BUREAUCRACY AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION OF PUBLIC ORGANISATIONS

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Abstract

Public sector organizations are undergoing a transformation in their style of management. Not only is the conduct of governmental institutions increasingly being conducted like businesses, where managers play a central role, but the client service aspect is also becoming more important. However, according to different theorists, public sector organizations are also hierarchic and controlled systems operating on a high level of bureaucracy. The research (1) by present author reported here shows that public organizations favour their ‘bureaucratic’ features because via bureaucracy it is possible to control societal processes and acquire power. On the other hand the bureaucratic organizational model creates problems with internal communication. A feeling of belongingness is also one of the key factors in public sector organizations – employees perceive themselves as members of a group, which supports their positive attitudes to bureaucracy and power and compensates for lack of information. The author's research shows that public sector employees very often have a special “public sector worldview”. From the organizational stand point this special worldview is of course good, because it keeps employees loyal and motivated without the expenditure of huge effort, but from the client service viewpoint this can create a number of problems, because such an egocentric worldview can destroy the image of the public sector as a public service provider.
Public Management and the Cultural Theory Approach

The term ‘public management’ which has replaced ‘public administration’ in the interests of making government institutions more business-like signifies the art of the state – “the problem of how to design and operate public services and the detailed work of executive government (Hood 2000)”. In his book “The Art of The State – Culture, Rhetoric, and Public Management” published in 2000, Hood writes that some general assumptions are commonly made about public management: Public management is changing and adopting a new style. The conduct of governmental institutions increasingly resembles that of businesses, where managers play a central role. Basically, what is taking place is modernization – public management institutions realize the effects of globalization and recognize the need to be up-to-date. One major factor that affects modernity, not only in public management organizations but in other type of institutions as well, is the development of information technology. The old ideas of public management are very different from the new ideas. According to Hood “It is often suggested that serious thinking about public management only really began in the 1980s” (Hood 2000). He says that the out-dated style of public management, which was process-oriented and rule-focused, is being transformed into a results-orientation with a special emphasis on efficient least-cost practice (Hood 2000).

Modern public management is implementing more and more strategic tools drawn from the private sector – through the TQM (Total Quality Management) approach, for example public management boosts efficiency rather than decreases it. Terms like ‘benchmarking’ (which signifies setting certain organizations (or even countries) that are considered to have best practice as models and turning them into standards) and ‘business process re-engineering’ (i.e. reorganization) are becoming more and more common in public administration management.

From the above mentioned assumptions, Hood moves on to describe public management through the grid and group cultural theory approach, which he states, are essential for assessing the quality of public management institutions. The ‘grid’ approach is about rules and how much an organization is controlled by rules and regulations. The more rule-centered the organization is, the
higher it scores on grid. The ‘group’ on the other hand deals with people and explains how individuals’ needs are constrained by group preferences. The higher an organization scores on group, the more constrained individual choices are by group choices (Hood 2000).

The grid and group cultural theory allows four different types of public management to be distinguished: fatalist, hierarchist, egalitarian and individualist. Table 1 shows where these four types are located by grid and group.

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All four polar types have a corresponding generic type of control – a fatalist organization is described by chancist control, an individualist one is choicist, a hierarchist one is bossist, and an egalitarian one is groupist (Hood 2000).

Fatalist organizations score low on group but high on grid, which means that cooperation is low and individualistic approach is more developed, while adherence to the rules is very strict leaving little room for improvisation. From a control point of view fatalist organizations are related to the doctrine of chancism, the key words describing which are ‘contrived randomness’ – control is maintained by conducting random internal audits or unpredictable reorganizations and relocations. The main goal is to reduce the chances of corruption and prevent employees from becoming too familiar with their colleagues and clients. In a game metaphor, the fatalist type of public management resembles a game of chance – for example, a roulette wheel or gaming machine (Hood 2000).

Hierarchist organizations score high on both group and grid, which indicates that these organizations are driven by rules and regulations, and collectiveness rather than individualism. Everybody is responsible for something specific and if something goes wrong, the guilty part can
immediately be identified. The hierarchist organization is described by the doctrine of bossism, of which supervision is the tool of control monitoring. Inspection and overseeing are done according to a strict hierarchical authority of division that determines the direction of power and authority. This kind of strict supervision from above provides to control over subordinates and assumes that there are fixed rules and regulations that subordinates have to follow in order to meet the needs their superiors. Applying a game metaphor, Hood compares a hierarchist organization to a team game with one central leader – a captain, as in football, ice hockey etc. (Hood 2000). Organizations which score low in both group and grid, are individualist and they advocate an atomized approach that focuses on negotiation and bargaining. Their locus of control is competition and they fall under the doctrine of choicism. Control is assumed by initiating rivalry and competition: externally, control over clients is attained through sparking off competition among rival organizations, whether for attention, discounts, prizes, etc. Internally, it shows by establishing a competitive environment. Hood writes that this approach improves employees’ loyalty to the organization and their eagerness toward work. Constantly fighting for bonuses, promotion, better working equipment etc. makes them more hard-working, but overall, if all employees are competing with one another on a continuous basis, this can obstruct the achievement of the general goals of the organization. Individualist public management is perceived as an individual game where skills of each player matter a lot, as in chess, tennis etc. (Hood 2000). The egalitarian way is practised in an organization that scores low on grid, but high on group. This means that high cooperation and participation is valued over an individualistic approach, while in its conduct, it is not so much restricted by rules and regulations. The control doctrine is groupism and mutuality is the keyword for maintaining control in an egalitarian organization. It derives from ‘peer-group accountability’, which shows that groupism is the complete opposite of choicism – competition is replaced by social cohesion, where everybody in a group is equal rather than rivals. The whole idea behind mutuality as a control tool is that everybody is held responsible and accountable for group actions, and therefore, if one person fails, everybody fails. The mechanism of control works in the following way: since nobody wants to
fail, peers monitor each other’s work, i.e. they are their own constant supervisors. If in choicism the main idea was to be ahead of the others and not to be on the same level with other workers, then in groupism it is important to stay with the others and by no means lag behind them. Applying the analogy of a game, Hood says that egalitarianism is like a non-captained and non-competitive team sport, for example folk dancing (Hood 2000).

