

**INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN THE OIL INDUSTRY:
A STUDY OF TULLOW OIL GHANA LIMITED**



**BY
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DECLARATION

I, Awurabena Ampofo-Bekoe, hereby declare that this study is my original research conducted between May 2011 and October 2011 under the supervision of Prof. K. Ansu Kyeremeh of the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana. Acknowledgements have also been given where other works and studies have been cited.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Madam Beatrice Yaa Odamea, for her undying love, financial, spiritual and moral support throughout my education. God richly bless you so much for all that you have helped me accomplish in life.



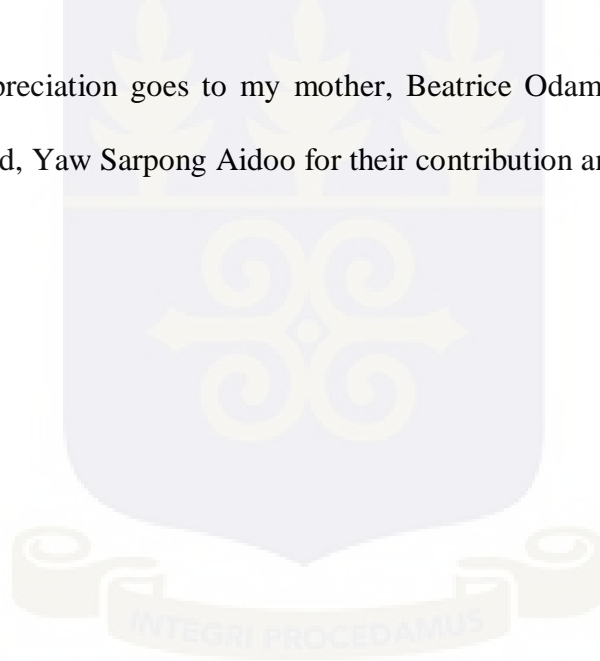
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My greatest gratitude goes to God almighty for His endless grace and mercies throughout this program and for seeing me through the successful completion of the program.

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ABSTRACT

This study was to explore how employees of Tullow Oil Ghana communicated and exchanged information within the organization. The channels used, the exact strategies employed to achieve effective internal communication as well as the role it played in accomplishing goals and objectives of the organization were particularly focused on.

Open-ended interviews with six employees from six different departments sought answers from informants while allowing useful insights. The majority of the respondents preferred face-to-face communication because interpersonal, dialogue communication remains important to employees at every level of the organization. They reasoned that though face-to-face meetings were time consuming, efficient face-to-face interaction with managers targeted at the internal audience give employees at all levels of the organization an understanding of the brand image and hence project this externally.

The study also noted that informants considered internal communication to be very important within the oil industry because it is risky; hence the need for continuous communication. It was also noted that the flow of information within Tullow Oil was effective; consequently respondents were satisfied with the communication strategies of Tullow Oil Ghana. Further, the study found that internal communication contributed greatly to the achievement of the organizational goals and objectives within Tullow Oil.

The regular temporary breakdown of the internet server is one major problem faced and the study recommends that a lasting solution must be found.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduced the research by providing a background of internal communication. It also defined the problem and outlined the objectives of the study. There was also a brief description of the structure of Tullow Oil Ghana limited.

1.1 Background

Internal communication is a subset of effective business communication, which is built around the simple foundation that communication is a dialogue, not a monologue. In fact, communication is a dual listening process. So internal communication, in a business context, is the dialogic process between employees and employer, and employees and employees. However, many a time the latter process is forgotten by strategists and PR professionals and the role of internal communication in building corporate brands seems to have received less attention in the academic literature as companies usually concentrate more on their external publics (Hopkins, 2006).

It should always be remembered that communication between employees and between employees and employers is very often far more powerful than any communication. Whereas the top-down, employer-driven communication is great for setting a communication agenda or discussion point, it is the peer-to-peer employee communications that determine the tone of the response back to the employer. (Hopkins 2006). It is therefore important that communication in the work place is very effective. Internal communication is the conversations that businesses have with their staff and the conversation that staff have with each other (Hopkins, 2006).

Internal communication refers to the exchange between an organisation's management and the internal publics who are the employees (Moore, 1981). Internal communication is a major constituent in any organisation, and is considered by some researchers as the lifeblood of an organization (Bartlett and Ghoshal 1989). In other words, the maintenance of an organisation requires an effective internal communication. Thus internal communication merits close attention as employees are the most important audience for a company's organisational communication and corporate branding efforts (Christensen and Askegaard, 2001). Indeed, employees are considered as one of the most trusted information sources about an organisation (Dortok, 2006). According to Argenti (1998) effective internal communication can have a positive effect on employees by motivating them to work harder. Conversely, employees can be "ambassadors of indifference" when managers do not remember that the most important asset the organisation has is its employees. Owing to the intense and competitive nature of business in contemporary society, it has become essential for organisations to communicate effectively. This has made communication such a fundamental part of managing today that without it, virtually nothing can be accomplished. (Smith, 1991).

According to (Johnson and Scholes 2010), a communication strategy is defined as a direction and scope of an organisation over the long-term: which achieves advantage for the organisation through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment to meet the needs of markets and to fulfil stakeholder expectations. It is in this context that this study aimed to assess the internal communication strategies employed by Tullow Oil Ghana, and to find out whether these strategies helped to achieve the communication objectives, and to explore and understand internal communications as it was applied by Tullow oil. This study seeks to identify how

workers of the company understand internal communication and its relevance to the organisation.

1.2 Profile of Tullow Oil.

Tullow Oil plc (LSE: TLW) is a global oil and gas exploration company headquartered in London, United Kingdom. The Company was founded by Aidan Heavey in 1985 in the Republic of Ireland as a gas exploration business operating in Senegal. Following the signing of a license agreement in Senegal in 1986, gas production and sales commenced in 1987. Tullow expanded its operations into the United Kingdom in 1988, acquired exploration acreage in Spain, Italy and South Yemen in 1989 and between 1990 and 1994 acquired licenses to operate in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt and Romania.

Currently it has interests in over 85 licenses across 23 countries. Its largest activities are in Africa, where it has discovered new oil provinces in Ghana and Uganda. It currently produces oil and gas in six countries and has exploration projects in 13 countries. As at 30th June, 2010, it had total proven commercial reserves of 290.5 million barrels of oil.

In the year 2000 the company acquired a £201 million worth of gas producing fields and related infrastructure in the UK, South North Sea from BP. This proved to be a catalyst for the Group's positioning as a leading player in the CMS and Thames/Hewett areas.

The 2001 to 2003 period was the first defining and transformational period for the group with the integration of its 2000 UK acquisition and growing production in core areas, as a result of re-investment in exploration and development activities. Strong increases in sales and profits were

achieved and Tullow focused its financial resources and management attention on offshore UK, West Africa and South Asia.

The group doubled in size in 2004, mainly as a result of the Energy Africa acquisition which was completed in May that year for \$570m. Overall, Tullow spent US\$1 billion on acquisitions and investments in 2004, creating a strong portfolio of international exploration, production and development assets. In the same year, it had two UK North Sea gas discoveries, one discovery in Gabon and one in Mauritania.

In 2006, the company began drilling its first well in Uganda and has since drilled circa 30 wells around the Lake Albert region. There were five oil discoveries in Uganda during 2006, which established the existence of a working hydrocarbon basin and marked the beginning of proving to be a world-class major new oil province there. Tullow also announced its largest acquisition ever with a US\$1.1 billion bid for Hardman Resources Limited.

In 2007, Tullow drilled two deepwater wells offshore Ghana discovering the massive Jubilee field, its largest ever discovery and the beginnings of proving up a second new major oil province. The period between 2008 and 2009 was its next phase of growth with a major focus on Africa, based on delivering the first oil in Ghana in 2010, and continuing to fast track the development of the significant resources discovered in Uganda.

In 2010, the Jubilee field was brought on to production in November, in record time, some 40 months after its discovery. A new major discovery was made at the Enyenra (Owo) and Tweneboa fields in Ghana during the year.

1.3 Problem statement

Effective internal communication is an area very important to every organisation. Most experts on organisations, management and leadership, assert that effective communication is the foundation for effectiveness in any type of organisation. They assert that there cannot be too much communication. Some leaders misinterpret communication to be the same as paperwork or bureaucracy and so they are averse to a high degree of communication. As leaders and managers mature, they realise the need to effectively convey and receive information, and efforts at communications (internal and external) increase substantially (Carter McNamara, 2008).

Communication is the heart and soul of the organisation because it infiltrates every relationship between employees, employees and management, within departments and amongst the organisation and its many and varied stakeholders. Kitchen's (1997) central idea is that employees must be fully informed if they are to participate effectively in the organisation. Employees need to fully understand where they fit into an organisation's strategy and how they contribute to the fulfillment of the organisation's aims and objectives (Kitchen, 1997). White and Mazur (1995: 170) also pick up this point, emphasising that "internal communications is a matter of creating trust, developing a climate in which open communication can take place". They view internal communication as a two-way process which is most valuable in companies of less hierarchical and more flexible structure. However, despite the importance of internal communication, it is said to be an under-researched field (Daly, Teague and Kitchen, 2003).

Many people tend to be ignorant of what communication strategies are in place to communicate the vision and mission of the company and confuse it with channels of communication. There seem to be a lot of challenges in the Oil industry in terms of managers carrying down

information. This is due to the increase demand on them to achieve results as the leading oil industry in the country, and the fact that the oil industry is a very new industry in the country is also a challenge so a lot has to be learned about it. Tullow has a duty to meet the expectations and the demand that comes with the oil industry. This can be achieved when communication about company policies and other aspects are effective. Some management members of Tullow oil limited seem to misinterpret communications to be the same as paperwork or bureaucracy and so do not engage in a high degree of communication. Employees a negative effect on organisational effectiveness and are counterproductive. Tullow being the leading company in charge of Ghana's oil has a duty to make the country profit from its oil revenue and so have to bring the best out of its workers, and this could be done when communication is effective.

In view of these, it was necessary to study the current internal communication practices of the oil industry and establish the need for workable internal communication strategies that will contribute to the attainment of organisational goals and objectives.

1.4 Objectives

- Assess the existing internal communication practices within Tullow oil limited.
- Determine whether effective internal communication contributes to the achievement of organisational goals and objectives
- To assess the strategies that enabled effective internal communication and information flow within Tullow Oil Ghana Limited.
- Identify challenges associated with internal communication and information exchange within Tullow oil.

1.5 Research questions

The research sought to answer the following questions.

- What internal communication practices exist within Tullow oil and how effective are they?
- What specific strategies enabled effective internal communication within Tullow Oil Ghana and did these strategies help in the understanding of internal communication.
- Does effective internal communication between members of the organisation help in the achievement of the organisation's goals and objectives?
- What challenges are associated with internal communication and information exchange within Tullow oil?

1.6 Scope

This research focused on the oil industry to examine the internal communication strategies they employed in carrying out their communication activities. Tullow Oil Ghana was selected for the study to examine the internal communication strategies employed by the company and to find out how effective internal communication was in the company and whether it helped in the achievement of the organisations goals and objectives.

Tullow oil was chosen for the study because it has the biggest share in the Jubilee field. Consequently information concerning Tullow oil operations in the Jubilee oil field in Ghana, abroad or its management of this national resource is of great interest to almost all Ghanaians.

