

Media Business and Innovation

Stavros Georgiades

Employee Engagement in Media Management

Creativeness and Organizational
Development

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Media Management	1
1.2	Developing Media Management Theory	3
1.3	Theoretical Contribution	3
1.4	Methodology: Inductive Qualitative Case Study Approach	5
1.5	Structure of the Book	6
	References	7
2	Employee Engagement and Organizational Change	9
2.1	Employee Engagement Leading Towards Sensemaking and Thus a Successful Organizational Change	9
2.1.1	Sensemaking and Change	10
2.1.2	Paradox and Sensemaking	11
2.2	Employee Engagement Leading Towards Creativeness	12
2.2.1	Creativity in Organizations	13
2.2.2	Employee Creativity via Sensemaking	13
2.2.3	Employee Engagement, Sensemaking and Creativity	14
2.3	Importance of Communication Methods in Achieving Sensemaking Leading Towards a Successful Change	16
2.3.1	Communication Process Aid to Change Factors	16
2.3.2	Difficulties with the Application of the Communication Process	17
2.3.3	Effects of Working Relations on the Communication Process	18
2.3.4	Relationship Between Justice and Communication	19
2.3.5	Stress Minimisation via Proper Communication	19
2.3.6	Communication's Role in Employee Engagement	20
2.3.7	Applying Open Book Management via Communication	21
2.3.8	Communication and Employee Empowerment	22

2.3.9	Communication via Training to Achieve Employee Participation	22
2.3.10	Employee Reactions to Changes in the Management Provision of Information	23
2.4	Employee Participation to Achieve Sensemaking Leading Towards a Successful Change	24
2.4.1	Employee Participation via Empowerment	24
2.4.2	Participation's Ideological Background	26
2.4.3	Development of Participation Programmes	27
2.4.4	Employee Involvement Programmes Contribution Towards Participation	28
2.4.5	Employee Commitment Leading on to Participation	29
2.4.6	Participation in a Rule-Bound Organization	29
2.4.7	Multiple Levels of Participative Climates and Employee Engagement	30
2.4.8	Participation's Role in Corporate Transformation	31
2.4.9	Effects of Participation on Employees	32
	References	33
3	Communication Process to Achieve Employee Engagement	39
3.1	Introduction	39
3.2	Problem Statement: Research Objectives	39
3.3	Literature Review: Theoretical Background	40
3.4	Research Method	41
3.4.1	Data Collection	41
3.4.2	Data Analysis	43
3.5	Results	44
3.5.1	Managers' Perceptions of the Information Characteristics Necessary to Achieve Employee Engagement	44
3.5.2	Managers' Perceptions of the Information Assistance Necessary to Achieve Employee Engagement	48
3.5.3	Organizational Arrangements	50
3.6	Contribution	53
3.6.1	Information Characteristics	53
3.6.2	Assistance with the Information Provided	54
3.7	Limitations	55
3.8	Conclusions	55
3.8.1	Employee Understanding	55
3.8.2	Team Work Spirit	56
3.8.3	Employee Sense of Control	56
	Appendix	57
	References	58

4 Organizational Arrangements for Participation Leading Towards Employee Engagement	61
4.1 Introduction	61
4.2 Problem Statement: Research Objectives	62
4.3 Literature Review: Theoretical Background	62
4.3.1 Ideological Entailments	62
4.3.2 History of Academic Interest in Employee Engagement	63
4.3.3 Importance of Communication in Empowerment and Organization Change	63
4.3.4 Overview of History of Empowerment, Participation and Engagement in a Successful Change Effort	64
4.3.5 Managers’ Conceptualizations of Employee Engagement	64
4.3.6 Employee Engagement, Communication, and Change	64
4.3.7 Managers May Not Perceive Concept of Empowerment as Applicable	65
4.3.8 Managers’ Conceptions of Empowerment Vary by Level	65
4.3.9 Overview of the Literature on Employee Engagement and Change	66
4.4 Research Method	66
4.4.1 Research Design	66
4.4.2 Data Analysis	67
4.5 Results	67
4.5.1 Managers’ Perceptions of the Organizational Arrangements Necessary to Achieve Employee Engagement	68
4.5.2 Employee Empowerment	70
4.5.3 Employee Motivation	72
4.5.4 Disclosure and Solution of Problems	74
4.6 Contribution	74
4.7 Limitations	78
4.8 Conclusions	78
Appendix	79
References	79
5 Employee Engagement Implementation Leading Towards Employee Creativity	83
5.1 Introduction	83
5.2 Problem Statement: Research Objectives	84
5.3 Literature Review/Theoretical Background	85
5.4 Research Method	87
5.4.1 Data Collection	87
5.4.2 Data Analysis	88

5.5	Results	89
5.5.1	Employee Support	89
5.5.2	Empowerment Practices	90
5.5.3	Employee Motivation	92
5.5.4	Trust and Open Door Communication	93
5.6	Limitations	95
5.7	Contribution: Conclusions	95
5.7.1	Recruitment Method	95
5.7.2	Employee Creation and Innovation	96
5.7.3	Employee Engagement True and Valid	96
	Appendix	97
	References	98
6	Assessing Employee Creativity	101
6.1	Introduction	101
6.2	Literature Review/Theoretical Background: Problem Statement/Research Objectives	101
6.3	Research Methods	104
6.3.1	Initial Interview with a Top Manager	104
6.3.2	Case Study	105
6.4	Results	105
6.4.1	Sentimental	105
6.4.2	Self-aware	106
6.4.3	Ethical/Honest	107
6.4.4	Risky	108
6.4.5	Ambiguous/Surprising	109
6.4.6	Inspirational	109
6.4.7	Self-confident/Determined	111
6.5	Contribution	112
6.6	Limitations	113
6.7	Conclusions	114
	Appendix	114
	References	115
7	Conclusion	117
7.1	Communication Process to Achieve Employee Engagement	118
7.2	Organizational Arrangements for Participation Leading Towards Employee Engagement	118
7.3	Employee Engagement Implementation Leading Towards Employee Creativity	119
7.4	Assessing Employee Creativity	119
	References	120

List of Tables

Table 3.1	Managers of the radio and music department	41
Table 3.2	PDP relevant dates	43
Table 3.3	Information characteristics	45
Table 3.4	Empowerment practices	49
Table 3.5	Organizational arrangements	51
Table 4.1	Organizational support	69
Table 4.2	Empowerment practices	71
Table 4.3	Motivation	73
Table 4.4	Disclosure and solution of problems	75
Table 5.1	Employees of the marketing department	88
Table 5.2	Employee support	90
Table 5.3	Expressions of confidence	91
Table 5.4	Employee development	91
Table 5.5	Operational freedom	92
Table 5.6	Employee motivation	93
Table 5.7	Trust and open door communication	94
Table 6.1	Sentimental	106
Table 6.2	Self-aware	107
Table 6.3	Ethical/honest	108
Table 6.4	Risky	109
Table 6.5	Ambiguous/surprising	110
Table 6.6	Inspirational	110
Table 6.7	Self-confident/determined	111

1.1 Media Management

What is Media Management? While taking part in a Media Management conference a student doing a masters in Media Management asked a panel of media experts (editors of media journals) asked the question above in obvious desperation, adding that although he had been doing classes for some time he still was not sure about what media management means.

And to make it even worse, he said that he asked several academics who presented their research in the same conference and got different answers!

The media experts then tried to answer the student's question, and in doing so it became even more obvious in my mind that there was no clear answer. Although they tried for their answers to be as similar as possible, in reality they were not.

To add to the student's worry, what is worth considering is that academics during the last years have introduced several media management masters courses in different parts of the world, which do not seem to have the same direction.

Cottle (2003) suggested that media management is an under-explored and under-theorized field, and Lampel, Lant and Shamsie (2000) that to date mainstream management scholars have largely neglected the media industry, arguably because managerial practices and organizational patterns in the cultural industries are often at odds with established views of management.

According to Kung (2008), the subject of media management has in the main been approached from media-related disciplines that are not grounded in the study of management and organizations, including media economics, media studies, political economy, and mass communications and journalism.

This reflects mainstream management's neglect of the field, as well as the fact that the field of media management crosses inter-disciplinary lines, theoretical domains, and political systems (Albarran, Chan-Olmsted, & Wirth, 2006).

Kung (2008) added that viewed from a management perspective, media organizations have been largely addressed as businesses rather than organizations,

at a macro rather than a micro level, and much attention has been focused on the exogenous changes (technology, policy, regulation and consumption, for example) and their impact on media firm's output.

The student's question thus seems to be very plausible. What is media management? Have media management researchers focused mainly on media and not on management?

Probably a definition of the two words could help us look into this very interesting issue.

According to Lavine and Wackman (1988) media firms are understood as entities that develop, produce and distribute messages (content) that inform, entertain and/or persuade. To sell the products that carry these messages they select an audience and develop the marketing, promotion and sales strategies to reach their audience. Recently, according to Kung (2008) the internet has also been added to the media sector together with fixed and wireless communications.

What do we mean by management? What is the definition of management? According to Griffin (2013) management is a set of activities (planning and decision-making, organizing, leading and controlling) directed at an organization's resources (human, financial, physical and information) with the aim of achieving organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner. That is using resources in a cost-effective way and making and successfully implementing right decisions.

To briefly explain the main terms of the definition, planning and decision-making refer to setting the organization's goals and deciding how best to achieve them, organizing refers to determining how best to group activities and resources, controlling refers to monitoring and correcting ongoing activities to facilitate goal attainment, and leading refers to motivating members of the organization to work in the best interests of the organization.

So how can the two combine? How can we define media management?

Based on the above definitions, it seems to me that media management refers to the management of media organizations, that is the application of the different management processes to media organizations. More specifically, media management research could deal with issues like the way media managers should plan, make decisions, organize, lead, control the human, financial, physical and information resources, aiming to achieve the media organization's goals in an efficient and effective manner.

Although this at first may seem to be a difficult task, media management academics can look at the direction of the management literature, and more specifically in both qualitative and quantitative management research performed in media organizations. Take for example the management field of organizational creativity and innovation, which seems to be relevant to media organizations for obvious reasons.

There has been a lot of research in this field by several academics that has been published in management journals including Scott and Bruce's (1994) article entitled "Determinants of innovative behavior: a path model of individual innovation in the workplace", Ford's (1996) article "A theory of individual creative action in multiple social domains", Glyn's (1996) article "Innovative genius: A

framework for relating individual and organizational intelligences to innovation”, Elsbach and Kramer’s (2003) article “Assessing creativity in Hollywood pitch meetings: evidence for a dual-process model of creativity judgments”, and Zhang and Bartol’s (2010) article entitled “Linking empowering leadership and employee creativity: the influence of psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation, and creative process engagement.”

1.2 Developing Media Management Theory

This book thus aims to make a small step towards filling the gap described earlier on, that is to apply one of the basic management constructs using qualitative case study research to different media organizations in Europe, USA and South America in order to develop theory from each case study performed which relates to the management of media organizations. More specifically, the book deals with the dynamics of employee engagement and considers its value to achieve the necessary sensemaking in order to introduce change successfully and attain organizational development and employee creativity.

It is thus directed towards academics, students, as well as practitioners/professionals involved with media organizations, combining theory on a specific media management topic and practice based on in-depth case study research conducted in different media organizations around the world. It aims to provide media managers with practical media management advice, students with media management theory and practice, and academics with media management material to use when educating those who want to get involved with media organizations.

In order to develop theory on the specific media management topic from each case study performed in different media organizations around the world, the author decided to use the method of inductive qualitative case study research. Consequently, it is necessary to describe the methodology used and how it aims to fulfill the book’s aim.

1.3 Theoretical Contribution

Due to the fact that this study aims to develop theory on a specific topic, it is crucial we first define what we mean by theory. According to Gioia and Pitre (1990) theory is a statement of concepts and their interrelationships that shows how and/or why a phenomenon occurs. Based on the above definition, a theoretical contribution rests largely on the ability to provide original insight into a phenomenon by advancing knowledge in a way that is deemed to have utility or usefulness for some purpose, thus focusing on the two criteria of originality and utility (Corley & Gioia, 2011).

Originality can be categorized as either (1) advancing understanding incrementally or (2) advancing understanding in a way that provides some form of revelation, whereas the utility dimension parses into 1. Practically useful and 2. Scientifically useful. According to Smith the ultimate value-added test of a research is that it has

moved scholars in the field or advanced our theoretical understanding (Smith, 1997).

To make these issues clearer it would be useful to try and describe them in a simple manner. The revelatory issue rests on the idea that theory needs to reveal what we otherwise had not seen known or conceived (Corley & Gioia, 2011) and allow us to see profoundly, imaginatively, unconventionally into phenomena we thought we understood. . .theory is of no use unless it initially surprises, that is changes perceptions (Mintzberg, 2005). Thus theory needs to be interesting. . .denying the assumed, while affirming the unanticipated (Davis, 1971).

Theory needs also be useful. That is, it must have the potential to either improve the current research practices of informed scholars (Whetten, 1990) or improve the current managerial practice of organizational practitioners (Corley & Gioia, 2011). According to Van de Ven, research must contribute knowledge to a discipline, on the one hand, and to apply that knowledge to the practice of management as a profession on the other (Van de Ven, 1989).

Thus, scientific utility is perceived as an advance that improves conceptual rigor (Corley & Gioia, 2011), which in a practical sense good theory helps identify what factors should be studied and how and why they are related (Hitt & Smith, 2005; Pratt, 2011) Practical utility is seen as arising when theory can be directly applied to the problems practicing managers and other organizational practitioners face (Corley & Gioia, 2011) or as Hambrick suggests through observation of real life phenomena, not from scholars struggling to find holes in the literature (Hambrick, 2005).

This idea of practical utility was the force behind the writing of this book, because the author believes that media organizations and people who manage these organizations need practical theory that can be applied to real life phenomena they have to face in a high velocity media industry, rather than either mere description of media issues happening because of mainly technological changes or theory produced to create theoretical academic discussions within the academic which will have no real value to the management of media organizations.

This inattention to a concern within practical applicability of management theories has led to a troubling disconnect between management theory and practice (Pfeffer, 1993; Ghoshal, 2005; Mintzberg, 2005). Consequently, the focal problems in the academics chosen field of work should relate more directly to the wider world's work (organizational practice) by drawing more from the world of practice and the experience of real people, rather than from abstract derivations of hypothetical formulations. This would ideally lead to an integration of the scientific and practical utility dimensions and would produce a comprehensive utility dimension.

Based on this, academics need to realize that theoretical knowledge must move from static knowledge to dynamic processes of knowing, thus shifting the focus of theorizing to activities that people engage in while dealing with problems and inheres in the activities that individuals engage in to deal with their day to day interactions (Corley & Gioia, 2011).

1.4 Methodology: Inductive Qualitative Case Study Approach

Based on the above, the author decided to use the method of inductive case study research conducted in several media organizations around the world, aiming to develop media management theory from each case study that can have practical utility to those managing media organizations.

In order to achieve this aim, the author used the qualitative case study approach because according to Eisenhardt (1989) case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings. Case study can involve single cases and numerous levels of analysis and employ an embedded design, that is multiple levels of analyses within a single study (Yin, 2013), where the evidence may be qualitative and can be used to generate theory (Harris & Sutton, 1986; Gershick, 1988; Vaughn, 1992).

All case studies included in this book were conducted based on the method described by Eisenhardt in her 1989 famous article “Building Theories from Case Study Research”. More specifically, Eisenhardt starts by stressing the importance of initially defining a research question, at least in broad terms, in order to have a well-defined focus and consequently the kind of data that would be gathered. A priori specification of constructs can also help to shape the initial design and if the constructs prove important as the study progresses, then the researcher has a firmer empirical grounding for the emergent theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). According to Gephardt (2004) qualitative research starts from and returns to words, talk and texts as meaningful representations of concepts.

Selection of each case is an important aspect of building theory from case studies, aiming to ensure that the process of interest is “transparently observable”. Data can be collected via in-depth interviews and secondary sources because theory building seems to require rich description, the richness that comes from anecdote (Eisenhardt, 1989). According to Mintzberg (1979) it is anecdotal data that enable us to do the building.

In addition, this method provides a major advantage that is additional adjustments that can be made to data collection instruments, such as the addition of questions to an interview protocol allowing the researcher to probe emergent themes or to take opportunities which may be present in a given situation (Harris & Sutton, 1986). This according to Eisenhardt (1989) is legitimate for theory-building research because investigators are trying to understand each case individually and in as much depth as is feasible.

Data can be analyzed using detailed case study write-ups which are simply pure descriptions central to the generation of insight, aiming to become intimately familiar with the case as a standalone entity, allowing the unique patterns to emerge, and giving the researcher a rich familiarity with each case while looking for emerging patterns. One tactic is to select categories or dimensions and then look for within-group similarities coupled with intergroup differences. These dimensions can be suggested by the research problem or by existing literature, or the researcher can choose from specific dimensions.

The result of these comparisons can be new categories and concepts which the investigator did not anticipate. When the finding is corroborated by the evidence from another, the finding becomes stronger, when the evidence conflicts the researcher can aim to reconcile the evidence through deeper probing of the meaning of the difference.

Once this is done the researcher can start to compare the emergent frame (tentative themes, concepts, relationships) with the evidence from the case study, iterating toward a theory which closely fits the data because a close fit takes advantage of the new insights possible from the data and yields an empirically valid theory. This closeness can lead to an intimate sense of things—"how they feel, smell, seem" (Mintzberg, 1979) and this intimate interaction with actual evidence often produces theory which closely mirrors reality (Eisenhardt, 1989).

As a result, accumulating evidence from diverse sources converges on a simple, well-defined construct. At this point, the qualitative data are particularly useful for understanding the dynamics, that is the "why" of what is happening, which is crucial for the establishment of internal validity. The researcher can compare the emergent concepts or theory with extant literature, asking what is this similar to, what does it contradict and why. The result is often a theory with stronger internal validity, wider generalizability, and higher conceptual level, because the linkage with a variety of literature in other contexts raises the confidence that the researcher observed a valid phenomenon within her small number of interviews performed in a single setting (Eisenhardt, 1989).

1.5 Structure of the Book

This first chapter, the introductory chapter, considers the discipline called Media Management, looking at it through a management lens, and explains how the method of inductive case study research conducted in media organizations can be used to develop media management theory from each case study, aiming to make a small step towards filling the gap created by the mainstream management's neglect of the media management field.

The second chapter focuses on the literature relating to the construct of employee engagement and its value to achieve the necessary sensemaking leading towards a successful organizational change and development. This chapter highlights the literature dealing with the way employee engagement can lead towards employee sensemaking and creativeness, and also explains how employee sensemaking can be achieved via communication and participation methods.

The third chapter includes an inductive study to understand how managers think the communication process can lead towards employee engagement via the provision of information to employees, highlighting the importance of both the characteristics of the information and the necessary assistance to ensure employees can appreciate and use the information.

Chapter 4 aims to increase our understanding of organizational change and employee engagement by studying how managers view the way organizational

methods for participation can lead towards employee engagement. This study reveals an overlap between how academics approach the matter and how managers do, and uncovers some interesting nuances about how they manage the process.

Chapter 5 considers the way employees think about how management can operationalize employee engagement and achieve employee creativity, contributing towards a richer theory on the process behind the implementation of employee engagement and highlighting the importance of several organizational arrangements that can help achieve employee creativity.

Chapter 6 aims to assist management assess employee creativity by considering the characteristics management can actually attend to and use in real media organizational settings, in order to identify creative employees and take maximum benefits from their value creative potential.

Chapter 7 is a Concluding Chapter that gathers all thoughts together in the final concluding remarks.

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Organizational change is essential for short-term competitiveness and long-term survival, but it poses daunting managerial challenges. Advanced technologies, global markets, and mobile capital intensify pressures to constantly cut costs while enhancing flexibility (Leana & Barry, 2000). According to Kanter, Stein, and Jick (1992), managing change has become the ultimate managerial responsibility as firms continuously engage in some form of change—from shifting organizational boundaries, to altering firm structure, to revising decision-making processes. Yet major change projects rarely claim “substantial success” (Taylor-Bianco & Schermerhorn, 2006).

Labianca, Gray, and Brass (2000) stressed the managers’ roles as models. They found that employees watch their supervisors intently, skeptical of management’s commitment to change. Although executives design such projects, middle managers serve as critical change agents. Middle managers operationalize change initiatives, thereby aligning their units to executive mandates (Balogun & Johnson, 2004). Huy (2002) described “middles” as the lynchpins of organizational change, acting as intermediaries between top management and the front line. His study depicts middle managers’ need to implement change while managing subordinates’ emotions, for change can spur debilitating anxiety and defensiveness.

2.1 Employee Engagement Leading Towards Sensemaking and Thus a Successful Organizational Change

Consequently, “sensemaking” becomes very important for management to achieve in order to manage change successfully, which in turn makes employee engagement in the change effort vital as it can lead towards the necessary sensemaking.

2.1.1 Sensemaking and Change

According to Weick (1995), sensemaking denotes efforts to interpret and create an order for occurrences. Managers, however, must also communicate their understandings, particularly in the midst of organizational change, in a way that provides their subordinates with a workable certainty. Such “sensegiving” seeks to influence subordinates’ interpretations (Maitlis, 2005). Yet change may foster intense cognitive disorder for middle managers (McKinley & Scherer, 2000).

Such conditions spur confusion, anxiety, and stress that impede, or even paralyze, decision making. Indeed, Huy (2002) blamed unsuccessful change projects on managers’ inability to cope with shifting organizational expectations—shifts that dramatically alter their cognitive and behavioral interactions with the world around them. Balogun and Johnson (2004) further explained that managers “have the challenge of grasping a change they did not design and negotiating the details with others equally removed from the strategic decision making”. Unfortunately, studies of managerial sensemaking and change are rare (Maitlis, 2005).

Organizational change poses a particularly critical and difficult setting for sensemaking. As Weick (1995) explained, sensemaking is an effort to create orderly and coherent understandings that enable change. Yet dynamic contexts intensify experiences of complexity, ambiguity, and equivocality. Complexity rises as work demands shift, multiply, and potentially conflict (Hatch & Ehrlich, 1993).

Ambiguity renders new demands uncertain and frequently misunderstood (Warglien & Masuch, 1996), and equivocality fosters confusion as demands become open to varied, even contradictory, interpretations (Putnam, 1986). As a result, actors often struggle with changing roles, processes, and relationships. Without clear understandings, anxiety may paralyze decision making and action (Davis, Maranville, & Obloj, 1997; Smircich & Morgan, 1982).

Organizational change spurs reframing, as actors seek to make sense of disparities between their expectations and new experiences (Balogun & Johnson, 2004). According to Bartunek (1984), frames provide a structure of assumptions, rules, and boundaries that guide sensemaking and over time become embedded and taken-for-granted. Shocks and surprises signal that existing frames may no longer apply. Reframing, therefore, enables actors to alter meanings attributed to changing situations (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974).

Argyris’s (1993) distinction between “single-loop” and “double-loop learning” offers illustration. Single-loop signifies incremental variations within an existing frame, and double-loop denotes reframing, substantially altering an actor’s view and thus enabling dramatic changes in understanding and action.

Striving to fulfill “boundary-spanning” and sensegiving responsibilities, managers face further sensemaking challenges. During change efforts, managers link executives to employees (Kanter et al., 1992). Yet Balogun and Johnson (2004) found that as firms become more geographically dispersed and leaner, managers’ sensemaking is inhibited.

Through restructuring, top managers have less contact with lower levels, relying on middle managers to span boundaries. Simultaneously, managers have fewer interactions with executives, limiting opportunities to seek clarification. So while employees look to their managers to give sense to change mandates, managers themselves struggle for understanding (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Too often, a result is anxiety that debilitates decision making and implementation.

