Cape Peninsula University of Technology

THE RE-ENGINEERING OF COMMUNICATION PROCESSES TO MANAGE POST-MERGER INTEGRATION CHALLENGES AT A SELECTED FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

by

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DECLARATION

I, Nuraan Ederies, declare that the contents of this mini-dissertation represent my own work and that the mini-dissertation has not been submitted for academic examination towards any other qualification. It represents my own views and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

20 September 2016

Signed   **Date**

ABSTRACT

In any business and in particular complex, merging businesses there is a need for effective communication with both internal and external stakeholders. This is often difficult when, in the process of a merger, communication departments of the different consolidating entities, each of which may have had its own processes, are required to function as one synergistic unit. Merger-related disruptions to business, and particularly communication processes, result in communication failure, causing delays, duplication, incoherent flow of communication and greater margins for business error. This becomes a further challenge without a thorough audit and re-evaluation of all the existing and prospective communication-related business process options. Optimal consolidated business processes need to be re-engineered and continuously improved within the new environment.

This study aims to explore the importance of re-engineering communication processes during mergers to ensure a successful communication function supported by a robust business process. The analyses and recommendations further aim to strengthen the body of knowledge available to communication specialists operating within the context of severe organisational change, helping them to understand not only why it may be necessary to undertake an exercise of this nature, but also the challenges, issues and questions likely to arise.

This study aims to answer the questions:
   i)   What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?
   ii) How do communications processes need to be structured to be effective when companies merge?
   iii) Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?

Primary and secondary research is undertaken with a prominent financial services institution as a business case. Primary research includes face-to-face interviews and empirical research. The interviews took the form of one-on-one sessions with each of the interviewees using an interview guide of semi-structured questions. Secondary research was undertaken for a sound theoretical foundation.

In terms of research philosophy, the ontology is subjective, while the epistemology is interpretivism. Responses are coded, summarised, categorised and prominent themes identified as a basis for making recommendations. Throughout this process, ethical practice was undertaken with respect to colleagues, participants, the environment, society and sponsors.

This research also aims to move towards an understanding of the factors contributing to increased productivity, enhanced organisational effectiveness and heightened staff morale. It also works toward a resultant improvement in profit and perception due to better communication processes in a dynamic environment where communication to stakeholders is a critical factor in business success.

Keywords: Mergers, communication, integration, business process design, change management.

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1.1 Introduction

In any business and in particular complex, merging businesses there is a need for effective communication with both internal and external stakeholders. This is often difficult when, in the process of the merger, communication departments of the different consolidating entities, each of which may have had its own processes, are required to function as one synergistic unit. In this study the communication complexities of a merger between seven financial service providers (FSPs) are investigated. The study aims to explore the importance of re-engineering communication processes during mergers to ensure a successful communication function supported by a robust business process.

Mergers occur globally and impact large and small companies (Sinha & Sanchari, 2014). In 2012, the value of mergers and acquisitions announced across the globe was in excess of two trillion US dollars despite the global economic crisis (Kato & Schoenberg, 2013).

Businesses merge for different reasons, including improved share performance after mergers (Kemal, 2011). Businesses could merge to sell new products to their existing customers or sell existing products to new markets resulting in an increased customer base, reduced cost or an expanded product range (Alfani, Rustandar & Mulyanto, 2013; Nag, 2012). New capabilities, technologies, products and lower operating costs are achievable through consolidation of resources (Nag, 2012).

Businesses could also use a merger as a risk mitigating strategy when diversifying into these new markets and geographies (Kemal, 2011). However, the process of merging is, in itself, a risky endeavour and where merging companies have completely different product ranges, market structure and cultures, failure becomes more probable (Sinha & Sanchari, 2014). In addition, when several businesses merge, they each bring their own variant of business processes (La Rosa, Dumas, Uba & Dijkman, 2010). Where multiple variants of business processes exist, convergence is critical to create synergies and eliminate redundancy resulting from duplicate departments or operations (La Rosa et al., 2010; Gottschalk, Van der Aalst & Jansen-Vullers, 2008). When old processes remain intact, employees in the organisation may take additional strain by having to manage new responsibilities whilst maintaining their old responsibilities until the changes are effected (Bryson, 2003).

The communication variable is the most important factor during mergers and acquisitions and is the key to a successful integration of two clashing cultures (Cheng & Seeger, 2012). Yet, there is not always a concerted effort by management and

communication practitioners to develop efficient processes to deal with the new reality. This is especially true when they are burdened with the added workload of running additional businesses (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2013).

A further challenge exists because in a merging business there could be potential for growth or retrenchment, and people in all areas attempting to make their mark, remaining territorial of their own brands and work, and not easily working as a team (Bryson, 2003). The result of the lack of integrating communication presents an added challenge to the merging process as the very people who need to communicate the changes in the organisations, must go through a learning phase as well.

Furthermore, communication specialists may also not be familiar with techniques such as Business Process Design (BPD) or the strategy of the business (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2013). Where communication specialists do have the required BPD knowledge and skills, they rely on feedback and guidance from senior management. Despite the importance of this guidance, it is often lacking, as managers tend to understand the change in broad terms and not in practical terms. As a result of this lack of guidance, staff do not always know how or why to receive the change (Kansal & Chandani, 2014). In general, getting a complete understanding of the finer detail is difficult until the business has moved beyond the strategic level conversations (Kansal & Chandani, 2014).

In some cases, deliberate withholding of information by senior executives who are involved in the merger process is possible. This leads to confusion, uncertainty, loss of trust and loyalty among the employees (Sinha & Sanchari, 2014). With the absence of leadership direction, the people who undertook communication in these departments tend to revert back to what they know (Bryson, 2003). These sometimes conflicting behaviours may result in fragmented and incoherent communication to staff and clients.

Communication to clients and staff needs to remain coherent throughout the merger and communication processes after the merger need to be clear and aligned to the new vision. A communication experience that is fragmented and contradictory negatively influences client- and staff perceptions of the company and its brand (Nur, 2013). Responsiveness to organisational change is important as it means employees are more likely to accept process changes (Rosemann & Vom Brocke, 2015). Businesses sometimes underestimate the required investment into organisational change initiatives because they do not fully understand the impact of the merger on the various facets of the business and its staff (Trkman, 2010).

Scholars and specialists in the business process field have found that successful systems begin with a complete analysis of the organisation's processes (Chishti, Ma & Knight, 2014). The lack of knowledge and understanding of the subtle nuances of each communication specialist's role in the new environment can make simple communication tasks difficult. There may be a lack of understanding of who needs to develop the communication strategy, implement the strategy and sign off the outputs (Rana, 2013).

1.2 Research problem

1.2.1 Background to the research problem

In merging and recently merged businesses, communication to stakeholders, internal and external, is important (Ge & Cao, 2014; Søderberg, 2013). However, merger-related disruption to business, and particularly communication processes, results in communication failure (Ge & Cao, 2014). Communication process inefficiencies result in delays, duplications, incoherent flows of communication and greater margins for error (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2013). The impact of the merger on staff and clients increases the danger of the business losing clients and investors, having lower staff morale and being less productive, all of which lead to financial losses for the business (Chen & Krauskopf, 2013).

1.2.2 Research problem statement

Merger-related disruption to business, and particularly communication processes, results in communication failure, causing delays, duplications, incoherent flow of communication and greater margins for business error.

1.2.3 Research aim

The aims of the research are to explore and understand why communication fails during and after business mergers. A further aim is to explore the merits of an integrated communication process design framework for communication practitioners in businesses that are undertaking mergers.

1.3 Research questions and sub-questions

Research question 1: What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?

> **Research sub-question 1.1:** What process challenges do communication practitioners face when companies merge?

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Research sub-question 1.2: What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?

Research sub-question 1.3: What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?

Research question 2: How do communications processes need to be structured to be effective when companies merge?

Research sub-question 2.1: How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?

Research sub-question 2.2: How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?

Research question 3: Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?

Research sub-question 3.1: Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?

Table 1 summarises the research problem, research questions, and objectives of the questions as well as the methods applied to answer the research questions.

1.4   Objectives of the study

The three main objectives of the research are as follows:

i) To determine what factors impact communication processes when businesses merge.

ii) To ascertain a structure in which communication is effective when businesses merge.

iii) To establish what factors lead to communication failure within merging businesses.

Table 1.1: Summary of research questions, research sub-questions, methods used to answer questions, and objectives of questions

Research problem	Merger-related disruption to business, and particularly communication processes, results in communication failure, causing delays, duplications, incoherent flow of communication and greater margins for business error.

Research question 1 (RQ 1)	What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?

Research sub-questions (RSQs)	Research method(s)	Objectives
RSQ 1.1: What process challenges do communication practitioners face when companies merge?	Case study, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews	To examine how mergers impact communication processes
RSQ 1.2: What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?	Case study, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews	To determine the characteristics of an ideal process design
RSQ 1.3: What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?	Case study, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews	To evaluate the merits of existing processes to establish which parts of the current processes may be retained or discarded

Research question 2 (RQ 2)	How do communications processes need to be structured to be effective when companies merge?

Research sub-questions (RSQs)	Research method(s)	Objectives
RSQ 2.1: How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?	Case study, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews	To determine the applications available to communication practitioners experiencing business process issues during mergers
RSQ 2.2: How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?	Case study, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews	To investigate ways to derive and implement suitable and sustainable business processes for communication

Research question 3 (RQ 3)	Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?

Research sub-questions (RSQs)	Research method(s)	Objectives
RSQ 3.1: Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?	Case study, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews	To determine the relevance of establishing sound business processes

1.5   Research assumptions

The following assumptions are applicable:

i)   Staff members at different levels of a merged organisation are relevant units for analysis.

ii)   Interviewees have experienced challenges as a result of the merger.

iii)   Interviews each have different frames of reference and hold different roles within the business, but which are relevant to communication.

iv)   Mergers generally have a negative effect on processes and it is desirable to have efficient communication processes.

v)   Participants are honest in their responses.

vi)   Current economic conditions have no impact on the challenges experienced in the merger.

1.6   Research methodology

Kothari (2004) defines research as a search for knowledge. The research methodology outlines the way in which the research is delineated and the data are collected and analysed. Methodology can be defined as "a system of principles, practices, and procedures applied to a specific branch of knowledge" (Peffers, Tuunanen, Rothenberger & Chatterjee, 2007:5). Research methodology can thus be defined as "a way to systematically solve the research problem" (Kothari 2004:8) by applying a defined "system of principles, practices, and procedures" to a "specific branch of knowledge".

In this study, an anti-foundationalist, subjectivist ontology was used, due to the nature of the research required and the different frames of reference of the interviewees. A qualitative approach was taken to attain a view of the personal experiences, current challenges and recommendations. A case study strategy allowed a holistic enquiry to be undertaken in the natural setting in which the merger had occurred.

1.6.1   Research philosophy

1.6.1.1   Research ontology

Packer and Goicoechea (2000:227) define ontology as "the consideration of being: what is, what exists, what it means for something—or somebody—to be". According to Couclelis (2009), ontology deals with what exists in a given world. Within this study, subjectivist ontology is inherent due to the exploratory nature of the research required.

1.6.1.2 Research epistemology

The researcher collected information using a subjective, interpretive approach due to the varying nature of the interview experiences and recommendations. Packer and Goicoechea (2000:227) define epistemology as "the systematic consideration, in philosophy and elsewhere, of knowing: when knowledge is valid, counts as truth". Couclelis (2009:4) defines epistemology as "being concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge".

1.6.2 Research approach

The information required for this study needs to offer a view of social behaviour, current challenges and recommendations; a "richness of description not obtainable by quantitative research" (Poetschke, 2003:7). This research study uses an inductive approach.

1.6.3 Research strategy

In this study the communication complexities of a merger between seven financial service providers are investigated. It could be argued that this study follows a multiple case study strategy. However, because the seven financial service providers had merged into a single entity, the research strategy is in actual fact a case study of the single merged entity. Using this merged financial services organisation, descriptive research has been undertaken to understand the current situation from various perspectives.

Unit of analysis: The unit of analysis for this research is the consolidated entity into which seven (7) smaller financial services providers merged in the City of Cape Town in South Africa.

Unit of observation: In this research, the units of observation are 17 individuals within various parts of a merging financial services organisation who are involved to some extent with client or staff communication.

1.7 Sampling technique

This research sample is a hybrid between the 'non-probability' methods, purposive and snowballing techniques.

1.8 Data collection

Based on the aim of the research, an interview guideline was developed, outlining the relevant questions. Face-to-face interviews using semi-structured questionnaires were undertaken and the questions were used as the interview guideline. This

guideline is aligned to the research problem, and questions were developed to gauge holistic views of the current reality, the desired experience, and the relevance of achieving the desired experience. The questions were aimed at determining how mergers impact communication processes, the merits of different processes and the relevance of establishing sound business processes. These interviews are the core of the primary research to be undertaken in this study. The responses were transcribed and tabulated where answers were provided.

1.9 Data analysis

Interviews were undertaken, transcribed and analysed. Responses were coded, summarised, categorised and a thematic analysis undertaken.

1.10 Delineation of the research

This section provides an understanding of what this research study does not undertake to do. Being a study involving the design of communication processes in a merging business, it is not intended as:

- A stakeholder-mapping exercise
- A client relationship management design tool
- A study to map client demographics against particular product purchases
- A communication plan

The geographical location is Cape Town, South Africa, and the study is limited to one financial institution (including all merging entities). No generalisation is attempted with the results of the study.

1.11 Contribution of the research

This research is aimed at assisting communication practitioners and senior leaders to motivate the importance of creating systems and processes to facilitate smart and smooth communication in their businesses, particularly in the case of corporate mergers.

The analysis and recommendations further aim to strengthen the body of knowledge available to communication specialists operating within the context of severe organisational change.

1.12 Research ethics

Resnik (2011) states the following to be ethical principles to adhere to when undertaking research: honesty and objectivity, respecting confidentiality and intellectual property, openness about research findings, and human subject,

environmental and animal protection. Benatar (2002:1134) explains ethical merit as "respect for the dignity of research subjects (their integrity, privacy, safety, and human rights hence the need for informed consent".

All ethical considerations have been heeded with regards to permissions, ethical practice in relation to the colleagues involved, ethical practice in relation to research participants, ethical practice in relation to the environment, and ethical practice in relation to South African society. Ethical approval from each interviewee was received prior to the interviews being conducted, and all interviews are fully aware of the purpose of the research. This is further explained in Chapter 3.

1.13 Outline of the research
The research report consists of six chapters.

Chapter One
The first chapter introduces the purpose of the study. It delves into the reasons this study is a pertinent addition to the body of research available to those involved with organisational process design during major change. This chapter further outlines the background to the research problem to be solved, and the purpose of the research— offering insight into the type of questions posed to participants. While the research design is covered in later chapters, a high-level introduction into the research methodology is provided before a brief synopsis and outline of the research concludes the chapter.

Chapter Two
Several reputable researchers have undertaken studies relating to communications, business processes and mergers, which form a valuable basis for this study. This chapter offers the theoretical groundwork for the study, providing a full literature review of all secondary research undertaken by the researcher. It starts with a short introduction to the available literature, followed by short definitions of the key definitions and concepts. It closes with a more in-depth view of the theoretical models and principles.

Chapter Three
Chapter three outlines and substantiates the selected research design and methodology. After providing a brief introduction, it explains the research ontology and epistemology adopted for this research. It further outlines the research approach and strategy, so the reader is aware of the units of observation and analyses for the

study. This leads to a short explanation of the proposed methodology for data collection and analysis.

Chapter Four

Having undertaken several interviews with the purpose of assessing the areas of concern within the merging business, the researcher analysed the data. Based on this analysis, research findings were categorised according to themes. This chapter outlines the research findings and themes.

Chapter Five

In this chapter the themes are addressed in accordance to the research questions presented to the participants. A guideline is proposed.

Chapter Six

Based on the research undertaken, Chapter 6 outlines the recommendations, the future studies to be taken, the limitations of the study and concludes with final reflections.

1.14 Summary

In merging businesses, a need for effective communication with both internal and external stakeholders exists. Ensuring that communication processes in the new entity are defined is equally important.

The **problem statement** is:

Merger-related disruption to business, and particularly communication processes, results in communication failure, causing delays, duplications, incoherent flow of communication and greater margins for business error.

The three main research questions are:

RQ 1: What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?

RQ 2: How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?

RQ 3: Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?

An interpretivist, inductive approach was applied as the research methodology. The research strategy adopted was a singular case study with a merging financial services organisation as the unit of analysis and the 17 staff members, all of whom have a contribution towards the communication function, as the units of observation.

In totality, 17 interviews were conducted using a pre-determined set of interview questions. The answers to the questions were transcribed, reviewed and analysed for the purposes of identifying key themes to discuss.

The following chapter encompasses a full literature review in which primary concepts and issues are defined.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        Introduction         │
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              │
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        Main concepts        │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Communication in a merging │
│           business          │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│     Process design within a │
│      merging organisation   │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Characteristics of an effective │
│    business process design  │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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│           Summary           │
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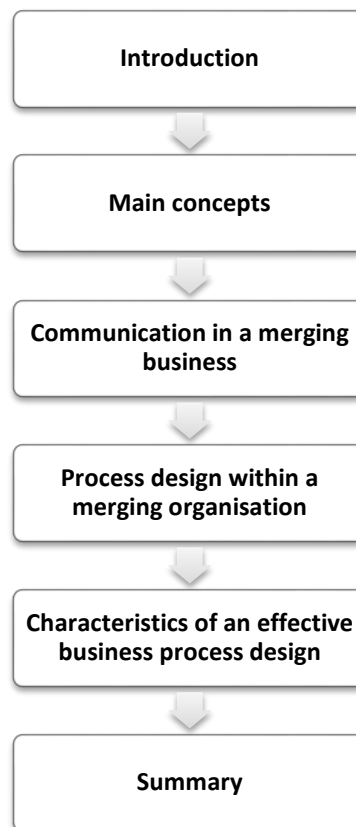
Figure 2.1: Structure of Chapter 2

2.1   Introduction

In this chapter the main concepts, definitions and principles are discussed. A definition of mergers and the critical factors that drive their success or failure are discussed. This is followed by a definition of communication and a look at the features of successful communication. The usage and features of business processes are outlined, as well as their importance and role of business process design within the corporate sphere. Business process modelling (BPM) is introduced, with a more in-depth view of event-driven process chains. Finally, the importance of business process design and communication is addressed.

Several databases have been used for the literature review, including Google Scholar, Emerald and EBSCOhost electronic databases. The searches were guided by key words identified (iteratively) in the problem statement, research questions and aims of the study.

2.2   Main concepts of this study

This section explains the key concepts related to the study. This study culminates in a proposed design of an optimal communication process in a merging organisation to

ensure a seamless transition. It is based on the principles of business process design, specifically the business process model referred to as an event-driven process chain. The main concepts explained in this section are thus mergers, change management, communication, business process design, business process models and event-driven process chains.

2.2.1 Mergers

While the case study focuses on a South African financial services company, the intention is to focus on the communication challenges when companies in general merge – irrespective of the business sector or locality.

In a merger, two companies come together and create a new entity (Schuler & Jackson, 2001). A merger is a form of corporate expansion which is pursued by businesses in order to access new markets or further entrench themselves in their current markets (Kato & Schoenberg, 2013).

Dooley and Zimmerman (2003) explain mergers as the start of a new reality and not simply an event. Those involved are required to shift their behaviour, values and actions to be in line with a new norm. The new norm is not likely to be reached immediately. According to the well-known Bruce Tuckerman model of forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning (Barash, 2013), finding a norm is only the third stage after a period of storming.

There is a view that most mergers fail to deliver on expected outcomes (Chatterjee & Brueller, 2015; Kansal & Chandani, 2014; Sinha & Sanchari, 2014; Banal-Estañol & Seldeslachts, 2011). According to Sinha and Sanchari (2014), more than 43% of merged businesses around the world achieved lower profits than their non-merged counterparts during the last fifteen years. This is aligned to the research findings of Banal-Estañol and Seldeslachts (2011), who similarly report that a vast number of corporate unions seem to be unsuccessful and that more than half of the merged firms end up being divested.

According to Schuler and Jackson (2001:243), researchers have identified three phases of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) activity: i) pre-combination, ii) combination, which refers to integration, and iii) the final stage, which is solidification and advancement of the newly-merged entity. The first stage is an important foundation for the critical second stage, which does not always receive adequate attention as lack of integration planning is found in 80% of the M&A's that underperform (Schuler & Jackson, 2001). If the second stage fails to materialise effectively, Schuler and

Jackson (2001:245) report that productivity drops significantly at the third stage, which should ideally be the 'to-be' scenario.

Behr and Heid (2011) in contrast argue that historically, the methodology adopted to undertake this kind research had been flawed because merging businesses should not directly be compared to any non-merging businesses, but rather those sharing the same position. Behr and Heid (2011) had done research on this basis and their findings indicate that while short-term profitability is not enhanced through mergers, there is greater cost efficiency, which in the long term could enhance profitability.

Nonetheless, where mergers do fail, it is thought to fail because of informational misalignments from the pre-merger stage and problems of cooperation and coordination within the recently merged firms (Sinha & Sanchari, 2014; Banal-Estañol & Seldeslachts, 2011). Sinha and Sanchari (2014) further attribute merger failure to not planning properly, focusing on too much and not understanding or considering post-merger integration problems and projecting synergies. They found that when the company and the merger are managed badly, even good deals risk failure, hence the importance of high-calibre managers (Sinha & Sanchari, 2014). Schroeder (2012) specifies that failure could be attributed to cultural incompatibilities or other people-related issues. This is related to the conclusion drawn by Appelbaum, Gandell, Shapiro, Belisle and Hoeven (2000) who attribute merger failure to poor human resource planning.

Yet, while an abundance of knowledge on the financial and legal effects of mergers is available, very little research exists prior to the turn of the century on the 'human' elements, like communication (Schuler & Jackson, 2001). For the staff undergoing the process of transformation, the factors most influencing whether they perceive the merger as positive or negative are their levels of satisfaction in their roles prior to the merger and the level of communication about what to expect before, during and after the merger (Appelbaum et al., 2000).

Some of the problems businesses encounter when merging is lack of integration, understanding or prioritising communication, access to information, fragmented communication, and project implementation delays – all of which can negatively impact the business (Mitleton-Kelly 2006).

According to Sinha and Sanchari (2014) only two thirds of merging businesses do not adequately communicate information to staff. An additional challenge is that communication specialists may also not be familiar with Business Process Design or

the business strategy (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2013). Furthermore, the lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities in terms of both strategy and implementation can make simple tasks difficult (Rana, 2013). Thus communication to staff suffers, as does communication to clients, who rely on informed staff to communicate with them.

Businesses should ensure the levels of knowledge and skills required for optimal business process management is sufficient and that leaders, staff and teams are fulfilling their respective roles (Rosemann & vom Brocke, 2015).

Kato and Schoenberg (2013) identify a gap in the research relating to stakeholders during mergers. They argue that where human-related elements have been studied, it has primarily focused on the impact of mergers relating to internal stakeholders, with very little focus given to external stakeholders such as clients. This is despite the fact that mergers can strengthen or weaken the relationship with external as well as internal stakeholders, depending on how the integration is handled (Kato & Schoenberg, 2013).

Schroeder (2012) indicates that in a merger, a comprehensive change management strategy is needed. This general entails drawing up a budget needed for the post-merger integration, understanding the possible threats to success and developing measures to monitor performance and success.

When a merger is effectively planned it can enhance performance of the organisation (Appelbaum et al., 2000). By effectively integrating and aligning business processes, successful mergers can leverage the strengths and advantages of the merging businesses (Gottschalk et al., 2008). The potential benefits include economies of scale, additional human capital, strengthened technology or systems and new clients resulting from the merger (Sinha & Sanchari, 2014).

2.2.2 Change management

Management theories that guide change are generally undeveloped (Priest & Hallebone, 2009). Theories and approaches to change management currently available to academics and practitioners are often contradictory, mostly lacking empirical evidence (Todnem, 2005).

