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Complex Communicative Challenges

Internal communication and the role of the managers at Volvo Information Technology

Final thesis in Media and Communication Studies
(Examensarbete i Medie- och kommunikationsvetenskap)

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Abstract

Title	Complex Communicative Challenges – Internal Communication and the role of the managers at Volvo Information Technology
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Aim	The aim of this study is to identify factors that might affect the managers' ability to communicate in order to explain why there is an overall impression that important information does not reach everyone intended at Volvo IT.
Method	Quantitative method, survey study based on a web survey.
Material	Results from 234 web surveys that were sent to all 398 managers at Volvo IT.
Main results	The main results of this study show that the majority of the respondents are well aware of their communicative responsibility and the important preconditions for effective communication. The results also show that managers need more knowledge and guidelines in order to achieve effective communication that will reach everyone intended.
Conclusions	The problems that Volvo IT faces with communication are common in complex and international corporations. Managers need better training in communication due to their educational backgrounds and the way they were recruited to the corporation. There is also a need to implement the communication policy in order for managers and employees to use it as a guide for their communicative responsibilities. With different measures and improvements managers at Volvo IT would have the preconditions that are needed for effective and successful communication

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Executive summary

The managers at Volvo IT are well aware of the communication process and their own communicative responsibility. Despite this there are still several factors that might affect the managers'ability to communicate important information. These factors, such as lack of concrete guidelines and feedback, gaps between the managerial levels and unfamiliarity with the communication policy, have been identified in a recent study from Göteborg University.

Previous research shows that managers spend most of their working hours communicating with other people which gives them a key position when it comes to an organisation's internal communication. This is the reason to why the students Maja Dizdar and Hanne Johansson from the University of Gothenburg chose to look at Volvo IT's managers' views of their own communicative responsibility and Volvo IT's internal communication.

- By trying to identify factors that might affect the managers'ability to communicate important information we wanted to be able to explain why Corporate Communications has an overall impression that important information does not reach everyone intended at Volvo IT, says Dizdar and Johansson.

The study points out that the problems that Volvo IT experiences with internal communication not are very surprising. Volvo IT is a knowledge intense company with educated and competent people even at the lowest level of the organisation which makes the organisation highly complex.

- The fact that Volvo IT is a complex organisation with for example no blue collar workers are aspects that often create a breeding ground for communicative difficulties, state Dizdar and Johansson.

In the study the students start out in theories and previous research that discuss internal communication from a leadership perspective. That has helped them get an overall view of the different factors that might affect the managers' communicative ability. Some of the factors that they mention, and also have studied, are kowledge about the communication policy, the use of information channels for different purposes and time and amount. These factors can affect the managers' communicative preconditions which might lead to the fact that important information does not reach everyone. It can also result in that the managers are not aware of, and for that reason do not use, the imortant preconditions for effective communication like dialogue, feedback and context.

- The results of the study are based on a web survey that was sent to all 398 managers at Volvo IT and they show that the managers at Volvo IT have good knowledge about the communication process and their own communicative responsibility. However we have been able to identify some factors that could be part of the explanaition to why important information does not reach everyone intended. The fact that the majority of the managers are not familiar with the communication policy could be seen as one factor. The results also show us that several managers lack concrete guidelines for their communicative responsibility. We can also see that some information channels, especially e-mail, are used more than many of the managers prefer.

The students also point out additional influential factors. The amount of information is one of those factors. Many of the lower managers think that they receive little information compared to the higher managers that think they receive much information. This indicates a gap between the managerial levels that can have an affect on the communication process. Also the packaging of messages seems to be a problem.

Another interesting aspect is that a majority of the managers are well aware of the importance of dialogue. However there is a much smaller percentage that actively ask for feedback from their subordinates. Since feedback is a precondition for dialogue this can be an influential factor. The study also point out that there are background variables as education, age and earlier experiences that can affect the managers' communicative ability.

- To sum up we can say that there are several aspects to take into consideration when trying to identify factors that can explain why there is a feeling that important information do not reach everyone intented. We see it as a puzzle. Different pieces of the puzzle are needed in order to create a whole puzzle and picture, which in this case is equvivalent to a well working internal communication built on effective communication

The students objective with this study has been to provide Corporate Communications with results that can give them a starting point in order to continue the work with the communicative challenges that most often exist in a complex company as Volvo IT.

- But no matter what use Volvo IT will have of this study we believe that it at least has made the managers attentive to their communicative responsibility, Dizdar and Johansson concludes.

1. Introduction

"Most managers spend most of their working hours communicating with other people."[1]

This quotation is a good example to why communication has always had a key role when it comes to leadership.[2] It is in fact the managers of an organisation that have the responsibility to reach the goals that have been defined. In order to achieve these goals and work towards them all employees need knowledge and a common understanding of the organisation's activities, strategies and visions. This means that it is the managers' role to communicate important information to the employees and make sure that the information the employees receive also eventually is implemented in the daily work.[3]

Today there seems to be an overall and good understanding of the importance of communication, it's effects and profitability. Also the managers' knowledge and awareness of the connection between communication and leadership, and their responsibility within this process, is constantly increasing. This is decisive since communication in organisations today both is more important and more difficult than it used to be.

The reason to why communication in organisations is both more important and difficult probably arise from several factors, one of them being the growing amount of information through modern techniques. There are also more knowledge intense organisations that face new and to some extent unknown challenges when it comes to communication. These challenges are also something that Volvo Information Technology (Volvo IT) as a large, global and complex organisation faces.

Volvo IT is part of the Volvo Group which has a tradition of being up front when it comes to modern leadership. When studying their internal documents and policies it becomes clear that they have understood the importance of well-functioning internal communication.

In spite of this, Corporate Communications at Volvo IT has an overall impression that important information "disappears" and never reaches the employees that need it. One need to be aware of that it is one thing to have communicative goals and visions in theory and that is it something else to actually implement these and use them in practise.

With this in mind we took on the assignment to try to identify factors that might affect the communication process and the managers' ability to communicate important information in order to explain why Corporate Communication has the above mentioned impression.

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[1] Simonsson (2002:249)
[2] Ibid.
[3] Heide etc. (2005:19)

2. Problem discussion

2.1 Organisational perspective

Volvo is recognized as a leading corporation when it comes to incorporating the right tools for modern leadership. Volvo IT as an organisation has a very high awareness of the importance of communication and the managers' communicative responsibilities. This becomes clear when reading their internal documents, especially the communication policy. However it is one thing to write something down in a document and another to actually apply it in every day work.

The fact that managers spend most of their working hours communicating with other people give them a key position when it comes to an organisation's internal communication.[4] For that reason it is vital that the managers within an organisation understand the importance of their communicative role.[5] But one can wonder if the managers are as aware of their important role when it comes to developing communication and make it more efficient.

