Internal communication in B2B context

- A case study at Electrolux

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Conducting this study has been a valuable experience, where the authors have gained extended experience and knowledge from a theoretical and an organizational perspective. The authors believe that this study will bring them significant knowledge throughout their professional careers and will be an important experience in the future.

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Abstract

Effective internal communication is an important factor for organizational success. Organizations need to evaluate and improve their internal communication especially in an increasingly difficult and competitive economic environment. In this regard, measurement instruments enable organizations to monitor communication effectiveness of internal communication systems (Ruck & Welch, 2012). The focus for this study will be the concept of internal communication within an organization.

In order to establish and identify the purpose of the study a literature review was performed that examined the existing research within the field. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence the effectiveness of internal communication from the employee perception at the logistic department of Electrolux. Three research questions were then conducted in order to answer the purpose.

The study has been conducted through a case study in the form of in-depth interviews. The study was carried out through 11 interviews with employees from the logistic department of Electrolux Laundry System AB in Ljungby.

In the current business environment a formal way of strategically handle the communication that is practiced within an organization is needed in relation to higher competitive advantage. The study reveals that Electrolux logistic center is not practicing this in any higher degree in accordance to the theory of effective communication. No clear goal regarding communication or measuring communication was identified. In accordance to this practical managerial implication was concluded based on these findings. The presented research model done was suggested to be developed as a further research.
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1 Introduction

Effective internal communication is an important factor for organizational success. Organizations need to evaluate and improve their internal communication especially in an increasingly difficult and competitive economic environment. This chapter presents an introduction to the research study and background, followed by a problem discussion, proposing research purpose, research questions and ending with delimitations and the outline of the thesis.

1.1 Background

All enterprises are at some degree attempting to create and pursue competitive advantage by being more internally efficient within the organization (Powell, 2001). The general questions that arise according to Powell (2001) are:

- What is competitive advantage?
- Is it sustained superior performance compared to competitors?
- Does it involve in having only one or more sustained competitive advantages that stands out? (Powell, 2001).

Previous research explains that there are no longer anything called long-term competitive advantage (Goldsmith, 2013). He further more discuss that in order for companies to maintain a competitive edge, a company must constantly update and improve what makes them have a competitive advantage. By doing this, companies can better reach their financial goals. Meeting these financial goals and becoming competitive successful against a competitor is a part of every companies' agenda (ibid).

Organizational communication is an influential factor in determining firm’s competitive advantage. There are two types of organizational communication, internal and external. External communication in academic literature has long seemed to be the traditional focus of B2B organizations. To increase their competitive advantage in external communication companies can involve advertising, improve public relations and use marketing channels. However in recent years, the attention on internal communication and its benefits has grown. Communication from employees between the external and internal environment is now regarded as one of the main factor of success and competitive advantage (Chong & Chain, 2007). This is because
employees are the main contacts to external stakeholders, which they communicate the values and aim of the organization. Therefore employees are required to not only understand the brand values but also to act and behave appropriately towards that. This explains the need for establishing sustainable internal communication within a corporation. A dependable internal communication is a vital factor for the employees to be intrigued to deliver the brand values out to the external environment (ibid). A company that has established a separate internal communication department often receives higher employee engagement and better reputation, which explains the importance that internal communication has for reaching organizational goals (ibid).

The need of an effective internal communication system is of great importance and the outcome is even greater, but in order to sustain an effective internal communication system there are factors that need to be considered (Yates, 2006). Companies have to consider and evaluate their employees’ perception of these systems and also the factors that may influence the effectiveness of internal communication from their perspective. It is a continuing process to sustain effective internal communication where organizations need to monitor the driving factors that influence the process (ibid).

Yates (2006) argues that organizations need to understand the role that communication plays in driving behavior that supports business objectives. In other words, high effective organizations focus on communication and keeping employees aware of the vision and goals of the organization in order to create an understanding of what is important to communicate (Yates, 2006). In that aspect, the managerial behavior has to be monitored. High effectiveness organizations rely on managers to communicate company goals, work performance, and objectives to the employees. Communication through managers and supervisors is vital to business success because it is those who have the most daily contact with their employees. The importance of communicating the company goals to employees and helping them understand how their actions influence the results is a communication practice that highly effective companies recognize and pursue (Ibid).

One of the main tools in internal communication is electronic mail system. Electronic mail system has for a long time been one of the most effective ways of communication within the organization and out to the external environment. In B2B
environment, it is a crucial tool for contact between customers and suppliers were it is used frequently on a daily basis by employees because of its more complex nature of interaction due to the global operations. For instance, the amount of e-mails that a logistics center handles every day is so large that a dependable and efficient system is of high importance. This is because a flaw in the communication may lead to e-mails that result in a worse customer relation. With usage of e-mail increasing, the system has been questioned for being a threat to itself because of the fast information flow, were this risk is that it will lead to information overload were the control and the efficiency of the e-mails will be at the expense (Hewitt, 2006).

1.1.1 Company presentation – Electrolux

In 1921, two students from Royal institute of Technology in Stockholm developed a product called “Model V”. The Model V was a portable vacuum designed for ease of use and home facilities. Model V was the revolutionary beginning of the Electrolux group. The success regarding the vacuum cleaner was tremendous. In the 1960th, due to the success the Electrolux group decided to expand which led to an investment into the white goods market and fast became one of the market leaders of this segment. In 1984, Electrolux Group merged with the Italian Zanuzzi and its subsidiaries in Spain. This merge made Electrolux to the number one market leader in Europe regarding white goods (household and food service equipment). Two years later in 1986, a new merger was proposed and completed in 1989 on the American market. This was a very important step due to expansion globally and increased the overall market share for the corporation. The merge made Electrolux enter the third largest white goods franchise and expanded their business portfolio regarding outdoor products (Electrolux.se).

In 1994, a important restructuring program was started in the Electrolux Group and in 1997, Electrolux expanded into the industrial products sector – 2B2 and this has become a high value segment for the corporation. In 1998, the core business comprised to household appliances, professional appliances and Outdoor products. This reconstruction of the corporation was made to increase profitability and the Electrolux group sale was in 2013 117 Billion SEK (Electrolux.se).
1.1.2 Electrolux Laundry Systems Sweden AB.

One of the B2B plants of the Electrolux Group is located in Ljungby - Sweden and has its focuses on professional equipment (Electrolux.se). Electrolux Laundry System (ELS), was first merged in 2004 but at first, the plant was referred to as Wascator AB. This was an independent corporation and the name was inherited from a 50-50 mix between “washing” and “lavatory”. 1973 Electrolux Group was impressed with Wascator AB and its progress on the market and decided to purchase the plant of Wascator AB. The plant was at first called Electrolux-Wascator AB and in 2004, the transformation into Electrolux Group became complete which the plant operates in today (Electrolux.se).

ELS in Ljungby have its focus on professional equipment and have a sales turnover of 40 million products in 150 countries all over the world. There are three plants in the world, which produce professional equipment for the Electrolux group. Ljungby, Sweden and Rayong, Thailand produce washing machines and dryers and the plant in Troyes, France has its focus on ironers and barrier washes (Electrolux.se).

1.2 Problem Discussion

Implementation of a good internal communication system may be very complicated and should be taken into consideration in which way it is implemented. However, experts and expert practices are often neglected within the organizational boundaries. The question then arises of how to know when organizations should pursue a practice of internal benchmarking and, most importantly, what is the most effective method for utilize this process? (Southard & Parente, 2007).

Developing communication plans is a practice more and more companies are pursuing, however the majorities are still not engaged in it actively. In high-effectiveness companies less than 50% are doing active communication planning and in low-effectiveness companies only 25% is engaged in practice (Yates, 2006). An area that the engagement also is low is the area of communicating feedback to employees. Among high-effectiveness companies, less than 33% give employees the opportunity to provide meaningful input into decisions, and only 25% reflects on employees’ input on how the business is run which is an important driving factor for effective internal communication (ibid).
The study of Yates (2006) shows that compared to previous study, there are a 10 percent higher frequency of companies that use formal communication measures. However, less than 25 % of high-effectiveness companies measures extensively to validate the contribution that communication makes to achieve business results (Ibid).

Companies that are working in a global marketplace need to establish best practices and processes to enable managers and employees to openly share information with offshore operations in an efficient way (Yates, 2006). Therefore, the perception of the managers and the employees are important to investigate in because of the impact it has on organizational values (ibid). Communication challenges become more complex as companies become increasingly more global and the study of Yates (2006) states that fewer than 50 % of the global companies perceives themselves doing a good job of communicating with their employees and business units around the globe (Yates, 2006).

This may be an effect of the fact that a great share of company’s lacks a documented global strategy. Less than 30 % of the high-effectiveness companies and only 9 % for low effectiveness companies pursues such strategy.

Another reason could be that many companies disregard to customize the corporate message for other countries. Companies seem to rely on local managers to interpret and deliver the message but provide little training or support to assist the managers (Yates, 2006).

Mazzei (2010) argues in her findings that a key issue in internal communication is to identify the most important active communication behaviors. Mazzei (2010) explains further that managers have to create activation strategies in order to decrease inactivity. To be able to manage these issues the internal communication departments have to motivate, train and coach employees through programs to improve the communication competencies and increase organizational trust (ibid).

Employees within organizations are more and more likely to use electronic mail systems when communicating with coworkers, customers and other colleagues (Byron, 2008). This increases the information sharing and productivity within an organization but it has also introduced challenges. One of those is miscommunication of emotion through email, which affects the perception of the message. The failure of accurately communicate emotion may inhibit the relationship between coworkers,
employees and customers (Byron, 2008). Emotion provides information to guide behavior and if employees who inaccurately interpret others’ emotions will not make the right informed decisions regarding their behavioral response (ibid). Therefore, it is of a great importance to study the factors that are influential in success or failure of internal communication strategies from firms’ employee’s point of view.

1.3 Purpose
The purpose of this study is to investigate factors that influence the effectiveness of the internal communication from the employees’ perceptions of Electrolux internal communication system.

1.4 Research question
RQ1: How does Electrolux communicate with their international sales offices and what are the negative and positive aspects of the communication system used?
RQ2: How is the efficiency of internal communication measured in Electrolux and what tools are used for that purpose?
RQ3: How could the internal communication system be improved to gain competitive advantage?

1.5 Delimitations
Due to the complexity, scope and size regarding communication as a topic, the authors have come to the decision that an investigation regarding the whole internal communication system at the Electrolux Group is too large of extent that it would be hard to collect data within the time limit for this bachelor thesis. The authors have therefor decided to investigate the logistics department.

Therefor is the collection of data only made at the logistics department in Ljungby, Sweden. The chosen location of the plant is because of the relevance of the location of the authors, which are operating from Växjö (Sweden), 50km east from Ljungby.

According to Hewitt (2006), the main communication within B2B is done by internal communication tools such as email, which is a crucial factor in gaining company success. Therefore has the authors chosen just to focus in the communication related with B2B. Regarding the field of internal communication B2B there has been a lack of research in which it appears and the authors are therefor interested in investigating this field of business.
1.6 Outline of the thesis

To give the reader an extended view of how this thesis will be outlined, the authors have constructed figure 1.1 to discuss basic information of each chapter provided in this bachelor thesis.

Table 1.1 Outline of the thesis

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2 Literature review

This chapter presents a theoretical framework that the authors have chosen to utilize with regards to the purpose of the research. The objective with this chapter is with the help of relevant academic literature present an argument that will support the research and explain the need for it. The figure 2.1 shows the framework of the literature review and how the topics connect to each other. The chapter is divided into three sections, communication, performance measurement tools and competitive advantage.