In addition, the review of the literature revealed a distinct absence of research on internal communication in Oil companies within Ghana; therefore, it is the researcher's contention that pursuing this field of study will provide a unique insight into the workings of oil companies and will significantly contribute to the greater body of work on internal communication provided by previous scholars.

1.7 Significance of the study

This research was significant and timely because the country had just discovered oil and Tullow Oil Ghana was the company responsible for the drilling of the oil find. It therefore had a big responsibility to communicate effectively to its internal publics so that accurate information will be passed on and received in order to keep workers well informed about their duties to enhance positive output.

The study was important because having an effective internal communication was not only relevant for the basic maintenance of the organisation, but also because internal communication could act as a source for exchanging knowledge and ideas. The reason for this was that information was the currency of communication. Therefore, the rapid and steady flow of information enriches and empowers an organisation, just as the flow of money creates wealth. Today's business environment is characterised by intensifying competition. An oil company such as Tullow Oil has to deal with the regular internal organisational issues, problems, and challenges in coordinating, integrating, and controlling its activities. An effective internal communication strategy is therefore needed to deal with the complex nature of the oil industry.

The study was again important because it would help companies to understand the need for effective communication with its internal audience before its external ones since building effective internal audience will result in understanding and sharing of ideas.

1.8 Operationalisation

Internal: Within or inside something rather than outside.

Communication: Process by which people exchange information or express their thoughts and feelings.

Organisation: A group such as a club or business that has been formed for a particular purpose.

Internal Communication: Internal communication refers to the exchange between organisation management and the internal publics- i.e. employees (Moore, 1981).

1.9 Organisation of the study

The study is organised under five different chapters with each chapter linking to the other to produce a complete work.

Chapter One presents an introduction that sets out the main purpose and focus of the study, thus to explore the internal communication strategies in the oil industry. It outlines the research problem, research questions and objectives and clarifies the terms and concepts as applied in the study. More especially, it presents the profile of the organization and the reasons that necessitated this research work.

Chapter two consists of a review of the literature according to five main themes: internal communication, internal communication management, measurement, channels and previous communication research in the financial sector. These themes were chosen due to their importance within the field of internal communication and their influence on each other. This review of the literature provides additional justification for the purpose and direction of this study and highlights some of the major themes within internal communication research.

Based on the literature review, chapter three discusses the methodology and the design of this research. A qualitative method was chosen as the most appropriate approach due to the small sample size retained and the ability to collect detailed data from participants through in-depth interviews and observation. Additionally, the background of the participants and the ethical considerations and limitations are also discussed in this section. The sampling techniques, tools for data collection, ethical issues and the challenges encountered during the fieldwork are also discussed in this chapter.

The fourth chapter presents the analysis of the research findings and discusses the findings from the field work in the light of the theoretical framework presented in the literature review.

Finally, chapter five concludes by summarising the main points of this thesis with consideration to all of the previous discussions. In addition the limitations of the study and areas of future research are explored.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction.

This chapter is an exposition of the theories used by the researcher in this study and it also discussed some of the scholarly materials that have been written on internal communication. The first part of this chapter discussed the conceptual framework. It also talked about the theory underpinning the research. The second part of the chapter looked at works and literature that have been conducted and discussed on internal communication.

Defining Internal Communication

Internal communication can be termed internal marketing, organisational communication, employee relations (Quirke, 2000), management communication, internal media, cross-departmental communication (Greenbaum, Clampitt, and Willihnganz, 1988), business or corporate communication (Kitchen, 1997), strategic communication (Argenti, 2007) or integrated internal communications (Kalla, 2005).

In its simplest form internal communication is “the exchange of information and ideas within an organisation” (Bovee and Thill, 2000, p.7) or the “formal and informal communication taking place internally at all levels of an organisation” (Kalla, 2005, p.304). Welch and Jackson (2007) view internal communication from a stakeholder approach and define it as “the strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels within organisations” (p. 183). Internal communication within an organisation is dependent on a number

of factors including the type of industry; the structure of the organisation; organisational culture and managerial style (Kitchen, 1997; Quirke, 2000).

2.1 Communication Strategy

A communication strategy is a plan to shape the opinions of a company's key audiences and leverage a reputation to advance the corporate objectives and preserve the goodwill toward the brand (Randy Ryerson, 2003). A communication strategy has many elements. First, it is important to identify what image the communication plan will present. Second, who the target of the communication is, how the image will be communicated and in particular, what types of media will be used, how often, and in what ways. Finally, regardless of the media and the target audience, it is necessary to identify whether the message that is being presented is consistent, and whether all the audiences will receive the same message and have the same view of the organisation (Randy Ryerson, 2003). Communication strategies can also be used to create and reinforce desirable organisational cultures. Some of the most successful companies and corporations create a workforce that understands the mission, goals, values and procedures of the organisation. People talk about the Hewlett-Packard "way", or the Wal-Mart "way" to describe what are essentially organisational cultures that are held in common by most employees in the organisation (Bacal & Associates, 2005).

To be successful, communication strategies must consider organisational culture regardless of who the ultimate target audience is. Even for parties external to the company, the communication strategy must present a message that is consistent with the organisation's culture and the activities it engages in if the message is to be credible. Communications within a company must consider culture since the credibility of the message is dependent on what is

communicated by the internal publics. The communications must both reinforce desired aspects of the organisation's culture and present changes in a way that they will be accepted and incorporated into the organisation's culture.

An effective communication strategy should also fulfill a number of criteria. First of all, it must incorporate clear goals for what the internal communication is to achieve in order to engage and align the employees with the organisation's business goals. Further, the communication strategy should be flexible so as to give space for maneuvers (Larsson, 1997). Since information can be described as the currency of communication, the communication strategy should also ensure that individuals and groups within an organisation receive the information they need and that they are not burdened with an overload of information and/or distracting information (Thunberg *et al*, 1982).

The development of internal communication strategy and its implementation can provide a number of benefits to organisations. To achieve those benefits, one needs a coordinated, comprehensive, long term communication approach. (Randy Ryerson, 2003)

2.2 Internal Communication Channels

Fletcher and Major (2006) contend that the world is growing smaller as technology advances and the creation of more advanced technology introduces organisations to different channels of internal communication, spanning both time and geographical distance. Fletcher and Major (2006) suggest four basic channels are used in workplace communication (1) face-to-face meetings, (2) audio or telephone exchanges, (3) video mediated conferences, and (4) computer-mediated text transfers. In addition to those four, Charles (2005) notes organisational publications, such as the company newsletter, are also a channel for information

2.3 Media Richness Theory

Literature on communication channels almost exclusively focuses on media richness theory (Kahai and Cooper, 2003; Salmon and Joiner, 2005; Sheer and Chen, 2004), which is based on contingency theory and information processing theory (Galbraith 1977).

The theory was propounded by Daft & Lengel (1984). Researchers Daft, Lengel and successors propose that communication media have varying capacities for resolving ambiguity, negotiating varying interpretations, and facilitating understanding. Two main assumptions of this theory are: people want to overcome equivocality and uncertainty in organizations and a variety of media commonly used in organizations work better for certain tasks than others. Using four criteria, Daft and Lengel (1984) present a media richness hierarchy, arranged from high to low degrees of richness, to illustrate the capacity of media types to process ambiguous communication in organizations. The criteria are (a) the availability of instant feedback; (b) the capacity of the medium to transmit multiple cues such as body language, voice tone, and inflection; (c) the use of natural language; and (d) the personal focus of the medium. Face-to-face communication is the richest communication medium in the hierarchy followed by telephone, electronic mail, letter, note, memo, special report, and finally, flier and bulletin. From a strategic management perspective, the media richness theory suggests that effective managers make rational choices matching a particular communication medium to a specific task or objective and to the degree of richness required by that task (Trevino, Daft, & Lengel, 1990, in Soy, 2001).

Markus (1994) defines media richness theory as a “prescriptive model in which achieving a match between information processing requirements (e.g., uncertainty and equivocality reduction) and communication channels (e.g., face-to-face interactions and written memos) was

posited as essential for organizational effectiveness” (p.503). Essentially the premise is that lean media is used by managers for simple topics and rich media is for more complex topics (Sheer and Chen, 2004, p.79) so the focus of media richness theory is on the choices made by the managers, not necessarily the employees.

However, Berry (2006) suggests that although management literature examining communication uses face-to-face communication as the standard, the literature does not adequately consider time-related problems inherent in face-to-face communication. In fact, face-to-face communication relies on participants being in the same place at the same time (Hargie and Tourish, 2004) which is not always possible. In agreement, Quirke (2000) adds that time is “the most limited resource in most organizations, and better use can be made of precious face-to-face time which is too often used for the wrong purposes – to tell people things they could more easily read about, in meetings which are badly run and boring (Quirke, 2000, p.32). In addition to legitimate time constraints, Howard (1996) contends that the presentation skills of the supervisor to confidently articulate the company’s goals and plans, in face-to-face sessions, need to be considered when choosing this channel, something which is not addressed within the original premise of media richness theory. According to media richness theory, the telephone is the second richest channel after face-to-face communication; however, Salmon and Joiner (2005) state that recent research suggests the telephone “as a mode of transmitting and receiving management information, has been superseded by the use of email, because of the superior functionality and usability features of email” (p.57).

O’Kane, Hargie and Tourish (2004) argue that traditional communication channels such as memos, letters and phone calls have been replaced by emails, the most preferred communication channel in the business world. The success of email is due in part to its asynchronous nature where the sender and receiver do not have to be present for the communication to occur (Thomas et al., 2006), as well as being able to cross “physical, social, temporal, and psychological boundaries at an astonishingly low cost” (Berry, 2006, p.352). In addition, research suggests that email reduces interruptions caused by face-to-face meetings and telephone conversations thereby improving managerial efficiency (Markus, 1994) as well as having the added advantage of being able to be read around the clock (Thomas et al., 2006). According to Turner and Reinsch (2007) our ability to communicate at any time in any place with anyone is increasing our opportunities for interaction. Using e-mail, instant messaging, and cell phones, a manager’s ability to stay engaged within the workplace is greater than ever before. In fact, multitasking has become synonymous with the communication technology infused workplace of today

Thomas et al., (2006) state that “compared with alternative channels such as the post office or the telephone, e-mail reduces transaction time by offering instant transmission almost anywhere in the world at relatively low cost” (p.257). Many organisations have employees that are geographically located in diverse areas; email enables information to be sent regardless of location and/or time zone (Salmon and Joiner, 2005, p.62). Critics of e-mail suggest that the availability of new technology does not ensure effective communication, and instead it is the leadership and training in the use of the technology that will ensure effectiveness (Berry, 2006). E-mail has now become the dominant force in written communication (O’Kane et al., 2004) and has made email processes such as deleting and not responding to messages, an acceptable

communication process in the 21st century (Tassabehji and Vakola, 2005). In addition, e-mail does not allow concurrent feedback (Kahai and Cooper, 2003) and the informal style of emails has often lead to misunderstandings and spelling and grammatical errors (O'Kane et al., 2004). Emails can be sent quickly without serious thought given to the content or proofreading of the reply, resulting in a form of nonverbal identity, where the choice of informal or formal vocabulary or grammar describes the sender (Carter, 2003) in a manner similar to first impressions upon meeting. One of the largest challenges with e-mail is the concept of information overload. Thomas et al., (2006) state that e-mail overload can stem from “(a) the sheer volume of e-mail messages sent every day, (b) poorly written messages or messages that violate etiquette, and (c) the variety of ways that users use their email systems” (p.256). Within media richness theory, the inability for immediate feedback or ambiguity in messages as suggested by Thomas et al., (2006) is what defines e-mail as a lean channel of communication (Salmon and Joiner, 2005).