Despite good results in internal surveys regarding communication within the organisation there is still a feeling of something missing. The communication management at Volvo IT feels that important information and corporate messages do not reach the employees that need it. This could indicate a problem somewhere in the communication process. Since the managers at Volvo IT play an important role when it comes to spreading important information to the employees the above mentioned facts are some of the reasons to why it is important to study the managers and their communicative roles and responsibilities. Particularly if there is an assumption that important information is not getting through.

Corporate Communications department at Volvo IT is interested in finding out what the problem is based on. Are there any differences in how managers at different levels feel about their roles? And if so what causes them? Another important thing to take into consideration is how information is spread today, and if there is room for improvement?

There are several aspects that make Volvo IT a unique organisation that also can have an impact on the communicative situation. At first sight one might not be surprised that Volvo IT experience problems with communication to their employees. More than 5000 employees plus 1900 external contractors, divided into both different geographical and organisational units, tend to complicate the communication process.

Seeing that we are a part of the era of globalization, companies like Volvo IT are expanding their business around the world. This also means that they have employees in different countries around the world. For that reason they are developing new ways to communicate and spread information that can be applied in different parts of the world. It is a fact that communication problems can arise when many diverse organisational cultures meet in the same organisation.

Another aspect of the situation is that there are no blue-collar workers at Volvo IT. In reality this means that all employees have access to a computer and both the intranet and internet where they can find relevant information about the company. Although they have an intranet, two different company newspapers, e-mail information and so on, it does not necessarily mean that it is enough. We live in a globalized world, where we on a daily basis receive large proportions of information from different directions. This trend is probably reflected in the organisational culture of many companies.

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[4] Simonsson (2002:13)
[5] Lönn (2005:3)

At Volvo IT there are three levels of management: executive management team, director team and first line manager team. In order to get an overall understanding of the importance of communication within large global organisations, our study will focus on the different levels of management. We also want to learn if there are any differences in prioritizations and preconditions at the different managerial levels. As we have mentioned Volvo IT is a unique organisation but despite that it is probable that the existing situation at Volvo IT not is unique for this company alone. For that reason this study might bring about interesting results with aspects that other companies could benefit from.

2.2 Academic perspective

Communication has become an important factor in modern organisations, mostly based on the research that has been conducted on organisations and communication. Good and effective communication is a necessary precondition for all employees. Through good communication employees receive the information that is vital in order to carry out their daily tasks. But to achieve good and effective communication there must be a strong and well developed internal communication with the role to keep all employees informed about changes, visions and goals.

Academic research that covers internal communication almost exclusively concentrates on how vital this part of communication is. This is a relatively new study subject and that is why it is of great importance to conduct empirical studies of the kind that this study represents.

Most of the research done on organisations and communication has been conducted by researchers with background in business economics and political science. This means that there is still a need for organisations to be studied from a communicative perspective with a focus on how people use communication and what effect that has on organisations.[6] Most of the studies that have been conducted on behalf of media and communication studies in Sweden have focused on media and its context.[7] Since there is a gap in the communication field of research we believe that our study will contribute to spread the importance of this field.

With this study we are interested to look closer at factors that earlier studies and research claim to be crucial for effective communication. By doing so we hope that our study will contribute with additional aspects in the area regarding the managers' role when it comes to the communication of information within an organisation. There are studies that have been carried out in the field of internal communication and the role of the managers. However this study is different to the extent that Volvo IT is a complex and modern multinational organisation. It is a very knowledge intense company with employees that to a great extent have higher education and extensive knowledge within this technical field. The fact that Volvo IT consists of white collar workers instead of blue collar workers means that the conditions and contexts for communication of information is somewhat different from previous studies. For above mentioned reasons we belive that this study will be an important contribution within this field of research.

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[6] Strid (1999:98)
[7] Simonsson (2002:15)

3. Aim and research questions

The aim of this study is to identify factors that might affect the managers' ability to communicate in order to explain why there is an overall impression that important information does not reach everyone intended at Volvo IT.

The indications of that important messages do not reach all employees at Volvo IT lead to a request from Corporation Communications at Volvo IT. This request underlies this study and is also the reason to why we were commissioned to this assignment. With important information we refer to the five types of information that the Volvo Group has identified as important information for the individual employee. (see section 4.2.1)

Different theories and previous research within the fields of leadership and communication serve as the starting point for this study in order to be able to find out what the experienced communication problems arise from.

In order to fulfill the aim of this study the following two comprehensive research questions need to be answered.

- **What are the manager's views of the internal communication and their own communicative responsibility?**

With this question we intend to find out, among other things, how the managers view their role as communicators. What are their views on the important preconditions for effective communication? Do the managers prioritise dialogue and actively ask for feedback? Do they think that it is their role as managers to interpret and put messages into a context? We also wonder if there are any differences between the three managerial levels regarding these questions. We are interested to find out if the managers at Volvo IT have an unanimous view of their role as communicators and if this view is in agreement with Volvo IT's view of the managers' communicative responsibility.

- **Are there any concrete factors that can affect or prevent the managers way of communicating?**

With this question we intend to find out the managers' views of organisational factors such as information channels, amount of information and time. We are also interested to know if they think that their communicative ability is affected by any of these? Are there any personal factors, such as sex, age and education, that might affect the managers way of communicating? Do the managers think they have concrete guidelines? Are they familiar with the communication policy that is supposed to provide them with guidelines for their communicative responsibility and to what extent do they integrate this in their daily work? Do the managers feel that the multicultural environment affect the way they communicate?

4. Volvo Information Technology

In order to both conduct a relevant and well founded study and to understand the results of this study we believe that it is important to have an overall understanding of Volvo IT and the Volvo Group as well as their point of views regarding communication, information and leadership.

4.1 Volvo IT – a global organisation

Volvo Information Technology AB (Volvo IT) is a comprehensive and global IT company. It is a wholly-owned subsidiary of AB Volvo and part of the Volvo Group. In 1967 the Volvo Group gathered its IT operations in a separate company and Volvo Data was established as a group-wide development division. This was at a time when computers were first being used in the industry. In 1998, the current global Volvo IT was created. Today Volvo IT provides IT solutions for the whole industrial process with customers that include the Volvo group, the Ford-owned Volvo Car Corporation and other global organisations like Nobel Biocare, SCA and Skandia.[8] They employ nearly 7000 co-workers and contractors worldwide.[9]

Volvo IT has a global matrix organisation in three dimensions; customer, solutions and geography. The line organisation (geography) has a global reporting structure for some parts but not for all. The ones that do have global reporting structure have a very complicated communicative starting point. This means in practise that the manager for one unit is seated in for example Greensboro while his or her staff are seated in Lyon. That staff receives information from both their manager in Greensboro and from their site manager. This is a problem that Volvo IT is aware of.[10]