Two important (though Hood calls them the most essential) polar dimensions – individualism vs. collectivism, and strict regulation vs. loose regulation – allow different types of public management to be distinguished. Combination of these dimensions creates four categories of public management – fatalism, hierarchism, individualism and egalitarianism – each of which has a corresponding control pattern. Hood notes that often a public management organization can not easily be categorized since different types appear at different organizational levels. And, sometimes, hybrid forms of organizations may exist. But the reason why he still advocates using the cultural theory approach in describing public management is that it focuses on the most significant aspects of managers and provides a general framework which not only concerns concrete characteristics but also gives a broader overview (Hood 2000).

**Hierarchist Type of Public Management**

Hierarchist public management scores high on both grid and group, which means that group is valued over the individual and therefore the group’s wishes and values override individual wishes and values. Strict control is exercised over employees because it is believed that rules that regulate employees’ behavior and determine the scope of their authority should be strictly followed in order for the organization to function normally and avoid chaos and failure. Rules also provide an additional value – if something goes wrong, it is relatively easy to find out who to blame since everybody has a specific task to carry out (Hood 2000). Division of authority is a very important keyword in describing hierarchist organization – if other types of public management seek to avoid this, hierarchist public management, on the contrary, believes that an organization operates better if
the chain of command is well-regulated and fixed, thereby minimizing creativity, improvisation and spontaneity.

Hood (2000) lists four basic interconnected principles of hierarchist public management. The first two of which he links to a groupist metaphor, such as the family; the last two are connected to a gridist metaphor, such as a machine:

1. the organization comes before individuals;
2. individual needs have to be surrendered to group interests;
3. avoiding chaos is achieved by following rules and regulations;
4. in case of failure those who don’t follow the rules must be blamed.

The importance and implementation of the hierarchist management approach is growing. According to Hood, hierarchist elements have come to be much practised in many public and private organizations, and therefore many people associate hierarchist conduct with the term ‘management’ and cannot imagine that organizations could be managed otherwise (Hood 2000).

Max Weber’s Theory of Bureaucracy

Another way to approach the hierarchical type of public management is through classical management theory. In 1910 Max Weber introduced his ‘ideal type’ theory, nowadays known as Weber’s theory of bureaucracy. Although he was not very sure about some of his bureaucratic principles, he thought that eventually bureaucratic organizations would take over due to their technical superiority.

Miller (1999) and Pace and Faules (1994) have each analyzed Weber’s work and have come up with two lists of characteristics. Miller (1999) proposes six basic keywords for Weberian bureaucracy:

1. a clearly defined hierarchy – usually in the shape of a pyramid, where, according to his/her position and authority, each person has supervisors and subordinates to whom he/she has certain responsibilities;
2. division of labor – work can be done best if workers are given a limited number of specialized tasks;
3. centralized decision-making and power – the central management has control and makes decisions;
4. authority – bureaucracies function on authority, power and discipline;
5. rules – rules and regulations should cover all possible aspects of the organization’s work and should be preferably in written form;
6. a closed system (Baecker, Knodt and Luhman 1996) – interacting with outside environments is not favored since it can disturb or damage the functioning of the organization.

Pace and Faules (1994) find ten generic characteristics of Weber’s ideal bureaucracy, several of which overlap with those on with Miller’s list. Those which add to or expand Miller’s list are the following:

- specific qualifications are the basis for employing people in a bureaucratic organization. Pace and Faules (1994) note that this is the opposite of getting hired because of political, family etc. connections.
- security of tenure – although getting a job in a bureaucratic organization is based on competence and proficiency, promotion also depends on how long has the employee worked for the company. This means that seniority can be as crucial as achievements in advancing and getting promoted.
- employees are not encouraged to socially interact with one another during working time. This means that professional life and family life should be kept separate. The organization has to achieve employees’ full devotion to their work.
- positions and authority – everybody in a bureaucratic organization has a defined position with a title and only the person who is legitimately assigned to a certain position can exercise his/her authority;
procedures – the organization’s procedures have one generic function, i.e., to ensure that employees regard their work impersonality and are therefore more objective in performing their work.

As Pace and Faules (1994) put, “these characteristics lead toward rational decision making and administrative efficiency. Experts with much experience are best qualified to make technical decisions. Disciplined performance governed by abstract rules, regulations, or policies and coordinated by hierarchical authority fosters a rational and consistent pursuit of organizational goals.”

Communication Patterns in the Hierarchist/Weberian Organization

The next few sections look more closely at the hierarchical and Weberian approach, which is commonly adopted in most public management institutions. The communication pattern in such an organization is derivable from its basic characteristics and allows putting together a picture of the communication practice in a hierarchical/Weberian organization.

First of all, strict control is exercised over employees in order to avoid chaos and failure. What this means for communication, is expressed in the keywords ‘defined’ and ‘fixed’, which indicate that there is also a strict chain of communication. Also, the belief that the organization comes before individuals and that individual needs have to be surrendered to group interests indicates that the communicated messages are targeted at the organization as a whole rather than at individuals. On the other hand it is made sure that everybody knows his/her responsibilities, as this is essential for spotting these to blame for mistakes because they did not fulfill their duties.

The major purpose of communication in such an organization is to achieve organizational goals (as it is the purpose of other management functions) through communicating rules, regulation and control to the employees. From this it is possible to derive other characteristics of communication in such an organization – content is task-oriented rather than social since interpersonal relationships among the workers are discouraged and every employee is expected to concentrate only on work rather than on other factors, which leads to minimizing creativity,
improvisation and spontaneity. For internal communication it means that possibilities for social interaction, such as collective informal events, are not highly favored or practised. The ultimate goal is to separate working life from private life, and by doing so, obtaining full dedication from the employees.

Owing to its primary function, the direction of communication is, first of all, downward and the written channel is preferred to face-to-face personal communication (the impersonality factor again is present). Encouraging a formal attitude leads to a formal style of communication and the importance of rules points toward a developed, fixed and clear model of communication.