Despite the importance of managerial sensemaking during organizational change, related studies are rare (Luscher & Lewis, 2008). First, frames fluctuate as managers struggle for meaning through social interactions and experimentation (Maitlis, 2005). Therefore, examining their sensemaking requires a highly interactive method (Balogun & Johnson, 2004). Second, managers may be unwilling or unable to articulate their understandings. Argyris (1993) explained that in changing times, managers often grapple with conflicting emotions tied to “undiscussable” facets of organizational life.

2.1.2 Paradox and Sensemaking

Consequently, paradox becomes central to the process of managerial sensemaking. In hindsight, this is not surprising. When environments are complex and changing, conditions are ripe for the experience of contradiction, incongruity, and incoherence and the recognition of paradox and ambiguity within organizations (Hatch & Ehrlich, 1993). According to Lewis (2000) change surfaces “contradictory yet interrelated elements—elements that seem logical in isolation but absurd and irrational when appearing simultaneously”. In turn, such awareness spurs sensemaking, as actors seek a more orderly understanding.

In their study De Cock and Rickards (1996) identified paradoxical themes through interviews and then presented those themes to managers in group feedback sessions. Westenholz’s (1993) study showed that paradox energized reflection, offering a “counterweight to the unreflective discourse surrounding the management of change”.

Luscher, Lewis, and Ingram (2006) complement these findings, focusing on the social construction of paradoxes. That work examines communicative patterns, noting that “Identifying links between paradoxes and communication suggests discursive processes through which actors seek to make sense of change, but that often foster anxiety and paralysis”.

The significance of collaboration in paradoxical inquiry extends research that depicts managerial frames as shifting through social interaction (Isabella, 1990; Maitlis, 2005). For example, Hatch and Ehrlich (1993) examined how a management team juxtaposed contradictory and equivocal messages in meetings. Using irony and humor helped managers work together to make sense of their paradoxical changing roles. Similarly, Balogun and Johnson (2004) stressed the importance of middle managers’ interactions to reframing. They explained that as firms move toward more decentralized structures, the actions, language, and shared experiences of peers have a direct effect on managerial sensemaking.

As McKinley and Scherer (2000) explained, the cognitive disorder created by change can debilitate, frustrate, and even paralyze middle managers. Working through paradox could help managers enact a more workable certainty—a negotiated understanding, sometimes even more complex than the former understanding, but eventually more meaningful and actionable (Luscher & Lewis, 2008).

In her work on communicative patterns of paradox, Putnam (1986) posited a linear, upward flow from mixed messages sent at the individual level toward systemic contradictions entrenched within a firm. In essence, tensions bubble up. Mixed messages often become stable patterns, fostering recursive cycles within groups as they become undiscussable and emotionladen elements of daily life (Argyris, 1993). Eventually such communicative patterns become independent of actors, embedded within the system.

For instance, the organizing paradox of needing both stability and change is reflected in conflicting mandates for managers to increase productivity and build their teams. In this case, performing paradoxes may mirror systemic contradictions as managers communicate mixed messages of needing to resolve team conflicts but also use team time efficiently. Likewise, systemic contradictions may spur recursive cycles. For example, conflicting organizational demands for top-down and bottom-up management may challenge managers to engage and disengage in their teams' efforts (Luscher & Lewis, 2008).

Luscher and Lewis (2008) explained that interwoven communication patterns, in turn, imply the potential for coping strategies to reinforce each other. Paradoxes of performing, for example, are related to actors' self-understanding. Splitting may enable reframing by reducing cognitive conflict between seemingly competing roles, expectations, and demands. Likewise, emotional tensions that pervade paradoxes of belonging may benefit from more social confrontation through collective reflection and modeling.

In turn, according to the authors, viewing paradox as a natural feature of intricate and dynamic systems suggests that paradoxes of organizing benefit from acceptance. Yet ongoing paradox management may require all of the above, as coping with one paradox may enable coping with related paradoxes. Splitting exposes alternative perspectives that may aid confrontation, while acceptance reduces defensiveness to facilitate splitting, and social confrontation may fuel exploration of undiscussable issues and foster more collaborative and productive sensemaking.

2.2 Employee Engagement Leading Towards Creativeness

The interrelationship between employee engagement and sensemaking can also lead towards employee creativeness.

2.2.1 Creativity in Organizations

Early research on creativity centered, to a large extent, on discovering and describing the nature of creative people (Barron, 1955; MacKinnon, 1965). While noteworthy in its own right, its nearly exclusive focus on the individual level of analysis eclipsed more macro explanations of creativity (Slappendel, 1996). Amabile, working with her colleagues (Amabile, 1983, 1996; Amabile, Goldfarb, & Brockfield, 1990), enlarged the scope of creativity research from its origins at the individual level to the group or social-psychological level and, eventually, to the organizational level (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996). In general, scholars in the field have followed this approach, and multilevel models of creativity in organizations are now emerging.

Later studies on creativity concluded that it was dynamic, defining creativity as the process of engagement in creative acts, regardless of whether the resultant outcomes are novel, useful, or creative (Amabile, 1988, 1996; Ford, 1996).

By defining creativity as a process (Mohr, 1982) and Amabile (1988) have modeled creativity as an individual-level cognitive process consisting of multiple stages. To Torrance (1988), individual creativity is a process of sensing problems, making guesses, formulating hypotheses, communicating ideas to others, and contradicting conformity or “what is expected.”

At the individual level, creativity can be defined as the engagement of an individual in a creative act (Torrance, 1988; Ford, 1996). Creative engagement is a process in which an individual behaviorally, cognitively, and emotionally attempts to produce creative outcomes (Kahn, 1990). For example, engineers working on a project may attempt to design an apparatus that is creative; they may collect data, consult past solutions, contemplate alternatives, propose inventive ideas, and become emotionally invested in their work.

This process orientation focuses on how individuals attempt to orient themselves to, and take creative action in, situations or events that are complex, ambiguous, and ill defined. In other words, this is an issue of how individuals engage in sensemaking in organizations (Greenberg, 1995; Weick, 1995; Volkema, Farquhar, & Bergmann, 1996).

2.2.2 Employee Creativity via Sensemaking

A sensemaking approach to creativity affords a fresh perspective. Traditionally, creativity research has depicted the key levels of analysis as being individual, group, and organizational, with creativity at higher levels typically being an aggregation of creative output at lower levels (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993; Glynn, 1996).

A sensemaking perspective enriches this perspective by pointing to cross-level, systemic, and embedded effects that may arise from idiosyncratic and/or communal interpretations of what it means to be creative. This implies that conflict, political influence, and negotiated order may operate at more macro-organizational levels

(Walsh & Fahey, 1986; Weick, 1995) and over time in organizations to influence creative processes.

Creativity is a choice made by an individual to engage in producing novel ideas; the level of creative engagement can vary from person to person and from situation to situation. An individual may choose minimal engagement, proposing simple solutions that may not be novel or useful—a behavior Ford (1996) refers to as “habitual action.” Alternatively, an individual may choose to engage in a full manner, using all of his or her abilities in an effort to produce creative outcomes. To Kahn (1990), such processes of engagement (and disengagement) vary over time, ebbing and flowing from moment to moment and from day to day.

The goal of theory building in the interpretive or sensemaking perspective is to describe organizational life. The focus is less on understanding how to manipulate a system (so as to increase the level of creativity) than it is on understanding the processes through which individuals and organizations develop systems of meaning about creative action. With its focus on the development of meanings and how they motivate engagement and action, a sensemaking perspective is well suited to the focus on creativity as a process.

Although functionalist perspectives dominate organizational research (Gioia & Pitre, 1990) a sensemaking perspective has made significant headway (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). A sensemaking approach has been invoked to explain a diversity of topics, including issue and agenda formation (Dutton & Jackson, 1987; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991), strategy formation in top management teams (Porac, Thomas, & Baden-Fuller, 1989), change management (Poole, Gioia, & Gray, 1989; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), and technology diffusion (Barley, 1986). Researchers have studied the general innovation process using a sensemaking framework (Ring & Rands, 1989; Dougherty, 1992; Hill & Levenhagen, 1995), but we know of only limited work that applies an interpretive framework specifically to the study of creativity (Ford & Gioia, 1995; Ford, 1996).

Based on a sensemaking perspective approach several issues become important. First, although researchers recognize that individuals are the center of organizational life, those individuals are accorded a different role: they create meanings about their social setting through interactions with others (Weick, 1979). But individuals also have agency and take actions that shape their environments (Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Giddens, 1994) thus, the interpretation process is inherently dynamic.

2.2.3 Employee Engagement, Sensemaking and Creativity

From this individual level of inquiry, creativity researchers have extended their perspective to include contextual variables. They have found that settings that provide opportunities, absence of constraints (Amabile & Gyskiewicz, 1987; Amabile, 1988; Oldham & Cummings, 1996) and rewards (Mumford & Gustafson, 1988) foster creativity.

A number of multilevel studies have revealed that leader style, cohesiveness, group tenure, and degree of cooperation are antecedents to creativity (King & Anderson, 1990) and research team effectiveness (Payne, 1990). Further, Andrews (1979) has found that the composition of groups is a determinant of recognition and effectiveness, as well as of publications, for research and development teams.

Creativity also can be defined as a group-level process. The complex, creative projects taken on by large organizations require the concerted engagement of many individuals, rather than just one or a few.

Individuals and groups participate in creative processes in an iterative fashion. Individuals develop ideas, present them to the group, learn from the group, work out issues in solitude, and then return to the group to further modify and enhance their ideas. The iterative, interactive nature of group creativity requires that individuals first choose to engage in individual-level creativity (Klein, Dansereau, & Hall, 1994).

In these settings, communication and coordination are handled directly between communities of individuals assigned to project teams. Situations characterized by high levels of ambiguity and low levels of inclusiveness provide individuals little in the way of guidance concerning what is correct behavior.

According to House, Rousseau, and Thomas-Hunt (1995), such psychologically weak situations “stimulate groups to engage in collective sense making and construct their own version of reality”. Different communities come to a project team with different professional frames; in turn, these influence team members’ interpretations of events that occur during the process of project work. In the face of situational ambiguity, individuals within different communities will consult one another to develop an interpretation of events in lieu of crossing communal boundaries.

For example, Amabile (1988) assumes that “major corporations select individuals who exhibit relatively high levels of these personal qualities, [and that] the variance above this baseline may well be accounted for primarily by factors in the work environment” Amabile (1996) later affirms this view in her statement that “whatever an individual’s talents . . . the conditions under which he or she works . . . can significantly increase or decrease the level of creativity produced”.

Support for this notion can be found in Oldham and Cumming’s (1996) study. These authors hypothesized a person-by-situation interaction effect on creativity and found statistical support for an ordinal relationship. That is, individuals whose dispositions make them more likely to be affected by a favorable work environment are more creative, but the creativity of all individuals is raised by a supportive environment. Thus, one assumption in creativity research, made explicitly or implicitly, is the homogeneity of higher-level (or situational) effects on individuals.

The degree of inclusion of individuals in a hierarchy of levels is an important construct in cross-level research (Rousseau, 1985; House et al., 1995). Total inclusion implies that only the group in which an individual has formal membership is influential (e.g., a functional department or an assigned project team). Partial inclusion means that an individual occupies multiple organizational roles and is

influenced by membership in all of them; situational attributes can cue or make salient membership in a particular group to the exclusion of other groups (Ashforth & Mael, 1996). As Fine (1996) observes, “The assumption of a dominant [occupational] identity overly limits people’s choices in constructing their work relations”.

Thus, it is important we consider in detail how sensemaking in the case of an organizational change in the dynamic manner described above can be achieved as this will help deal with the paradox and ambiguity described earlier one. According to the literature sensemaking can be achieved via communication and participation leading towards a successful organizational change because this way managers can work through paradox and enact a more workable certainty. This will be the theme of the literature to follow.

2.3 Importance of Communication Methods in Achieving Sensemaking Leading Towards a Successful Change

The matter of communication is of prime significance in the organizational change literature because communication influences several fundamental change factors. This multidimensional role of communication is discussed and analysed.

2.3.1 Communication Process Aid to Change Factors

Lundberg (1990) examined the role of communication in different cases of organizational change, suggesting that organizational changes were facilitated through communication processes. He explained that because organizations operated in different ways, and organizational changes differed between them, the role of communication, its process and focus differed in each particular case.

The author went on to classify organizations in four different types (rational, human resource, political, cultural) based on the organization’s perspective on different organizational phenomena. He then classified organization change in to three types (internal adjustments, environmental alignment, future anticipation) based on the fundamental tasks that organizations performed (Lundberg, 1990).

Using these classifications Lundberg built a framework identifying the focuses of organizational communication that emerged with respect to each combination of frame and task. By mapping the communication focuses of organization change, the author argued that change agents could identify those targets of organizational communication that were most relevant to a particular perspective and type of change, and thus help ensure that organizational change projects succeed.

Klein provided further evidence on the way the communication process could help employees in the case of organizational change. He suggested that the communication strategy in the case of organizational change was important because it could deal with the difficulties arising with changes. Based on his experiences of a system-wide organizational change in several manufacturing plants of the company in which he worked as corporate manager, he described how significant

organizational changes began slowly, were implemented incrementally and were subject to change as information was being gathered (Klein, 1996).

According to Klein, because many organizational participants were vaguely aware about the changes, the resulting rumours, anxiety and resistance could adversely affect the success of the change. If communications were poor and employees did not really know and understand the reasons for the new system they would not approve it. Moreover, if they felt they had no influence over how to do their job and at what pace, again they would reject the change. Only if they comprehended the necessity for change and how it affected them, would the change be implemented successfully.

Klein then identified organizational communication principles that help ensure management satisfy the needs of the employees mentioned above and explained and described the different communication needs of the employees and the way management could ensure they were met satisfactorily. He then concluded that strategic thinking about how and what to communicate to employees dealt with change difficulties and could rectify problems via (1) feedback and adjustments (2) developing communication strategies that encourage disclosure of problems and (3) discussion of solutions through intensive face to face communications between management and employees (Klein, 1996).

2.3.2 Difficulties with the Application of the Communication Process

Gill's UK empirical work investigated how information could be misinterpreted by the employees within the organization, despite the good intentions of the communicator to ensure clear and explicit information was being conveyed. The barriers of understanding were found to be the recent company history, trust factors and the communication methods (Gill, 1996).

The organization and Gill embarked on a communication exercise, prior to the implementation of a new employee scheme, to assist its implementation and create a sense of identity with the new element by providing employees with information and looking to them to provide input into how the new scheme would work. Their aim was to ensure employee involvement, commitment, satisfaction and as a result increased productivity, but it did not have any intention for involvement to go beyond consultation to co-determination. Participation was aimed to be kept to day-to-day operational issues and would involve no significant transfer of decision-making power from the management to employees.

The results showed that employees did not understand the objectives of the new scheme and believed that their opinions were not taken into account. Gill concluded that the communication exercise was only partly effective and successful. Although management provided information, employees interpreted it according to their experience and perception of recent company history, which for many had created suspicion and mistrust. The management methods of communication and the failure

of senior management to utilise a feedback system, effectively, did not help eliminate those feelings (Gill, 1996).

The process of communication was ineffective because the spirit and intent of it had not been fully acknowledged by the receivers. This was due to the fact that cooperation was based on sharing of elements of the language (Watson, 1994, as cited in Gill, 1996). In this case only some sharing of language occurred, but lessons had been learned about the communication process in general, the upward solving of problems and the need for feedback following a period of top down change. The importance of new language was established (Gill, 1996).

2.3.3 Effects of Working Relations on the Communication Process

Tierney's empirical study analysed the impact of leadership and teams on the employee's psychological climate for change. Tierney wanted to test how and if supervisors and teams shaped the employee's climate perceptions because these perceptions played an integral role in the change process. Both types of work relationships employees shared might serve as potential mechanisms for transforming employees towards change (Tierney, 1999).

The results showed that the development of strong relationships between supervisors and employees and among employees and their team members was associated with employees perceiving that they worked in a context, characterised by risk-taking and departure from the status quo, open communication, trust, operational freedom and employee development, five of the necessary conditions for the emergence of individual and organizational change.

Quality relationships in the work setting might actually provide employees with work conditions conducive to change. Teams that perceived the climate as change-conducive, were more likely to have individual members who shared the same view. Employees had the strongest climate perceptions when they had the opportunity to experience a favourable relationship with a supervisor who viewed the organization as having a change-conducive climate (Tierney, 1999).

For this reason Tierney pointed out that organizations should support supervisors and teams in their attempts to develop high quality interactions so that they enhanced the potential for positive change. In addition, management should provide team members with conditions likely to cultivate good impressions of the work environment and thus result in greater positive discourse regarding change-centred factors. The study revealed that management should also be sensitive because any messages they conveyed regarding their views of the work context for change might have a substantial impact on employee's views. Management should thus ensure they did not expose employees to negative information.

2.3.4 Relationship Between Justice and Communication

Cobb, Folger and Wooten examined organizational change by focusing on the contributions justice might make to planned change and to the organizations that were constructed from those change efforts. The authors claimed that because organization change involved changes in policies, procedures and resource allocations, matters of fairness were inherent in change programmes. Justice research had shown that organizations and leaders perceived as fair command loyalty, commitment and trust and were better able to adjust to the kind of adversities often found in change efforts, even layoffs (Cobb, Folger, & Wooten, 1995).

Fundamental to change was a redistribution of resources as the organization shifted its missions, priorities and the means to achieve its goals. Thus the authors explained that such resource distributions would fundamentally affect perceptions of how fair the change effort was and as a consequence the outcomes that resulted from these perceptions such as organizational commitment, trust and the willingness to accept change.

The role of management became very important during an organizational change because fair treatment communicated higher standing in the organization, even when employees had to face disappointing results which appeared in the organizational change case. Explanations for actions that resulted in disappointing outcomes for the employees became important because they could reduce the moral outrage and retribution.

The authors also identified that management should communicate the need for change and reasoning behind this strategy, explain the basic normative principles of the change programme after integrating these with the core values of the employees. Also, articulate the experience of other organizations that had to change and succeeded, then, finally acknowledge the hardships of those affected by the change. The idea that while mistakes would be made, change efforts and emerging organizations were fundamentally fair and committed to the welfare of the employees had to be evoked (Cobb et al., 1995).

2.3.5 Stress Minimisation via Proper Communication

McHugh studied a change and found that ignoring the needs of employees and looking at the needs of the organization alone was a serious mistake. If employees were neglected in the planning and implementation of an organizational change, it was likely that the entire process would become stressful for employees, the adverse effects of which would be a cost to the organization. Management should thus include the matter of stress on the change management agenda (McHugh, 1997).

The study identified that a careful, well-planned approach to change management was required to ensure stressed staff were optimally placed to cope with additional pressures which inevitably accompanied a major change. As a result,

McHugh claimed that management should provide training programmes aiming to help employees control their own stress levels, identify causal factors and acquire the skills to cope efficiently.

McHugh argued that management should also ensure that those effecting and those affected by the change were engaged in adequate communication through dialogue in order to clarify pertinent issues, exchange views and alleviate any areas of uncertainty. The study also showed that organizational change was often imposed without dialogue taking place, consequently many employees were unsure of exactly how they would be affected and felt powerless to take any action to prevent the change from taking place.

The provision of information through dialogue was necessary but not sufficient. It was equally important, McHugh noted, to engage in adequate and realistic time planning for the process and to focus on the skills required by those who were at the core of the change process. These matters, according to the author, should also be addressed via the dialogue process.

The author added that in order to create an organization in which employees expressed their opinion, the communication structure should allow their suggestions to be heard, ensure they saw their suggestion's results and thus make them feel they influenced the decision-making. This would foster a climate of ownership over decisions and pride if their suggestions were accepted. The author also claimed that management should ensure employees were sensitised to the need for change and were provided with further training aiming to help them cope with change. This way change would be welcomed rather than viewed with fear and repudiation (McHugh, 1997).

2.3.6 Communication's Role in Employee Engagement

Holman considered matters of communication and organizational culture together, in order to consider the issue of employee involvement. The author suggested that currently there was ample evidence that when high involvement and a system-wide approach to change were used, the potential for great results was high. Several characteristics for a successful approach to change were then mentioned by the author (Holman, 2000).

The first such characteristic was that when people saw the possibility of contributing to something larger than themselves the emphasis shifted from focusing on why something could not be done to how we could make it happen. People felt alive and excited with possibility, and the belief was that people in the system knew best.

Another characteristic for a successful approach to change was that members collectively created a whole system of views and when this occurred members knew better how to participate and thus make intelligent, informed contributions to substantive decisions. The system was kept whole through a commitment to sharing information. When people were informed, they made more informed decisions about their own activities.

Based on these characteristics, Holman advised management to (1) be clear about their purpose of undertaking change, mobilise meaningful involvement and sustain the work, (2) know where the support was coming from and plan accordingly because different strategies depended on whether support was from the top middle or grassroots, (3) mean what they say and be prepared to be tested or do not start at all because people had the ability to read underlying intention, and if the motivation for high involvement change was not real they would know and behave accordingly, (4) determine their approach to change based not on the current culture but on the belief that they could move from where they were to the culture they wanted by focusing on how best to bring people into a future they desired, (5) communicate with everyone early and often, explaining that whilst it might start as one way communication about a decision to undertake change, when it would become an ongoing conversation among everyone involved, it would carry the momentum for success and finally (6) get the support they needed for success because high involvement change could look messy, and as a result, involving someone who saw high involvement change before could save much anxiety when they were not sure what was happening made sense (Holman, 2000).

2.3.7 Applying Open Book Management via Communication

Maurer summarised the significance of justice, training and participation in the principles of open book management, claiming that the most important thing was to build support for these ideas and get an organization to recognise why a change was important. When a critical mass of people saw the importance of taking some action they would all be eager for the action to begin (Maurer, 2001).

The principles of open book management were an effective way to help get everyone to a shared recognition of why a change was important because this type of management literally opened the books. Often, the data that drove a business (industry trends, quality reports) were accessible to only a few in the organization. Consequently, when leaders announced a change, no one else saw why it was necessary.

Open book management provided access to critical business information, ensured that via training people could interpret the data, gave people enough time for all to make sense of the information and gave people a stake in the outcome by linking pay and bonuses to financial and other critical outcomes. In addition open book management gave employees the authority to act on information by trusting them with the information and with the power to do something differently, and finally made sure people received the data in a way that they could believe because when people did not trust the source of the data they did not trust the data itself (Maurer, 2001).

2.3.8 Communication and Employee Empowerment

A major organizational change was considered a major factor that could lead to employees feeling powerless because existing organizational norms and patterns of action were likely to change. The organization's goals and rules might no longer be clearly defined, responsibilities and power might shift dramatically, uncertainty might prevail and the transition produce a period of disorientation, seriously challenging employees sense of control and competence as they dealt with the uncertainty of change and accepted new responsibilities, skills and guidelines for action and behaviour. Management should therefore ensure the provision of empowerment practices to its employees, in order to ensure the organizational change did not fail (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

According to Conger and Kanungo (1988) this could be achieved via the provision of training procedures to ensure that the requisite technical, linguistic and social influence skills were acquired, and that the company culture emphasised self-determination, collaboration, high performance standards and meritocracy. Organizations providing multiple sources of loosely committed resources at decentralised levels, and structuring open communication systems were more likely to be empowering.

Management should also express confidence in subordinates, foster opportunities for employees to participate in decision making and provide autonomy by setting inspirational and meaningful goals to ensure employees felt empowered. A reward system emphasising innovative performance and high incentive values also fostered a sense of self efficacy.

In order to be effective the empowerment practices outlined above had to directly provide information to employees about their personal efficacy. Management should therefore structure the organizational change programmes in a way that initial objectives were sufficiently attainable so that employees could execute them successfully.