4.1.1 Managerial levels at Volvo IT

The managers at Volvo IT are divided into three levels: Executive Management Team (EMT), General manager/director team and Manager/first line manager team. The CEO at Volvo IT works closely with the EMT. The EMT exists of one representative from each 11 units/regions at Volvo IT. Each EMT member then has its own management team of general managers and managers. The general managers often have the title directors but can be seen as managers for managers. All of these managerial levels have the responsibility "communication of information" defined in their role as managers. Within Volvo IT most of the formal communication is considered to be vertical.[11]

4.2 Internal communication at Volvo IT

4.2.1 The Volvo view of communication

Communication in general is viewed as a strategic instrument of great importance for their business. In order to realize their vision, reach their strategic and financial objectives and strengthen confidence in their brands effective communication is expressed as essential in the Volvo Group's communication policy. The fact that the company is operating in the global business environment makes it even more important.[12]

Communications in the Volvo Group – Policy and Guidelines is the name of the policy that presents principles that all companies within the Volvo Group must follow in their communications. This policy was adopted in April 2005 but a new communication policy will be

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[8] *Industrial IT by Volvo Information Technology* (2007:2f)
[9] Informant interview with Ing-Marie Flodell, Volvo IT (2008-04-09)
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] *Communications in the Volvo Group, Policy and Guidelines* (2005:3)

adopted at the Internal Communications Council in May 2008. However the communication policy does not stand alone in shaping the internal communication at Volvo IT. There are several other documents such as *The Volvo Way*, *The Volvo IT Fingerprints* and different guidelines that are reinforcing the guiding principles for communication.[13]

Dialogue is a keyword and is always preferable to one-way dissemination of information. They also seek to encourage both "horizontal" and "feedback" communications within the Volvo Group.[14] The guiding principle for internal communications in the Volvo Group is:

"Internal communications primarily aim at promoting common values and business understanding through an ongoing dialogue. Motivating employees to proactively participate in this dialogue, management should improve information utilisation and feedback to achieve common goals and objectives."[15]

Five types of information have been identified as important information for the individual employee's work motivation, business understanding and sense of security for the employee's role. This is the information that we refer to when talking about "important information".
- Information relating to individual needs.
- Information relating to jobs.
- Information relating to the company's situation.
- Information relating to objectives and values.
- Information relating to the world in which the company is operating.

A good balance between these types of information is considered to benefit the atmosphere in the company's different units. It is also emphasized that no medium is superior to personal communication which means that the leaders have a crucial communicative role.

4.2.2 The Volvo Way of communicative leadership
The communication policy emphasizes the fact that internal communications within Volvo aim at promoting common values and business understanding through an ongoing dialogue. This is defined as the managers' communicative responsibilities:

"It is the responsibility of each manager to provide context and motivate employees to participate in this dialogue. Leadership requires active communication – listening, motivating, explaining decisions, and asking for feedback."[16]

It is also often required that the managers cascade information. This is a process where the manager has to prioritise which messages to pass on, and how and when.[17] Since 2003 Volvo conducts an internal survey about the employees' satisfaction at work which is called the Volvo Group Attitude Survey (VGAS). A number of the questions from the VGAS focus on the managers' ability to communicate. The results from these questions are reviewed and presented as an index called the communicative leadership index, CLI. The CLI reflects managers' communicative leadership. Each manager gets personalized individual feedback reports and internal communicators support managers with training and assistance to enhance their communicative leadership.[18]

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[13] Informant interview with Ing-Marie Flodell (2008-04-09)
[14] *Communications in the Volvo Group, Policy and Guideline* (2005:3)
[15] Ibid. (2005:7)
[16] Ibid. (2005:3)
[17] Ibid. (2005:8)
[18] Presentation with results from VGAS and CLI from Corporate Communications (2007)

Volvo IT's managers have shown good results in these surveys but despite this the team in charge of internal communications have an overall feeling that important information do not reach everyone. This is the case despite that there are several courses in leadership designed for team leaders, for the new recruited managers and even for the more experienced managers. However communication is not a main priority on the agenda for these courses. It is seen as something that is a natural part of all aspects of leadership and for that reason it is incorporated in most parts of the courses.[19]

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[19] Volvo Group main leader training activities presentation (2007)

5. Theoretical framework

Our theoretical approach contributes to an overall view of the importance of communication and different aspects and factors that influence the internal communication process and the managers' communicative ability. The following theoretical framework will bring a relevant foundation in order for us to achieve the understanding required to analyze the results of this study.

5.1 The importance of communication in modern organisations

Communication is the basic of every organisation. Without a satisfying way of communicating, the other processes of an organisation such as decisionmaking, creating a culture, creating motivation and so forth would fail.[20]

"If communication activity stops, the organization disappears. If the communication activity becomes confuse, the organization begins to malfunction. These outcomes are unsurprising because the communication activity is the organization."[21]

In order for an organisation to be successful it needs to prioritise communication. The fact is that communication between employees and managers is essential for organisations' survival.[22] If communication is successful all members of an organisation will accept its goals and work towards them together.[23] It is the management's responsibility to emphasize that communication is an important factor and that the organisations will be more effective if communication is regarded important. Unfortunately this is not always the case.[24]

Communication can be defined as the essence of combining different activities, expressing feelings and thoughts.[25] A more simple explanation is that it is a process where people or groups send messages to each other and the content of these messages is information. Furthermore there is a code in every message that the receiver must decode.[26]

Organisations constitute of external and internal communication. In this theoretical framework we will for natural reasons only focus on internal communication. This since the main aspect of our study is to try to identify factors within Volvo IT that affect the internal communication process and the managers' communication. Investing in internal communication is a great development potential for organisations.[27] Many researchers even claim that effective internal communication is a factor for success. For that reason every organisation ought to focus on and invest in it.[28] By doing so, internal communication can open new development possibilities for the organisation.[29]

5.2 Two ways of internal communication

There are mainly two types of communication that explain the basic conditions for the way information is communicated within an organisation. They are referred to as vertical and horizontal communication. Both vertical and horizontal communication are important in order to

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[20] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:399)
[21] Weick (1995:75) i Heide etc. (2005:19)
[22] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:478)
[23] Heide etc. (2005:17)
[24] Högström (1999:66)
[25] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:334)
[26] Ibid. (2002:335)
[27] Larsson (2001:70)
[28] Jacobsen &Thorsvik (2002:337)
[29] Larsson (2001:70)

understand the preconditions of communication within Volvo IT. It is also important to find out what effects the two types of communication might have on the organisation's communication process. Although there are factors that indicate that vertical communication is the formal way of communication and the most common one at Volvo IT, horizontal communication exists on different levels but mainly in a more informal way.