Scholars refer to different types of change management approaches. These include the traditional or planned approach to change management in which old behaviour, practices and values are to be discarded before adopting the new (Todnem, 2005).

There is an emergent approach to change which is more organic and iterative (Todnem, 2005). In the case of mergers, typically the changes occur so rapidly that an emergent response is required.

Similar to the concept of emergent change is *Theory O* (Beer & Nohria, 2000), which is one of two approaches that exist as part of this set of theories. *Theory O* is a change management approach that is emergent, participatory and aims to build a strong inclusive corporate culture. The other theory, *Theory E,* is a methodical, pragmatic approach that places structures and systems first and makes use of consultants to drive and implement the structures instead of staff (Beer & Nohria, 2000).

The emergent approach in these cases alleviates the problem of top leadership having to conceptualise and articulate the vision and activities and instead encourages a bottom-up approach (Todnem, 2005). With emergent systems and approaches to change, however, it cannot be understood or undertaken in its entirety by a single person or team because the system emerges through the interaction of agents including people, processes, technology and government, among others, which all act on local knowledge and their own principles (Mitleton-Kelly, 2006).

Emergent processes do however mean that teams have opportunities to craft their own business processes. In cases where changes are rapid and quick responses are required, this is likely to be the most feasible solution. Based on the available work, it appears that research provides a strong understanding of the differences between the two approaches, but does not provide any relevant guidelines to facilitate the development of communication or business processes. Where this body of knowledge does offer valuable insight into this study is through its articulation of how businesses organically deal with change. Poorly managed change communication results in rumours and resistance to change (Elving, 2005).

Models within the study of psychodynamics help to explain the behaviour of staff that are going through a change; The Kübler-Ross model (Kübler-Ross, Kessler & Shriver, 2014) identifies denial, anger, bargaining, depression and finally acceptance as the psychological stages through which terminally ill patients go in dealing with their conditions (Cameron & Green, 2015; Kübler-Ross et al., 2014). This can be applied, albeit to a lesser extent, to people in general who have to deal with change (Cameron & Green, 2015). The *Adams, Hayes and Hopson Change Curve* include a few extra stages, with relief and/or shock which could occur prior to the denial stage, and experimentation and discovery which could occur after acceptance (Cameron & Green, 2015).

Acceptance of and participation in the initial stages of a change have been shown to depend on recipients' assessment of its instrumentality, that is, the likelihood the change will lead to personal and organisational benefits (Ford, Ford & D'Amelio, 2008). Change agents are encouraged to communicate frequently and enthusiastically about change (Ford et al., 2008).

2.2.3 Communication

Manoela and Cecilia (2013:412) define communication as "the exchange of audible, tactile or visual signals aimed at informing, instructing or persuading". It has also been defined by Gifu, Dima & Teodorescu (2014:45) as the "activity of conveying information through the exchange of ideas, feelings, intentions, attitudes, expectations, perceptions or commands, as by speech, gestures, writings, behavior and possibly by other means such as electromagnetic, chemical or physical phenomena". A number of common communication models and theories exist which are summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Prominent communication models and theories

Name of theorist	Short description of theory
Aristotle	Aristotle identified ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos refers to the credibility of the person conveying the message. Pathos refers to the ability to appeal to the message receivers' emotions. Logos is the ability to appeal to the audience's logic through supporting pathos and ethos by presenting logical facts and figures to position the presenter as knowledgeable (Gifu et al., 2014).
Lasswell	Lasswell coined the popular 'who, said what, in which channel, to whom, and with what effect?' question (Celuch & Cecil, 2014) (Table 2.2).
Shannon-Weaver	A common communication model is the Shannon-Weaver model devised in 1947 (Dobra & Popescu, 2008). The Shannon-Weaver Communication Model assumes communication starts with an information source, which sends a message and ends as the receiver receives the message (Figure 2.2). She introduces a noise source as a potential communication barrier (Dobra & Popescu, 2008).
Schramm	Schramm focused on the impact of the commonality of experiences and language between the sender and the recipient of the message and believed that overlapping experiences prompted greater understanding (Koptseva, Liia, Kirko, Копцева, Лия & Кирко, 2015).
Berlo	David Berlo suggests that each aspect of the communication process occurs through several filters (Saud, Jufri, Rahman & Salam, 2014) (Figure 2.3).

Some of the communication models in Table 2.1 are further explained below.

i) The Shannon-Weaver Communication Model

The Shannon-Weaver Communication (Figure 2.2) assumes a linear communication process which entails a message being transmitted as a signal from an information source to a destination via a receiver, and identifies a noise source which may hamper the signal from the transmitter to the receiver. This is relevant to the study as it highlights the key factors to consider when planning a communication process. The information source in the corporate communication context could be a content expert like an economist, for example. The message is delivered via a specific channel such as email. The challenge is that when businesses merge, there may be a lack of clarity of what the message is, who needs to transmit the message, how to prioritise several messages going to the same audience – and no clear idea of how to manage the process, or who is responsible for managing the process.
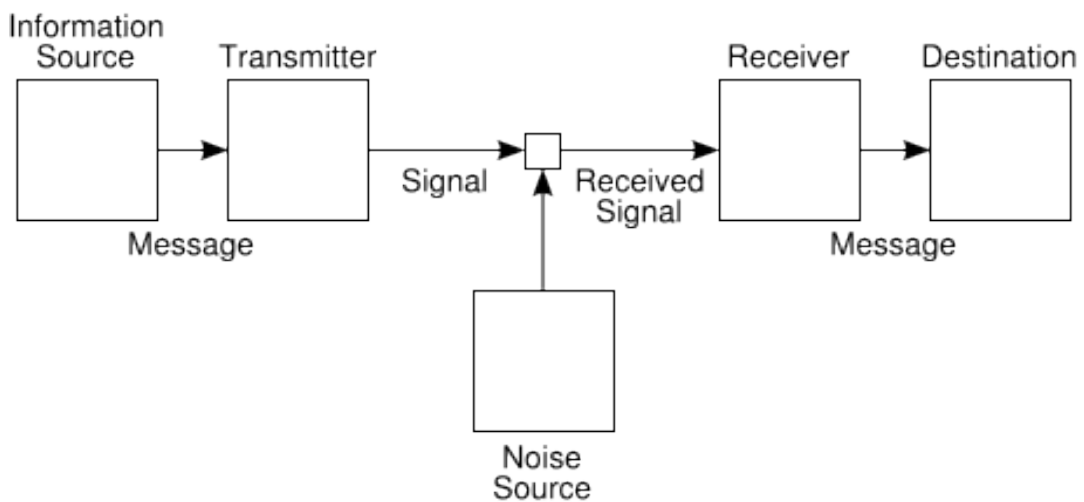
Figure 2.2: Shannon-Weaver Communication Model
(Dobra & Popescu, 2008:16)

ii) Harold Lasswell's framework

Lasswell (1948) provides a framework to guide communication, based on five simple questions, as illustrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Harold Lasswell's communication framework
(Lasswell, 1948:216)

Who?	"Factors that initiate and guide the act of communication."
Says what?	"Specialists who focus upon the 'says what' engage in content analysis."
In which channel?	"Those who look at channels are doing media analysis."

To whom?	"When the concern is with persons reached by media it is audience analysis."
With what effect?	"If the question is the impact on audiences, the problem is effect analysis."

While the Shannon-Weaver model focused on the process, this model helps to guide the content of the communication plan. It helps communications specialists to ask the right questions when ascertain the best way to structure their plan and their key messages.

iii) The SMCR Berlo Communication Model

This model (Figure 2.3) deconstructs the process of communication as the encoding of a message from a source, and via a channel, to a receiver which decodes the message and provides feedback.
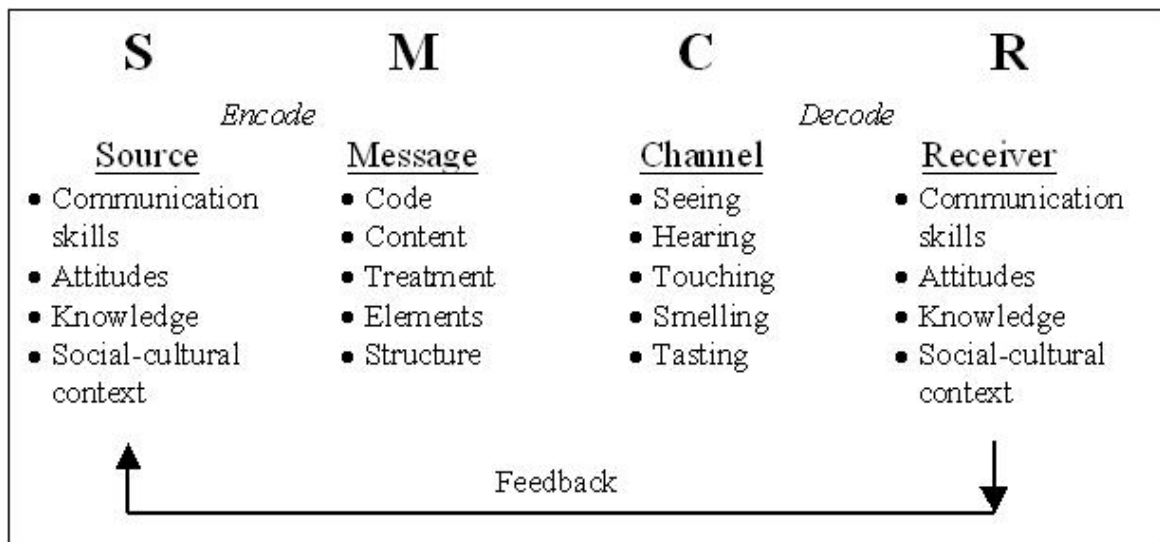
Figure 2.3: The SMCR Berlo Communication Model
(Saud et al., 2014:1035)

The key element in the SMCR Berlo Communication model is the feedback loop, which indicates that communication is not a one-way process. Communication has only properly occurred if the feedback received indicates the message is received and understood. The application of such theories occurs in various contexts. Within the business context the practice of corporate communication is a widely referenced notion. It considers an organisation as a singular unit in communicating with stakeholders, not merely fragmented among different managers, campaigns and staff interactions, among others (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2013).

According to Mohr, Fischer and Nevin (1996:38-40) four factors have been studied extensively as part of the theory of organisational communication:

Frequency: How often communication takes place?

Direction: Which way does the communication flow?

Modality: How is communication undertaken? What is the method and medium?

Content: What is being shared?

When deriving communication plans and processes, these four elements need to be considered.

2.2.4　Business process design

A business process (BP) is described as "a procedure relevant for adding value to an organization. It is viewed in its entirety, from beginning to end" (Scheer & Nüttgens, 2000). Eriksson and Penker (2000:4) describe BP as "the activities performed within the business in which the state of business resources changes. BP is key when integrating an enterprise (Aguilar-Saven, 2004). The main goal for analysts when undertaking BP alignment exercises is to identify and integrate overlapping process parts (Gottschalk et al., 2008). Suboptimal BP results in communication breakdowns, replication or duplication of roles or tasks, other obstacles which halt or delay projects, higher expenses and outputs which do not fulfil their objectives. BP thus aims to increase efficiency (Cousins & Stewart, 2002). It is also particularly useful in preparation of, and following mergers and acquisitions and other forms of restructuring within business (Cousins & Stewart, 2002).

A high degree of complexity is involved particularly when functions intersect business units. In many instances, BP is not limited to one divisional unit and can cross inter-organisational sub-units, being independent of formal organisational structure (Davenport & Short, 2003; Cousins & Stewart, 2002). This also helps to capitalise on the skills required at different stages of the process, irrespective of where in the organisation they are based. Thus, when undertaking a re-engineering process, the focus is not only on the structure of the events and functions, but assigning organisational units to functions (Scheer & Nüttgens, 2000). This is referred to as process organisation, a valuable way for businesses to break functional silos that hinder information flow, limit the business's value chain and lead to isolated systems development (Trkman, 2010).

Merging business processes requires: i) process analysis of the 'as-is' processes; ii) identification and mapping of identical tasks among the processes; and iii) the creation of an integrated business process (to-be) applicable for all of the merging corporations (Gottschalk et al., 2008). Business analyst teams are required to assess existing

models (as-is), identify the similarities and differences and develop an integrated process model that could be used in order to drive the process consolidation (La Rosa et al., 2010). In the absence of business analysts, those assigned to the role of assessing and developing business processes need adequate training and operational guidance to produce high-quality process models (Claes, Vanderfeesten, Reijers, Pinggera, Weidich, Zugal & Poels, 2012). Different modeling languages (section 2.2.5) for the design of process models exist (Rommelspacher, 2008), but for the purpose of this study the *events-driven process* is used.

2.2.5   Definition of business process design

A well-structured process has the potential to boost efficiency and productivity (Cousins & Stewart, 2002). The design or redesign of processes is typically undertaken by businesses to improve a current process or to conceptualise a new business process (Harmon, 2010). Process redesign re-evaluates every element within an existing process and often culminates in shifting items or people within the sequence, or automating portions (Cousins & Stewart, 2002).

Companies usually redesign processes in order to increase competitiveness or diversify. This is sometimes required in cases where the business has acquired one or more other companies and subsequently needs to integrate the various processes utilised within the different organisations (Harmon, 2010). Successful engineering of BP to create an optimal set of repeatable activities can help the business achieve its greatest level of efficiency (Scheer & Nüttgens, 2000).

BP design entails an analysis of current BP and proposing enhancements to optimise the process (Pinggera, Soffer, Fahland, Weidlich, Zugal, Weber & Mendling, 2013). If the process design leads to enhanced quality and productivity that offsets the expense incurred to implement the changes, it is considered successful (Pinggera et al., 2013). The process should be "optimised, effective, meet customer requirements, and support and sustain organisational development and growth" (Cousins & Stewart, 2002:3).

2.2.6   Business process models

Business process models are a way of designing, analysing, implementing and controlling business processes (Pinggera et al., 2013; Aguilar-Saven, 2004). It is also considered by far the best way in which communication in process improvement projects may be supported (Reijers, Mendling & Recker, 2015). More and more businesses are adopting the practice of business process modelling (Claes et al., 2012), an approach that graphically illustrates the way in which the business conducts

its operations. According to Aguilar-Saven (2004), modeling business processes can help to create an understanding and analysis of the processes that exist. Furthermore, these formalised, defined representations allow for easier analysis of the processes required to create improvements that are most likely to lead to greater productivity and profitability (Chishti et al., 2014).

A business process model can present a bird's-eye view of what the entire organisation does, with the option of drilling down into individual processes to see the lowest level of detail (Aguilar-Saven, 2004; Cousins & Stewart, 2002). It can offer a thorough understanding of all relevant processes (Aguilar-Saven, 2004). BP modeling provides an understanding of how tasks and information flow through the business. This information can be used to measure and then improve business performance by adjusting participants' tasks or processes, to keep abreast of environmental changes or to communicate an updated company strategy (Cousins & Stewart, 2002).

Chishti et al. (2014:1) argue that business process models have been created in order to:
- "Understand the key mechanisms of an existing business
- Orient the creation of suitable information systems that support the business
- Implement improvements in the current business
- Show the structure of an innovated business
- Experiment new business concepts
- Identify business elements not considered part of the core which could be delegated to an outside supplier"

Business process model depictions are represented by functions, events and connectors that form the process, using inter-connected icon-like figures that are accompanied by textual annotations (Reijers et al., 2015; Vom Brocke, Recker & Mendling, 2010). It outlines the steps in the process, what the relationship of each step is to the other, who is involved, what systems are used and when interaction with stakeholders occurs (Reijers et al., 2015). These notations are required to meet accepted syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic quality requirements (Pinggera et al., 2013). Depending on the modelling technique adopted, these requirements may differ.

The event-driven process chain is often used in business process modelling and enterprise resource planning initiatives (Sampson, 2012). For communication practitioners and others who are not familiar with business process design, the event-

driven process chain appears to be the simplest to use and is thus the core modeling framework used in this study.

2.2.7 Event-driven process chain

Event-driven process chains (EPC) are part of a holistic modeling approach, called the Architecture of Integrated Information Systems (ARIS) framework. The ARIS framework was developed by August-Wilhelm Scheer (Chishti et al., 2014). It is used to model BP to specify events in a top-down manner (Dijkman, 2008), representing the 'flow of control' in a process.

According to Chishti et al. (2014) and Gottschalk et al. (2008), EPC diagrams consist of the following main node types or building blocks: events, functions and logical connectors. Events and functions alternate and are connected by logical connectors or control flow arcs (Rommelspacher, 2008).

Events: The correct manner in which to construct an EPC diagram is to start and end with an event. Events are 'passive' elements that lead to (are preconditions of) or from (are post-conditions of) functions (Chishti et al., 2014; Dijkman, 2008; Gottschalk et al., 2008).

Functions: Functions, on the other hand, are the active elements (Gottschalk et al., 2008) and represent activities in the process (Dijkman, 2008). They actively transform inputs into outputs and make decisions which influence how the process unfolds through the use of connector nodes associated with the function (Chishti et al., 2014). On completion of a function, an event occurs (Chishti et al., 2014).

Logical connectors: Events and processes can be joined together with logical operators (Chishti et al., 2014; Gottschalk et al., 2008; Scheer & Nüttgens, 2000). Arcs connect these different types of nodes (Dijkman, 2008). Connectors include: AND ($\wedge$), XOR ($\times$) and OR ($\vee$) (Dijkman, 2008). These logical connectors can be used to branch or merge the control flow (Rommelspacher, 2008).

2.3 Communication in a merging business

According to Sinha and Sanchari (2014), lack of communication is a major 'culprit' in mergers, impacting both staff and clients. Good communication is needed to help maintain and elevate client perceptions of the business. Communicating to external stakeholders takes many forms, including direct communication, website content, media relations, community relations, investor relations, employee relations, public affairs and other communication activities (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2013).

Mosley (2007) states that communication on its own is not enough, and it needs to live within the realm of effective brand management and thoughtful service design. The author alludes to client communication within the context of the greater brand. Communicating effectively to clients is a strong factor in business success. The client's experience of the business is created through the various channels of interaction or exposure the client has to the brand and the ability of the business to deliver on its brand promise is an important factor contributing to influencing clients' perceptions of the brand (Mosley, 2007).

Rana (2013) also acknowledges the major role communication plays in a merger. Not only is it one of the functions within a business that has to be mobilised fast to ensure that clients and staff receive business-as-usual interaction, but it is also a crucial aspect of the change management process.

According to Schuler and Jackson (2001:248-250), communication should aim:
  i) To reassure clients and staff of their financial security.
  ii) To help staff and clients understand the new joint vision and feel connected to it.
  iii) To help staff to understand their roles in the merger, how it impacts them and what is required of them.

Communication processes and organisational change are closely linked. According to Sinha and Sanchari (2014:41), "one of the major reasons mergers fail is lack of communication between the two merging organisations or between people at all levels of the organisation".

Sinha and Sanchari (2014) found that nearly a quarter of good staff leave the company within three months of learning that a major change in the organisation is to take place. They further report that half of senior managers leave within a year. Interestingly, in the US, Europe, and around the world, retaining key talent, communication and cultural integration were most often viewed as crucial elements to include in the human resources integration strategy (Schuler & Jackson, 2001). Thus, a greater focus on these areas can lead to greater integration success. The findings of these research studies reinforce the importance of communication in a merger.

According to Schuler and Jackson (2001:242), staff issues in the integration phase of mergers and acquisitions include:
  • Retaining specialists

- Communicating effectively with staff
- Retaining leaders
- Integrating cultures

In business, proper communication can help to achieve commitment and loyalty from staff, enhance or sustain employee motivation and morale, employee loyalty, encourage trust and respect (Rana, 2013). Rana further suggests that by helping employees deal with change effectively by communicating well, staff may be less inclined to resign or stay absent. Staff may be more productive, meaning the company is able to continue generating or increasing profits. Thus, companies are better able to remain on track during periods of intense change (Rana, 2013).

In contrast, when communication is inefficient and ineffective, there is a negative effect on company performance, and greater failure rates of businesses (Rana, 2013; Schuler & Jackson, 2001). According to Banal-Estañol and Seldeslachts (2011:591), "newly merged firms cannot rely on pre-existing coordination mechanisms, such as standard operating procedures, routines, shared language, and identification".

In a business, communication can flow through the hierarchy in different ways. If the communication flow from senior managers down the hierarchy to staff fails, it means staff is unlikely to understand what is expected of them, what they need to do, and what the directives are (Rana, 2013). In much the same way, communication failures from the bottom up means that the strategic decision makers at more senior levels are ill-equipped to make client-centric decisions, and may not understand if their decisions and policies are effective, how they affect the business and what they need to do to stay relevant (Rana, 2013).

A structured approach to communicating with staff during the time of a merger is not always possible, given a number of factors that make this difficult. This may be because details are not known, are confidential or are still under negotiation. Because negotiations take time, management, for weeks or months, may have no further news to share with staff. Sinha and Sanchari (2014) report that only 30% of merging businesses communicate information well to mid and lower levels and often staff rely on print media to get the information they need. This has a negative impact on staff morale and anxiety levels. Thus, staff have to rely on other means of finding information—including the grapevine and other forms of informal communication (Rana, 2013). This is an important factor to note for the study as it reinforces the importance of staff communication and thus developing proper communication processes.

2.4   Process design within a merging organisation

Eriksson and Penker (2000) state that there are four perspectives within business: i) the Business Vision View, which considers the business's vision and goal as well as the problems that must be overcome to reach these goals; ii) the Business Process View, which refers to how processes work with the available resources to achieve the goals of each process; iii) the Business Structural View, which takes a view of the organisational structure; and finally iv) the business Behaviour View, which looks at the behaviour of resources in the process (Eriksson & Penker, 2000).

According to Cousins and Stewart (2002), the primary focus of process modeling is to offer a 'process view' of the organisation. In mergers, in addition to understanding how each person fits within the organisation, it is important to determine what processes are required and how people and other resources are allocated to this process (La Rosa et al., 2010).

Although the result of an effective process design project is an efficient, thorough, simple model that the business uses to deliver an output to its stakeholders (Cousins & Stewart, 2002), many businesses tend to prioritise organisational and management structures and departments, despite external stakeholders only being concerned with the value they are afforded by the business. BP helps to deliver this value (Cousins & Stewart, 2002).

Different process design projects target different areas of business activity depending on organisational focus and requirements (Cousins & Stewart, 2002). In order to maximise efficiencies, in merging businesses, processes that begin in these different parts of the business have to be consolidated in order to streamline the workflow and improve efficiency. To achieve this, similar processes must be compared, commonalities and differences must be identified and an integrated process model must be created (La Rosa et al., 2010).

Once the business enhances ineffective business processes, it can enhance its delivery of value to customers which could improve its own profitability (Cousins & Stewart, 2002). Growing demand of effective business processes has compelled business analysts and process designers to devise new techniques and methodologies as well as modeling tools to support these (Chishti et al., 2014).