![Figure 2.1: Framework of literature review](image)

2.1 Communication

Communication is a broad subject, which is involved in many aspects of life. If studying communication in organizational environments the definition of communication is defined by Du Plessis and Boshoff (2008) as the use of a medium to convey a message between individuals or groups and it is a means of relating to each other. Moreover, Ferreira (2006) described communication as a transaction where participants together create meaning through the exchange of symbols. The symbols can in that sense be verbal, non-verbal and graphic (ibid). The communication process proceeds through the following steps:
• The message is conceived and encoded by the sender via a particular chosen route/channel to the receiver (Ferrier, 2006).

• The receiver then decodes and interprets the message (Ferrier, 2006).

In the scientific and academic study of Van der Walt et al (2006) have stated that there are two general views about the role of communication. The first view is concerned with how accurately and efficiently messages can be transferred from one person to another. This view attempts to identify ways of increasing clarity and accuracy of the message and concentrates on improving the tools and techniques that promote efficient communication. This view also perceives that communication is a linear, one-way process of events from one person to another, which implies that communication is only about the transmission of messages (Van der Walt et al, 2006). The second view argues that in addition to the transmission of messages, communication is involved in the interpretation of messages. This view regards communication as complex, dynamic, never-ending and ever-changing. The central assumption to this perspective is that people actively interpret their experience by assigning meaning to the information they are exposed to (ibid).

### 2.1.1 Internal communication

Internal communication, which also is referred to as organizational communication is defined by Plessis and Boshoff (2008) as:

“*The communication between people working together to achieve individual or collective organizational goals*” (Plessis and Boshoff 2008, p.13).

The more general definition of internal communication is explained as the communication flow among people within an organization, which aims to manage and distribute the internal information flow. The focus lays also in sharing corporate values and missions to increase commitment and creating a climate for active communication behaviors such as commitment, knowledge sharing, collaboration and creativity (Mazzei, 2010).

Promoting active communication behaviors is according to Mazzei (2010) the main objective of internal communication because knowledge and commitment are generated
through social interactions between employees and with the external environment (ibid).

It is often claimed that an effective internal communication is essential for a positive external corporate image because internal communication should be used to enable and improve external communication (Mazzei, 2010).

2.1.2 Effective communication
Ferreira (2006) explains that effective communication is when the message communicated from the sender to the receiver is interpreted with the same meaning that the sender intended to. According to Yates (2006) effective internal communication increase business performance, organizational turnover and is a leading indicator to financial performance. To reach that kind of result an organization has to focus on certain areas. Some of the areas that Yates (2006) claims an effective communication organization is focusing on are: Educating employees about organizational culture and values. Helping employees understand the business. Aligning employees’ actions with customer needs. These areas are vital for employee engagement and are the components of communication in an effective organization. The relationship between high communication effectiveness and high financial and organizational performance are reflected in the figure 2.2 where it is illustrated how effective communication practices drives the employee engagement, commitment and productivity which results in superior business performance (ibid).

![Figure 2.2 Communication Effectiveness Drives. Adopted from (Yates 2006p. 72).](image-url)
Yates (2006) explains further that the relationship connection of effective internal communication to high financial performance and the result of that practice are claimed with four key findings of her study.

- **Increased shareholder value:** which showed under a five year period that companies with high communication effectiveness has 57 percent higher total return to shareholders (TRS) than companies with low communication effectiveness (Yates, 2006).

- **Higher market premium:** Yates (2006) claims that higher communication effectiveness is associated with a higher market premium. “*Market premium - the extent to which a company’s market value exceeds the cost of its assets*” (Yates 2006, p.73). Companies that communicate more effectively earn a higher market premium than their less effective peers (Yates, 2006).

- **Leading indicator of financial performance:** The study Yates (2006) has presented is showing that communication effectiveness is “*a driver rather than an outcome of strong financial performance*” (Yates 2006, p.73).

- **Higher employee engagement:** Yates (2006) presents that the organizations with high effective communicators were more than 4.5 times more likely to have highly engaged employees, which positioned them for better financial results (ibid).

Top performing companies are engaged in very specific communication practices that bring in quantifiable results, which can be shown in the figure 2.3 called “hierarchy of effective communication” down below. For improving internal communication each practice has a vital role but it is the collaboration of all practices that delivers an effective communication framework. There are three dimensions within the hierarchy that includes nine communication practices, those dimensions are the foundation stage, the strategic stage and the behavioral stage (Yates, 2006).
Figure 2.3 Hierarchy of effective communication. Adopted from Yates (2006 p. 74).

The Foundation stage: A good foundation of four communication practices is the starting point for effective communication (Yates, 2006). He further more explained the four steps as:

- A formal communication process
- Employee input
- Links between desired behavior and employee compensation
- Effective use of technology (ibid)

The Strategic stage: The practices on the strategic level support internal communication with business objectives and employee communication (Yates, 2006).

- Facilitate organizational change
- Focus on continuous improvement
- Connect employees to the business strategy (Yates, 2006).

The Behavioral stage: The behavioral stage uses communication to increase employee commitment by focusing on the relationship between employees and their leaders, with communication practices designed to;
Drive changes in the behavior of managers and supervisors that enable them to support senior management’s vision through their actions

Work through these key managers and supervisors to draw a clear line of sight between employees’ jobs and business outcomes (Yates, 2006).

2.1.3 Knowledge Transfer
Knowledge transfer is described by Major & Cordey-Hayes (2000), as the conveyance of knowledge from one place, person or ownership to another. The transfer of knowledge consists of a source and a destination, the original holder of the knowledge and where the knowledge is transferred too (ibid). In theory the transfer process is outlined in the following way. The source selects a message, which then is encoded by a transmitter into a signal. A receiver receives the signal, which then becomes subject to noise. This decodes the signal into a message, which then reaches the destination (Major & Cordey-Hayes, 2000). In the market view of knowledge transfer in an organizational context, knowledge is treated as a good that moves in a knowledge market. A knowledge market exists within organizations and there are two groups of participants in a knowledge transfer process: knowledge senders and knowledge receivers (Lin et al 2005). The knowledge sender as well as the knowledge receiver can be an individual, a team or an organization. Researchers have argued that the ability to leverage valuable knowledge within the organization is critical to building competitive advantage. Knowledge in itself is not the desired end-state, but part of a creation or transfer process (Bou-Llusar & Segarra-Cipres, 2006).

2.1.4 Intercultural communication
Intercultural communication has mainly been described in terms of national differences disturbing the sending and receiving of messages (Lauring, 2010). In general it involves the study of the process of communication between people from different cultures (Learning Material, 2006). When people from the same culture communicate, the message is interpreted by the receiver based on values, beliefs, and expectations similar to those of the person who sent the message (ibid). The message interpreted by the receiver is then likely to be fairly similar to what the sender intended. If the receiver of the message then is a person from a different culture, the receiver uses information from his or her culture to interpret the message. The message that the receiver interprets may be very different from what the speaker intended (Kitao, 2004).
In developing a theoretical model of intercultural organizational communication, the intentionality in the communicative act described by Lauring (2010) is important. Similarly, the idea that differences, cultural or other, are naturalized with a purpose is useful. This is providing a theory that relates intentional communicative actions with the social organization of differences. Furthermore, the social informal organization of the workplace can be linked to both the internationality found in the communicative act and to the perception of human differences (Lauring 2010).

2.2 Performance measurement tools

Performance measurement is the process of collecting, analyzing and reporting information or data regarding the performance of in this case organizations and more specifically internal communication systems. It is in other words a tool, which provides a method for evaluating how well system and processes are operating and in which way they can be improved (Probst, 2009). This section will brief the reader about important performance measurement tools regarding internal communication and in which way their individual process benefits the organization.

2.2.1 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is the on-going process of measuring products, services and practices against the toughest competitors or those recognized as industry leaders. It has the purpose to identify and measure the performance quality of the organization and the outcome and to compare how other organizations achieved their high performance level. This creates a comparison process within the company to constantly change and become better within its field (Sousa & Amaral, 2009; Hong, et al, 2012) The major problem with implementation of the traditional benchmarking processes is that there are not any stated tools or steps to implement for any given organization (Amaral & Sousa, 2009)

2.2.2 Internal benchmarking

Internal benchmarking is often explained as a tool for organizational learning and knowledge transfer internally and is defined as the process of identifying, sharing, using improving the knowledge and practices inside one’s own organization (Southard & Parente, 2007). The benefits of using internal benchmarking for the organization is that access to information is more available compared to the external approach because
of other companies unwillingness to share information. Transferability of practices is another advantage compared to external benchmarking where the practices that is working for one organization may not be applicable for your own company. Last internal benchmarking is creating a safe training environment for progression towards external benchmarking where skills can be developed in a comfortable phase with less risks and possible consequences (ibid).

2.2.3 Key performance indicators
Key performance indicators (KPI) are in practice used to monitor and make sure that the companies fulfill the core strategy. With that in mind, the contexts of KPIs are an exceptional tool to classify and identify the key initiatives within the company. Long-term framed qualitative and quantitative analyses indicate the value of the identified KPIs and their impact on the achievement of the strategic directions (Janeš & Faganel, 2013).

2.2.4 SWOT Analysis
When constructing an SWOT analysis within a company, there will be identification about the companies four most vital elements: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Kotler et al, 2008; Kotler & Keller, 2009). These four categories are divided into two parts: the external environment and the internal environment. The external element consists of opportunity and threats analysis, which makes that the internal element contains of strengths and weaknesses. The division of these two elements makes it easy for the company to identify and monitor internal and external threats to the company (ibid). Philip Kotler, et al (2008) explain a SWOT analysis like…

“A SWOT analysis is a distillation of the findings of the internal and external audits which draws attention to the critical organizational strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats facing the company” (Kotler et al, 2008 p.135).

As a manager it is critical to know and identify the main threats and their opportunities as the company face in everyday work. The main focus is to predict future developments to gain competitive advantage as a company as well as not get behind the competition within a section that is key factor to success (Kotler et al, 2008)
2.4 SWOT Analysis Matrix.

The purpose of this matrix is to identify and grade the strengths, threat, weakness and opportunity the company currently has. A corporate strength could be e.g. financial artillery or market leader and a weakness could be low advertisement and promotion budget or low number of supplier. When identifying all of these, the company knows which section or department that should be more focused at to improve the weak spots (Kotler et al, 2008).

2.3 Competitive advantage

A competitive advantage is an advantage gained over competitors allowing the firm to generate greater sales or margins and/or preserve more customers than its competition by offering them greater value. That can be done either through lower prices or by providing additional benefits and service that is perceived to be worth paying a higher price for (Emkhe, 2008). Many different types including the firm’s cost structure, product offerings and customer support can define competitive advantage. Competitive advantage that is kept in a sustainable way by the organization is more difficult to neutralize for the competitors (McClure, 2011). Comparative advantage and differential advantage is the two main types of competitive advantages. Comparative advantage, or cost advantage, is a firm's ability to produce a goods or service at a lower cost than its competitors, which gives the firm the ability sell its goods or services at a lower price than its competition or to generate a larger margin on sales. A differential advantage is created when a firm's products or services differ from its competitors and are seen as better than a competitor's products by customers (ibid). In order to identify if a company has competitive advantage there are a few questions that can be asked. Is its strategy different from other companies in the market? Does the company's strategy position
deliver superior profits? Is the strategy defensible? If investors can respond yes to these questions, the company may have good future prospects (McClure, 2011).

2.4 Research Gaps

Effective communication is in this chapter presented with its benefits and outcome and the effect it has on an organization, which is one aspect of the study this paper is going to provide. However the question then arises about what it is that affect effective communication. The conducted research done on the area is seemingly not focusing as much on the factors that influence effective communication. Yates (2006) is discussing what areas organizations with high effective communication is focusing on but does not go deeper into the subject. The authors have chosen to present the articles related to this chapter in the table 2.1 to make it easier for the reader to get an overview of the articles and references presented in the paper. In the table the authors have divided the graphs in terms of subject. The graph will clarify the outcome of the article, method used by the author(s) and the main findings related to the articles.