5.2.1 Vertical communication

Vertical communication describes the classical hierarchical structure within an organisation.[30] This is the more traditional way of communicating where the management is supposed to create and send messages to the employees on what to do, how to do it and why. Hence vertical communication could be described more as information than communication.[31]

Several problems can arise with this type of communication. There is a risk that information can change shape when it passes through several levels of an organisation. Managers at different levels will interpret the message on the basis of their position, situation, tasks, challenges, possibilities and future problems. There are two diverse results of this. The efficient one is that a manager successfully can interpret information for its own unit, which will result in efficient development. The other effect is of a more negative nature. Managers will, to avoid creating a negative atmosphere, withhold certain information from the employees.[32]

Vertical communication is often a very time-consuming way of communicating. It ususaly takes a while for information to reach the lowest level of an organisation and there are no guarantees that the information will be correct. However, vertical communication is often a necessity in larger organisations.[33]

5.2.2 Horizontal communication

The second communication procedure is horizontal. Essential for this procedure is the teamwork that exists between colleagues and units in an organisation.[34] People at the same level in an organisation often have similar education, interests and experiences. This provide them with the same symbols, language and a possibility to communicate without a risk of misinterpretation. If horizontal communication exists within an organisation, the employees will develop social support with others at the same level.[35] This sort of communication is often of a more informal nature.[36]

Vertical and horizontal communication are only two ways of trying to explain the way information is communicated within organisations. These two types should are not completely independent but often work as a combination. Many organisations have tried to modernize themselves by transforming from hierarchical and traditional organisations with a strict vertical communication into more modern organisations with elements of horizontal communication. There is a very common problem that occurs when organisations try to change from their old communication patterns, namely that the way the management communicate does not always change. Organisations can be transformed on paper with new structures and strategies on how to organize work but communication will not be affected by that if the management is not actively trying to implement these new changes in the daily work.[37]

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[30] Kreps (1990:202)
[31] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:350)
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid. (2002:352)
[34] Larsson (2001:72f)
[35] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:354)
[36] Ibid. (2002:359)
[37] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:10)

5.3 Preconditions for effective internal communication

A well working internal communication should be open and two-way based with questions and answers arising from both directions. This means that dialogue is the ultimate way of communicating.[38] Effective communication is the term of the process where the receiver interprets the message content in the way that the sender intended.[39] This is often easier said than done. To achieve effective communication the sender has to use symbols and feelings that the receiver can identify with. It is also important that the message is put in a relevant context. If this is not done, there is a risk that the outcome can be the opposite of the original intention.[40]

If we look at internal communication through a leader or management perspective it is usually utilized for direction, control and coordination. When it is regarded effective, the management are able to inform his or her employees in the right way and about relevant issues. That means that these messages probably will be accepted properly by the receivers. However, if internal communication is not regarded effective it can lead to negative consequences. One of these consequences can be that employees do not follow instructions that have been given to them. This can be a result of information not getting through the right way.[41] In order to achieve effective communication there are several points of veiw that need to be taken into consideration. We have summarized these into three aspects; dialogue, feedback and context, that are vital in order for communication to be effective and successful.

5.3.1 Dialogue
There is a way of seeing communication as a sort of teamwork between two or more people. The sender and the receiver are considered to be active actors, mainly because they are both interpreting the message. To be able to reach a mutual understanding and interpretation, there must be a dialogue.[42] Volvo IT is an organisation that focuses on and prioritises goals, visions and values. Messages within organisations like that are often more complex and more difficult to interpret. Hence, dialogue is necessary in an organisation like that.[43]

Communication must also be open for everyone and not be exclusive. All employees need to be able to express their views and opinions, no matter what position they have.[44] Both managers and employees need to make sure that they receive information and that they pass it on to others. This way an open dialogue can be created through the entire organisation.[45]

When it comes to the communication between managers and employees there are several factors that affect that communication. Managers are for example not always aware of the fact that a dialogue requires sharing thoughts and ideas both ways. It is common that managers think they are having a dialogue, when in fact it is only one-way communication. If managers are doing all the talking, there is simply no room for response.[46]

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[38] Lugn (1990:16)
[39] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:336)
[40] Ibid. (2002:336)
[41] Heide etc. (2005:20)
[42] Simonsson (2006:7)
[43] Ibid.
[44] Högström (1999:87)
[45] Lugn (1990:16)
[46] Simonsson (2002:13)

5.3.2 Feedback

The most important part of dialogue is feedback. It is through feedback which is a response of a message, that a two-way based communication process takes shape. To be able to achieve effective communication feedback is of great necessity since it is through feedback that the receiver can make the sender aware of if the message is understood or not. Without feedback there is no chance for the existence of a dialogue.[47]

5.3.3 Context

A lot of the information that is communicated to the employees in a company is often all-embracing and general. For that reason the managers need to facilitate this process by interpreting the information and give it an understandable meaning.[48] If information is not put into a relevant context it often leads to the fact that the employees can not relate to it, and for that reason will not be interested in it.[49] This can be an effect of the fact that managers put too much effort on what to mediate and not how to mediate.[50] A manger can give orders, but people will not necessarily accept them if they can not understand them.[51] To sift through, interpret and value information before passing it on is an important part of the managers' communicative responsibility according to Simonsson.[52] Högström also emphasizes that the managers' most important communication responsibility is to explain the information for the employees and give it a meaning. Before doing this the managers need to work on the information in order to make it relevant and important for the recipient.[53]

In Simonsson's study of another Volvo unit from 2002 she analyzed how managers pass on information and how the employees interpret it. Her conclusion from that study is that the managers often do not take the employees' frames of reference and their actual context into consideration. There is in other words a lack of ability to adapt the messages to their target group.[54]

5.4 Factors that can affect and prevent effective communication

In order to try to identify factors that can explain why important information do not reach everyone at Volvo IT we need to have a general view of the factors that might affect the communication process and the managers communicative ability. There are several examples of what can have an impact on how a manager communicates and if he or she understands communication. The most comprehensive factor is that communication is not a priority in many private and public organisations. This can be seen as an organisational overall problem.[55] Furthermore the different factors and aspects that can affect and prevent effective communication can be divided into organisational factors such as too much information, new information techniques and policies and more personal aspects such as sex, age and education.