Five stages of the business process management life cycle, according to Devilliers (2011:4), are applicable. Figure 2.4 depicts the stages. The process starts with the identification of existing processes and the development of new processes based on

the required resources and deliverables. This is followed by the mapping of processes in accepted business process modelling (BPM) techniques and the translation of these process models into automated processes through the use of computer applications. This is followed by monitoring and constant further improvement.
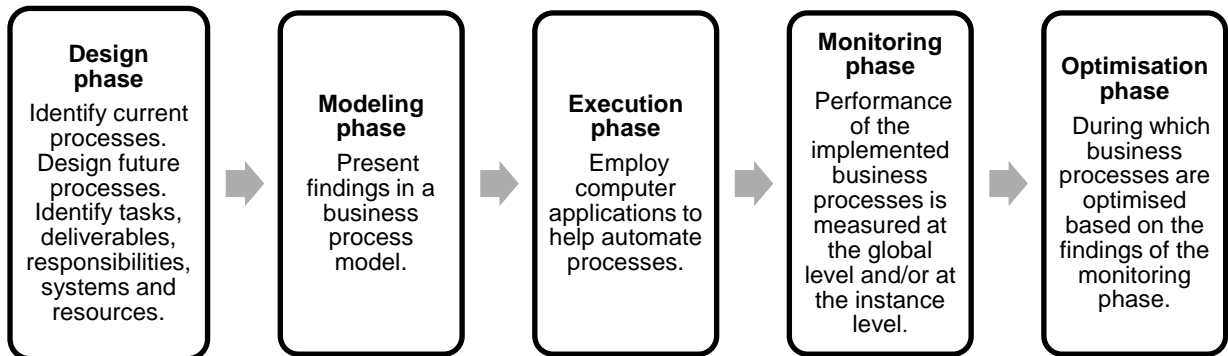
Figure 2.4: Five stages of BPM
(Devilliers, 2011:4)

Cousins and Steward (2002) also refer to two perspectives of business process analysis—a strategic perspective (higher level) and a tactical perspective (lower level). The former aims to add overall value to stakeholders from an overarching business perspective and the latter to increase operational competences. Some organisations adopt the clean-slate approach, undertaking an 'as-is' analysis to determine the current status quo, identify the pitfalls, map an improved process and determine which parts of the process may be automated (Cousins & Steward, 2002).

2.5   Characteristics of an effective business process design

To achieve long-term success and enhanced performance, business process management should be aligned to business strategy (Trkman, 2010). The most telling sign of success is if the business chooses to incorporate business process management into its business strategy. Furthermore, knowing the context of a business process management project is useful for process improvement (Trkman, 2010). Rosemann and vom Brocke (2015:111) outline the focus areas which have to be present for business process management to be successful. These factors include: i) strategic alignment; ii) governance; iii) methods; iv) information technology; v) people; and iv) culture. A short overview of the factors is now given.

i) Strategic alignment: The processes which occur at all levels of the organisation should be inextricably linked to the organisation's broader strategic imperatives.

There needs to be an understanding of how business processes help to achieve the business' goals and which processes affect business strategies. Processes in this scenario play such a key role in business that based on emerging process capabilities it has the potential to drive strategic change. At this level of involvement between strategy and process development it is possible for the business, even during complex mergers, to understand the implications of process and strategy changes on the limited resources available and how to reallocate or add resources to ensure seamless transitions.

ii) Governance: Business process design cannot succeed if it is done in a haphazard manner. Governance relates to the importance of having strategically selected participants involved in the overarching business process management project. This would include specific process owners for the different processes who would be responsible for facilitating the design, monitoring the success and enhancing the process as more knowledge comes to light. Governance includes the allocation of compliance and oversight committees, as well as standards that guide the development, usage and changing of any processes.

iii) Methods: The business process life cycle consists of various stages, each of which has its own methodology requirements. Using Devilliers' (2011) five stages of business process management, the following methodology requirements are relevant: The design and modelling phases require methodology that can assess current processes and conceptualise future processes. The process execution (or implementation) would need methods to convert process models into practical process specifications, to communicate the models and escalate any issues which arise. The monitoring phase (control and measurement) requires methods to collect and consolidate relevant information relating to the process (quality, risk, costs and time, among others). The optimisation phase requires methods to guide the improvement of the process such as allocating better resources, devising better process flow or changing the performance benchmarks.

iv) Information technology: Managers must re-engineer their core processes from a customer perspective (Trkman, 2010). Information technologies should ideally be able to optimally integrate across applications or programmes, allow automation for certain parts of the process where required, and allow customisation. Just as suitable methodology needs to be adopted in each stage of the life cycle, so suitable software, hardware, and information systems can be optimally used through various phases of the life cycle. For the first stages—design and modelling—IT, through process mining, offers semi-automated support to allow process models to be derived and simulated.

In order to facilitate implementation, IT can support the development and execution according to specifications and business rules. Escalation, controlling and visual performance can be automated at the monitoring phase of the process life cycle.

v) People: In addition to the methodology and IT used to help the business achieve its process imperatives, there is a role to be played by staff, leaders and teams within the business. Each person has a varying level of knowledge and skills when it comes to process management, of which technical, methodological, social and communicative skills are key aspects. Relevant elements of consideration are process knowledge management, education on process management skills and communication, or collaboration of teams to derive record and share additional knowledge. It is important for businesses to ensure the level of knowledge and skills required for optimal business process management is sufficient and that leaders, staff and teams are fulfilling their respective roles.

iv) Culture: Customer orientation, excellence, responsibility and teamwork have been identified as core beliefs and values required for optimal value-based business process management within business. Culture refers to the broad process thinking within the organisation and generally has an impact on responsiveness to change, and process change in particular.

2.6   Summary

This chapter provided theoretical answers to the research questions and the aim of the research which is to explore and understand why communication fails during and after business mergers. A further aim is to explore the merits of an integrated communication process design framework for communication practitioners in businesses that are undertaking mergers.

The primary research questions are:
- **RQ 1:** What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?
- **RQ 2:** How do communications processes need to be structured to be effective when companies merge?
- **RQ 3:** Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?

In answering these questions, some of the key concepts and principles were discussed in this chapter. A definition of mergers as well as the critical factors that drive their success or failure was discussed. The research points to the fact that there

are many benefits of mergers, but if the merging process is inefficient, the rate of failure is high. The theory underpinning this research established that within merging organisations, many businesses fail, mainly due to post-merger integration issues—driven primarily by ineffective communication. The research brought to light several different change management approaches as well as the psychological impact that change can have on staff. Prominent communication models and theories were explained. These include the Shannon-Weaver Communication model, Harold Lasswell's framework and the SMCR Berlo Communication Model, among others.

The usage and features of business processes were outlined, as well as their importance and role of business process design within the corporate sphere. A good process has the potential to boost efficiency and productivity and usually redesign processes to increase competitiveness or diversify. Business process modelling was introduced, with a more in-depth view of event-driven process chains. Finally, the importance of business process design and communication was addressed, as well as the characteristics of effective business process design.

The following chapter outlines the key concepts relating to the research philosophy, methodology, approach and strategy and the methods employed in collecting and analysing the data.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

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│     Research    │
│    philosophy   │
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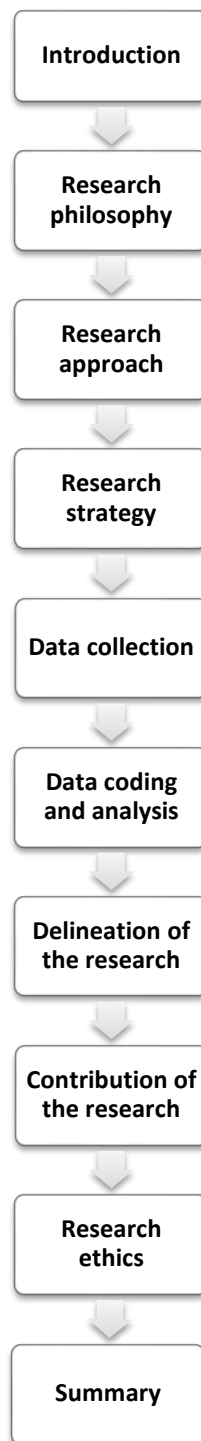
Figure 3.1: Structure of Chapter 3

3.1   Introduction

This chapter provides more detail to Chapter 1 which touched on the research design and methodology to be employed in the study. It outlines the key concepts relating to the research philosophy, methodology, approach and strategy, which the researcher

used. It further outlines the methods to be employed in collecting and analysing the data.

An anti-foundationalist, interpretivist ontology and a subjective, interpretive (Walliman, 2011) epistemology were used. A case study of a financial services merger was used as a research strategy and 17 face-to-face qualitative interviews were done and analysed in order to ascertain problem areas and recommend solutions.

3.2   Research philosophy

According to Holden and Lynch (2004:15), a "researcher's view of the purpose of the research is central to the question of how to research and what to research" and philosophy offers the parameters to this purpose. Research philosophy is described within the parameters of ontology and epistemology (Ponterotto, 2005).

3.2.1   Ontology

Ontology is a branch of metaphysics, which in part is a study of reality (Kant, 2014) to establish first principles as the foundation of knowledge. Research ontology is important to establish given its influence in defining the research methodology to be chosen for the study (Kant, 2014; Poetschke, 2003). Two contrasting spectrums of ontology exist, namely foundationalist and anti-foundationalist. The former implies the existence of a *real* world independent from our knowledge and the latter a socially and discursively constructed reality (Poetschke, 2003). Within this study an anti-foundationalist, subjectivist ontology is inherent, due to the exploratory nature of the research required. Re-engineering communication processes entails ascertaining the aspects that require improvement, based on feedback relating to current non-optimal process problems. The process problems experienced by participants may be different depending on their frames of reference and role in the business. Views shared tend to be subjective rather than objective, especially given the personal impact of a merger on those involved in the merger.

3.2.2   Epistemology

The research epistemology studies theories of knowledge (Kant, 2014). Walliman (2011) similarly describes epistemology as the theory of knowledge, especially about its validation and the methods used. It deals with how we know things and what we can regard as acceptable knowledge in a discipline. Table 3.1 indicates three of the epistemology types.

Table 3.1: Methods of enquiry – a comparison
 (Walliman, 2010:25)

	Positivism/ Post-positivism	**Relativism/ Interpretivism**	**Postmodernism/ Emancipatory**
Epistemology (nature of knowledge; relation between knower and would-be-known)	Objectivity is important; researcher manipulates and observes in dispassionate, objective manner.	Interactive link between researcher and participants; values are made explicit; creating findings.	Interactive link between researcher and participants; knowledge is socially and historically situated.

This study aims to enable the researcher to gain an understanding of what the process challenges are and how to define an optimal communication structure and process. This is done by exploring the experiences of participants who are part of the same corporate merger and who are involved with the communication process. The researcher collected information using a subjective (Poetschke, 2003), interpretive approach (Walliman, 2010) because of the varying nature of the interview experiences and recommendations. Samkange (2012:611) explains interpretivism as an "epistemology that advocates the necessity of the researcher understanding differences between humans in their role as social actors". Interpretivism is an epistemology that advocates the necessity of the researcher understanding differences between humans in their role as social actors. The steps included in the business processes have been subjectively selected, depending on what the researcher had deemed to be most important.

3.3 Research approach

Two primary research approaches—qualitative and quantitative—exist, although some researchers combine methods with an approach positioned at a point between the two extremes on this spectrum (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Quantitative research (deductive approach) is utilised for the purpose of testing 'objective theories' through examining the relationship between variables while qualitative research is explained as an approach for determining the meaning people ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2013).

The information required for this study needs to offer a view of social behaviour, current challenges and recommendations; a "richness of description not obtainable by quantitative research" (Poetschke, 2003:7). This research study thus adopted a qualitative approach.

3.4 Research strategy

A case study strategy was adopted. Using a financial services organisation as the case, descriptive research was undertaken to understand the situation from various

perspectives. A case study is described as a holistic inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its natural setting (Harling, 2012).

Creswell (2013:15) defines a case study as:

> "…a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program(me), event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time".

i) Unit of analysis: According to research by Grünbaum (2007:84), "the unit of analysis defines what the case study is focusing on (what the case is), such as an individual, a group, an organization, a city, and so forth". The unit of analysis for this research was the seven (7) smaller financial services providers that were merged.

ii) Unit of observation: The population interviewed was limited to staff members who were impacted by the merger. In this research, the unit of observation was the 17 individuals within various parts of a merging financial services organisation who were involved with client or staff communication.

iii) Sampling technique: This research sample was chosen non-randomly, purposively as well as using snowballing as technique. According to Marshall (1996:523), snowballing refers to "a technique in which subjects recommend other suitable candidates". The sampling included communication specialists, marketing managers and business analysts, among other relevant participants.

3.5 Data collection

Face-to-face interviews were conducted. These interviews formed the basis for the primary research that were undertaken in this study so the researcher could learn about their experiences of communication processes during and after the merger and for the purposes of recommending a suitable business process design based on these needs. Interviews were directed by an interview guide (Appendix A) using semi-structured questionnaires that were directly linked to the research questions posed for the research.

3.6 Data coding and analysis

Interviews were recorded, transcribed and then coded. Each research question was thoroughly analysed, with examples of pertinent comments included in the text. Through the analysis, 44 research findings emerged. Similar findings were arranged into categories. There were six categories identified, from which four themes were

developed. These themes were further unpacked according to research undertaken by other researchers. Themes were rated according to the most prominent and best practice concepts were recommended and crafted into an event-driven process chain.

3.7 Delineation of the research

As a study involving the design of communication processes in a merging business, it is not intended as a stakeholder-mapping exercise, a client relationship management design too, a study to map client demographics against particular product purchases, or a communication plan. It excludes the implementation, monitoring and enhancement phases of business process modelling theories, or the use of any complex models such as BPMN. The geographical location is Cape Town South Africa and is limited to one financial institution (including all seven merging entities).

3.8 Research ethics

Ethics

Permission had been obtained from the company as well as each interviewee in order use their insight in the research. The interviews did not disrupt the general work of the interviewee.

Ethical practice in relation to research colleagues

Research was undertaken in a scholarly and responsible manner. Honesty, clarity, comprehensiveness and accountability were practiced. All sources of information and support have been acknowledged and interviewees are assured that findings have not been used for the personal gain of the researcher.

Ethical practice in relation to research participants

Research participants were only involved in this project with their permission. Research participants were not harmed or negatively impacted. The process was undertaken in such a way to safeguard their dignity, confidentiality, anonymity and right to information (autonomy), therefore no 'vulnerable participants' exist. Furthermore, the research can be of benefit to research participants (beneficence).

Ethical practice in relation to the environment

This research has had no harmful impact on the environment and no hazardous material was dealt with in this study.

Ethical practice in relation to South African society

This research aims to assist South African businesses that merge.

Ethical practice in relation to sponsors

No party has sponsored this research.

3.9   Summary

This study aims to explore the reasons communication fails during and after business mergers, and the merits of an integrated communication process design framework for communication practitioners in businesses that are undertaking mergers. The rationale for undertaking this study, as the research problem states, is that merger-related disruption to communication processes results in communication failure, delays, duplications, incoherent flow of communication and greater margins for business error.

This chapter outlined the research philosophy, methodology, approach and strategy, as well as the methods employed in collecting and analysing the data. A financial services company is used as a case study. The ontology is anti-foundationalist and interpretivist, and the epistemology is subjective and interpretive.

The unit of analysis for this research is the seven (7) smaller financial services providers that merged. In total, 17 Individuals within various parts of a merging financial services organisation were interviewed, including communication specialists, marketing managers and business analysts, among other relevant participants. The participants were interviewed using semi-structured questionnaires that were directly linked to the research questions posed for the research.

The findings are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND THEMES

Figure 4.1: Structure of Chapter 4

4.1   Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research methodology employed in this study. A subjective, interpretive ontology and epistemology were applied. This chapter analyses the qualitative interviews undertaken regarding participants' experiences of communication, the current state of their processes and how they believe it could be enhanced. For the reader's convenience the problem statement, aim and research questions are once again stated and key elements from the research are presented.

4.1.1   Research problem statement

Merger-related disruption to business, and particularly communication processes, results in communication failure, causing delays, duplications, incoherent flow of communication and greater margins for business error.

4.1.2   Research aim

The aim of the research is to explore and understand why communication fails during and after business mergers. The aim is further to explore an improved communication process design framework for communication practitioners in businesses that are undertaking mergers.

4.1.3 Research questions and sub-questions

RQ 1: What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?

RSQ 1.1: What process challenges do communication practitioners face when companies merge?

RSQ 1.2: What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?

RSQ 1.3: What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?

RQ 2: How do communications processes need to be structured to be effective when companies merge?

RSQ 2.1: How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?

RSQ 2.2: How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?

RQ 3: Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?

RSQ 3.1: Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge*?*

4.2   The case

4.2.1   The merged entity

The business is a financial services company which operates in Cape Town, South Africa. It provides investment products and solutions. The intended merged entity is designed as a company to serve the investment needs of high-net-worth individuals, despite the individual merging component companies currently serving a different market.

The business comprises seven merged entities, namely: i) a unit trust management company targeting all investors; ii) a financial advisory business servicing primarily financial advisers and their clients; iii) a financial advisory business servicing primarily high-net-worth clients; iv) a multi-manager business servicing financial advisers, main stream clients and institutions; v) a global investment business servicing UK clients; vi) a unit trust platform servicing products from different divisions within the broader business; and vii) shared services such as marketing, HR, finance and others pulled from different businesses, consolidated into teams and required to operate functionally.

All these businesses merged into one financial advice and investment institution targeted at its own list of financial planners, institutions and high-net-worth clients. Tied and independent financial advisers needed to be re-trained to offer the new proposition and clients of the seven merging businesses needed to be aware of, and comfortable with, the changes. Three years into the merger, the merged business is functional, but most of the businesses which merged into the new business have not ceased to exist and staff continue having duplicated roles.

Prior to the merger, several communications processes had existed, as the different businesses each had their own separate processes. In this study, representatives of the different business units shared information about these various communication process. An example of one such process is provided in section 4.3, along with a figure to illustrate the process (see figure 4.3 on page 51).

4.2.2   The participants

Participants are from the above mentioned seven businesses. Some of the participants are still working for a specific business; others work across the seven businesses, whilst others work for the new merged company. All of them have been impacted by the merger. The participants also have been impacted by the communication processes employed within the business. Seventeen interviews were conducted with participants from various levels of the organisation, particularly those directly involved at some stage within the communication process life cycle. Table 4.1 presents a background on the participants.

Table 4.1: List of participants, their positions and years within the FSPs

Participant	Position	Years of experience
1	Client Relations Manager	16
2	Communication Administrator	8
3	Operations Manager	23
4	Communication Specialist A	3
5	Proposition Marketing Manager	11
6	Business Analyst	15
7	Communication Process Analyst: Intermediaries	9
8	Traffic Manager	25
9	Unit Trust Marketing Manager	19
10	Communication Specialist B	6
11	Proposition Marketing Coordinator	8
12	Communication Specialist C	9
13	International Marketing Manager	24
14	Research and CRM Specialist	7

15	Institutional Marketing Manager	17
16	Web Manager	20
17	Human Resources Consultant	15

All of the participants have been impacted by the merger and directly impacted by communication processes employed within the business. Seventeen interviews were conducted with participants from various levels of the organisation, particularly those directly involved at some stage within the communication process life cycle. To protect the identity of the interviewees, the findings are represented anonymously and not in the order listed above.

4.3   Data analysis

4.3.1   Interview findings

This section discusses the findings derived from the interviews. The format of the section is as follows: Firstly, the main research question (RQ) is presented, followed by research sub-question (RSQ). The specific interview question (IQ), linked to the RSQ is then discussed. The format holds for all RQs, RSQs and IQs.

RQ 1:   What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?

RSQ 1.1: What process challenges do communication practitioners face when companies merge?

IQ 1.1.1: What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?

The question is posed to determine why interviewees believe they experience communication challenges. This relates to their experiences within their work environments in terms of the communication they receive or are responsible for.

The primary barriers mentioned are outlined in Table 4.2, along with the frequency of the same issue re-occurring. Some participants may have alluded to more than one issue; hence the total number of mentions exceeds the number of participants as can be seen in Table 4.2.

Interviewee 5 (I5) stated that, "with the different businesses coming together, each business had they own way of doing things" (Appendix B5). I7 mentioned that "it's a lack of integration from an overall business perspective. And tied to that would be lack of consistency, mostly saying the same thing, but not selling the right story" (Appendix

B7). The lack of integration exacerbates and is as a result of poor communication. I4 said that "there is no similarity in messages from across the entire business" (Appendix B4). I3 argued that "no communication equals no integration; no integration equals no business" (Appendix B3).

Table 4.2: Barriers to successful communication

Response	Number of mentions (Some participants may have indicated more than one, and others may not have indicated any at all. Therefore this number may not add up to 17)
Lack of integration, synergy and consistency	6
Lack of clarity around responsibilities	3
More stakeholders to satisfy and understand	3
No common understanding of communication	2
Lack of access to information	2
Lack of leadership support	2
Unclear single business strategy and proposition	1
No current challenges	1

Fifteen percent of the participants indicated the lack of role clarity to be a challenge. I5 stated that, "when we got together there wasn't a lot of clarity of who was responsible for what" (Appendix B5). I5 is supported by I14 who said: "We don't know where the skills are and to what extent" (Appendix B14).

Participants also identified the additional stakeholders to which to communicate as a challenge. While having to satisfy clients and business leaders within the businesses from which they had originally come, they also needed to participate in the engineering of a new business and satisfy a new set of stakeholders. I10 indicated that "I have to satisfy my own business [here and another in a different region], and there are other parts of the business merging. So there is a three-prong challenge" (Appendix B10). Further challenges experienced are a lack of common understanding of what 'communication' refers to in the business, limited access to information, an unclear business strategy and lack of leadership support.

Finding 1: The lack of integration, consistency and synergy is the greatest challenge experienced by communication practitioners when companies merge

Finding 2: The lack of role clarity among communication practitioners is a barrier to effective communication when companies merge

Finding 3: The absence of a clear business strategy and access to the correct information; communication practitioners are not aware of what, how and to whom to communicate

IQ 1.1.2: What are the communication process challenges you currently face?

The primary issues mentioned are outlined below in Table 4.3, along with the frequency of the same issue re-occurring.

Table 4.3: Communication challenges experienced due to barriers

Response	Number of participants
New process is not defined or is ineffective	7
Continuation of old processes results in inefficiency	3
Bad planning	3
Lack of resources	2
Inconsistent data capabilities	1

Relating to the non-existence of new processes, I4 stated that "we're not sure of all the processes yet, who needs to see it and who needs to approve it. The approval processes are not in place yet" (Appendix B4). I5, I7 and I16 concur with this view. I2, I11 and I16 alluded to the existence of a new process, but indicated it to be too slow or laborious.

In the absence of a commonly understood and effective new process(es), communication practitioners retain or default to what they know, their respective existing processes, particularly if those processes worked well in their pre-merged environment. I3 stated that "we are taking a very long time to actually live outside of the past. Everybody is still wearing their old hats trying to do something new" (Appendix B3). This has the tendency to result in fragmented or duplicated communication to clients, lack of motivation to define new processes and frustration or insecurity about the way forward. I1 said: "Usually in mergers, everyone keeps doing the same things, but they can't. On the client side, with different quarter end dates, clients get two annual reports. They get two statements, one month apart, different client newsletters… Now there is a fragmented view of what clients get" (Appendix B1).

Some participants, including I3, attribute the communication process problems to ineffective planning or not effectively communicating the plans properly. I8 claimed

that "the biggest challenge we faced initially was to be put into a project team and put together a communication strategy for a business that hadn't even been merged yet" (Appendix B8).

As can be understood from the comment made by I15, the challenge in this case is that while new deliverables are required for the new consolidated entity, deliverables are still required for the merging businesses. I15 stated: "Lack of planning… no time. It's worse. There is more work. The old business is still with us, and they're keeping us busier" (Appendix B15).

Relating to the previous question (IQ 1.1.1) and the references to leadership support, in this regard, the challenge exists partially because there is no strong leadership stance as to when the old can be ceased. Staff members are thus under pressure to deliver on two sets of requirements. It is therefore hardly surprising that some participants cited lack of resources as a process challenge. I14 stated that "we don't have many process or admin people" (Appendix B14). I2 stated: "Sometimes it is just quicker to do things myself, instead of competing with all these businesses for the communication specialists' time" (Appendix B2).

A further challenge is the lack of access to and management of data. With several client data systems and no single consolidated system, it becomes more difficult to gain an accurate and holistic picture of client data and communication activity with regards to each client. I1 stated that "it's easy to see if someone is a client of one product, or of another, but it is difficult to tell if someone has both. One of the challenges is to say we need a system to do that" (Appendix B1). I1 is supported by I6, saying that "at our business there is no-one that actually understands how data fits in end to end to build up into the proposition… They have no idea where the data is, what it means and how to measure the stuff. Each person does stuff manually and it takes them days to do things. If you look at some of our guys, they just spend their days working on Excel spread sheets working on finding data" (Appendix B6).