Table 2.1 Outline of articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors(s)</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hong et al, 2012</td>
<td>Benchmarking</td>
<td>For sustainable competitive advantage, benchmarking goes beyond the operational level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evans et al, 2012</td>
<td>Benchmarking</td>
<td>Benchmarking, six sigma &amp; Hoshin Kanri’s philosophy about business improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adebajno et al, 2010</td>
<td>Benchmarking</td>
<td>Benchmarking effectiveness compares favorably with effectiveness of other improvement tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southhard &amp; Parente, 2007</td>
<td>Int. Benchmarking</td>
<td>Internal benchmarking has the potential to offer many, if not all, of the same benefits with fewer implementation problems than external.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaral &amp; Sousa, 2009</td>
<td>Int. Benchmarking</td>
<td>Barriers to internal benchmarking initiatives of different types are found and strategies of how to prevent them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janes &amp; Faganel, 2013</td>
<td>Key Performance indicators</td>
<td>Error correction models to find the negative factors to increase them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.5 Chapter summary

The literature review done in this chapter is divided into three sections as previously stated. Section 2.1.2, effective communication presents a model named hierarchy of effective communication, which presented three stages; foundation, strategic and behavioral. This model will be the main tool when conducting interview questions for the empirical data regarding communication. The three measurement tools used for evaluating internal communication processes that is presented has the role in this study to mainly give an insight in what most organizations use for evaluating their own processes. Moreover, these are also used for improvements but mainly for the authors to compare those with what is used in the case study.
3 Methodology

This chapter is composed in order to explain different approaches used in conducting this research. This section will clarify in what procedure the authors have composed information to be able to conduct this report and turn into measurable information.

3.1 Research Approach

An academic research could be conducted in several of approaches, inductive or deductive. Once the approach is decided upon, then it can be investigated by qualitative or quantitative research (Jacobsen, 2002; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.1.1 Inductive vs. Deductive research

In order to conduct a valid research, either in an academic or a business research, researchers need to choose the most suitable approach and data collection method. There are two major techniques to approach a research project, inductive or deductive.

Bryman and Bell (2011) state that deductive research approach is the most commonly used one in research. They further explain deductive research is correlated with existing theories and investigates it through empirical data.

However, in the inductive research approach, investigation does not originate from any theory. Instead it's findings lead to theories. Once the collection of empirical data is done, the theoretical framework will be supplemented into the paper in which will complement the empirical data collected (Jacobsen, 2002; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Table 3.1 will illustrate how deductive research starts with finding theories and then collecting data; while inductive research shows that it starts with finding information and turning into theory.

Table 3.1 Deductive vs. Inductive research approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach Type</th>
<th>Start of Investigation</th>
<th>Leads to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deductive research Approach</td>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>Empirical Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inductive Research Approach</td>
<td>Empirical Data</td>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The authors for this research have applied a deductive research. This approach is based from a theoretical framework and then will investigate data to support this approach.
3.1.2 Qualitative vs. Quantitative

It is important for researchers to need know what type of approach or method of collecting data is best suited for their work. There are two approaches of data collection, which are qualitative or quantitative research. These two approaches can be used separately or together depending on what the purpose of the work. The data collected for both of the methods are often referred to as soft (qualitative) and hard (quantitative) data. These terms are referring to nature of the data (Sogunro, 2002).

Qualitative research is discovery oriented where the data collected is used to generate ideas and theories. This is suitable when conducting inductive reasoning, where the researchers identify patterns in the data acquired to reach conclusions and build theories (Hair et al, 2011). The data collected from a qualitative research is based on observations and interactions with a small sample population. The qualitative research describes why, how, where, in the context of a research with the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organizing these findings into a theoretical explanatory scheme (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The main task of quantitative research is to examine data, identify, and find relationships, that then can be converted into knowledge (Hair, 2011). Quantitative data relies very heavily on numbers and statistical analyze where the theory is tested to determine if the empirical findings are true or not. The data collected is often a passive interaction through a questionnaire where the experiment or the determination is done after the collection compared to qualitative where the data collection is an ongoing process. The data analysis is statically where the instrument used to go through with the procedure often is a program such as the statically package for the social science (SPSS) (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The authors have decided to conduct their thesis with a qualitative research approach. This was decided in order to best answer the purpose of the research. In order to receive the most valid and suitable information, indebt responses were required. This was done by conducting interviews with key personal from the case company. For these reasons a quantitative study would not be a suitable research approach to answer the purpose of this study, thus require a qualitative study to be conducted.
3.2 Research design
There are several ways in collecting and analyzing data for a research project; explorative, descriptive and casual design. These three categories are divided into two sections of research design, conclusive and exploratory. These two are the blueprints in which a research approach will be based off. Descriptive and casual designs are included in the conclusive section and exploratory are a category on its own (Churchill & Lacobucci 2005; Oghazi, 2013)

Exploratory research design is the research approach in which a company/individual who wants to explore in order to gain more insights on the market, extend the research project, and etc. It could also be used when launching a new product on the market to find out the consumers reaction or when investigating the how and why in a process (Churchill & Lacobucci, 2005).

Descriptive research design is used when measuring a relationship between two variables. The relationship frequencies that are described are compared by X and Y. For Example, if variable X in this case represents age and variable Y represents entry time into college, the measurement is between age and entry into college (Churchill & Lacobucci 2005; Oghazi et al. 2012).

Casual research design is an investigation where the company makes experiments and measures the different outcomes. This could be done when producing different products, marketed in different geographical areas to see what product that preformed better on the market in terms of sales (Churchill & Lacobucci, 2005).

Table 3.2 will describe more in detail which approach is the most suitable depending on what kind research that is conducted.

Table 3.2 A comparison of basic research design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Design</th>
<th>Exploratory</th>
<th>Descriptive</th>
<th>Casual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics:</td>
<td>Flexible, versatile</td>
<td>Marked by prior formulations of specific hypotheses</td>
<td>Manipulating od one or more independent variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often the front end of total research design</td>
<td>Preplanned and structured design</td>
<td>Measure the effect on dependent variable(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Control of other mediating variables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The authors have approach this research with an exploratory design. Due to lack of research within this field, this was the approach most suitable for this paper in order to answer the purpose & research questions of this project. The authors have therefore approach this study with a lot of flexibility and quick changes in order to match and answer the purpose.

Due to the authors chosen research design, according to Malhotra (2010), a cross-sectional design is the most appropriate regarding the exploratory research approach. A cross-sectional design implicates that information from whatever source is conducted, but only once. Within cross-sectional designs, there are two different ways in how to conduct data: single vs. multi-cross sectional design. These two are very different but has the same foundation and fit in together in the conclusive research approach (ibid).

- Single cross-sectional designs “only one sample of respondents is drawn from the target population, and information is obtained from this sample only once” (Malhotra, 2010, p.108).

- Multi cross-sectional designs “There are two or more samples of respondents, and information form each sample is obtained only once. Often information from different samples is obtained at different times over long intervals” (Malhotra, 2010, p.108).

The red tread in figure 2.5 shows the approached taken for the purpose of this research.
In order to insight in how the employees of Electrolux perceive their internal communication system, an exploratory design was chosen. The authors have explored and gained insight in how the internal communication processes are perceived which required an exploratory design due to the low knowledge regarding this area.

### 3.3 Data sources

There are two main types of data collection; primary and secondary (Jacobsen, 2002; Oghazi 2014). Primary data collection is data that has been collected for the first time and for a specific purpose. The collection of data is made for a particular purpose and could be conducted by interviews, questionnaires and observation (Jacobsen, 2002).

The second type of data is secondary data. This type of data collection is taken from another source and this information was originally collect for another purpose. However, the data is still relevant for the new purpose (Jacobsen, 2002).

In order to research the purpose of this investigation, primary data collection was the main source of information. However, the authors for this report has chosen to collect both primary and in some extent secondary data. Jacobsen (2010) describes the double usage of sources as “when using both sources of data, the credibility of the collected data increases” (Jacobsen 2010, p.153). Primary data that was collected through in-depth interviews. The secondary data was used to support the responses of the interviewees and create the interview session itself.

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**Figure 2.5. Classification of marketing research designs. Adopted from Malhotra (2010 p.103).**
3.3.1 Research strategy

When the chosen foundation of the research has been determined, the next step will involve the collection of information that is valid for the research (Jacobsen 2002; Oghaizi et al. 2009). According to Jacobsen (2002) there are four different ways of collecting information in a qualitative research approach; Open interview, group interview, observation and data collection. Due to different conditions of research approaches, there are three factors in which influence the output of the research according to Yin (2014). He further explain them as:

- Type of question posed
- The extent of control a researcher has over actual behavioral events and
- The degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to entirely historical events (Yin 2014, p.9).

Table 3.3 will give a visual view in which qualifications of each research strategy includes. This section is a very crucial depending on what approach that will be chosen as the main data collection tool and how this approach is supposed to be handled. Furthermore, it discusses the three major factors, which influence the output of the research (Yin, 2014).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Form of research question</th>
<th>Requires control of Behavioral events</th>
<th>Focuses on contemporary events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>How, why?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Analysis</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>How, why?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>How, why?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Yin (2014,p.9)

The authors believe to best answer their purpose and their research question that a case study must be conducted. This approach was decided to be most relevant to this report in which discuss the how and why regarding the examined area and does not focus on
control of behavior but instead include contemporary events. The case study was conducted at Electrolux Laundry System AB in Ljungby and more specifically at their logistic department. How the information was collected during the case study will be described in the sections below.

3.4 Data collection Method

Hair et al. (2011) describe this section of a research paper to be one of the most vital ones. This is because, when the author(s) of a study have collected all the data, it is difficult to recollect the same data without bias. If the data needs to be corrected due to an inaccuracy, then the entire data must be reconstructed and collected again. This is a very time consuming process and may even be impossible (ibid).

The methods for gathering and controlling data are very much depended on the approach of study and it's objectives. If the data is narrative and collected through focus groups, observations and/or personal interviews it is referred as qualitative data, which is involved in a e.g. case studies. A descriptive study on the other hand is more likely to require a large amount of quantitative data were it is obtained through e.g. large scaled studies. The two most common methods for qualitative data collection are observations and interviews. For quantitative data collection it involves structured questionaries’ and surveys in which numbers and statistics are the outcome (Hair 2011; Oghazi et al. 2012).

The authors’ decision to assemble data was through a case study in the logistic department of Electrolux. This required the information to be based mostly on interviews. Furthermore, the authors wished to gain an overview picture of the problem in order to collect valid information and in-depth answers to the problem of the investigation. A case study was implicated and decided to be the best alternative in order to answer the purpose of this research. Why, how and what kind of interviews is described and presented in that sub-section down below.

3.4.1 In-depth interviews

Because the authors have chosen to work according a qualitative research approach including a case study, this research is therefore valid to continue in that direction for the collection of data as well (Bryman & Bell, 2011).
The table below will review the different ways in collecting data for a case study and shows the strengths and weaknesses of the different methods of sources of evidence.