One of the characteristics of this type of public management practice is centralized and fixed decision-making. This refers to the two-way asymmetrical stage from Grunig and Hunt’s four stages in the evolution of public relations, according to which the basic aim of communication remains persuasion, although an effort is made to set up dialogue between the parties (Grunig cited in Culbertson et al. 1996).

**Importance of Internal Communication**

Here, the main purpose is to attain strategic goals through communicative means. Through internal communication, it is possible to increase the value of the organization, assuming the organization's managers are able to motivate the employees enough to make them follow the organization’s principles and adhere to them. Fletcher puts effective internal communication next to employee issues and leadership, which he sees as the most important and critical aspects of an organization’s success (Fletcher 1999). The challenge facing of today’s management is not one of developing strategies and basic values – it is more about mediating all these to the employees in a way that would guarantee their emotional commitment to the organization.

In present author’s opinion the existing two key goals of internal communication, which are injecting a feeling of belonging, enabling the employees to feel part of the organization and part of the bigger group, and attaining employee support, suggest that employees are the most important representatives of the organization since they are the links to its external audiences. The functions
of internal communication include conveying organizational values, beliefs, attitudes, vision, changes and information; effective internal communication is motivating and facilitates the everyday work of employees, and serves as the foundation for developing a successful company (i.e. internal communication is a channel through which employees adopt the organization’s values and beliefs). The final item in the present author’s list is the assumption that efficient and effective internal communication is the basis for building a good external communication pattern where employees are positive ambassadors of the organization.

Smythe (1996) in an article published in the journal Managing Service Quality, studies the importance of internal communication more closely and identifies some generic functions of internal communication:

1. Cultural conscience of the organization – internal communication communicates the organization’s values, beliefs, attitudes, and helps to shape employees’ understanding of the organization itself and helps to create shared values.

2. Ethics interpreter and values facilitator – Smythe separates this from the rest of the organizational culture since the issue of ethics can sometimes be controversial. He says that some organizations may still be “little islands where internal values override the ethics of the society around them” (Smythe 1996). In this case, the role of communication is to disseminate and explain the organization’s ethical values.

3. Combining organizational culture and external brand – the gap between the values of the organization and the organization’s projected image should be minimal. There should be a balance and a consistency between them. If the organization values one thing and actually does the opposite, the whole perception of the organization fails (Smythe 1996). Today branding is also an issue in the public sector, lot of practical cases proving this trend. According to Hood public management is changing and transforming to a new style. The conduct of governmental institutions is increasingly resembling that of business organizations (Hood 2000).
4. The big picture – a strategic function, which is to inform employees not only about the changes that will take place in the near future but also about long-run development. This aspect has also a motivational value since the informed employee feels part of the organization and its development and, therefore, provides better input and dedication.

5. Visioning – Smythe (1996) states that valuing new ideas and approaches improve an organization’s competitive advantage. Organizations often ignore the creativity of their employees and underestimate their abilities. The role of the internal communication here is to encourage employees to come up with new ideas on how the organization can be enhanced and to build a good basis for employee-employer dialogue on strategic issues.

6. Constant real-time communication – the former secrecy over decision-making has already for a long time been replaced by the need of transparency. The decision-making process with relevant details and rationale has to be clear to and accessible by all employees. This generates trust between the parties, which is essential for an effective and mutually beneficial relationship between the management and rank and files.

7. Consultation, involvement and empowerment – although Smythe talks about a similar issue in visioning, here he focuses more on this internal communication function that determines the extent of real employee involvement (Smythe 1996). In other words, internal communication should also deal with finding a balance between an organization’s stated value of encouraging employee involvement and the real need by management for employee input.

8. Listening versus hearing – for a relationship to function effectively hearing should be replaced by with listening. According to Smythe the difference between these two terms lies in the extent of the involvement – if hearing is only one-way in a sense that something is heard and that is the state in which it remains, then listening is more about reacting to what has been heard. Smythe attaches great importance to the skill of listening: “it is a central part of the psychological good health of an organization”. He continues by saying that if the organization wants to be an effective real-time communicator then there are three critical aspects that should be monitored
and listened to in real time: what has been heard, what employees want to know more about and what are employees’ concerns (Smythe 1996). If these issues are monitored by reactive listening skills, then a organization can become a better and more efficient and effective communicator.

As Smythe (1996) concludes the context of internal communication is changing all the time (Smythe 1996). This means that where there used to be a mere downward communication of tasks and orders, now the function of internal communication has become one of establishing a mutual dialogue and understanding between employee and employer. Smythe adds that all the abovelisted functions should be fully implemented and turned into action if the company wants to keep up to date (Smythe 1996).

Effective Internal Communication

No matter which internal publics the organization wants to communicate with, the golden rule of internal communication is reactive communication, which means that the employees have to get enough information before the wider audience gets it. From the viewpoint of internal communication, there is nothing worse than an employee finding out about changes in his/her organization in a newspaper. This means a breach of trust, yet trustworthiness and credibility are keywords in communicating with internal publics since the employees are the group to whom public relations has to sell the organization’s ideas and vision in the first place. This is where the term internal communication comes in.

Kitchen and Daly (Kitchen and Daly 2002) have analyzed effective internal communication in more depth and have put together a checklist of key principles that can be categorized into the following groups:

- Regularity – all employees should get information about the company on a regular basis and before it goes public. In order to ensure this happens the management has to be committed to and willing to trust their employees.
- Honesty – all employees should be informed honestly and clearly also about the negative issues within the company; in order to generate trust, reliability and trustworthiness the messages communicated must be consistent with the company's actions.

- Management visibility – the communication of the management has to visible to the employees. This is why all employees should be informed of the organization's strategic plans, its mission statements, up-to-date information about the financial indicators etc. Written and face-to-face communication should be combined; there should be both regular meetings with the management and regular distribution of written information.

- Communication skills – effective speaking, listening and questioning skills are needed in order to achieve effective communication.

- Monitoring and feedback – employee issues should be monitored on a regular basis since these are the subjects of possible crises if left without attention. The grapevine is one effective channel for monitoring employees’ concerns.