The leanest channel of communication as defined by media richness theory is the use of written documents. The company newsletter, memo or magazine require little interaction and exchange with employees and usually involve operational information about the company and not about critical decisions under review. Therefore, employees can attend to them at their own convenience (Byrne and LeMay, 2006). According to Charles (2005) while many companies are moving to the convenience of electronic newsletters, there are still companies that recognize the importance of providing employees with newsletter that they can hold in their hands and take home to share with their families.

2.4 Relationship of the Theory to the Study

The premise of effective organizational communication depends heavily upon successful internal communication between managers and employees. Snyder & Morris (1984). Though it may seem like a straightforward concept, organizational communication affects organizational performance – the next step to communicating well in the workplace means that managers should seek forms of communication that will lead to common understanding and employee satisfaction. In 1984, Daft & Lengel suggested that managers have an obligation to “create an acceptable level of order and certainty” and “provide a clear, workable, well defined conceptual scheme for participants” (Daft & Lengel, 1984). In this case, participants can be classified as employees. Daft & Lengel also say that organizational success depends on how well managers can clarify messages and reduce message complexity to ensure that employees understand those messages. The authors said that this can be achieved through communicating information through “an appropriate richness,” which led them to develop the media richness theory. The media richness theory explains that each method of communication has a certain information-carrying capacity. Any medium that provides “substantial new understanding” is rich, while any medium that provides little understanding is low in richness, or lean. According to Daft & Lengel (1984), face-to-face communication is the richest form of information processing while basic written communication such as letters, memos, or documents are moderate to low in richness. Daft & Lengel (1984) say that ultimately the way to classify a medium is to determine if it provides substantial new understanding (in which case it would be rich) or whether it provides little understanding (which would indicate it is lean).

The message and media choices among workers of tullow oil will be made most effective when the appropriate communication channels are incorporated into their communication strategies.

The intent of incorporating these appropriate channels among workers of Tullow oil Ltd was not to dominate or control employees, but to aim them at a set of common goals on which they could act every day. Thus when there was effective internal communication and workers are well informed about the company's goals and mission; it brought coherence to the workplace, and allows better coordinated action. By clearing up ambiguity in what's, how's, and why's, this permits employees to act with empowerment. When the staff understands the basic values and purposes of an organisation, it provides them the opportunity to make decisions that fall within such parameters. Simply put, if we want to create a workplace that is populated by people who are working towards the same goals, and by the same rules, internal communication, in its broadest sense, is the key to bringing that about. It would not happen unless workers are proactive in their communication and coordinate their efforts, so they can convey consistent, combatable messages (Bacal, 2005).

Geertz and Pacanowsky (1973) talk about three types of stories told in the organisation which are told through certain outlined strategies developed by each organisation. These help determine what should be communicated to staff, when it should be communicated and how it should be communicated. It is for these reasons that communication strategies are developed to make it possible for these stories to be communicated, because in a large company such as Tullow oil Ltd., internal communication strategies need to include the appropriate media.

2. 5 Related Works

This part of the chapter reviewed works done by scholars in similar area of internal communication as this study. Some of the studies discussed internal communication in building organizational goals. The studies also outlined the communications strategies employed by other researchers in other organisations and institutions and whether it helped in building organizational culture.

Internal communication in building organisational culture and corporate brands

Snyder & Morris in their study based upon the assumption that both theorists and practicing managers assume there should be a strong relationship between organizational communication and performance, set out to prove that Organizational effectiveness depends heavily upon successful internal communication between managers and employees.

The authors evaluated both the quality of supervisors and the feedback they provided to employees about their performances to determine how that related to the overall effect of manager communication on employee performance. They state that, “Researchers have had to make the assumption that relationships between communication and performance at a molecular level have meaningful consequences for overall organization performance” (Snyder & Morris, 1984).

In their study, they gathered and presented initial data on how organizational performance and characteristics of communication related to one another. Through a survey that assessed overall effectiveness of supervisors as communicators, they found empirical support for the assumption that there is a relationship between communication and performance. For example, they learned

that: More positive evaluations of the quality of supervisors as communicators and the extent to which job-related information was shared within work groups were associated with lower workloads (number of clients served, clients served per employee) and higher levels of organizational efficiency (relative and total costs of the operation) (Snyder & Morris, 1984).

These findings demonstrate that effective communication between supervisors and employees results in efficient performance. The evidence presented from this article opened the door for other researchers to move forward and build on the concept that communication is a major component to organizational performance success. In today's workplace where managers must communicate via various channels including computer-mediated ones, it is important to evaluate whether those tools result in effective communication between managers and employees.

Based upon the literature and how it characterizes basic written communication as lean, this paper suggests that e-mail, instant messenger, and text-based messaging are all lean forms of communication. Even within that lean characteristic, however, some forms of CMC are leaner than others. For example, text messaging and social media tools such as Twitter limit users to a certain number of characters. Very little information can be sent via these channels, which also means that the receiver's ability to process and understand the meaning of those messages is limited. Managers, however, would have to determine what they consider rich versus lean on a case-by-case basis according to the message and the characteristics of the medium they want to use. Do they want to convey an in-depth message and achieve shared understanding, or do they simply need to share a routine message that will be easily comprehended? This is one consideration that helps managers determine whether to choose a rich or lean medium of

communication. This does not say that there is a right or wrong way to communicate; rather managers must realize that different modes of communication will result in different levels of understanding among their employees, which will affect overall organizational performance.

Larry Perry (2007) in a study of the Australian zoo sought to explore how common elements and components such as an organisation's culture, vision, mission, hierarchical structures and strategic goals were communicated within the organization. Using a single case study the research was conducted to explore and understand internal communication as they applied to zoological parks and aquaria. In the research, Larry Perry (2007) utilized in-depth semi structured interviews and a highly interactive exploratory approach from (Newman, 2003) with the help of interview guides to identify how much the staff knew about their organisations missions, policies and management processes. And to access the communication strategies and media used to inform, consult and engage staff.

It was observed from the research that according to Larry Perry (2007) the use of email was acknowledged in both the literature and the data as being an important means of communication within organisations and yet the data from this research identified some significant flaws that prevented all employees from benefiting from accessing information and communicating via this media. Increasing access and resolving technical difficulties were ways in which the informants identified that communication competence could be increased to encourage improvements to information flow up, down and across the organisation.

The data identified that most of the informants perceived there to be little or no consultation and the majority of non supervisory informants indicated that they had received no information at all

on the strategic goals. This key point contrasts with responses from senior management informants who indicated that employees were provided information about the review and development of new visions, mission and strategic goals and that all employees were offered opportunities to be included in these discussions. The research identified that focus groups were convened to discuss these matters; however it was also revealed that many of the focus groups were of selected key employees. The intent by senior management for these key employees to further communicate down the line to their employees was identified by senior management as an expectation of their role in the focus groups.

The case study data identified that the knowledge of the zoo's vision, mission strategic statements and goals were poorly assimilated, and that the vision and mission statements were confused with the core pillars and roles of zoos by all middle management and non-supervisory informants. Additionally, the expression of the zoo vision, mission strategic statements and goals by the majority of informants was varied and often expressed in very generic terms, although some informants were able to support their comments using examples drawn from the zoo programs and activities. The lack of knowledge of the vision and mission statements and the inability to express them clearly was evident in both management and non management employees, implying that the ability to communicate and transfer knowledge through the structure by the leaders was ineffective.

Research also showed that too often organisational failings identified in research or reported in public forums were not acknowledged as legitimate issues of significance, but rather were attributed to misfits and troublemakers or as outliers in the data rather than being acknowledged as opportunities to seek out and improve the organisation's culture and effectiveness.

It is clear from the study that employees considered emails to be a lean form of communication since most of the messages could not get to them due technical problems. Internal communication on the whole was not well carried out because though management believed information was sent, employees were of a different view that information on the company's policies and visions well not well assimilated thus resulting in employees not being able to carry out their duties diligently.

Mark Chong (2007) also studied the role of internal communication and training in infusing corporate values and delivering brand promise in Singapore airlines. This study examined the internal communication and training functions at Singapore Airlines –one of the world's best international airlines – and how it was used strategically to enable cabin crew and ground staff to live its corporate values and consistently deliver on its brand promise of being 'a great way to fly'. It showed that internal communication and training should be treated as the ' first frontier ' in the battle for the customer.

This study was conducted from May to July 2006 and involved face-to-face interviews with senior managers of SIA ' s People Networks and Cabin Crew Training departments. In addition, the researcher observed the proceedings of a course (called 'The Magic of SOAR') conducted by the Cabin Crew Training department for cabin crew trainees. These interviews and observations were supplemented with analysis of corporate presentations, SIA's website and corporate publications as well as conversations with cabin crew trainees at the SIA Training School in July 2006. The grounded theory method (Glaser and Straus, 1967) was used in analysing the interviews, observations and communication materials. The researcher's analysis was validated

by the vice-president of the People Networks department and the senior manager of the Cabin Crew Training department.

The study also showed that SIA had channels that were tailored to the specific communication needs of its very important cabin crew members and pilots. For example, the Cabin Crew Division produced three publications specifically for the cabin crew. Highpoint: is a monthly newsletter that featured cabin crew events and passenger comments. Cabin Crew Circulars: which were bi-weekly updates on service procedures, rules and regulations, security and safety guidelines. In addition, it sent out electronic news online through a cabin crew online portal and mass email updates for urgent announcements. There were also pre-flight briefings: conducted by in-flight supervisors or the chief steward / stewardess as well as cabin crew business meetings and fleet meetings for pilots.

From the study it can be seen that what made SIA stand out was the number of face-to-face communication channels they employed. Their belief in a rich media such as face-to-face enabled employees to engage management directly and was tailored to the communication needs of different employee groups. These dialogue sessions and ward get-togethers allowed cabin crew members and management to address specific issues and express their views in face-to-face settings. When the appropriate media is used for the right kind of communication which is founded on strong corporate values, internal communication and training could help transform key employees such as cabin crew into ‘ walking embodiments ’ of the core values, and key touch points into opportunities for fulfilling the brand promise. Their use of both rich and lean media enabled SIA to consistently deliver on its brand promise to become the world’s most

successful international airline because each media was tailored towards a specific level of understanding by employees.

White, Vanc, and Stafford (2010) also examined how employees of a multi-campus university viewed information flow from top administrators in positions of personal influence, employees' communication preferences (amount, channels, types of information), their sense of community within the organisation, and the relationship between those perceptions and their willingness to advocate for the university.

The study found through 147 open-ended interviews with employees that the personal influence of the chancellor and top administrators had an effect on information satisfaction. Employees who had a relationship with the chancellor were more satisfied with the information they received and felt a greater responsibility to advocate for the organisation. Even the perception of a relationship with top administrators led to satisfaction. The direction and dimension of internal communication, as well as the channel dimension were important. Although e-mail was efficient for information exchange, the preferences for communication among all groups of employees were face-to-face, interpersonal and dialogic interactions.