Moreover, the authors claimed that because employees felt empowered when they observed similar colleagues performing their jobs successfully, supervisors should ensure their behaviour set an example for employees to believe in themselves. Words of encouragement and verbal feedback could help employees mobilise greater sustained effort. The authors concluded that it was the responsibility of management to ensure stress, fear or anxiety did not lower the self-efficacy expectations by clearly defining employee roles, reduce information overload and offer them technical assistance to accomplish their tasks (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

2.3.9 Communication via Training to Achieve Employee Participation

Rusaw's (2000) empirical research considered training as a form of organizational change, since by giving employees skills and insights for identifying and defining

organizational problems, individuals would have greater capacity to change unproductive and unsatisfying organizational structures and processes. The author suggested training was a catalytic process that depended largely on the abilities of informed and skilled members to develop their own tools for change.

The case study considered a University Dean who decided to train all employees and managers in one department in skills that would address the issues identified by an employee- initiated study and related to trust, openness of communication and equity of treatment among different classes of employees (Rusaw, 2000).

Training however, according to Rusaw, might not guarantee that employees would make or could make the changes when they returned to their workplaces. This was because the training programme might be unable to transfer skills to the workplace, the employees had the skills but not the power to make changes, managers might fail to give the resources to employees to make changes because they could see the change as a risk, and finally because managers could look at highly skilled employees as a threat.

Rusaw added that Critical Theory suggested that resistance to change by managers could stem from a struggle between organizational domination and attempts to liberate employees. Training promoted autonomy, access to information, people who could meet and freely discuss with others their opinions, who could think critically, and did not allow ideologies to define personal responses. It finally aimed to liberate employees from oppressive organizational ideologies.

The case study revealed that management felt that training threatened its assumed authority and control and the maintenance of organizational hierarchy. Thus management tried to control the format of discussion in a training programme, imposed definitions of needs, approved training content and selected who attended training events. The end result was that the matters training aimed to address remained unresolved.

Consequently, Rusaw claimed that in order to succeed, management had to be able to change ideological assumptions and promote and write a new organizational ideology. They had to realise that their resistance affected not only present organizational productivity but also the capacity to meet future challenges and opportunities. Management should not view training as a threat to existing power but as a way to encourage maturity, creativity and satisfaction among them and their employees. They should value freedom and promote it in practice (Rusaw, 2000).

2.3.10 Employee Reactions to Changes in the Management Provision of Information

According to Purdy employees had more input at work and could affect matters to the benefit of the organization when organizations operated in a democratic way in relation to the provision of accounting data to their employees (Purdy, 2003). In addition accounting data, and more specifically financial management accounting data, was important in current work contexts because it was used for both decision

making and evaluation of the performance of the decision-maker. Thus the appreciation and use of these data had significance for the actions of an individual at work. The ability to appreciate important data enabled an individual to utilise that data in their job (Purdy, 1996).

Two studies, Jackson-Cox, McQueeney, and Thirkell (1987) and Centre for Decision-Making Studies (1979), suggested that the type and form of information was determined by senior management. Evidence suggested that senior management were concerned to put across particular messages rather than provide data for use to affect engagement and company decisions.

The studies indicated that where information and financial information had been provided it did not seem to be appropriate for the requirements of the employees even in their existing conditions. The employees were unable to conceptualise situations, and where they did, were not in a position to requisition the information. They lacked the power to obtain information and even where it was obtained did not have the influence or power to utilise it.

According to the two studies, on other occasions where financial information had been provided gratuitously, the information did not seem to relate to the context of the employees. Irrespective of whether either the employees understood it or it had meaning for them, the employees were not in a position to use it. It appeared that during the period of the two studies the management did not expect employees to use this financial information, except to accept it.

2.4 Employee Participation to Achieve Sensemaking Leading Towards a Successful Change

2.4.1 Employee Participation via Empowerment

There is consensus among academics that to introduce change successfully, managers often need to gain the support of employees. To do so, they are advised to use practices that empower employees (Delaney & Sockell, 1990; Cobb et al., 1995; Tesluk, Vance, & Mathieu, 1999; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003).

Empowerment was defined as the process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among employees through identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both organizational practice and informal techniques of providing efficacy information (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

Initially, empowerment was introduced as an individual-level construct (e.g., Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Spreitzer, 1995, 1996) and grounded in work on employee involvement (Lewin, 1947). Early work on individual empowerment was closely linked to motivational frameworks such as the job characteristics model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), and Bandura's work on self-efficacy (1977, 1977, 1982). As a result of these two foundational literatures, empowerment came to be conceptualized in two distinct ways: structural and psychological (Menon, 2001; Leach, Wall, & Jackson, 2003; Spreitzer, 1995, 2008).

2.4.1.1 Structural and Psychological Empowerment

Structural empowerment builds upon work centered on job design and job characteristics (Campion, Medsker, & Higgs, 1993; Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980) and, at its core, focuses on the transition of authority and responsibility from upper management to employees. Accordingly, structural empowerment is concerned with the actual transference of decision making and how this can best be done such that benefits from shifting authority and responsibility for certain tasks to employees are realized.

In comparison, psychological empowerment, which has ties to Bandura's (1977, 1982) work on self-efficacy, is less concerned about the actual transition of authority and responsibility, but instead focuses on employee's perceptions or cognitive states regarding empowerment. Here, the key is that individuals need to believe that they can perform their work on their own and as such, psychological empowerment can be defined in terms of motivational processes (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

2.4.1.2 Team Psychological Environment

With teams becoming more and more prevalent in organizations, it is hardly surprising that the empowerment construct has also been extended to, and examined, at the team level of analysis. Here, researchers argue that aggregation is appropriate given that empowerment appears to be both isomorphic and homologous (Kirkman & Rosen, 1997; Klein & Kozlowski, 2000). In other words, empowerment retains its same basic meaning across individual and group levels of analysis (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000), and that similar relationships hold across levels of analysis (Chen, Bliese, & Mathieu, 2005). The recent work by Seibert, Wang and Courtright (2011) was the first to empirically show that these assertions hold for empowerment.

The most proximal antecedent to team psychological empowerment is structural empowerment. At its core, structural empowerment considers the effects resulting from managers handing over a number of activities such as scheduling, monitoring work, coordinating training, and conducting performance appraisals to the team (Alper, Tjosvold, & Law, 2000; Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, & Drasgow, 2000; Cook & Goff, 2002; Mills & Ungson, 2003). Lawler (1986, 1992) was one of the first to suggest that in order for employee involvement to be effective, organizational design elements needed to be transitioned to lower levels.

2.4.1.3 Relationship Between Structural and Psychological Empowerment

The argument for a relationship between structural and psychological empowerment is that the psychological empowerment state is likely to follow from organizational design features that facilitate this transference. This is in line with prior work by Menon (2001) who recommended that both perspectives of empowerment (i.e., psychological and structural) be integrated by considering structural empowerment as an antecedent to psychological empowerment.

The underlying thought being that when individuals or teams are given, through the structure of their work or task, increased participation in decision making and

overall responsibility, psychological empowerment should be enhanced (Susman, 1976; Hackman, 1987; Guzzo, Yost, Campbell, & Shea, 1993; Manz & Sims, 1993). While not numerous, there have been examinations of the relationship between structural and psychological empowerment. For example, Mathieu, Gilson & Ruddy (2006) obtained a significant correlation between empowering organizational structural features and team members' shared perceptions of authority and responsibility.

2.4.1.4 Outcomes of Team Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment increases team performance because possessing a sense of ownership results in team members having greater levels of initiative (Spreitzer, Noble, Mishra, & Cooke, 1999). Spreitzer et al. (1999) provided evidence of a significant, positive relationship between psychological empowerment and team performance.

Additionally, empowered teams that possess the knowledge required for a given task should make better decisions hence have better performance (Latham, Winters, & Locke, 1994). Mathieu, Gilson, and Ruddy (2006) demonstrate a positive relationship between team psychological empowerment and two measures of performance in their study of empowered service technician teams. Finally, Kirkman and colleagues' (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Kirkman, Rosen, Tesluk, & Gibson, 2004) research suggests that psychological empowerment has a positive impact on team performance in both face-to-face and virtual contexts.

Essentially, empowered team members are better able to align their capabilities, interests, and availability with task demands thus reaping performance benefits through better leveraging of their human capital. Second, being empowered generates higher levels of employee motivation, which in turn, has long been seen as an essential ingredient for team success (Hackman & Morris, 1975).

2.4.2 Participation's Ideological Background

Considering employee participation from a theoretical point of view, Black and Margulies argued that the underlying basis which guided the implementation of participative methods had significant impacts on the nature and effectiveness of participation. They examined two basic ideological approaches to participation (organizational development and industrial democracy) and analysed potential learning from each in order to understand participation better and provide guidelines for more successful implementation (Black & Margulies, 1989).

In the case of Organizational Development, participation was planned, system-wide and designed to make the organization better able to adapt to changes and future demands, whereas in the case of Industrial Democracy participation was workplace oriented and the overall goal referred to the employee's right to have an influence on decisions that affected their life. The result was that the differences in values concerning participation had a significant impact on the factors that guided

the implementation of participative approaches. However, the authors claimed that in order to improve the chances of success, the two approaches should be combined.

Black and Margulies stressed that in both approaches participation was difficult to implement successfully and it took commitment to make it work. Managers needed to realise that values and the communication of these guided the utilisation and implementation of participation. When employees believed that the organization did not value participation they either were not motivated to participate or when they participated the quality of decisions taken was poor. Likewise if they wanted to participate but perceived that participation would not be instrumental in achieving valued outcomes, participation was not likely to be successful. In addition, managers and employees needed to realise that participation took time and it was not a means to fix problems quickly.

Although managers might perceive participation as a threat to their authority and employees perceive as submitting to managerial pressures to increase productivity or performance, its implementation would be more successful when both managers and employees viewed participation as a right of all and as a means to benefit all members of the organization. The authors added that management should incorporate a more flexible and comprehensive view of participation for change to be successful (Black & Margulies, 1989).

2.4.3 Development of Participation Programmes

Schochau and Delaney investigated the effect of participation, profit sharing and the participation programme structure on managerial assessments of employee support for policy changes, to consider how employee participation efforts could lead to employee support for organizational changes. Their analysis used data collected as part of a study of human resource policies and organizational outcomes in business units of US-based firms. Relationships between managerial assessments and participation, profit sharing and programme structure were studied (Schwochau & Delaney, 1997).

The work indicated formal participation programmes were positively related with assessments of employees support for policy changes and with the managers' willingness to make changes in organizational policies. Profit sharing was positively related to the extent to which employees showed support for policy changes, however there was no evidence to suggest that profit sharing was associated with benefits over and above those achieved through participation alone.

Schochau and Delaney identified several aspects of the programme structure were associated with perceptions of support for policy changes. First, the amount of authority given to participants to implement their recommendations was consistently related to greater perceived support for changes in policies. Second, the extent of employee engagement in participation efforts enhanced employee support for change as judged by management. As a result, the importance of meaningful voice in organizations was interrelated with participation.

When the two were combined, when more employees were given input to a larger number of issues and were also given more authority to implement their recommendations, the assessment of employees support for policy changes was enhanced. The authors also identified that participation efforts succeeded because they tapped into an unused reservoir of unused talent, skill and knowledge that existed amongst employees. However, they pointed out that the beneficial results depended on developing participation programmes that would provide employees with a meaningful voice (Schwochau & Delaney, 1997).

2.4.4 Employee Involvement Programmes Contribution Towards Participation

Delaney and Sockell considered employee involvement programmes and their contributions towards change taking into account unionisation. The authors studied the relationship, if any, between employee involvement, unionisation, and the support for change in businesses. They used data collected as part of a study of human resource policies and organizational outcomes in business units of US firms (Delaney & Sockell, 1990).

For firms to accommodate change it was believed management had to emphasise flexibility in the control and deployment of resources including employees. It was also widely perceived that unions resisted this effort of management and that nonunion firms were better able to innovate or manage resources flexibly. On the other hand, employee involvement plans were seen as contributing to the flexible management of resources because they reduced shirking behaviour on the job, increased employee willingness to change the terms of their work and helped them adapt to change.

The survey results showed that unionisation together with employee involvement programmes were positively related to perceived support for change. If unions did not restrict the management's ability to make changes, employee involvement might be particularly effective in unionised settings. The authors explained that participation plans in unionised work places might have a greater effect on workplace support for change than similar in nonunion settings, because workers trusted their union more than they trusted management. On the other hand, if unions restricted flexibility, participation might be more effective in nonunion settings.

The authors claimed that participation programmes might be more effective in unionised firms because they posed a threat to unions. An involvement plan could serve as an alternative representation scheme, unions might become actively involved in it, and this involvement in plans could cause workers support for change to increase. The structure of the employee involvement programmes was also found to affect perceived support for change. This was significant, according to the authors, because in all cases, perceived support for change was significantly higher when an employee involvement programme existed. Management of organizations should therefore pay particular attention to the structure of these programmes (Delaney & Sockell, 1990).

2.4.5 Employee Commitment Leading on to Participation

Neubert and Cady (2001) considered employee commitment to change programmes and investigated its association with important organizational outcomes and a set of potential antecedents.

The authors explained that in order to respond to the frenetic pace of environmental change, organizations introduced programmes requiring the engagement of Human Resource Professionals as change agents. Their success in positively affecting change depended on gaining and retaining the commitment of employees to the programme. High level of commitment motivated employees to put forth the effort, initiative and cooperative behaviours that were required to successfully implement change. Also committed employees demonstrated enthusiasm, got engaged, persisted in the face of difficulties and took personal responsibility for a programme's successful implementation.

The practical implications of the study's conclusions were very important for management, revealing that change agents should focus on obtaining programme commitment before the introduction of the programme. This way, employees would be more inclined to participate in the programme and perform at a high level. Several preconditions like organizational commitment, change efficacy and team-work orientations were found to affect programme commitment, thus programme commitment could be increased by attending to those factors.

Management could actively foster organizational commitment by developing a work environment with clear rules, motivating jobs and positive leader and co-worker relations. Management should also find ways to develop employee confidence in their own capability to contribute to an ever changing work environment, to emphasise their engagement in learning change-related skills and training prior to the implementation of the programme.

After the programme started, management could use the power of positive role models within the organization by recognising those employees who were examples of high levels of programme-related performance. The authors claimed that it was also important for management to ensure the organization recruited employees who indicated a positive disposition towards these programmes (Neubert & Cady, 2001).

2.4.6 Participation in a Rule-Bound Organization

Change in a rule-bound organization was examined by Clayton and Gregory who highlighted the difficulties of management achieving the necessary employee participation and communication in order for the change to succeed. The research was undertaken about a prison and the changes that had to be brought into several of its sectors. The main characteristic of this organization was that rules were everything and individuals could not influence the organization (Clayton & Gregory, 2000).

Clayton and Gregory conducted personal interviews during which it became clear that employees did not want to participate in this change as they believed that the means and ends were outside their sphere of influence. Moreover, some did not want a change because they could derive advantages from the existing system. Some other participants wanted change but were not prepared to contribute to the change, and others wanted to optimize their part of the system but did not want to consider how it would affect the other parts of the system. The process to move these people was difficult and time-consuming and needed to involve the establishment of some guidelines for participation.

People should be made to understand that it was important to speak up and listen to others, although it was not possible to force people to participate in a meaningful way. Changing attitudes and personal values and organization-wide commitment to change was necessary in order to endorse participation in the process.

The authors explained that this could be done via participant planning events, dialogues between viewpoints that conflicted and the creation of working situations in which employees at all levels felt empowered to participate in a meaningful way in a full range of organizational activities. They noted that rule-bound organization cases needed a different change approach which involved the recognition and valuing of change, even when this only amounted to opening up the channels communication (Clayton & Gregory, 2000).

2.4.7 Multiple Levels of Participative Climates and Employee Engagement

Tesluk, Vance and Mathieu examined how participation could influence the working climate and as a result ensure employee engagement. The authors examined the relationship between participative climates, as they existed at top and middle organization levels, and employee attitudes and behaviours (Tesluk et al., 1999).

Success in organizations required work systems that maximised the contributions of those individuals who were on the front line. As a result, the authors argued, these employees needed systems/mechanisms whereby they could work collaboratively to solve problems. It was also important to ensure employees were willing to contribute creatively and actively. Employee engagement, according to the authors, was designed to attain these objectives. The study therefore emphasised the complex interplay of managerial, structural and climate factors at several organizational levels as they influenced the success of employee engagement programmes.

Tesluk Vance and Mathieu considered their results could have several implications for organizations that try to implement programmes of employee engagement. It was important for organizations to ensure that managers at different levels were supportive and were communicating their support to those below them. Top management support would indicate to lower level managers that participation was the preferred method of decision making. Their support was also important to provide the resources and direction.

Support from middle level managers was also required for employee engagement practices to be implemented and translated into participative climates within small work units. Because middle managers often resisted employee participation, it was important that top level managers anticipated their concerns and designed a process that accommodated manager's roles and responsibilities to the changing roles and responsibilities of their employees.

The authors explained that ensuring that managers at all levels participated was also likely to promote greater understanding of the process necessary for taking steps at the work unit level to facilitate effective participation. They stressed that organizations should also consider how multiple climates operated and influenced employee attitudes and behaviours because, although the larger organizational climate might be supportive, smaller units might be less hospitable and therefore impede employee participation (Tesluk et al., 1999).

2.4.8 Participation's Role in Corporate Transformation

Miles noted that we are in the age of corporate transformation and management had to learn how to focus the organization in such a way that employees could align quickly. Management should find new ways to engage employees, so that they could lead the organization in new directions at all levels. Also, the increasing speed of changing, and rapidly shrinking population of employees with the right capabilities were forcing the need to engage and align all employees rapidly. The author introduced the idea of the employee supercharger for leading corporate transformations that had to be introduced right after the corporate transformation planning effort was completed (Miles, 2001).

According to Miles (2001) management should involve all employees in high-engagement cascades that created understanding, dialogue, feedback and accountability. These cascades empowered people to creatively align their subunits, teams and individual jobs with the major transformation initiatives of the whole enterprise. As a result, they could refocus and re-energise managers and employees by creating an intensive initial experience that lasted for a few days.

Executive and business leaders set the transformation template, and managers and employees at all levels went through a circle of understanding, dialogue, feedback and goal alignment that enabled people to use their creativity and job knowledge, take prudent risks and drive the transformation challenge. The author stressed that managers exercised authority about direction but authority about the means by which the ends were accomplished rested with the team itself (Miles, 2001).

This combination was important for the success of the change process because, as Lewis claimed, people embraced changes they controlled and they disliked being controlled, which explained why when management led a change they needed an engagement plan. Lewis also noted that people embraced change that was good for them and resisted change that was bad for them. As a result and to the extent

possible, project teams would design all changes to benefit those affected by the change (Lewis, 2001).

Miles added that the high-engagement cascade event also served as a Trojan Horse for developing leaders at all levels in the organization because it empowered employees to take the initiative at their level, and enabled them to confront reality and develop a vision and success model, communicate these in a simple and compelling manner, engage in structured dialogue and establish personal accountability for the new performance expectations (Miles, 2001).

2.4.9 Effects of Participation on Employees

A study conducted with male-blue-collar employees in a local authority's recreation department (Wall & Lisher, 1977), where employees' responses to an initial questionnaire showed a very strong desire for information about matters and decisions which were at a local level to their work, and a strong desire for information concerned with issues at medium and distant levels from their job task.

After this initial survey, Wall and Lisher and the local authority started an experiment which tried to implement the expressed preferences of employees and managers for a system of participation. The experiment included a series of meetings attended by employees and supervisors. The meeting topics were ones which concerned medium decisions and the information requested about these was provided to the employees. These meetings affected some of the distant decisions that were being made, whilst some earlier distant decisions were altered. The employees accepted these decisions more readily with the downward flow of information.

The study by Wall and Lisher (1977) combined participation with employee engagement and psychological growth and related growth to learning, knowledge and creativity. It also supported several notions and ideas that helped explain how participation could be used to promote organizational change.

First, since participation promoted democratic ideals and involvement, when the employees were engaged in any organizational change they accepted that change more willingly than if they had not been so engaged. A participative mode of working contributed to the positive ways in which employees felt about their work tasks, for example, more satisfaction at work.

Wall and Lisher also argued that the act of participating was frequently accompanied by some form of learning process and reported examples of managers providing information to employees who understood the information and consequently accepted the rationale of the managers' decisions. Wall and Lisher also cited examples of employees who felt that they had a lot of knowledge to contribute to the running of their work organization, where much more could be achieved if only the manager would listen and provide the information.

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3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter analyzed previous literature on employee engagement, highlighting the importance of communication and participation in achieving employee sensemaking leading towards a successful organizational change. This chapter will focus on the communication process that can be used by management when aiming to achieve employee engagement.

Despite the recognized role of employee engagement there has been little research on the way management can work to achieve employee engagement and contributions. The purpose of this study is to eliminate this lacuna.

From a theoretical perspective there has been a lot of interest in the construct of employee engagement and contributions towards organizational decisions and operations, mainly due to its positive effects on both the organization's employees and the organization in general (Putnam, 1986; Delaney & Sockell, 1990; Schwochau & Delaney, 1997; Tesluk, Vance, & Mathieu, 1999; Miles, 2001; Neubert & Cady, 2001; Ketokivi & Castaner, 2004; Maitlis, 2005; Luscher, Lewis, & Ingram, 2006; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008; Luscher & Lewis, 2008; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

3.2 Problem Statement: Research Objectives

Even though these theoretical views are helpful, outstanding issues remain. Although there is a great deal of literature about the importance of gaining employee engagement and the necessary sensemaking to implement change successfully, the existing theoretical views have not dealt adequately with the way managers who are actually responsible for the implementation of employee engagement think and how they act in order to achieve employee engagement and contributions via the provision of information to employees.

In order to address this gap, this study is organized around the following research question: What are the managers' perceptions of the characteristics of the information and the related assistance they need to provide employees with, to enable and encourage them to get engaged and to contribute? The setting is the radio and music department of an EU media organization.

The result reported here is a set of propositions which extend current theoretical thinking on the way employee engagement can help management achieve employee sensemaking leading towards a successful organizational change. The evidence suggests that the information provided by management to employees needs to relate to their area, be relevant (essential and specific to a particular operation/decision), adequate (structured to separate all its components and accurate), controllable and timely.

The findings also indicate that management needs to assist employees appreciate the information provided by expressing confidence in them, clearly defining their responsibilities, explaining the way information is produced by involving them with its production, providing them with technical training, ensuring all information is received by all employees, and promoting and encouraging feedback and adjustments. The empirical grounding of those ideas is the subject of this study.

3.3 Literature Review: Theoretical Background

Several academics have come up with many abstract notions relating to the provision of information to employees, aiming for employee influence in organizational affairs.

One research stream deals with the characteristics of the information provided by management to employees arguing that needs to be (1) related to the employees' area of operations, (2) relevant, essential and specific to a particular operation/decision, (3) adequate, structured to separate all its components and accurate, (4) controllable and not imposed without the employees influence, and (5) timely so that it can be of any use to employees (Wall & Lisher, 1977; Jackson-Cox, McQueeney, & Thirkell, 1987; Purdy, 1993; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003; Lewis, Schmisser, Stephens, & Weir, 2006; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

Another research stream emphasizes the management assistance that can be provided to employees in order to understand and appreciate the information provided, referring to regular expressions of confidence in employees, formal technical training, assistance provided to ensure employees can understand how the information has been prepared, management control over the amount of information provided, and finally methods of identifying and rectifying related employee problems (Bandura, 1986; Conger, 1986; Block, 1987; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Nord, Rosenblatt, & Rogers, 1993; Klein, 1996; Gill, 1996; McHugh, 1997; Clayton & Gregory, 2000; Rusaw, 2000; Ketokivi & Castaner, 2004; Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Maitlis, 2005; Luscher et al., 2006; Detert & Burris, 2007; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008; Luscher & Lewis, 2008).

