher will enter into the private lives of the respondents; therefore, confidentiality must be guaranteed.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the methodology of the study. It gives a brief overview of the purpose of the study, as well as the results that the method was designed to provide.
It provides the relevant information on research design, methodology, research instruments, data, analysis, limitations and all the ethical considerations.

The research design focuses on techniques that have been employed to undertake this study, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the techniques. It also touches on the type of questions to be used, as well as the interviews to be conducted.

The research methodology highlights the purpose of the research instruments and the importance of research instruments, in order to arrive at reliable and valid results. Data will also be collected by using the random sampling approach, in which every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.

The limitations of this study are also highlighted. It has also been indicated how such limitations might affect the research undertaken.

This study adheres to the necessary ethical considerations, as it involves human beings. Elements of the population will remain anonymous, and all the information will remain confidential. The ethics committee was also approached for the ethical approval of this study.

The following chapter will look at the findings of the study from the questionnaires that were distributed all members of the WSU – both academic and non-academic from all four campuses.
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS WITH CHARTS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the findings from the research questionnaires that were distributed among the participants, in an effort to explore the role of strategic internal communication systems of the Walter Sisulu University.

The findings will reflect what members from various campuses perceive, on whether they view the internal communication systems as having contributed – or not contributed – to a successfully merged university.

One hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed on different campuses and departments, without any discrimination as regards issues relating to demographical information. One hundred members managed to respond.

The questionnaire is structured in three main sections, namely: internal communication systems, tools of communication and line-management communication.

5.3 Internal communication systems

The findings of this study were deduced from 100 members of the WSU, from four campuses across the Eastern Cape.

The majority of the WSU workforce who participated in this study disagreed with the statement that the internal communication systems contributed to a successfully merged university.
Again, the staff of the WSU strongly agreed, 37% of these members agreed with the statement that the communication system communicates policies to the institution more openly; 29% were neutral, and 34% disagreed.

As many as 62.6% of the workforce believed that good internal communication can improve the productivity in the workforce at the WSU.

The majority of participants of the WSU believed that internal communication systems are responsive to the needs of the employees, 31% agreed, while 24% strongly agreed with the statement mentioned above.

As many as 41% of the workforce strongly agreed, while 33% agreed that the internal communication systems contributed to a positive organisational climate – which is a better contribution for a merged organisation.

A total of 46% of the workforce strongly agreed, while 24% agreed that the internal communication systems contributed to positive staff morale, which is also another improved contribution to the merged organisation.

As many as 36.3% agreed and strongly agreed, that the internal communication systems create an enabling environment, where employees can develop interpersonal relationships.

A total of 37.3% and 38.3% agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that internal communication systems create an environment that enables co-workers to support each other. Meanwhile, 75% of the staff members disagreed.

Only 29% and 46% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that internal communication
systems provide a channel through which organisational information can be shared between co-workers. Meanwhile 11% disagree, and only 14 respondents remained neutral.

Only 28% and 39% agreed and strongly agreed respectively, that internal communication systems provide a channel through which organisational information can be shared between management and the workers. Only 16% of the respondents disagreed, and 17% were neutral.

5.4 Tools of communication

Only 34.3% agreed and 26.2% strongly agreed that the intranet is the best choice of communication – especially for those who have had intranet connections for almost 8 hours per day. Only 7% of the respondents were neutral. Meanwhile, 21% of the respondents disagreed with the statement - as a result of which, many academics spend more time in lecture halls than in their offices.

Only 36% of the members were neutral on whether the internal newsletter is the preferred mode of communication, while 31% agreed that it is the best mode of communication.

The majority of the workforce is supportive of the computer services in their effort to ensure that there is a steady information flow within the institution. A small 23% remained neutral, while 23% strongly agreed, and 31% agreed.

As many as 32% of the members disagreed with the statement that information always reaches the workforce on time, while 25% agreed, and 21% remained neutral, and 12% strongly disagreed. Tools of communication are fully utilised to ensure that the workforce is able access the relevant information on work-related issues in good time.

A few, 26% of the members, remained neutral, while 27% of the workers agreed that
upward communication is encouraged at the WSU as a means of communication between workers and the management.

48% of the workers disagree and 30% of the workers at the WSU were neutral on whether downward communication is encouraged, while 22% agreed with this statement as a means of communication between the management and workers on relevant matters like policy changes.

61% was recorded for those who agreed and strongly agreed respectively, that internal communication systems currently practised at the WSU promote a two-way feedback mechanism.