Table 3.4 Six sources of evidence: Strengths and weaknesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of evidence</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>• Stable – can be reviewed repeatedly&lt;br&gt;• Unobtrusive – not created as a result of the case study&lt;br&gt;• Specific – can contain the exact names, reference, and details of an event&lt;br&gt;• Broad – can cover a long span of time, many events, and many settings</td>
<td>• Retrievability - can be difficult to find&lt;br&gt;• Reporting bias – reflects (unknown) bias of any given documents authors&lt;br&gt;• Access – may be deliberately withheld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival records</td>
<td>• Same as those documentations&lt;br&gt;• Precise and usually quantitative</td>
<td>• Same as those documentations&lt;br&gt;• Accessibility due to privacy reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>• Targeted – focuses directly on case study topics&lt;br&gt;• Insightful – provides explanations as well as personal views (e.g., perceptions, attitudes, and meetings.)</td>
<td>• Bias due to poorly articulated questions&lt;br&gt;• Response bias&lt;br&gt;• Inaccuracies due to poor recall&lt;br&gt;• Reflexivity – interviewee gives what interviewer wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct observations</td>
<td>• Immediacy – covers actions in real time&lt;br&gt;• Contextual – can cover the case’s context</td>
<td>• Time-consuming&lt;br&gt;• Selective – broad coverage difficult without a team of observers&lt;br&gt;• Reflexivity – actions may proceed differently because they are being observed&lt;br&gt;• Cost – hours needed by human observers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant observation</td>
<td>• Same as above for direct observations&lt;br&gt;• Insightful into interpersonal behavior and motives</td>
<td>• Same as above for direct observations&lt;br&gt;• Bias due to participant- observer’s manipulation of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical artifacts</td>
<td>• Insightful into cultural features&lt;br&gt;• Insightful into technical operations</td>
<td>• Selectivity&lt;br&gt;• Availability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Yin (2014,p.106)
As the authors described in the past section, the data collection method will be based on a qualitative research, which involves a case study and furthermore involves making interviews with the chosen population regarding the purpose of the paper.

When conducting interviews, there are several of different interview techniques, approaches and aspects to keep in mind to be able to conduct the information in the most accurate way to make the information valid for the report (Bryman & Bell, 2011). When conducting a qualitative interview, the interview will take place between people, preferable face-to-face but there are other options in a case study like telephone or focus groups interviews. Focus groups should preferable be in context of six to eight people. These interviews have its main focus on few, unstructured and generally open-ended questions, which should promote open views and opinions from the participating group members (Creswell, 2009).

When conducting information through interviews, there are several different kinds of interview techniques that the interviewer needs to take into account. The authors must determine which way the interview will be conducted either through an intensive, in-depth or an unstructured way. Depending on what kind of research is conducted, the conduction should fit the approach and follow the guidelines for that specific technique (Yin, 2014).

Information collection through interviews is seems as one of the main six ways of conducting data for a research. There are several ways of conducting an interview, but regarding the qualitative approach, a semi-structured interview is the correct way of collecting data (Mikkelsen, 2005).

“Participatory methods have contributed to adjust the interview to make it more conversational” (Mikkelsen 2005, p.168).

This is possible because when question are posed, the authors allow for follow up questions. In addition they allow for the interviewee to explain off topic to see if the addition information will be relevant. This means that the path is structured and the topics are prepared, but due to the conversation and the way a conversation could turn out, some questions may turn up along the way, which makes it a semi-structured interview (Mikkelsen, 2005).
The authors have chosen to carry out in-depth interviews with the targeted population. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face with employee from Electrolux, which the authors considered to be the most appropriate and suitable regarding the topic of the thesis. The semi-structured approach was chosen regarding the complex nature of investigation, which makes the authors flexible in their way of conducting data at the interviews. In depth interviews according to Bryman & Bell (2011) should have a time frequency of at least 30 minutes. The interviews conducted at Electrolux had a time range of 30 - 64 minutes and the mean of those was calculated to an average of 42 minutes.

Due to the quantities of the interviews, the authors incorporated the triangulation effect, which is explained by Bryman (2008) as…

”…The use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings may be cross-checked” (Bryman 2008, p.700).

This aspect of triangulation effect is included in the research by having a multiple range of interviews and by having the interviewee review the questions in order to reach triangulation.

### 3.4.2 Operationalization

The operationalization process and its structure will be described in this section. By defining a concept in order to make it measurable in form of variables consisting of specific observation the process becomes operationalized (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The definitions of a concept may differ because those are often intangible with regards to practical business research (Ibid). Saunders et al. (2009) defines operationalization as..

“The translation of concepts into tangible indicators and to characterizing concepts for the practical application of the investigation is crucial” (Saunders et al. 2009, p.597).

The research approach for this study is as previously stated deductive and when applying a deductive research, it is essential to go through an operationalization process in order to provide measurable concepts (Saunders et al, 2009).
3.4.3 Measurement of variables

Amo and Cousins (2007) explain that for an operationalization process there are no general steps to pursue. However, the authors also discuss that when constructing an appropriate structure and a construct validity of a study, there are some steps that can be utilized when gathering evidence in support of a particular operationalization. Amo & Cousins (2007) explains it as:

- Definition of the object of study grounded in the literature
- Definition of the underlying concepts that make up the object of study
- Definitions of related constructs and concepts in order to differentiate the object of study
- Indicators and measures in order to assess the occurrence, quantity, or quality of the object of study.

Table 3.5. Operationalization of concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical concept</th>
<th>Conceptual Definition</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Questions asked – Appendix 1</th>
<th>Column – Appendix 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective Communication</td>
<td>Effective communication is when the message communicated from the sender to the receiver is interpreted with the same meaning that the sender intended to (Ferrai 2006).</td>
<td>A measure that increase business performance, organizational turnover and is a leading indicator to financial performance</td>
<td>Employee engagement and commitment Communication process, employee input, rewards, technology</td>
<td>Nr.1-10</td>
<td>Nr. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Benchmarking</td>
<td>The process of identifying, sharing, using improving the knowledge and practices inside one's own organization (Southard &amp; Parente, 2007).</td>
<td>A measure that is identifying and measuring the performance quality of the organization and the outcome.</td>
<td>Flowchart Business improvements</td>
<td>Nr.1</td>
<td>Nr.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Performance Indicator</td>
<td>Key performance indicators are in practice used to monitor and make sure that the com-</td>
<td>A measure to classify and identify the key initiatives within the</td>
<td>Identifying key measures for communication</td>
<td>Nr. 1</td>
<td>Nr. 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
panies fulfill the core strategy (Janeš & Faganel, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical concept</th>
<th>Conceptual Definition</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Questions asked – Appendix 1</th>
<th>Column – Appendix 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWOT Analysis</td>
<td>Identification of the companies four most vital elements in the company: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Kotler et al., 2008; Kotler &amp; Keller, 2009)</td>
<td>A SWOT analysis is a measure which is a distillation of the findings of the internal and external audits which draws attention to the critical organizational strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats facing the company</td>
<td>Identifying weaknesses and threats for future developments</td>
<td>Nr. 2-6</td>
<td>Nr. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Advantage</td>
<td>Competitive advantages give a company an edge over its rivals and an ability to generate greater value for the firm and its shareholders (McGrath, 2013).</td>
<td>A measure that identifies the advantage a organization has over its competitors.</td>
<td>Internal communication, intercultural communication,</td>
<td>Nr.1-2</td>
<td>Nr.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural Communication</td>
<td>Described in terms of national differences disturbing the sending and receiving of messages (Lauring 2010).</td>
<td>A measure that identify the cultural differences in regards to the communication</td>
<td>Global aspects, mis-communication, cultural differences</td>
<td>Nr. 11</td>
<td>Nr. 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first two steps contain the theoretical framework for defining the concepts. The third step is revolving around the development of operational definitions. The fourth step discusses the identification of measures of the concepts (ibid). These steps that Amo & Cousins (2007) have presented will be utilized when conducting the operationalization process for this research.
The operationalization and the measured variables will be presented in the table below. The concepts identified in the literature review have already been conducted. This is the third step of the operationalization process and therefore that step was completed previous to step one. The third step is shown in column one in the operationalization table as the name of the concepts. Step one is displayed in the second column in the table (concept, and conceptual definition). Step two is presented in the third column (operational definition). Step four is displayed in the fourth column (measure). The last column views the related questions to each concept applied in the interview guide in appendix 1.

3.4.4 Interview guide
The authors have based the interview guide on previously conducted studies where the interview guide questions already have been developed. The purpose of the interview guide in this chapter is to ensure validity and reliability of the questions asked, which is the reason for utilizing questions that already have been tested in the previous studies. The authors want to explain that some questions are developed from previous research and some questions are developed from the conducted literature review by the authors themselves. Furthermore, three professors at Linnaeus University, School of Business & Economics, have approved the usage of these questions during the interviews.

The questions regarding communication were derived from the study of Mezzai (2010) and Yates (2006). They were combined with questions from the study of Uusi-Rauva & Nurkka (2010).

The questions derived regarding performance measurement tools and are conducted from Kotler et al, 2008, Kotler & Keller, 2009; Maylor, 2010; Janeš & Faganel, 2013 and in order to match the operationalization and the theoretical framework.

A complete interview guide will be provided in appendix 1.

3.4.5 Pretest
In this chapter a pretest of the interview guide is conducted in order to validate if the operational measure equals the questions developed in the interview guide (Bowden et al, 2002). When evaluating the accuracy of the interview questions a pretest is a well-established tool to do that (Ibid). According to Bowden (2002) pretesting involves a number of steps and within the authors study some of them are presented:
Due to the facts that the semi-structured interviews will be asked in the native language (Swedish), the questions need to be translated & tested by professionals or by a population similar to the target population (Oghazi, 2009). The translation is made from English into Swedish. Due to reliability issues, this aspect needs to be taken into account. The authors have therefor asked two persons to translate the questions, first from English into Swedish and then have the other individual translated the questions back from Swedish to English. This is due to the aspect, which will clarify if the individuals understand the questions and the translation comparatively to the authors. The persons asked for this task where two students of Information Logistics class, year 3: Linnaeus University institute of Technology. These targeted individuals are within the field of a similar population regarding to the targeted one. Both have good knowledge within the field of communication and English, which gives the translation a high reliability.

The authors have also tested the questions with several of professors at Linnaeus University, School of Business & Economics, which makes the questions reliable and valid in order of the purpose and research questions posted in appendix 1.

3.5 Sampling
When sampling information from interviews, there are several ways of conducting this information; through telephone, face-to-face etc. Asking sensitive questions by telephone may give a more accurate answer instead of asking it when having a face-to-face interview and this would be due to the stress occurring during the interview (Bryman & Bell, 2011).
3.5.1 Sampling frame and sample selection

Conducting information could be conveniently, the challenging aspect is to determine which people in the population should be interviewed to match the research design to assemble the right information (Malhotra, 2010).

Due to the chosen research approach, the sampling frame will be conducted in a natural setting, where human contact and normal events occur. Due to the exploratory approach, the empirical data has been described in words, tables and figures rather than numbers, which would be conducted in a quantitative approach (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The aim is to collect data to receive the perception and experience in which to understand the reality of the problem. The qualitative approach has its nature of investigating the process, product or its output, which will give the researcher an understanding of how things appears (Creshwell, 2009).

The researchers will collect the data from employees with different backgrounds at the Electrolux logistics department to receive an overviewsing impression of how the internal communications with their international sales offices, distributors and customers are handled. Due to the research approach, the sampling selection has to be according this outline. The recommended sampling selection for a qualitative sampling is non-probability sampling, which indicates that the sampling frame has not been randomly selected (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Due to this aspect, the authors have chosen the logistics department for this investigation, which is need of accurate information in order to performed their job.

Because of the qualitative research is conducted through human contact, the outcome is a negotiated situation because of the interoperation of the receiving person, which is subject. Therefore, it is crucial for the researcher to be objective and truthful. If the research is supposed to fulfill the reliability and liability of the research, those criteria are crucial (Creshwell, 2009).

The authors for this report have conducted face-to-face interviews with different employees at Electrolux logistics department. These employees have different amounts of experience and knowledge regarding the transport of information in which could be affecting the response from the interviewee. The targeted population is both males and
females at Electrolux logistics department, working in different positions, responsibility, and areas of expertise.