The main keywords that intervene with all these principles of effective internal communication are trust and credibility – management and employees have to develop a trust relationship in order to turn the communication between them into something effective and successful. For this reason the present author proposes an additional checklist, which in some cases overlaps with the previous one, and which deals with sustaining credibility:

- Exchanging information frequently and as soon as possible;
- Proving credibility – negative information is information too;
- Involving employees in decision-making and other internal processes;
- Showing interest toward employees' ideas and opinions.

In conclusion, effective internal communication should be able to convey the whole situation in the organization. It is about mutual trust and credibility through constant on-going dialogue at all levels of the organization but, most of all, between management and employees.
Strategies, Tactics and Methods of Internal Communication

In the present author's opinion the leaders of an organization should accept their employees’ wish to be informed and to be noticed, even in the bureaucratic type of organization, as sharing information is not a whim but a very important motivational tool. According to a recent study conducted by present author (Tampere 2004) it is possible to increase employees motivation approximately 50% simply by informing them. Employees of bureaucratic organizations also mentioned this need as big motivator. As stated earlier, each employee is an ambassador of the organization he/she works for and therefore he/she has an important role in the whole image formulation process. To ensure a positive outcome, the present author propose several general strategies of efficient and effective internal communication, which are summarized in the following paragraphs.

First, the regular monitoring of employees’ attitudes and opinions is important. It is paradoxical that an organization’s financial situation is often analyzed on a daily basis while measuring the attitudes of the company’s most important asset – its employees – is left out. It is way too late to think about employees when a crisis has already struck or when a top worker hands in a resignation request. A wise and concerned management monitors employees with the same regularity as they do with financial data. And besides, regular monitoring will lead to realization of the need for providing means for employees to give feedback on the decisions of the company, since they see often things differently from the management.

It is essential to be consistent and systematical in communication and keeping promises. Management, which promises open and mutually beneficial communication, should act accordingly. When people are hired, they may be told that they can always turn to the management with their problems. Often the real situation is different and a concerned employee is left without any substantial help. It is wrongly believed that a hurt and disappointed employee keeps negative feelings to her/himself; on contrary, he/she becomes a loud critic of the organization and this is far more influential than sponsorship or any other image-strengthening tool. Creating systematic
internal communication requires several analytical processes to be carried out beforehand. In the present authors' opinion, first it has to be learned what information is necessary for the work of which employee group, second, what of that needed information is present and what is not and third, who processes information of specific kind, who forwards it to whom and how the receiver uses it. If all steps in the analysis are carried out and put down in written form, the organization can talk about developing systematic and consistent internal communication. In present author’s opinion the only way of keeping communication consistent and systemized is a communication process, which makes it clear what information reaches which target audience in which way. In this way initial communication about an organization’s difficulties or about important news on the organization’s future does not take place in a smokers' corner or in the pub.

Personalized communication is the next strategy for good internal communication. The present author’s organization’s analyses show that only one fifth of today’s management communicates personally with his/her employees, which is obviously not enough since employees need personalized communication. A good way to achieve this is to organize regular meetings with the management (Tampere 2004).

Being open and honest is the fourth proposed strategy. This is a rather problematic strategy for bureaucratic organizations, owing to the more closed nature of the worldview a this type of organization. But employees expect honesty and openness from the management on every issue on reputation as well as clarity in information communication - even in hierarchist and bureaucratic organizations. People are actually willing to work in difficult conditions if they know and understand what they are working for.

Openness to innovations and development means that information transmission in internal communication often needs to be reorganized due to feedback from the communication audit or simply due to organization enlargement. Organizations should be flexible enough to be able to adopt to new communication methods and to keep up with employees’ needs and wants in informationsharing techniques.
Another important aspect is encouraging employees and providing them with possibilities to communicate on all the different levels in the organization – not only downwards or upwards but also laterally. Providing employees with means to interact with others on the same level is essential in creating a feeling of belongingness and therefore improving loyalty and commitment to the organization.

The present author notes as a separate strategy of internal communication the need to provide information on advancement opportunities, training, and promotion. The reason for this is motivational – employees can see that they are valued and that their advancement and development are taken into account and made into a subject matter for the organization.

The present author would also add a point to all the existing general strategies by stating that before implementing any single strategy it is important to analyze them through three lenses in order to check whether they are valid and reliable enough. These three aspects are the following:

1. The right information – the information that is being distributed and on the basis of which decisions are being made has to be appropriate. This means that the receiver has to be provided with information that is meant for him/her.

2. The right place – if the information has been processed in such a way that important details are emphasized and unimportant details are removed, then this “right” information has to be forwarded to the right place.

3. The right time – it is extremely important that the right information is received in the right place at the right time. No matter how accurate the information is, if it reaches the right place even a little too late, then it has no value. This also applies information that is distributed earlier than needed – in this situation the information can disturb the whole working process.

In order to achieve the strategies set for internal communication, many tools and methods are available. Many scholars agree that each method is effective in its own way and that there is no universal tool equally applicable to all the strategies. Hart says that different methods help in reaching different goals, and he divides all the tactical tools into five categories, each corresponding
to a different, expected internal communicational outcome. (Hart 1995) The first category is awareness, which is meant for communicating general news about the company, and is therefore disseminated to a wider audience without customizing the message according to the needs of different target groups. As Hart (1995) puts it, the tools used are “arm’s length, call for little interaction or response, and allow for little feedback.” These kinds of methods include newsletters, bulletin boards, direct mail, annual reports, corporate identity etc. The next category is understanding, which includes conferencing, presentations and other similar tools that create a possibility for giving feedback and that are more specifically tailored to the needs of a specific target group. Communication which has understanding as an outcome is more personal and interactive, since of a more face-to-face kind communication is preferred (Hart 1995). In the stage of gaining favour and support it is not enough just to disseminate the information and have people understand the main essence of it. The difference from the previous category is the scope of interaction (which is greater in the support stage than it was in the understanding stage) and a shift from a presentational style to one of education and discussion. Sample methods are seminars, trainings, and forums. The next stage is involvement, which is again a step forward in the communication process. The goal of this stage is to generate more dialogue and shared thinking, more feedback, ideas and independent initiative. The communication tools corresponding to this stage are team meetings, feedback forums, speak-up programs and interactive conferences, all of which are more like debates and exchanges of ideas than simple question and answer seminars (Hart 1995). The last stage in Hart’s five-step model is commitment. Hart says that the only big difference between this stage compared to the other preceding stages is that at this level management is not there to inform or educate, but to listen. Informal meetings with a loose agenda create a perfect environment for people to raise issues and communicate their concerns (Hart 1995). The focus has shifted from a one-way distribution of information to a wide passive audience to specific and two-way communication centred on an active audience. In public sector organizations these five stages are complicated because of a high level of bureaucracy, which often blocks all
these categories. According to Hart employees in bureaucratic organizations recognize this five
categories of tactical tools; however the research done by present author found the opposite – in
practice they are not yet possible in all public sector organizations. Much depends on the level of
bureaucracy in these organizations. This suggests that practical internal communication as a
motivator for public sector employees is not realistic prospect just yet.