Only 27% of the members believed that video-conferencing should be used as a mode of internal communication, while 15% strongly agreed.

34% of the members remained neutral, while 28% agreed that the information from the intranet actually motivates the workforce to perform better.

5.5 Line-management communication

51% disagreed and strongly disagreed that the internal departmental policies are clearly defined, while 25% remained neutral. Meanwhile 16% strongly agree and 8% agree with the above statement respectively.

33% disagreed, while 28% agreed that job descriptions are communicated openly to the workforce, while 17% remained neutral. Only 17% remained neutral on the above statement; and 19% and 7% agree and strongly agree respectively.

29% disagreed and 21% disagree with the statement that the workforce is kept informed of all new internal departmental policies, while 24% remained neutral. Only 31% of the
members of the workforce at the WSU were neutral on the statement that lines of communication are open to all members of a department, while 20% agreed with the statement.

As many 20.2% of the members disagreed and 15.1% strongly disagreed that upward communication is encouraged by the departments, while 27.2% agreed and 9% strongly agreed with the statement, meanwhile 28% of the members remained neutral.

The majority of the respondents suggested that they wanted to see more interaction between the workforce and management, and that the decisions should be an inclusive process, where members are afforded an opportunity to voice their concerns.

5.6 Conclusion

It is interesting to note that staff members from Buffalo City campuses contributed more, especially those from the faculties of Business, Management Sciences and Law with an academic background and with less than six years of experience; these all proved to be more active in this research venture.

Lastly, the former Eastern Cape Technikon members of staff, both academic and administrative, participated to a greater extent than those from any of the other merged institutions.

The majority of the participants made it clear that internal communication systems can play a pivotal role in creating a positive organisational climate, in helping to increase staff morale, and in improving productivity.

The findings also point to the fact that the workforce believe that internal communication
systems can create an enabling environment, where all staff members can develop interpersonal relationships, support among staff members for each other, and an environment where information can be shared among the co-workers, as well as to provide a channel through which organisational information can be shared between management and the workers.

Most of the participants believed that the intranet, as well as the newsletter, is the best mode of communication, provided the computer services are playing a supportive role in the dissemination of information.

However, it was found that most members of the workforce believed that information does not reach the workforce on time.

The majority of the workforce believe that internal departmental policies and the job descriptions are not clearly defined. They are also in support of the statement that they are not well informed on new internal departmental policies.

The majority are also of the view that lines of communication are not open and that upward communication is not properly encouraged.

Most of the respondents would like to see better interaction between the workforce and management, and are of the opinion that decisions should be an inclusive process, where staff members are afforded an opportunity to voice their concerns.

The following chapters will provide an insight into the analysis and the evidence, as well as the conclusions in support of the findings mentioned in this chapter.
CHAPTER 6

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS ANALYSIS WITH CHARTS

6.1. Introduction
From the literature review, it was evident that internal communication can play a leading role in ensuring that there is productivity, increased staff morale, as well as better organisation, when handled well. Public relations theorists acknowledge the fact that internal communication is significant for an organisation’s success.

This chapter will analyse the questionnaires that were distributed among the workforce at the WSU. As stated in the previous chapter, 100 members of staff from all four campuses responded to the call.

The Likert scale was used, in which all the respondents were asked to rate a particular statement by selecting one of the following responses – where each was given a code number: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2) and lastly, strongly disagree (1).

6.2 Analysis of internal communication systems

The first statement on the questionnaire states that effective internal communication systems have contributed towards a successfully merged institution.

The number of cases, expressed as a percentage is: strongly disagree 14.00%, disagree 21%, those that are neutral, 31%, for those who agree it is 23%, and for strongly agree it is 11%.
Bar chart 6.1

The second statement reads as follows: internal communication systems communicate the policies of the organisation more openly.

The percentage of each value who strongly disagree was 8%, disagree was 26%, neutral was 29%, agreed 24%; and those who strongly agreed was 13%.

Bar chart 6.2

The third statement declares that effective internal communication can improve productivity in the workforce. The number of cases for this variable was 99. The number of values obtained for this variable was five.

The percentage of each value obtained for those who strongly disagreed was 3.03%, disagreed 8.08% for service workers, neutral 5.05%, academics and administration respondents agreed 21.2%, and those that strongly agreed was 62.6%.
The fourth statement states that internal communication systems have contributed towards a successfully merged organisation. The number of cases obtained for this variable was 99. The number of values submitted for this variable was 5. The mean was 3.13 and the standard deviation was 1.26.