The authors will also state that this research will not be a census research but a sample research. The reason for not choosing a census research design is due to the complexity in which involves...

“...A complete enumeration of the elements of a population or study subject” (Malhotra, 2010 p.371).

The authors chose instead a sample research which implicates “... a subgroup of the elements of the population selected for participating in the study” (Malhotra, 2010) p.371).

Regarding the time available to approach this research, a sample research design was conducted in which the authors have chosen a specific element and population to investigate for this research.

3.5.2 Convenience sampling

Bryman & Bell (2011) describes this sampling section as...

"A convenience sample is one that is simply to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility" (Bryman & Bell 2011, p.190).

This selection of sampling is chosen according to Creswell (2007) “to save time, money, and effort, but the expense of information and credibility” (Creswell 2007 p.127). This research approach is very commonly used in a qualitative research approach.

Due to the collaboration with Electrolux, this was the most accurate kind of sampling. Because of the limitations of time and resources, the authors chose this way of collecting data samples for this report.

3.5.3 Snowball sampling

The authors have used a sampling procedure called snowball, which is described by Bryman & Bell (2011) as “the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contact with others” (Bryman & Bell 2011, p.192).
The authors received contact from the order manager at Electrolux, who referred the authors to other contacts within the rest of the department of interest regarding this thesis. The authors decided to use the snowball sampling due to the complexity in receiving relevant information regarding the subject discussed and received from the sampling population. When having contact with the order manager, this person introduced the authors to the sampling population in which gave the authors accurate and convenient information regarding the purpose of the thesis.

3.6 Data collection procedure
This chapter of data collection procedures consists of the structure used when doing the in-depth interviews that was conducted from the employees. A content analysis was utilized on the material gained from the interviews. In order to achieve triangulation this chapter conducted the content analysis in relation to the interviews.

3.7 Data analysis method
Due to the chosen approach in which this thesis is conducted, the amount of information is massive and includes a broad amount of data in which needs to be focused and assembled into a context in which makes sense to the reader (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The Table below will show a brief description between the way of how to analyze qualitative and quantitative data.

### Table 3.6 Distinctions between quantitative and qualitative data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative data</th>
<th>Qualitative data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on meanings derived from numbers</td>
<td>Based on meanings expressed in through words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection results in numerical and standardized data</td>
<td>Collection results in non-standardized data requiring classification into categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics</td>
<td>Analysis conducted through the use of conceptualization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sounders et al (2009, p.482)

The authors will conduct a qualitative data analysis in which they match the patterns of the assembling design. Furthermore, this data analysis will be constructed in words in which will match the exploratory research design. Due to this aspect, it will be
presented in a non-standardized classification or category. This makes the analysis to be conducted through the use of conceptualization.

In order to proceed the analysis process in a qualitative approach, there are three major ways of conducting qualitative data. Data reduction, data display, drawing/verifying conclusions are the three main method used in qualitative analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Yin, 2014).

- **Data reduction:** Is the categories in which the data collected throughout the research are shortened and concentrated towards the purpose of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Yin, 2014).
- **Data display:** informs the reader about the information conducted, which could be visualized in a table or graph to enhance the reader of the information collected and also make comparisons between the findings (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Yin, 2014).
- **Drawing/verifying conclusions:** are the steps were the patterns are described from previous research, theories in which flows could be identified, propositions could be claimed (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Yin, 2014).

The authors for this thesis will work according to data reduction and data display mentioned above by Bryman and Bell (2011) and Yin (2014). The conducted interviews will be constructed in a comprehensive and judicious way for the reader. Furthermore, this information will be described in words, charts and tables in which the reader could get an overviewing picture and connection with the theoretical framework the authors have utilized. Moreover, this is done in order to summarize the whole thesis in an overviewing tone to visualize the red thread through out the paper.

### 3.8 Quality Criteria

When conducting a research there are different criteria’s that should be considered in the research design. Bryman & Bell (2011) argues that are three main criteria’s namely: reliability, relevance and validity, which has many sub categories, which will be discussed further. He further claims it is often to be the most important one of the criteria’s.
3.8.1 Content validity

A researcher who develops a new measure should establish that it has content validity or face validity (Bryman & Bell 2011). Moreover, content validity refers to if the measure reflects the content of the concepts in the study. In order to assure content validity, people external to the study could be asked whether they believe that the measures actually represent the concepts (Ibid). The content validity is the part of the operationalization process where the pre testing phase is done and where you confirm that the measures of the operationalized concept captures its content (ibid).

The authors have therefore constructed a pre-test regarding the questions asked to the sample population at Electrolux. Moreover, the questions have been tested and approved by multiple professors at Linnaeus University, School of Business & Economics in Växjö. In order to increase the validity of this research, two independent individuals have therefore translated the questions to Swedish and back to English in order to establish the proper understanding of the questions that was asked during the interviews. This was done in order to make sure that the content validity would match the purpose of the thesis.

3.8.2 Construct validity

Bryman and Bell (2011) says that validity is the extent to which the data collection instrument or methods actually measure what they are intended to and whether the results actually present what they appear to (Saunders et al 2009). Construct validity is defined as a tool with the intention to show if the measurement questions succeed in measuring what they are intended to measure (ibid).

According to previous research conducted, there are three ways in which the construct validity could be measured (Cohen et al, 2011; Bryman and Bell, 2011; Yin 2014).

- Usage of multiple sources
- Establishing a chain of evidence
- Reviewing the data collection before draft

The authors created an interview guide in order of conducting the right information from the sample population. The questions held were semi-structured due to the chosen approach. By constructing the interviews with several of interviewees, the authors have
therefor used the triangulation affect in order to construct validity to this thesis. Comparing the different answers and matching them together which give a higher credibility.

Moreover, when the interviews was held, the authors chose to recorded them in order of not misinterpret the information given from the interviewee. The original script, which was created during the interviews was also kept in order to go back and review the answers given during the writing of the empirical data. When the empirical data was conducted and assembled, the authors send the information constructed from the interview to the people in which could review and assure that the information written in this thesis is accurate according to their answers.

### 3.8.3 External validity

Bryman and Bell (2011) define external validity as the extent to which the question of whether the result of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context. For example, in politics, when conducting an election pol external validity is usually used by taking random samples for generalizing the population of voters. Regarding external validity it should also be noted that if a study lacks construct validity the findings become meaningless, destroying also the internal and external validity of the findings (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005).

The authors have in order to create external validity for this research conducted multiple interviews. Large quantity of sample population gives the authors a more accurate illustration in adopting generalizations regarding the findings. Moreover, including the whole logistics department at Electrolux, the authors acquired an overviewing vision in which led to accurate data and high validity.

### 3.8.4 Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the question of whether the results or the findings are repeatable and consistent (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Saunders et al (2009) explains the concept as the extent to which the data collection techniques and analysis procedures will yield consistent findings. In the study of Saunders et al (2009) they present three questions for determine if the research is reliable:

- Will the measures result in the same findings on other occasions?
- Will other observers reach similar observations?
• Is the process from raw data to findings transparent? (ibid).

Reliability is connected to replication because it is used when researchers replicate other existing research because the existing findings do not match the evidence of the study (ibid).

Due to that the authors have conducted interviews as their primary data collection, there are several characteristics in which needs to be considered. Jacobsen (2010) explain that when conducting interviews, the person who leads the interview expose the interviewee for several of different stimuli’s and indications, which needs to be addressed to create reliability (Jacobsen, 2010). This creates an effect in which could shape the conversation, both in content and tone. He furthermore explains that if two people who participate in the interview perceive and come up with the same information, that information is reliable. Jacobsen (2010) further discuss that an important issue regarding reliability is the perception of the data collected during the interviews. If the person who leads the interview, careless handles the information that is conducted could lead to a lower reliability. Due to the aspect that humans are not constructed to receive an large amount of information, therefore reliability are in need of notes and recordings of the interviews in order of revive the data at a later point. This is due to be able in replicate the information given during the interviews held.

The authors have therefore conducted the interviews together. Moreover, the authors have also assembled the information together in order to measure the different answers given in which a generalization is based upon.

The interviews were held in an uninterrupted and safe environment due to the aspects of the interviewee. This aspect could affect the answers given which increase the reliability on the data collected as well.

The authors have in order to replicate this investigation kept all documents regarding the thesis. Recordings of interviews, notes from the opponent groups (junior and main) at seminars and comments from the tutor were collected. This information was archived in a common Facebook group and drop box account shared by the authors. In this way, all information could easily be retrieved and conducted once again.
3.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has been a description of the methods used when conducting the findings, which, is presented, in the empirical data (chapter 4). The methodology chapter is the foundation of how the empirical investigation will turn out and the authors have therefore explained the research approach, strategy and viewed in how a research could be from a Qualitative & Deductive approach as the foundation. Operationalization was performed in order to form the interview questions in the interview guide. The authors have also made comparisons and given descriptions of different ways of conducting data depending on the chosen approach for a research project but has mainly explained how and why they have conducted their specific data for this specific report.

Table 3.7 Outline of Methodology Chapter.

<table>
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<th>Outline of Methodology Chapter</th>
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<td>Section 6</td>
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<td>• Convenience sampling</td>
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<td>Section 7</td>
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<td>• Data reduction,</td>
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<td>• Data display,</td>
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<td>• Drawing and verifying conclusions</td>
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<td>Section 8</td>
<td>Quality criteria</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reliability</td>
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4 Empirical Data

This chapter will present the field of investigation and the findings conducted from the case study. This investigation has focused on the order department, which is included as a part of the logistic department in Electrolux Laundry System Sweden AB. The employees of the order department have been interviewed and the questions asked have been divided into three different sections. Each section is described according to the theoretical framework and the interview guide, which is presented in appendix 1.

The people who participated in this case study will not have their personal information presented. In other words, a description by name, age or rank won’t be presented in order to protect the individual’s identity. The frameworks of the sampling group are presented in the methodology chapter and will not be stated here. In order to give the reader a more overviewing picture from whom the authors collected the presented data from, a table will be presented in appendix 2.

Moreover, this is done in order to match the data analysis method and present the valid information to the reader regarding the operationalization and the interview guide.

4.1 Communication

Electrolux Laundry System AB uses three main strategic systems regarding the internal communication process. Due to a split within the Electrolux Group and the global context of Electrolux, different systems are used in different continents and countries. The three systems that currently are in use are Lotus Notes, Order Lux and PRMS.

Lotus Notes is an email software created by IBM. This software is processed to the extent, which creates a social business environment with its customers. Lotus Notes includes email, messaging/chat function and modern social user interface including file sharing and calendars information.

Electrolux use Lotus Notes in order to have contact with their customers and suppliers through email. The Order department has organized a common email address
(els.logistics@electrolux.com) within Lotus Notes for the whole department and this is where all the received emails will be received. Moreover, this is done in order to prevent the department from possible occurring problem due to absence. Management created a common email address in order to have a back-up plan if someone within the department gets sick or is absent of some reason. The back-up plan is conducted to the extent if one person is absent. A prearranged person takes care of the sick individuals region or country temporarily when him/her is departed.

In the department of logistics at Electrolux the whole world is divided upon regions or countries where each employee is responsible for supplementing their own region with goods. The regions, which are excluded from the area of responsibility are Africa and the Middle East since the logistics departments in Italy is handling these regions.

Furthermore, this emailing system is constructed in the degree that everyone receives the emails on the same email address. Three people handles the assortment process in which these people sort the received emails and forwards them to the person who handles the senders region or country.