Jefkins (1999) on the other hand provides a clearer and easier, more formal categorization of
the different internal communication tools. If Hart’s categorization and five stages sometimes
overlap and it is difficult to distinguish where one stage ends and another one starts, then Jefkins
divides all communication methods into three basic categories – tools for upwards communication,
tools for sideways communication and tools for downwards communication.

Upward communication is first of all meant for encouraging employees to engage in
dialogue with the management. Jefkins writes that many managers may not acknowledge the need
for this and may think that good salary is enough to keep the workers satisfied. But job satisfaction
is far more than that – one of the most important elements in keeping the employee motivated is a
sense of belonging, and this is best achieved by a management which promotes the idea of the
organization being one whole. This can be achieved through having a corporate newsletter in which
are included and through speak-up and suggestion schemes. Although not many employees would
bother to write or speak up or make a suggestion, these is an extra value in simply knowing that
there is a chance to do so when the need arises. Incentive schemes as on internal communication
tool may work as both downwards and upwards communication, the nature of it depending on the
company (Jefkins 1999). Jefkins’ example of an upwards incentive scheme is rewarding an
employee for coming up an idea that is implemented and results in making the organization more
effective and efficient. Jefkins’ approach is also more acceptable in organizations with high
hierarchy and bureaucracy, because of its more formal character, which is easier to integrate with
such an organizational worldview.
The last important tool is writing articles for the organization’s in-house newsletter. Articles about a worker and his/her job description can be very valuable for the management since, as Jefkins points out, not all the members of the management team have grown up through the organization and therefore many people at the top don’t actually know what workers really do. (Jefkins 1999) Same tactics also work in the opposite way. The present author's research shows that quite a big problem in bureaucratic public sector organizations is the fact that employees do not know enough about their managers' work. There may be two reasons for this: at first, because of the closed worldview in such organizations, managers have not adopted the habit of to communicating enough with employees, and, second, bureaucratic and closed organizations do not have well developed system of information for dissemination more informal messages. Bureaucratic organizations prefer to communicate in very formal and official ways, and which causes them problems.

The next strategy in Jefkins’ list is sideways communication, the main goal of which is to ensure and maintain good relationships among the employees. Jefkins writes that although all this can be achieved by in-house newsletter and notice boards, other tactical tools should be implemented as well (Jefkins 1999). For example, a good and simple way to promote communication between employees and promote the creating of contacts is to devote a certain amount of space in the house journal or newsletter for personal advertisements. Another section in the in-house publication should be dedicated to staff news so that employees can learn about people whom they know in the company. Possible topics could cover marriages, births, retirements, leaving, promotions etc. Jefkins says that since in-house journals are often distributed to retired employees, personal news can help maintain interest in the company. (Jefkins 1999). Present author’s research (Tampere 2004) shows that an in-house publication can change some bureaucratic trends in hierarchist organizations as well. But in this context in-house publications should follow a conservative and classical format, and the language and messages in them must also be well deigned and accurate. One of the members of the present author’s study organization told how
organization a crises arise when editor of the in-house newsletter included a story about an employee who had been a dancer in her student days. For conservative older colleagues it was a total disaster and not acceptable in their solid bureaucratic public organization. This case shows quite well what bureaucratic public organizations can be like inside and how such a closed worldview can be expressed. And, unfortunately, this case was not exceptional.

Another tool for encouraging the creation of personal employee contacts inside the organization is to organize activities that involve everyone (Jefkins 1999). Providing different opportunities to sport (e.g. to company has a special deal with a local gym that at specific days and/or times entrance to the sporting facility for the employee is free of charge or at a very reduced fee) or organizing activities like special summer or winter festivals help toward strengthening the feeling of belonging, of generating contacts with other employees and increasing the possibilities of interaction with people from the same department or with other workers in the same company. In the present author’s opinion the main motivator for many employees is not salary but social atmosphere, which can be created and shaped through shared activities. And as the present author has found (Tampere 2004), this tool also works well also in bureaucratic organizations. This tool has features which support bureaucratic worldview – rituals, traditions, the possibility to pay tribute to the best employees, and also in a less official way to communicate with bosses.

For Jefkins, the last strategy category is downwards communication, the keywords of which are mutual understanding. (Jefkins 1999) Although the main tool here is the in-house newsletter, downward communication should not be limited to it. Annual reports and company policies are important supportive tools for creating understanding of what is going on in the company. And the person responsible for internal communication should keep the employees constantly aware of all possible company-related news through Internet communication (e-mail, intranet).

No matter what the company does and how it operates, it should be remembered that internal communication must be knowingly organized and systematically carried out. Many studies show that employees who are satisfied with the internal communication in the company are more
effective and tolerate organizational problems and difficulties better than those who are not sufficiently informed and who thus may unintentionally enlarge the problem. (Tampere 2004)

**Common Problems in Internal Communication**

The overriding problem in internal communication of bureaucratic organization is the lack of information. This can be because communication is strictly downward, which turns the whole process of information transmission into one-way communication, excluding feedback and discouraging the upwards transmission of information. This kind of suppressed communication and/or purposeful distortion lead to mistakes in the facts that are being communicated and possibilities for misinterpretation. All this gives rise to rumors and the grapevine, which in essence are very effective means of communication but can also be damaging if the information is not true (Kitchen and Daly 2002).