From the study the respondents acknowledged that information flowed in a hierarchical, top-down pattern from the chancellor and top administrators to other levels of the organisation. However, at all levels of the organisation, there was evidence that employees wanted to receive information as directly as possible from the chancellor. More importantly, direct dissemination from the top was perceived to reduce uneven distribution of information and increase credibility

of information because employees at all levels recognised that the top-down flow of information created bottlenecks at different levels of supervision and makes getting consistent information to all levels of the organisation difficult. In addition to the Problem of uneven distribution, the study found concern that information from top managers was often filtered, and sometimes distorted, as it was relayed through the layers of bureaucracy. Information was likely to get changed at each level as it came down to employees usually through telephone calls. By the time it got to the employees, they did not have all the information, or the whole truth, so people were confused about what was said. (Exempt staff). It was like; playing a game of telephone where you only hear what makes it to the bottom of the food chain. They felt the lack of face to face interaction did not foster a good sense of community among the workers. It was also found that top administrators, not surprisingly, believed that they received sufficient information and were satisfied with the information flow. Of course, they had constant access to the chancellor, as well as access to privileged sources of information. However, although they acknowledge their position at the top of the information system, they were aware that others in the organisation may not be as well-informed. The administrators also admitted that they often did not have a clear sense of what was common knowledge among employees and what pieces of information needed to be conveyed. They also admitted that they did not always know what happened to information after it reached the next level below them. Information voids were created when supervisors assumed that employees had already been informed through other channels.

Face-to-face is still considered to be a rich media of communication because it fosters a sense of community in the organization. The desire for face-to-face communication was consistent with the findings of Stein (2006). Both her study and this study found that communication-rich channels such as face-to-face effectively fostered a sense of community and that employees

sought a sense of community at some level in the organization. Emails were however considered as being lean since emails circulated through the organizational hierarchy were not that welcomed by respondents because they believed they received insufficient information about the organization. Telephones were also considered lean because it distorted the message before it got down to them. This proves that though both rich and lean media contribute to the achievement of organizational goals lean media in this paper such as telephones and message being sent through other people did not help to achieve the organizational goals fully. Rich media such as face-to-face however was believed to be the appropriate means of achieving these goals since those who got their information directly from the top were most satisfied and felt a sense of importance.

Influence of Internal Communication in Achieving Organisational Goals and Objectives

A study by Morales, Reche & Jover (2011) assessed the influence of internal communication on technological proactivity, organisational learning, and organisational innovation in the pharmaceutical sector. Their findings verified empirically that internal communication helped to develop a foundation for technological proactivity. In an increasingly globalised economic and social environment marked by the rigorous need to achieve efficiency in internal communication, the power of new technologies is more and more necessary to facilitate Internal communication to overcome barriers in time and space. Sender and receiver do not have to share the same space or time to be able to develop effective communication. New technologies also enable us to increase the capacity for storing and disseminating knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

It was also found out that the results of this research supported a positive relationship between Internal Communication and Organisation Learning in technological firm. Internal communication between managers and members of the organisation not only enhanced

management support but also provided the organisation's members with feedback to improve their job performance (Conduit & Mavondo, 2001).

To reduce the possible bias associated with data collected from a single key informant, Morales, Reche & Jover (2011) used objective measures of organisational learning, innovation, and performance. For internal communication, they followed other similar studies and measured the variables using chief executive officers as the subject of study. However; the use of multiple respondents would have been preferable. It is unlikely that any one individual could provide a comprehensive view of one organisation (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000).

The study showed that the rise of new technology and social means were preferred over other means of communicating. The rise of new technologies being developed has helped in the achievement of their organizational goals. This therefore shows that the different technologies used in communicating were considered as rich media over the other forms of communicating because it worked for them.

Barriers to effective internal communication strategies

Forssberg & Malm (2001) researched into a multinational company to describe and explain aspects within it that created barriers to an effective internal communication and to find out how a multinational company (MNC) could achieve effective internal communication. According to Forssberg and Malm (2001) MODUL Service AB, the case company made it possible for them to identify and analyse the factors that could act as barriers to an effective internal communication within an MNC.

Through observations they were able to gain insight into the causes of the barriers. First the geographical distance between the headquarters and the subunits was an area that created a very distinct barrier to internal communication in the MNC both vertical and horizontal basically because the sender and receiver spread across national borders. The most obvious problems were that it was not possible for all of the employees to meet and discuss issues face-to-face which were a good communication strategy. The geographical distance implied that instead of having face-to-face meetings, the employees had to communicate via other channels such as memo, phone or fax.

Their findings also indicated that, there was no possibility for immediate feedback where employees had a chance to ask follow-up questions or clarify the information. Further, when communicating over geographical distances the sender was not able to see the receiver's expressions and gestures. This type of non-verbal communication is a very good tool to really make sure that the receiver has understood the message. The lack of feedback and control created a large barrier for the internal communication to be effective. It was also not possible for the foreign managers to be present at all meetings that were held. The geographical distance was, furthermore, a problem for the departmental managers in the foreign units, who also could not be present at the different meetings, held during which many decisions were taken.

Finally, the geographical distance contributes to the fact that the employees in MODUL Service AB were rather unaware of what was going on in the other units. From the interviews conducted, it was rather clear that there was not a regular communication about the development and situation in the other units. As a consequence, it was difficult to know what the other offices had done or were planning to do regarding certain issues.

Concluding, Forssberg & Malm (2001) suggested that in order to enhance the feeling of togetherness, it was important to deal with the mentioned issues that acted as barriers. They believed that in order to achieve effective internal communication, the coordination of information was required.

The study in line with my study shows that though workers were not privileged to have face-to-face communication, they saw it as a rich media of communication and preferred it over the lean media such as the memos and fax they had. The lean media here did not foster a sense of community among them. Media richness theory identifies face-to-face interpersonal communication as the richest media of communication which fostered effective internal communication. It is clear from this study that organizational goals were not fully achieved because of the lack of use of such rich media.

Internal communication channels

A study by Byrne and LeMay (2006), also examined the satisfaction in and perceived quality of information about one's job, business unit, and company, as well as perceived quality of urgent news (i.e., news about changes in business and generally considered legally sensitive material), communicated via different media. Results from 598 fulltime employees revealed that the strategy involving the rich media (e.g. face-to-face) was most related to satisfaction in information about one's job and business unit and in perceived quality of information from the supervisor; lean media (e.g. company newsletter) was most related to satisfaction in and quality of information from top management, while moderate media (e.g. e-mail) was only significantly related to perceived quality of urgent news. Trust in top management was positively related to satisfaction in and quality of information shared by management. Lean media most strongly related to quality of urgent news, over and above rich communication.

The results of the study showed that employees derived most of their satisfaction with the information they received about their job from rich communication channels such as face-to-face meetings with their bosses, phone conversations, and departmental meetings. Lean communication mechanisms such as the quarterly meetings, the employee newsletters, or written memos and notices contributed a small addition to their satisfaction level in information about their jobs. Email and the intranet (moderate communication mechanism) contributed nothing in addition to the rich and lean media. Similar results were shown for satisfaction with information about the business unit. When employees were considering their satisfaction with information that was directly relevant to them, it seemed that the data supplied by the cues of rich communication were important.

On the other hand, when the information was about the company, employees were much satisfied with it being delivered via lean communication media such as the newsletters as compared to the rich media such as face-to-face. These findings seemed to contradict the notion of management who were satisfied with face-to-face communication. As suggested by media richness theory, however, their results may be because company information did not immediately affect individual employees and thus they felt more removed from this information. Hence, they preferred that it be delivered via lean media so that they could attend to it when convenient and have the data in writing to refer to more than once. This kind of communication (memos, newsletters, company-wide meetings) requires little interaction and exchange on the part of the employee; it usually involves learning about the company rather than discussing a critical decision that has an effect on the company. Thus, when receiving information that was not directly relevant to them, employees did not need the additional data supplied by visual cues, such as facial expressions, to be satisfied.

The practical implications of the findings suggest that organisations may use the lean medium for sharing information about the company to the satisfaction of employees. Supervisors should share job relevant information with employees in one-on-one meetings or via the phone. It shows that both the rich and lean media had their purposes and helped in different ways depending on the situation or the type of information being delivered. This can go further to show that both rich and lean media help in one way or the other in the achievement of an organizations goals and objectives. Though communication of job related information via a rich medium was more highly related to satisfaction in the information than when it was shared via a lean medium.

2.6 Summary

The chapter captured facets of studies done on the internal communication and the strategies employed by various organisations in dealing with their internal publics. These studies were related to my study as they tried to outline some of the internal communications strategies and tools available to organisation and its defined culture. Internal communication is one aspect of public relations that hold the pieces of the organisation together and without an effective internal communication strategy the internal publics will not be informed to perform efficiently. The theory talked about organisations having their own culture which helped them to achieve their set objectives. The studies also outlined issues about internal communication strategies and its importance in building brand image and achieving goals and objectives.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the overall methodological framework employed in this research. Also, it presents information about the research design used, description of the target population, the sampling technique and method, data collection methods and instruments used. It is hoped that this study will generate insights and pave way for further studies on the role of internal communication in the oil industry in Ghana. The following subsections outline the methodological approach used in gathering the data for the study.

3.1 Research design

The overall purpose of the study was to get a higher degree of understanding of the internal communication strategies employed by Tullow Oil Ghana and how these strategies helped encourage productivity. This orientation required the adoption of the qualitative research design. Qualitative research shares the theoretical assumptions of the interpretative paradigm, which is based on the notion that social reality is created and sustained through the subjective experience of people involved in communication (Morgan, 1980). Qualitative researchers are concerned with attempting to accurately describe, decode and interpret the meanings of phenomena occurring in their normal social contexts (Fryer, 1991). The researchers operating within the framework of the interpretative paradigm are focused on investigating the complexity, authenticity, contextualization, shared subjectivity of the researcher and the researched and minimization of illusion (Fryer, 1991). Thus, for a study such as this one, the researcher used in-

depth interviews to get detailed answers from respondents. In-depth interviews were conducted with six workers from different departments from the accra office. The interviews were conducted in person between july and august 2011. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Interviewees were from the following departments: Communications, Business management, Information Technology department, well engineering, Operation Engineer, FPSO representative, administrative executive.

Although informational interviews will not be representative of all workers in the oil industry throughout the country and among different industries, this in-depth process will provide a case study for how managers communicate with employees and, more importantly, will provide reasoning behind why they communicate the way they do. Furthermore, in-depth, face-to-face interviews are a traditionally rich form of communication that will provide a great deal of depth, detail and understanding about managers' communication processes, which seems fitting given the scope of this project (face-to-face interviews are a rich form of communication)

This approach was considered the most appropriate for serving the purpose of the study because qualitative research can reveal how all parts work together and form a whole (Merriam, 1998). Further, the qualitative approach was chosen as a result of the fact internal communication is a very vague concept that is difficult, if not impossible to quantify. The reason for this was that when studying a vague concept such as internal communication, it was preferable to use a method that made it possible to understand, describe, and discover meaning at the same time, and it was a flexible and evolving method.

3.2 Study population

The study population was employees of Tullow Oil Ghana limited, classified according to their departments. The employee strength stands at 100, since most of the workers are offshore and in other countries. Researchers usually cannot make direct observations of every individual in the population they are studying; instead they collect data from a subset of individuals (a sample) and use those observations to make inferences about the entire population (Zickmund, 1991) thus one person from each department available at the Accra office where the study was carried out.

3.3 Sampling procedure and technique

The study used a combination of non-probability sampling methods, specifically purposive sampling and quota sampling techniques. The choice of these methods was informed by the need to have a representative sample from all the departments of Tullow Oil Ghana. Even though there is a complete list of Tullow Oil employees to serve as a sampling frame this was not used because its use would not result in getting representation from all the departments.