“*The downside with having a common mailbox, is when this address gets overloaded and a personal mistake is done in which one or a couple of emails get forgotten*”

Each individual has a personal email address that could be used in order to accomplish his/her duty. In order to execute the stated back-up plan, this email is infrequently used. During the period when the private emailing system still was in action and used frequently, the account number and password of Lotus Notes had to be handed out to a colleague which was supposed to log-in and fulfill the task meanwhile him/her was absent.

Lotus Notes also offers a chat function, which involves all distributors and sales offices around the globe. This chat-function includes fast messages and status check function. This feature allows the employee of the order department to contact a customer or a supplier with the specification and get a urgent answer to a question or, ask a question to his/her colleague within the department e.g.

The second communication instrument that is used is a system called PRMS. PRMS (Planning Requirement Material System) is a planning and ERP (Enterprise and
resource planning) system, which Electrolux Laundry Systems Sweden AB is using. The PRMS handle orders that arrive from customers around the world. PRMS, includes order, finance, stock, production and purchase functions that Electrolux, and the logistic department require for their daily work.

Order Lux is the third system that is used within the corporation. Due to the global context of Electrolux, all three systems are used all at once. Some countries use Order Lux and some PRMS. Electrolux in Ljungby is part of the professional section B2B within Electrolux Group. This section is divided into three parts and regions. Ljungby, Sweden, Troyes, France and Rayong, Thailand. These three plants operate with at least two of these systems. Lotus Notes is always included but Order Lux and PRMS is fluctuating depending on the region and country.

Apart from the technical communication systems, most of the information that is communicated within the department between colleagues is through verbal communication. Face-to-face communication between the colleagues at the logistic department is a common used tool but some communication is handled through telephone or the chat function, depending on the case and problem at hand.

Depending on which region or country that sends the order or email, Order Lux or PRMS is used. These two systems create two different needs to fulfill the task at hand. The order department in Ljungby is only operating with PRMS, which makes it hard for the order management team to handle and communication via Order Lux. The idea is that Order Lux and PRMS are supposed to communicate with each other due to the aspect that they are interconnected but occasionally that connection miscarries. When an order is sent from Order Lux, the exact same order should be able to be displayed in PRMS by the order team. One thing, which Order Lux is exposing, is e.g. Delivery and sending dates, which PRMS sometimes miss and is not able to be retrieved. Due to this miscommunication, discussions and email conversations with the customers regarding this area is held.

Due to that PRMS and Order Lux are not communicating, the order management team has a high volume of communication with the person who sent the order, which perceive the information different. The discussions held are often related to which receiving date are the correct one due to the fact that the two different systems are
viewing two different dates of arrival e.g. This communication related to production and arrival dates are not able to be nothing else then what PRMS says. The PRMS system is interconnected with the productions system in which sets the numbers of article in stock and arrival dates. Due to this, the communication related between Order Lux and PRMS is irrelevant.

If the customer is interconnected to PRMS, there is no need of double-checking the order, which is placed by the customer. Due to the fact that PRMS and Order Lux are not interconnected in the way it should according to the interviewees, a need of double-checking the order, dates or arrival e.g. is crucial to the logistics department.

“An improved and interconnected system in which PRMS and Order Lux could be assembled would decrease misunderstandings. If these interconnected, a higher customer satisfaction would be implemented”.

Although, within PRMS, there are different designs in which are connected to different plants and regions around the world. These different designs have created miscommunication, regarding e.g. stock size. The correct information could be hard retrieve according to the interviewees, but if so, it is related to lack of knowledge of the system.

4.2 Performance Measurement Tools

During the interviews, it has been identified that there are four tools regarding measuring communication. The first one includes response time for incoming emails, the second one is a performance appraisal held every year and finally a RFP (result improvement premium).

The guideline regarding the first measurement tool includes a response time of 24 hours from when the email has been submitted to Lotus Notes and the response has been sent back to the sender. Management of the logistic department measures this manually and do not have a strategic plan constructed in this matter.

In addition to the 24 hours response time, the performance appraisals are the second identified measurement tools regarding the communication. Once a year, Electrolux have performance appraisals with every employee to see what could be improved, how Electrolux and the employee could move on from this point forward and see how the
past year have been and how the future could look like in order to improve from both sides. Each individual have his or her own plan, which is determined with the manager. This plan could include e.g. courses regarding different subjects, which could include intercultural communication, business English or any related area to the line of work.

Electrolux also arrange an attitude survey every third year. This includes the perceptions of the employee towards his or hers current situation. This survey is supposed to be anonymous but due include different questions as sex, age, department and position held. This survey is also used to increase the work environment on Electrolux and make the employee express their feelings towards the corporation.

The third tool that is used in measuring the communication is a commission-based system that measures: accuracy in deliveries, quality and productivity of the handled orders of each individual and the overall department.

RFP, that is the result based commission system, which is given every 6 month to the employees of the logistic department. Due to the parameters in which this is based upon, are not factors, which is not able to influence according to the employees. In some cases, they even do not know what aspects that are being measured in order to influence the bonus.

The forth tools is a follow-up call to a customer. This is done once a month and all employees of the logistics department have to apply a follow-up call to a customer in which they have been in contact with the past month. This follow-up call is a survey regarding the problems in which have occurred between the logistic department and the customer. Moreover, this survey is an improvements tool regarding the communication between the logistic department and its customers. This survey brings up the positive and negative sides of the relationship and in what aspects that could be improved to increase the positive sides of the relationship. The questions related to the survey are pre-determined in which bring up all the aspects that should be raised in this session.

“Due to the large amount of dedicated and long-term customers to Electrolux, this follow-up call is more like a social call and after one, two or three work related questions, the next couple of minutes are involving the e.g. the Easter holiday instead”.
The fifth tool is larger survey, which is conducted every second year. Electrolux have a larger survey in which gives the employee an anonymous option in which they could communicate feedback and improvements regarding the department. Feedback, assistance and encouragement are dealt with on an informal level in which decreases the barriers of employee and management according to the interviewees. The connection with the management is dealt with if needed but all individuals have their own personal development plan. This development plan is a part of a performance appraisal, which is conducted once a year at Electrolux. This deals with a development plan in which the individual could develop and grow within the work assignment and become better at its task.

4.3 Competitive Advantage

When the authors asked questions regarding how Electrolux could gain competitive advantage, the interviewees were all answering in the same tone. It could be improved through an increased intercultural knowledge and fresh technology, which includes computers, phones and a working ERP system. The first issue was explained as:

“…An improved communication regarding the intercultural barriers could improve the finished product and increase the competitive advantage of Electrolux. Extend the knowledge regarding this issues would increase the whole communication process regarding the finished product in which would improve the efficiency of the corporations”

The interviewees explained that a intercultural course have been held, but to refresh the memories and implement this course once a year would be a good idea.

“The more of a team the corporation is, the better communication and finished goods will become”

The second issue, which would increase the competitive advantage, was time-consuming and sluggish computers and the phones used at the department. In order to start all of the required programs that make it possible to fulfill the task for the logistics department and communicate with the global suppliers, sales offices and distributors, a functioning computer is required.
“If you should be able to do your job in a correct way, the system and the computers shouldn’t be so slow”

The phones used at the logistics department are a part of a common phone line that all employees are connected to. Each individual have his or her own phone and gets automatically logged on to the phone line where this phone line randomly choose a person to receive the phone call which enters the line. However, this is according to the interviewees not the problem. It is the sluggish phones given to the employees, which do not work properly which creates long and blurred phone calls with customer and suppliers and are perceived as a general problem.

The authors also received repeated remarks where the interviewees insistent to mention problems with the ERP system called PRMS. Regarding this area one employee explained it as…

“.It does happen that the PRMS crash. Last week it crashed for about an hour which makes it hard to perform your job”. 
5 Data Analysis

Chapter five will present the conducted analysis from the empirical data clarified in the previous chapter in order to find possible patterns and implications. Moreover, this chapter will be divided into three sections, which will display the chosen data analysis methods. 5.1 will brief the reader about the data reduction done from the conducted interviews. 5.2 will explain the data display, which will summarize the answers given throughout the interviews in order to match the concepts and related questions asked regarding the literature review. Section 5.3 shadows the same framework as the literature review as well as the empirical data. This is done in order to get an overviewing illustration regarding the brought up concepts presented throughout this paper. This section will therefore summarize the data analysis methods as well as the main concepts: Effective communication, Performance measurement tools and competitive advantage.

5.1 Data Analysis Methods

5.1.1 Data Reduction

When the authors retrieved the conducted empirical data from the interviews that was held, some data had to be removed in order to match the purpose and research questions stated for this report. The authors have in order to present a valid empirical data chapter, chosen not to present the interviewee and his/hers answers directly due to the fact that many answers given was identical. In order to not repeat the same data, the equal answers was taken into consideration, but only written once. Tables 5.1 – 5.3 will describe the answers given within each concept throughout the interviews. Some answers are stated more than once in the table due to the fact that and answers given was identical, but was forward in another contexture. Section 5.2 will present the answers given throughout the interviews based on the operationalization and the concepts presented.

5.1.2 Data Display

This section will display the data conducted during the held interviews in tables, which will visualize what each individual’s answers regarding each concept and question in a
summarized version. The column to the left initiating the letter R and a number afterwards will visualize the different respondents participating in this investigation. The authors have therefor summarized the given answers and displayed in table 5.1-5.3 which is related to the interview guide.

5.1.2.1 Data Display – Communication

Table 5.1 will visualize the given answers from each individual regarding communication. Table 5.1 – 5.3 will, due to its length, exceed over page breaks, which the authors have placed a new headline at each break to create a easy way to follow each column related to each topic.

Table 5.1 Data display - Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Effective communication</th>
<th>Internal communication</th>
<th>Intercultural Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>Its good with the common mail addresses. Everyone can take part of the others jobs.</td>
<td>The culture of Sweden are very helpful in general which gives you the opportunity to receive input from colleagues and manager/s.</td>
<td>Could be seen as a barrier. Different countries, different culture which makes people behave different. Learn to deal with it, which have to be adopted in order to create improvements within the firm.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>This emailing system is constructed to the extent that everyone receives the emails on the same email address</td>
<td>When you are in need of some information in which regards a colleague, there is a very casual conversation face-to-face</td>
<td>The differences have a major impact and especially emailing in which the reception is objective, which generates unnecessary miss-communication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>Due to the fact that if a person within the department get sick or have to be absent of some reason, this person don’t have to get panic or feel that they don’t need to be at work because of this per-</td>
<td>Some communication is handled via telephone, depending on the case and problem at hand</td>
<td>Due to religion, culture and country of origin, different behavior is accepted and not accepted which is hard to know about when you are located in a different con-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
sons region or country won't be satisfied if this appears, and this is because of the Lotus Notes common mail function.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Effective communication</th>
<th>Internal communication</th>
<th>Intercultural Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>It is a safety to know that if someone is sick, the job will be done either way</td>
<td>There is a lot of Face-to-face communication. If you need to get in contact with the production manager, which is located in the plant, a phone call is in order or you just step by his/hers office for a short meeting.</td>
<td>The differences could sometimes be huge which demands a phone call instead of emails. The message wouldn’t just be received in the manner that I meant it to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>During this period when the private emailing system still was in action, the account number and password had to be handed out to a colleague in which was supposed to log-in and fulfill the task</td>
<td>The open landscape creates an open environment where we are able to walk up to the person in which a certain questions is including and have a conversation regarding a specific case.</td>
<td>This is a major problem due to the differences regarding religion, culture and continent of origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>The downside with having a common mailbox, is when this address gets overloaded and a personal</td>
<td>We due also have a chat function within Lotus Notes. This chat-function includes</td>
<td>What we perceive in Sweden to be “normal” is very abnormal is foreign countries, which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>Effective communication</td>
<td>Internal communication</td>
<td>Intercultural Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>Mistake is done in which one or a couple of emails get forgotten.</td>
<td>Fast messages and status check, which makes it easy to get a quick answer from a colleague it needed.</td>
<td>Makes it impossible to keep the same profile among the Swedish co-workers as the international one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R8</td>
<td>Looking at the customer satisfaction regarding the common email address has been questioned from their perspective.</td>
<td>When there is a matter of discussion or you are in need of help, there is face-to-face contact with the person, which its affects.</td>
<td>It is a huge difference regarding communication. In one region and country I can talk in one way, in another I need to adjust to another one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td>Due to the fact that all employees at Electrolux logistic department used to have a private box, the customers lost the “private” contact and were very skeptical at first.</td>
<td>When I am in need of a fast answer, I either call or write a short message in the chat function.</td>
<td>Due to culture and country, I need to adjust my English and use more simple words in order to make myself clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>With a common mailbox, it is now possible if one person get sick, someone covers this region meanwhile him/her is absent.</td>
<td>When a case gets complicated, I usually put “cc” and forwards that email to my colleague in whom I could receive help.</td>
<td>Some countries are in need of phone calls while another pass by very well by email.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All regions have a specific back-up plan and person who takes care of this region if the main contact person is sick or absent of some reason. Only to give the customer the best reply as possible.</td>
<td>Face-to-face communication is mostly used. If it’s a matter that involves another person, we mostly just shout over the cubes.</td>
<td>Due to religion, culture and country of origin, different behavior is accepted and not accepted which is hard to know about when you are located in a different continent, which have a different acceptable social</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.2.2 Data display - Performance measurement tools