Finding 4: A lack of a defined communication process during a merger entices the reversion back to previously accepted practices

Finding 5: There are many different processes and systems resulting in fragmented communication to stakeholders

IQ 1.1.3: How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?

The purpose of this question is to ascertain whether the merger-related communication process problems negatively affected the ability of the participants to do tasks assigned to them.

The primary issues mentioned are outlined in Table 4.4. Participants indicated that communication process problems have the tendency to result in problems meeting deadlines, not being clear about what needs to be done thus delivering the incorrect result, or because of time constraints not being able to deliver the standard they expect of themselves.

Table 4.4: Impact of communication process challenges on deliverables

Response	Number of participants
Delays in project completion or missed deadlines	3
Incorrect implementation due to unclear requirements	3
Below par work or client service due to time constraints	3
Over- or under communicating	2
Extreme personal pressure	2
I don't know	4

In terms of deadlines being difficult to meet, I5 stated that "we have various stakeholders and we have to give lengthy timelines to get everyone's feedback, but we still have to stretch the timelines. We have to communicate quickly, yet I've dealt with communication which takes three to four months to complete" (Appendix B5). I5 further argued that with the merger, sign off processes became more laborious. Despite extra time factored into processes, deadlines still need to be renegotiated.

Contributing to delaying delivery is the reluctance of managers to approve work sent to them for sign off. I4 mentioned that "when we do the copy, and it's ready, there is no one designated person to sign it off. People are too insecure within the new structure to sign off copy. It now affects my deliverables and you have to work in extra time for this" (Appendix B4). An added challenge is the fact that participants are required to deliver, but do not always know what they need to deliver and what the requirements are. I7 said:

> "It causes frustration because things are not clear. You have to keep going back to make sure you – and they – really understand what it is that they want from you. It's just the instructions are not very clear. The business is in so much flux that they're not really sure what they want" (Appendix B7).

With the lack of clarity or direction and no liaison between teams there is a tendency to communicate to clients ineffectively, either too much, or not enough. I1 stated that "either there is way too much information being sent out, or there is nothing" (Appendix B1). The uncertainty, the tight deadlines, the lack of understanding, and the inability to spend time doing things properly result in some participants feeling despondent and pressurised.

I10 very emotionally said: "I go home every day feeling I haven't finished my work. I never feel like I've done a good job ever. It's not sustainable in the long term. In the short term, people may be willing to do it, but only if they see the plan" (Appendix B10).

Finding 6a: Communication process problems result in suboptimal deliverables and delays.

Finding 6b: Suboptimal deliverables and delays tends to result in staff feeling pressured, stressed and demotivated.

IQ 1.1.4: What should the role of the communication department be?

The purpose of this question is to establish whether there exists a common understanding of the role of the communication department within the organisation.

Table 4.5 reflects a divergence in opinion about the role of communication. The communication department is located within the marketing department in this organisation. It is therefore understandable that the role of the communication department would be simply marketing related communication to clients. However, most participants believe that the role of the communication department should not simply be to clients, but rather to all stakeholders.

Table 4.5: Perceived role of communications department

Response	Number of participants
All stakeholder engagement (general)	9
Client communication only (marketing support)	3
Not sure/other	5

Two interviewees support the notion that the communications department should also be seen as an addition to marketing and should have its own seat at an Executive

Committee level. I7 said: "There should be a dedicated communication department. It should not be a subset of the marketing department. For me, marketing in my opinion is there to look after marketing communications and there should be a communication function which has a strategic purpose" (Appendix B7). Others see communication purely as a marketing function taking care of "brochure ware" and "client communication".

Finding 7: People have different views of what the role of the communication department should be

Finding 8: Most participants see the value in a strategic communication function which oversees all types of communication and not simply those related to marketing

RSQ 1.2: What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?

IQ 1.2.1: Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?

Table 4.6 reflects interviewees' views that clients and financial advisers are seen as important stakeholders to be involved, and staff to a lesser extent. (Note: Some participants may have alluded to more than one issue; hence the total number of mentions exceeds the number of participants).

Table 4.6: Perceived key stakeholders

Response	Number of mentions
Financial advisers: Internal and independent	8
Clients: All	11
Internal: Business units who are clients or signatories	3
Internal: Staff	4

Because each interviewee hails from a different business unit, each interviewee's client base differs largely. So where the interviewees refer to clients, it is not necessarily the same clients they refer to, but rather the clients within their respective businesses' existing database.

I1 indicated that brokers, all clients and staff were the most important stakeholders, whereas I2 said pension fund clients, high-net-worth clients and corporates were the most important. Others, for example I9, mentioned internal audiences including staff and consultants.

Finding 9: Communication to staff is needed, but is largely neglected before, during and after mergers in favour of communicating to intermediaries and clients

IQ 1.2.2: What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?

Given their wide-ranging concerns relating to communication and processes, this question is asked to ascertain participants' expectations with regards to a desired process. Interestingly, few participants gave recommendations into a process, but rather mentioned several individual tactics that they felt could be utilised to bridge the communication gap. The general sentiments are tabulated in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Views on how to improve communication before merger

Role	Number of mentions
Clearly defined roadmap or plan	3
Clearly defined roles and knowing others' roles	2
Regular update sessions	6
Team brainstorm sessions	1

Some participants indicated the need for clarity on a plan or roadmap, stating the importance of being taken along on the journey. I3 indicated that the following should be put in to place prior to a merger: "A clearly defined mapped journey. As a business we know the end game [for staff]. We create the right expectation, the right deliverables. If the end game is not understood by everyone, we're working to different goals" (Appendix B3).

I1 stated that "if you are going to merge two companies, there needs to be an upfront view at the concept phase of communication at the start" (Appendix B1). I7 is of the opinion that "there should have been a communication strategy… but it should have been driven strategically and with much effort from the project team. But there focus was on getting the proposition right" (Appendix B7).

Nearly one third of participants believe that quick catch-ups or more regular update sessions should have been undertaken prior to the merger. These update sessions

would cover both work related aspects, and provide an opportunity to ask questions about factors that are impacting staff. I10 argued that "someone should have addressed the questions. Let's send out a comm – these are the common questions being asked. But they are covering their own backs to get promoted… I just want my questions answered" (Appendix B10).

Only one interviewee (I9) recommended a process that should have been implemented prior to the merger. "I would understand what the change is. Scope the change. What do we need to communicate? Develop a communication approach to each. Design a communication plan around this. Do a stakeholder analysis. Who are they? Who can we discount?" (I9, Appendix B9).

Finding 10: Communication processes are not put into place because process design is not a widely understood concept

Finding 11: Those experiencing a merger prefer to know the plan upfront

Finding 12: As the merger unfolded, no update sessions to deal with prominent issues and concerns were communicated

IQ 1.2.3: What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?

There are very contrasting responses to this question (Table 4.8). The aim is to gauge recommendations of processes that should have been put into place after the merger. Participants referred to activities or to systems, but once again not specifically to process.

Table 4.8: Views on how to improve communication after merger

Response	Number of participants
Clearly defined roadmap or plan	3
Clearly defined roles and knowing others' roles	2
Regular update sessions	6
Team brainstorm sessions	1
Don't know	5

Responses are very similar to the previous question with 5 out of 17 participants indicating that a clear plan is important to have in place. I9 suggested:

"A proper change management plan that overlays the entire process. From the above-the-line issues around actual tangible change; the tangible is the new buildings, the new people. But the underlying issues, staff retention, EVP, are all missing…. an overarching but interconnected change management process. What do we do to deliver this? What we want to do, what we have to do to get to that level. Once changes are identified, then implement communication strategy to support change management" (Appendix B9).

Finding 13: People going through mergers are more likely to identify an outcome than the solution leading to an outcome; hence the difficulty in developing mutually agreed communication processes

Finding 14: An overarching change management plan is not in place

RSQ 1.3: What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?

IQ 1.3.1: What was your communication process before the merger?

This question aims to establish a baseline for the question that follows in order to ascertain how their processes have changed. Of the seventeen participants, six (I1, I7, I8, I9, I16, I17) indicated they do not have a specific process before the merger. The rest indicated that they have a process, aside from one person (I14) who indicated not knowing the process having not been in the role prior to the merger. The vast nature of the spectrum of answers starts to illustrate the root of the issues faced by staff involved in the communication process:
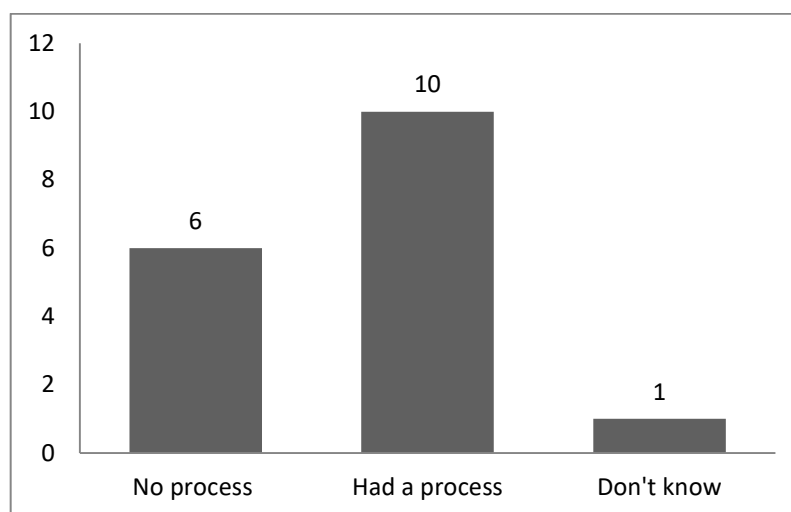
Figure 4.2: Status of current process

Added to the severe leadership gap alluded to during an earlier question (IQ 1.1.1), there was no strong leader in a senior enough position who understood the extent of the process dilemma. Some of these findings are discussed in the context of the question that follows.

IQ 1.3.2: What is your communication process after the merger?

The following encapsulates, in the researcher's words, the different processes used and how it has changed from before and after the merger. This information is derived through the responses to this question, as well as the previous question. Most participants either do not have a formalised process or have retained their previous processes (Figure 4.2).
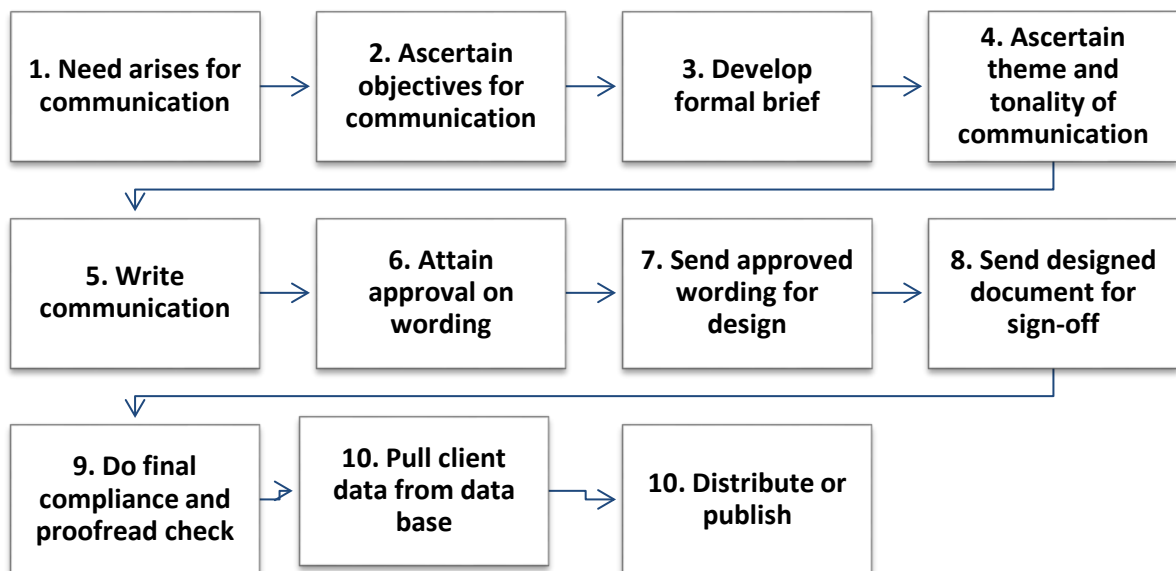
Figure 4.3: Example of a communication process used prior to the merger

Figure 4.3 is a basic communication process based on the historical communication process prior to the merger. Interviewees were asked how their current process differs from this process. According to their feedback, I1 does not use a formal process (Appendix B1) and I2 follows the above process, but the distribution is undertaken through an external mailing house and the database differs to all other business units (Appendix B2). I3 did not indicate whether he follows the above process. However, at point 1 (need arises for communication), in the past, the need would arise as part of a clear plan. Post-merger, there is no existing plan and I3 indicated that they "figure out" how things need to work (Appendix B3). I4 explained the post-merger process used, which seems similar to that stated above. This is managed by a traffic manager who uses a system called *Chase* to manage the process (Appendix B4).

I5 uses a similar process, but includes a meeting as part of the initial stage of the process to ascertain the most suitable approach to the communication. Unlike a few of the other business units, the work done in this area is completely reactive; it is only upon request from another department that this team generates content. There was no reference made to the *Chase* system. (Appendix B5). I7 has a focus primarily on the adviser target audience than the consumer (Appendix B7). I9 indicated that there is no formal process used (Appendix B9).

I10 indicated no part of any process but commented about not getting the support required to get work done, saying, "I can't work sixteen hour days" (Appendix B10). I11 indicated using a similar process but with a greater focus on testing the accuracy and clarity among the audiences once the communication has been written. It also includes a final step of loading the communication onto an internal adviser-specific portal (Appendix B11). I15 indicated using the same process as specified (Appendix B15).

Finding 15: When companies merge and several different processes emerge, communication process problems can arise

Finding 16: Further problems will arise when there is no strong and experienced leadership figure with the right level of authority to address the process issues

IQ1.3.3: What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?

None of the participants indicated any advantages to the current status quo. Instead, they shared many concerns. These concerns revolve around the i) lack of an understood process, ii) that too many people want to have input during the process, iii) the long length of time it took to complete projects due to the arduous sign off process, iv) the lack of business analysts within business areas, and v) people being forced, due to circumstance, to be involved in areas they do not have the expertise for. For example: I4 stated: "People don't know the process and don't know the different elements and how it each works" (Appendix B4). I2 stated that there are "just too many chiefs, so sign off is difficult. Too many people who want to give input. People are busy; the right people don't give feedback" (Appendix B2).

I1 states:

> "Systems are fundamentally different and have different computing languages and often, client numbers are not holistic to companies. For every product, you have a different client number, and can't know unless you match them in a data

warehouse. People had done it haphazardly and there were challenges in managing relationships" (Appendix B1).

Some participants indicated their process has not changed, and they are doing things in the same manner as they had prior to the merger.

Finding 17: Inefficient processes prolong the period from start to completion of projects

Finding 18: Organically changing job descriptions and key performance areas of staff as they start adapting to the new environment may leave staff confused about their roles, who needs to sign work off, who needs to get involved and how to do certain tasks

IQ 1.3.4: Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?

The question is posed to determine which party within the business is expected by participants to drive the communication strategy and communication process engineering. Responses are tabulated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Perceived communication process and strategy owner

Response	Number of participants
Communications team	8
Any knowledgeable willing person assigned by the business	2
Marketing manager	3
Different people within the business	4

There is no clear view as to who needs to hold this responsibility. Seven (7) interviewees (I1, I4, I7, I9, I10, I16 and I17) indicated that the communication team should be responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering.

I9 stated that "communication strategy should be done by communication team" (Appendix B9). I16 said it should be done by "ideally a communications manager at an Exco level. It can't be a specialist or line manager, it can't be marketing either. It is two different functions. The bigger old business should tell us what they want. Our division should be centralised, then one person here who represents us centrally"

(Appendix B16). I17 agrees, saying that there should be "a strategy and communications function at an Exco level" (Appendix B17). It can thus be deducted that while participants believe a member of a communications team needs to be responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering, they also so believe the person should hold a higher level of authority than what is currently afforded to those expected to undertake this role.

Two interviewees (I3 and I11) thought it should be any person with the knowledge, passion or capacity. I3 said "it needs to be driven by someone who is passionate. We're trying to segment things into things that make sense. We're just chasing our tails. At the moment, no one is driving it" (Appendix B3).

Finding 19: There is no senior communications professional in place with the correct level of authority to take and implement strategy and process decisions

Finding 20: There is a widespread perception that communication strategy should be undertaken by the communication team rather than the marketing manager

Finding 21: There is a school of thought that says the role of communication process manager needs to be a standalone role and not one that is undertaken by a member of the communication team that is responsible for content

RQ 2: **How do communications processes need to be structured to be effective when companies merge?**

RSQ 2.1: How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?

IQ 2.1.1: What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?

When posed with a question addressing measures interviewees recommend to minimise or overcome the challenges they currently experience, there were a host of recommendations. I1 suggested that there needs to be one communication process framework in place "for all sign off" to help overcome their communication challenges (Appendix B1). I2 believes that "expectations need to be managed" (Appendix B2), while I4 felt that the business needs to involve the communications people earlier in processes and stated that the business should "include communication people in strategic meetings instead of informing us at the last minute" (Appendix B4).

There is also a strong view that having the right people working together in complementary ways would help to overcome communication challenges. In this regard, I5 suggested "rely(ing) on existing synergies" (Appendix B5), while I10 felt there would be value in "people asking common questions" and getting "a few people together" (Appendix B10). This may require additional resources, according to some of the answers (I14, I15). They believe there needs to be an account manager for each business acting as the intermediary between the marketing department and the business unit. Specifically, I14 (Appendix B14) suggested having a resource both in the marketing team and someone within the business division being serviced to run with the tasks. I15 feels it is important to have a specialist account executive "brief it [the job] in via Chase" (Appendix B15).

Some interviewees also feel that strategic and leadership aspects need to be addressed. According to I13, "decent leadership support" (Appendix B13) would help overcome communication challenges, and I11 (Appendix B11) said "businesses need to decide what their strategy is".

Finding 22: A clear business strategy and communication process is not in place to assist those involved in the communication process to overcome their challenges

Finding 23: Communication practitioners are not involved in projects early to determine how they can optimise technology to deliver requirements

Finding 24: There are skills and resources gaps within the business which, if plugged, could help to alleviate some of the challenges faced

IQ 2.1.2: What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?

In very much the same vein as the prior questions, there were key recommendations that emerged. Many interviewees feel working together and having discussions with the right people are important. I8 said: "We need to stop working as silos" (Appendix B8). Reinforcing this view, I3 alluded to "having one world, and servicing that world. Otherwise, we'll be all over with communication" (Appendix B3). In this regard, I1 feels that face-to-face sessions are better than email discussions about requirements. I1 said: "We need to talk to each other, and find out what others do. You can't deduce much from an abstract email, but you can from a face-to-face session" (Appendix B1). Similarly, I12 said: "People have to take the time out to get to know what other areas

are doing. Otherwise you won't know about what's happening in other areas. There needs to be an A to Z" (Appendix B12). I14 suggested having a "weekly meeting" (Appendix I14).

Some interviewees are of the opinion that the appropriate use of systems and analysts could support the business in bringing its various entities together as one unit. I16 said that their communication process problems would be overcome if "the centre of our system is in the IT infrastructure" (Appendix B16). Two interviewees (I11 and I7) mentioned the implementation of a Client Relationship Management (CRM) system as a tool to overcome communication process problems. I11 suggested that the businesses are "amalgamated within one CRM system and segment" (Appendix B11) and I7 emphasised the potential benefits of a CRM system to the business and its different target audiences, saying "the CRM looks after the data from a relationship perspective. Who has done what, to whom, where, why and how?" (Appendix B7).

I6 said:
> "Business analysts need to sit in the business. Each business area needs someone who is technically responsible for their business area to make understanding the requirements easier (although this may be difficult to do because people have operational deliverables). This specialist, within each business needs to be able to communicate to broader projects what needs to happen" (Appendix B6).

This is related to comments by I10 and I13 from the perspective of having the correct people in place. I10 suggested having a "communication process manager" in place (Appendix B10) and I13 suggested having a clearer distinction of who needs to be responsible for strategising and who needs to be responsible for implementation. I13 said: "We are using 'doing' people in wrong space. I don't want a monkey see money do. We need time and space to ask questions. The more we empower the doers, the more the thinkers are freed to do the thinking" (Appendix I13).

Training sessions between teams are recommended by I4 to learn about different business units, discuss how they fit together and what that means for communication. I4 said: "We should go on training or an induction to find out all about the different businesses. There is so much to learn, not only for communications but across all the different businesses and how they fit in together" (Appendix B4).

Finally, the importance of testing and analysing processes is mentioned. I5 said: "The best way to check if things work out it to test it" (Appendix B5) and I9 said

communication process problems can be overcome "by identifying the elephant in the room – doing a deep dive – root cause analysis" (Appendix B9).

Finding 25: People work in silos and there are not enough face-to-face interactions and training sessions to bridge the divides and work towards a joint vision and overcome communication process problems

Finding 26: Appropriate systems such as a CRM system and a job-tracking system are not in place and not enough emphasis is placed on the IT infrastructure as a core function that can help to overcome communication process problems

Finding 27: There is no specialist that focuses specifically on communication process design and management

Finding 28: The lack of testing and root cause analyses means that issues are not understood and identified so they may be addressed

IQ 2.1.3: What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?

The responses to this question are largely aligned to those in the previous question (IQ 2.1.2). There are several ways participants believe they are able to overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes. Views were varied to this response, but primarily linked to the importance of having the correct resources and the correct leadership support.

In particular, I3 suggested that "there needs to be a serious reshuffle of resources generally within the business. We are trying to ask people to do one thing, without the resources to do things properly" (Appendix B3). I1 feels that the people then put in place need to be trusted to do what they need to do. I1 said: "The first step is to trust people, bring them on board earlier in the process, and then allow them to do what they need to do" (Appendix B1). I10 presents the other side of this coin indicating that if people—particularly communication specialists—are to be trusted, they need to show they can be trusted. I10 said: "Communication specialists need to be credible, by consistently showing the value they add to the business (Appendix B10). I12 shared views about how this could be achievable, saying communication specialists have to work on the relationships with the stakeholders. I12 explained that by doing so, "stakeholders would perceive them as an importance resource, saying "they will consider [them] as an integral part of the process" (Appendix B12).

With specific reference to the need for additional resources, I9 suggested a change communication process team, specifically "a dedicated department to focus on that – effectively change communication in the business. And this should be spearheaded by a project owner in the communication space" (Appendix B9). I9 further explained that this team would do an analysis of the entire business and evaluate "where it is not effective and what do we have to do to improve this" (Appendix B9). I5 mentioned also having a "proposition management team that overlooks all businesses" (Appendix I5).

With respect to using the right people for the right tasks, I6 spoke about the importance of having the right people extract data for communication specialists to use to ensure the right clients receive the correct communication. I6 said: "Retrieving data should be left to the specialists, to be efficient" (Appendix B6).

Of course, the best systems would not be effective if there is no strategy and no leadership direction is provided. I7 said that clear direction from the executive can help to overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes.

Finding 29: Communication specialists do not yet have the required level of credibility within the business to be involved in projects early in the process, and may not have established strong relationships with the right stakeholders

Finding 30: There is no specialist team in place that can facilitate the change communication within the merging business

Finding 31: The proposition management team does not oversee the management of the propositions of all businesses from a strategic perspective although the need exists for them to so do

Finding 32: Adequate use of data specialists to retrieve the correct data was not made with the result that data overlaps or gaps were present in communication distribution lists

IQ 2.1.4: How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?

This question has been posed to ascertain what recommendations participants have with regards to overarching paradigm shifts needed within their work environments to help alleviate their communication challenges.

Among the recommendations mentioned, the focus on the client is found to be a concern by two participants (I1 and I7). I1 stated: "Client needs should drive the outputs" (Appendix B1). I7 stated: "Doing things from the client's perspective and not from our perspective – not what's easiest for us; what's cheaper for us" (Appendix B7).