Since the purposive sampling is a non-representative subset of some larger population, and is constructed to serve a very specific need or purpose, it involved the process of intentionally picking respondents for the study based on criteria I set. In this method, the researcher, in adhering to her research objectives, purposively selected respondents who typify the group of his study (population) and could therefore answer the research questions. As advocated by (Bailey, 1994), the advantage of the purposive sampling is that the researcher can use his or her skill and prior knowledge to select respondents.

With the quota sampling, it involved the selection of a portion of the population being studied with the basic idea to set a target number of completed interviews with specific subgroups of the

population of interest. The sampling procedure then proceeded using a nonrandom selection mechanism until the desired number of completed interviews was obtained.

In probability sampling each element in the population has a known nonzero chance of being selected through the use of a random selection procedure such as simple random sampling. Non probability sampling does not involve known nonzero probabilities of selection. Rather, subjective methods are used to decide which elements should be included in the sample. In non-probability sampling the population may not be well defined.

3.4 Data collection

Two main qualitative methods of data collection were used in gathering the field data for this study. These were in-depth interview and observation. In-depth interview was the main data collection tool and it was supplemented by observational data.

3.41 interviews

The choice of interviews for data collection was partly based on the suggestion by Millar and Gallagher (2000) that interviews are one of the central tools utilised within internal and external communication audits. The current study arguably parallels aspects of the communication audit process (Tourish & Hargie, 2000) and additionally, interviews were considered most appropriate due to the type of rich data required from the participants in order to answer the research question.

3.42 data collection procedure

About six different interviews were conducted, varying between thirty minutes to one hour each. The informants were drawn from six different departments in the organisational structure. The

interviews were conducted with the communications manager of Tullow, an administration assistant from Business management department and Telecommunications Analyst from the Information Technology department. Others include the Operation Engineer and company representative for Tullow on FPSO, an engineer from Well Engineering department and then finally an Administrative executive. For the analysis they were named as manager (communications manager) respondent 1,2,3,4 & 5.

Each interview began with some preliminary remarks to create a relaxed atmosphere and a trusting relationship. After this, the purpose of the study was explained to the informants and they were assured of confidentiality of the information they were to give. The consent of the interviewees was requested before an interview was done. The respondents were informed of the necessity to make audio-tape recordings of the interview but at the same time guaranteed that these would be destroyed after the dissertation had been written and finalized. To this end, the interviews were generally audio-taped but some cases were manually recorded. To ensure accuracy in the case of audio-taped interviews, the tapes were played back after transcription to make sure that these were verbatim records rather than subjective interpretations.

Where a respondent had agreed to participate in the study but was busy, agreements were reached to meet at a convenient time. The rationale behind this was to ensure that participants are relaxed and comfortable, while giving them a high sense of confidentiality that will boost honest responses to interview questions.

3.5 Data collection instruments

A comprehensive interview guide was developed and used in collecting the necessarily information needed from respondents. Interviews were done after dates, place and time were scheduled with the respondents based on the questions:

- What specific strategies enabled effective internal communication within Tullow Oil Ghana and did these strategies help in the understanding of internal communication.
- Did effective internal communication between members of the organisation help in the achievement of the organisations goals and objectives?
- How important was internal communication to Tullow Oil Ghana limited?

Observation

The interview was supplemented with observation. It was observed the body language and comfort level of the participants were varied. The researcher noted when the respondents appeared to be open, enthusiastic, hesitant, guarded or when they had difficulty answering a question. This showed in their body movements and their delay in giving some answers. Some were fidgety and others more relaxed. This method was also used to observe the various communication gadgets and channels used in internal communication.

It allowed the researcher to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, and to discover things that interviewees might not freely say in the interview. For example during some of the interviews I heard the radioman make announcement on the public address system to all the staff. I also observe the interviewees receiving emails and interrupting the interview session

to read the mails because they deemed it important to their work. The interview with the communication analyst in the IT Department was very revealing.

According to Rossman and Rallis (1998), observation is an important supplementary technique for research that is based on interviews. It can guide the interviewer in the process, helping to inform which questions may need further exploration when it might be helpful to encourage the participant or when to abandon a line of questioning. It is, therefore, different from seeing. It involves creating order out of the chaos of signals reaching the brain and gleaning information from the environment by placing significance on some things and not others. It also includes noticing the absence of things, being aware of one's in-built biases and taking steps to counteract them (Sanger 1996). Thus, the adoption of this method offered the researcher the opportunity of looking at what is taking place in the situation rather than at second hand. The research saw at firsthand how information was received from managers both within and outside Ghana and sent to all employees concerned.

3.6 Data analysis

Qualitative research can produce vast amounts of data. These may include verbatim notes or transcribed recordings of interviews or focus groups, jotted notes and more detailed "field notes" of observational research, a diary or chronological account, and the researcher's reflective notes made during the research (Pope, Ziebland and Mays 2000). All these can produce vast amount of data. After collecting the recorded data from the respondents, the recorded pieces were transcribed and analysed according to themes based on the research objectives set.

The analysis was done by listening to the taped interviews and reading the field notes several times. During such time, themes were first derived, changes in meaning and specifying

constituent units of meaning were noted and irrelevant repetitions eliminated. In addition to this, data obtained was also analyzed as and when they were available from the field. As Merriam (1998) states, “The right way to analyze data in a qualitative study is to do it simultaneously with data collection . . . The final product is shaped by the data that are collected and the analysis that accompanies this entire process” (p.162). The analysis was also guided by Creswell’s admonition that, “the general pattern of understanding qualitative work emerges when broad themes are developed and coalesced into a grounded theory of broad interpretations” (Creswell, 2003). Going by this, the analysis of the data took the form of retelling the story of the respondents with specific emphasis on significant statements that had bearing on the central thesis of the study and its objectives. The researcher did several reading of field notes, interviews and comments and re-examined the categories, and then, allocated pseudonyms to each participant’s responses to the interview questions, noting similarities and differences. The aim was to create different concepts and to determine how they are linked. This, then, made it easier to trace the source of each response and quotes. This was followed by cross case analysis of the interview, noting similarities and differences across participants’ responses to the interview guide. Themes were developed from the data.

Ethical Consideration

All research involves ethical issues and this study is no exception. The purpose of the research was explained to all the respondents. The researcher also explained to each of the respondents that they would remain anonymous and that the information they would be giving out would be treated with the utmost confidentiality. To maintain confidentiality, information on the participants’ names and places of employment were coded by utilizing pseudonyms.

They were assured that there will no risk involved in participating in the research and that they have the right to stop the interview if they so wish



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The main thrust of this study was to describe the communication strategy of Tullow Oil Ghana. In pursuance of this broad objective specific objectives were formulated to guide the study. These included: understand the internal communication strategy of Tullow Oil Ghana, to identify the specific strategies that enabled effective internal communication in Tullow Oil and to describe how internal communication occurred in Tullow Oil Ghana. Others included examining the effectiveness of internal communication and how this related to the achievement of the organisational goals and objectives of Tullow Oil Ghana, and assess the importance of internal communication to the industry.

An interview guide which explored various aspects of internal communication was designed and in-depth interviews were conducted with six employees from six different departments of Tullow Oil Ghana. This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the field data.

4.1 Understanding Internal Communication

One of the underlying objectives of this study was to find out how workers of Tullow Oil Ghana understood internal communication. Though different definitions for internal communication were given, the idea of internal communication being the communication within the organisation was prominent in all the definitions. They perceive internal communication as passing of information to every employee in the company from management to staff, and among the workers in the organisation who make up the internal public. The definition by one respondents

from the business management department reflects the views of other respondents on what internal communication in the following way.

Internal communication has to do with how information is passed on to every worker in the work place from the manager to the cleaner, how information is given to everybody at the right time in time not when it is delayed so that it can't be useful to whoever is receiving it (respondent 5)

Respondents viewed internal communication as the communication amongst people within the organization, within different departments within the organization. Thus, in the opinion of most of the respondents internal communication is simply the communication that is within the confines of the organization and not accessed by the outside world.

To the communication manager, internal communication was one of the key activities that an organisation needed to undertake in order to make sure that the internal stakeholders of the organisation also add value to what the business did. He stressed the importance of internal communication as:

“It should aim at mobilising internal stakeholders to the vision and the business goals of the organization, and beyond mobilising, it should also aim at capturing the hearts and minds of the employees and making or creating an enabling environment that supports innovation, creativity, and initiative in efforts at adding value to an organization”
(manager)

Employee communications meant the provision and exchange of information and instructions which enabled an organisation to function efficiently and employees to be properly informed about developments.

4.2 Specific Strategies that Enable Effective Internal Communication

Communication strategies differ among organizations and there are specific communication strategies that are adopted by organizations based on the industry that they find themselves in, the technology available and the culture of the country in which the operations of the organization is located. Investigation regarding what specific communication strategies were employed by Tullow for their internal communication revealed that the internal communication strategy in Tullow was based on the overall vision of the organization. Incorporate clear goals for what the internal communication is to achieve in order to engage and align the employees with the organisation's business goals. The internal communication strategy is based on which phase of operation that Tullow oil finds itself. The communication manager puts it this way:

“Tullow oil deploys the right communication strategies in terms of specific objectives of communication which is dependent upon the phase in which the company is in at time. Phases such as the first oil production phase and then now post first oil production phase. The phase in which the company is in determines the message put in the strategy and the tools used since the cornerstone of every communication strategy is the messaging”. An effective communication strategy should first of all, incorporate clear goals for what the internal communication is to achieve in order to engage and align the employees with the organisation's business goals. This is backed by a detailed action plan among which the key stakeholders, key messages, the channels to be used and the resources available have been outlined. Further, the communication strategy should be flexible so as to give space for maneuvers. (manager)

It is clear from the above that Tullow oil does not have one or overarching internal communication strategy. Rather, the communication strategy is linked to the period in which they find themselves and where they want to be in the future. The company then sketched out

how the future plan could be achieved. The future plan involves a detailed action plan which includes the key stakeholders, key messages, the channels used and the resources available.

Another interviewee also had this to say in answering the question about strategies:

“The strategy is to utilise a combination of communications simultaneously, whether formal and informal, written and non-written or verbal and non-verbal. This means a combination of any of the following: face-to-face interpersonal communication (meetings and durbars), telephone conversations, emails, memos etc. are used together depending on what is being communicated, the target audience, the urgency attached and the feedback required. Through the strategies, i believed staff would be good ambassadors of the organisation as well maximize productivity since we are at the centre of the communications strategy”. (respondent 1)

To me the specific communication strategies are the regular departmental meetings we have where each department brings its report to be discussed. This is a sort of face-to-face kind of communication strategy and I like it. Also the intranet is very easy and a fast way of sending information and I believe it works.(respondent 2)

Here, combining different communication channels in sending information seem to be one of the strategies employed by the company according to a respondent.

4.3 Communication Channels used by Tullow Oil Ghana

Different communication channels were employed by Tullow Oil Ghana. Consistent with the media richness theory, different media were used depending on the type of communication. The channels include oral, written, and different electronic media to facilitate the transmission of information throughout the organization. The oral channel include group meetings with immediate managers every month, also face-to-face meetings with the chief executive officer at

the beginning of the year and quarterly durbars to remind workers of the phase where the company had reached in carrying out its duties. This was done to make sure that staff understood every aspect of what they did.