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[47] Rogers & Agarwala Rogers (1976:24)
[48] Simonsson (2002:26)
[49] Lachotzki (2005:139)
[50] Högström (1999:98)
[51] Lachotzki (2005:139)
[52] Simonsson (2002:26)
[53] Högström (1999:74)
[54] Simonsson (2002:232)
[55] Simonsson (2002:14)

5.4.1 Organisational factors that can affect effective communication

Communication policies

Communication policies and policies in general are meant to provide all the employees within an organisation with relevant guidelines for different purposes. There are usually no concrete suggestions for measures, especially in communication policies. These policies are generally used to describe how communication ought to function within the organisation and they are supposed to be used as an internal encyclopedia about communication.[56] This however does not resemble the reality. The communication policy is a document which is not used as much as it should be. One of the problems with the communication policies in organisations is that they are just one of many. Another problem is that policies about strategies and communication are not prioritised enough in the companies. It appears to be more of a process on the side instead of something that ought to underlie the organisation.[57] This means that it is not very unusual that managers and their employees are not familiar with policies and that these are not implemented in their daily work.[58] In order to implement a communication policy all managers within the organisation need to live up to the communication standards that are presented in the communication policy. If the managers can not do it, then neither will the employees. [59]

But there are several problems that may occur even when policies are implemented. Catrin Johansson has analyzed how strategies are designed, how they are communicated and how they are accepted and interpreted in different managerial levels in her dissertation *Visions and realities – the communication about the company's strategy[60]*. She states that managers have different preconditions and for that reason they face strategies in different ways. However they are rarely aware of these differences. If anything managers have the impression that other people within the organisation interpret things the same way they do. The result of this is that the communication is filled with incorrect assumptions about what should be common meanings. In this process of interpretation the managers have an important role since they can guide the employees by stressing certain aspects and explain relations. Hence it is important that the managers also are considered to be a target group for the organisational communication.[61] This is another reason to why dialogue and interaction is important.[62]

New communication techniques

To be able to spread information the right way has become crucial for modern organisations. The traditional way of communicating, which is most often applied from the top down, is becoming more and more impractical within flexible organisations.[63] Thanks to today's modern communication techniques it has become much faster to spread information. Just because there are more ways of communicating this however does not mean that the communication has improved. Instead it has become more difficult. More information channels mean an increased stream of information. This also means that an even smaller part of the information is relevant for each and everyone and that it is the receiver that decides the relevance of the information. The fact that people create their own understanding of the reality, by gathering different parts from different information, makes it even harder to find out if important information has reached the intended groups.[64] The result of this is that there are no guarantees that the management's visions

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[56] Eriksson (2007:154f)
[57] Johansson (2003:333)
[58] Löfgren Nilsson (1999:142f)
[59] Eriksson (2007:161)
[60] Own translation of *Visioner och verkligheter – kommunikationen om företagets strategi*
[61] Johansson (2003:328)
[62] Ibid. (2003:334)
[63] Simonsson (2002:25)
[64] Högström (1999:10ff)

and goals are getting through to the employees.[65] To be able to achieve the goal of getting the information to everyone the messages within an organisation can not simply be forwarded. Instead they have to develop through a dialogue.[66] There are several studies that have been conducted on leaders daily work. There are parts of the results that indicate that leaders prefer oral information such as phone calls and meetings, rather then written information like reports, letters and memos.[67]

Unfortunately the reality does not always resemble the ideal picture. The majority of the organisations today invest a lot of money on internal communication campaigns or on introducing the latest information techniques. But when it comes to communication between the manager and the employees it is expected to work more or less on its own. This is a very optimistic assumption according to Simonsson.[68] Many managers are for example better at communicating with media than with their own employees. This is due to the fact that there are often courses in media training but very seldom courses on how to communicate effectively with subordinates.[69]

To sum up it can be said that despite all new ways of communicating it is still different kinds of meetings that are the channels of communication with most penetration. Meetings encourage dialogue in a way that no other channel of communication can measure up to.[70] Simonsson also stresses that personal communication involves more possibilities to create understanding from complex information than computer mediated communication.[71]

Information overload and limited time
One of the most important tasks a manager can have is to mediate information about changes, decisions, plans and activities to his or her employees.[72] This is where the most common communication problems within an organisation occur. Modern organisations today are well equipped with the latest communication techniques, computers including intranet, internet and messenger which are supposed to facilitate the communication process. In reality this means that managers are constantly attacked by more information than they can handle.[73] The fallout of this could lead to following reactions among the managers:

- They can chose to ignore parts of information – this could result in missing vital information
- They can handle information superficially - risking to misinterpret the information
- They can collect information depending on how much time they have – risking putting important information on hold.
- They can consciously not prioritise certain information – risking to systematically leave out information.[74]

5.4.2 Cultural and personal aspects that can affect effective communication
Most multicultural companies such as Volvo IT have an overall organisational culture. In order for a multicultural cooperation to work there is a need for mutual frames of reference for among other things communication and decisionmaking. This is often easier said than done since a

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[65] Sandberg (2003:31)
[66] Simonsson (2006:9)
[67] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:484)
[68] Simonsson (2002:13)
[69] Högström (1999:124)
[70] Ibid. (1999:92f)
[71] Simonsson (2002:232)
[72] Jacobsen and Thorsvik (2002:342)
[73] Bolman & Deal (2005:367)
[74] Jacobsen and Thorsvik (2002:342)

multicultural environment consists of people with different backgrounds, knowledge and cultural values.[75] But it is not unusual that many different cultures can arise side by side in an organisation. It can be cultures related to for example sex, age and education.[76] These cultures and background factors can in some cases have an influence on a leader's role as a communicator, which is why we find it important to keep these factors in mind. The factors that are considered to have the strongest effect will be presented below.

Sex

By tradition there are many assumptions that women have a richer ability to communicate than men. However empirical studies show very small differences between men and women. Furthermore these differences disappear completely when taking variables like age, position and other organisational circumstances into consideration.[77] It is also hard to say if any possible differences between men and women lead to different efficiency as leaders. Despite this there are several studies of women as leaders that emphasize the fact that women often are more flexible leaders that communicate in more complex ways than men.[78]

Age

There are many opinions about the fact that age might be a component that influences the way managers communicate. *Managing Generation X* was the title of a book that was published in 1996. Those that were born at the end of 1960s and 1970s were called the generation X and the insight was that they differ from their parents when it comes to several cultural dimensions that are of importance when it comes to how work and management is organised. One of these dimensions is that generation X often has a more modern way of looking at leadership and communication than the older generation's more traditional view.[79]

Education

The third factor that we will mention is education. It is important to keep in mind that a person does not only acquire knowledge through education but also values, attitudes and social identifications. When the person concerned is recruited to an organisation all of these things are brought together. Even though organisations in different ways can affect the employees' behaviour it is not possible to fully eliminate the cultural components that have been established through education.[80] There are also studies that show that people with similar education have a tendency to stay together at the same workplace. Through this social interaction they support each other and strengthen the tendency to think and act the same way.[81]

What we are interested in finding out is in what way education affect leaders way of communicating. Most of the managers in large organisations have their university degrees in areas such as economics and technology.[82] These educations usually do not include any courses in communication.[83] This means that managers are not always aware of the effects that can be achieved through good communication.[84] This is especially true for economists that are used to measuring success in numbers, which is very hard to do in the communication field.[85] Considering

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[75] Hambrick m.fl (1998:25)
[76] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:171)
[77] Bernstein m.fl (1994), Klenke (1996) i Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:510)
[78] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:510)
[79] Tulgan (1996) i Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:174)
[80] Blau & Scott (1963) i Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:172)
[81] Lipsky (1980) i Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:172)
[82] Heide m.fl. (2005:20)
[83] Simonsson (2002:14)
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

that managers spend up to 80 % of their working day on different kinds of communication this is especially interesting. [86]