The percentage of each value obtained was strongly disagreed 13.1%, disagreed 16.1% neutral 32.3%; respondents agreed 21.2% and strongly agreed 17.1%.

Bar chart 6.4
The fifth statement points out those internal communication systems that are responsive to the needs of the employees. The number of cases obtained for this variable was 100.

The percentage of each value obtained was: strongly disagreed 5%, disagreed 14%, neutral 26%, agreed 31% and those that strongly agreed was 24%.

*Bar chart 6.5*

The sixth statement highlights the point that internal communication systems contribute to a positive organisational climate. The number of cases obtained for this variable was 100.

The median and the mode were 4.00 and 5.00 respectively. The percentage for each value was: strongly disagreed 5%; disagreed 7% (these are respondents with lower education: service workers); neutral 14%; agreed 33%; and those that strongly agreed, 41%.
The seventh statement points out those internal communication systems that contribute to positive staff morale. The number of cases obtained for this variable was 100, and the largest value was five. The mean and the standard deviation obtained were 3.98 and 1.18 respectively.

The percentages for each value obtained were: strongly disagreed 4%, disagreed 10%, neutral 16%, agreed 24% and strongly agreed 46%.
The eighth statement highlighted the point that internal communication systems create an enabling environment, where employees can develop interpersonal relationships. The number of cases obtained for this variable was 99.

The median and the mode for the values were each 4.00. The percentages for the values obtained were: strongly disagreed 6.06%, disagreed 7.07%, neutral 14.1%, agreed 36.3, and strongly agreed 36.3%.

*Bar chart 6.8*

The ninth statement reveals that internal communication systems create an environment that enables co-workers to support each other. The numbers of cases obtained for this variable was 99, with the largest value obtained being five.

Meanwhile, the respondents strongly disagreed 5.05%, disagreed 9.09%, neutral 10.1%, agreed 37.3% and strongly agreed 28.3%.
The tenth statement on the questionnaire states that internal communication systems provide a channel through which organisational information may be shared between co-workers. The number of cases obtained for this variable was 100 – with five values.

The percentage for each value was: strongly disagreed 6%, disagreed 5%, neutral 14%, agreed 29% and strongly agreed 46%.
The last statement was as follows: Internal communication systems provide a channel through which organisational information may be shared between management and the workers. The number of cases obtained for this variable was one hundred, and the largest value obtained was five.

The percentages for each value obtained were as follows: strongly disagreed 8%; disagreed 8%; neutral 17%; agreed 28%; and lastly, strongly agreed 39%.

Bar chart 6.11

6.3 Conclusion

It is evident from the analysis, that the majority of the respondents believed that the internal communication system of the WSU is working very well. According to the information obtained, the majority are neutral; and they agreed or strongly agreed with all the statements put forward. Only a minority disagreed with the statements put forward.

The next chapter will deal with the analysis of the tools of communication, and will focus on whether they contributed or did not contribute to the merger of the WSU.
CHAPTER 78

TOOLS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS WITH CHARTS

7.1. Introduction
As far as internal communication is concerned, the tools of communication can play a significant role in ensuring that there is a free flow of information within the University. At the same time it will enable the information to reach the internal stakeholders on time. One hundred cases were obtained from the respondents.

The Likert scale with, the ratings from one to five, was used to evaluate the internal communication systems of the Walter Sisulu University.

Botha et al. (2007:18) maintain that employees of an organization are its most important assets. A productive, happy workforce should be the ideal of every management team. Employees who know what the organisation is doing are generally more productive and contented workers.

7.2 Analysis of internal communication tools

The first statement states that the intranet is the best choice for communication. There were 99 cases obtained for this variable. The percentages of the values were as follows: respondents, especially service workers and some academic staff without permanent offices strongly disagreed; 7.8%, disagreed, 14.1% were neutral; 18.1%, 34.3% agree and strongly agreed 26.2.
Bar Chart 7.1

The second statement points out that the internal newsletter is the preferred mode of communication. One hundred cases were obtained for this variable. The largest value obtained was five. The median and mode for the values were each 3.00.

The percentages for the values obtained were: service workers who strongly disagreed 4%; those who disagreed 16%; neutral 36%, meanwhile academics and administration staff 31% agree and another 31% strongly agree.

Bar Chart 7.2

The third statement established that computer services are supportive in the flow of information to the internal workforce. There were one hundred cases obtained for this variable.
The largest value was five. The mean for this variable was 3.42; and the standard deviation was 1.29. The median and the mode were each 4.00.

The percentages for each variable were as follows: 12% strongly disagreed, 11% disagreed, 23% neutral; meanwhile; 31% agreed and 23% strongly disagree.