So how do the provision of information and the related assistance lead to employee engagement? This question suggests that extant views need to be linked to employee engagement. This observation coupled with the limited research on employee engagement led to the inductive research described in this study.

3.4 Research Method

The study used a multiple case design that allowed a replication logic, where a series of cases (interviews) is treated as a series of experiments, each case serving to confirm or disconfirm the inferences drawn from the others (Yin, 2013). Table 3.1 describes the 7 managers of the 3 areas of the radio and music department studied. The study also employed an embedded design, that is multiple levels of analysis, focusing at three levels: (1) the management team (2) provision of information and (3) related assistance. Although an embedded design is complex, it permits induction of rich and reliable models (Yin, 2013).

3.4.1 Data Collection

To obtain multiple perspectives, 22 in-depth interviews were conducted over a period of 5 months with the departmental manager (DM) of the technical department and the DM, the middle managers (MMS) and the working unit leaders (WULS) of the three departmental areas (Talk Area First Radio, Music Area First Radio, Third Radio) of the radio and music department of an EU media organization.

There were three data sources: (1) initial interview with the manager of the technical department (2) semi-structured interviews with the seven managers of the radio and music department (3) secondary sources.

DM of the Technical Department: An entry interview, using a semi-structured format was conducted with the DM of the technical department who usually only gave some general information about a Personnel Development Program (PDP) which had recently been introduced, aiming amongst other things to achieve employee engagement in the decision making process by improving employee skills and knowledge.

Seven Managers of the R&M Department Interviews: After the initial interview with the manager of the technical department, semi-structured interviews with all

Table 3.1 Managers of the radio and music department

Area	No managers	No informants
Departmental manager	1	1
First radio station-talk area	2	2
First radio station-music area	2	2
Third radio station	2	2

managers of the radio and music department were conducted. Initial interviews involved questions about the operations and structure of the department, as well as the implementation of the PDP. The second and third set of interviews became more structured and questions during these interviews involved the provision of information and the related assistance management provided employees with to achieve their engagement. Thirteen matters were discussed in total (Appendix). The interviews were all taped.

Immediately after, the interview facts and impressions were cross-checked. Several rules were followed. The “24-h rule” required that detailed interview notes be completed within 1 day of the interview. A second rule was to include all data, regardless of their apparent importance at the time of the interview.

The combination of multiple informants, “courtroom questioning” that focused on factual accounts of what informants did or observed others doing (Huber & Power, 1985) helped to avoid informant speculation, a tandem interviewing addressed some previous criticisms of research relying on managers’ recollections (Schwenk, 1985).

Secondary Source and Other Data: Internal documents were examined as available, including the organization’s annual summary and the annual published radio and music departmental review.

3.4.1.1 Description of the Change Effort

The study was conducted in an EU medium-sized media organization that recently implemented a major change—the Personal Development Program. The program was introduced because due to the convergence of the European Union markets, this EU organization had to operate in a very competitive media environment.

The PDP was intended to reduce costs and increase both the quantity and the quality of the programs produced. It was one of several programs the organization had introduced aimed at improving personnel quality.

The program included the introduction of new technologies, accompanied by special personnel educational programs aiming to improve employee skills and knowledge related to the new technologies. It also provided specific organizational arrangements that management hoped would achieve employee engagement.

Gaining employee engagement via the implementation of the program was intended to ensure that the opinions of the employees were taken into account and that they influenced both the organizational decisions and work level operations. However, management did not want to make joint decisions with employees. They only aimed for employees to have an input in the decisions the managers made.

The Board of Directors (Board) decided the implementation of the PDP at the beginning of the year. During the first 3 months the Board organized several meetings with the management staff of all departments to inform them about the PDP and its aims. These were accompanied by special training programs, aiming to contribute towards the improvement of employee skills and knowledge. Part of the PDP program related to the introduction of new technologies, such as online facilities. The Board thus employed external Internet specialists to monitor, in

association with all departmental management staff, the implementation of the necessary online facilities in all the organizational departments.

During the same period the Board also held meetings with the employee trade union in order to explain the aims of the PDP, the way it was expected to operate and its effects on the employees. By doing so the Board aimed to achieve the union's agreement and ensure all employees were thoroughly informed about the PDP via their trade union. In addition to the information and explanations received by their union, employees could also communicate with the management staff of their department for any further clarifications or questions focusing on specific departmental matters.

During the second 3 months of the year all organizational staff went through some Internet training with the external specialists in order to ensure they understood and were able to utilize the new facilities at work. By the middle of the year all new facilities were in place and all staff was trained to use them. Table 3.2 summarizes the PDP relevant dates.

3.4.2 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed as follows. The qualitative responses of each member of the radio and music management team were first compared. There was some agreement among respondents around the critical issues of the provision of information and the related assistance necessary for employees to be enabled and encouraged to get engaged in the decision making process. The few, conflicting responses were preserved in the stories.

The search for propositions was assisted by selecting pairs of managers based on the 3 different areas they worked and listing similarities and differences between each pair. From these lists and comparisons, tentative propositions were induced. After the development of these tentative propositions, each case (interview) was revisited to improve the understanding of the underlying dynamics. After many iterations between data and propositions existing literature was used to sharpen the insights yielded by the inductive process.

Once preliminary analyses had been performed on the respective data sets, the analyses and induced propositions were combined using methods for building theory from case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989). What emerged were propositions linking information provision and related assistance with employee engagement.

Table 3.2 PDP relevant dates

Dates	Board actions
Start of the year	Board decided PDP implementation
First 3 months	Board informed management staff Staff special training programs Introduction of new online facilities Board informed employee trade union
Second 3 months	Staff internet training
Middle of the year	New working method commencement

3.5 Results

3.5.1 Managers' Perceptions of the Information Characteristics Necessary to Achieve Employee Engagement

3.5.1.1 Information Characteristics

From Table 3.3 we can see that the managers think that when the information provided to employees relates to their area of operation, is relevant to a particular operation/decision (essential and specific), adequate (structured to separate all its components and accurate), controllable and timely, management enables and encourages employees to get engaged in the decision making process.

Talk Area

The Talk Area Working Unit Leader (WUL) claimed that the information provided to employees had to relate to their area of operations for them to “become interested and able to understand and thus utilize it to get engaged and to contribute”. He added that “this way employees can influence matters and decisions of their area and consequently feel that they have the necessary job independence”.

According to the Talk Area Middle Manager (MM) employees had a limited amount of time available to appreciate the information provided by management because they were very busy working on many different jobs, and also spent a lot of time working out of office. Consequently “management needs to provide them with only the essential information”.

The Talk Area WUL noted that the information provided needed also to be structured to separate all its components so that management could ensure that employees were not overloaded with unnecessary information.

The two Talk Area managers considered that the information provided should not be imposed without the employees influence, because otherwise “employees feel that they lose their job independence and consequently do not want to use the information to get engaged and to contribute. Job independence is a particularly important matter because employees do not trust management to be completely independent”.

Finally, the Talk Area MM explained that employees aimed to produce programs/activities of high quality, and this could be achieved when the information used in the programs/activities was prompt and continuously updated in order to be accurate. Consequently the issue of information timeliness was major.

Third Radio Station

The Third Radio station case also indicates the linkage between several information characteristics and the achievement of employee engagement.

For example, the Third Radio Station WUL believed that the information provided had to relate to the employees' area of operations because via their engagement employees believed that they could assist management make decisions that could improve the quality of their area's operations and as a result benefit

Table 3.3 Information characteristics

Information characteristics	DM	MM talk area	WUL talk area	MM third radio station	WUL third radio station	MM music area	WUL music area
Relate to the employees' area of operations	"Employees have the knowledge and expertise to get engaged and contribute, and benefit themselves as a result".		"In order for employees to be able to influence matters and decisions of their area"				"When information relates to the operations of the music area, employees become creative at work."
Relevant, essential and specific to a particular operation				"Programs produced are designed for emigrants, thus info has to be relevant, specific and focused towards the production of programs which can satisfy their needs"		"Information is collected and transmitted online, thus management has to chose and transmit only the essential information"	"Has to be relevant to the operations of more advanced organizations of the same industry"
Adequate, structured to separate all its components and Accurate		"The main aim of our area is to produce programs/ activities which will make listeners feel they can trust the accuracy of			"So that employees can identify and request any further info when they consider it necessary"		

(continued)

Table 3.3 (continued)

Information characteristics	DM	MM talk area	WUL talk area	MM third radio station	WUL third radio station	MM music area	WUL music area
Controllable and not imposed without the employees Influence		MM talk area information they transmit” “When information is imposed upon employees they do not want to use it to contribute”	WUL talk area	MM third radio station “Employees are worried about management passing the responsibility and thus possible blame for decisions which were out of their control, on to them”	WUL third radio station	MM music area “So that employees can use it to invent, create, and consider different options”	WUL music area
Timely					“Producing programs for groups whose tastes/needs change. Even groups change due to demographic changes around the world”		“After the internet implementation employees have to contribute towards new and more sophisticated operations”

themselves via both job promotions and the provision of better working conditions. The two Third Radio Station managers also added that the information had to be relevant and specific towards a particular operation/decision in order for employees not to be overloaded with unnecessary information.

Music Area

Several different issues were also mentioned by the Music Area managers linking the information characteristics to the achievement of employee engagement.

More specifically, the two managers considered necessary that the information provided to employees be relevant, that is essential and specific to a particular decision/operation. They explained that because their area's operations had either changed or become more sophisticated after the internet implementation, when the information provided by management was not relevant to the particular operation/decision it was difficult for employees to appreciate and use it to get engaged and to contribute.

Also, because most of the information was collected and transmitted online, management was tempted to provide employees with too much information. Management thus had to choose and transmit only the essential information because otherwise employees would not be able to focus on the specific operation/decision and their contributions would be vague as a result. Information according to the two managers needed also to be "relevant to the operations of more advanced organizations of the same industry so that employees are aware and comprehend the developments that are already taking place in the more advanced organizations, and as a result their contributions take these changes into account".

The MM also considered necessary the information provided was structured to separate all its components and accurate so that employees could appreciate and use during the decision making process, and that the manager's job was assisted by the fact that a lot of the information relating to the music area operations was produced, collected and stored online. The WUL pointed out that "the information provided to employees has to be under the employees control to also alleviate employee worries that they can be responsible for decisions which are out of their control".

Finally, the WUL considered necessary management provided employees with timely information "because the aim of the music area is to produce programs and activities of a current nature, for different groups of people whose tastes and needs change continuously".

In Formal Terms

Proposition One: The managers' opinion is that when the information provided to employees relates to their area of operations, is relevant to a particular operation/decision, adequate, controllable and timely, employees are enabled and encouraged to get engaged and to contribute.

3.5.2 Managers' Perceptions of the Information Assistance Necessary to Achieve Employee Engagement

3.5.2.1 Empowerment Practices

Expressions of confidence

From Table 3.4 we can see that the managers think that expressions of confidence do not always have a positive effect on the employee appreciation of the information provided.

According to the DM, expressing confidence to employees can assist them appreciate the information provided and that this can be done by “highlighting cases in which employees use the information to argue a particular matter or to draw their own conclusion and contribute”.

The Music Area WUL added that “expressing confidence to employees is necessary because the information provided has been more advanced and technical after the internet implementation and as a result more difficult for employees to understand and appreciate”. In addition, the Music Area MM noted that “expressing confidence is crucial because employees are usually sentimental and easily affected and influenced based on other people’s comments”.

In contrast, the Third Radio Station MM considered that there is “no need to regularly express confidence because this will probably make them think that it is very difficult to appreciate the information provided by management. When employees have problems they need the provision of specific management assistance that can help them overcome their problems without delay and not words of confidence”.

Definition of employee responsibilities

The data collected illustrate a linkage between the definition of employee responsibilities in relation to the information provided and employee appreciation of that information. The managers in all three areas think that “management needs to clearly define employee responsibilities in relation to the information provided so that employees only have to deal with the specific information assigned to each one. The definition of responsibilities must be done in cooperation with employees because they are very close and thus familiar with each other’s abilities, knowledge and expertise”.

The Talk Area WUL added that “as a result employees feel satisfied and comfortable with the information assigned to each one of them and consequently appreciate and utilize it to contribute”.

Involvement with the production of the information

The managers of all areas pointed out that employees were also involved with the production of the assigned information. The DM noted that this “helps employees attain a good understanding and enables them to use the information to comprehend situations, get engaged and contribute”.

Table 3.4 Empowerment practices

Empowerment practices	DM	MM talk area	WUL talk area	MM third radio station	WUL third radio station	MM music area	WUL music area
Expressing confidence to employees	“By highlighting cases in which employees used the information to argue a particular matter or to draw their own conclusion and contribute”	“Would probably make employees feel that they are not capable of dealing with the information provided”		“No need because this will probably make them think that it is very difficult to appreciate the information provided by management”		“Crucial because people who work with music are usually sentimental and easily affected and influenced based on the comments they receive from others”	“Necessary because some of the information provided to employees is more advanced and technical than in the past”
Clearly defining their responsibilities			“To ensure employees only have to deal with the specific information assigned to each one”		“So that employees will only need to appreciate a part of the information used during the decision making process”		
Explain and involve employees with the production of the information	“Helps employees attain a good understanding and enables them to get engaged”	“Employees have the necessary assurance about the independence of the information				“Necessary because the continuous changes in the operations result in continuous changes in the information used in the decisions made”	

For example in the music area, according to the MM, “the continuous changes occurring in relation to its operations and activities mainly caused by the internet implementation, resulted in continuous changes in relation to the information used in the decision making process. Consequently, because employees need a lot of explanations and clarifications in order to reach a satisfactory level of understanding, it is also necessary to involve them with the production of the assigned information in order to obtain the necessary insights which will enable them to appreciate and utilize the information to contribute towards the management decisions”.

Also, according to the MM of the Talk Area “by involving employees with the production of the information they have the necessary assurance about the independence of the information used to make decisions”.

In Formal Terms

Proposition Two: Management can assist employees understand and appreciate the information provided to them by regularly expressing confidence to them, clearly defining their responsibilities, and involving them with its production.

3.5.3 Organizational Arrangements

According to Table 3.5 the managers think that management can encourage and enable employees to get engaged by providing them with technical training, ensuring each employee receives all assigned information, and utilizing a system of feedback and adjustments.

3.5.3.1 Training

All three areas illustrate a linkage between the provision of training sessions and employee appreciation of the information provided. The Music Area MM noted that “training sessions are necessary for the employees because some of the information has become very technical, and thus difficult for employees to understand and appreciate, due to the fact that some of the activities have become more sophisticated after the internet implementation”.

The Third Radio station WUL pointed out that “the discussions with management after the end of the training sessions are considered very useful by employees because they have the opportunity to clarify all outstanding matters, including simple matters they would be embarrassed to mention in front of their area’s staff”.

According to the Talk Area MM “explanations in relation to the information provided are also available online for those employees who cannot take part in some of the training sessions because of their work duties”.

3.5.3.2 Receipt of All Assigned Information

The managers also noted the importance of ensuring all employees receive all assigned information. According to the DM this should be done based on each employee’s experience, knowledge and expertise.

Table 3.5 Organizational arrangements

Organizational arrangements	DM	MM talk area	WUL talk area	MM third radio station	WUL third radio station	MM music area	WUL music area
Employee Training		“Explanations are also available online for those who can not take up the training sessions”	“Part of the training sessions is a reference to several online sources employees can look up to, in order to improve further their appreciation of the assigned information”		“Employees are given a certain amount of time after the end of the training sessions to raise and discuss with management any matters they either did not manage to comprehend or were unclear”	“Necessary because some of the information has become very technical”	
Ensure each employee receives all assigned information	“Assign each employee to deal with only a part of the information to be used in the decision making process based on their experience, knowledge and expertise”	“This way employees can appreciate all related matters and as a team get engaged and contribute”		“Via regular face to face discussions management ensures the correct information is received by all team members”			“Management uses the internet to provide some of the assigned information and via regular face to face discussions ensures the correct information is received by all employees”

(continued)

Table 3.5 (continued)

<p>Organizational arrangements</p> <p>Utilize a system of feedback and adjustments</p>	<p>DM</p>	<p>MM talk area</p> <p>“Inform employees during the provision of information to communicate any problems immediately”</p>	<p>WUL talk area</p> <p>“WULS are assigned to view employee problems daily, both online and via personal contact and if necessary consider solutions together with the MM and the DM. Solutions are then presented and explained to employees”.</p>	<p>MM third radio station</p> <p>“Set up mechanism to ensure problems in relation to the information provided reach management and are solved without delay”</p>	<p>WUL third radio station</p>	<p>MM music area</p>	<p>WUL music area</p> <p>“Management informs employees during the provision of information that they must communicate all problems instantaneously to the managers of their area in order to be tackled immediately”</p>
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The managers of the Talk Area pointed out that “it is very important for us to ensure that each employee receives and appreciates all information he/she is assigned to deal with. Employees can then get together, discuss and appreciate all the information and related matters concerning a particular operation or decision in total, then as a team be in a position to get engaged during the discussions with management and contribute towards the final management decisions”.

The MM of the Third Area and the Music Area WUL added that “management uses the internet to provide some of the assigned information and via regular face to face discussions ensures the correct information is received by all employees”.

3.5.3.3 Feedback and Adjustments

Finally, the data illustrate the importance of utilizing a system of feedback and adjustments. For example, the Third Radio station MM noted that “we set up a mechanism to ensure all problems and misunderstandings the employees face, in relation to the information provided, reach management as soon as possible in order to be solved without delay. Otherwise they become an obstacle to employee understanding, because employees are influenced negatively and feel that they cannot deal with the information, and thus get engaged and contribute”.

The WUL of the Talk Area added that “WULS are assigned to view employee problems daily, both online and via personal contact. If problems are not minor they can consider solutions together with the MM, and in case of a difference in opinion discuss also with the DM. Solutions are then presented and explained to employees”.

Similarly, the Talk Area managers noted that “we inform employees during the provision of information that they must communicate all problems instantaneously to us in order to be tackled immediately”.

In Formal Terms

Proposition Three: Management can assist employees appreciate the information provided and encourage them to use it to get engaged and to contribute by providing employees with technical training, ensuring each employee receives all assigned information, and utilizing a system of feedback and adjustments.

3.6 Contribution

This chapter began by describing the extant views of employee engagement and contributions: that is, management can achieve employee engagement and contributions by providing employees with information and related assistance.

3.6.1 Information Characteristics

Consistent with studies dealing with the characteristics of the information provided by management to employees (Wall & Lisher, 1977; Jackson-Cox et al., 1987;

Purdy, 1993; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003; Lewis et al., 2006; Zhang & Bartol, 2010) the results suggest that management needs to provide employees with information that relates to their area of operations, is relevant (essential and specific) to a particular operation and decision, structured to separate all its components and accurate, controllable and timely, in order to achieve a thorough understanding of different parts of decisions and operations of their area, comprehend the different situations, attain the necessary sensemaking, and as a result make credible contributions.

This view however, neglects that by providing employees with controllable information management ensures that employees do not feel that they lose their job independence and thus overcomes the problem of employee distrust towards management. As a result employees have no reservations in using the information to get engaged and to contribute.

3.6.2 Assistance with the Information Provided

The results also support the view that in order to improve employee competence and thus comprehension, interpretation and appreciation of the information provided management needs to regularly express confidence in them, clearly define their responsibilities, explain and involve them with the production of the information, provide them with technical training, ensure each one receives all assigned information, and utilize a system of feedback and adjustments. This can help managers work through the change paradox and achieve employee sensemaking, leading towards a successful change.

These results are consistent with studies on management behavior relating to employee empowerment, personal control via formal training methods, and strategic planning including both commitment to sharing information and identification and solution of the communication process difficulties in an organization change scenario (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Klein, 1996; Gill, 1996; Ketokivi & Castaner, 2004; Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Maitlis, 2005; Detert & Burris, 2007; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008; Luscher & Lewis, 2008).

These views however, neglect several issues. Firstly, that management needs to clearly define employee responsibilities in relation to the information provided in cooperation with employees so that they feel satisfied and comfortable with the information and can consequently appreciate and use it to get engaged and contribute. Also, that by involving employees with the production of the information provided employees have the necessary assurance about the independence of the information and thus have no reservations about using it during the discussions with management.

Finally the results are in partial support of the view that words of encouragement are considered by managers to empower employees (Leach, Wall, & Jackson, 2003; Spreitzer, 2008), pointing out that only when employees seem to be sentimental are positively affected based on the comments made by their superior. There are also situations where employees are negatively affected feeling that the reason why

management regularly expresses confidence to them is because they do not consider them capable of dealing with the information provided.

3.7 Limitations

It is important to recognize some limitations of this study. In interpreting these results, it must be recognized that the study dealt with one particular type of change in one setting and enclosed included only a few managers. Thus while the finding suggest the need for future research, they must be interpreted cautiously.

3.8 Conclusions

This research explored the way management can work to achieve employee engagement and contributions via the provision of information and related assistance to the employees of a media organization operating in a high-velocity environment. Such environments are particularly challenging due to the continuous changes resulting mainly from new technological advancements.

The findings are a set of propositions, organized around three issues relating to the way management can work through the change paradox and achieve employee sensemaking in order to implement change successfully.

3.8.1 Employee Understanding

Several of the propositions focus on how management aiming to achieve employee engagement accelerates employee understanding.

For example, in agreement with Morgan and Zeffane (2003), Lewis, Schmisser & Weir (2006), Spreitzer (2008) and Zhang and Bartol (2010) management provides employees with information that relates to their area of operations, is relevant to a particular operation/decision, structured to separate all its components and accurate, controllable and timely (Proposition One). The result is a thorough employee understanding of the different parts of decisions and operations of their area that allows them to comprehend the different situations and get engaged and make credible contributions.

Management also uses different methods to assist employees appreciate the information provided in relation to a specific decision/operation, encouraging them to use it during the decision making process. More specifically, and in accordance with Conger and Kanungo (1988), Lawler (1992), Klein (1996), Gill (1996), Mills and Ungson (2003), Ketokivi and Castaner (2004), Detert and Burrell (2007), Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008) and Seibert, Wang & Courtright (2011) management explains and involves employees with the production of the information provided (Proposition Two) provides employees with technical training, ensures each employee receives all assigned information, and utilizes a system of

feedback and adjustments (Proposition Three). Doing so, management helps employees make sense of the information provided to them by management, understand interpret and appreciate how to use it to contribute during the discussions with management.

3.8.2 Team Work Spirit

Second, several of the propositions describe how management aiming to achieve employee engagement and contributions achieves a team work spirit.

More specifically, this study is in agreement with the conclusions of Balogun & Johnson (2004), Ketokivi and Castaner (2004), Luscher et al. (2006), Detert and Burris (2007), Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008) and Luscher and Lewis (2008) in that management assists employees appreciate the information provided and encourages them to get engaged and contribute by explaining and involving employees with the production of the information provided (Proposition Two) and providing them with technical training (Proposition Three). The result is a team conditioned to work together successfully and achieving the needed appreciation of the information provided to be used during the decision making process.

Management also ensures each employee receives all assigned information, and utilizes a system of feedback and adjustments (Proposition Three). By ensuring each employee receives all assigned information management can avoid any possible confusion and thus obstruction of the group's effort to discuss, comprehend and use the information provided. Also, by utilizing a system of feedback and adjustments management encourages a team work spirit because employees can disclose problems and consider possible solutions with the managers of their area, thus working as a team.

3.8.3 Employee Sense of Control

Several propositions also converge on the importance of employee sense of control with respect to their engagement and contributions during the decision making process. Management aiming to achieve employee engagement employs a behavior that can build the employees' sense of control.

One tactic which agrees with the ones explained by Maitlis (2005), Luscher et al. (2006), Lewis et al. (2006) and Luscher and Lewis (2008) in their studies is to provide employees with information about a particular operation/decision that is controllable by the employees (Proposition One). Doing so, management overcomes the problem of employee distrust towards management being completely independent, ensures that employees do not feel that they lose their job independence and as a result have no reservations in using the information during the decision making process.