The strategy also included written methods through the use of the new media such as the emails, outlook and social networks such as twitter and facebook for the sharing of ideas and contribution on issues of concern. There was also, the application of the telephone system which was utilised once in a while and the public address system which made it possible for everyone to hear a particular message delivered at the same time. These channels changed over time depending on technological trends and where the company found itself. The company had shifted from the days of notice boards to emails and telephones based on the current trend. Through these, they believed staff would be good ambassadors of the organisation since they were at the centre of the communications strategy.

4.4 Internal Communication within Tullow Oil

On the question of how internal communication took place in the company, different means were mentioned by respondents. It was found out that communication took place in several forms within the company. It was realised that the era of magazines, newsletters and seemed to be a thing of the past since workers would pick them up and not read them till the next one was published. They therefore supported and deployed a lot of the new media which included online channels with the intranet being the commonly used through the outlook. Apart from the intranet there were social networks such as twitter, facebook as the main means of communicating

internally. Two respondents one from the Business Management Department and another from the Engineering Department had this to say about the use of online media.

Ooh it is done mainly through emails. They are the primary means of internal communication here. There is an internal mail system which is in the outlook exchange server which you can access even if you are outside of the office. Everybody has an account on this outlook server.

Internal communication in Tullow is mostly through the emails and on rare occasions through lunch and we have a P.A . System (Public Address system) that once in a while they give information, yeah that is it.

It is clear from the above interview that the main form of internal communication within Tullow was the use of the intranet which employees can access within or outside the premises of the organization. Employees could have access to every employee of Tullow in any part of the world. This was made possible by a corporate contact book which was kept at all offices of Tullow.

Besides, there is a cooperate contact book that you can go in and then look out for anybody that you want to communicate with be it from the Ghana office, London office, Dublin office, south Africa etc.

In addition to the online channels, were the oral channels. The oral channels could be divided into face-to-face interpersonal and group communication. The face-to-face interpersonal communication was usually between employees and department heads or their supervisors. This involved department heads issuing out instructions to the employees in his/her department.

Sometimes, our department heads would call you and discuss the details of their meetings with us in the department and what plans he want to put in place to achieve the

organization goal. On other occasions he will call us one after the other and issue out specific instructions. (respondent 1)

Group communication took a variety of forms including durbars, seminars and happy hours. The happy hour is a short meeting on the last Friday of the month between management and employees or departmental heads and employees which lasted between 20-30 minutes.

There is also the happy hour on the last Friday of every month so we can get to know each other (respondent 4).

These meetings were held in hotels during lunch time and for that matter interviews preferred to call it *Lunch and Learn*. Most interviewees appreciated this form of communication because they considered this meeting as very simple, clear and they felt very relaxed.

I like the happy hour a lot. We are taken out to a hotel and the managers come during the lunch time and present to us general information that we need to know about the Tullow within 30 minutes. Sometimes, the presenters spend less than 30 minutes; let's say 20 minutes and he is finished. I am okay with this method it is straight forward, you feel relaxed, there is no need to write notes. All that you do is to listen.(respondent2)

The durbars were held quarterly. From the interviews it was realized that this was a good way of transmitting general information and most of the employees considered the meetings to give enough information about the general situation. The intent of such meetings was to present the direction of the company in terms of sales figures and other key figures, which could be described as formalisation when connected to the theoretical framework. Apart from being a method for formalisation, they were, in addition, a kind of socialisation as it was an informal and relaxed meeting, which contributed to a feeling of togetherness. During these durbars, they were

assembled in one place sometimes in a restaurant or in the seminar rooms where the managing director and chief executive officer met with workers to discuss issues bothering them on all issues concerning the company. A respondent from the engineering department described the importance of the quarterly durbars in the following way.

There are quarterly durbars that are held. During this function everybody (all employees) will come together and the president will address the whole workforce and any outstanding issue will be dealt with. The workers are given the opportunity to ask questions and these are answered. And if targets are being achieved or not they are highlighted and then the way forward is given out so that we will know the part to play in order to achieve the corporate goal. (respondent 3)

Another form of the group communication was the use of the public address system (PA systems) and the alarm system. Although these two communication channels allows information to be disseminated to all employees at the same time, they serve different purposes. The P.A systems give out information on flights whilst the alarms are used for emergency purposes. The employees are taught the meanings of the different sounds of the alarm as revealed by the following interview.

A radio man who gives announcements on flights, going out and coming in. The alarms are for emergency purposes, that communicate different things but we are taught on the various meanings. (Respondent 1)

The telephone systems were also another prominent communication channel used for internal communication within Tullow. The telephone systems in Tullow were incorporated with many advanced features to suit the communication needs of the organization. It has features which allows for online communication, chatting and offshore communication with people on the rig and vessels. The communications manager described the telephone infrastructure in the following way.

Also the telephone system is used a lot. Everyone's log-in details is also put onto the telephone system so once the person logs onto the telephone anybody who is online can see the person. There is a chat system incorporated into the telephone system as well so if a person is online you can just chat with the person. Also the system allows conference calls where you can talk to the London office and offshore installation on the rigs and other vessels to discuss operation (manager).

Related to the telephone was the use of walkie talkies used only by the employees on the rig.

There we ***Observation***

The interview was supplemented with observation. It was observed the body language and comfort level of the participants were varied. The researcher noted when the respondents appeared to be open, enthusiastic, hesitant, guarded or when they had difficulty answering a question. This showed in their body movements and their delay in giving some answers. Some were fidgety and others more relaxed. This method was also used to observe the various communication gadgets and channels used in internal communication.

It allowed the researcher to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, and to discover things that interviewees might not freely say in the interview. For example during some of the interviews I heard the radioman make announcement on the public address system to all the staff. I also observe the interviewees receiving emails and interrupting the interview session to read the mails because they deemed it important to their work. The interview with the communication analyst in the IT Department was very revealing.

According to Rossman and Rallis (1998), observation is an important supplementary technique for research that is based on interviews. It can guide the interviewer in the process, helping to inform which questions may need further exploration when it might be helpful to encourage the participant or when to abandon a line of questioning. It is, therefore, different from seeing. It

involves creating order out of the chaos of signals reaching the brain and gleaning information from the environment by placing significance on some things and not others. It also includes noticing the absence of things, being aware of one's in-built biases and taking steps to counteract them (Sanger 1996). Thus, the adoption of this method offered the researcher the opportunity of looking at what is taking place in the situation rather than at second hand. The research saw at firsthand how information was received from managers both within and outside Ghana and sent to all employees concerned.

re also the performance appraisal which were sent round monthly to find out how workers were performing in the various duties assigned them.

4.5 Being Well Informed Through Tullows Communication Methods

Keeping staff informed could not be taken for granted in any organisation because how well the staff knew about the job determined how efficient their output was. Respondents believed that keeping staff well informed was a fifty percent chance that they would know their job description and perform well. They were satisfied with the means of communication though there was always room for improvement. The communication methods employed by Tullow such as the online channels and interpersonal channels were working for the company since respondents believed that they were well informed through the means. On the whole respondents expressed their satisfaction with the dissemination of information within Tullow. One respondent describe the speed and urgency with information gets to all employees.

We are well informed about almost everything happening within the organization. This is because information intended to get to us reached us on time with enough explanations describing exactly what was expected of us.(respondent 3)

Another interviewer expressed his appreciation about the way the communication department has performed their duty excellently.

The communications department is doing a good job, as the strategies in place are working perfectly. The various methods employed made it impossible for one to miss out on information when in the office. If one is not by his or her computer to get an urgent mail, the PA system was loud enough to deliver that message.(manager)

This is indication that multiple channels of communication are used to deliver the same message to all employees. This makes it difficult for staff to miss out on information meant for them.

Another respondent asserted that despite the fact that there were problems with the intranet, the flow of internal communication within Tullow was effective. This was because as a result of the multiple channels of communication used, it made it possible for alternative channels to be used when the intranet was not functioning well.

Even though there were technical hitches sometimes with the intranet, the flow of information was very effective. Communication is channeled through other means when the intranet is down. But on the whole I would say the intranet is very effective. Even the little details in the company such as relationship with co-workers and with bosses were discussed through the intranet.(respondent 2)

It is clear from the above that there is a constant flow of information from management to employees through various communication channels. The reason for doing this was to bring all employees up to date on every development within the Tullow Oil and within the oil industry in Ghana. The company does not want to keep the employees in the dark or to be misinformed

about information regarding the oil industry from outside Tullow communication channels as revealed by this respondent.

When an issue came up in the oil sector, workers were immediately alerted so they did not hear different stories outside. The intranet also allowed them to send feedbacks on issues they could not understand clearly.(respondent 4)

This practice made it possible for employees to be well informed on company policies, the agenda for the day, new development within the company and the oil industry in general. A point worth noting is that the flow of information was not always meant for the employees alone. There are instances where employees were given the opportunity to ask questions and to contribute meaningfully to issues being discussed at durbars. Here is how one respondent describe the way employees were well informed and knowledgeable about issues within Tullow.

We are well informed about almost everything at every point in time. For instance during the durbars and meetings with the chief executive officer, staff were given the chance to ask questions and make additions and submissions. They were informed of the where they had gotten to, what was hindering certain progress and what they could do to improve. They were reminded of the company's vision and mission in order not to lose track of it.(respondent 5)

This shows that the quarterly durbar held by Tullow affords workers the opportunity to share ideas and express their opinions on issues affecting the company, their work and welfare.

4.6 Sending Messages and Receiving Feedback

Communication is a two way affair and one only communicates when the message sent out is received and sent back, to determine whether the message has been properly understood. This applies in all forms of communication whether you are at work, communicating with employees, suppliers or customers, or at home, communicating with your family and friends. Communication takes place when both parties understand each other. Thus, for communication to be termed effective both the sender and the receiver must be clear and understand each other. The study therefore tried to find out whether respondents were allowed to send feedback or not and whether the feedback was received with much urgency or attention. It was found out that Feed backs were sent both oral and written. That is they were sent through the emails and sometimes face-to-face methods depending on the issues and the urgency. The investigation showed that the feedbacks were treated with much attention and urgency just as any other issue was treated.

The manager will have to give his feedback on what has been written on the performance appraisal form or what is going on. So before everything is finalized the manager will have to give your feedback and we have a dead line so it is quite urgent.

There were at times spontaneous feedbacks from the email especially where someone read a piece that had been sent through the intranet and wrote back to inform the sender how great it was or otherwise. There were also times when information was circulated through the emails and responses like “thank you very much” or “what about doing it this way or that way” were received.

It was also found out that instant feedbacks from the focus group discussions normally held were received. There were the performance appraisals, where a manager had to give his feedback on what had been written on the form or what was going on. So before everything was finalised, the

manager had to give his feedback based on a dead line thus making feedback treatment very urgent and effective.

One could walk to a manager, tell him what was bothering them and the manager would take it up from there to management meetings where such issues tackled with urgency. Respondents simply believed that the way priority was attached to every information delivered, in the same way, feedbacks were expected, received and tackled. Their petitions were sent through emails and other means to the appropriate authority.

4.7 Employees Preference for Receiving Information

The internal communication within Tullow is conducted through various communication channels, oral, written, and different electronic means to facilitate the transmission of information throughout the organisation. Employees had the opportunity to utilise a variety of methods. Employees who were most satisfied with internal communication were those who received information from a variety of sources, including interpersonal channels.