Bar chart 7.3

The fourth statement maintains that information reaches the workforce on time. One case was submitted for this variable and the highest number of values was five.

Each value had the following number of percentages: strongly disagreed 32%; disagreed 25%; neutral 21%; agreed 12% and strongly agreed 10%.

Bar chart 7.4
The fifth statement claims that upward communication is encouraged. One hundred cases were submitted with five values.

The percentages of the values submitted were: staff members strongly disagreed at 16%; disagreed at 19%; neutral at 26%; meanwhile respondents agreed at 27%, and agreed at 12%.

*Bar chart 7.5*

The sixth statement advocated that downward communication be encouraged. The number of cases obtained for this variable was 100.

The percentages of each value could be interpreted as follows: strongly disagreed at 16%, disagreed at 17%, neutral at 30%, agreed at 22% and strongly agreed at 15%.

*Bar chart 7.6*
The seventh statement claims that internal communication systems promote a two-way feedback mechanism. The number of cases obtained was one hundred, and five values were allocated.

The percentages were: workers who strongly disagreed 7%, disagreed at 17%, neutral at 15%, agreed 39%, and strongly agreed 22%.

Bar chart 7.7

The eighth statement pronounced that video-conferencing may be used as a mode of internal communication. One hundred cases were obtained and the highest value for this variable was five.

The response from this statement, according to percentages was: strongly disagreed 19%, disagreed 15%, neutral at 24%, agreed 27%; and strongly agreed at 15%.
The last statement claimed that information on the intranet motivates the workforce to perform better. One case was obtained and five values were also obtained. The mean and the standard deviation for this variable were 3.18 and 1.11, respectively. The median and the mode were both at 3.00.

The percentages of the values in this variable were: strongly disagreed 8%, disagreed 18%, neutral 34%, agreed 28% and strongly agreed 12%.

**7.3 Conclusion**

The respondents believed that the University used the tools of communication to ensure that the workforce was kept informed of the changes that were taking place. Although there was uncertainty on the accessibility of the intranet to all members of the University, they also believed that the computer services were not doing enough to support the workforce in getting all the necessary information to them in time.
The next chapter will look at the line management at the WSU, in order to ascertain whether it is functional enough to increase productivity and able to communicate effectively with the workforce.
CHAPTER 8

LINE MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS WITH CHARTS

8.1. Introduction

Botha et al. (2007:209) confirmed that when you know what is expected of you and what the role is that are to you are expected to play within the group, it is easier for you to complete the task. It also helps you to know that you are a member of the team and that the team values you. This will motivate employees to work well within an organisation.

This chapter will explore some of the statements in the questionnaire on line-communication management. A Likert scale with the ratings from one to five was employed.

8.2 Analysis of line-communication management

The first statement argued that internal departmental policies are clearly defined. One hundred cases were obtained for this variable

The percentages for each value were: strongly disagreed 21%, disagreed 30%, neutral 25%, agreed 16% and strongly agreed 8%.
The second statement attested that new job descriptions are communicated openly to the workforce. One hundred cases were obtained for this variable. The maximum number of values obtained was five.

The percentage of each value could be interpreted as follows: strongly disagreed 28%; disagreed 33%; neutral 17%; agreed 17%; and strongly agreed 5%.

The third statement maintained that the workforce is kept informed of new internal departmental policies. The number of cases obtained was one hundred.

The percentages for the values obtained were: strongly disagreed 21%; disagreed 29%; neutral 24%; agreed 19%; and strongly agreed 7%.
The fourth statement inferred that the lines of communication are open to all members of a department. The number of cases obtained for this variable was 100.

The percentages could be interpreted as follows: strongly disagreed 19%; disagreed 22%; neutral 31%; agreed 20%; and strongly agreed 8%.

The last statement claimed that upward communication was encouraged by the departments. The number of cases submitted for this variable was 100.

The percentage of each obtained value was: strongly disagreed 15.1%; disagreed 20.2%; neutral 28%; agreed 27.2%; and strongly agreed 9%.
Lastly, the employees were asked the question whether they were satisfied with the internal communication systems at the WSU. The majority of the workers stated that they would like to see an improvement in ensuring that there were better communication methods that could be employed, that might be especially suited to the University.

They also pointed out that there should be accessibility for all the staff members to the intranet, as the campuses are scattered all over the Eastern Cape. Also, they would like to see the communications department working very closely with computer services to enable the information to reach the workforce in good time.