A second tactic in accordance to Conger and Kanungo (1988), Gill (1996), Mathieu, Gilson, and Ruddy (2006) and Detert and Burris (2007) aims to assist

employees understand and appreciate the information provided by regularly expressing confidence to them, clearly defining their responsibilities, and involving them with the production of the information provided (Proposition Two). Doing so, employees are persuaded verbally, mobilize greater effort and this boosts their sense of control and confidence. Also, they are not overloaded with information and thus their emotional arousal state is reduced, leading to an increase in their competence.

Finally, employees have the necessary assurance about the independence of the information used in the decision making process and thus are willing to use it during the discussions with management to get engaged and contribute. Regular expressions of confidence however may also have a negative effect on the employee's effort to understand and appreciate the information provided because employees may feel that management does not consider them capable of dealing with the information.

Appendix

List of Matters discussed during the interviews

Description of the department

1. Operations and Structure
2. Implementation of the PDP

Characteristics of the information provided

In order to achieve employee appreciation the information provided by management to employees needs to

3. relate to the employees' area of operations
4. be relevant, essential and specific to a particular operation/decision
5. be adequate, structured to separate all its components and accurate
6. be controllable and not imposed without the employees influence
7. be timely so that it can be of any use to employees

Management assistance in relation to the information provided

In order to assist employees appreciate and use the information to get engaged and contribute management needs to

8. provide employees with technical training
9. regularly express confidence in employees
10. clearly define employee responsibilities in relation to the information provided
11. promote and encourage feedback and adjustments
12. explain to employees the way the information each one is assigned to deal with is produced
13. ensure that each employee receives all the information assigned by management to deal with

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Organizational Arrangements for Participation Leading Towards Employee Engagement

4

4.1 Introduction

According to the literature reviewed in Chap. 2, communication and participation methods can be used by management to achieve employee engagement. Chapter 3 dealt with the communication process and this chapter aims to increase our understanding of how managers view the way organizational arrangements for participation can lead towards employee engagement. This lacuna is noteworthy given an apparent consensus about the value of employee engagement to achieve employee sensemaking and successfully introduce change.

There is consensus among academics that to work through the change paradox and achieve employee sensemaking and as a result introduce change successfully, managers often need to gain the support of employees (Delaney & Sockell, 1990; Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992; Cobb, Folger, & Wooten, 1995; Tesluk, Vance, & Mathieu, 1999; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003; Balogun & Johnson, 2004).

To do so, they are advised to use practices that empower employees via both the provision of employee development (Block, 1987; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Rusaw, 2000; Maitlis, 2005; Detert & Burris, 2007; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008; Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011) and operational freedom (Bandura, 1986; Conger, 1986; Nord, Rosenblatt, & Rogers, 1993; De Cock & Rickards, 1996; Tierney, 1999; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

Also they should use several motivational methods (Black & Margulies, 1989; Schwochou & Delaney, 1997; Neubert & Cady, 2001; Ketokivi & Castaner, 2004; Luscher, Lewis, & Ingram, 2006) to ensure employees are motivated to deal with problems that arise without delay (Gill, 1996; McHugh, 1997; Clayton & Gregory, 2000; Lewis, Schmisser, Stephens, & Weir, 2006; Luscher & Lewis, 2008).

4.2 Problem Statement: Research Objectives

Despite Lewin's (1943) pronouncement about the practicality of a good theory, if managers and academics think about change and employee engagement differently, even if an underlying theory is correct, then managers might not use it. To see how wide the gap might be, the study begins with a brief overview of significant portions of the academic work on organization change and employee engagement. Then, the author presents the results of a single case study designed to learn how at least some managers think about introducing change. One caveat before starting—we are academics, consequently our understanding of how managers think about change was developed from the perspective of prior academic research.

4.3 Literature Review: Theoretical Background

Research stressing the importance of gaining employee engagement in order to implement change has a long history. Existent research on engagement has appeared under a variety of labels, including participation and empowerment.

4.3.1 Ideological Entailments

Gaining precise understanding of these terms is complicated by ideological commitments of various users. Some scholars, especially those with a more Marxist bent, find certain terms, particularly empowerment, to be useful tools for promoting their emancipatory agenda. Consider Edwards and Collinson's (2002) observation that "empowerment was used originally by social movement and feminist writers" (p. 273).

To some, the term empowerment connotes rather radical transformation of power relationships at work. For others, it represents "an effort to generate disciplined autonomy within a clearly understood set of expectations and priorities" (p. 274). It is little wonder that Styhre (2001) feared the term risks being turned into rhetoric with an ambiguous referent.

Other terms, such as participation, seem to have less extreme end points, but even there one can see that sometimes writers link it to somewhat extreme change such as a democratic workplace. For example, some years ago Slater and Bennis (1964) stimulated by social science of the times that advanced human resources management to replace Taylorism, wrote that "democracy is inevitable." While this phrase could be interpreted as a major challenge to the capitalist system of the times, many champions of the human resources approach had no such radical agenda in mind.

Nevertheless, as one studies the matter of worker engagement one must be aware that, in some writings, a term has radical transformation entailments and, in other writings, it has only pragmatic, managerialist ones. While anything approaching a full nuanced discussion of this matter is outside the scope of this study, it is

necessary to recognize the distinction. The author will sometimes classify comments according to the degree of transformation they appear to imply and will use the terms transformational vs. pragmatic to refer to the distinction.

4.3.2 History of Academic Interest in Employee Engagement

Much of the interest in topics such as participative management is grounded in the 1947 work of Kurt Lewin (Maynard, Mathieu, Gilson, O'Boyle, & Cigularov, 2012). Some of Lewin's most well-known inquiry dealt with the use of participation to reduce resistance to change at the Harwood Manufacturing Corporation, where participation entailed involving workers in small discussion groups. The results were published in the now-famous paper by Coch and French (1948).

This lineage apparently led many academics to view group discussions as the major step in implementing participative management. Even though one of the co-authors, Coch, was a personnel manager, this study gave us little insight about how the managers in general conceptualized employee engagement.

The emphasis on groups was evident in a second early stream of research, the contingency theory of leadership advanced by Vroom (1973). Vroom proposed a normative theory to guide leaders choices concerning the degree to which groups should be involved in decisions. As with the Lewin and Coch & French works, this research did not investigate how the managers viewed the engagement process.

Since this early research that was the foundation for interest in employee engagement, more recent work has increased our understanding of employee engagement in change efforts. Much of this work concerned communication.

4.3.3 Importance of Communication in Empowerment and Organization Change

The value of employee engagement for improving communication and achieve employee sensemaking has been widely recognized.

Lundberg's (1990) theoretical work explained how different types of communication can aid organization change. Further, Klein (1996) provided evidence concerning the way the communication process can help employees. He found that: (1) feedback and adjustments, (2) strategies that encourage disclosure of problems, and (3) discussion of solutions through intensive face-to-face communication between management and employees, was helpful.

In a similar vein, Gill (1996) observed that recent company history, trust factors, and communication methods could introduce barriers to communication in a change process. Introduction of a communication exercise prior to implementing a change contributed to success in implementing the change. Similarly, Tierney (1999) found that the quality of supervisor/employee relationships affected the degree to which an organization's climate was conducive to change.

Conger and Kanungo (1988) following study of the relationship of communication and empowerment, suggested organization change can lead to employees feeling powerless. To ensure that change does not fail, they advised managers to empower employees. Successful empowerment practices would provide information to employees about their self-efficiency. In related work, Holman (2000) advised managers to be clear about the purpose of the change and communicate with everyone early and often so that the change might become an ongoing conversation between everyone engaged.

Miles (2001) argued that to aid corporate change, managers should make all employees in high-engagement cascades that would generate understanding, dialogue, feedback, and accountability.

4.3.4 Overview of History of Empowerment, Participation and Engagement in a Successful Change Effort

The longstanding interest in employee engagement and change has produced a rather strong consensus in the academic literature that high levels of employee participation, engagement, and empowerment, can help management work through the change paradox, achieve sensemaking and contribute to successful change.

However, it appears to the author that there is a significant omission in this stream of research. Little study of how practicing managers view employee engagement in change has been done. This omission is particularly troublesome given the wide variety of labels academics have used to refer to employee engagement. Still, some of the more recent inquiry has provided some clues about the managers' views.

4.3.5 Managers' Conceptualizations of Employee Engagement

Few studies have dealt directly with how managers view the role of employee engagement and several scholars have provided some clues. First, consistent with research discussed above, communication is a central concern. Second, practicing managers may not perceive terms that academics use to refer to employee engagement, particularly empowerment, as applicable. Third, managers at different levels may view employee engagement differently.

4.3.6 Employee Engagement, Communication, and Change

Two studies, one by Schweiger and DeNisi (1991) and one by Huy (2002), are instructive regarding communication.

In their study of mergers, Schweiger and DeNisi (1991) suggested that changes, such as mergers, may generate considerable anxiety that can have dysfunctional consequences. One way managers may deal with the problematic emotions is

through communication. From their study of two plants engaged in mergers, they concluded that communication, in the form of realistic job preview, can help reduce uncertainty and help to stabilize the situation.

Interestingly, they suggested that symbolic value of the communication showing that management cares, may be as important as actual content. The major significance of their findings for the present study becomes evident in light of Huys' (2002) work. Using the concept of bounded emotionality, Huy suggested that during radical change middle managers maintained operational continuity by encouraging employees to express a wide range of emotions. During changes, middle managers sought to lower unpleasant/low-activation feelings of disappointment and fatigue by sharing the feelings among themselves. Taken together with Schwieger and DeNisi's study, Huys' work leads us to speculate that some managers may find employee engagement to be helpful in managing subordinates' emotions during change.

4.3.7 Managers May Not Perceive Concept of Empowerment as Applicable

In addition to this speculative inference, Edwards and Collinson's (2002) work provided some more direct information about managers' conceptions of employee engagement efforts. They treated employee engagement under the heading of empowerment. Their findings supported Hales (2000) analysis that the empowerment concept was elastic. Managers had difficulty defining the term, but whatever it was it was difficult to implement and the term was . . . not a word used at local level (p. 287).

Managers viewed the idea of empowerment as inapplicable because it meant giving workers a wide range of freedom. "Managers were much happier with terms such as involvement and participation" (p. 288). They concluded that, in practice, managements "rarely attempt the far-reaching transformations that the language of empowerment" (p. 293) suggests. Further, they noted that their findings were consistent with Hales (2000) idea that junior-level managers have a pragmatic and context-dependent interpretation of empowerment.

4.3.8 Managers' Conceptions of Empowerment Vary by Level

Based on several case studies conducted in the UK, Hales (2000) concluded that junior-level managers interpreted empowerment differently than did senior managers. Hales speculated that for some senior managers empowerment provides a set of ideas that imply the need for junior managers has decreased. Junior-level managers are faced with changes that mean they can no longer claim exclusive responsibility for a liquid labor process. Terms like trainer/coach, advisor, trouble-shooter, and information resources describe their roles. The language of empowerment is flexible enough to cover these roles and it is elastic enough to cover

interpretations of the senior managers as well. In short, the word means different things to managers at different levels.

4.3.9 Overview of the Literature on Employee Engagement and Change

Several important themes emerge from this study of literature on employee engagement and change. There is good reason to believe that some sort of employee engagement can often enhance change efforts via employee sensemaking. A likely reason for such improvement is better communication. A wide variety of terms is used to refer to the idea of employee engagement. Individual managers may interpret the same term differently.

Little study of how managers conceptualize employee engagement has been done, but the available clues suggest that inquiry is needed. The study reported below was motivated by the author's desire to satisfy this need. The author conducted a single inductive case study.

4.4 Research Method

4.4.1 Research Design

The single case study is used here inductively, in a manner consistent with Eisenhardt's (1989) recommendations for "building theory from case study research" According to Eisenhardt, "the case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings where the evidence may be only qualitative", can involve numerous levels of analysis within a single case study (Yin, 2013) and can be used to accomplish various aims including this study's aim to generate theory from case study evidence (Harris & Sutton, 1986; Gersick, 1988).

The author collected data primarily through 22 in-depth interviews (lasting 1.5–2 h) conducted over a period of 5 months with the same managers of the EU media organization described in Chap. 3.

Two sets of interviews were conducted: (1) an initial interview with the manager of the technical department, and (2) semi-structured interviews with the seven managers of the radio and music department. Immediately after the interview, facts and impressions were cross-checked. Several rules were followed. First, the 24-h rule required that detailed interview notes be completed within 1 day of the interview. Second, at the time of the interview, all data, regardless of apparent importance were included. In addition, secondary sources were consulted. Data were collected from internal documents, including the organization's annual summary and the annual published radio and music departmental review.

Initial interviews centered on departments' operations and structures and on the implementation of the personnel development program. The second and third set of

interviews were more structured and focused on specific organizational arrangements management provided employees with to achieve their engagement. 11 matters were discussed in total (See Appendix).

After the initial interview with the manager of the technical department, semi-structured interviews with all managers of the radio and music department were conducted. In addition, questions were directed at obtaining factual accounts of what informants did or observed others doing.

4.4.1.1 Setting and the Change

The study was conducted in the same EU medium-sized media organization as the one used for the Case Study described in Chap. 3 that recently implemented a major change, the Personal Development Program, and interviews were performed with the same managers.

4.4.2 Data Analysis

The search for consistent perspectives was assisted by selecting pairs of managers (middle managers and working unit leaders) within each of the three different departmental areas of the radio and music department, and listing similarities and differences between each pair.

Managers' thoughts about the change were classified under four general headings: (1) Perceptions of Organizational Arrangements Necessary to Gain Employee Engagement, (2) Empowerment Practices, (3) Motivation, and (4) Disclosure and Solution of Problems.

4.5 Results

Initial Interviews

In the initial interviews about the personnel development program, managers reported that, early on, the Board organized several meetings to inform management staff of all departments about the program and its aims. These meetings were accompanied by special training programs, aiming to contribute towards the improvement of employee skills and knowledge.

To aid introduction of new technologies, such as online facilities, the Board employed external Internet specialists to monitor, in association with all departmental management staff, the implementation of the necessary online facilities in all the organizational departments.

4.5.1 Managers' Perceptions of the Organizational Arrangements Necessary to Achieve Employee Engagement

Managers commented extensively on how to gain the support of employees, their unions, and of managers at different levels before the change and to retain that support after the implementation of employee engagement by encouraging and enabling employees to get engaged in the decision-making process. Their ideas are presented in Table 4.1.

Managers emphasized communicating with employees through the union. The departmental manager's opinion was that "it was vital for the Board to explain to the employee's union the way the program would operate and its effects on the employees in order to gain their members support towards the implementation of the new process."

The Talk Area middle manager believed that "it was important for management to achieve the support of the employee trade union because that was the only way to ensure all employees supported the new process at work. Otherwise, even if the majority agreed to support, the minority who disagreed would not work towards achieving its goals and this would affect its implementation negatively. The minority in this case could only be convinced by their trade union committee".

To sustain employee support and commitment, the managers noted that after the program implementation often they needed to explain that management aimed to achieve employee engagement. The middle manager of the Third Radio station explained that "Management needed to discuss and resolve any matters with the employee trade union even after the implementation of employee engagement to ensure continuous support."

For example, in the Music Area the working unit leader said, it "was important to achieve because employees were suspicious and worried that by implementing employee engagement management might aim to increase both their control over employee jobs and the employees' workload." The Music Area middle manager's opinion was that explanations, illustrations and clarifications helped management reduce employee suspicions that management might not apply in reality what they agreed to apply in theory, and gain employee support and commitment towards the new process of employee engagement as a result.

The managers also believed that before the personnel development program was implemented the Board needed to discuss, explain the aims of employee engagement to the managers of the radio and music department, and gain their support. The departmental manager's said that "it was important to ensure all departmental units could implement employee engagement in coordination to avoid the risk that the departmental effort was impeded at any stage."

The working unit leader of the Talk Area explained that "the job of the working unit leaders was important because they had the main managerial responsibility to implement employee engagement within their units." Consequently, they had to ensure the change was implemented in a coordinated way so that it ran smoothly in all units, and the departmental effort could not be obstructed. Due to the fact that all

Table 4.1 Organizational support

Organizational arrangement	DM	MM talk area	WUL talk area	MM third radio station	WUL third radio station	MM music area	WUL music area
Gaining the support of employees and their unions	“Unions had a major effect over their members opinion”	“Employees could only be convinced by their trade union committee”		“Management needed to discuss and resolve any matters with the employee trade union even after the implementation of employee engagement”	“It was important for management to achieve the support of the employee trade union”	“Explanations and clarifications help management reduce employee suspicions about their engagement”	
Gaining the support of managers at different levels	“It was important all departmental units could implement employee engagement in coordination”		“WULS have to ensure the change is implemented in a coordinated manner”				“Managers had to meet regularly to discuss problems, difficulties and successes they achieved”
Support in solving potential problems	“Before the personnel development program was implemented the Board needed to discuss and explain the aims of employee engagement to the managers”		“Due to the fact that all departmental units were interconnected problems spread and affect the implementation negatively”			“When solutions cannot be found, management staff meetings should be organized so that the rest of the management staff can take part and offer assistance”	

departmental units were interconnected problems spread and affected the implementation negatively.

In addition, the managers of the Music Area thought that when the implementation was assigned to working unit leaders, they had to arrange regular meetings to discuss problems, difficulties, and successes in order to find solutions to any problems and to sustain coordination in their efforts. When solutions could not be found, management staff meetings should be organized “so that the rest of the department’s management staff could take part and offer their assistance.”

In short, the managers thought that gaining the support of employees, their unions, and of managers at different levels, would encourage and enable employees to get engaged in the decision making process. Two noteworthy themes from Table 4.1 are the emphasis managers placed on the role of the union in communication with the employees and the tone that emphasized “explaining” and “convincing.”

4.5.2 Employee Empowerment

4.5.2.1 Employee Development and Operational Freedom

Table 4.2 reveals that managers thought that providing employees with both internal and external training (employee development) and promoting operational freedom (employee job autonomy and decision making authority) encourages and enables employees to get engaged in the decision making process.

Some such as the managers of the Talk area observed that employees could get engaged because training boosted and updated their professional knowledge and accomplished their development. At the Third Radio station, the working unit leader believed that management needed to organize training sessions and also give employees time after the end of the sessions to raise and clarify any outstanding personal matters. This was considered major because according to the working unit leader by doing so management helped employees improve their individual level of competence and made them feel that they operated in a context in which they were supported to get engaged.

Regarding the provision of operational freedom, the departmental manager thought that employees who are “given control of their jobs in order to appreciate the job related matters and feel responsible to get engaged in the decision making process.” In addition, if they were given control and authority to consider matters in their areas, they would feel it was important to express their thoughts.

In the Talk Area, the middle manager’s opinion was that “management had to ensure that all employees were given job autonomy and decision making authority in order to continue operating as a group, arguing that if this was not the case some employees might impose their authority and dissociate the rest of the group from the general management effort for employee engagement.”

The Talk Area working unit leader added that “. . .when employees were given job autonomy and decision making authority they did not feel restricted, appreciate all job-related matters and thus got engaged and had an input towards the final

Table 4.2 Empowerment practices

Empowerment practices	DM	MM talk area	WUL talk area	MM third radio station	WUL third radio station	MM music area	WUL music area
Employee Development	<p>“All units provide both internal and external training for all employees to accomplish their development”</p>		<p>“Training boosts and updates the employees’ professional knowledge”</p>		<p>“Should also give employees time after the end of the training sessions to clarify outstanding personal matters”</p>		
Operational Freedom	<p>“Employees are given both control of their jobs and authority to consider their area’s matters”</p>	<p>“All employees must be given job autonomy and decision making authority”</p>	<p>“Cannot exceed certain limits imposed by the media guidelines”</p>	<p>“Employees consider themselves as being part of management”</p>			<p>“Employees do not feel restricted and can be creative”</p>
Operational freedom and training						<p>“We need to emphasize training because if employees are trained appropriately, allowing them high levels of discretion in their work would yield positive outcomes”</p>	<p>“Operational freedom and engaging employees should relate to the production of new, advanced and of high quality music related activities”</p>

management decisions made, noting that in the case of a media organization job autonomy could not exceed certain limits imposed by the media guidelines.”

Managers in the Music Area suggested that “operational freedom was important for their area’s employees because this way they did not feel restricted and could thus be creative. To be creative, they believed employees had to get engaged in the making of decisions relating to the production of new, advanced and of high quality music related activities.”

The managers appeared to think that empowerment practices like employee development and operational freedom were linked to the arrangements management needed to provide employees so as to encourage and enable them to get engaged in the decision making process. These managers seemed to emphasize training and believe if employees were trained appropriately, allowing them high levels of discretion in their work would yield positive outcomes.

4.5.3 Employee Motivation

From Table 4.3 we can see that the managers thought that ensuring that employee engagement leads to valued outcomes was important and that managers had a role in motivating employees to get engaged in the decision making process. According to the managers this could be done in two ways.

First, management could motivate employees through providing both monetary and job satisfaction by offering job promotions, highlighting and praising the employees who got engaged, and distributing a part of the organizational benefit resulting from their engagement back to them. The managers explained that in order to motivate employees “job promotions could be offered to employees who got engaged and had an input about the goals of their area.

Management could also make arrangements for those employees to attend related workshops and conferences overseas and organized staff meetings to praise them in front of their colleagues, and stressed the positive consequences of their engagement on their individual jobs.”

Second, the managers believed that motivation could also be achieved by ensuring that employees could see that their engagement affected the final decisions management made. However, as with respect to organization support discussed above, their tone emphasized explaining and convincing. The departmental manager explained that “the final management decisions made should be communicated and explained to employees soon after they were made.”

The Third Radio Station middle manager noted that “management needed not only to communicate to employees the final management decision made as a result of the discussions with them, but also explain to employees how their engagement affected those management decisions.” The Talk Area working unit leader added that “this should be done soon after decisions were made.” According to the two managers both issues were major for two reasons.

Firstly because by doing so employees could clearly see that their opinions were taken into account and influenced the management decisions made, and secondly

Table 4.3 Motivation

Organizational arrangements	DM	MM talk area	WUL talk area	MM third radio station	WUL third radio station	MM music area	WUL music area
Employee motivation	<p>“The final management decisions made are communicated and explained to employees”</p>	<p>“Providing both monetary and job satisfaction by distributing a part of the organizational benefit resulting from their engagement back to the employees”</p>	<p>“Communicating and explaining management decisions to employees must be done soon after decisions are made”</p>	<p>“Management must also explain to employees how their engagement had an influence on the management decisions”</p>		<p>“Any delay in providing explanations would make it difficult for employees to remember all matters and thus see clearly how they affected a past decision”</p>	<p>“Job promotions, attendance of music related workshops overseas and also praising in front of their colleagues”</p>

because any delay in providing explanations would make it difficult for employees to remember all matters and thus see clearly how they affected a past decision.

The managers thus thought that ensuring employee engagement leads to valued outcomes management motivates employees to get engaged in the decision making process in a similar manner it motivates employees when aiming to achieve and manage an organizational change.

4.5.4 Disclosure and Solution of Problems

From Table 4.4 we can see that managers thought that by ensuring the disclosure and subsequent solution of employee problems without delay, management could encourage and enables employees to get engaged in the decision making process.

For example the Talk Area middle manager's opinion was that "by systematically and regularly promoting" management-employee dialogue and two way discussions management encouraged employees to disclose problems, misunderstandings and conflicting views in relation to employee engagement. As a result management could correct deficiencies and provide explanations and clarifications enabling employees to get engaged in the decision making process.

In addition, the Third Radio middle manager believed that once management discovered employee concerns and problems managers would need to consider possible solutions together with employees. This was important because this way management would take into account employee suggestions and achieve employee acceptance and satisfaction as a result.