A client-centric approach allows the business to communicate meaningfully to clients, instead of sporadically dispersing arbitrary messaging to clients for the sake of communicating. I16 stated: "All the communication feels like we just want to get something out there. Rather be out there with a quality message…" (Appendix B16).

Participants have different recommendations as to how best to establish what these quality messages are. To some it starts with the team, less so than the actual information. I3 stated that "it doesn't matter if you have good information. You need to become a team first" (Appendix B3).

The view exists that the team also needs to be adequately resourced and structured to work efficiently. I13 stated that it "would be useful to have a dedicated person within Marketing to run with our things. Somebody with the skills and the time" (Appendix B13). I14 mentioned that "we need account managers and proper briefs for all tasks" (Appendix B14). In similar vein, I4 recommended that "there should be one person in each business chasing sign offs" (Appendix B4).

In order to make the required changes, honest conversations are recommended. I11 stated: "Start within. How to optimally structure communication within our business will involve tough conversations. …look at who is doing what and which pockets of communication come from which areas" (Appendix B11). These honest conversations need to be based on the premise that communication is an overarching aspect of the business, and not simply a tail-end edit of the final product. I12 argued that "people need to understand communication is not about grammar. People need to understand the value of communication – being involved from a brainstorming through to the end" (Appendix B12).

Establishing a credible overarching communication function may require some extra resources, such as a dedicated high level communication strategy and process manager. I9 said that "there is a higher level comms skill required [to] look at strategically changing things" (Appendix B9). I10 recommended a communication process manager to "look at processes within each capability and …help with communications processes" (Appendix B10).

Finding 33: Currently client needs do not drive communication and business outputs, but can help to streamline communication and ensure it supports positive client outcomes

Finding 34: There is no dedicated person that manages stakeholder relationships, manages projects and chases sign offs in the marketing team

Finding 35: The lack of a communication process manager has been identified by the interviewees as a gap

RSQ 2.2: How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?

IQ 2.2.1: How can current communication processes be improved?

Interestingly, the bulk of the feedback is in identifying and explaining that a process problem exists and that it needs to be resolved. When faced with the opportunity to share ideas on how exactly to improve communicating processes, interviewees defaulted to seemingly generic responses.

I12 feels that the "the main thing is having the clear processes, assigning roles and responsibilities, and getting buy-in to the process" (Appendix B12). I1 emphasised the importance of "getting people used to a formal sign off process" (Appendix B1). I1 further suggested undertaking a gap analysis and identifying the shortfalls. I11 reinforced this, feeling there is a gap present and that filling the gap would be a prerequisite for making things work more effectively. I11 said: "There is a gap. It sits with pure client communication. This is missing. Once there is an understanding internally… and roles and responsibilities have been sorted, [we can approach the] organisation to articulate our structure and ask for accounts executives" (Appendix B11). I16 however indicated that the "communication specialists are the account managers" (Appendix B16).

I9 suggested prioritising stakeholders and said "I think [the] communication function could provide input into stakeholder analysis" (Appendix B9). Improving communication processes, according to I10, would require assigning these stakeholders "in order of importance" with the corresponding "sign off process then rate the best form [of communication] for each of those" (Appendix B10). I3 supports this, suggesting the different business units should get "together and agree what we want to communicate to whom, when and how" (Appendix B3). Interestingly, this is also brought up by I6, although relating it to IT and systems stating that in order to

narrow data requirements and decide what systems to use, they would "need to know what we want to communicate and [to whom], then give IT the right specs" (Appendix B6).

In mapping out this information, I7 cautioned to "think [the] strategy through carefully". I7 said: "You can't make it fool proof, but the more you think about it, the less risk" (Appendix B7).

To optimise communication processes and strategy, interviewees I5 and I8 spoke about the importance of people who oversee the messaging from the different businesses. I5 said: "Ideally, we'd like to have a proposition management team that overlooks all businesses. There are potential synergies within the current business that are not being realised" (Appendix B5). I8 also recommended having an overarching contributor who oversees the messaging from different businesses. "This person would see how things work in our portion of the business and brief marketing" (I8, Appendix B8).

I9 has a similar view, although suggesting that this process involves senior management. I9 said: "We need Exco involvement from a clarity perspective around strategy and what we need our comms plan to look like" (Appendix B9). I9 further suggested testing the next process, and the outcomes among stakeholders, saying, "We need to test this with external stakeholders and within our planner community. We can do this through working groups, focus groups" (Appendix B9).

Finding 36: Stakeholder groups have not been formalised and prioritised, and communication processes and sign off processes have not been finalised – all of which would assist in improving current communication processes

Finding 37: In order to provide the correct data to be used to facilitate smooth communication processes and campaigns, IT specialists need to be briefed adequately and given the right requirements

Finding 38: There are synergies within the business that are not being adequately utilised because there is not an overarching proposition management capability

IQ 2.2.2: How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?

Some interviewees attribute the initial difficulty in bedding down processes to lack of leadership direction. Two of the participants (I11 and I14) alluded to the role of the leadership team in ensuring a faster improvement of communication processes. They indicated the need for leadership to have played a more active role, to have focused on identifying communication processes far earlier in the process, and to have been more proactive in taking the decisions required to promote progress. According to I11, "HR and leaders need to have played a more active role" (Appendix B11), and I14 suggested being bolder and making decisions, saying, "Most things, like communication couldn't happen effectively because decisions were not taken" (Appendix B14). Other participants (I1, I2, I5, I8, I12 and I9) alluded to the usefulness that more regular structured updates and team meetings could have had in speedily resolving process issues and felt this should have occurred more readily as the business went through its transition. I1 said: "The business needs to talk outside of silos" (Appendix B1), I2 recommended "smaller team updates" (Appendix B2), I5 advised "a weekly communication to give people a heads up… a weekly or a bi-weekly progress update" (Appendix B5), while I8 thought a "communication forum" (Appendix B8) would have been helpful. I12, similarly, stated "having ongoing discussions and check-ins" (Appendix B12).

I9 (Appendix B9) said that key stakeholders should have been the first priority and their needs should be addressed first. Once that has occurred, the rest could have been separately managed until such time that a proper plan has been devised. I9 said: "Prioritise high priority stakeholders and make sure their needs are addresses, and contingency manage the rest".

Finding 39: Leadership do not play a sufficiently active role in prioritising communication and taking decisions

Finding 40: There are divisions between business units and the silo mentality poses additional challenges to improving communication processes and priorities

Finding 41: There are too many stakeholders and different goals to focus on instead of having a streamlined list of key stakeholders and priorities

IQ 2.2.3: What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?

Upon reviewing responses to this question, the most prominent factor that arose is the importance of getting the fundamentals right. I3 stated: "A decision as to what you want to be as a business" (Appendix B3).

I12 is of the opinion that "people need to take time out to have a strategy session and identify key players" (Appendix B12). I6 also promoted "effective segmentation" to ensure "clear, concise communication" (Appendix B6). I1 had a similar idea and stated, "Stakeholder mapping needs to happen because they get fixated on one market and forget about others. You need to plot a strategy for each level of the hierarchy and what will be done and on what dates this will be done" (Appendix B1). Adequate preparation for the change is also a recommendation. I14 suggested "proper change management teams, with the appropriate input from communication specialists within the business" (Appendix B14).

There is also a view (I13) that all decisions need to be formalised upfront and all subsequent decisions need to revert back to the initial agreement, but acknowledged that this is not always possible in the new environment and that the issue needs to be escalated to a leadership level. I13 said:

> "What [we] should be doing is falling back on agreements, roles and responsibilities we had in place previously. Can we fall back on this? Yes, but practically maybe not. If it isn't addressed, it remains a frustration. These items have been raised to a senior level, which should be the route to getting things addressed, but it isn't" (Appendix B13).

Some interviewees (I5 and I10) feel there should have been better feedback from leadership, clients and between departments. I10 said: "There needs to be a feedback loop – from the greater organisation and the clients" (Appendix B10). I5 said a "feedback and an escalation process is the most important thing" (Appendix B5).

Finding 42: The fundamentals such as stakeholder mapping and bedding down roles and responsibilities are not yet finalised

Finding 43: There is no adequate feedback loop to be sure that employee concerns are being addressed, and what actions to take in delivering their tasks because they do not always receive feedback

RQ 3: **Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**

RSQ 3.1: Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?

IQ 3.1.1: Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?

According to I11, communication can be a "key influencer in changing people's behaviour" (Appendix B11), but I9 said there are still communication "gaps" (Appendix B9).

Most participants agree that that the business does not understand the purpose or value of the communication function. I4 said: "People don't always understand the scope of what communications does" (Appendix B4). I12 said: "They don't see it as a value add in this business, or industry. [It is] intellectual snobbery. What can you possibly add?" (Appendix B12). I14 said: "People see it as purely marketing communications" (Appendix B14).

I16 challenged the perception that there is only a marketing communication function, and said that "marketing and communication are two different functions" (Appendix B16). Many participants (I3, I4, I5, I7 and I9) feel that aside from being a technical function, communications should also be a strategic function, as they all answered "both" (Appendix B3, Appendix B4, Appendix B5, Appendix B7, Appendix B9). Other participants (I12, I14, I15, I16 and I17) agree that communication should be a strategic function. When posed with the question, I12 said that "it should be seen as a strategic function that talks to business areas and strategies" (Appendix B12), I14 said "definitely" (Appendix B14), I15 said "yes" (Appendix 15), I16 said "yes, there should be someone at Exco level (Appendix B16), and I17 said there should be "a strategy and communications function at an Exco" (Appendix B17).

Finding 44: The role of the communication function is not well understood, despite being a key influencer of behaviour

Finding 45: The role of communication is not perceived by management as a strategic and technical function

IQ 3.1.2: Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?

In general, interviewees indicated that management does not place enough importance on the communication function and role. I6 said: "What I found is that people at appropriate levels don't communicate enough and they don't share data" (Appendix B6). I7 stated that while management know they need to place enough focus on communication, they do not "consider it as an important part of doing things" (Appendix B7). I16 agrees that not enough importance is placed on the communication function and described communication within the company as simply "a little picture within the bigger marketing picture. We have never historically had a strong communication structure, so no" (Appendix B16). I4 feels this can be attributed to the fact that management does not "know the process and …the different elements and how each works" (Appendix B4).

Effective communication cannot occur when a lack of importance is assigned to the communication function and role. It also leaves role players frustrated. I1 explained this frustration, saying:

> "There is an inner club and an outer club and it's rare for communications or marketing to be in the inner circle. So the information that does get passed on is not holistic, and then the same people who didn't want to keep marketing and communications informed are the people who complain that the message is not correct when it is communicated. It is quite a way down the process before marketing gets involved, and it's usually tacked on down at the end and when they then need to start communicating. At short notice, with crisis management, people can't get the full picture view of what the big picture transformation is" (Appendix B1).

Finding 46: Management does not place enough emphasis on the importance of communication

4.4 Summary of findings

Table 4.10 below summarises the findings derived from the data that have been collected and analysed.

Table 4.10: List of research findings

RQ 1: What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?
Finding 1: The lack of integration, consistency and synergy is the greatest challenge experienced by communication practitioners when companies merge
Finding 2: The lack of role clarity among communication practitioners is a barrier to effective communication when companies merge
Finding 3: The absence of a clear business strategy and access to the correct information; communication practitioners are not aware of what, how and to whom to communicate
Finding 4: A lack of a defined communication process during a merger entices the reversion back to previously accepted practices
Finding 5: There are many different processes and systems resulting in fragmented communication to stakeholders
Finding 6a: Communication process problems result in suboptimal deliverables, delays and stress **Finding 6b:** Suboptimal deliverables and delays tends to result in staff feeling pressured, stressed and demotivated.
Finding 7: People have different views of what the role of the communication department should be
Finding 8: Most participants see the value in a strategic communication function which oversees all types of communication and not simply those related to marketing
Finding 9: Communication to staff is needed, but is largely neglected before, during and after mergers in favour of communicating to intermediaries and clients
Finding 10: Communication processes are not put into place because process design is not a widely understood concept
Finding 11: Those experiencing a merger prefer to know the plan upfront
Finding 12: As the merger unfolded, no update sessions to deal with prominent issues and concerns were communicated
Finding 13: People going through mergers are more likely to identify an outcome than the solution leading to an outcome; hence the difficulty in developing mutually agreed communication processes
Finding 14: An overarching change management plan is not in place
Finding 15: When companies merge and several different processes emerge, communication process problems can arise
Finding 16: Further problems will arise when there is no strong and experienced leadership figure with the right level of authority to address the process issues
Finding 17: Inefficient processes prolong the period from start to completion of projects
Finding 18: Organically changing job descriptions and key performance areas of staff as they start adapting to the new environment may leave staff confused about their roles, who needs to sign work off, who needs to get involved and how to do certain tasks
Finding 19: There is no senior communications professional in place with the correct level of authority to take and implement strategy and process decisions
Finding 20: There is a widespread perception that communication strategy should be undertaken by the communication team rather than the marketing manager
RQ 2: How do communications processes need to be structured to be effective when companies merge?

Finding 21: There is a school of thought that says the role of communication process manager needs to be a standalone role and not one that is undertaken by a member of the communication team that is responsible for content

Finding 22: A clear business strategy and communication process is not in place to assist those involved in the communication process to overcome their challenges

Finding 23: Communication practitioners are not involved in projects early to determine how they can optimise technology to deliver requirements

Finding 24: There are skills and resources gaps within the business which, if plugged, could help to alleviate some of the challenges faced

Finding 25: People work in silos and there are not enough face-to-face interactions and training sessions to bridge the divides and work towards a joint vision and overcome communication process problems

Finding 26: Appropriate systems such as a CRM system and a job-tracking system are not in place and not enough emphasis is placed on the IT infrastructure as a core function that can help to overcome communication process problems

Finding 27: There is no specialist that focuses specifically on communication process design and management

Finding 28: The lack of testing and root cause analyses means that issues are not understood and identified so they may be addressed

Finding 29: Communication specialists do not yet have the required level of credibility within the business to be involved in projects early in the process, and may not have established strong relationships with the right stakeholders

Finding 30: There is no specialist team in place that can facilitate the change communication within the merging business

Finding 31: The proposition management team does not oversee the management of the propositions of all businesses from a strategic perspective although the need exists for them to so do

Finding 32: Adequate use of data specialists to retrieve the correct data was not made with the result that data overlaps or gaps were present in communication distribution lists

Finding 33: Currently client needs do not drive communication and business outputs, but can help to streamline communication and ensure it supports positive client outcomes

Finding 34: There is no dedicated person that manages stakeholder relationships, manages projects and chases sign offs in the marketing team

Finding 35: The lack of a communication process manager has been identified by the interviewees as a gap

Finding 36: Stakeholder groups have not been formalised and prioritised, and communication processes and sign off processes have not been finalised – all of which would assist in improving current communication processes

Finding 37: In order to provide the correct data to be used to facilitate smooth communication processes and campaigns, IT specialists need to be briefed adequately and given the right requirements

Finding 38: There are synergies within the business that are not being adequately utilised because there is not an overarching proposition management capability

Finding 39: Leadership do not play a sufficiently active role in prioritising communication and taking decisions

Finding 40: There are divisions between business units and the silo mentality poses additional challenges to improving communication processes and priorities

Finding 41: There are too many stakeholders and different goals to focus on instead of having a streamlined list of key stakeholders and priorities
Finding 42: The fundamentals such as stakeholder mapping and bedding down roles and responsibilities are not yet finalised
Finding 43: There is no adequate feedback loop to be sure that employee concerns are being addressed, and what actions to take in delivering their tasks because they do not always receive feedback
RQ 3: Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?
Finding 44: The role of the communication function is not well understood, despite being a key influencer of behaviour.
Finding 45: The role of communication is not perceived by management as a strategic and technical function.
Finding 46: Management does not place enough emphasis on the importance of communication.

4.5   Categories and themes

Findings arranged into categories

Morse (2008:727) describes categories as "a collection of similar data sorted into the same place, and this arrangement enables the researchers to identify and describe the characteristics of the category". As such, the findings are grouped into six main categories as indicated in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Findings arranged into categories

Finding	Category
3, 16, 37, 41, 43, 44, 46	Leadership support
1,23, 26, 36, 38	Integration, synergy and consistency
4, 5, 6, 10, 13, 15, 17	A defined communication process
2, 7, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25, 29 32, 30, 33, 35, 42, 45	Resources and defined roles
8, 11, 12, 14, 20, 22, 28	Clear strategy
9, 27, 31, 34, 39, 40	Clarified stakeholder priorities

Categories arranged into themes

Morse (2008:727) describes themes as "a meaningful essence" that runs through the data. Some categories have the same essence and are grouped accordingly (Table 4.12). While ALL themes ran through all categories, the categories listed in Column A lend themselves most prominently to the corresponding theme in Column B.

Table 4.12: Categories arranged into themes

Categories	Themes
Stakeholder priorities Leadership support Clear strategy	Business strategy limitations impact stakeholders
Integration, synergy and consistency	Impact of mergers on communication
Resources and defined roles	Communication roles and resources
A defined communication process	Business process difficulties

Unpacking the themes according to the research

Based on the interviews, the findings are contextualised within the themes in which they fit.

4.5.1   Business strategy limitations impact stakeholders

A clear business strategy is not in place to assist those involved in the communication process to overcome their challenges. According to some responses, the lack of a clear business strategy and access to information meant those in communication roles are not aware of *what*, *how* and *to whom* to communicate.

Business strategy decisions impact stakeholders—both internal and external—and as such, these decisions would need a level of consultation with stakeholders. Through the merger, according to the participants' feedback, the majority of issues had arisen because they were not made aware of most business strategy decisions. Those experiencing a merger prefer to know the plan upfront. There is no understanding of what tasks to undertake to support the business strategy because there is no understood formalised business strategy for the merging business units. With no understanding of the strategy and thus the tasks to undertake, and limited understanding on one's own role and the roles of others, and no defined business processes, not only is delivery impacted but so too is morale. Delivery is impacted not only because of lack of guidance of required tasks, but also lack of confidence of middle management to sign off tasks due to uncertainty of the greater strategy and required alignment across businesses. The research indicates that further problems arose because there is no strong and experienced leadership figure with the right level of authority to address the communication process issues.

According to the answers provided by the participants, communication processes are hindered because there is a lack of support from leadership and a lack of understanding and prioritisation of communication within the business. The

perception exists that leadership do not play a sufficiently active role in prioritising communication and taking decisions.

The findings indicate that the basics such as stakeholder mapping and formalising roles and responsibilities are not done upfront. Interviewees believe there are too many stakeholders and different goals to focus on instead of having a core list of key stakeholders and priorities.

This does not only refer to external stakeholders like clients, but also to staff. Interviewees felt that while communication to staff is needed, it has largely been neglected before, during and after mergers in favour of communicating to intermediaries and business partners. As the merger unfolded, few update sessions to deal with prominent issues and concerns were communicated. Most participants indicated the preferences for more engagement with leadership and each other than have been undertaken—as often as once per week. This helps to alleviate questions around deliverables that are expected despite the lack of direction, clarity, concise requirements, time, capacity and the high levels of personal pressure.

Although communication can offer integration support for business processes when it is used effectively, in this case it is not used effectively because it does not receive the attention required. It is largely felt that the role of communication has not been perceived by management as both a strategic and technical function, but that it should have been. Most participants also suggested a strategic communication function which oversees all types of communication and not simply those relating to marketing.

There is also no specialist team in place to facilitate the change communication within the merging business. A change management plan and a senior executive level communications practitioner are two elements from strategic level that achieved much prominence in participants' feedback.

Process design should be inextricably linked to business strategy and where the business strategy is unclear, process design is difficult. Therefore, a precursor to process design should be a clear business strategy or as the participants called it, a "clearly defined mapped journey".

4.5.2 Impact of mergers on communication

As a result of the merger, the greatest common factor affecting participants is the lack of integration, synergy and consistency.

According to the responses, there are divisions between business units and the silo mentality which pose additional challenges to improving communication processes and priorities. There are not enough face-to-face interactions and training sessions to bridge the divides to work towards a joint vision and overcome communication process problems. The challenge this presents is the diverging opinions and actions resulting from having no singular process, having too many target audiences and having different views of how stakeholders should be communicated to. As a result, there is no consistency in terms of how stakeholders are communicated to. With the added burden of no role clarity, no real business strategy and lack of confidence of middle management to make key decisions, lower management and implementers who are held responsible for their delivery, or lack thereof when client inflows are interrogated, end up improvising processes to reach the desired end. There are also synergies within the business that are not being adequately utilised because there is not an overarching capability to oversee and manage how the different businesses are positioned among clients. The result is fragmented communication to stakeholders, which is not necessarily in line with business objectives.

Where business leaders are not in agreement with each other, a degree of negotiation and bargaining occurs at strategic levels. Furthermore, the research indicates that some interviewees felt the lack of testing and root cause analyses meant that issues are not understood and identified so they could not be addressed. Among other reasons, pending outcomes of these discussions means no information is typically available to lower level staff. In the case of a merger, particularly where there is a high degree of complexity, the extent to which this occurs can result in an alarming lack of access to information.

The lack of access to information results in an inability of staff to undertake and complete their required tasks, but also affects their morale since there is no reassurance of a clear way forward. The morale challenges result from no clear direction and a feeling of being overwhelmed and unsupported—while still being held to account under extreme pressure to deliver. Personal feelings of despondency and failure are not unusual.

Against this backdrop, communication practitioners and others involved with the communication process have to deliver on their communication requirements among an even larger set of diverse audiences, some of whom may overlap across business entities. Without communication across entities, the possibility of fragmented communication is heightened because there is no mutual understanding across the business of who the stakeholders are who needs to be communicated to.

4.5.3 Communication roles and resources

Organically changing job descriptions and key performance areas of staff as they start adapting to the new environment may leave staff confused about their roles, who needs to sign work off, who needs to get involved and how to do certain tasks.

There is also a lack of role clarity within the newly merged entity at a broader scale. This includes not only lack of role clarity of participants' own roles, but also the lack of understanding the roles of others. Without understanding one's own role, there is the danger of inefficient and ineffective delivery, and without understanding others' roles, there is the danger of duplication and not leveraging others' knowledge and economies of scale. The lack of role clarity among communication practitioners is a barrier to effective communication when companies merge.

Fragmented communication has a negative impact on the business in that it affects clients' perceptions of the business, and raises concern internally of the lack of communication strategising undertaken. This leads to either communicating too often, too seldom, or incorrectly.

The challenge is that there is neither the direction nor the capacity for many participants in the process to re-evaluate communication strategies and systems when their time is filled with delivering the communication requirements of the various business units. Communication practitioners also felt they are not involved in projects early enough to determine how they can optimise technology to deliver requirements.

There are skills and resources gaps within the business which, if plugged, could help to alleviate some of the challenges faced.

There is no dedicated person that manages stakeholder relationships and projects, and chases sign offs in the marketing team. Some participants believe that the ideal addition to communication teams in this scenario would be the addition of process or project owners who would allow the specialists to focus on their areas of expertise. This process or project owner has also been referred to as a "communications account manager" by one of the participants. The role of this person would be to ensure alignment of the communication initiatives undertaken with both the business strategy across business units and with the resource capabilities within the communication teams. They would also ensure a greater sense of client centricity since communication efforts directed at specific target audiences are more probable.

There is also no specialist that focuses specifically on communication process design and management. The lack of a communication process manager has been identified by the interviewees as a gap. There is a school of thought that says the role of communication process manager needs to be a standalone role and not one that is undertaken by a member of the communication team that is responsible for content. Furthermore, appropriate systems such as a CRM system and a job-tracking system are not in place and not enough emphasis is placed on the IT infrastructure as a core function that can help to overcome communication process problems.

When focusing so heavily on high-level decisions, senior managers can be oblivious to the challenge of lack of resources or they may be unable to do anything about it due to their own time or financial constraints.