These three personal and cultural aspects are the ones that are considered to be the most influential ones when it comes to leaders communicative ability. Although, there is another factor that can affect communication that we will mention here briefly. Managers way of communicating can be influenced by the fact that they usually are recruited to a managerial position within the organisation they already work at. This means that they probably do not have much experience about communication from other contexts and employers, since they are building a career within one organisation. [87]

5.5 Communicative leadership and the role of the managers

The new leadership is all about mutual goals, visions, values and understanding for the different processes inside an organisation.[88] But to achieve such leadership, communication must be effective and prioritised.[89] It is only through communication that leaders can create mutual understanding, ideas and values.[90] If they succeed they can even transmit their visions on the employees, who will then identify with managers the goals.[91] To be able to accomplish such leadership, the characteristics of managers' communication must change. Their assignments are no longer to simply forward and spread information but to sift through, explain abstract information, relate it to the co-workers reality and create a dialogue.[92] They need to introduce the organisations' visions and goals to the employees through inspiration and guidance.[93] To achieve that managers must also be aware of the world around the organizaition and to know how to interpret it. The best way of doing so is, as already mentioned several times, through dialogue. The advantages of dialogue are creating meaning, opening up for new ideas, contributing to involvement, creating reciprocity and equality, but not manipulating.[94] The result of this is that the employees will feel involved and motivated.[95]

5.5.1 Communication through different managerial levels

In large organisations such as Volvo IT there are different levels of managers. Those managers that are in the middle of the hierarchy have a very significant communicative role to play. Their responsibility is to make communication and dialogue work between everyone within the organisation. If the managers in the middle level of the organisation are not good enough in spreading information, there is a risk that the dialogue will hit a stop. This is true no matter if the communication is initiated from the lower or the higher level in the organisation.[96] It is common that managers at the top level feel that communication failure depends on the managers in the middle. They often blame the problem on the transfer of information and the middle level managers incapacity to precede information and messages the right way.[97] That is why it is necessary that all mangers within an organisation, no matter what managerial position, have the same view on communication and the same understanding regarding it. [98] Especially since

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[86] Högström (1999:74)
[87] Simonsson (2002:14)
[88] Ibid.
[89] Heide m.fl. (2005:22)
[90] Ibid. (2005:23)
[91] Whittington (2002:55)
[92] Lönn (2005:3)
[93] Eriksson (2005:208)
[94] Simonsson (2006:46)
[95] Ibid. (2006:11)
[96] Eriksson (2005:78)
[97] Simonsson (2006:6)
[98] Eriksson (2005:78)

information has a tendency to change both shape and content when passing between different levels.[99]

5.5.2 Managers' roles and tasks

Leadership is all about affecting people and the best way to affect or influence someone is through communication. That is probably one of the reasons to why managers spend approximately 80% of their working day on communication.[100]

Charlotte Simonsson expresses in her dissertation *The communicative challenge – a study about the communication between manager and employee in a modern organisation*[101] that it is common goals, values and visions that control and unite the new organisations, not rules. This change also requires more of the communication between managers and employees. The managers' role is more about creating a common understanding and commitment about the abstract values and approach that will constitute the strength that unites the organisation.[102] Many organisations have unfortunately had difficulties with this change and according to Simonsson the modern leadership doctrine is still not put into practise.[103]

There are several managerial tasks that are considered to be important to achieve an effective leadership and communication. They will be presented here:

- **Sift through and sort out information –** This means that the manager has a "gate keeping" role and that he or she is filtering information. With so much information floating around it is crucial to sort out what is important. Managers have the power to decide which information is relevant for their employees and which is not.[104] The problem with this kind of communication is that the manager for example can decide what he or she thinks his or her higher managers want to hear. Problems like these are very common in larger organisations.[105]

- **Translate, interpret and explain** - Messages that contain information about visions, goals and values are often very indistinctive. That is why a manager needs to interpret the most relevant information and put it in a context for his or her employees.[106]

- **Initiate and create conditions for dialogue** – A manager needs to create a dialogue with his or her employees to be able to interpret complex messages. Using dialogue will contribute to involvement, motivation and learning processes.[107]

The picture of the reality that Simonsson illustrates in her final comments of her study is not a bright one. She argues that there is a schizophrenic culture at the organisation that she has studied, Volvo Car Corporation. She means that people say one thing and do another. On the one hand it is argued that dialogue, participation and common values are important fundamentals of a modern organisation. But on the other hand the actual work is driven by values as time, technique and costs. To be able to act in line with the modern leadership doctrine the managers need support.[108]

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[99] Larsson (2001:13)
[100] Simonsson (2006:5)
[101] Own translation of *Den kommunikativa utmaningen – en studie av kommunikationen mellan chef och medarbetare i en modern organisation*
[102] Simonsson (2002:14)
[103] Ibid. (2002:14f)
[104] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:347)
[105] Larsson (2001:13)
[106] Simonsson (2006:11f)
[107] Ibid.
[108] Simonsson (2002:258)

5.5.3 The role of the employees when it comes to communicative leadership

In her dissertation Simonsson argues that both managers and employees constitute leadership. This means that communication is not only a vital part of the leadership but also of the followership. Her study shows that both the managers' and the employees' communicative roles and responsibilities need to be discussed and have clearer definitions. It is also important to remember that it is not only the manager's role that has changed, but also the employees. The increased amount of information in combination with a higher independence among the employees means that both managers and employees need to improve their skills in sifting through and processing information.[109] In order to make the employees more independent, the managers must provide them with the right tools. Relevant information and understanding of the organisation are the key elements. [110] If not, there is a risk that the employees will interpret the message on the basis of their own frame of reference, which means that they will interpret the message in a different way than the management intended.[111]

[109] Ibid. (2002:248)
[110] Heide etc. (2005:23) and Strid (1999:21)
[111] Simonsson (2006:6)

6. Methodology and mode of procedure

In this following chapter we will present how this study has been carried out. Our line of action used in our data collection will among other things be described. We will also present and critically review the methodological choices we have made and the consequences these choices might have had on our study.

6.1 Choice of method

In order to answer our research questions and fulfil the aim of this study we found the quantitative approach to be more suitable and applicable than the qualitative approach. Hence, we conducted a quantitative study based on a web survey. This choice is based on the fact that Volvo IT is a large and global company with about 400 managers on three different managerial levels. In order to get a comprehensive understanding of the managers and to some extent generalize their views we believe that the survey-study will help us form a general opinion of this large group.[112]

Another reason for conducting a survey study is the limited amount of time. With a web survey the whole population can answer which makes the study broader. A qualitative study with interviews had only enabled us to conduct interviews with a minority of all managers. We also based our choice on the fact that the managers at Volvo IT are located in different offices around the world which would create difficulties for us to carry out the interviews.