Another problem in mediating information can be the assumption that if the management knows about something then presumably everybody knows about it and there is no real need to communicate the message. What the management seems to forget in such a case is that they are the source of information for their staff and what they leave uncommunicated, will remain unknown (at least for some time) (Kitchen and Daly 2002).

Common problem is ignoring the need for communication. A management may not recognize the need to provide information and/or may believe that the only time communication is necessary is when opinions from the lower echelons are needed (Kitchen and Daly 2002).

The next issue may seem at first more a virtue than a problem – trying to avoid bureaucracy. This is not always a good thing. For example when the company is small many things are communicated orally. This may be due to the small number of employees and therefore there is no need for written communication, or due to trying to avoid bureaucratic procedures since writing something down may seem a sign of bureaucracy. But once the organization starts to grow and the number of employees increases, then a situation where messages are not given in a written form will lead to a situation where not everybody is properly informed. The outcome of bureaucracy
avoidance is a company where written communication is not valued as much as it should be as a way of providing effective internal communication.

Management often thinks that communication just happens and it does not have to be systematic. The result is losing track of communicated messages and, most of all, of not knowing to whom the messages have been communicated. A related issue concerns the role of feedback – if the message is mediated, then without feedback it is impossible to tell if the recipient understood the message correctly or if there has been a problem in interpreting it. This shows that encouraging and valuing the systematic transmission of information and feedback is essential for reaching the target audience and ensuring their interpretation is correct.

The last common by encountered problem is access to information. Although the data needed is out there somewhere, sometimes it can be difficult to obtain. A good example (although no longer very up-to-date) is the application of the new technology in internal communication – for example, the organization's intranet. If internal communication takes place mainly through the intranet but a substantial number of employees do not have the competence to access the intranet, internal communication fails. Therefore, management should consider the skills and preferences of their employees when communicating with them, and if needed, guide them toward adopting new methods of communication.

**Employees Attitudes to Bureaucratic Organization Internal Communication**

According to the present author’s study (Tampere 2004) the third biggest problem area concerns information. It is important to note that information here does not equal communication since they are considered as two separate, but interrelated categories. Information here indicates content as opposed to communication, which deals with the process of information flow more generally. The feeling that information is problematic was backed up by other statements as well – most employees were partly satisfied, but not always with the information load necessary for their work, with the clarity of the information that they received or with its timing. The only factor under
information that the employees were relatively satisfied with was getting non-official information about the organization.

However, the main importance of internal communication is to reach strategic goals. This includes public sector organizations. Through internal communication, it is possible, by improving motivation, to increase the value of the organization. The organization's ability to keep its employees motivated was relatively good – most of the employees found that they were often satisfied with their working environment and with their work; personal recognition, a feeling of security about the future, enough freedom to decide on work issues, and prestigious work acted as additional motivators. The top five motivators in the present study were work itself, salary, colleagues, potential development and acknowledgement. They did not mentioned information, because of the bureaucratic character of the study organizations. They accepted this closed approach and found other motivators for themselves.

In systematic internal communication, the management plays a very important role and therefore has to be very supportive and committed. If this is done then the organization’s vision and mission can be effectively communicated to the employees. In the public sector organization studied mission and vision did not generate very positive responses, which indicates that the management has not been supportive and committed enough, and have not used the most effective means of communicating their mission and vision to the target group. The employees knew the reasons for creation and restructuring of the organization and were able to state the mission of the organization only to a certain extent. For them the mission included the reasons for the creation and restructuring of the organization, it was achievable and the strategy was clear and understandable, also only to a certain extent. That the chosen strategy would guarantee mission accomplishment and the degree to which the public organization was capable of implementing its chosen strategy, were also only believed to a certain extent. This shows pessimism, which may also come from ignorance – only 32% of the respondents could state the organization's mission and/or vision; 42% wrote they had not heard about the mission or simply cannot formulate it; the rest left the answers blank. When
compared to the original mission statements of the public sector organizations (eight public sector organizations were studied), the most popular answers were all correct. So it appears that those who can formulate the mission can do so well, while most of the employees cannot recall the mission at all.

However, injecting a feeling of belonging and interpersonal relationships are key goals of internal communication. The responses tended to be more positive rather than negative when evaluating cooperation with colleagues and social life at the workplace in general. Often the employees were used to teamwork, which means that in most cases social interaction with colleagues is inevitable. Coworkers were generally trusted and the relationship with them was satisfactory. Generally they perceived themselves to be members of a collective, which shows a high sense of belonging. In answer to the question about their relations with colleagues half did and half did not report generally interacting with one another outside work, but at the same time communication with people from other departments was very active – this indicates that communication is not limited to just one department. Current communication with the boss were also satisfactory as well as that is with the colleagues. But this was not the case with the top managers.

The usage of communication tools helps to determine what kind of information is communicated most often. The most frequently used channel was e-mail, which could be either personal (sent only to a single recipient or a small group) or public (sent to everybody in the list). Employees stated they checked their e-mail five or more times a day and they responded to their mail usually as soon as they received it, which makes it the fastest method of communication and the most effective way of reaching the target audience and asking for feedback on whatever issues. The next most frequently used tools were face-to-face communication and the phone, both of which are highly personal. Official documents and letters, training and collective lunches concluded the list of the most used means of communication. Thus a big importance was not attributed to the intranet at all, although it is a good tool, which operates as the company’s in-house journal. It shows
that the topics covered on the intranet are not relevant enough for it to be used more frequently; it is not so often updated, and/or messages coming in through e-mail provide enough information already and there is simply no need to check the intranet. A positive outcome of the communication channel audit was that rumors were the least used information tool – this indicates that generally there is no information vacuum that would lead to generating rumors.