4.5.4   Communication process difficulties

It is clear from the research that when companies merge and several different processes for the same function emerge, process problems can arise. Communication processes are not put into place because process design is not a widely understood concept and because there is not understood business strategy and formalised structure. Without a sound understanding of a formalised business strategy, target audiences, intra-team communication and a proper business process, there can be significant process delays. Communication process problems result in suboptimal deliverables, unmet deadlines and stress. In short, inefficient processes prolong the period from start to completion of projects.

These process delays occur at different stages of the process, whether at the beginning where project requirements are unclear or at the end where sign off and delivery requirements are not met. This is further exacerbated by inconsistent data capabilities and incorrect implementation due to unclear requirements.

Participants are concerned that the new process is not defined or is ineffective, and that the continuation of old processes despite a new reality, can be detrimental to outcomes. Too many different processes and systems result in fragmented communication to stakeholders.

Different participants within the business followed very different processes when it came to their own delivery. In some cases, the process is not clearly defined. In other cases there are differences between processes—some significant and others minor. Participants acknowledge the introduction of several new processes due to the merger and have ascertained that an inefficient process prolongs the period from start

to completion of projects. A further challenge, not simply from a business strategy or communication perspective is the lack of clarity when it comes to business processes is the lack of role clarity—there is no process owner and participants in the process are not adequately defined. A lack of a defined communication process during a merger entices the reversion back to previously accepted practices.

This is a challenge where many processes need to be defined and manage, particularly where processes need to be tailored depending on the target audience of the communication.

4.6   Chapter summary

This chapter outlined key findings based on data collected from the 17 participants who answered a semi-structured face-to-face questionnaire.

Some key findings include:
i)   There is a lack of leadership support in terms of formalising a strategy and ensuring staff understand the way forward.
ii)   Lack of integration, consistency and synergy are the greatest challenges experienced by communication practitioners when companies merge.
iii)   Lack of role clarity and a defined communication process among communication practitioners is a barrier to effective communication when companies merge.
iv)   An overarching change management plan is required.
v)   No business analysts have been assigned within business units to guide efficiency**.**
vi)   A senior communications professional needs to be given the authority to take and implement strategy and process decisions.
vii)   There is no CRM system to help overcome communication problems faced during mergers.
viii) The business needs to adopt a client-centred approach to communicate in a way that aligns with clients' needs.
ix)   A specialist account owner is required to represent each business from a communication perspective.
x)   Business strategies and concrete service level agreements (SLAs) were not agreed upfront.
xi)   The role of communication—according to those involved in communications within the business—should be a strategic and technical function.

The four (4) themes developed are:

i) Business strategy limitations impacts stakeholders

ii) Impact of mergers on communication

iii) Communication roles and resources

iv) Communication process difficulties

A total of 44 findings were derived from the interviews. Of these findings, four themes were developed. In Chapter Five, the research questions, findings and themes are discussed in relation to existing literature.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION
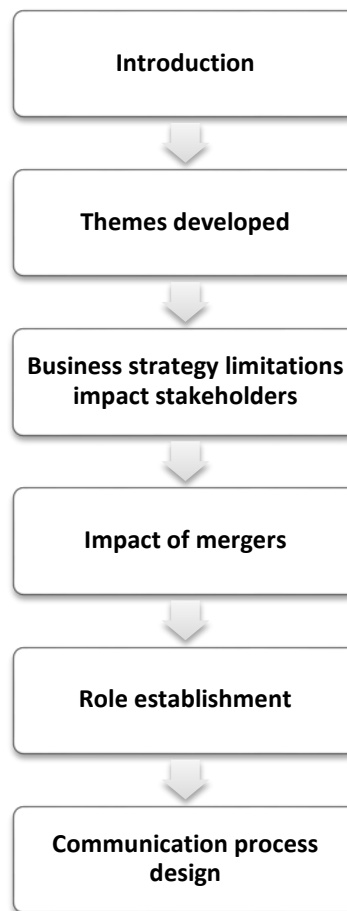
Figure 5.1: Structure of Chapter 5

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the highlights of the primary research undertaken as part of this study. This chapter aims to discuss the themes according to previous research undertaken by scholars and propose guidelines for a process to gain a competitive advantage.

5.1.1 Background to research problem

In merging and recently merged businesses, communication to stakeholders, internal and external, is important (Søderberg, 2013; Ge & Cao, 2014). However, merger-related disruption to business, and particularly communication processes, results in communication failure (Ge & Cao, 2014). Communication process inefficiency results in delays, duplications, incoherent flow of communication and greater margins for error (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2013). The impact of the merger on staff and clients increases the danger of the business losing clients and investors, having lower staff

morale and productivity levels which leads to financial losses for the business (Chen & Krauskopf, 2013).

5.1.2 Research problem statement

Merger-related disruption to business, and particularly communication processes, results in communication failure, causing delays, duplications, incoherent flow of communication and greater margins for business error.

5.1.3 Research aim

The aim of the research is to explore and understand why communication fails during and after business mergers. The aim is further to explore an improved communication process design framework for communication practitioners in businesses that are undertaking mergers.

5.1.4 Research questions and sub-questions

RQ 1: What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?

RSQ 1.1: What process challenges do communication practitioners face when companies merge?

RSQ 1.2: What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?

RSQ 1.3: What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?

RQ 2: How do communications processes need to be structured to be effective when companies merge?

RSQ 2.1: How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?

RSQ 2.2: How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?

5.2 Themes developed

5.2.1 Business strategy limitations impact stakeholders

Among other things, in developing a strategy, management should understand the needs of different stakeholders in order to set the bounds of operation (Freeman & McVea, 2001). Participants identified that additional stakeholders add another dimension of complexity. Mergers can weaken or strengthen relationships with

stakeholders, depending on how the integration is managed (Kato & Schoenberg, 2013).

Kato and Schoenberg (2013) argue that stakeholder identification is critical to merger success. According to the authors, business performance may be measured through the examination of the relationship between a business and the stakeholders impacted, or who impacts, the merger.

Business processes, according to the participants, need to allow for the tailoring of communication initiatives to the information needs of all new stakeholders. Many researchers have focused on the impact of mergers and acquisitions on internal stakeholders but very few on the impact on, and response of, customers to mergers (Kato & Schoenberg, 2013). The data and IT aspect of managing the new stakeholders is also important to consider. For instance, in some cases, it makes sense to integrate legacy systems to holistically cater to all audiences, and in other cases it makes sense to retain legacy systems. A financial services organisation such as this one may have existing CRM systems that are tied to markets and customers who could represent a fair chunk of the merger's value (Sarrazin & West, 2011), although temporarily until the longer-term, comprehensive integration plan can be rolled out.

5.2.2 Impact of mergers to communication

The lack of integration, understanding or prioritising communication, access to information, fragmented communication, and project implementation delays are some of the sub-themes identified in this research.

Findings 1, 23, 26, 36 and 38 all refer to the impact of the lack of integration, synergy and consistency on mergers, as experienced by the respondents, which is common in merging businesses and can impact the business negatively. This is corroborated by Mitleton-Kelly (2006). According to research undertaken by Mitleton-Kelly (2006), synergies expected from mergers and acquisitions fail to materialise 70% to 80% of the time and 65% resulted in negative shareholder value. Furthermore, initiatives launched during mergers or acquisitions are delayed by unmade decisions accumulating with no one to make them, and in mergers and acquisitions, clients and staff are forgotten. The lack of integration was found to be the common theme to which these failures may be attributed (Mitleton-Kelly, 2006).

Schweiger and Very (2003) find that different strategies result in different sets of potential synergies with different integration challenges. Failure to manage these

challenges makes it more difficult to achieve needed cash flow targets and create value for clients. Sometimes businesses are not ready for the challenge of integration and do not have the skills, functions and processes required (Schroeder, 2012).

Sinha and Sanchari (2014) attribute failure to not planning properly, focusing on too much and not understanding or considering post-merger integration problems and synergies. Sinha and Sanchari (2014) also cite the lack of communication as a major 'culprit' in mergers, impacting both staff and clients. They further report that only one third of merging businesses adequately communicate information to mid-to-lower levels of the organisation, thus negatively impacting staff morale and anxiety levels. In some cases, deliberate withholding of information by senior executives who are involved in the merger process is possible. This leads to confusion, uncertainty, loss of trust and loyalty with the employees (Sinha & Sanchari, 2014:41).

An added difficulty is that communication specialists may also not be familiar with techniques such as Business Process Design (BPD) or the strategy of the business (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2013). Managers and communication specialists may also not be able to focus on developing processes to deal with the newly merged entity, due to added workloads mergers can bring about (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2013).

5.2.3   Communication roles and resources

Not understanding the roles, the extreme personal pressure, the lack of resources and role clarity are identified as key factors relating to role establishment. Some interviewees, for example, said that "when we got together there wasn't a lot of clarity of who was responsible for what" (I5, Appendix B5) and "we don't know where the skills are and to what extent" (I14, Appendix B14).

This is in support of Schuler and Jackson (2001) who found that while some merger and acquisition failure can be explained by financial and market factors, a significant proportion results from neglected HR issues. Their research further alludes to the fact that culture differences, role gaps or incompatibility and people leaving the business are cited as some of the most common reasons for failure.

According to Schuler and Jackson (2001), people issues in the integration phase include retention of key talent, communications and integration of corporate cultures. Interestingly, this implies an HR-related communication component, which is different to a marketing communication role. In most cases the communication function is a subset of marketing, and the function of marketing communication does not always

allow an overarching view of communication in its various forms, such as internal and organisational communication, across the entire business.

Finding 42 in this case study stated indicates that the fundamentals such as stakeholder mapping and bedding down roles and responsibilities are not yet finalised—creating challenges for those involved. This is corroborated by Rana (2013). The lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities in terms of both strategy and implementation can make simple tasks difficult (Rana, 2013). Businesses should ensure the levels of knowledge and skills required for optimal business process management is sufficient and that leaders, staff and teams are fulfilling their respective roles (Rosemann & vom Brocke, 2015). Thus, when undertaking a re-engineering process, the focus is not only on the structure of the events and functions, but assigning organisational units to various functions (Scheer & Nüttgens, 2000). This is referred to as process organisation, a way for businesses to break through silos, which hinder information flow and lead to isolated systems development (Trkman, 2010).

5.2.4 Communication process design

Several participants indicated the importance of an alignment between process design and strategy. This is corroborated by researchers such as Trkman (2010) who states that business process management should be aligned to business strategy in order for the business to achieve sustainable performance and success, and that incorporating business process management into the business strategy is important to driving success.

With respect to existing processes, participants in their interviews indicated differences in their communication processes, and the high-level finding emerged that when companies merge, several different processes may be in use. In other words, the functions, events and connectors for the different businesses tell different stories, with different results.

Thus in this merging business, different variants of business processes exist. Research undertaken by Gottschalk et al. (2008) and la Rosa et al. (2010) refers to this problem and the importance of convergence. Where multiple variants of business processes exist, convergence can help to create synergies and eliminate redundancy resulting from duplicate departments or operations (Gottschalk et al., 2008; La Rosa et al., 2010).

In creating this convergence, a consolidated process can be mapped—using one of many different notations. An event driven process chain notation uses three node types, as explained by la Rosa et al. (2010):

i) *Functions* which represent tasks.

ii) *Events* which represent pre- or post-conditions.

iii) *Connectors* which control the flow: AND, XOR and OR.

This study provides an example of a comprehensive event-driven process chain and suggests that all communication initiatives align with the corporate strategy.

5.3   Summary

In this chapter the themes were discussed in the context of previous research undertaken by scholars. The themes are: i) Business strategy limitations impacts stakeholders; ii) Impact of mergers on communication; iii) Communication roles and resources; and iv) Communication process design.

In the next chapter recommendations are made based on the findings of the research undertaken.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
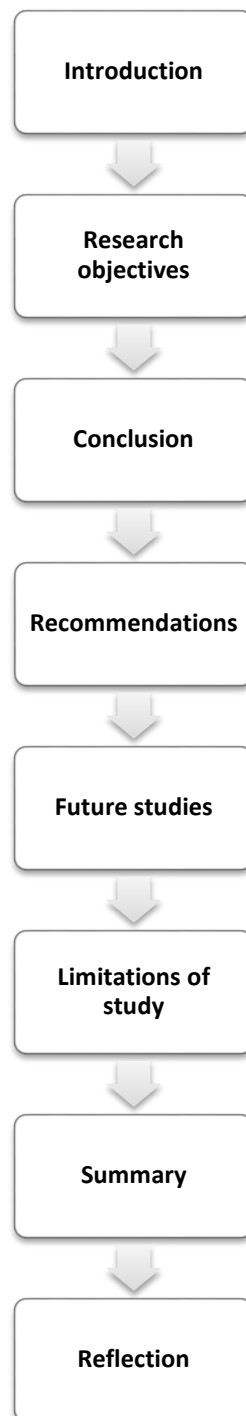
Figure 6.1: Structure of Chapter 6

6.1 Introduction

For many different reasons, businesses merge. When they do, it requires a new set of plans, strategies and skills to allow for a seamless consolidation and integration. During the merger communication is essential with clients, staff and other stakeholders. For communication to be effective, communication consultants need to

be afforded the information, the authority, the resources and efficient processes required to ensure that during this critical time, stakeholders are on the receiving end of informative, reassuring, non-intrusive and well-planned communications. Typically, in the case of mergers, this is not a simple task, because there is a great likelihood that communication practitioners have been affected by impact of the merger in the sense that they too have the challenge of duplications of roles, processes, a lack of access to information and the level of authority required to implement any constructive change. Without proper communication, the success of the business is at stake. Communication and integration challenges have been cited as two prominent factors leading to merger failure and staff morale issues.

In this study, a comprehensive literature review and primary research had been undertaken to understand the factors that impact communication processes, the characteristics of an effective communication process and factors that lead to communication process failure during mergers. This chapter aims to suggest recommendations based on the findings of the research undertaken.

6.2   Research aim and objectives

The aims of the research are to explore and understand why communication fails during and after business mergers. A further aim is to explore the merits of an integrated communication process design framework for communication practitioners in businesses that are undertaking mergers.

The objectives of the research are:

i)   To determine what factors impact communication processes when businesses merge

By understanding the factors that impact communication processes, it is possible to understand the 'as is' situation to determine what difficulties are experienced by participants in the process. These factors were found to be the convergence of different processes, the lack of knowledge or authority around business process management or development, reversion to past processes, job insecurity, uncertainty and lack of access to information.

By understanding these difficulties, it is possible to evaluate which of these factors, if any, are likely to lead to communication failure or lowered staff morale and turnover. Without an understanding of these factors, managers and business process analysts are likely to be unaware of what factors are hindering effective delivery.

ii) To ascertain a structure in which communication is effective when businesses merge

Communication failure is a prominent factor in the failure of mergers, and a cause of compromised perceptions among clients and other stakeholders. On the other hand, successful communication can lead to positive perceptions, be a persuasive marketing tool, a reassuring HR tool and an influential corporate business tool. Thus, where there is a danger of communication, there is a risk to the business. By establishing an optimal structure in which communication is effective when businesses merge, the risk of communication failure is reduced. An optimal structure requires an alignment between communication processes and strategic imperatives. It is a simple, repeatable—and where required, automated—process that starts with a full briefing and ends with sign off and distribution of communication material.

iii) To establish what factors lead to communication failure within merging businesses

The primary factor leading to communication failure within business is the lack of prioritisation of communication and communication processes within the business. Just as it is important to ascertain the general factors that impact communication processes when businesses merge, it is important to understand which of those factors are likely to lead to degeneration and eventual failure of communication during mergers. Understanding these factors provides not only a basis from which improved communication processes can be developed, but also a reference point against which to check revised processes to ensure the same factors are not likely to be present.

6.3 Answering the research questions

To answer the problem statement that merger-related disruption to business, and particularly communication processes, results in communication failure, causing delays, duplications, incoherent flow of communication and greater margins for business error, three main questions were asked:

RQ 1: What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?

The factors found to affect communication processes when companies merge are as follows: The convergence of several different processes when businesses merge is the primary challenge, particularly when communication practitioners do not possess the knowledge or authority required to retain the necessary portions of the various processes and discard those which are superfluous or redundant. Where no further

progress is made to re-evaluate and agree on new processes, the different businesses revert back to previously accepted processes, leading to fragmented communication and the absence of mutual goals and a team spirit. Furthermore, due to job insecurity and uncertainty, there is a measure of information hoarding. Lack of access to information can be hugely detrimental to communication initiatives because those who are responsible for communication are not afforded access to the information they require to do justice to the communication they need to deliver.

RQ 2: How do communications processes need to be structured to be effective when companies merge?

Communication processes need to be aligned to strategic imperatives and should be the consolidation of the most optimal elements of each of the merging entities' communications processes—provided it supports the requirements of the new consolidated entity. It needs to be a simple, repeatable process that allows for conceptualisation and briefing at the outset, and sign off processes to ensure compliance at the tail end. Where possible, aspects of the process need to be automated, with the support and expertise of information technology specialists and business analysts who should ideally form part of the entire process mapping project.

RQ 3: Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?

Many factors impact communication processes when companies merge, but only certain of them are prominent enough to cause them to fail. The overarching factor that inevitably leads to communication process failure is lack of prioritisation of effective communication process design in business. In addition, by neglecting to acknowledge communication as a strategic and tactical tool that has the potential to provide invaluable support to a change as critical as an organisational merger companies risk endangering their relationships with all their stakeholders.

6.4   Recommendations

Communication process design may focus on various potential focus areas. These can dependent on the prevailing stage of the merger, whether pre-merger, during the integration or after the merger. The following guideline may assist managers and communication practitioners with effective communication process design efforts. Other facets of the merger exist, including financial and operational considerations, but the below guidelines focus specifically on the communication and process aspects thereof:

6.4.1 Top level management guidelines: a business level

i)   Identify and formalise the purpose of the merged organisation, and its primary objectives.

ii) Identify key individuals to consult with in terms of stakeholder communications. Ideally, these would be several focused teams each with a project (or account) manager, a communication specialist and a business analyst. From the start, their role is to ensure clients and staff receive the information required, in the format and medium most suitable, at the times and in the tonality most appropriate.

iii) For communication specialists to be able to articulate the correct message at the correct times, they need to be involved at a senior level at all stages of the merger process. They need to be encouraged to work with other senior members to identify the key stakeholders involved in the process who need to be communicated to.

iv) The objectives, key messages and most appropriate format for communication need to be determined. This may require a significant investment of time of even the most senior executives, who would need to share the vision of the organisation with all stakeholders as required. This may be as frequent as a weekly webinar or information sharing session. At these sessions, staff need to be taken along on the journey and understand what the benefits and implications are to them in their personal capacities.

v)   With input from the different merging entities, decision trees or other decision-making mechanisms need to be employed to determine the new brand architecture of the newly-merged organisation. Are all brands likely to continue to exist to clients and phased out over time? Are they immediately going to be renamed and fall under the new brand? Or are they going to retain some of their brands, and others change? A full analysis of this is required to develop a plan and phase out timeline. This is an essential resource for communication specialists who need to manage the expectations of clients, staff and other stakeholders who are affiliated in some way to any of the businesses.

vi) Account managers and communication specialists, based on the strategic and brand decisions undertaken, need to be given specific mandates to which they would deliver. This may be split in different ways. For example, each of the merging entities may be assigned their own communication

specialist, or it may split according to target audience (i.e. clients, staff or intermediaries). This may require additional resources for the interim. To deliver on these mandates, business managers should provide regular briefs and feedback in terms of future activities that may require communication.

vii) Business analysts need to work closely with communication specialists to ensure that processes are continuously tested and improved. Duplications need to be identified, skills need to be analysed and an optimal process and working team needs to be devised.

viii) Regular departmental meetings need to be held. The key is to map all activities being undertaken back to an organisational strategy. If it does not support the organisational strategy, it does not belong on the agenda.

ix) New mergers mean new staff and new responsibilities. Not everyone is familiar how they are able to work with other staff members, who they need to contact if they require a specific item. Initiatives need to be undertaken to allow staff to understand the business and their respective roles. These may include show-and-tell sessions, who's-who booklets and several other innovative information sharing tools.

x) Businesses should be aware of the fact that communication has the capability to act as a strategic tool to assist the business in raising its levels of efficiency and competitiveness.

xi) Buy-in needs to be acquired prior to the adoption of any communication processes to reduce the chances of lower morale levels.

xii) Business process analysts and designers should be appointed on a permanent or temporary basis to evaluate and design optimal processes and recommend how project managers, communication staff and information technology specialists can work together to develop sound processes.

xiii) Business process analysts and/or communication specialists should be afforded the required tools, technologies and software—which could be used not only to improve communication processes, but to develop optimal processes across the organisation.

xiv) If required, an outsourced consultant or organisation can offer technical expertise.

Communication processes need to be structured as follows to be effective:

i) Communication processes need to be aligned to clearly defined strategic imperatives of the organisation.

ii) Functions and events need to be clear, as do the roles of participants in each step of the process.

iii) The process needs to be mapped clearly on a suitable model, which is to have the right levels of buy in from members of the organisation.

iv) Each step in the process needs to be of value, and needs to fulfil a unique role. If there are duplications or inefficiencies in the process, business analysts need to re-evaluate and ascertain how to go about streamlining the process.

v) In addition to guiding implementation, the process should also allow for interrogation of information and adequate conceptualisation of communication deliveries, which may not always be possible.

vi) The process needs to allow for different kinds of timelines, whether quick turnaround times are required or whether there is very long lead time.

vii) It also needs to allow for the correct sign off procedures to be undertaken.

The following events-driven processes are recommended:

The first simple diagram (Figure 6.2) lists a high-level process of the overarching process to follow very soon after the merge. The second diagram (Figure 6.3) is a detailed event-driven process to help communication practitioners from the various entities to follow the same process. The structure of the two event-driven processes (Figure 6.2 and Figure 6.3) aim to address the risks brought about by the themes and categories identified in Chapter 5. The themes indicate that business strategy limitations impact stakeholders, that mergers impact communication because of lack of integration, that roles and resources have to be defined and that lack of business processes can lead to communication difficulties. By including business strategy as a priority in the broad communication process, it ensures that all communication is aligned to the goals of the business – and hence all role players are working towards a common goal. If a strong brief with the defined details are agreed, there will be no misunderstanding in terms of the roles of various stakeholders and thus overlaps and integration risks can be mitigated. Mapping this in a business process ensures all stakeholders understand how the process works.

Figure 6.2: Recommended events-driven strategic communication process

The following figure describes the technical events driven day-to-day communication processes:

```
Communication          Set up briefing         Briefing           Develop brief for         Briefing
Plan elements     →     meeting with      →     meeting held   →   each item based    →      document
agreed                  managers                                  on discussion             developed
                                                                                                 │
                                                                                                 ▼
                                                                                           Send briefing
                                           ┌────────────────────────────────────────→     document to
                                           │                                     ┌──→      managers for
                                           │                                     │         approval
                                           │                                     │             ⊗
                                    Incorporate          Brief not          Brief
                                    feedback      ←      approved           approved
                                    provided                                    │
                                                                                ▼
  Write and            Team              Assign team        Job number      Load brief onto
  research copy   ←    assigned and  ←   to job        ←    generated   ←   system
                       briefed
      │
      ▼
  Wording copy    →    Edit        →     Copy edited   →    Send copy to
                       copy                                 managers for
                        ↑                                   approval
                        │                                      │
                        │                                      ▼
                        │                                      ⊗
                        │          Wording          Wording
                        └────      not              approved
                                   approved             │
                                                        ▼
  Sent wording to      Wording           Design            Document        Send
  designers for   →    received by   →   document     →    designed    →   document
  lay out              designers                                            for design
                                                                            approval
                                                                               │
                                                                               ▼
                                                                               ⊗
                                                              Design not       Design
                                                              approved         approved
```

Figure 6.3: Recommended events-driven technical communication process

6.5 Contribution of research and future research studies

During mergers, communication is critical. However, when the merger includes the consolidation of a number of businesses and their communication teams, understanding and describing what needs to be communicated, to whom, and why is critical. It is also important to have an understanding of what systems can assist in ensuring communication is streamlined and that all resources are leveraged effectively—while ensuring no unnecessary work is done or time is wasted. This research is aimed at assisting senior leaders within business and communication

practitioners to motivate the importance of creating processes to facilitate smart and smooth communication in their merging or changing businesses.