Our initial thought was to complement our quantitative survey-study with semi structured qualitative interviews that would have themes based on information and patterns from the results of the survey. This additional study would have enabled us to get a deeper understanding of the managers' thoughts and explain the data from the surveys in other words.[113] Unfortunately this was not possible to carry out due to the limited amount of time.

In contrast to the qualitative research, which focuses more on words and meanings for the interpretation of the social reality and contexts, the quantitative research focuses just on numerical methods to make generalisations.[114] With a survey study we get straight answers that can be transformed to statistics. The disadvantage is however the lack of explanations and nuances. Critique directed towards survey studies is mainly about how social phenomenas loose their meaning if they are divided to fit measuring instruments like surveys. In spite of this survey studies are the best method to study attitudes and behaviours that cannot be observed directly which is the case with our study of the managers at Volvo IT.[115]

6.2 Method of selection

We have conducted a complete study which means that the survey was sent to all of the 398 managers at Volvo IT which is the group that we want to comment on. This is a good but somewhat unusual method of selection that was possible for our study since we conducted a web survey.[116] A reason for this choice was that we wanted to be able to generalize the result from the study to some extent, which means that we wanted the result to be generally applicable on the whole population. We were aware of the fact that even though our original selection was highly representative a probable drop-out could make the selection less representative.[117] In order to

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[112] Johansson in Ekström & Larsson (2000:78)
[113] Östbye etc.. (2004:101)
[114] Holme & Solvang (2001:35)
[115] Johansson in Ekström & Larsson (2000:78)
[116] Ejlertsson (2005:18)
[117] Östbye etc. (2004:152)

avoid this as much as possible we followed the advice to be thorough when working with the initial parts of the research. With a well planned research design our aim was to achieve a high answering frequency that would give us a highly representative material.[118]

6.3 The survey study

The survey study that underlies this study is a web survey that was sent out to all 398 managers at Volvo IT through e-mail.

6.3.1 How the survey was carried out

Before we decided the questions for the survey we tried to create a true picture of Volvo IT and the problems they experience. To be able to do that we met with our contact person at Volvo IT, we studied internal corporate information and read additional literature within the field. When we designed the survey and decided on what questions to have we started out by thinking about what information we needed in order to answer our two comprehensive research questions. We tried to find indicators that we could measure the conceptions that we wanted to study which is called to operationalize.[119] We showed our first draft to both our contact person at Volvo IT and our tutor at the university and they both contributed with valuable feedback.

The final version of the survey contains 29 questions. To be able to handle the material only the last question of the survey was an open question. In that question the managers were able to write if there is anything that they think could facilitate their responsibility to pass on information to their subordinates. We also had to make up our mind regarding the debated question about whether there should be a mid-alternative or not.[120] We however chose to include a mid-alternative in the questions where it was possible. The reason for this was to avoid forcing the respondents with no opinion to take a position since that could lead to unfounded answers. We are aware of the fact that some respondents might tick the mid-alternative even though they have an opinion which is something that we have to relate to when analysing the results. We also chose to place the background questions first in the survey seeing that we do not find these questions to be sensitive.

Volvo opinion helped us create the web version of the survey and e-mailed it to all managers. A cover letter that explained the study and the purpose of it was enclosed with the e-mail with the link to the survey. Due to the limited amount of time a reminder was sent out already after 6 days and the survey was closed after 10 days. (To see the cover letter and survey as a whole, see appendix 3 and 4.)

6.3.2 How the material was handled and worked through

We received all data from the study in an excel document from opinion. After thoroughly looking through the material we transfered it to the statistical programme SPSS (Statistic Package for the Social Sciences). We also checked the different variables and namned the labels in SPSS. When that was done we printed out frequencies and cross tabs on all parts of the results in order to get an overall view of the results. This also gave us a first view of the internal drop-out and the examined group.

6.4 Answering frequency and drop-out analysis

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[118] Halvorsen (1992:101)
[119] Johansson in Ekström & Larsson (2000:79)
[120] Östbye etc. (2004:141f)

The survey was sent out to our population which is all 398 managers at Volvo IT. From these, 164 managers (41 %) did not answer the survey. This gave us an answering frequency of 59 % with 234 respondents that answered the survey. When it comes to survey studies today an answering frequency between 50-75% is common and considered accepted.[121] This means that our study has an acceptable answering frequency. If we also keep in mind the fact that only one reminder was sent out due to the limited amount of time we can be satisfied. Usually three or four reminders are sent out when it comes to survey studies.[122]

Even though the answering frequency is high enough it is preferable to carry out a drop-out analysis.[123] This has been done by comparing the composition of our material with the composition of the selection, which in our case is the same as the population. If those that did not participate in the study in relevant aspects differ from those that have partcipated we could have a problem with the representativity. But by doing a drop-out analysis we could determine if it is possible to disregard the drop-out when analysing the results.[124]

Table 1. Division of sex among the population and our material (in percent)

	Population/selection	Our material
Men	74	72
Women	26	28
Total percent	100	100
Number of respondents	398	227

The table above shows very small differences beween the population and our material regarding the division of sex.

Table 2. Division of managerial positions among the population and our material (in percent)

	Population/selection	Our material
Executive Management Team	4	4
General managers/directors	10	25
Managers/first line managers	86	70
Total percent	100	99
Number of respondents	398	230

This table shows some differences between the population and our material regarding the lower and middle managerial levels which is something that we will take into consideration when analyzing the results.

Table 3. Division of geographical regions in which the managers work among the population and our material (in percent)

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[121] Trost (2007:137)
[122] Johansson in Ekström & Larsson (2000:93)
[123] Trost (2007:137)
[124] Johansson in Ekström & Larsson (2000:88)

	Population/selection	Our material
Sweden	49	69
Rest of Europe	28	13
USA	18	14
Asia	3	2
Other	3	2
Total percent	101	100
Number of respondents	398	234

We have not had access to all numbers needed to carry out a complete drop-out analysis but what we can see is that there are some differences regarding the middle and lower managerial levels and the geographical regions Sweden and the rest of Europe. As mentioned these differences will be taken into consideration. Especially the high representation of region Sweden can be a factor that might influence the answers on some of the questions which we will try to pay attention to. However these differences are relatively limited and our view is that they do not indicate that the drop-out could be systematical. In spite of this we need to be careful with our conclusions from the results of the study. This since we have only shown similarities and differences with regard to the variables where we have information from both the population and our material. So even if there are no significant differences regarding sex, managerial position and geographical region we can not be completely sure that this is the case with regard to other variables.[125]

6.5 Method Criticism

6.5.1 The contents of the survey

When analyzing the answers from our study we have realized that the wording of the questions and how the questions are understood probably is the biggest insuffiency with this study. However we have established that there is no question that has not worked at all. When we decided to use words like dialogue, sender, feedback and gatekeeper we were aware of the fact that the managers might have different understandings and views about these words and concepts. We also received a couple of comments regarding question 28 and the managers view of an ideal manager. Apparently the word gatekeeper has somewhat negative connotations within the Volvo sphere. Gatekeeper is often associated with someone that selfishly protects his or her own position which was not the meaning we intended. This might have affected the answers and for that reason we have taken this into consideration when analyzing the results from that question. We are also aware of that several of the words that we have used in our survey could result in prestigous answers. For example, there are probably not that many managers that are negative towards words like dialogue.