In answer to the question on where they would like to see improvements in the internal communication systems, many alluded to the fact that they would like to see more interaction between management and the workers. They believed that they should be provided an opportunity to make suggestions, especially on issues related to the policies of the university.

8.3 Conclusion

This section has provided many challenges to the respondents, as the majority of the respondents have shown their dissatisfaction on how information is distributed within the departments. They believe that there are no formal structures of communication within
the departments, as the structures had not yet been finalised. Policies and job descriptions of individual members were not clearly communicated to these members, as things stand.

The following chapter will round up the research.
CHAPTER 9

9.1 A SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

9.1 Introduction

The primary objective of this chapter is to highlight and reveal a summary of the findings from the research undertaken. It will also provide the information in an abbreviated form.

This chapter will provide the findings that have been deduced from the research as a whole, as well as to give an indication on whether it agrees with the research question or not.

Attention will be given to evaluate the internal communication system at the Walter Sisulu University after the three former institutions of higher learning merged.

Lastly, this chapter will also give recommendations and suggestions for the application of the research. All recommendations will need to be implementable - and should be made possible by means of the digital and technological era in which we are living.

9.3 Internal communication systems

The study has revealed that the majority of respondents remain neutral on the statement that says effective internal communication systems contributed towards a successfully merged university. This indicates that the university tried to ensure that all members from the three merged institutions were kept informed of the developments directly affecting the workforce.

The study highlighted that once more the respondents remained neutral on the statement that internal communication systems communicated policies of the institution more openly and effectively.
This shows that the new policies were evidently, or-not evidently, communicated to the workforce.

This statement presented with mixed feelings among the respondent ot this study.

The study shows that the majority of respondents believed that effective internal communication can improve productivity in the workforce. Theaker (2001:132) confirms the findings of this study – by stating that the goals of employee relations are to identify, establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between the organisations and the employees – on whom its success or failure depend. This indicated, for any organisation big or small, that there should be a constant flow of internal communications in place – to ensure that the workforce is kept informed of any developments that are taking place within it.

The study has found that the majority of respondents remained neutral on the issue of whether internal communication systems have contributed towards a successfully merged university. There are mixed feeling among respondents on whether internal communication systems contributed towards the merger, or whether they did not.

The study has revealed that the majority of respondents believe that internal communication systems at the WSU are responsive to the needs and concerns of the employees. This indicates that the WSU is taking the concerns and needs of its employees seriously, using internal communication systems as the means of promoting a two-way communication system.

The study shows that the majority of respondents believe that internal communication systems contribute to a positive organisational climate. This statement is supported by, Skinner et al. (2003:390) - that the dominant philosophy applies within the organisation and is responsible for the nature of the relationship within it.
The study has highlighted the fact that the majority of respondents agree with the statement that: …internal communication systems contribute to a staff morale that is positive.

This indicates that lack of internal communication systems can generate negative or even low staff morale in the workforce. A lack of internal communication systems can have a hindering effect on the morale of the employees.

The study shows that the majority of respondents believed that internal communication systems create an enabling environment, where employees can develop interpersonal relationships. As a result of the merger of three institutions with people from different backgrounds, cultures and climates, it is of paramount importance to establish those interpersonal relationships needed to ensure that the employees relate to one another without any noticeable friction, as regards their previous institutions.

The study shows that the majority of respondents believed that internal communication systems create an environment that enables co-workers to support each other. This indicates that the internal communication can be utilised to bridge the gap between workers from the different merged institutions – to play a supportive role in ensuring that employees understand one another.

If they understand one another, as well as their differences, then this can ensure that better working conditions will be established.

The study revealed that the majority of participants agreed with the statement that internal communication systems provide a channel through which organisational information can be shared between co-workers. This can be made possible by using the tools of communication, such as the intranet and the internal newsletters. Meetings can be also a very effective way of information-sharing among the workers from the merged institutions.
The study also revealed that the majority of respondents believed that internal communication systems provide a channel through which organisational information can be shared between management and workers. This statement was supported by Frost et al. (1997:147), … that communication in an organisation is the transfer and receiving of ideas, feelings and attitudes between management and the workers. It also involves a thorough understanding of the knowledge of all the necessary information that is being made available.

It can, therefore, be concluded that the majority of the respondents in this study agreed that internal communication systems can play a leading role in ensuring that there is an effectively merged university. It is, therefore, important to have a formal structure of communication that will provide a free flow of information within the organisation. Skinner et al. (2003:4) state that public relations is the art and social science of analysing trends, predict their consequences, counselling organisational leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action, which will serve both the organization and the public interest.