The analysis of the data showed that respondents preferred three channels of communication within Tullow Oil Company. These were face-to-face, the intranet and group communication. Overall the majority of the respondents preferred face-to-face communication even though many employees noted that face-to-face meetings were time-consuming. This preference for face-to-face communication cut across workers and their superiors and was based on the fact that it fostered a cordial relationship among workers and superiors and among workers on the same level as well. The communication manager described his preference for face-to-face communication in the following way:

I am stickler for interpersonal communication. This is because no matter what one did and no matter the effectiveness of the social network, the most effective way of communicating with staff was through the interpersonal means. The face-to-face communication instilled some kind of trust and confidence in the workers. (manager)

Face-to-face communication is considered the richest channel primarily due to the ability to give immediate feedback as well as the amount of information shared during the interaction in the form of verbal cues (tone of voice, pitch, volume...) as well as nonverbal Cues (Kahai and Cooper, 2003). This preference for the face-to face interaction may be due to its many benefits. Face-to-face team briefings are considered a vehicle for sharing the philosophy and values of the organisation, the strategy (Gamble and Kelliher, 1999) and “give people the opportunity to ask questions, offer opinions, and give and receive feedback – unique advantages over even the best print publications, video programs and e-mail messages” (Howard, 1996, p.12). Additionally, rich media can create a closer relationship between a manager and subordinate as well as a more personal focus (Sheer and Chen, 2004).

The intranet is the second most preferred means of communication indicated by the respondents. Those who prefer the intranet based the choice on three reasons. First, they reasoned that the intranet allowed the workers a chance to refer to the information given over and over again.

I prefer the emails to all the other communication channels. This medium allows me to read the information over and over again to constantly remind myself of what have to be done and at what time it must be done. Unlike the others, you don't need to write it down.(respondent 1)

Secondly they argued that the intranet allowed them the opportunity to express their views without any pressures from staring eyes. Whatever time could not allow them to say during the durbars was expressed well in detailed writing.

I am a cool person who does not want to talk in public. At the durbars the bosses do most of the talking. Sometimes, some employees who think they are knowledgeable dominate the discussions and when some of us the cool ones talk, they stare at you as if you are ignorant. (respondent 1)

Another reason for the high preference of the face-to-face was because some people could express their views in speech better.

I think the face-to-face because some people are able to express their feelings more in person than writing. Because some might feel like voicing out what is really bothering them but when you do it in writing I think you are limited. people are able to express themselves better face-to-face.(respondent 3)

Group communication was the third and least preferred method by the respondents. Those who prefer this medium of communication believed that it allowed workers to share and learn new ideas from other workers. They believe that this form of communication gives them a sense of importance community feeling. They feel they are part of a big family.

You know few employees in multinational companies hardly get the chance of meeting with their chief executives on regularly basis as it happens here in Tullow Oil. It is a privilege that at such durbars opinions of every member is welcome and taken into consideration. I therefore prefer face-to-face. I like talking a lot so.(respondent 4)

The desire for communication was consistent with the findings of Stein, (2006). She found that communication-rich channels such as durbars and face to face communication effectively foster a sense of community and that employees sought a sense of community at some level in the organisation. Hearing information first-hand gave employees a sense of importance.

A few of the respondents argued that their preference for a particular channel of communication is situational. To them situations and contexts determines the type of communication channels to use since some are effective in some situations and contexts than others. Here is how two respondents from the engineering department share their experience.

Respondent 5

I prefer internet and emails because it's easy. The reason is that you don't have to walk to the person and deliver an information but you can just leave the mail and the person can always get to it whenever and the phone system though it's limited to the office area. Offshore I prefer the PA system and phone system.

Respondent 2

It depends on the instance or problem. Stuff like promotions and monetary issues we prefer it to be one on one so we can ask questions . For instance there was one time where the president took us out to announce some issues about the first oil drilling, thanking us for no fatalities and a job well done etc. and people really wanted to ask questions about whether there will be additional money added to our salaries and stuff and a lot were curious you know, but when you stand up to say those things they will go like “wonkoaaa woha adwene dodo“ meaning you are troublesome. So a lot of people might be shy to voice out stuff like that but when you have your manager, one on one or two on one come on you can just talk to him and voice out what you feel you.

From the analysis it could be seen that majority of the respondents preferred interpersonal channels of communication than group communication such as durbars and 'happy hour'. On the whole the respondents believed that the variety of means employed in transmitting information

to workers was very professional because it gave them options and was not sent through only one source but a variety of them so even if one did not get to you another was likely to be delivered.

4.8 Knowledge of Company Policies and Goals

Knowledge of organizational policies and goals is very crucial in aligning employee's interest with the goals of the organization and motivating employees to work hard to achieve them.

The data analysis revealed that respondent had good knowledge of the policies and goals of Tullow oil. They had sufficient information to perform their job. These were obtained from several sources. At the beginning of every year the policies and aims were communicated to them by the Chief Executive Officer himself, and when they joined the company, they were given a brochure which outlined all the objectives and goals. Quarterly, when they met at durbars to discuss how far the objectives set were being achieved, the Chief Executive Officer outlined the policies and goals and discussed with workers to remind them of the goals of the company.

Lastly the policies and goals of Tullow were also displayed on the company's website. For this reason anytime employees opened their emails, they got the opportunity to read them. The essence of the use of these multiple media of communicating the goals and polices was to constantly remind them and to keep them focused on the bigger picture.

When the workers were made aware of those policies and goals, they became familiar with the strategies in place as well. The strategies such as the durbars, use of brochures and putting the policies and goals on the website and emails of employees as means of communicating the policies and goals of Tullow were effective. This is because being constantly reminded of the policies and goals of Tullow made the employees to become conversant with them, imbibe them

and the company's policies and goals became part of daily lives and kept them focused on what was expected of them.

However, not all the employees had an in-depth knowledge of the policies and goals of Tullow oil. Some of the respondents did not read all the policies and goals of Tullow despite the fact that many channels were used in communicating to them. They rather read the summary of the policies and goals. Their reason for this was that the brochure on the policies and goals of Tullow Oil Ghana was too long.

I don't think I have read all before because it is too long. Usually what we really do I can say we just look up the titles and see where our interest lies. That's it (respondent 4)

4.9 Effectiveness of Internal Communication in the Achievement of the Organizational Goals and Objectives

Effective internal communication which could be said to be "downward, upward or horizontal", is a vital means of addressing organisational concerns. Effective internal communication has been shown to help improve employee engagement through increased job satisfaction, safety and decreased absenteeism, grievances and staff turnover. Such improvements are linked to improved productivity and overall profitability. The analysis of the data revealed that all the respondents agreed that internal communication contributed greatly to the achievement of the organisational goals and objectives within Tullow. This is because the respondents believed that as result of being constantly informed of new developments within the company, being reminded always of their job descriptions, the agenda for the day and discussion of the previous day's work made them to be empowered. This empowerment motivated the employees and spurred

them on to excel in their assigned duties leading to the achievement of the organization goals and objectives of Tullow. One respondent shared his opinion on how the internal communication strategies in Tullow made her to work hard to achieve assigned duties.

The constant flow of information from the chief executive, the department heads, seminars, durbars and other communication channels made us aware of what is going on in Tullow and our role in the achievement of the targets set by the organization. As a result I want to always work hard so that my department would excel and help achieve the objectives of Tullow (respondent1).

A respondents from the communication department also commented on how internal communication was vital to the achievement of the organization goals and objectives and how this had been interwoven into the communication strategy of Tullow.

Keeping staff informed was one detail the company made sure not to take for granted because the staff were responsible for the growth of the company or otherwise. I can say almost all the staff of Tullow know what they are were about and they knew the business performance targets because they are well informed (respondent2).

Thus, getting the workers well informed gave them the confidence to go about their duties efficiently and the ability to give the right information to the external audience and not misinform them. A respondent from the Business management Department had this to say.

Yeah definitely because if people don't know what they are supposed to do then they might do whatever they want. You know if they (workers) don't know the part they are supposed to play in order to achieve the cooperate objective then you can't achieve it. The staff are well informed so that they don't misinform other people. When there are

incidents people will talk to workers first and they have to give the correct info in order to give the company a good image (respondent 5)

With effective internal communication the workers were likely to be abreast with the happenings in the industry and know how to manage such crises through their communication with the general public without misinforming the public and also damaging the reputation of Tullow. These findings are consistent with the observation by Erikson (1992) that internal communication provides employees with a general view of the business; it creates unity among the employees regarding the goal of the business; it facilitates delegation; and, in the end, it contributes to higher results.

4.10 Appraisal of Workers' Perception of Tullow's Communications Strategies

Indeed Tullow Oil Ghana had a way of evaluating the communication strategy by way of a periodic audit where an annual survey called the 'talk back session' was carried out. With this audit questionnaires were given out to every employee to respond to. The questionnaire had a section focused on evaluation of the communication strategies of Tullow oil. In addition to that, there were the regularly held focus group discussions to gauge what the issues were around communication. The Human Resource Department also gauged issues around what they called the "soft issues" in an organisation. With this, there was very little about production and engineering and the workers had the opportunity to voice out which means of communication they found comfortable or otherwise. During these focus groups, issues concerning the company were brought up and workers were allowed to share their views and ask questions about strategies in place and what could be done to improve upon them. If the majority had a problem with a particular system in place they were revised to make them more comfortable and efficient.

This made the communications department aware of where they were headed and whether their strategies in place were working or not.

4.11 Sustainability of Communication Strategies Over Time

Smythe (1996) argues that “nowadays the context of internal communication is changing fast and the challenge is not only managing media and using more media, but reducing communication pollution and discipline the torrent of information from management in order to increase individual understanding. In terms of strategy, communication must mainly deal with the information of employees, the management of changes and the motivation of employees. Also excellent internal communication means that everyone in the organization, at all levels, understands the need for change, what the changes are and how they will affect the business and each individual’s work” (Dolphin, 2005)

Overall it was revealed from the interviews that the communication strategies employed by Tullow had changed over time. The changes were caused by different factors such as the phase in which the company was in at a point in time, the size of office space and the feedback from the appraisal sessions. So a particular strategy was not sustained over time. The pre-oil production phase had its own communication strategy and channels. During this phase attention was on the initial drilling and the message in the communication strategy focused on exploration, drilling activities, discoveries of wells and when to start oil production. After the first oil was pumped, the message had to change and focus on production levels among other issues. The communication manager explained the communication strategies further:

The messaging in the communications strategy was linked to the jubilee project and so the key messages were, “first oil will be produced on schedule”, “Tullow is in Ghana for

the long term, we are desirous of creating shared prosperity, and we take local content seriously.”

The second determining factor of the change in communication strategy was the size of the office space occupied by Tullow oil. Initially, Tullow had its departments in different offices in the same compound. Because the offices were smaller it made it difficult for management to meet all the employees at the same time. Therefore focus group discussions and durbars were usually avoided. During this period the dominant channels of communication were emails, newsletters, magazines and notice boards. However, when the company moved into its new ultra-modern bigger office, the newsletters and notice boards were discarded whilst interpersonal methods such as face-to-face meetings, intranet and the public address systems were introduced.

The third change factor was the feedback from the appraisal sessions. These feedback sessions showed which communication channel employees preferred and how they wanted the message to be delivered. This was then considered and fused into the communication strategy. One could not stick to one particular strategy throughout the working period without changing the strategy because as time went by, new ideas came and the old ways had to pass to give room for the fresh ones. So over time new strategies were developed and the old ones changed. The strategies were therefore not sustained but changed as the company moved forward.