Table 5.2 Data display - Performance measurement tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Internal Benchmarking</th>
<th>Key Performance Indicators</th>
<th>SWOT analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| R1          | It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways. | It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways. | Strengths: Common mailbox  
Weakness: Non correlated system in terms of PRMS and Lotus Notes  
Opportunities: Correlated systems  
Threats: Disruptions Languid systems and computers. | |
| R2          | It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways. | It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways. | Strengths: Common mailbox  
Weakness: Non correlated system in terms of PRMS and Lotus Notes  
Opportunities: Correlated systems  
Threats: Disruptions Languid systems and computers. | |
| R3          | It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways. | It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways. | Strengths: Common mailbox  
Weakness: Non correlated system in terms of PRMS and Lotus Notes  
Opportunities: Correlated systems  
Threats: Disruptions Languid systems and computers. | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Internal Benchmarking</th>
<th>Key Performance Indicators</th>
<th>SWOT analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| R4          | It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways. | It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways. | Strengths: Common mailbox  
Weakness: Non correlated system in terms of PRMS and Lotus Notes  
Opportunities: Correlated systems  
Threats: Disruptions Languid systems and computers. |
| R5          | It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways. | Strengths: Common mailbox  
Weakness: Non correlated system in terms of PRMS and Lotus Notes  
Opportunities: Correlated systems  
Threats: Disruptions Languid systems and computers. | |
| R6          | It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. | It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality. | Strengths: Common mailbox  
Weakness: Non correlated system in terms of PRMS and Lotus Notes  
Opportunities: Correlated systems  
Threats: Disruptions Languid systems and computers. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways.</td>
<td>It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways.</td>
<td>Strengths: Common mailbox</td>
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<tr>
<td>R8</td>
<td>It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways.</td>
<td>It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways.</td>
<td>Strengths: Common mailbox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td>It would be the RFP (Resultat Förbättrings Preemie) which is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency. But otherwise, I don’t know. We can’t really affect the parameters anyways.</td>
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<td>Strengths: Common mailbox</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.2.3 Data display – Competitive Advantage

Table 5.3 will visualize the answers given throughout the interviews regarding competitive advantage.

Table 5.3 Data display – Competitive Advantage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Competitive Advantage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td></td>
<td>With an increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With an increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Competitive Advantage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>With an increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>With an increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>With an increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>With an increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>With an increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>With an increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.3 Interpreting data display

5.1.3.1 Communication

The general concept of effective communication is defined as when the message is interpreted the same from sender to receiver and while the definition is fairly simple, the complexity and the wide range of components and steps to attain and implement within

culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Competitive Advantage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R8</td>
<td>With an increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R9</td>
<td>With an increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R10</td>
<td>With an increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R11</td>
<td>With an increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
an organization is much more comprehensive. In order to attain effective communication, Yates (2006) states that there is a correlation between having a formal communication process or system and high communication effectiveness, which results in higher market premium. The communication system that the logistic department at Electrolux is using is as previously stated Lotus Notes, Order Lux and PRMS, which mainly all the nonverbal communication goes through internally to their distributors and sales offices.

If looking into the employee’s perception of the system compared to the theory it is first of all stated that it is misinterpretation or distortion between the order systems PRMS and Order Lux which affects the effectiveness of the communication between the departments. Both of these systems are used in different regions and countries and the idea is that both should be able to work together but according to the empirical findings, they do not seem to be compatible with each other. Both of the systems handle the order process in different ways and this creates a great deal of unnecessary work regarding misinterpretation in communication. Furthermore, the employees want to denote that there is no stated problem regarding PRMS, only the interconnection between them both. Miscommunication regarding PRMS and Order Lux could be regarding quantity, carrier code (PRMS have a register which Order Lux don’t get their hands on e.g. if Great Britain order something and is supposed to send if forward to Hong Kong, the carrier code will be GB because of the fact that Hong Kong is not registered as their own carrier code. The regulations which was stated in the beginning of PRMS was that the sales offices where only to supply their own region, which in this case is GB and not Hong Kong, but due to the globalization, the world looks different. The delivery address is Hong Kong (HK) but when the order is sent from GB, and Order Lux are supposed to communicate with PRMS but PRMS only notice the sender code GB which set the delivery place in GB. This DHL get the delivery address in GB but the real delivery spot is in HK. This miscommunication could lead to a delay of 4-5 working days, which affects both the brand image and the customer relationship according the employees.

The third communication system Electrolux uses internally within the logistic department is the Lotus Notes system, which deals with mail and message with suppliers, distributors and sales offices. This system is fairly complex and it has certain issues according to the employees where for example the assortment of emails
has to be done manually by three people within the department. Within the common mailbox, there is room for personal errors such as when the inbox gets overloaded, one or a couple of emails may get forgotten.

The chat function Lotus Notes offers could be a fast communication tool but according to the interviews done, it appears that it is not satisfaction. To both be able to receive information on the chat, mail and phone from the distributors creates more or less confusion and frustration rather than efficiency and an increasing turbulence in the communication. The relationship regarding the chat function is perceived by the authors as very fragmented as the interviews were held. Some persons perceive this function as a stress increasing tool in which is closed down the first thing in the morning, but some, uses it regularly in order to give fast feedback to customers and co-workers.

The presented theory of Hierarchy of effective communication by Yates (2006) is arguing that formal communication systems should be implemented to reach a higher efficiency in communication. Electrolux is handling their communication through such systems and is therefore in line with the theory, however the specific systems are not implemented and briefed to the employees correctly, which creates communication issues even though the systems are made to prevent just that.

The figure “Hierarchy of effective communication” is not only explaining that there should be a formal communication process for the technological systems where nonverbal communication occurs but also for the other communication activities which mostly is strictly verbal communication. Electrolux has according to the employees no documented internal communication plan or strategy to guide communication activities. The communication managed at the logistic department in Ljungby is held face-to-face in an informal manner. The Logistic department is working in an open landscape, where the employees are able to walk up to the person who has a certain issues and have a conversation regarding a specific case. If there is an issue or a case, which involves a co-worker, this person will be added in the forward list or acting as a “CC” (carbon copy) in which the co-worker receives a copy of the email you are sending. These issues are held very casual and informal. The performance of the department is something all interviewees agreed upon is very important.
The next communication practice within The Hierarchy of effective communication model is focusing on employee input and employee engagement and how this is done within the company. The analysis made on how Electrolux is working with that part of internal communication is as following. While the theory states that the input on the work of employees should also involve input from the employees themselves and not only from managerial point of view where it considers how the work gets done and how the business is run. According to the interviews done there is one formal opportunity a year for the employees to receive individual input and give input to the work done and of how the business is run which are through the performance appraisal. The discussion in those meetings is based on the formal development plan the employees have to do which, are done though a questionnaire. The common perception is that a development regarding the questionnaire should be focusing on the improvements of the supervisor of the department as well.

Otherwise most of the inputs and feedback is done in the monthly meetings from the managerial perspective. The employee input and engagement is mostly a one-way discussion from manager to employee and some interviewees are even stating that it is also the case in the performance appraisal. The employee perspective on the business is done every second year through a survey and Yates (2006) argues that such activities should be done on a regular basis in order for the employee to be more motivated and engaged in the organization to increase internal communication effectiveness. The reward system is also a one-way interaction where the employees feel that errors are more often identified instead if the employee is doing a good job. There is however a commission-based bonus, which is based on your personal performance. The RFP, which is handed out at Christmas holiday and summer vacation. This bonus is based on: Precision of delivery, Quality, Efficiency.

The intercultural communication creates barriers in which needs to be taken care of. The differences have a major impact and especially emailing in which the reception is objective, which generates unnecessary miss-communication.

5.1.3.2 Performance Measurement Tools
The interview questions for the measurement tools were based on the theory of internal benchmarking, key performance indicator and SWOT analysis. The aim by studying
those theories and using them as a base in the research for the interview question were to find out and identify how and if Electrolux measures their communication systems in terms of effectiveness. The SWOT analysis was used to find out how the employees perceive the communication through strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Since there is no stated strategy according to the interviews for communication practices both through nonverbal and verbal communication internally there are no stated process of measuring them either. However for the email system Lotus Notes there are a guideline of a 24-hour response time which can be used as a measure for how effective the communication is between the logistic center and the sales offices. Most of the decision concerning changes comes from the Italian headquarters and as stated the Lotus Notes system is on the verge of being replaced. Since this is the case a benchmarking process of measuring and comparing the present system with other similar systems would have been used even though they state that they are not using measuring tools for evaluating their systems. If they utilize such measuring process in situations when they need to replace a major system it shouldn’t prevent Electrolux to use such practices in their everyday work situations to evaluate their internal communication. According to Yates (2006) organizations with effective internal communication use audits, objective assessments of behavior change, assessments of the impact communication has on work performance, and other hard measures to help gauge the effectiveness of internal communication.

The threats or the flaws with their current system are as stated the miscommunication with order systems PRMS and Order Lux. According the majority of the interviewees, the miscommunication is a common problem in which creates loads of extra work which wouldn’t be if the systems where correlated. An improved and interconnected system in which PRMS and Order Lux could be assembled would decrease misunderstandings. If these are interconnected, a higher customer satisfaction would be implemented.

The cultural differences in communication between the sales offices and the logistic center are perceived as a threat that creates barriers. The differences in the communication have a major impact and especially emailing in which the reception is objective, which generates unnecessary miss-communication. As stated in the problem discussion, global communication increases and fewer than 50 percent of the
global companies in the high communication effectiveness category are stating according to Yates (2006) they are doing a good job of communicating to their business units abroad. Electrolux has according to the interviews offered courses regarding intercultural communication to their employees, which was fairly extensive still it seems that employees perceive his as a problem and a threat to effective communication.

If looking into the benefits of communication systems and practices within the logistic center the open landscape in the work area of the logistic center in Ljungby has proved to be beneficial regarding the communication flow between employees. One person can easily do another person’s work if a situation requires that, everyone have an open dialog, which prevents miscommunication and in contrary it actually engage active communication behaviors as Mazzei (2010) explains. It can be argued that the employees working in the logistic department has a long time experience with each other, which creates such open environment but still it is the managers responsibility to implement and engage active communication behavior to newly employed as well in order to create such environment. The email system Lotus Notes is perceived with both negative and positive attitude but the bottom line is that as a communication tool its vital for the contact with abroad sales offices since it has the common mail box where the large amount of mail processed can be sorted according to person and preference.