Information flow was perceived more or less in a positive way – at both unit and whole organization level it moved satisfactorily. The main hindrances to the information flow were inadequate interpersonal communication among colleagues within a unit and within the organization as a whole (this shows a slight conflict with the previous positive evaluation of interpersonal relations) and sometimes it was unclear to whom a piece of information should be passed and from whom to get information (tasks, responsibility and hierarchy were not clearly enough communicated). Information about work tasks and responsibilities, whom to address where there are problems in accomplishing tasks, others' satisfaction with the employee’s work, the goals and future plans of the organization and who works in the organizations was sufficiently accessible. On the other hand, there was a lack of information about promotion possibilities and managerial problems. When employees were asked to write down what kind of information they would like to receive more of and what kind of information is missing in general, most answers were concerned future plans [more specifically, development plans, visions, strategic directions, priorities, and immediate and long term goals (both at the department, as well as organizational level)] and top management issues [top management’s plans, problems, decisions, vision, activities (top management’s meetings protocols should be regularly available)]. More or less equally more information about promotion and development possibilities, future changes and their implementation, and the rationale for decisions and changes was requested.

Information flow in different directions and between different parties showed that the most positively regarded was the flow among colleagues on the same level, the most informal way, and one which ignores the bureaucratic system. This information was also considered the most accurate
and the fastest, whereas the downwards information flow was considered the slowest and the information flow between the top management and the organization the most inaccurate. This shows that all the information coming from above may not reach the recipient on time and also indicates a slight distrust of the management.

**Motivating, Informing, Bureaucracy and Public Service Quality**

Many sources share the idea that their employees are an organization's most important stakeholders as well as its most important asset, but not all the organizations acknowledge that fact in real life (Byrne 2001; Hart 1995; Howard 1998; Jefkins 1999; Theaker 2001). The employees are the best ambassadors or the loudest critics, depending on how fast they get relevant information and the context in which it is received. This clearly indicates the tremendous importance attributed to this stakeholder group. But, according to Theaker (Theaker 2001) and Byrne (Byrne 2001), many organizations are able to manage well without focusing on their workers. Byrne says that employers regard employees as a product at any time that can be replaced by with a new one. (Byrne 2001) The result of this kind of management attitude is high employee turnover due to insecurity and doubt, lack of commitment, lack of respect and lack of credibility. If the employee is treated this way then the workplace is nothing but a workplace. In present author’s opinion in this case the only concern of management in such cases is the company’s projected image. A large number of lobbyists and press secretaries are hired in order to manage their communication with the company’s external audiences. All this is done only for the sake of positive publicity, which should generate a good image of the organization to be realized in good profit margins. Although it may seem that getting along well with the organization's publics is the most important thing, present author questions the value of this way of thinking. Theaker states, “Good external relations and policies should have a solid foundation on good internal communications” (Theaker 2001). She also says that the opposite of the abovedescribed company attitude is an organization where the issues of staying motivated in order to be productive and employee turnover become predominant (Theaker
Organizations that acknowledge the need to motivate their employees are more successful in keeping them, writes Byrne (Byrne 2001).

Fletcher defines employees as customers of the organization's internal services and they are the group of people who can truly evaluate internal service quality. Employees can also “offer insight into conditions that reduce service quality in the organization”. Monitoring employees helps to monitor issues within the organization before they reach crisis point (including system breakdowns that the workers can notice or predict earlier than the customer) (Fletcher 1999).

Theaker identifies four levels of employment where effective communication is extremely important. These are:

- Start level – attracting and training new employees;
- Work level – distribution of information about training, news and general work-related materials;
- Reward and recognition level – organizing special events, granting awards and promoting employees;
- Termination level – layoffs; dismissals etc (Theaker 2001).

During these stages communication should serve the purpose of both parties – employees become more aware of the company’s objectives as these emerge from the messages communicated, and their input in the decision making processes also becomes vital for the organization (Theaker 2001). The main purpose here seems to be demonstration by the management of concern for its employees and their problems. This connects with motivation and links internal communication with work results. In bureaucratic/hierarchist organizations managers do not communicate and employee involvement in decision making is also smaller. The system of motivation in organizations works on employees emotions, which include also lot of ceremonial events and motivation with symbols (glory, order etc), practices which are ultimately inspire egoism and self-confidence, again feeding bureaucracy.
One approach to studying employee motivation and job satisfaction is through using Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg cited via Miller 1999). The main essence of this theory by Frederick Herzberg, which came out in the late 1950s and which was developed further during next two decades, is that in the workplace there are certain characteristics that function as satisfiers and make employees happy, and there are certain characteristics (to be precise, their absence), which function in the opposite way – they are dis-satisfiers and make employees unhappy. These two opposed sets of characteristics have different names – Herzberg calls satisfiers and characteristics that make an employee happy “motivation factors”; “hygiene factors” are therefore the characteristics that keep an employee from being unhappy or dissatisfied. Motivation factors include recognition, achievement, responsibility, promotion and advancement, and interesting and challenging work. Motivators tend to correspond more to the highest level of needs – the levels of self-actualization and esteem in Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow cited via Miller 1999). Herzberg says that if motivation factors exist in the workplace then the employee is satisfied and happy with his/her work. The other category – hygiene factors – corresponds more to the lowest level of needs – the levels of physiology, safety and affiliation levels in Maslow’s needs hierarchy. Policies, benefits, salary, and physical working conditions – all these are aspects the presence of which will not make the employee particularly happy or satisfied, but the non-existence of which does cause worker dissatisfaction (Miller 1999).

The main difference between Herzberg’s and Maslow’s motivation theories is that Herzberg does not order his factors into a hierarchy. Motivation and hygiene factors may or may not be simultaneously present or absent. Thus there are four different possible situations:

- Hygiene factors (good work environment, salary etc.) and motivation factors are both present (promotion, challenging work etc.) – the employee is satisfied, happy and not unhappy.
- Motivation factors are present but there is an absence of hygiene factors – the employee is both happy and unhappy.
- Hygiene factors are present but there is an absence of motivation factors – employee is not happy but not unhappy either.
- There is an absence of both motivation factors and hygiene factors – the employee is not happy and unhappy (Miller 1999).

Herzberg’s distinction between happy and not unhappy may be unclear. Miller explains that basically all work aspects and characteristics can be divided into two basic categories: “those whose presence is satisfying and motivating (= motivation factors) and those whose absence is dissatisfying and depressing (= hygiene factors)” (Miller 1999). Miller adds that today Herzberg’s typology of satisfaction and dissatisfaction can be contested, since some of the factors – salary and personal advancement in the company – are not purely hygiene factors or motivation factors (Miller 1999). Both of them serve as satisfiers if they are present, and both of them serve as dis-satisfiers if they are absent.