The objectives of the analysis and recommendations are to strengthen the body of knowledge available to communication specialists operating within the context of severe organisational change, helping them to understand not only how to undertake an exercise of this nature, but also the challenges, issues and questions likely to arise during its development. Thus these recommendations are also designed to be a specific aid to practitioners in the field of communication.

This study recommends a simple model which is understandable to communications professionals who are not fluent in communication process design.

Further research is recommended on a broader scale, where the unit of analysis is larger or based on a multiple case study research strategy. While the principles found to be true in this research are likely to remain intact, a broader or deeper level of insight may be attained by expanding the scope of the research. The potential exists to research in greater depth how technology and sophisticated business process modelling techniques can be used in business to improve the ability of senior managers and communication practitioners to develop their business processes in scenarios other than mergers—such as the development of new businesses and campaigns.

6.6   Limitation of study

The primary limitation was having used one financial services company based in Cape Town, South Africa, as the case study, although much of the secondary research corroborated the findings. As this is only one case study, no generalisation can be made although the results are collaborative with the findings of this research.

Some of the interviewees were not aware of the difference between process challenges and communication challenges. Others were reluctant to have their responses captured on an audio recording or were slightly censored in terms of the responses provided.

6.7   Summary

This research aimed to explore and understand why communication fails during and after business mergers. The aim was further to explore the advantages of an integrated communication process design framework for communication practitioners in businesses that are being merged.

A merging financial services institution is the case study. Seventeen participants were interviewed. The research found that where mergers fail, a large proportion of failure has to do with poor communication, lack of integration and lack of role clarity.

In addition to integration and synergy challenges, processes are affected largely by uncertainty about the roles and responsibilities of participants in the process. New stakeholders need to be satisfied given the broadened scope of the organisation when it is merged with other businesses. The functions, events and connectors in each business's pre-merger process have different forms or sequences relative to the other.

Communication is not always understood by every role player to have the same definition. To some it is as limited as the process of editing a document, while to others it is the overarching strategic role of providing valuable guidance to the upper echelons of the organisation.

There is also the added challenge of potentially not being equipped with the information required to undertake necessary tasks, or the lack of leadership support required to understand which tasks are in alignment with the strategy.

Furthermore, in the case of a business merger, it is not uncommon for the business to grapple with an unclear business strategy and proposition.

In newly-merged organisations, processes are generally not defined, or may be ineffective or not appropriately followed due to resistance. Without a more appropriate 'to-be' scenario, participants tend to revert back to old processes, which may result in further inefficiency.

In such an environment, planning and forethought is difficult due to the combination of an unclear strategy and an ineffective consolidated communication process.

Without leadership support, it becomes an added challenge to request the resources required—particularly from a human resources and capacity perspective, and in terms of ensuring data consistency across several data platforms which may not be aligned.

Deadlines are missed, projects are delayed, implementation may be done incorrectly due to unclear requirements and work may be below par due to time constraints and high-stress levels.

When these challenges are experienced, those at the receiving end of communication initiatives, such as clients, may perceive fragmented communication.

Furthermore, there is no clarity in terms of who needs to remedy the problem. Communication practitioners tend to be lower down the corporate ladder and tend to report to heads of marketing—who are not always familiar with communication processes. In addition, marketing communication tends to have an external focus, whereas communicating to staff is sometimes considered a subset of the human resources department.

Communication specialists could then tend to have somewhat of an identity crisis, particularly because communication failure, whether internal or external, is typically attributed to communication specialists, who according to the structure of the organisation may, according to their key performance areas, have a different focus area altogether. Particularly at the sensitive time of a merger, it is important to ensure that the communication processes are well thought through and seamless.

As an initial starting point, this document provides an example of a comprehensive event-driven process chain, makes the critical recommendation that all communication initiatives be mobilised by the process, aligns with the corporate strategy, and argues that without communication, there cannot be integration and without integration, merger success is much harder to achieve.

6.8   Reflection

The study was challenging given the sensitive nature of the project and the level of emotion it evoked in those involved. During my Master's degree, I lost two grandparents, moved house twice, got married, got promoted and changed jobs. Furthermore, the initial research had been done while I worked at the organisation, and the completion of the thesis had been done after I resigned from the organisation.

I learnt many lessons in the development of this thesis, particularly, the dedication required to turn a concept into a fully-fledged research project. One needs to approach a study of this nature with an open mind and no preconceived notions, because the answers are not always what one thinks they are. It helps to start early, work consistently, and tap into all the resources at hand. It helps to record interviews, ask the questions systematically as it helps with tabulation and analyses. Remembering and recording sources is critical, as is keeping an eye open all the time to gain new perspectives and gain new sources of insight. All in all, the most important lesson:

keeping the eye on the purpose of the research, and bearing it in mind with every sentence written.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research question 1: What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?

- **Research sub-question 1.1:** What process challenges do communication practitioners face when companies merge?
- **Research sub-question 1.2:** What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?
- **Research sub-question 1.3:** What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?

Research question 2: How do communications processes need to be structured to be effective when companies merge?

- **Research sub-question 2.1:** How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?
- **Research sub-question 2.2:** How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?

Research question 3: Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?

- **Research sub-question 3.1:** Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?

Tables 1 summarises the research problem, research questions and objectives of the questions as well as the methods applied to answer the research questions.

Table 1: Summary of research questions and research sub-questions

Research problem	Merger-related disruption to business, and particularly communication processes, results in communication failure, causing delays, duplications, incoherent flow of communication and greater margins for business error.	
Research Question 1 (RQ 1)	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
Research sub-questions (RSQs)	**Research method(s)**	**Objectives**
RSQ 1.1: What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?	Case study, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews	To examine how mergers impact communication processes
RSQ 1.2: What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?	Case study, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews	To determine the characteristics of an ideal process design

RSQ 1.3: What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?	Case study, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews	To evaluate the merits of existing processes to establish which parts of the current processes may be retained or discarded
Research Question 2 (RQ 2)	**How do communications processes need to be structured to be effective when companies merge?**	
Research sub-questions (RSQs)	**Research method(s)**	**Objectives**
RSQ 2.1: How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?	Case study, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews	To determine the applications available to communication practitioners experiencing business process issues during mergers
RSQ 2.2: How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?	Case study, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews	To investigate ways to derive and implement suitable and sustainable business processes for communication
Research question 3 (RQ 3)	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
Research sub-questions (RSQs)	**Research method(s)**	**Objectives**
RSQ 3.1: Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?	Case study, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews	To determine the relevance of establishing sound business processes

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW RESPONSES

APPENDIX B1: INTERVIEWEE 1

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 1
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	If the business doesn't know what the proposition is, how can the communications staff? People will meet deadlines, but that's not enough. Getting the right info to reflect pulling from multiple data warehouses is very difficult. It's IT time and IT resources. Making a physical change is hard, and it competes with the time for other business deliverables. Making small changes is difficult to accommodate because of the way systems are set up. We compete with other builds the companies need. If it's bringing in new business vs. communication, it will not be the number one priority.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	Usually in mergers, everyone keeps doing the same things, but they can't. On the client side, with different quarter end dates, clients get two annual reports. They get two statements, one month apart, different client newsletters and the client experience was bad. Now there is a fragmented view of what the clients get. Everyone is aware of the change, but frequently, many issues are not addressed, and sometimes for good reasons. It's easy to see if someone is a client of one product, or of another, but it's difficult to tell if someone has both. One of the challenges is to say we need a system to do that. You can't give a client the idea you're giving them a holistic view, and only report on one. It will be a big project. The clients are email clients, but other clients came over with postal preferences. It's difficult to give the same level of reporting for an actual print job, and now we have to do both.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 1
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	Either there is way too much information being sent out, or there is nothing.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	I think communications should own the way communication is implemented.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	Brokers, clients and staff
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	If you are going to merge two companies, there needs to be an upfront view at the concept phase of communications at the start.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	We have to launch a project team. Usually there is a forum and you get people into a room and this seems to work a bit better. Who is everyone, who should be involved? Do we have all the people in the room that we need. Invariably, project meetings last a while and it may not have anything to do with communication. If they're not well managed, people stop coming. They're not effective. You have to keep the detail out of it.
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	No process.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	No process.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 1
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	Systems are fundamentally different and have different computing languages and often, client numbers are not holistic to companies. For every product, you have a different client number, and can't know unless you match them in a data warehouse. People had done it haphazardly and there were challenges in managing relationships.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	The comms team.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	One process in place for all to sign off.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	We need to talk to each other, and find out what others do. You can't deduce much from an abstract email, but you can from a face-to-face session.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	The first step is to trust people, bring them on board earlier in the process, and then allow them to do what they need to do.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	Client needs should drive the outputs. Communications needs to ask why the business is proposing an aspect – is this the correct thing to employ to get maximum effect?

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 1
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	Getting people used to a formal sign off process. Gap analysis, shortfall identification.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	The business needs to talk outside of silos.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	They need to review their structural issues and they need to coordinate communication. Stakeholder mapping needs to happen because they get fixated on one market and forget about others. You need to plot a strategy for each level of the hierarchy and what will be done and on what dates this will be done.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	It is often being driven by hard business objectives and usually there are many drivers.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 1
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	There is an inner club and an outer club and it's rare for communications or marketing to be in the inner circle. So the information that does get passed on is not holistic, and then the same people who didn't want to keep marketing and communications informed are the people who complain that the message is not correct when it is communicated. It is quite a way down the process before marketing gets involved, and it's usually tacked on down at the end and when they then need to start communicating. At short notice, with crisis management, people can't get the full picture view of what the big picture transformation is.

APPENDIX B2: INTERVIEWEE 2

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 2
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	It's hugely expensive to communicate to clients.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	Sometimes it is just quicker to do things myself, instead of competing with all these businesses for the communication specialist's time.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	We're in different buildings; teams have been broken up, no fluidity. There is a greater rift, like my business is not being taken care of.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	The moment you engage – courting, with touch points, birthday message the communication team should be involved.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	Pension fund clients, high net worth, corporates.
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	Smaller team updates.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	Not sure.
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 2
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	Most of the communication would be pre-planned. The only times you hear from us are twice a year at the most, so we incorporate most of our communication for the year into those two communications. Once we decide the themes of this communication, we brief it into marketing: • We pull data from our base: email or print • Email client gets it in info slip: Automated Print clients: will get a copy and send it to mailing house to send to clients.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	We have an entire administration taking care of our communication with 300 000 members. We have a correspondence engine. It is not housed in one place. There are various other channels that communicate with our members. The process hasn't changed but difficult dealing with a business where so much is happening.
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	Just too many chiefs, so sign off is difficult. Too many people who want to give input. People are busy; the right people don't give feedback.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	No view shared, didn't know.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	Expectations need to be managed.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	Do things myself.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 2
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	I don't think the communication was bad.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	No view shared, didn't know.
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	No view shared, didn't know.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	Smaller team updates.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	No view shared, didn't know.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	From a business perspective, they should do change management communication.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 2
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	I think the head of the business is great. And I really feel that he tried. I don't hold the business responsible. I attended all the sessions.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 2

APPENDIX B3: INTERVIEWEE 3

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 3
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	No communication equals no integration; no integration equals no business. In the business we've missed a few things.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	We are taking a very long time to actually live outside of the past. Everybody is still wearing their old hats trying to do something new. 1. Not planning properly, and 2. Not communicating plans properly.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	There are some structural issues that impact communication. To a certain extent there was a plan, but it was never implemented properly. People feel like they're left out, people don't feel like they can contribute.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	How we are going to tell people things.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	All stakeholders.
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	A clearly defined mapped journey. As a business we know the end game. I may be wrong. You need to create the end game for staff. We create the right expectation, the right deliveries. If the end game is not understood by everyone, we're all working to different goals.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	It would have been a much better idea to bring all common teams together and talk about how we manage current and how we manage the past.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 3
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	We determine what the plan is and how it will roll out; then do it internally.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	We figure things out as we go along, so no real process.
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	If you have a fragmented approach, you can't do the next step if you haven't done the previous step. You couldn't do it much sooner because you're trying to build an entire product within a year, then you can build the migration in. We didn't have the luxury of time.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	It needs to be driven by someone who is passionate. We're trying to segment things into things that make sense. We're just chasing our tales. At the moment, no one is driving it.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	Not sure.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	Having one world, and servicing that world. Otherwise, we'll be all over with communication.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	In theory you should be able to work from wherever you are and you'll be able to function as teams. But we've discovered that doesn't work. There needs to be a serious reshuffle of resources generally within the business. We are trying to ask people to do one thing, without the resources to do things properly.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 3
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	It doesn't matter if you have good information. You need to become a team first. The theory is 100% correct that it can work. The theory can't take into its calculation the personalities.
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	We need to get together and agree what we want to communicate to whom, when and how? I would make marketing part of business development. With three or four marketing executives with central hub.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	If you had started the business with a clean slate, with different allocations to different roles, there would have been different outcomes.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	A decision as to what you want to be as a business.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	It's both.
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	No view shared, didn't know.

APPENDIX B4: INTERVIEWEE 4

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 4
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	There is no similarity in messages from across the entire business. People also don't see that we're a strategic part of their team to help them.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	We're not sure of all the processes yet, who needs to see it and who needs to approve it. The approval processes are not in place yet.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	When we do the copy, and it's ready, there is no one designated person to sign it off. People are too insecure within the new structure to sign off copy. It now affects my deliverables and you have to work in extra time for this.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	Not sure.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	Staff, clients and advisers.
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	I really don't know.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 4
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	. Don't know.
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	Same as it is now, but didn't use chase and used an external design agency or we did the lay out ourselves.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	We now have a system called chase which our traffic manager runs and logs all her job on there. We put in a brief, with all details about what the client wants, comms, design, printing, and format. Then I will get a job back and state the deadlines and these deadlines will incorporate time for design and everything else. I will start working on the copy, speak to an interviewee, complete the writing and then get them to sign it off. It is really important that we make it clear what the times lines are how long it takes to do what. It either goes to design, used as is, or the copy is published online.
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	People don't know the process and don't know the different elements and how it each works.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	Communication people.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	Include communication people in strategic meetings instead of informing us at the last minute.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 4
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	We should go on training or an induction to find out all about the different businesses. There is so much to learn, not only for communications but across all the different businesses and how they fit in together.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	It would have been nice if each area can get a ½ half hour slot to share what it is that we do. The same for the other business units and teams.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	There should be one person in each business chasing sign offs.
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	Not sure.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	Not sure.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	It would have been better if we sat together at the start, had more time to prepare ourselves.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 4
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	Both.
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	They don't know the process and don't know the different elements and how it each works.

APPENDIX B5: INTERVIEWEE 5

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 5
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	With the different businesses coming together, each business had they own way of doing things. When we got together there wasn't a lot of clarity of who was responsible for what. Communication was poor. It's a difficult thing when you have businesses that come together - things are not going to be clear from the start.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	Because we do our own communication, seems to be lack of clarity of who needs to be involved when various communications need to be sent out, who has sight of what we need to be communicating.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	We have various stakeholders and we have to give lengthy timelines to get everyone's feedback, but we still have to stretch the timelines. We have to communicate quickly, yet I've dealt with communication that has taken three or four months to complete. But it may not be their biggest priority. People also sometimes respond later than they were supposed to which causes delays. Also, sometimes the process I need to follow doesn't fit in with the process someone else needs to follow. For examples when we deal with trustees of our retirement funds, I would need to give them things to follow up that we would need to communicate or inform the market. Once I have the agreement of our legal people, our servicing people, then we send it to the trustees to give their approval. However, they have got their own process that will take a month or more to finalise, and then they come back with feedback. I have a meeting set up for next February to discuss something I have done. It clashes with my process of getting things done as soon as possible. You have your communication processes, and those elsewhere in the business.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	Much of the client communications needs to be done in marketing and what we communicate to the client.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 5
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	We would send the communication to the clients and/or the financial planner.
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	Engagement with other business and units. Ideally we have to be aligned and have simple, quick processes and the amount of work.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	An escalation process is the most important thing.
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	Not much has changed, except the frequency of communication. We've been doing more communication than usual. It is a new business, a new way of doing things. We have been very busy.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	Different stakeholders may come to us with different communications they want us to generate. Depending on the kind of communication, different stakeholders need to sign off. From the service centre we get a lot of feedback from clients. People don't always respond the way they should into the call centre. So I set up a meeting with the call centre to talk about how the things should be done better.

We get approached by product development.

We get all information.

We draft the comm and send to all stakeholders.

We get the technical input and content.

Once that is done, we'd send to marketing.

They need to send it to us for approval.

Communication is delivered. |

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 5
		If we had to do a communication for 6000 specific clients, we would go to the data specialist to mine data and get information so we can send emails directly to the clients. Product development gives us the brief to do the communication. Based on the clients' details we'll send the letters to the clients. We would send the communication to the clients and/or the financial planner.
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	We are not sure at what point to get marketing involved, as an end point. I don't think we've ever done an assessment of how necessary it is to have a marketing or communication person to view our deliverables.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	We do planner communication, client communication, for example, FC migration. That is something that is initiated within our area. We would involve marketing in terms of refining the message, looking at content.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RQS2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	Rely on existing synergies.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	The best way to check if things work out it to test it.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	Have a proposition management team that overlooks all businesses.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 5
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	Because of the role we fulfil in our team, it's beyond communication. If I look at the current structures, that person would need to have the technical savvy of how the products work.
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	Ideally, we'd like to have a proposition management team that overlooks all businesses. There are potential synergies within the current business that are not being realised.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	A weekly communication to give people a heads up. We could have done a weekly or a bi-weekly progress update.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	As long as there was a communication medium to communicate, it would have been fine. They should have just highlighted the big points. There were many things that were not finalised. We had to wait a long time for clarity. Even things that were communicated was not finalised. We had a huge expectation and big worry when we thought about all the businesses. Whether it was poor oversight, or depended on other things being finalised, I'm not sure. Feedback and an escalation process is the most important thing.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	Both.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 5
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	I can't really confirm.

APPENDIX B6: INTERVIEWEE 6

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 6
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	Because it's a big business with seven business coming together everyone has a different view of how they want to communicate with clients and there needs to be someone who then takes control of that and to me it's one of the upper guys and they need to say, this is how we're doing it and it's a matter of engaging with those guys, coming up with a solution and at some stage we say, this is how we communicate. If you don't like it, well maybe it's not going to work for you. No-one is willing to make that call.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	At our business there is no-one that actually understands how the data fits in end to end to build up into the proposition, so from a finance perspective, they're chasing their tails. They have no idea where the data is, what it means and how to measure the stuff. Each person does stuff manually and it takes them days to do things. If you look at some of our guys, they just spend their days working on Excel spreadsheets working on finding data.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	On the Regulation 28 stuff, it was a disaster because there wasn't someone who tool ownership of that requirement end-to-end.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	Communication – lending support to the process, educating people about things or using the data to develop good communication.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	End clients Tied agent force PFA

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 6
		BD
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	Communication is the simplest thing ever. It's really straightforward and we battle with it. There is a lot of assumptions that are made, and potentially, people are going down the wrong path, and things are not being supported correctly so to me it's as simple as: if you have an Exco session, its formal forum, but the people at the next level down need to talk to each other. Simple catch up. How do we work together, what can we get from each other.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	More open communication. After the merger, you can't shrink back into your shell and ensure people understand.
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	No comment.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	No comment.
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	No comment.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	No comment.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 6
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	Everyone talks about building data warehouses, if you understand the minutia you can built to the top level. Companies tend to come with top down approach. They don't understand that those that understand the data best are the ones who capture it, instead of five levels up – and it needs to be a bottom-down approach. From a BA perspective – theoretical, consulting (can do spec and document requirements, facilitate sessions). But BA's that come out of the business.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	Business analysts need to sit in the business. Each business area needs someone who is technically responsible for their business area to make understanding the requirements easier (although this may be difficult to do because people have operational deliverables). This specialist, within each business needs to be able to communicate to broader projects what needs to happen. Businesses need to partner with their specialists. IT is no longer the workhorses, and it needs to change. IT is integral to the business and people need to view it that way. The IT team needs a research team to be able to deliver on things. Blue sky thinking around data and big data. People are under resourced so all of that falls by the wayside. They don't think of that because the business doesn't understand it and the IT team doesn't know how to deliver.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	There are 7 different businesses, maybe lack of understanding. But is the easiest thing to solve. Retrieving data should be left to the specialists, to be efficient.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	We need to document business requirements to outline how the business want[s] things to work. What then happens is that it drops down a level to the guys that do the functional stuff which to me is the BA, so they understand how those things hang together and how they can connect the dots and they can start putting things together technically starting to pull the process together. But this person here is fully responsible for whatever it is. They understand why they made the decisions.
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 6
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	You need to be able to narrow the data; You need to decide which system to use; We need to know what we want to communicate and who, and give the IT the right specs – all requirements need to be analysed; Have to understand the business and how to get to the underlying data.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	Clear communication of end goal.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	Clear concise communication – specific needs to specific groups. Specific target people. With all those things still in play, it sits all over the show. All business does different things. It comes down to effective segmentation.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	That role should provide the mechanisms, content and channels.
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	What I found is that people at appropriate levels don't communicate enough and they don't share data.

APPENDIX B7: INTERVIEWEE 7

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 7
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	It's a lack of integration from an overall business perspective. And tied to that would be lack of consistency, mostly saying the same thing, but not selling the right story. Individually, there is a lack of people understanding and appreciating the value of communication. No forward to proactive thinking.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	In terms of process, tying to process, it is non-existent. Use what we currently have and optimise it so we can get the best value. This is something I am finding is missing.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	It causes frustration because things are not clear. You have to keep going back to make sure you – and they – really understand what it is that they want from you. It's just the instructions are not very clear. The business is in so much flux that they're not really sure what they want.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	There should be a dedicated communication department. It should not be a subset of the marketing department. For me, marketing in my opinion is there to look after marketing communications and there should be a communication function which has a strategic purpose. Communication has been shoved in a corner somewhere and now people are realising the important thereof.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	Staff – it would have been a conversation about what's going on. Similarly, with external stakeholders, there would have been a conversation – engage them early. There was not an understanding of how important the stakeholders are.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 7
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	There should have been a communication strategy. I mean in broad terms, with staff. Your platform for communication. Your media stuff. But it should have been driven strategically and with much effort from the project team. But there focus was on getting the proposition right.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	A repository for data. Where you have links between advisors and clients. For a business to be launched in 2013, and not though about a CRM system is short sighted. I was not involved in any part of the planning. There was a project approach to launching the business.
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	Prior to the merger I did the MIS, so I was relied on for information. It was not a formal process.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	We work with advisers, and all the business units merged have historically provided info to planners and previously sent info to al planners. So the idea is to see what is going out to everybody, who is sending it, branding, target audience, to streamline, so they get one message, and take into account communication preferences. Some people don't want emails; they want communication to direct them to a link. It's about processes. Once an adviser is on boarded, what do they receive from us? They receive a letter and an induction invitation. What does that process entail? How do they receive the invitation? When do they receive the invitation? What is the tone of the communication? So those are all the bits. Because we are dealing with planners in the full partner space, we want to give them that preferential feel of communication. We are saying this is exclusive. How does our communication say that?
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	No similarity; can't be compared.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	The function of the communication department would be to streamline, to make sure that everybody knows what is expected of them, create open environment for communication, they communicate strategy up and down. And they would be responsible for driving the processes and so forth. It shouldn't even be an opinion, it's a given.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 7
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	Not to be afraid of it. Many people are afraid of technology.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	A CRM system, which should have been one of the initial things taken care of. If you want a record of that you need a CRM. The CRM looks after the data from a relationship perspective. Who has done what, to whom, where, why and how? You get a global picture of interactions with the adviser. There is a contextual history. This will be available on your smartphone and tablet. If you want to talk about sales stats, what strategies they are writing most, you can access on their smartphones.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	Clear direction from the executive.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	Doing things from the client's perspective and not from our perspective – NOT what's easiest for us; what's cheaper for us.
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	Think your strategy through carefully. You can't make it fool proof, but the more you think about it, the less risk. The world and relations are changing. We need to follow. Many of the advisers we work with are old and technology averse. But many are not. I don't want hardcopies.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	Not sure – ask clients how they want to interact with you, I guess.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 7
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	Somehow the need for a CRM system should have popped up.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	Both.
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role	Not sure.