5.1.3.3 Competitive Advantage
The theories studied in this report regarding communication is stating and showing that higher efficiency of communication within an organization will generate higher competitive advantage. Knowledge, which is a result of communication, is regarded as the most valuable resource a company needs for competitive advantage. The questions regarding this segment where built to identify in what sense competitive advantage is perceived by the employees and how it is perceived to be related to effective communication. Also to identify how Electrolux is working to generate higher competitive advantage through communication. The perception regarding competitive advantage of the employee during the interviews was consistently focusing on how an improved intercultural communication would improve the finished product and increase the competitive advantage. It appears that the interviewees are aware that competitive
advantage stems from knowledge and that communication plays a key role in developing that.

6 Conclusion

This chapter presents the conclusions based on the analysis conducted in the previous chapter. The first part of the chapter focuses on the three concepts the authors have chosen to research in connection to Electrolux. Following, a discussion regarding theoretical contributions is made, also managerial implications, limitations of this study, and suggestions for further research based on the conducted study.

6.1 Discussions

Based on the literature concerning communication, performance measurement tools and competitive advantage the following research questions were developed constituting the aim of this study. Subchapters 6.1.1-6.1.3 contain further discussions aiming at answering the research questions.

6.1.1 Communication

RQ1: How does Electrolux In Ljungby communicate with their international sales offices/distributors and what are the negative and positive aspects of the communication system used?

The information that is transferred through the communication system, which includes the order system is at this point according to the interviews often miscommunicated. The systems are not correctly interconnected which makes the authors draw the conclusion that lack of communication between the global distributors is the prominent issue. According to theory of effective communication, a formal strategic communication plan is needed as a foundation in order to be successful in the following communication practices. The empirical data is not showing any stated formal plan regarding communication practices at Electrolux, which could improve the
interconnection between the order systems PRMS and Order Lux. This is concluded to be the main issue for the logistics department at this point and it also affects not only the systems of communication but also the daily communication environment. The managers is as stated responsible for engaging the employees in active communication behaviors by a strategic communication plan however since this is not practiced by Electrolux it creates a certain uncertainty among the employees of how things should be run. The idea is to have a two-way communication where employees at Electrolux should be able to have inputs. By encouraging meaningful input and acting upon employee recommendations, Electrolux would demonstrate the value they place on the role of employees in business success. Employees would then understand how their efforts contribute to corporate objectives, and they act accordingly which makes the communication more effective as a result. As a concluding thought the logistic department should recognize the role internal communication has for driving business success and behave according to that.

The intercultural aspect between the global distributors of Electrolux, which has been discussed in the analysis of this study has a great impact in how well the information is communicated. The education and training in that area seems to be very slim. There has been occasion where this is practiced but the education should not only be focused on the department in Ljungby but managers have to propose this practice in the different head-offices on global scale regarding the differences of cultural behavior.

**6.1.2 Performance Measurement Tools**

*RQ2: How is the efficiency of internal communication measured in Electrolux and what tools are used for that purpose?*

In order to best answer the first research question stated the concepts of key performance indicators and benchmarking was investigated in relation to the logistics department of Electrolux professionals AB in Ljungby. This investigation shows according to the theory that measuring communication is based on the formality of the process. It has to be structured and implemented in a correct way in order to be able to measure the outcome of the performance. By benchmarking the communication practices it will identify what systems works and which that do not. Electrolux is
currently not using any formal performance measurement regarding communication practices. What the empirical data indicates is that the only way of measuring communication is by once a year having a performance appraisal and the RFP, which is based on the precision of delivery, quality and efficiency of job performance and is handed out twice a year to the employees. This measurement tools are only regarding the communication between the employees and the input from the manager’s point of view. While for a high effective organization, measurements of communication between managers to employees are also a vital part to include.

6.1.3 Competitive Advantage

*RQ3: How could the internal communication system be improved to gain competitive advantage?*

The analysis done concerning how the internal communication in Electrolux can be improved in order to gain a higher competitive advantage was first focusing on how the employees perceived the relationship of the two concepts. It was an overall coherency between the employees that competitive advantage was connected to efficient internal communication. The theory states that by having a formal communication plan, higher employee engagement, input and reward and an effective use of technology that facilitates communication will generate a higher market premium. All these control points is implemented in the logistic center but not in a high degree. One specific way that can be concluded for the logistic center to derive higher competitive advantage through more efficient internal communication is to engage the employees more in teachings about intercultural communication. An increased knowledge regarding intercultural communication would increase the efficiency for Electrolux. This would grow our understanding regarding how people from a different country with a different culture perceive characteristics, which for us in Sweden are seen as normal and nothing strange. This would increase the patience towards customers, distributors and sales offices.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

The purpose of this study is to investigate in factors that influence the effectiveness of internal communication from the managerial & employee perceptions of Electrolux internal communication system. The way to understand and further investigate in the
purpose, the theories was based on previous studies for the research to be carried out. This study has then used these theories to see whether they are applicable to the case study or not.

This study could provide in important information in where companies could investigate how their communication is perceived within any company that works in a B2B environment on the global market. Moreover, this could be used as a basis in order to further investigate a specific aspect where communication is used as a foundation.

Kotler et al (2008) explained the SWOT analysis which where implemented and included in the interview guide where communication were discussed. The authors were able to use the four measures and collect data from that theoretical framework in order to conduct a deeper dimension.

Yates (2006) argued in the hierarchy of effective communication that a formal communication plan was a vital tool for organizations but companies did not utilize it properly. This was investigated in the case of Electrolux where they were not practicing such theory, which correlated with research of yates but not with proposed theory of effective communication.

The performance measurement tools that were presented were not applicable in the case study other than that a conclusion could be drawn from the fact that Electrolux were not using such measures.

Moreover, the main literature review did not support this case study, which throughout the paper was discussed. Due to the deductive research approach, this could not have been prevented.

### 6.3 Managerial Implications

The analysis stated that misunderstandings between the order/ERP systems PRMS and Order Lux are often an occurring issue. This is ultimately is based on lack of communication between the departments because no formal strategy of communication is implemented. A more formal communication plan would prevent this issue and decrease misunderstandings.

A more structured plan for the internal communication at Electrolux logistic center should also involve a higher engagement of employees where they are given the
opportunity to provide meaningful input into decisions and how the business is run. This improves involvement of employees and provides the organizations greater adaptability to respond quickly to changes. This implication could practically be implemented as a part of the yearly performance appraisal.

In relation of having a communication plan the management at the logistic center must also establish a way of measuring the communication in order to create room for improvements. Metrics such as communication audits, benchmarking processes to improve systems and measuring the impact communication has on job performance should be a part of the communication plan.

Regarding the order system, Electrolux Professional in Ljungby should construct and develop a team in order to fabricate a new system in which should replace Order Lux and PRMS. To have the new system up and running within five years minimum should replace the depraved interconnection. The system could in this case be a mix between Order Lux and PRMS, which could also satisfy the whole organization and the needs related to it.

The actions in short that Electrolux logistic center should consider in order to improve the effectiveness of their communication is as follows:

- Construct a documented communication strategy that is connected to the business of Electrolux.
- Planning the communication practices on a yearly basis to reach a more proactive approach to communications.
- Engage and facilitate employee inputs into decisions through a two-way communication more than two times per year.
- Train managers and employees more often in intercultural communication and give them better tools so they can be successful and be able to have greater share of responsibility regarding communication.
- Facilitate communication through higher cutting edge technology such as new communication systems.
- Establish formal measures to improve the effectiveness of communication practices.
6.4 Limitations

The limited ability to generalize due to the qualitative nature of this study is perceived to be the main limitation, also the relatively short time frame that restricted the research and the number of interviewees for this study is one of more central limitations. In order to enhance the possibility to generalize, a larger sample number should have been used from more than one company. Due to lack of knowledge the interviewees could not answer several questions regarding certain areas, which prohibited the study to attain answers to certain information, which could have improved the findings. Due to lack of expertise regarding interview technique the authors had limited way of moderating the interviews in an expert way, which the empirical data is based upon.

A limitation that was due the short time frame was that only employee perception was investigated. Managers were excluded whom which could have brought a deeper knowledge about the research area. Also international units of Electrolux was not considered which could a have extended the research regarding intercultural communication.

6.5 Further Research

- Considering the lack of managerial inputs in this study and the similar responses from the interviews a new research could be conducted with this study as a base. A larger sample selection where the more than one department is considered could be used.

- Since this only is a qualitative study the concept of communication could in the future be tested though a quantitative approach at Electrolux , where the internal communication could be measured through a questionnaire. Also there could be an opportunity of conducting hypothesis in order to test the theories of the Hierarchy of effective communication.

- This study was based on the perceptions of the people who worked at the logistic center. In the future a study could have a more objective approach where the financial performance in connection to communication is investigated in.
The theory of knowledge transfer was not utilized as much as anticipated in the future a more in depth investigation of how that works in regards to communication would be interesting to look upon.

6.6 Concluding Remarks
The investigation of internal communication has in many researches shown the benefits for an organization to invest in improving the effectiveness of their communication practices. The increasing involvement in the global environment requires an effective communication plan where cultural barriers can be prevented and a better communication with the offshore sales managers would be implemented. This is will generate substantial rewards in the future, including higher shareholder returns, increased market premiums, higher employee engagement, and lower turnover. These points are a major reason why the authors has chosen to investigate in this subject, because it seems that communication is one of the main platform or foundations that makes an organization to be successful.
References List


Amo Courtney & Cousins J. Bradley, (2007): Going through the process: An examination of the operationalization of process use in empirical research on evaluation, pp. 5-26


Education.


Appendix

Due to the in-depth interview and the semi-structured interview questions, the questions asked will be very general (Mikkelsen, 2005). The questions asked during the interviews are based on the theoretical framework made in chapter 2. Because of the difference in the amount of theories within different areas, the amount of questions will also differ in numbers. The questions are constructed by the authors and are not copied from the theoretical framework or another author, this is due to the purpose of the investigation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of investigation</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Measurement Tools</th>
<th>Competitive Advantage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question asked:</td>
<td>• What kind of strategic system do you use for your internal communication?</td>
<td>• Are there any tools of measuring the communication made within the organization?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are the employee needs and preferences with regard to the organization’s internal communication?</td>
<td>• What flaws are there in your system?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How is the communication handled with the international sales/distributing offices?</td>
<td>• What are the benefits of your system?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In which way do you believe it is an effective way of communication?</td>
<td>• Which are the opportunities within your communication system?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How do you think the internal communication system could be developed and improved?</td>
<td>• What are the threats of the communication system?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In what way do you engage, motivate or give feedback to your employees?</td>
<td>• Are there any stated values that are constantly measured in the organization?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In what way do you communicate input on the work of your</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(A), Would an improved communication give or increase the output of your product/service? (B) If so, in what way?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>employees?</th>
<th>Is there any stated barriers regarding the communication held in a global context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- How do you communicate the organizational values and motivate your employees?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How do you make sure the employees understands their role in the organization?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What kind of rewards or benefits do you give your employees?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

Appendix two will display the division the interviewee are located at Electrolux Laundry System AB, years of experience and the level of authority of each individual.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Level of authority</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic department</td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>Operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic department</td>
<td>1,5+</td>
<td>Operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic department</td>
<td>40 +</td>
<td>Operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic department</td>
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<td>Operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic department</td>
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<td>Operative</td>
</tr>
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<td>Logistic department</td>
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<td>Operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Operative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic department</td>
<td>8+</td>
<td>Operative</td>
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</tbody>
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