9.4 Tools of internal communication

The study has revealed that the majority of respondents believe that the intranet is the best choice of communication. With campuses scattered in rural and urban areas, the intranet is the best mode of communication. With the advent of new technologies, it is important to use the intranet to communicate with the workforce that is located hundreds of kilometres away from each other.

The study has shown that the majority of respondents are neutral as regards the statement that the internal newsletter is the preferred mode of communication. Various factors might have influenced the decision of the employees, such as: The decisions are centralised with other campuses receiving little or no coverage.
The study has highlighted that most of the respondents believe that the computer services at the WSU are supportive of the information flow to the internal workforce. This statement suggests that the computer services are playing a significant role in ensuring that information reaches the workforce on time, as they have the responsibility to maintain and service computer networks at the WSU; and also to work closely with the departments that are entrusted with the responsibility of information dissemination.

The study has shown that the respondents believe that the information reaches the workforce in time. This statement is supported by the above statement that shows the efficiency of the computer services in their effort to ensure that the intranet is up and running.

The study has revealed that the respondents believe that upward communication is encouraged at the WSU. This will enable the workers to voice their concerns to the management; this will enable them to feel that they are part of the decision-making process. Barker (2002:183) states that upward communication comprises any message sent from subordinates to the supervisor or manager.

Such upward communication allows for a meaningful participation of the workforce on issues related to policy changes at the WSU.

This study has shown that most of the respondents are neutral on whether downward communication is encouraged at the WSU. If respondents believe that downward communication is lacking at the WSU, that suggests that policies are not clearly defined by the management. Barker and Gaut (2002:182) stated that downward communication is a means of directing information/messages to the subordinates.
Messages, include job instructions, individual expectations, and the evaluation of information.

The study has highlighted the point that the majority of the respondents believe that internal communication systems promote a two-way feedback mechanism. This is evident from the theory employed by this study – the systems theory, which suggests that the whole is equal to the sum of its parts.

This means that the communication process should start from the source and proceed to the destination. Then, it is also for the source to know that the message has reached its intended destination; and there should be some form of feedback.

The WSU is an institution with four campuses and eleven sites; the majority of the respondents believe that video-conferencing should be used as the mode of communication. Video-conferencing could save the institution from spending lots of money and time on travelling between the different campuses.

The study has revealed that the majority of the respondents remain neutral, on whether the information on the intranet motivates the workforce to perform better. This suggests that information on the intranet should be relevant enough to motivate the workforce to perform better.

The study has revealed that for any organisation to have a better-performing workforce, they need to make use of the tools of communication, to ensure that the relevant information reaches the workforce on time. Both the print and electronic means of communication could be used here.

9.5 Line-management communication

The study has revealed that the majority of the respondents disagree with the statement
that the departmental policies are clearly defined.
As a result, the institution has introduced drastic changes that will accommodate all members from the merged institutions.
This will enable the department to avoid the duplication of job functions. Members feel that policies of the newly formed institution are not clearly defined.

The study highlights the fact that the majority of the respondents disagree with the statement that job descriptions are communicated openly to the workforce. If the job descriptions are not openly communicated, this would certainly lead to poor performance, and members would not be able to execute their responsibilities, as required.

The study has shown that the majority of respondents disagree with the statement that the workforce is kept informed of new departmental changes. The process of merger can take up to five years to be completed; therefore, new changes need to be communicated to members – to avoid confusion and for members to know where they stand in the new dispensation.

The study has shown that the majority of the respondents have remained neutral about whether the lines of communication are open to all members of the department, or not. A great task lies ahead of the new management to ensure that the lines of communication are open, so that members can express their concerns about the newly merged university.

The study reveals that the majority of the respondents remain neutral on whether upward communication is encouraged by the departments. Skinner et al. (2003:392) state that upward communication from staff to management, as seen with speak-up schemes, quality circles, open-door policies, work councils, co-partnerships, and house journals with candid reader comments have revealed that the respondents at the WSU feel that the university is not doing enough to encourage line communication management in the workplace.

The next chapter will focus on the conclusion of the study.
CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

10.1 Introduction

This chapter will conclude the research - by looking at the background of the research question, the literature review, the research design, the methodology, and the findings in the context of the problem statement of the research, and by offering a final conclusion.

10.2 Background, research problem, and problem statement

The study has attempted to explore the strategic internal communication systems at the WSU, focusing on both the academic and administrative staff. The research is conducted on three merged institutions - that formed one comprehensive university. This research focuses on the Walter Sisulu University - to enable the institution to begin to address issues that need improvement in the strategic internal communication system.