APPENDIX B8: INTERVIEWEE 8

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 8
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	People don't have the same understanding of what a communication strategy is.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	The biggest challenge we faced initially was to be put into a project team and put together a communication strategy for a business that hadn't even been merged yet.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	We had no issues.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	Can't say.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	Clients and advisers.
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	Don't know.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	Really not sure.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 8
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	Before the merger, our boss would brief me, and I'd brief marketing.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	We don't have a formal communication process; data collection – Excel document; client data comes from application form; we populate the CRM database and link it to the fund they are involved with; load client as a fund, and all members as contacts (institutional); when they sign the application form, they give us permission to communicate with them; when the client invests, we know what they invest into and subscribe them to receiving those fund fact sheets, our weekly communication and anything else that is relevant. We receive ad hoc emails from clients, randomly go into database to check what we have vs email signature. Say we need to communicate to all clients, we have mechanisms in CRM to pull lists, and that is how we come up with different contact lists.
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	I follow the same process.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	A lot of people think it's me for our business unit. But we are working with the marketing team. That in a sense works. Perhaps it's many people working together.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	For us, it's about constantly think about communicating what we do. We need to have a thinking cap on. An investment guy may have something he is working on as a potential communication to clients.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 8
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	We need to change our mind-set. We have the investment team, our team. We need to stop working as silos. That is the change I am starting to bring about now. Everything we do right now. As I know about work the team is pushing out now.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	If we have a communication forum and picking up what other people are doing, it will help.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	There needs to be a communication forum. There needs to be one representative from all different business units. I suppose the only way.
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	It helps to have an overarching contributor who oversees the messaging from different businesses. With every communication you learn. Have account executives. This person would see how things work in our portion of the business and brief marketing.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	A communication forum.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	A plan.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 8
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	For me it's difficult to say.
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	Not sure.

APPENDIX B9: INTERVIEWEE 9

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 9
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	The culture is very different. You became a number, difficult to establish your personal brand. We are still establishing ourselves as new fledgling company. Influencing this is the new culture. But learning within the business is hard. Access to information is difficult.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	The uncertainty of the current environment. Does everyone understand it? What does the future look like? The concern, the worry. It comes from the legacy of my comfort zone. I don't know and trust the current. How can I trust the future?
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	We make it work. We always have to sell what we do. We always have to fight for buy in.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	Communication should be integral in every aspect of business in dealing with external and internal stakeholders, internally and external. The value of communications speaks to credibility. It speaks to brand, position in market. So I see the role of communications as overarching.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	Business: Exco, functional areas and business plan. People: Support (benefits, remuneration, training, learning and development). External: Business units outside of this subsidiary. Service providers: Head-hunters, consultants, provide input in terms of industry standards.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 9
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	• I would understand what the change is • Scope the change • What do we need to communicate? • Develop a communications approach to each • Design a communication plan around this • Do a stakeholder analysis • Who they are? • Who can we discount?
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	A proper change management plan that overlays the entire process. From the above-the-line issues around actual tangible change. The tangible is the new buildings, the new people. But the underlying issues, staff retention, EVP, are all missing. If you have an overarching but interconnected change management process. What do we do to deliver this? What we want to do, what we have to do to get to that level. Once changes ARE identified, then implement communication strategy to support change management.
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	**You cannot have a change plan, without a communication plan. It either informs or supports the change plan. An idea needs to be communicated to stakeholders. At each stage there needs to be a level of engagement. You can't divorce communication from change.**
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	No formalised process before or after merger.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	No formalised process before or after merger.
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	No formalised process before or after merger.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	Communication strategy should be done by communication team.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 9
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	Understanding what the barriers are. What the blockers and derailers are and then taking them out of the way.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	By identifying the elephant in the room – doing a deep dive – root cause analysis. You get feedback from stakeholders. What would they like to see?
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	To have a dedicated department to focus on that – effectively change communication in the business. And this should be spearheaded by a project owner in the communication space. Analysis of the entire business. Where it is not effective and what do we have to do to improve this.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	There will always be a vetting component of all comms. You probably can have someone who is experienced or trained to review communication. It also depends on the communication to review. But there is a higher level comms skill required and look at strategically changing things.
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	We need Exco involvement from a clarity perspective around strategy and what we need our comms plan to look like. We need to test this with external stakeholders and within our planner community. We can do this through working groups, focus groups. Ask critical questions, what do you think of the brand, get their buy in through involving them.

The change that is being positioned. The change project, related to a specific project, the person responsible. The responsible area needs to define who that area impacts. Prioritise stakeholders. Informing other parts of the business who may potentially be impacted. I think someone like a communication function could provide input into stakeholder analysis. |
| IQ 2.2.2 | How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger? | One key stakeholder. Prioritise high priority stakeholders and make sure their needs are addresses, and contingency manage the rest. |

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 9
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	Formalised forums of communication like business updates.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	Both. Strategic level person to focus completely on it. This person should be closely aligned to CEO and Exco. From a technical functional support.
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	No.

APPENDIX B10: INTERVIEWEE 10

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 10
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	I think for me it is more difficult. I have to satisfy my own business in SA and the UK, and there are other parts of the business merging. So there is a three-prong challenge. The challenge is how to satisfy this business enough with a skin, how you satisfy the other business by putting on this skin. And how do you satisfy the other businesses to let them know we will be integrating.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	In the UK they have developed a system which is a front end, end to end process. Our funds are housed on the one platform. So does it make sense for us to be in a different platform – no one seems to be addressing that disconnect. They tell us we will be going onto their platform and someone is doing a project to integrate us onto a different platform. The manager in charge needs to have this conversation. His UK equivalent is six month ill. There is now a regular meeting. We need to communicate with the service centre. How do we formalise the communication to ensure all stakeholders are informed?
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	I go home every day feeling I haven't finished my work. I never feel like I've done a good job ever. It's not sustainable in the long term. In the short term, people may be willing to do it, but only if they see the plan.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	If we needed brochure ware, MarkComms does it for us.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 10
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	In UK: • UK legal • Compliance • Communications • Marketing Managers • Proposition manager In South Africa: • SA legal • Corporate legal • SA compliance • Offshore specialists • Proposition manager
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	Someone should have addressed the questions. Let's send out a comm – these are the common questions being asked. But they are covering their own backs to get promoted. But they pick on the easy things like parking and coffee machines. We are lucky that we park close by. They touch on easy stuff, not hard questions. We are no different. There are more similarities with people than our differences. We all want the same things. If you have identified someone who is not a good communicator. Get someone who is. I just want my questions answered. Real things.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	So what needs to happen – business analysts, head of IT, communication specialists, Business Development, and one representative of business, and talk about the systems we use, and how we collect databases and the systems we use.
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	**There so many systems and people responsible for distribution.**
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	Before, marketing used to sit in UK.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	There is no formal process in place.
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	The challenge is I now don't have proper processes in place. Don't have enough staff and I have been to the head of marketing and I was told no, so it's back with me. I have to inform three groups of organisation. There is work that needs to be done on the ground, but the processes need to get done. I can't work sixteen hour days.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 10
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	Communications.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	People asking common questions and get a few people together. When they start seeing the benefit of less people whispering in the corridors, your credibility starts going up. People are working hard. They need to be acknowledged.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	A communication process manager.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	Looking at business' individual needs. It's not just about the business saying what they want to say. Communication specialists need to be credible, by consistently showing the value they add to the business.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	I do think they need to separate communications out and put it on a separate footing. Communications develop the message and see what the business needs to communicate. The CEO knows what to communicate, but need a communications team to teach them how. From a processes perspective, look at processes within each capability and will sit and help [you] with communication processes: A communication process manager.
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 10
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	I would show them who all my stakeholders are in order of importance, sign off process, then rate [the] best form for each of those. Financial advisers. (SMS, web pop up, symposium) Clients (how do we speak to them: our business is very possessive of its clients).If we standardise. CEOs need to let go of database. But they will not. They will think of all sorts of reasons why it won't work. We can't give our database. It starts with trust.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	No answer.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	There needs to be a feedback loop – from the greater organisation and the clients.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	The key lies in the fact that they don't just call it marketing and communication. They are on the same level, whether reporting to marketing, or to operational. It is also strategic. There needs to be a mentoring process. If tough discussions are the way we do things. You as one who owns communications you need to say to the CEO, you are not communicating effectively.
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	Technical yes, strategic no.

APPENDIX B11: INTERVIEWEE 11

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 11
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	Compared to what we used to do nothing. I think the challenges come in respect of how my relationship with channels has changed. We come from a small boutique set up – one stop shop and managed everything. And channels are now expecting one person from wealth to do everything fulfil the same thing and I've found since the merger we have evolved I have become more of a planner communication expert, rather than holistic communication theme expert.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	The previous process allowed more time for each message to be considered and tested internally, and externally – refined and sent out. It was an organised process. In terms of ownership we owned everything. My sign off was quick. It is now more laborious. Because we are separate, it needs to go through many channels. Very much reactionary.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	Don't have time to test it with Investment specialists. We don't ensure content is robustly debated.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	Marketing to position branding messaging, how does it tie in to overall business? Touch Point, creating halo brand effect. There is a gap. It sits with pure client communication. This is missing.
No formalised process before or after merger	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 11
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	Clients and planners.
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	Understand what each business did and how to effectively organise and structure the business going forward.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	Plans and strategies to start using the same vernacular.
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	**Our current system has organically grown. It has never been documented.**
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	It varied.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	The initial concept comes from legal reasons, environmental, market feedback via planners, or a proactive thematic type of communication we'd like to see from planners' behaviour. We conceptualise. We test it with communication specialist. We them test it back into business for technical correctness. Then we test it – channel and servicing – we have our own service centre (two to three day lag in client services centre) has there been a newsletter, a pricing error. We also test it with channels and if anything in the message is ambiguous. Our two last sign offs are sign off and legal and compliance. We then go to design, and then put into layout and send it to market.
		It is sent to market electronically, via outlook. We do fit in with the greater organisation's my News.
		We have a database of people we need to send it to. We cover channel marketing, channel ops, servicing, legal trainers, RGM, then sent to my News, Investments Specialists send it to their adviser base. We have got great success. Our IS call on planners once or twice per week, and know their needs and practice. Push information works, but they're getting a lot of information, so we send it from individual mailboxes.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 11
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	We used an external design agency and now we use an internal one. I can talk short hand to internal agency, but external agencies may give newer fresher design ideas.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	You can't put it down to one person. Because of the many communications we do, we need to have buckets. And would hope the rest would follow.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	There will be fallout, but businesses need to decide what their strategy is.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	That comes back to strategic decisions about what we're doing with different businesses. Amalgamated within one CRM system and segment – then slowly, over time, bleeding them into the new business.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	The use of a CRM management system. Understanding that database. Segmenting it. That's basically what I would do.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	Start within. How to optimally structure communication within our business will involve tough conversations. Would look at who is doing what and which pockets of communication come from which areas.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 11
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	There is a gap. It sits with pure client communication. This is missing. Once there is that understanding internally. Roles and responsibilities have been sorted. Approach greater OM organisation, to articulate our structure and ask for accounts executives.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	HR and leaders need to have played a more active role.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	Not sure.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	I think communication can be an effective tool within an organisation and get buy in from the greater organisation. Change feelings and perceptions within the organisations.
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	Not sure.

APPENDIX B12: INTERVIEWEE 12

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 12
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	The people aspect – working in silos.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	Everyone doesn't work the same. Overcoming the people and the relationships.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	No, I am serious about meeting deliverables. I am going to get what I want.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	There is a content component on a strategic level, but for me, the main thing is having the clear processes, assigned roles and responsibilities need to buy in to process.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	Planners.
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	To be kept informed regularly with staff meetings. Small workshops as to how you would be affected.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	Once we got here, we were here. I don't remember any further information. We were told about the restructure, but that was all. We were not communicated to in any depth. There should have been.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 12
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	**No response.**
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	Marketing needs to ensure that they're happy with layout, whereas in the past it was my role.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	None.
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	It's the history, A new person, so you may not have worked out the system. Work ethic, coming in there is so many different processes. Finding common ground.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	With the current communication audit, there needs to be one person with the capacity to have this as a portfolio. It's as though we have different cowboys who does their own things. It's having someone who can own that who has the capacity. They still will not be able to give it the full attention it deserves with this expertise of seven different businesses. I would think the person needs to looks at processes, not content. There is a content component on a strategic level, but for me, the main thing is having the clear processes, assigned roles and responsibilities need to buy in to process.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	I try to ignore the noise and manage the relationship. I try to overcome the hurdles and build on the relationship.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	People have to take the time out to get to know what other areas are doing. Otherwise you won't know about what's happening in other areas. There needs to be an A to Z.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 12
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	I think it's just working on the relationships with the stakeholders. They will also look at you as a resource. They will consider you as an integral part of the process.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	I think in an ideal world you would have a piece of pie in everyone's world, attend all forums everywhere, People need to understand communication is not about grammar. People need to understand the value of communication – being involved from a brainstorming through to the end. Streamlining. I am more of a fan of knowing everything and not being a specialist. So that everyone knows what's going on. It helps you grow and widen your skills. People taking ownership and feeding back to communications team.
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	There is a content component on a strategic level, but for me, the main thing is having the clear processes, assigned roles and responsibilities, and getting buy-in to the process.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	Having ongoing discussions and check-ins.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	People need to take time out to have [a] strategy session and identify key players.
Q3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	It should be seen as a strategic function that talks to business areas and strategies.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 12
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	No. Communications team within marketing, then no, because we are not involved at that level. We are just part of the process.

APPENDIX B13: INTERVIEWEE 13

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 13
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	My frustration is not feeling decent leadership support. As a middle manager it is therefore difficult giving that support downwards.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	Thinkers don't have the time to think, so that marketing rep took long to find. That position didn't get filled, but the person who filled it had so many other things to get done. No one wants to fill a vacancy immediately. Operationally we needed to get briefs done.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	It's not sustainable in the long term. In the short term, people may be willing to do it, but only if they see the plan. The long hours, pressured environment and there is no clear plan of when it will stop.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	To design to change the app forms, to comms to change messaging.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	Clients.
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	Roles and responsibilities need to be clear and boundaries need to be recognised.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	No response.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 13
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	Something is asked of us, or as regulation changes, we have team meetings and these items are picked up, what are the implications of that. One of the representatives are marketing. What do we see the impact of that. Example, tax free savings account going live. What is the impact on our forms? On the basis of this, what do I see to be the case? And someone would think those things through.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	There is a communication that needs to go out, and instead of coordinating the work, we're actually doing the communication. The impact of that is that people are working outside of their strength are.
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	We have people who are not copywriters taking a stab at this, or legal reviews happening by people who are not lawyers. I am being asked to do something and i don't feel like I am being supported in the task that is being asked on me.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	The marketing person – he is doing as much as he can, but has other responsibilities. But taking a long time or not happening. Are roles clear? Yes, is it happening? No.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	Decent leadership support.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	We are using 'doing' people in wrong space. I don't want a monkey see money do. We need time and space to ask questions. The more we empower the doers, the more the thinkers are freed to do the thinking.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 13
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	Not sure.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	Not sure.
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	Not sure.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	As a recipient, you need to be made aware if anything changes. I am aware there is a demand on management. I am also aware, in a space where wheels are moving it is difficult to keep everyone up to date. We were told we will keep you in the loop. That leads to distrust in the message giver. We all want to trust management.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	What should be doing is falling back on agreements, roles and responsibilities we had in place previously. Can we fall back on this? Yes, but practically maybe not. If it isn't addressed, it remains a frustration. These items have been raised to a senior level, which should be the route to getting things addressed, but it isn't. I'm not sure.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	Not sure.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 13
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	No. When management take the time to communicate, they have had a couple of interaction where people have been very vulnerable and opened up, those have been few and far between. The fear that stops people from raising the items that come[s] up in corridor conversations. I don't see those conversations as being honest. Because of fear. I think we would love to all be drinking the correct cool aid, and saying the right things. It is not a work environment in which you can easily move. We end up with a number of people that are unhappy that are not prepared to talk about it. Deemed to be career limiting.

APPENDIX B14: INTERVIEWEE 14

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 14
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	We don't know where the skills are and to what extent. It always seems like there needs to be a go between. Marketing hasn't said who our dedicated person is.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	We don't have many process or admin people.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	Easy to set deadlines. Challenging for me to make it happening. I'm not the one writing, designing or supplying figures. Most challenging when I don't get the information when I need it.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	We can hand something over, but we need someone to take ownership.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	Private clients.
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	I would recommend a weekly meeting to update up about what we are working on and the progress. We get the impression, things have been forgotten. I am writing stuff. I write the extra bits. We want to use the opportunity to build the brand. We do forget about some of the things we should be working on.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	Marketing needed to draw up a plan.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 14
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	I don't know – I started after the merger.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	• I think about ideas throughout the week • I look through newspapers, other financial newspapers • Can take two to three hours to find information • I can train someone else to do this. If our team grows, our trader or portfolio manager can write it
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	People are having to do work they don't know – which affects quality.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	No response.
RQ 2:	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	There needs to be a person within the marketing team, and someone at our business to run with the tasks. Marketing needs to draw up the plan. That person within our business needs to run with things.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	A weekly meeting.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	It would be nice to know about other businesses. My fault in finding out about other businesses.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	Would be useful to have a dedicated person within Marketing to run with our things. Somebody with the skills and time.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 14
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	More frequent discussions and updates.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	Being bolder and making decisions. Most things, like communication couldn't happen effectively because decisions were not taken.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	Proper change management teams, with the appropriate input from communication specialists within the business.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	Definitely.
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	I don't think so.

APPENDIX B15: INTERVIEWEE 15

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 15
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	Easy to set deadlines. Challenging for me to make it happening. I'm not the one writing, designing or supplying figures. Most challenging when I don't get the information when I need it.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	Lack of planning, therefore no time. It's worse. There is more work. The old business is still with us, and they're keeping us busier.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	We have the same amount of designers, but more deliverables. Our designers have so little time to design. They don't have time to be creative.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	Ensure accurate and engaging information is sent to stakeholders.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	Everyone
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	To get everyone involved earlier, brainstorm spark ideas.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	Blitz fifteen minute session before each project.
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 15
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	Same as now.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	• We get brief • Writers write copy • Sign of on copy • Designers design • Sign off of design • Distribution
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	It's the same now, except at a much larger scale.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	Marketing Manager.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	I think it is important to have an AE, brief it in via Chase. The brief, the job would all sit under Chase. I need to insist that people do so.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	What would help is if everyone had chase to find out where a job is. To have the entire process in their minds.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	To get in more people and focus only key companies.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	We need account managers and proper briefs for all tasks.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 15
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	There are too many different processes.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	Marketing heads should have focussed on this to a greater extent right up front.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	Regular updates.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	Yes.
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	I think the Marketing Manager needs to make sure the exec is well informed. But I also think it is important for some of us to be with them to talk this through.

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APPENDIX B16: INTERVIEWEE 16

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 16
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	Access to information and too many messages.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	Sign off processes.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	Some info is not meant to go out, and you have people who are not communication specialists who want things to go out.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	I would push for a seat on Exco.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	All.
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	Before and during – it was enough.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	A manager needs to be put into place to explain the importance of communication. Would set up a meeting with OpsComm, would be written by the communications team. I would also employ more people.
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 16
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	No real process.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	We get information, write or edit and send-off to be signed off and designed.
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	With the new system, it takes too long – info becomes stale.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	Ideally a communications manager at an Exco level. It can't be a specialist or line manager, it can't be marketing either. It is two different functions. The bigger old business should tell us what they want. Our division should be centralised, then one person here who represents us centrally.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	Going to the person to ask what you need. I go directly to the right people.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	If the centre of our system is in the IT infrastructure.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	IT needs to build the online tools, calculators, and spotlight. They build all the tools. We distribute messages. We use the tools to create training manuals to show planners how to use the tools, would write about it.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	Communications need to be separated from staff and internal. You need to understand what you are sending out.
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 16
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	I would separate boutiques, no tag teaming. Communication specialists are the account managers.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	I would have suggested weekly updates.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	I would add resources.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	Yes, there should be someone at Exco level.
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	Communication is a little picture within the bigger marketing picture. We have never historically had a strong communication structure, so no.

APPENDIX B17: INTERVIEWEE 17

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 17
RQ 1	**What factors affect communication processes when companies merge?**	
RSQ 1.1	**What process challenges do the communication practitioners face when companies merge?**	
IQ 1.1.1	What are your barriers to successful communication in the business?	There were, but not anymore. It didn't affect my running.
IQ 1.1.2	What are the communication process challenges you currently face?	There was not a proper process in place, and if that had happened pre-name change but hindsight is a wonderful thing.
IQ 1.1.3	How do these communication process problems impact your ability to meet your deliverables?	No. My questions are how you brand. Maybe I am oversimplifying things.
IQ 1.1.4	What should the role of the communication department be?	Don't necessarily get involved with strategy. Implement what marketing manager and project manager decides. The communication specialists would implement.
RSQ 1.2	**What communication processes, internal and external, are required before and after a merger?**	
IQ 1.2.1	Who are the stakeholders of this business who need to be communicated to before and during the merger?	Who are the stakeholders you service at the moment? • The investment group • Two primary investment businesses within the group • The management company • The Multi-Manager
IQ 1.2.2	What communication processes should be put into place prior to a merger?	I would have kept things more quiet until I had an idea of what was going to happen.
IQ 1.2.3	What communication processes should be put into place after the merger?	Have to have a plan to know when and what is going to be said – so a whole lot of communication saying the right things in the right media. So it is all the same tone and message.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 17
RSQ 1.3	**What are the characteristics of the different communication processes?**	
IQ 1.3.1	What was your communication process before the merger?	Things were sporadic and no exact process.
IQ 1.3.2	What is your communication process after the merger?	There are different content management systems. The *invest* business has their own content management system. Hosted on different servers. We have a function were we distribute communication. We use outlook for some, V206 for others. We use different systems because they don't always sit on the same system.
IQ 1.3.3	What are the pros and cons of doing it differently?	The tools are similar.
IQ 1.3.4	Who is responsible for communication strategy and communication process engineering?	A strategy and communications function at an Exco level.
RQ 2	**How do communication processes need to be structured to be effective?**	
RSQ 2.1	**How can challenges faced by communication practitioners be overcome when businesses merge?**	
IQ 2.1.1	What can help you overcome the communication challenges you currently face?	Not sure.
IQ 2.1.2	What can help you overcome the communication process problems you currently face?	Not sure.
IQ 2.1.3	What can help you overcome the merger-related impact on communication processes as a lesson for the future?	As a client, the way we were communicating about the name change. We were communication with the different brands, Yes we got there. As a client, it seemed confusing. We should have agreed this upfront.
IQ 2.1.4	How does the communication function in the business need to be restructured or rethought to overcome these challenges?	All the communication feels like we just want to get something out there. Just be out there. Rather be out there with a quality message than over nothing.

CODE	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESULT 17
RSQ 2.2	**How can the most effective communication processes be established and maintained for internal and external stakeholders?**	
IQ 2.2.1	How can current communication processes be improved?	Not sure.
IQ 2.2.2	How can businesses improve communication processes faster after the merger?	Not sure.
IQ 2.2.3	What mechanisms or structures should have been put in place to ensure good communication before and during the merger?	Not sure.
RQ 3	**Why do communications processes fail when businesses merge?**	
RSQ 3.1	**Why do communication practitioners face challenges when businesses merge?**	
IQ 3.1.1	Should it be a strategic function in addition to being a technical function?	A strategy and communications function at an Exco.
IQ 3.1.2	Does management place enough importance on the communication function and role?	Management knows they need to place enough focus on communication, but doesn't consider it as an important part of doing things.