4. 12 Challenges that Hinder Effective Internal Communication

The communication channel selected for transmitting a message plays a significant role in maintaining the quality of the original message in its passage from the sender to receiver. The sender, given the opportunity to weigh the merits of using an oral or written communication, or a

combination of the two, selects the most effective for the situation. Regardless of the communication channel selected, the sender will encounter obstacles. Effective internal communications is all about enabling people to do their jobs to the best of their ability and ensuring that all are working together towards the same organisational goals. This can mean anything from encouraging one to talk to and exchange ideas with people from other departments to explaining the direction that the company is headed.

One of the challenges that hindered effective internal communication according to respondents was the fact that workers were not doing a good job to know what the other departments were doing. Usually when a mail was sent through the intranet only the departments it concerned were interested. Other departments were usually not interested in reading the mail because it was not about them. However, respondents believed if they paid more attention to the works of other departments, then they would be well informed about other departments and appreciate the work of their colleagues. Reading mails from other departments helped enrich workers' knowledge on what other departments were doing. This helped to know whether they were at the same level in achieving their objectives and goals or not.

Technology was another major hindrance to communication. When the server was down and mails could not be accessed, urgent information could not get to one on time, especially, if the information was directly from the London office, where the PA system was impossible to use.

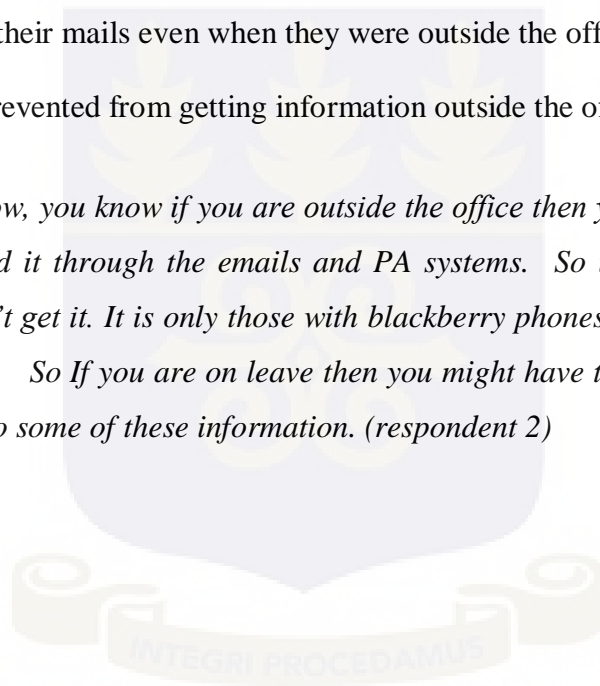
Technology, if the server is down and you can't assess your mails then urgent information might not get to you on time since the internet is the major thing used. Though there is PA system if you are out then you don't get it.(respondent 1)

Technical hitches therefore caused some information to be delayed sometimes.

Another problem was that when one was outside the office they could not get information because it was sent through the intranet and PA systems. It was only those special devices such as blackberry phones were able to get information outside the office. In such situation if one was on leave he or she would have to wait to get back to the office before getting knowledge of such information. The consequence is that such people lag behind on certain issues.

However, there are links through which one could access mails when outside the office, but such links were not common to all, so if everyone was made aware of such links and given the access, then people could check their mails even when they were outside the office. Everyone not having access to the links was prevented from getting information outside the office.

Here within Tullow, you know if you are outside the office then you don't get information because they send it through the emails and PA systems. So if you are not within the building you don't get it. It is only those with blackberry phones who are able to get info outside the office. So If you are on leave then you might have to wait to get back before you get preview to some of these information. (respondent 2)



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

The objectives of the study were to find out how workers of Tullow Oil Ghana understood internal communication and to find out the internal communication strategies employed by Tullow in carrying out its internal communication activities. It was also to find out whether internal communication to the workers of Tullow Oil helped in the achievements of the organizational goals of Tullow Oil and whether effective internal communication was important to the company. In-depth interviews were conducted with some selected members of Tullow Oil Ghana from six different departments to find out their views on the subject. This chapter presents the summary of the research findings, makes conclusions and recommendations from the research findings.

5.1 Summary of findings

In summary, the in-depth interviews conducted revealed that there was more than one approach to the way a media was chosen to communicate within Tullow oil. Consistent with the media richness theory, interviewees reported an understanding that certain messages were better communicated with certain media depending on the complexity of the message and the level of understanding. Generally managers will communicate in whatever way they felt will result in that understanding, when possible. Even when barriers existed that affected what type of communication a manager was able to use, subjects reported careful thought as to how they could best communicate with their employees.

The study found that all respondents believed that internal communication was very important within Tullow oil based on three principal reasons. First, the oil industry is risky where lives could be lost and huge amounts could be lost hence there must not be a communication gap. Secondly, the oil industry in Ghana is a new one therefore employees need a lot of information to be well informed, be efficient in their dealings with the public and upgrade their skills. Thirdly, employees need adequate information on the equipments used in the oil industry since they are particularly designed for that purpose.

The study again found that, the communications strategies (channels) employed by Tullow oil has changed over time. The company no longer used newsletter and notice boards. The major determinants of these changes were the phase in which the company was in at a point in time, the size of office space and the feedback from the appraisal sessions. This goes further to stress that, the communication channels employed by Tullow were viewed as the strategies used to communicate internally as there were no specific strategies lined up except for the channels.

Respondents found face-to-face communication essential to their relationships and communication with employees for a variety of reasons. Not only did face-to-face allow for conversation, verbal and nonverbal cues, but also that it conveys the importance of the task at hand to her employees. According to the manager of communication, face-to-face communication is valuable when discussing large projects or brainstorming because it conveys importance. Face-to-face communication is also important to managers for in-depth situations such as new project discussions where complexity might exist and understanding is necessary to achieve a common goal. Often managers want to see or hear their employees' reactions and so they will choose to meet face-to-face.

This preference for face-to-face communication cut across both workers and their superiors. The preference for the face-to-face communication was based on the fact that it fostered some kind of a cordial relationship among workers and superiors and among workers on the same level as well.

The study also noted that respondents believed that the flow of information within Tullow Oil was effective. This was based on the belief that there was a good interpersonal relationship between managers and employees as well as among employees. This made them very satisfied with the company's practices.

5.2 Limitations of the study

A major limitation of the study was the absence of literature and research on anything having to do with the oil industry since it is a new market in the country. Internal communication and training in building corporate brands has also received less attention in the academic literature since most organisations pay particular attention to their external publics more than their internal publics. Much of the related literature that formed the background and context of the study tended to be European and American.

Another difficulty faced was also the fact that, some of the departments especially the Public Relations department which is very vital to the communication of the company is based in another town but the time did not permit the researcher to visit the other offices out of town. For this reason, it was not possible to get anyone from that department to interview even though an opinion from that department would have been very influential.

Time factor was a very huge limitation. Collecting the data took a lot of time due to the tight working schedule of the Tullow Oil employees. The nature of their work prevented them from having enough time to spare since the only time they could meet was during working hours so the interviews had to be made short so they could get back to their busy schedules. The exploratory nature of the study also prevented hypothesis from being tested. However care was taken in the gathering and analysing the data.

5.3 Conclusion

While the research limitations have a slight effect on the overall conclusions one can draw from this paper, i have discovered a great deal from this research alone, which can be useful to other companies in understanding the manager-employee communication process. This research shows us that within Tullow oil (and probably many others), there is fluency with the most common communication tools. The way interviewees referred to different media and their varied use of each demonstrates a general ease and shared understanding among the organization of what these tools were and how they were used.

Despite the availability of technology in today's workplace, workers do value the face-to-face interaction and the communication they have with their employees. They see it as a way to enhance organizational performance and also as a way to develop relationships among workers. Ultimately, the research conducted proves that even though communication channels continues to evolve and people become 'networked', people still crave in-person interaction and communication, and managers want to see their employees face-to-face. They want to receive verbal and nonverbal cues and see body language so that they can reach genuine shared meaning and mutual understanding. Sometimes this is possible over a computer-based medium as well;

sometimes face-to-face is required. I gathered from the research that today's organizational communication relies on both rich and lean media to exchange messages that result in shared understanding and strong organizational performance, and even when new types of channels are introduced, this will most likely hold true.

Also existing Internal Communication Strategies were not clearly stated in the sense that they seemed to have used the communication channels available as the strategies in place, with the communication channels which in respondents view were the communication strategies employed by the company. Though it was stated that the strategy took its source from the overall vision of the company where the purpose of the message, target audience, the phase in which the company and channels available were addressed, the face-to-face kind of communication and internet were stated as being paramount in the strategy. Referring to the channels as strategies.

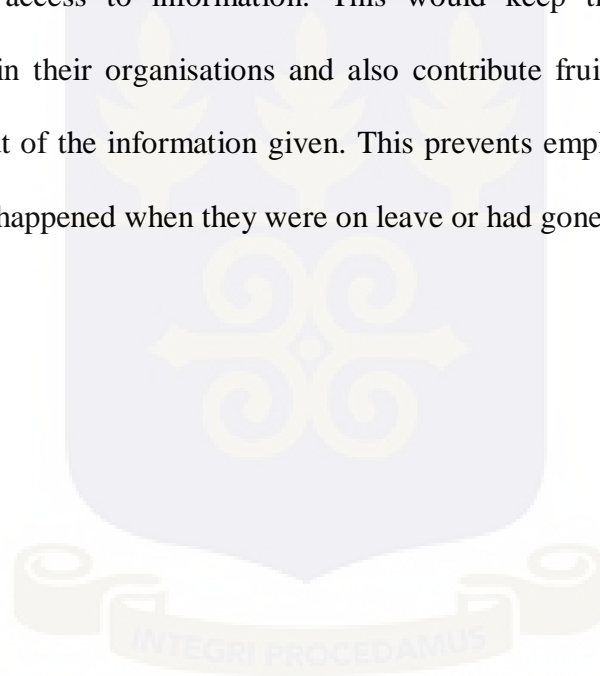
Finally, on the whole, effective internal communication contributed greatly to the achievement of organisational goals and objectives, as it created a conducive work environment. Workers however were of the view that, although every aspect of internal communication seemed to be working perfectly for them, there was always room for improvement as new ideas sprung up.

5.4 Recommendation

The following are recommendations from the study.

- First, organisations must employ various channels of communicating internally with its employees and other stakeholders.

- Employees must be made to own or share in the design and implementation of communication strategies of organisations. This way employees would understand the objective of communication strategy.
- Communication strategies must be well developed and used strategically so that workers feel comfortable, well informed and motivated to give their all.
- Internal communication systems must be designed in such a way that employees who go out of the office must have access to internal information. This way, even employees on leave can have access to information. This would keep them abreast with every information within their organisations and also contribute fruitfully to any discussions that may arise out of the information given. This prevents employees from having to be updated on what happened when they were on leave or had gone outside the office.



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Appendix A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What is your name?
2. What department are you in?
3. What position do you hold in the company?
4. How do you understand Internal Communication?
5. What are the Specific Strategies that Enable Effective Internal Communication?
6. How does Internal Communication occur in Tullow Oil Ghana?
7. Are you well informed through these Means?
8. How do you prefer to Receive Information?
9. Does Effective Internal Communication help in the achievement of the Organizational Goals and Objectives?
10. How effective is internal communication and Information Exchange within Tullow Oil Limited?
11. Does the company communicate its policies and goals to you?
12. Do you think effective of Internal Communication is important to Tullow Oil?
13. What are the challenges that hinder effective Internal Communication?
14. Is there an audit carried out to find out how workers feel about the communication strategies in place?
15. Are the strategies maintained or changed over the Time?
16. Are you allowed to send feedbacks? And if you are through what means?