The problem statement tried to establish whether the internal communication systems assist the organisation by promoting higher staff morale and productivity, and ultimately ensure greater effectiveness.

“An exploration of the role of a strategic internal communication system in the merging Walter Sisulu University.”

It is evident from the findings of this study that, indeed, the internal communication systems contribute towards an effectively merged organisation.

10.3 The literature review

The theoretical statement of the study is derived from the systems theory, as well as the transformational model. The systems theory states that the whole is equal to the sum of
its parts. Therefore, for the whole to function effectively, all the integrated parts must function together. The transformation model was chosen because of the transformation of higher education in South Africa – which resulted in the merger of former technikons and universities.

The study is derived from a preliminary literature review which shows that an organisation’s internal communication system is a contributing factor to the effectiveness of the organization. Different sources on corporate communication, public relations, employee communication, internal communication, organisational communication, upward, downward and lateral communication, as well as the new technology, organisational change, organisational culture and organisational climate would all be consulted for the purpose of the study.

This study indeed yielded that strategic internal communication can play a meaningful role in ensuring that workers’ morale in the workplace is high and is kept motivated.

### 10.4 Research design and methodology

The research was developed in accordance with scientific principles to ensure that the findings could be verified. A survey research method was used to obtain quantitative data which would permit the collection of substantial information from a large sample size. Questionnaires were used as the recording instruments for this study. The data were collected from employees of the WSU, on all four campuses.

Although acquiring information from the respondents was time-consuming, a moon stats computer spreadsheet was employed to capture the data.

### 10.5 Findings

The findings of the study have been discussed for the purpose of the study. The findings
were structured, according to biographical information, an internal communication system, tools of communication, and line-management communication. Also, different views from the respondents have been discussed in considerable depth.

10.6 Conclusion
This chapter concluded the research, by looking at the background of the research question, the literature review, the research design, the methodology and the findings in the context of the problem statement of the research, and by offering a final conclusion.

The next chapter will focus on the recommendations derived from the findings of the study.
CHAPTER 11

11.1 RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

11.2 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the recommendations, and how they should be implemented at the WSU, as seen from the findings of this study. In this chapter, the researcher will name each recommendation, and explain where and how it should be implemented. Hofstee (2006:159) states that if you are going to include recommendations for the application of your research, you should keep them reasonable. They must be feasible and easy to implement - and clearly useful.

- The study reveals that the majority of the respondents believe that the intranet at the WSU is not utilised optimally, for the purpose of internal communication. It is therefore important for line managers to work closely with the computer services to ensure that there is a free flow of information to the workforce in good time.
- The study has revealed that newsletters are not used solely for the purpose of internal communication. There should be regular newsletters in circulation that cover news from all the different campuses and sites as a means of communication.
- All forms of communication, upward, downward and lateral communication, should be encouraged to ensure that both the management and the workforce are able to share information on the newly merged institution.
- The study also revealed that video-conferencing should be used at the WSUs. This would save costs on travelling and time. All campuses should be equipped with video-conferencing facilities for meetings and conferences; and sometimes, lectures.
- The study indicates that departmental policies are not clearly defined. It is therefore the responsibility of policy makers at the WSU to ensure that there is full participation of all the members on policy formulation, as well as the optimal
use of tools of communication, to ensure that all members can access these policies.

- The study shows that there is a lack of information, with regard to job descriptions. Again, this is the responsibility of line the managers to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the job description of all staff members – by using all the necessary forms of communication.

- As a result of the merger, the workforce believes that there is lack of communication with regard to new departmental changes. Information on new departmental changes should be communicated to the workforce in good time.

- Lines of communication should be open to all staff members. This can be put into practice by having suggestion boxes, as well the use of the intranet for contributions from the workforce.
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What are Cybernetics and Systems Science?

Research Project

Dear Staff

You are invited to participate in a research project which evaluates the internal communication systems of the Walter Sisulu University.

This study is part of the dissertation for my studies with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. The findings will be used to improve internal communication systems at the WSU.

The attached questionnaire aims to examine to what extent employees of the WSU perceive that the internal communication systems of this university effectively contributed-or-did not contribute effectively –towards a merged university.

The results will assist our institution in improving its internal communication systems which are a contributing factor to positive organisational climate, staff morale and productivity, and –ultimately the effectiveness of the organisation.

As results of the ethical standards of social research the respondents will be treated anonymously.

A participant may withdraw at any moment or leave out any question that makes them feel uncomfortable.