What cannot be easily contested since most of the sources agree on it, is the motivational value of well-managed internal communication – there is no doubt that the effect of satisfied employees is directly related to business outcomes. Many investors form their attitudes and make decisions whether to sell or buy an organization’s stocks not only on the basis of financial data – they also take into account the non-financial performance, which includes social responsibility, service quality, employee relations etc., basically everything that forms a company’s goodwill (Theaker 2001). In the present author’s opinion this is now something that an image-conscious manager should take into account as not everything is achievable with well-organized and well-managed external communication; conflicts resulting from misunderstandings and/or lack of motivation and therefore decline in service are just few of the things that cannot be taken care of simply by communicating externally. To do so would be to communicate with the wrong audience, because the most critical and probably the most influential group in terms of an organization's failure are its employees as it is they who shape the face of the company.
The organizational face that is created by the workers is something that becomes very visible and important both to the public and to customers. In study conducted by the present author (Tampere 2004) more than 40% of clients said that they would be willing to purchase products/services again from the same company/organization' if the employees with whom they come into contact treat them well, this apart from exposure to promotional materials and other influences (e.g. advertising). This means that good customer relations and service quality are profoundly based on effective internal communication. Fletcher (Fletcher 1999) states that a systematic and step-by-step internal communications approach is the only way to encourage employees to improve service quality, but in this situation, management plays a very important role and therefore has to be very supportive and committed. If these needs are met, then the organization’s vision and mission can be effectively communicated to its employees. Therefore, shared values help to create better quality service.

Public Sector Worldview

In the research conducted by present author during 2000 to 2004 (Tampere 2004) in public sector organizations all the characteristics stated in the sections dealing with the hierarchist and Weberian organization, only few occurred among the adjectives used to describe the public sector organizations. The most fundamental characteristics – bureaucracy (Hood 2000, Weber cited via Miller 1999) – was one of the two most oftenmentioned adjectives, but on the other hand the security issue (Pace and Faules 1994), which is also one of the characteristics of such an organization, was mentioned only once, and avoiding chaos through rules and regulations was widely demolished by claims that the public sector organizations are chaotic and unclear (third most frequently mentioned adjectives).

In general, the present author's research (Tampere 2004) on public sector organizations found, that employees perceived their organization positively rather than negatively or neutrally. The organization was perceived as innovative, friendly and effective, but also as hierarchical/over regulated and chaotic/unclear; the attributes big and constantly changing were placed in a neutral
category since it was impossible to tell out of context whether employees mean them in a positive or a negative way. Nevertheless, employees perceived the their organization as dynamic (innovative, effective, constantly changing) but also as bureaucratic (which is one of the basic characteristics of the public management type of organization and which also proves that research organizations fall into the Weberian bureaucratic and hierarchical type). Saying that the organization is friendly indicates that the organizational internal climate is well organized and the employees are satisfied and informed. The perception that public organizations are chaotic and unclear points more to the organizational structure and managerial skills. This in turn can be linked to perceptions of the organization as 'big', which might be the cause of the perceptions chaotic and unorganized, and which thus has a negative connotation.

At the same time the employees reported that working in the public sector is relatively prestigious and it appears the same to people outside the organization. Employees also stated that they either always or in most cases talk favourably about their organization outside it. These factors again show that a positive attitude toward public sector organizations dominates and that employees are good ambassadors of their organization since they speak very well of it most of the times to others who are not working in it, thereby helping to shape outsiders’ perceptions in a positive direction.

Another problematic area for public sector employees is innovation, which may be perceived as a problem if the organization is implementing new ideas too often, if the innovations are not communicated and/or if the employees are not involved in the decision-making process about imminent innovations. In addition, the study found that employees were only sometimes satisfied with the changes in their organization and that regular workers are involved in the decision-making process only sometimes. Innovation as a problematic area can be also linked to the statement by almost half of the employees that they do not know how the management envisions the organization five years hence, i.e., employees cannot predict what kind of innovations and changes will be made in the future. This can also be read as a clear sign of a bureaucratic style,
which can also mean stagnation for the organization. According to system theorists (Baecker, Knodt and Luhman 1996) this can lead to entropy and destroy an organization. For public organizations the most healthy strategy would to minimize bureaucracy, and seek to model themselves on the more flexible and innovative type of organization.

In conclusion in the present author’s opinion public organizations employees perceive their organizations mostly in a positive way. They also perceive their organizations as ‘bureaucratic’, which they see as a positive quality, because via bureaucracy is possible to control societal processes, observe the law and realize power. But from other side the model of the bureaucratic organization causes problems with internal communication, which shows that often public sector organizations employees do not know who to turn to for information. Internal communication is not very systematic, developed and organized in bureaucratic style public organizations and this strongly influences employees' motivation to do their job. A feeling of belongingness is also one of the key factors in public sector organizations – employees perceive themselves as members of a group, and this supports their positive attitudes to bureaucracy and power and compensates for lack of information. The research done by the present author seems to indicate that public sector employees very often have a special “public sector worldview”, which is a combination of several factors which motivate them to work in the public sector: benefits, security vis a vis the future and also strong feelings about their power and authority. From the organizational perspective this special worldview is of course good, because this keeps employees loyal and motivated without enormous effort, but from the client service perspective this can cause many problems, as this worldview also represents public sector egocentrism and can damage the public sector’s image as a public service provider.

(1) Research conducted by present author during 2000 to 2004 include eight public organizations in Estonia (appendix 1), study methodology was questionnaire and interviews, all together approximately 3000 public sector’s employees opinions were analyzed.
REFERENCES


Appendix 1: List of studied organizations
Estonian Health Insurance Foundation
Estonian Prosecutor's Office
Estonian Police Office
The Estonian Agricultural Registers and Information Board
Ministry of Social Affairs
Estonian Finance Ministry
Ministry of the Interior
Estonian State Television