In the Talk Area the working unit leader expressed the view that "the managers had to meet and discuss with employees either in scheduled meetings or at their workplace in order to become aware of all their concerns and consider possible ways to overcome them." The Music Area middle manager noted that "employees needed to have the opportunity to present their areas of concern regularly so that they could be considered by management as soon as possible. Otherwise employees became easily and quickly disappointed, feeling unable to get engaged."

In sum, the managers thought that by ensuring the disclosure and subsequent solution of employee problems without delay, management enables and encourages employees to get engaged in the decision making process in a similar manner it encourages and enables employees to face any problems arising in the case of an organizational change.

4.6 Contribution

A major purpose of this study was to learn how closely the ways managers seeking to introduce change think about gaining employee engagement and compare them to the academic theories mentioned earlier on.

When the various comments are viewed together, an interesting pattern can be seen.

Table 4.4 Disclosure and solution of problems

Organizational arrangements	DM	MM talk area	WUL talk area	MM third radio station	WUL third radio station	MM music area	WUL music area
Management-employee dialogue, two way discussions		<p>“This way employees are encouraged to disclose problems, misunderstanding and conflicting views in relation to their engagement and management can correct deficiencies”</p>	<p>“Managers have to meet and discuss regularly with employees to become aware of their concerns and consider possible ways to overcome them”</p>		<p>“Management has to consider possible solutions together with employees”</p>	<p>“If employees cannot present their areas of concern regularly they become easily and quickly disappointed”</p>	

First, the managers shared the academic literature's emphasis on the importance of employee engagement for accomplishing organization objectives through sensemaking (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Maitlis, 2005; Edwards and Collinson, 2012; Maynard et al., 2012). Interestingly, one of these objectives was promptly achieving objectives. The managers thought that by ensuring the disclosure and subsequent solution of employee problems without delay management encourages and enables them to get engaged in the decision making process.

Importantly, adoption of the managers' perspective helped us to see some interesting nuances in how managers thought about how to gain this engagement that can help management work through the change paradox and achieve a successful change.

Two things were noteworthy. First, their idea of engagement placed much more emphasis on explaining and convincing than is evident in typical academic treatments where a tone of mutual influence seems to be more evident (Tierney, 1999; Rusaw, 2000; Neubert & Cady, 2001; Luscher et al., 2006; Luscher & Lewis, 2008). Second, it was the proactive stance they felt they needed to take. In particular, they saw working with and through the union as highly important.

In addition, there were a number of things they believed they needed to do. Consistent with much of the academic literature, many of these were quite pragmatic. Communication was clearly the most salient. Other pragmatic-centered matters included: providing training, motivating engagement, providing information about the process and results, and the importance of immediately attending to problems. It is notable that much, but not all, the concern with communication called for explaining. Whereas much of the academic literature also stresses communication (Isabella, 1990; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991; Miles, 2001; Huy, 2002) this study's results point to the need to recognize the somewhat obvious idea that not all calls for communication are necessarily calls for the same thing.

Communication focused on explaining and convincing is not likely to be a call for the dialogue many academics seem to have in mind.

Of course, these specific activities, especially the emphasis placed on using the union to communicate, may well be idiosyncratic to this particular setting and thus cannot be generalized, at least at this point.

On the other hand, what may be generalized and serve as a stimulus for future research is the finding that these managers thought of rather specific things that they needed to do, at least in this context, to gain the desired employee engagement. Thus, the results are a first step in addressing the lacuna in the academic literature pointed to at the start.

While transmitting information seemed to be the major benefit of engagement, other, more abstract benefits, were also expected. A major one was gaining the support of both employees and managers (Cobb et al., 1995; Tesluk et al., 1999; Cook & Goff, 2002; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003; Seibert et al., 2011).

Some managers believed that by gaining the support of employees, their unions, and of managers at different levels management encourages and enables employees to get engaged in the decision making process. Further, they believed that management must gain the support and commitment of employees, their unions, and of

managers before implementation and retain that support after the implementation of employee engagement. Among other things, they believed that to gain employee engagement, management needed to provide all necessary explanations, illustrations and clarifications before and after the implementation of employee engagement in order to reduce any suspicions that management may not apply in reality what they agreed to apply in theory.

In addition to these pragmatic interests, when the data were considered through an empowerment lens, some limited themes consistent with the emancipatory spirit appeared. For example, comments in Table 4.2 emphasized development and operational freedom. In addition, recall that some managers in the music area viewed the engagement as contributing to creativity.

This study also adds insights relating to the use of empowerment practices by management towards employees like the provision of employee development and operational freedom (Tierney, 1999; Holman, 2000; Mills & Ungson, 2003; Mathieu, Gilson, & Ruddy, 2006; Detert & Burris, 2007).

The managers saw the provision of employee training as especially important because employee development and training boosts and updates their professional knowledge and skills (Alper, Tjosvold, & Law, 2000; Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, & Drasgow, 2000; Detert & Burris, 2007; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). In other words, management needs to give employees time after the end of the training sessions to raise and clarify any outstanding personal matters because this way employees improve their individual level of competence and feel that they operate in a context in which they are supported to get engaged in the decision making process.

The managers also suggested that providing employees with operational freedom, job autonomy, and decision making authority, made them feel supported and encouraged to get engaged (Clayton & Gregory, 2000; Hales, 2000; Cook & Goff, 2002; Mills & Ungson, 2003; Seibert et al., 2011). According to some of the managers interviewed, operational freedom is important to provide to employees also because by doing so management ensures employees do not feel restricted and can thus be creative during the decision making process. In addition, it is important for management to ensure that all employees are given operational freedom in order to continue operating as a group because otherwise some may impose their authority and disassociate from the rest of the general management effort for employee engagement.

The data also produced insights concerning the use of several motivational methods by management to achieve employee motivation (Schwochau & Delaney, 1997; Neubert & Cady, 2001; Ketokivi & Castaner, 2004; Mathieu et al., 2006).

The managers believed that management can motivate employees by ensuring that their engagement leads to valued outcomes that can be seen by them. This according to the managers can be done in monetary and/or job satisfaction terms, and by making the final management decisions known to employees. In other words, managers need to provide explanations to employees on how their suggestions affected the final management decision made. These explanations must be communicated to employees soon afterwards in order for them to see

clearly that their opinions are taken into account and have an influence over the final management decisions. Any delay in providing explanations will make it difficult for employees to remember all matters and thus see clearly how they affected a past decision.

Recall that some previous research suggested that managers at different levels may view employee engagement differently (Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991; Huy, 2002; Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Maitlis, 2005; Luscher & Lewis, 2008; Maynard et al., 2012). The findings support this possibility. Recall that the designers of the personnel development program did not want joint decisions, but only to provide a mechanism for letting employees have input. Yet, as Table 4.2 revealed, some of the lower-level managers mentioned such things as giving employees control over their job and have employees consider themselves as part of management. Thus, the findings suggest it is unlikely that all managers view employee engagement in the same way. Future study should recognize this likelihood and investigate the difference.

4.7 Limitations

It is important to recognize some limitations of this study. In interpreting these results, it must be recognized that the study dealt with one particular type of change in one setting and enclosed included only a few managers. Thus while the finding suggest the need for future research, they must be interpreted cautiously.

4.8 Conclusions

This study addressed managers' conceptions of employee engagement in a rapidly-changing media environment.

The results are derived from a single case and thus are, at best, suggestive. The study arose from concern that little was known about how managers view employee engagement. Although a case study of this sort cannot provide generalized results, it did yield some important insights into an underdeveloped topic. Specifically, the study of engagement (and the various headings related to it) can be advanced by study of how managers view it.

Among other things, as might be expected, pragmatic matters are apt to be salient. Matters of information transmission and timely responses are likely to be central. Interestingly, whereas the academic literature frequently suggests participative methods are slow (Styhre, 2001; Miles, 2001; Edwards & Collinson, 2002; Luscher & Lewis, 2008; Seibert et al., 2011; Maynard et al., 2012), the managers in this study viewed employee engagement as a means of prompt response. Moreover, consistent with some previous findings, it appears that managers at different levels viewed employee engagement differently.

Of special note is that while both managers and academics emphasize the same word—communication—as a benefit of employee engagement, they are not

necessarily discussing the same thing. Study of how managers think about communication revealed what may be an important difference. Managers may be focusing on explaining and convincing. Academics may be more apt to concentrate on dialogue. Future inquiry into this subtle dissimilarity that might make all the difference would seem to be heading towards a good direction.

Appendix

List of Matters Discussed During the Interviews

Description of the Department

1. Operations and structure
3. Implementation of the Personnel Development Program Provision of necessary organizational arrangements
3. Regularly express confidence to employees
5. Promote employee development by providing employees with training sessions to expand their professional learning and skills
6. Promote operational freedom by yielding job autonomy and decision making authority to employees
7. Ensure engagement leads to valued outcomes that can be seen by employees
8. Discuss and explain the goals of this effort to trade unions in order to gain their continuous support
9. Explain to employees why they are invited to get engaged
10. Gain the support of all the managers of the department
11. Promote systematically and regularly management-employee dialogue and two way discussions
12. Motivate employees in both monetary and job-satisfaction terms.

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5.1 Introduction

According to Aristotle it is because we are a political-animal kind of being that the opportunity for exercising a natural capacity for practicing democracy, defined in a minimal sense as “association in public decision”, is for us a good-in-itself that is both inherently happiness-producing and necessary to our full happiness. Thus, association in decision ought to be promoted and in a form that is as robust as is practically feasible, because it is a happiness-producing exercise of natural capacities that are necessary for true and complete human happiness and thereby constitutive of the human kind of being (Ober, 2007).

Some 2,500 years ago, the city state of ancient Athens rose to unprecedented political and economic power by giving its citizens a direct voice and an active role in civic governance, bringing individual initiative and common cause in harmony. The Athenian democracy encompassed participatory structures for making decisions, resolving disputes, and managing activities; a set of communal values that defined people’s relationships with one another, and an array of practices of engagement that ensured the broad participation of the entire citizenry (Manville & Ober, 2003).

In this Athenian form of democracy, participatory democracy, the *demos* was composed of a socially diverse body of individuals, each capable of choosing freely in his own interests and its members were not unified in their desires by an “all the way down” ideology. Many of them required some sort of subsidy if they were to participate on an equal basis (Ober, 2008). This meant that a well-structured participatory democracy needed to educate citizens in cooperation, encourage their prudence by making the advantages of collective action self-evident, and have institutions offering appropriate incentives and sanctions (Ober, 2007).

This did not mean that appropriate institutions would emerge without effort. Indeed, it pointed out to the need for more work on the design of optimally effective participatory institutions.

5.2 Problem Statement: Research Objectives

Based on the above, the idea of moving towards a more democratic structure in an organization requires a genuine organizational and managerial change. Chapters 3 and 4 investigated the way communication and participation methods can be used by management to achieve employee engagement and as a result the necessary employee sensemaking for implementing change successfully. However, we know little about how employees think about the way the organizational arrangements provided by management to employees to gain their engagement can help achieve employee creativity. The purpose of this research is to eliminate this lacuna.

From a theoretical perspective, there has been a great deal of literature on the importance of gaining employee engagement and the necessary employee sensemaking in order to implement change successfully. Academics have looked at organizational arrangements provided by management when aiming to achieve and manage an organizational change and as a result provide employees with more influence. These theories suggest that management needs to gain the support of both employees and managers (Delaney & Sockell, 1990), use empowerment practices (Conger & Kanungo, 1988), motivate employees, and finally ensure that any problems likely to arise are solved without delay (McHugh, 1997).

Even though these theoretical views are helpful, outstanding issues remain. Although there is a great deal of literature about the importance of gaining employee engagement and the necessary employee sensemaking in order to implement change successfully, the existing theoretical views have not dealt adequately with how the employees think about the way management can work to achieve employee engagement leading towards employee creativity.

Consequently, there is little empirically grounded theoretical account of how employees think about the way management can operationalize employee engagement by focusing on the development of meanings and motivating engagement and action that can lead towards employee sensemaking and help achieve employee creativity.

In order to address this gap this study is organized around the following research question: What are the employees' conceptions about the way management can operationalize employee engagement and achieve employee creativity as a result?

Consequently, this study aims to explore how employees think about the way management can achieve employee engagement and the necessary employee sensemaking that can lead towards employee creativity. As a result, this study contributes towards a richer theory on the process behind the implementation of employee engagement, highlighting the importance of several organizational arrangements that can help management achieve employee creativity.

5.3 Literature Review/Theoretical Background

Various experiments and empirical studies have suggested that increased worker engagement in decision making increases organizational effectiveness, while positively affecting satisfaction, trust, participation and other work related attitudes (Guzzo, Yost, Campbell, & Shea, 1993; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003; Luscher, Lewis, & Ingram, 2006; Lewis, Schmisser, Stephens, & Weir, 2006; George, 2007; Luscher & Lewis, 2008; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

Focusing on the case when tasks are non-repetitive several authors stressed that engagement in the decision making process has a positive effect on job satisfaction and performance regardless of the subordinate's predisposition towards independence or autonomy (Abdel-Halim, 1983; Ketokivi & Castaner, 2004; Kirkman, Rosen, Tesluk, & Gibson, 2004; Lewis et al., 2006; Mathieu, Gilson, & Ruddy, 2006; Detert & Burris, 2007; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008).

Prior research also offers a general perspective into the construct of employee engagement, highlighting group support and acceptance.

Vroom and Yetton's famous participation model (Vroom, 1973) suggests how much decision making power managers should share with subordinates under certain conditions, noting that one of the major factors influencing this decision should be the acceptance and commitment on the part of subordinates to execute the decision effectively.

The leader-member (manager-employee) relationship also affects the manager's, his group's, and the organization's performance according to Fiedler's contingency model (Fiedler, 1972) because group support, trust, respect and acceptance by subordinates affect the favorableness of the situation a manager has to face.

Kerr (2004) noted that the benefits of engagement will be greater where the work requires more innovative and creative input from employees considering the benefits of employee engagement and whether organizational democracy can enhance an organization's competitive advantage explaining that this will depend on the activities performed by the firm and the types of products or services it sells to customers and clients.

According to related research the benefits of participation will be greater where the work requires more innovative and creative input from employees and democracy's relative advantage will be proportional to the amount of decision making that actually occurs in a given setting. More specifically, if the organization aims to respond to demand via innovative original products, this diversity of output will require a coordinated diversity of input that can be best achieved via open, collaborative, participative management processes. This leads towards respect and trust in individual and nurturance of talent and creativity. In addition the emphasis must be on the individual initiative rather than bureaucracy (Ford, 1996; Volkema, Farquhar, & Bergmann, 1996; Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996; Kerr, 2004).

Democratic practices and competitive advantage also depend on the nature of the organization's workforce, the ability and motivation of the workforce to

participate in the flow of information and the decisions. Where employees bring specialized or proprietary knowledge to the organization the competitive effect of democratic process is likely to be greater than where the knowledge of employees is homogenous. Also, democratic processes will be most valuable where the workforce possesses unique capabilities and attributes like talent and commitment (Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Amabile et al., 1996; Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

Management can also support open, collaborative, participative management processes, leading towards respect and trust in individual and nurturance of talent and creativity. Several studies have considered the organizational climate and structure that would encourage employee engagement and as a result the emergence of creativity. They noted that it is important to consider the organizational climate and structure most encouraging to the emergence of creativity.

A creative organization should have a small degree of formalization of relationships among the organizational positions, not over-specify the human resources needed for a specific task, create a flexible power-authority-influence structure, healthy amounts of participation and autonomy, broad spans of control (no management by direction and control), and a performance evaluation based on long time spans. The organization should also focus on the idea generation function, open communication, a reward system of intrinsic character via self-selection of tasks, broadly defined constraints, increased freedom of work scheduling and autonomy concerning work methods and enhanced opportunities for professional growth (Hill & Levenhagen, 1995; Glynn, 1996; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003; Kerr, 2004; Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004; Ketokivi & Castaner, 2004; Maitlis, 2005; Alge et al., 2006; Luscher et al., 2006; Lewis et al., 2006; Luscher & Lewis, 2008).

In addition, information privacy is important to be assured as it signals safety and reduces fears concerning close monitoring and critical scrutiny of time use and behavior that may discourage employees from generating new and useful ideas (Payne, 1990; House, Rousseau, & Thomas-Hunt, 1995; Pedersen, 1997; George & Zhou, 2001; Alge et al., 2006).

Information privacy also contributes to feelings of psychological empowerment which is positively associated with creativity. High-quality relations between supervisors and subordinates and supervisor support have long been recognized as important contributors to creativity (Torrance, 1988; Ford, 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Shalley et al., 2004).

Displaying interactional justice and being trustworthy are important ways in which supervisors can provide a supportive work environment for creativity. Also, network characteristics (weak network ties) that promote the sharing and spreading of heterogeneous information and perspectives promote creativity (Kahn, 1990; Amabile, 1996; George, 2007).

Previous researchers have also looked at specific organizational arrangements provided by management when aiming to achieve and manage an organizational change, and have come up with several notions relating to the provision of influence to employees.

In the management literature it appears that management aims to gain the support of both employees and managers (Delaney & Sockell, 1990; Cobb, Folger, & Wooten, 1995; Tesluk, Vance, & Mathieu, 1999; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003), uses empowerment practices towards employees either by regularly expressing confidence in them (Bandura, 1986; Conger, 1986; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Detert & Burris, 2007) and/or via the provision of employee development (Straus, 1977; Block, 1987; Rusaw, 2000; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008) and operational freedom (Nord, Rosenblatt, & Rogers, 1993; Tierney, 1999; Zhang & Bartol, 2010), ensures employees are motivated via the use of several motivational methods (Black & Margulies, 1989; Schwochau & Delaney, 1997; Neubert & Cady, 2001; Ketokivi & Castaner, 2004) and that any problems likely to arise are solved without delay (Gill, 1996; McHugh, 1997; Clayton & Gregory, 2000; Lewis et al., 2006).

So, what do employees think about the way management can operationalize employee engagement and achieve employee creativity as a result? This question suggests that extant views need to be linked to employee engagement and creativity. This observation coupled with the limited related research led to the inductive case study research described in this study.

5.4 Research Method

The study used a multiple case design that allowed a replication logic, where a series of cases (interviews) is treated as a series of experiments, each case serving to confirm or disconfirm the inferences drawn from the others (Yin, 2013). The study also employed an embedded design, that is multiple levels of analysis, focusing at 2 levels: (1) employees (2) provision of organizational arrangements. Although an embedded design is complex, it permits induction of rich and reliable models (Yin, 2013).

The setting is a US online media organization whose mission is to help create and empower an artistic middle class through the use of innovative technology, ensuring that any band from any genre anywhere in the world can find and connect with any type of music promoter, licensor or broadcaster—easily, effectively, and quickly. Due to the internet, this business has made it possible for just about any entrepreneurial artist to meaningfully connect with an audience and build a music career without the traditional backing of a major recording label.

5.4.1 Data Collection

To obtain multiple perspectives, 19 in-depth interviews were conducted over a period of 6 months with the founder/owner, and six employees of the organization from the marketing department. There were three data sources: (1) initial interview with the founder/owner of the organization (2) semi-structured interviews with the six employees (3) secondary sources (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Employees of the marketing department

Area	No employees	No informants
Community	1	1
Internet and online	1	1
Developer	1	1
Public relations	1	1
Brands	1	1
Bands	1	1

Founder/Owner: An entry interview, using a semi-structured format was conducted with the founder of the organization who gave some general information about the organization and its mission, and more specifically its aim to achieve employee innovation and creativeness via employee engagement and contributions towards organizational decisions and operations.

Six Employee Interviews: After the initial interview with the founder of the firm, semi-structured interviews with the six employees of the marketing department were conducted. Initial interviews involved questions about the organization and the decision making process. The second and third set of interviews became more structured and questions during these interviews involved specific organizational arrangements provided by management including several issues on creativeness and innovation. 14 were discussed in total (Appendix). Following an approach to inductive research, these questions were supplemented with ones that seemed fruitful to pursue during the interview. The interviews were all taped.

Immediately after, the interview facts and impressions were cross-checked. Several rules were followed. The “24-h rule” required that detailed interview notes be completed within 1 day of the interview. A second rule was to include all data, regardless of their apparent importance at the time of the interview.

The combination of multiple informants, “courtroom questioning” that focused on factual accounts of what informants did or observed others doing (Huber & Power, 1985) helped to avoid informant speculation, a tandem interviewing addressed some previous criticisms of research relying on employees’ recollections (Schwenk, 1985).

Secondary source and other data: Internal documents were examined as available.

5.4.2 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed as follows. The qualitative responses of each employee interviewed were first compared. There was some agreement among respondents around the critical issues of the organizational arrangements necessary for employees to get engaged and be creative. The few, conflicting responses were preserved in the stories.

The search for propositions was assisted by combining the descriptions each employee had given and listing similarities and differences. From these lists and comparisons, tentative propositions were induced. After the development of these tentative propositions, each case (interview) was revisited to improve the understanding of the underlying dynamics. After many iterations between data and propositions existing literature was used to sharpen the insights yielded by the inductive process.

Once preliminary analyses had been developed from the respective data sets, the analyses and induced propositions were combined using methods for building theory from case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989). What emerged were propositions linking organizational arrangements with employee engagement and creativity.

5.5 Results

5.5.1 Employee Support

First, the current study has insights relating to the issue of management gaining the support of employees in order to achieve their engagement. In this study the employees' opinion is that management must aim to gain employee support in relation to their engagement and subsequent contributions during the recruitment process. The employees interviewed believed that "management can do so by communicating to new employees the need to both create and innovate, leading to higher profits, and as a result find ways to generate extra value" (Table 5.2).

The employees added that management must also aim to gain employee understanding and subsequent support by explaining to new employees the reasons why their decisions are expected to follow the organization's formalized path (procedures) in order to be approved by management.

The employees stressed that "we are not fully entrusted to make decisions for major issues which will not follow the general organizational path (pay promoters' procedure). If we do our ideas and suggestions are not heard or even worse we are left out of the decision making process". According to the employees "when we make decisions that fall outside the formal organizational procedures management will ask why the decision was made and talk about it as a first warning".

The employees considered however that "this top-down approach with many priorities and requests from top level may sometimes have negative results, leading to lack of both execution on other projects and analysis of decisions that have been made, affecting negatively team morale and encouragement".

Proposition One: The employees' opinion is that management can gain employee support and encourage them to get engaged and be creative during the recruitment process.

Table 5.2 Employee support

Interview examples
1. "Management must aim to gain employee support in relation to their engagement during the recruitment process by communicating to new employees the need to both create and innovate, leading to higher profits, and as a result find ways to generate extra value"
2. "It is essential for management to explain to new employees the reasons why their decisions are expected to follow the organization's formalized path in order to be approved by management"
3. "If we do not follow the general organizational path our ideas and suggestions are not heard or even worse we are left out of the decision making process"
4. "This top-down approach with many priorities and requests from top level may sometimes have negative results, leading to lack of both execution on other projects and analysis of decisions that have been made, affecting negatively team morale and encouragement"

5.5.2 Empowerment Practices

5.5.2.1 Expressions of Confidence

The employees interviewed suggested that "there are cases when management expresses confidence but there are times when guidance turns into telling us what to do, right down to a detail like what an email should say, which makes us question management's confidence in us" (Table 5.3).

Consequently, it is the employees' view that management should aim to encourage and as a result gain their engagement via the way they are evaluated, and more specifically by tying their performance and compensation to revenues and profits generated as a result of creativity and innovation, and that this should also be communicated clearly during the recruitment process.

What managers should not do, according to the employees, is "to confuse us by not being happy when we try to create and as a result lose track of our individual jobs and criticize us for not trying enough new stuff when we try to focus on the task on hand".