I hope this will receive your favourable consideration and looking forward to share the outcomes of this study with the WSU.

Thank-you.
S. Soha
ssoha@wsu.ac.za
THE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE
The Likert scale will be used: all respondents are asked to rate a particular statement by selecting one of these responses.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Biographical Information
1. Gender
Male____________Female____________

2. Marital Status
Single____________Married_____________Divorced_____________

3. Race
Black____________Coloured_____________White____________Other_____________

4. Age level
(a)26__________30 (b)31__________35 (c) 36__________40 (d)41__________45 (e) 46__________50
(f) 51__________55 (g) 56__________50 (h) 61+__________

5. Education level
Matric________M+3__________M+4__________M+5__________M+6________

6. WSU campuses/sites
Mthatha__________Butterworth__________Buffalo
City__________Queenstown__________

7. Faculty
Business, Management Science and Law
Health Sciences
Engineering Sciences
Humanities and Social Sciences
8. Job designation

Academic__________________Administration__________________

9. Number of years in your present job
(a)0_______5 (b) 6_________10 (c) 11___________15 (d) 16+__________

10. Previous Institution

Border Technikon __________________________
Eastern Cape Technikon __________________
University of Transkei ____________________

Internal communication systems

11. Effective internal communication systems have contributed towards a successful merged institution.

Strongly disagree
1_______2________3________4________5________Strongly agree

12. Internal communication systems communicate policies of the institution more openly.

Strongly disagree
1_______2_______3________4________5________Strongly agree

13. Effective communication can improve productivity in the workforce.

Strongly disagree
1_______2_______3________4________5________Strongly agree

14. Internal communication systems have contributed towards a successful merged organization.

Strongly disagree
1_______2________3________4________5________Strongly agree

15. Internal communication systems are responsive to the organisational needs.

Strongly disagree
1_______2________3________4________5________Strongly agree
16. Internal communication systems contribute to a positive organisational climate.

Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

17. Internal communications systems contribute to positive staff morale.

Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

18. Internal communication systems create an enabling environment where employees can develop interpersonal relationships.

Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

19. An internal communication system creates an environment that enables co-workers to support each other.

Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

20. Internal communication systems provide a channel through which organisational information can be shared between co-workers.

Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

21. Internal communication systems provide a channel through which organisational information can be shared between management and workers.

Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree

Tools of communication

22. Intranet is the best choice of communication

Strongly disagree
1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
23. The internal newsletter is the preferred mode of communication.

Strongly disagree 1 ______ 2 ______ 3 ______ 4 ______ 5 ______ Strongly agree

24. Computer service is supportive in the information flow to the internal workforce.

Strongly disagree 1 ______ 2 ______ 3 ______ 4 ______ 5 ______ Strongly agree

25. Information always reaches the workforce on time.

Strongly disagree 1 ______ 2 ______ 3 ______ 4 ______ 5 ______ Strongly agree

26. Upward communication is encouraged.

Strongly disagree 1 ______ 2 ______ 3 ______ 4 ______ 5 ______ Strongly agree

27. Downward communication is encouraged.

Strongly disagree 1 ______ 2 ______ 3 ______ 4 ______ 5 ______ Strongly agree

28. Internal communication systems promote a two-way feedback mechanism

Strongly disagree 1 ______ 2 ______ 3 ______ 4 ______ 5 ______ Strongly agree

29. Video-conferencing is used as a mode of internal communication.

Strongly disagree 1 ______ 2 ______ 3 ______ 4 ______ 5 ______ Strongly agree

30. Information on the intranet motivates the workforce to perform better.

Strongly disagree 1 ______ 2 ______ 3 ______ 4 ______ 5 ______ Strongly agree

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**Line Management communication**

31. Internal departmental policies are clearly defined.

Strongly disagree 1 ______ 2 ______ 3 ______ 4 ______ 5 ______ Strongly agree
32. Job descriptions are communicated openly to the workforce.

Strongly disagree
1_______2_______3_______4_______5________Strongly agree

33. The workforce is kept informed of new internal departmental policies.

Strongly disagree
1_______2_______3_______4_______5________Strongly agree

34. Lines of communication are open to all members of the department.

Strongly disagree
1_______2_______3_______4_______5________Strongly agree

35. Upward communication is encouraged by the departments.

Strongly disagree
1_______2_______3_______4_______5________Strongly agree

36. Are you satisfied with the internal communication systems at the WSU? If not, make some suggestion.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

37. Where would you like to see some improvements in the internal communication systems at the WSU?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________