5.5.2.2 Employee Development

In addition, the employees expressed their views relating to the importance of their development via training. The employees noted that "the business offers training focusing on the organization's mission, objectives, goals and operations, gives us the opportunity to attend related conferences and provides us with related books and training materials". In the past, according to some employees, management used to offer external training as well. However, the organization does not offer any specific training on how to be creative and innovative, something employees consider important (Table 5.4).

Management aims to achieve creativeness on-the-job by giving employees tasks to solve and coaching them along the way. In addition, management verbally expects and gives employees freedom to execute certain tasks and employees are asked to do so creatively, given guidance with the ideas they have and being

Table 5.3 Expressions of confidence

Interview examples

1. "There are cases when management expresses confidence but there are times when guidance turns into telling us what to do, right down to a detail like what an email should say, which makes us question management's confidence in us"
2. Management needs to tie our performance and compensation to revenues and profits generated as a result of creativity and innovation, and this should also be communicated clearly during the recruitment process"
3. "Managers should not confuse us by not being happy when we try to create and as a result lose track of our individual jobs and criticize us for not trying enough new stuff when we try to focus on the task on hand"

Table 5.4 Employee development

Interview examples

1. "The business offers training focusing on the organization's mission, objectives, goals and operations, gives us the opportunity to attend related conferences and provides us with related books and training materials"
2. "The organization does not offer any specific training on how to be creative and innovative, something we consider important"
3. "Management aims to achieve creativeness on-the-job by giving us tasks to solve and coaching us along the way"
4. "Management verbally expects and gives us the freedom to execute certain tasks and we are asked to do so creatively, given guidance with the ideas we have and are being challenged on these ideas"

challenged on these ideas. Employees are therefore encouraged to come up with solutions on their own and try things, not just asking for answers.

The employees interviewed also added that "training is essential to develop our skills and knowledge but initiative only goes as far as the priorities of the company let people take it. Conversations from a company strategy/management perspective for example are handled by leadership exclusively".

What is important to note is that employees believe that having to create and thus accomplish something new is what keeps them going. If they did not have the opportunity to use their talents they would leave their jobs. More specifically, several expressed the view that "media makes a meaningful impact on both our individual life and on a greater societal level and we thus work to improve other's lives. As a result we enjoy coming up with new ideas and executing them, because it enables us to live a life from a socially responsible perspective".

5.5.2.3 Operational Freedom

Employees also considered the idea of job autonomy and operational freedom. According to the employees interviewed, "management gives us the opportunity to provide value how and where we feel we are most impactful, as long as we remain focused on the company mission, objectives and strategies, and provides us with authority when it relates to our department and its objectives" (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5 Operational freedom

Interview examples
1. "Management gives us the opportunity to provide value how and where we feel we are most impactful, as long as we remain focused on the company mission, objectives and strategies, and provides us with authority when it relates to our department and its objectives"
2. "There are cases where initiatives for improving our work are not treated like a priority by management and even cases where a decision or a process we have made a million times comes into question by management, making us feel like we are not trusted"
3. "We look to build something new and make a contribution by throwing out a lot of ideas which will be trimmed down via a fairly structured process that will satisfy management if it is practical, sellable and creative"

Personal schedules are generally flexible, making employees feel more accountable. However, there are cases when success and reaching preset goals feels out of their hands and thus they do not get a sense of accomplishment and accountability. In addition, there are cases where initiatives for improving their work are not treated like a priority by management and even cases where a decision or a process employees made a million times comes into question by management, making them feel like they are not trusted.

Consequently, according to the employees, "there is operational freedom and authority provided it lies within the predetermined organizational path". This can explain the employees' opinion that when they look to build something new they can make a contribution by throwing out a lot of ideas which will be trimmed down via a fairly structured process that will satisfy management if it is practical, sellable and creative.

Proposition Two: The employees' opinion is that management can encourage employees to get engaged and be creative via the use of both evaluation and empowerment practices (expressions of confidence, training, job autonomy) that are directly related to their creativity.

5.5.3 Employee Motivation

The employees also expressed their thoughts on the way management can motivate them and thus encourage them to get engaged. According to the employees "management motivates us to be creative in our engagement and contributions towards organizational decisions and operations by checking return on investment on pre-set goals for team members that require both innovation and creativity, therefore expecting the decisions to line-up with the organizational and departmental goals (Table 5.6).

In addition, employees receive the final management decision made together with feedback on how management has come to that decision which is reflected in the final result.

Table 5.6 Employee motivation

Interview examples
1. Management can motivate us to get engaged by checking return on investment on pre-set goals for team members that require both innovation and creativity, therefore expecting the decisions to line-up with the organizational and departmental goals”
2. “We receive the final management decision made together with feedback on how management has come to that decision which is reflected in the final result”
3. “Management needs to use both monetary and non-monetary methods. Personal development, growth potential, a prize for the best idea, being called out in a meeting, added accountability and recognition are all non-monetary methods that would motivate us to get engaged”
4. “Management first shows us the profit from our creation and innovation and explains to us how our innovation achieved the specific profit, which is also educational for us”
5. “Management also ties salary increases to profits from innovation, offers stock options, revenue-based goals and quarterly bonuses where achieving goals is tied to innovation”

Most employees however expressed the view that “in order to motivate us to innovate and create management needs to use both monetary and non-monetary methods. Personal development, growth potential, a prize for the best idea, being called out in a meeting, added accountability and recognition are all non-monetary methods that would motivate us to get engaged”.

In terms of monetary motivation the employees added that “management first shows us the profit from our creation and innovation and explains to us how our innovation achieved the specific profit, which is also educational for us. Management then ties salary increases to profits from innovation, offers stock options, revenue-based goals and quarterly bonuses where achieving goals is tied to innovation”.

It is the employees’ opinion that as a result they feel motivated and encouraged to create new products that can achieve their department’s revenue goals. Showing and explaining these tangible results to employees helps them understand the importance of creation, gives a real indicator of what innovations paid off and why, and enables employees to do more of the things that were successful.

The employees finally pointed out that some of them are self-motivated and their incentive comes from knowing they are making someone’s life better and working towards a cause.

Proposition Three: The employees’ opinion is that management can motivate them to be creative via their engagement, by using both monetary and non monetary methods.

5.5.4 Trust and Open Door Communication

Finally, the study has insights on the process behind the implementation of employee engagement leading towards employee creativity. The employees interviewed considered that “what is important in relation to the process behind

Table 5.7 Trust and open door communication

Interview examples

1. "An employee must be trusted for a manager to include in a meaningful way. Managers who trust their employees are also affected when they prioritize creative employee thoughts and ideas. It takes a good deal of pro-activity, innovation and proving yourself to be in a position where your creative feedback is heard"
2. "An open-door environment by management fosters collaboration, team work and focuses on creativity results on the employees' willingness to try and contribute. In addition, open-door communication leads to no major inter-office politicking or backbiting which also encourages our engagement"
3. "When we are told that things are moving forward but do not see much movement, or when we are told to sit tight on things that need movement it is disheartening"
4. "When we feel we are communicating, collaborating and working together but are not able to get the priority from the rest of the company it is also disheartening"
5. "This kind of approach helps individuals who are new or not necessarily visible to leadership to be engaged immediately, gives them an opportunity to prove themselves and gain visibility"

our engagement is the employee-manager relationship because it always affects the manager's willingness to include us in the decision-making process" (Table 5.7).

The employees explained that "an employee must be trusted for a manager to include in a meaningful way. Managers who trust their employees are also affected when they prioritize creative employee thoughts and ideas. It takes a good deal of pro-activity, innovation and proving yourself to be in a position where your creative feedback is heard".

Another major issue mentioned is that of management encouraging open-door communication, collaboration and team work that focuses on employee creativity. According to the employees "an open-door environment that fosters this kind of initiative results on the employees' willingness to try and contribute.

In addition, open-door communication leads to no major inter-office politicking or backbiting which also encourages employees to get engaged". Some employees stressed however that although an open-door environment is important for management to achieve it is usually hard to get time from the managers to collaborate on everything.

The employees explained the importance of this initiative by expressing the view that "it has been tough to get the lines open. When we feel things are moving forward we definitely want to be engaged and create. However, when we are told that things are moving forward but do not see much movement, or when we are told to sit tight on things that need movement its disheartening. Also when we feel we are communicating, collaborating and working together but are not able to get the priority from the rest of the company its also disheartening".

Finally, the employees noted that "this kind of approach helps individuals who are new or not necessarily visible to leadership to be engaged immediately, gives them an opportunity to prove themselves and gain visibility and puts them in a great position to be heard and included in decision making".

Proposition Four: The employees' opinion is that management can encourage and enable employees to get engaged and be creative by fostering an environment of trust and open-door communication.

5.6 Limitations

It is important to recognize some limitations of this study. In interpreting these results, it must be recognized that the study dealt with one particular type of change in one setting and enclosed included only a few managers. Thus while the finding suggest the need for future research, they must be interpreted cautiously.

5.7 Contribution: Conclusions

Based on the employees' thoughts, this study contributes into a richer theory on the process behind the implementation of employee engagement by focusing on the development of meanings and motivating engagement and action that can lead towards employee sensemaking and help achieve employee creativity.

5.7.1 Recruitment Method

Several of the propositions focus on how the recruitment method can be used by management aiming to achieve employee engagement and encourage employee creativity.

Management aims to gain the support of employees (Proposition One) and the recruitment process can assist management in this effort. More specifically, management needs to explain to employees that they are expected to create and innovate according to the organizational path, leading towards an increase in the organization's profits.

The recruitment method can also assist management when aiming to empower employees (Proposition Two). Employees must be encouraged to innovate and create, evaluated accordingly, and the method of evaluation should be clearly communicated to them during the recruitment process.

Finally, management needs to ensure that employees are motivated to get engaged and be creative (Proposition Three). Due to the fact that there are several employees who are self-motivated, and their incentives come from knowing that they make peoples' lives better by working towards a cause, management should aim to identify and thus recruit those self-motivated new employees. In this view interesting research questions could center on how management can identify and this type of employees.

The emergent perspective thus considers the recruitment method used by the management of a media organization crucial in achieving employee engagement

and creativity. Others (Ketokivi & Castaner, 2004; Detert & Burris, 2007; Foot & Hook, 2011; Gomes-Mejia, Balkin, & Cardy, 2011; Dessler, 2013) have argued that recruitment can help identify suitable candidates for an organization. The view here, in agreement with (Kahn, 1990; Amabile, 1996; Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Luscher & Lewis, 2008), is that the recruitment process can also help management to both identify new recruits motivated to get engaged and encourage them to create and innovate according to the organization's needs.

5.7.2 Employee Creation and Innovation

Second, several of the propositions describe how management aiming to achieve employee engagement needs also focus on employee creativeness.

The management's effort to promote employee creativeness and innovation can be assisted by the provision of empowerment practices like employee training (Proposition Two) which should specifically and directly relate to different ways employees can become creative and innovative in line with the company's mission, objectives, goals and operations. In addition, management can train employees on the job via coaching, challenging and encouragement, and not constrain them based on specific pre-determined organizational priorities.

Management can also motivate employees to get engaged and contribute (Proposition Three) by using several motivational methods aiming to promote employee creativeness and innovation. Management can check return on investment on pre-set goals for team members required to create and innovate and also offer opportunities for their development and growth by tying promotions, stock options and bonuses to profits resulting from their creativeness and innovation.

This emergent view thus emphasizes the importance of motivating employees to get engaged and contribute (Black & Margulies, 1989; Schwochau & Delaney, 1997; Neubert & Cady, 2001; Luscher et al., 2006; Luscher & Lewis, 2008; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). The results of this research suggest that this view is limited when dealing with a media organization because in order to get engaged and contribute media employees should first be able to create and innovate. This should thus be the initial aim of management.

5.7.3 Employee Engagement True and Valid

Several propositions also highlight the importance of demonstrating to employees that their creative engagement is true and valid.

One way of doing so is via the provision of empowerment practices like expressions of confidence, training, evaluation and job autonomy (Proposition Two). However, expressions of confidence should not turn into telling them what to do in detail because this lack of confidence will have a negative effect on their creativity. Also, management must allow employees to set their own goals and treat

their creative initiatives as priorities, rather than trim them down via a pre-determined management process.

Another way of showing employees that their creative engagement is true and valid is via the use of several motivational methods (Proposition Three). Management should communicate the final management decisions to employees and give them feedback on how they are made. In addition, management needs to show employees the profit from their creation, explain how it was achieved, and as a result indicate clearly the effect of their engagement.

A final way is via the creation of an environment of trust and open-door communication (Proposition Four). More specifically, management should promote open-door communication leading towards the engagement of all employees and not only those that have achieved the management's trust, ensure communication only relates to their engagement and not inter-office politics, and finally demonstrate to employees that their creative initiatives are given priority and any resulting concerns are solved without delay.

This emergent view thus highlights the importance of management commitment towards the process of employee engagement that can help achieve employee creativity. The articles (House et al., 1995; Amabile, 1996; Ford, 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Maitlis, 2005; Luscher & Lewis, 2008) indicate that employee confidence and trust are key factors affecting employee engagement. Similarly, this study suggests that to encourage and enable employees to get engaged and be creative, management needs to both ensure and demonstrate to them that the process of employee engagement is true and valid.

Appendix

List of matters discussed during the interviews

Description of the organization

1. Operations
2. Decision making process

Arrangement provided by management to encourage and enable you to get engaged in the decision making process

3. Expressions of confidence
4. Training
5. Operational freedom and job autonomy
6. Job authority
7. Communication and explanation of final management decisions made
8. Effects of employee-manager and employee-employee relationships in your team/department
9. Open-door communication, collaboration, team work

Creativeness and Innovation

10. Expecting decisions to lead to innovation and creativeness
11. Creativeness in media. Responding to social needs.
12. Incentives to innovate and to create
13. Showing profits from your creation and innovation and explain how and what you achieved in terms of profits
14. Prefer to work in media because you want to create and innovate

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6.1 Introduction

Based on the results of the previous chapter, employee engagement can lead towards employee creativity through employee sensemaking. Consequently, a major issue for management is to be able to assess employee creativity in order to identify creative employees and take maximum benefits from their value-creative potential.

It is the author's opinion that scholars have failed to adequately consider how we can assess employee creativity in a media organization, something the author believes vital due to its importance towards achieving effectiveness and creative value in relation to products, services, procedures and structures.

This chapter will thus start by considering creativity and its importance and then help explain how this can be assessed, looking at creativity from a process perspective (Mohr, 1982; Amabile, 1988; Torrance, 1988) where an individual behaviorally, cognitively, and emotionally attempts to produce creative outcomes (Kahn, 1990).

6.2 Literature Review/Theoretical Background: Problem Statement/Research Objectives

Creativity is defined as the generation or production of ideas that are both novel and useful (Amabile, 1988, 1996; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Oldham & Cummings, 1996). Thus, to be considered creative, ideas must be both new and seen as having the potential to create value for organizations in the short and long run.

Creativity is typically viewed as a key precursor to innovation (the successful implementation of creative ideas) and is increasingly being recognized as an important ingredient for effectiveness in all kinds of work and organizations (Amabile, 1988, 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; George & Zhou, 2007). Creative ideas can relate to work procedures, products, services, and organizing

structures and can vary in terms of the degree to which the idea reflects an incremental versus radical departure from the status quo (Mumford & Gustafson, 1988; Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004).

Creative ideas can also vary in terms of scope or the range of their value-creative potential. Thus, creativity occurs, for example, when a nurse develops a novel approach to scheduling shifts in a hospital that alleviates recurring staff shortage while affording nurses more flexible more flexibility to deal with unforeseen non-work demands, when an administrative assistant develops a new electronic filing system, or when a research scientist develops a promising new drug. As vastly different as these examples of new and useful ideas are, they fall under the rubrics of creativity (George, 2007).

Organizational researchers and managers alike have long held the view that individual creativity is critical for organizational success. The frequently touted organizational benefits of individual creativity include higher-quality products, more effective decision making, better group performance, and more innovative solutions to organizational problems (Kelley, 2001). Such beliefs have helped spawn a virtual cottage industry of management books and business school courses that extol the virtues of creativity and provide suggestions for eliciting higher levels of creativity (Ray & Myers, 1986; Sternberg & Lubart, 1995; Robinson & Stern, 1998; Sutton, 2002).

Thus, judgments about individuals' potential creativity can sometimes be rendered on the basis of tangible products they have produced, such as actual product designs, written reports, or innovative programs (Caves, 2000; Kelley, 2001). In other instances, individuals' creative potential may be inferred on the basis of available cues regarding their role, status, or reputation in an organization. Creative potential also can be assessed using standardized personality tests (Kasof, 1995b).

No general theory or conceptual framework currently exists that explicates the judgmental processes expert organizational decision makers use when assessing others' creative potential in organizational contexts (London, 2001). Further, very little agreement exists even among experts about the particular attributes or cues that judges should or do pay attention to when making such assessments. Relatedly, there exists little agreement on universally accepted or empirically established standards for evaluating creative potential (Katz & Giacommelli, 1982).

Thus, researchers know virtually nothing about the particular individual attributes, interpersonal behaviors, and social cues that decision makers in organizations find salient and relevant when assessing others' creative potential, or about how they use such cues.

Extant research on the assessment of individuals' creative potential has tended to focus almost exclusively on personality attributes presumed to be correlated with the generation of creative products, such as dispositional correlates of creativity (Feist, 1998; Ford, 1996; Kasof, 1995a; Glynn, 1996; Sternberg, 1985, 1999).

A more recent and fruitful approach, therefore, has been to use social judgment theory and research to understand the process of creativity assessment (Kasof, 1995a). Although sparse, this work does provide a couple of suggestive clues about the processes that influence creativity judgments.

First, these studies show that, at least for lay social perceivers (people in day-to-day situations), assessments of others' creative potential are likely to be influenced by a variety of stereotypes based upon appearance and personality. Thus, when individuals attempt to assess another person's creative potential, they compare or match the person's perceived attributes (for instance, the level of passion or quirkiness they convey through their verbal and nonverbal behavior) with the features of their "implicit model" of creativity (Sternberg, 1990).

Second, this research suggests that such implicit models of creativity are typically organized in terms of a small number of basic categories or *prototypes* of creative people (Runco & Bahleda, 1986). As a result, as Katz and Giacomelli (1982) argued, "a 'creative person' schema or stereotype, activated when a person comes close to fulfilling the prototype, may cause observers to engage in biased topdown information processing in which they see people as being creative according to how they act or present themselves".

Although this previous research provides some insight into how experts in organizational settings might evaluate others' creative potential, it is limited in two important respects.

First, prior research has involved laypersons, such as undergraduate students participating in a laboratory experiment in exchange for course credit. For example, Katz and Giacomelli (1982) developed their framework of creativity perceptions by asking undergraduates to evaluate a picture of an artist in a studio and then sort adjectives into piles that described that picture.

Similarly, Sternberg (1985) asked undergraduates to rate the creativity of persons described in hypothetical letters of recommendation. Thus, it is far from clear how well, if at all, findings from these laboratory studies using non-experts generalize to organizational contexts involving expert judges who may use concrete information of their own.

A second major limitation of this existing research is that its reliance on laboratory settings required participants to assess others' creativity on the basis of purely abstract, hypothetical information and, equally important, in the absence of any contextual information or cues that may arise from *interaction* between targets and assessors. For example, although Katz and Giacomelli (1982) did employ professional artists in their study of creativity assessments, they did so by asking these experts to sort a list of adjectives describing their perceptions of ideally creative problem solvers, rather than by having them evaluate creativity in an interactive problem-solving task.

Thus, from the standpoint of their external validity, an important limitation of these studies is the failure to consider data collected in a dynamic context, for example an in-depth interview with creative employees themselves who have provenly created value for their organization.

Recognizing such limitations, Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 1999) has argued that theory and research on creativity should adopt a more "systemic" view of the process of assessing creative individuals and their products.

One important implication of this view is that both novelty and usefulness must be present for ideas to be considered creative. This helps to distinguish what is

creative from what is not creative. Outlandish, wild ideas can be creative but they are not necessarily so; they must also be seen as being useful in an organization or having the potential to create value to be considered as creative. Similarly, effective problem solving is certainly useful in organizations, but does not necessarily reflect creativity; in order for problem solving to be creative, generated solutions must be novel. Thus creativity is not the same thing as problem solving (Runco, 2004).

One attempt to adopt a more “systemic view” was made by Elsbach and Kramer (2003) who aimed to consider the characteristics of creative people. Based on their research aimed to identify creative people based on several characteristics they possess, they noted that creative people have several handicaps during an interview like appearing to be dull, being unpolished, untrained and anxious. In addition, they make obscure references, lack sophistication and experience, are passionate about their ideas and committed to their projects, possess a naivete which is associated with freshness and originality and focus on their job as a creative art form and not business.

On the other hand, uncreative people are too slick (try too hard, not believe in their ideas), appear too desperate, work too hard, get all dressed up and give a laundry (too many) list of ideas which means that they are not passionate and creative as they cannot be for all ideas on their list (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003).

The present study focuses on one important research question in an attempt to fill these gaps in the literature. When assessing the creative potential of employees in real world organizational settings, what characteristics can management actually attend to and use?

6.3 Research Methods

The single case study is used here inductively, in a manner consistent with Eisenhardt’s (1989) recommendations for building theory from case study research. According to Eisenhardt, “the case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings where the evidence may be only qualitative”. Case study research can be used to accomplish various aims including this study’s aim to generate theory from case study evidence (Harris & Sutton, 1986; Gersick, 1988).

The research was conducted at a South American media organization. The author at first conducted an initial interview with one of the top managers and asked several questions relating to the way the organization chooses its screenwriters.

6.3.1 Initial Interview with a Top Manager

The manager explained that 90 % of the organization’s screenwriters are in-house, after going through a detailed track of their performance. These writers are given a first chance, and based on how well they do they are then evaluated and given

further chances, and once they pass this first stage they are given the opportunity to be taught in specialised workshops to learn how to improve their writing. Thus the focus is on their record, what they have produced.

Usually these people are journalists and start as being authors, then directors, and then writers, so they go through a long process. Regarding the characteristics of successful writers, the top manager noted that there have been cases of people who started writing at a very early age, there was a case of a writer who started at the age of 4, writers are people who have read a lot in their lives, they have all been exposed to a lot of literature, poetry, a lot of them usually start to write in their school newspapers, are introverts, very “strange” people, people you never know what will come out of them, some even have difficulties paying their bills because they do not know how to deal with the bank, some do not even know how to use bank credit cards.

6.3.2 Case Study

The author used 32 in-depth interviews performed with the 32 top screen writers at the organization, whose creativeness led towards the production of highly-rated media programs. In these interviews the writers were requested to answer 21 questions about their personal lives and their writings, as well as issues they thought about and had to go through, leading towards the creation of the final media program (see Appendix).

The author analysed all data aiming to identify any personal characteristics that could help relate to creative people, according to the aim of the chapter.

6.4 Results

Based on the interviews analysed there seems to exist five general headings to classify the creative characteristics of the screenwriters interviewed. 1. Sentimental, 2. Self-aware, 3. Ethical/Honest, 4. Risky, 5. Ambiguous/Surprising, 6. Inspirational, 7. Self Confident/Determined.

6.4.1 Sentimental

During the interviews it became obvious that one of the main characteristics of a successful screenwriter was sentimentalism. For example, a screenwriter emphasized one of the roles he created for a woman whose love was so big that she did bad things to conquer the man she was in love with. The screenwriter explained that he felt so strong about it that in the end of the script he decided to make her a saint to remedy her (Table 6.1).

Several authors noted that they get so involved emotionally with their screen that they start to feel that what they write is real, the roles of people are real and that they

Table 6.1 Sentimental

Interview examples
1. "We get so involved emotionally with our screenwriting that we start to feel that what we write is real, the roles of people are real and that they live with us during the whole period the program is being aired"
2. "When the series is finished we feel sad because a life we lived has finished, people around us have died and we now have to construct a new life from the start, all over again"
3. "Reviewing the scenes of one of our big successes made us cry because they were so vivid of the period in question that made us relive that period of our life"

live with them during the whole period the program is being aired. As a result, when the series is finished they feel sad because a life they lived had finished, people around them have died and they now have to construct a new life from the start, all over again. Finally, there was a case of a screenwriter explaining how reviewing the scenes of one of his big successes made him cry because they were so vivid of the period in question that made him relive that period of his life.

6.4.2 Self-aware

Regarding the second characteristic, that of self-awareness, several authors stressed how he they do not get offended when actors add to their roles by themselves. If it is for the better and the authors like, they immediately incorporate and encourage people to continue doing so in the future (Table 6.2).

The authors interviewed acknowledged how they made errors in their writing that led to a lowering of the level and resulting ratings of the screen. In addition, authors explained how they are democratic, listening to comments made by their collaborators and even to the general public's comments made in all sort of public places, when they talk about their series, and which they always take into consideration when producing the remaining episodes.

Some authors explained how they made a mistake with the actors they chose to play in their series, good actors but inappropriate for the roles given. Also that they were not mature enough to touch on several themes and that as a result the series they produced was of a low level.

Several authors explained how they fought to achieve a high standard series but that they had full conscious when it was not done properly and felt very bad for that because they knew how it should be done but also knew that they did not manage to realise what they had in their head in the first instance.

One author explained that her reaction the first time this happened was to ask to become an assistant for the remaining episodes of the series, led by someone else, and even asked herself to be fired, which was what happened, because she felt that she was not ready to take the responsibility of being a sole writer. The curious thing is that although ratings up to that point were high she insisted that the quality of the media organization was the main reason for the high ratings her series achieved and not the quality of her series.

Table 6.2 Self-aware

Interview examples
1. "We do not get offended when actors add to their roles by themselves. If it is for the better and the we like, we immediately incorporate and encourage people to continue doing so in the future"
2. "We are democratic, listen to comments made by our collaborators and even to the general publics' comments made in all sort of public places, when they talk about our series"
3. "In the past we were not mature enough to touch on several themes and as a result the series we produced were of a low level"
4. "My reaction to the fact that the series did not achieve high standards at the start was to ask to become an assistant for the remaining episodes of the series, led by someone else, and even asked the manager myself to be fired, which was what happened, because I felt that I was not ready to take the responsibility of being a sole writer"

Another author explained how he reacted negatively when starting his career in a small media organization and was requested to prepare a series that would be very similar to a series broadcasted by a bigger media organization, hoping it would achieve high ratings. He explained that he disagreed, explaining to the manager involved that due to the fact that their organization did not have what it needed to produce a similar series, they should produce a series based on their own strengths and resources. The manager agreed to this and the series ended up being a real success.

6.4.3 Ethical/Honest

In relation to the third characteristic, that of being ethical and honest, one of the authors explained how he was shocked when he was invited to write a series for the first time, and that as a result he told the manager offering the job that he needed time to think because he did not feel up to the task which in the end turned down (Table 6.3).

Another writer explained that when she felt that writing a series with a co-author was not how it should be done, she was honest enough to tell the manager to let her go and do something else. There were also cases where authors turned down the opportunity to write a series telling the manager that they thought they were becoming repetitive, easily forecasted and people would not like to watch the series they would produce.

There was also the case of an author who noted how the first time he was offered to write something for TV he said no because he was not sure he would like to do so being in love with theatre at the time. When he later became an author of TV series and was offered to write on specific topics, after reading the synopsis and realising the topic had nothing to do with him he was honest enough to tell the manager that he did not know how to do it. When the manager insisted he remained firm in his position, something that caused a quarrel with the manager.

Several authors noted that being honest also appears in the themes of their scripts, because they believe that their series should not be manipulative, that

Table 6.3 Ethical/honest

Interview examples
1. "There are also cases where we turned down the opportunity to write a series telling the manager that we thought were becoming repetitive, easily forecasted and people would not like to watch the series we would produce"
2. "When I was offered to write on specific topics, after reading the synopsis and realizing the topic had nothing to do with me I was honest enough to tell the manager that I did not know how to do it. When the manager insisted I remained firm in my position"
3. "Solid values also appear in the themes of our scripts, because we believe that our series should not be manipulative, and that we have to treat things in a correct and decent way showing solid values"

they have to treat things in a correct and decent way showing solid values like for example that honesty is correct, ethics necessary, and that people should be generous and accomplices.

Finally, an author described how his name was included by chance on the list of possible writers given to two very rich businessmen who wanted to finance a series, and that when they came to offer him the job he told them face to face that he did not know how to write series because at that time he had never done it professionally, and did not accept the offer.

6.4.4 Risky

All writers had this characteristic in common. They were prepared to leave their jobs aiming to find what they really wanted to do professionally, and were never worried about the risk of changing jobs on a regular basis. One author explained how he was so tired of his initial job as a journalist for police matters that 1 day he went onto the room of his boss, where he was not allowed to enter, and asked the boss to fire him (Table 6.4).

Another author explained how she was not very interested in her initial job and quit, then even left her country looking for a job abroad, a year later returned, decided to study law at the university, which was her initial desire, and then gave up everything to try her luck in a media organization.

A risk-lover writer accepted to write a script without any prior experience, but that he had to accept because luck knocks on people's door only once in life. Later on, he even took a greater risk when he replaced a writer who was sick in the middle of his series writing, and as a result he had to watch all episodes up to that point and continue the writing under immense time pressure to finish the remaining episodes on time.

There were authors who took the risk to introduce something new in their writing, that of creating a series with only famous actors, write independently for each one, and then putting all stories together to create their series. The risk was that this was something new for spectators, a leap in the darkness, and totally contrary to what had been done and people expected from a TV series.

Table 6.4 Risky

Interview examples

1. "We were prepared to leave our jobs aiming to find out what we really wanted to do professionally, and were never worried about the risk of changing jobs on a regular basis"
2. "I accepted to write a script without any prior experience but had to accept because luck knocks on people's door only once in life. I then even took a greater risk when I replaced a writer who was sick in the middle of his series writing, and as a result had to watch all episodes up to that point and continue the writing under immense time pressure"
3. "We took the risk to introduce something new in our writing, that of creating a series with only famous actors, write independently for each one, and then putting all stories together to create the series"

6.4.5 Ambiguous/Surprising

The writers explained how their writing reflected on life where things happen in a strange form, uncommon and absurd, that creates the element of surprise and ambiguity. This even appears in the casting where they choose actors not expected to play a specific role, aiming to create the element of surprise to both the spectators and actors themselves (Table 6.5).

The element of ambiguity and surprise appears in the writing of a writer where for example he noted how a violent aggressive scene even caught him by surprise and caused strong feelings to the public as a result. Ambiguity can also result from the topic of the series when it relates to a social issue people are afraid to talk about and also when they decide to create a story where the roles are ambiguous and there is no clear distinction between good and bad people because people are partly good and partly bad. According to several authors people can be classified into a category but during their lives they may get out of that category and enter a new one.

Several authors explained how they are ready to go over the societal limits and tell stories that are not within the normal sphere of society, stories that will create discussions about issues neither classified by society clearly nor discussed a lot in the past, thus aiming to offend people and provoke. As a result they create challenges and conflicts, make people think whether the actor is wright in doing what he is doing in his role, and thus create public discussions which the authors believe help society consider ambiguous topics.

6.4.6 Inspirational

Many authors explained how the funny side of life produces inspiration for them because at the end of the day life is funny, ridiculous and sometimes dramatic. This funny side gives the spectator the opportunity to escape from everyday problems. They added that they get inspiration from journals, newspapers, stories they hear in a supermarket or in any other place they may go during a day, political stories, things they had paid attention from their adultery, small details they had noticed in everyday life (a queue of pregnant women of a very young age in a hospital), their

Table 6.5 Ambiguous/surprising

Interview examples
1. "Our writing reflects on life where things happen in a strange form, uncommon and absurd, that creates the element of surprise and ambiguity. This even appears in the casting where we choose actors not expected to play specific roles"
2. "Ambiguity can also result from the topic of the series when it relates to a social issue people are afraid to talk about and also when we decide to create a story where the roles are ambiguous and there is no clear distinction between good and bad people because people are partly good and partly bad"
3. "We are ready to go over the societal limits and tell stories that are not within the normal sphere of society, stories that will create discussions about issues neither classified by society clearly nor discussed a lot in the past, thus aiming to offend people and provoke"
4. "We create challenges and conflicts, and thus create public discussions which we believe help society consider ambiguous topics"

Table 6.6 Inspirational

Interview examples
1. "We get inspiration from journals, newspapers, stories we hear in a supermarket or in any other place we may go during a day, political stories, things we had paid attention from our adultery, small details we have noticed in everyday life"
2. "We may get inspired by the lyrics of a music song, and even a photo in the room of someone we may see. Inspiration can also be the result of things we always wanted to do in our lives"
3. "We may also be inspired during the writing of a series due to the difficulties we may face, like for example an actor who suddenly becomes sick and cannot act for some time, forcing us to re-adjust the writing of the story"
4. "Our inspiration is also the result of our immense need to imagine, fantasize, something that will help us achieve equilibrium and calm in our everyday routines, and a need for adventure which can be satisfied by inventing things"

intuition about what the spectators would either like or expect to see, making sure their writing accounts for these (Table 6.6).

Several authors noted that they get inspired by small things that occur around them on a daily basis and explained how they incorporate and mix in their writings to create their stories. They also mentioned how they may get inspired by a book, a cinema story, a theatre show, a talk with people while waiting for the dentist, and in general how they keep their ears open and let everything come in.

Others said that sometimes they may get inspired by the lyrics of a music song, and even a photo in the room of someone they may see. Inspiration according to the authors could also be the result of things a writer always wanted to do in his life. According to one author when a writer keeps thinking of how things he sees in everyday life can become part of a series that means he is still interested in his job.

A writer may also be inspired during the writing of a series according to several authors, due to the difficulties they may face like for example an actor who suddenly becomes sick and cannot act for some time, forcing the writer to re-adjust the writing of the story to account for the unexpected event.

It is the writers' opinion that their inspiration may be something totally new, in which case they have to introduce it slowly for spectators to be able to understand and accept, like for example an inspiration to have a male ballet dancer and a female car mechanic.

Finally the authors stressed that their inspiration is also the result of their immense need to imagine, fantasize, something that will help them achieve equilibrium and calm in their everyday routines, and a need for adventure which can be satisfied by inventing things in their series.

6.4.7 Self-confident/Determined

One of the authors explained how at the age of 16 he sent a letter to a writing competition with the story he wrote saying that he was a rare case of precocity and intuition (Table 6.7).

Another author mentioned that when he was offered to participate in a series, even without having any prior experience, he decided to try because he believed in himself. The same author mentioned how determined she was in her jobs, up to the point of even fighting with the leading author of the series who wanted to terminate the series well in advance.

Several authors mentioned that they always had the ambition to always be remembered as the main authors of important series in their lives. Their belief for the series they wrote was so immense that they stressed that it had become very important due to the fact that the best people worked to create them and that when compared to the rest of the world their series are dense, profound, better achieved, and considered artistic manifestations. The authors added that they were not worried about spectators moving towards internet programs and away from TV series, because the series they produce are much bigger than anything the internet can offer.

The authors added that their series were among the biggest moments of the TV, reaching the highest points they could possibly reach in the television drama, TV direction, role interpretation, photography, acting, research, keeping as a result a significant audience interested in them.

Table 6.7 Self-confident/determined

Interview examples
1. "At the age of 16 I sent a letter to a writing competition with the story I wrote saying that I was a rare case of precocity and intuition"
2. "The series we wrote had become very important due to the fact that the best people worked to create them and that when compared to the rest of the world ours are much more dense, profound, better achieved, and considered artistic manifestations"
3. "We did not want to do things the way they are done by others up to now but do things the way we like and believe they should be done"
4. "We feel the need to always do something new, which comes out of the restlessness that we have inside of us. The only way to change society is by not fearing change. It is necessary to open up new ways and make people trust our choices without fear"

There were authors who noted that they did not want to do things the way they were done by others up to now but that they wanted to do things the way they liked and believed they should be done. If they would succeed in doing something new then it would be super, if not then it would be their problem. Doing the same things because they will probably give poor results does not contribute in anything, what gives them pleasure is to abuse and try new ways. These authors felt the need to always do something new, which comes out of the restlessness that they have inside of them. According to the authors the only way to change society is by not fearing change. It is necessary to open up new ways and make people trust the authors' choices without fear.

6.5 Contribution

The major purpose of this chapter was to assess the creativity of individuals in a media organization by identifying the characteristics associated with their creative potential, aiming to select those who exhibit relatively high levels of these personal qualities and use their services to create value for the media organization.

This was done based on the analysis of data collected from in-depth interviews with the top 32 screenwriters of a South American media organization, whose creativity led to the production of top rated media programs during the last few years.

When the various comments of the writers are viewed together there seems to appear very interesting patterns.

First, the interviews showed the academic literature's emphasis on several characteristics that creative people appear to have (Amabile, 1988, 1996; Kahn, 1990; Feist, 1998; Sternberg, 1999; Elsbach & Kramer, 2003). Interestingly, in some cases there seems to be a mix up leading towards a contradiction between the characteristics described by the authors, where on the one hand the authors stress the characteristic of honesty in not taking up a specific job or even asked to be taken off a specific screenwriting duty because they did not consider themselves up to the necessary standards, but at the same time stress the importance of taking up risks, that is taking up a writer's job without any prior experience up to the point of replacing a writer in the middle of a series.

Importantly, when this is taken in conjunction with the writers' request to their managers to fire them because they felt they were not up to the task they had at the time, there seems to be a case of realisation from the writers' point of view (Volkema, Farquhar, & Bergmann, 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Caves, 2000; George & Zhou, 2007), an intuition on how to deal with every specific situation.

The adoption of this characteristic helps us explain the writers' characteristic described as self-awareness. Firstly there seems to be the need from the writers to incorporate comments and suggestions made by people working with them, and secondly this self-awareness leads towards a continuous self-criticism that makes the writers aware of their achievements or non-achievements and the reasons why (Torrance, 1988; Ford, 1996; Runco, 2004; George, 2007).

This seems to create a pragmatic circle where the writers become honest to both themselves and their manager, and as a result judging matters based on this pragmatism, even cynicism to consider the way forward.

It is notable however that there seems to be a need for clarification at this stage because although previous literature stresses the sentimental and inspirational characteristics of creative individuals (Kasof, 1995b; Amabile, 1988, 1996; Glynn, 1996), this study points to the need to recognize that this may be related to a different concept, that of pragmatism which may be the inspiration for the writers' sentimentalism. This is something calling for future studies.

Probably, this pragmatic approach by the writers leads towards another major characteristic they possess, that of ambiguity. Recall that the writers explained the importance of dealing with topics people are afraid to talk about, are challenging for the society and create conflicts, and that the themes of their writing should not be manipulative, highlighting real life values. This could be the result of their cynicism and realism in looking at things, the pragmatism explained earlier which seems to become a major part of their writing. This result thus can serve as a major step in addressing the author's initial thought on the specific characteristic creative people possess.

When the data were considered together, some other themes also appear, for example the element of surprise that can come up at any stage which seems to act as an inspiration (Torrance, 1988; London, 2001; Kelley, 2001; Elsbach & Kramer, 2003). The creative individual may suddenly decide her work is not of the appropriate level and give up, may suddenly decide to change actors, scripts, introduce a novel element in his writing called by some authors a leap in the darkness, disagree with the manager and give up, and all these because she seems to believe in the necessity to change society without fearing her choices.

This necessity seems to be a key in our understanding of the internal world of creative people and the specific characteristics they possess. Recall that their inspiration comes mainly from real life stories they hear about or notice to happen during their everyday life routine, paying close attention to small details they may come across.

This can help explain why they want to innovate and do new things in their writing, the way they believe things should be done, without fearing to open up new ways which society can trust to follow (House, Rousseau, & Thomas-Hunt, 1995; Mumford & Gustafson, 1988; Sutton, 2002; Shalley et al., 2004). This is probably why the writers get so involved with their writing that they feel the roles they create are real, alive, and feel their loss when the series is finished, having to create a new life all the way from the start.

6.6 Limitations

It is important to recognize some limitations of this study. In interpreting these results, it must be recognized that the study dealt with one particular type of media product in one setting and included only 32 writers. Thus while the findings suggest the need for future research, they must be interpreted cautiously.

6.7 Conclusions

This chapter addressed the characteristics creative screenwriters in a media organization possess. The results are derived from a single case study and thus are at best suggestive. This study arose from concern that little was known about the characteristics of creative screenwriters. Although a case study of this sort cannot provide generalised results, it did yield some important insights into an underdeveloped topic.

Specifically, the findings extend previous research by identifying specific characteristics writers possess in at least a specific setting. Further, the author can argue that the characteristics studied were considerably richer and more nuanced than those encountered in previous literature. We thus believe that the study on the characteristics of creative people may be advanced by the way successful writers view their job.

Interestingly, although a lot of the literature focuses on sentimental and inspirational characteristics of these people (Feist, 1998; Sternberg, 1999; Elsbach & Kramer, 2003), the present study highlighted a more pragmatic, realistic and in some cases even cynic side of these people. This is probably the reason why they get inspired from real life stories happening on a daily basis, aiming through their writing to surprise society and open up new ways for people to follow. This may highlight an important difference from previous literature where academics were more focusing on a sentimental romantic characteristic, rather than a pragmatic societal aim for real change. Future inquiry into this difference could be a good direction for future research.

Appendix

List of matters discussed during the interviews

1. At what age did you start to work? Why? Did you also have another job at that time? Until when and why did you stay in your first job?
2. Did you like screenwriting at that time?
3. What was your first writing?
4. Describe your first job and the reasons why you decided to move to a new one. Describe your new job.
5. How did you get into screenwriting?
6. Describe your first screenwriting job and your cooperation with colleagues
7. What was your inspiration? How did you feel writing a screen? What is the main characteristic of your writing and why?
8. How do you create the characters of your screenwriting? Is there one you really like and why? How do you decide the end of the characters in the screenwriting?
9. How do you decide on what character will grow in your writing?
10. What is your relationship with the public? Do you keep checking ratings?

11. How do you guarantee the suspense in your writing?
12. Do you get inspiration from your autobiography?
13. Do you deliberately create polemics to guarantee success?
14. How do the moral values of the public influence your work? What ethical issues should you worry about?
15. How do you face up to unexpected events happening like the case of a leading actor getting sick?
16. Describe a scene you consider emblematic and the reasons why you consider it as such
17. Is the end of your screenwriting predetermined?
18. Why do you usually change the characters of the actors and what is your inspiration for doing this?
19. How do you respond to low ratings? How do you evaluate your work?
20. What is your fictional universe?
21. What do you feel when a series starts and finishes?

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One of the most common thoughts of Karl Weick was the following: How can I know what I think until I see what I say? A concluding chapter will give the author the chance to tell what he thinks after saying what he said in the previous chapters.

The author continues to think that in media management studies there is a mainstream management's neglect due to the fact that mainstream management scholars have largely neglected the media industry (Lampel, Lant, & Shamsie, 2000).

In order to fill this gap, the author suggests that media management needs a way of thinking that aims to apply mainstream management constructs to media organizations in order to develop media management theory that is original and useful. Original means theory that either advances understanding incrementally or advances understanding in a way that provides some form of revelation, useful means practically and scientifically useful (Corley & Gioia, 2011).

This book aims to advance our understanding incrementally and develop theory that is practically useful because the author believes that people who manage media organizations need to be able to apply the knowledge to the practice of management (Van de Ven, 1989) and more specifically to real life phenomena they need to deal with on a regular basis in a high velocity media industry.

To achieve this aim the author focused on the dynamics of a major mainstream management construct, employee engagement, and considered its value to achieve the necessary employee sensemaking in order to introduce change successfully and attain organizational development and employee creativity.

The author decided to use the qualitative method of inductive case study research conducted in several media organizations around the world because the anecdotal data that can be collected via in-depth interviews and secondary sources enables researchers to do the building (Mintzberg, 1979; Eisenhardt, 1989) due to the fact that the closeness achieved can lead to an intimate sense of things (Mintzberg, 1979) and develop theory that closely mirrors reality (Eisenhardt, 1989).

This study led the author to several interesting practical theory stemmed from the case studies performed relating to the way: (1) Employee engagement can be achieved by management via a communication process and (2) the provision of organizational arrangements for participation (3) Employee engagement implementation can lead towards employee creativeness (4) Management can assess employee creativity.

7.1 Communication Process to Achieve Employee Engagement

It is the author's opinion that management needs to provide employees with information that relates to their area of operation, is relevant to a particular operation/decision, adequate, controllable and timely.

Management can assist employees understand and appreciate the information provided by regularly expressing confidence to them, clearly defining their responsibilities and involving them with its production.

Also, in order for employees to be able to use the information to get engaged, management needs to provide them with technical training, ensure each employee receives all assigned information and utilize a system of feedback and adjustments.

In sum, management accelerates employee understanding, achieves a team work spirit, and engages in a behavior that can build the employees' sense of control with respect to their engagement.

7.2 Organizational Arrangements for Participation Leading Towards Employee Engagement

Regarding the organizational arrangements for participation necessary to achieve employee engagement the author reached several conclusions.

To achieve employee engagement management needs to (1) gain the support of employees, their unions and of managers at different levels, (2) provide empowerment practices like employee development and operational freedom (3) ensure employee engagement leads to valued outcomes and (4) establish a mechanism for the disclosure and subsequent solution of employee problems without delay.

This study revealed that the idea of engagement places much more emphasis on explaining and convincing than is evident in typical academic treatments where a tone of mutual influence seems to be evident and that management needs to take a proactive stance when aiming to achieve the necessary employee engagement.

7.3 Employee Engagement Implementation Leading Towards Employee Creativity

The author also considered how the implementation of employee engagement can lead towards employee creativeness.

More specifically, the study concluded that management can encourage employees to get engaged and be creative (1) during the recruitment process (2) by establishing evaluation and empowerment practices (expressions of confidence, job autonomy) that are directly related to employee creativeness (3) by using both monetary and non-monetary methods, and (4) by creating an environment of trust and open-door communication.

This study's emergent view thus emphasizes (1) how the recruitment method can help management to both identify new recruits motivated to get engaged and encourage them to create according to the organization's needs (2) the importance of motivating employees to get engaged by initially aiming to ensure they are able to create, and finally (3) the importance of management commitment towards the process of employee engagement that is directly related to employee creativeness, suggesting that to achieve this management needs to both ensure and demonstrate to employees that their engagement is true and valid.

7.4 Assessing Employee Creativity

Employee engagement can lead towards employee creativity. A major issue for management therefore is to be able to assess employee creativity in order to identify creative employees and take maximum benefits from their value-creative potential.

This study identified several individual characteristics directly related to creative employees that can help management assess employee creativity.

More specifically, employees who are creative seem to be sentimental, self-aware, ethical/honest, risky, ambiguous, surprising, inspirational, determined and self-confident.

The author concluded that creative people seem to possess an intuition on how to deal with every specific situation they have to face.

Moreover, their self-awareness leads towards a continuous self-criticism where the creative individual judges matters based on pragmatism, which can even become cynicism, in order to consider the way forward at work. This pragmatism may be a source of their inspiration, because it can lead towards their sentimentalism.

Their cynicism also seems to relate to the ambiguity of their character and the resulting element of surprise which can become obvious at any stage of their work, mainly because they seem to believe in the necessity to change society without fearing for their choices.

Finally, this necessity to change society can help explain why they feel the need to be creative without fearing to open up new ways which society can trust to follow and why they get so passionate and involved with their jobs.

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