Our study could probably also have benefited from not having as broad questions. More detailed questions might have facilitated the analysis of the material and perhaps also have given us straighter answers to some of the questions. Since we decided to have a midalternative, number 3, we experienced some difficulties when analyzing these questions. Our initial though was that the midalternative meant "neither nor" but we found out, after closing the survey, that within the Volvo Group the midalternative usually means "mixed". We are aware of that this might have had an affect on some of the results but we have decided not to pay much attention to this category unless we believe that the category might influence the results to a great extent.

There are also a few specific questions that have caused us some problems. Unfortunately there was a mistake that we did not discover when Volvo opinion helped us create the web survey. Question 11 is a yes and no question concerning the knowledge about the communication policy.

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[125] Trost (2007:138)

The phrase "If yes, please answer the following question. If no, proceed to question no 13" has ben put before the yes and no alternatives instead of after. The result of this is probably a high drop-out, especially for the no-alternative.

When it comes to question 27 the categories are opposite to what the employees at Volvo are used to. Number 1 is in this case "strongly agree" instead of "strongly disagree". This was not our intention since we had fixed alternatives in words in our original draft. Unfortunately these disappeared when Volvo opinion created the web survey. We need to be aware of that a stressed manager can miss this when answering the question.

When analysing the results of this study we have taken all of the above mentioned criticism into consideration.

6.5.2 Validity and reliability

There are three measurements for the trustworthyness of a study; validity, reliability and objectivity.[126] Validity is about to what extent we measure what we intend to measure. We consider the measuring instrument that we have chosen, the web survey, to be very appropriate for this study. With our survey we have tried to ask clear and not biased questions in order to answer our comprehensive research questions.[127] We belive that the survey measures what we intended which according to us gives the study a high validity. Nevertheless it is hard to carry out a study without mistakes. As mentioned before the main mistake with this study is about how the questions have been understood which in theory could result in that we have not been able to measure what we intended. However we have been very thorough when operationalizing and defining indicators in order to really measure what we intended. This, together with our initial choice of measuring instrument, is why we consider this study to have a high validity.

We also have to consider the fact that this study is based on subjective opinions which raises questions about the relation between the subjective views and the reality. This is something that also could affect the reliability of this study. With a study based on the respondents subjective opinions it might be difficult to know to what extent we would receive the same results if the study was repeated.[128] However we have taken all of this into consideration and tried to eliminate this from having a negative impact on our study. One way of increasing the reliability of a study is to examine the same aspect from different ways.[129] This is something that we have tried to do and an example of that is question number 26 "What is your view of interpreting the information you receive before passing it on to your subordinates?" and 27 b "In order for my subordinates to understand the information I pass on, it is my role as a manager to put a message into the relevant context".

Objectivity is about to what extent values might influence the study. This is something that we have had to consider since we have an assigner for this study. There is an increased call for the authors' independence when it comes to studies that are commissioned by an assigner. This is something that we have paid attention to throughout the work with this study and for that reason we have also tried to increase the objectivity by motivating the choices we have made.[130] Corporate Communications at Volvo IT, our assigner, has had the comprehensive responsibility when it comes to defining the focus of this study. Through discussions with our contact person at Volvo IT we gained important knowledge in order to decide and define the scientific approach and aim of this study. Our contact person at Volvo IT has among other things contributed with

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[126] Björklund & Paulsson (2003:59)
[127] Ibid. (2003:60)
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Björklund & Paulsson (2003:61)

background material about Volvo IT, their strategies and policies and information about the managers. All the writing, formulation of survey questions and analysis of the results have taken place both outside and without influence from Volvo IT. This means that the assigner has not been able to affect the results of the study.

6.6 Final reflections

On the basis of the discussion regarding selection, answering frequency and drop-out analysis we consider the material to be relatively representative. This means that we will be able to generalize our results and assume that they are valid for all the managers at Volvo IT. However this will be done with caution and we will mainly focus on the obvious patterns and clear tendencies in the results. Whether it is possible to generalize the results on other contexts outside of Volvo IT we find more complicated. Since this study is a study of internal communication, with focus on the managers, we believe that this study can contribute with knowledge regarding communicative challenges in large, global and complex organisations. Especially the more modern and knowledge intense companies. However we find it important to keep in mind that this study is based on the managers' subjective answers that are influenced by the organisation in which they work. Since every organisation is different and unique they also have different preconditions which result in that both the probelms and solutions often differ between different organisations.

7. Results and Analysis

In this chapter we intend to answer our two comprehensive research questions by presenting the most significant results from our survey study. On the basis of our chosen theoretical framework we have analyzed and interpreted the results regarding the managers at Volvo IT and their views on internal communication and their own role as communicators. This has been done in order to try to identify factors that might affect the managers way of communicating and in the long run prevent important information from reaching everyone intended at Volvo IT.

7.1 The examined group

In order for the reader to get a better view of the respondents we will begin this chapter with a short presentation of the examined group on the basis of different background variables. In this following chapter we will use the terms respondents and managers for the examined group. This means that when we mention the word managers we do not refer to all managers at Volvo IT, but the 234 respondents of our survey study. However, as mentioned in our method discussion, we will be able to generalize most of the answers to apply for all of the 398 managers due to the high answering frequency and the relatively representative selection.

The majority (72%) of the respondents are men and 28% are women. Entire 79% are between 38-57 years old. Even though it is a global and multicultural company the majority of the managers are both Swedish (68%) and work in Sweden (69%). The next largest nationality are Americans (14%) closely followed by the rest of Europe (13%). Only 5% are from Asia and the rest of the world. There are three different levels of managers and these are Executive Management Team, Director/general manger and Manager/first line manager.

Regarding for how long the managers have held their current position 59% has held it for one to four years. There is also an overwhelming majority (80%) that have been recruited to their current position from within the Volvo Group.When it comes to education 33% of the managers at Volvo IT have their degree in computer science, 21% in technology and 17 % in economics.

We have analysed the material from our survey study on the basis of above mentioned background variables and then some. The results from this have not showed any significant differences that could be decisive for the results of our study. Our thought is that this could be a result of a strong and existing Volvo culture that is simply stronger than the personal and cultural factors. For that reason we have chosen to analyze our material by mainly comparing the different managerial levels since this is the factor that we have been able to discern some differences between the groups. However it is very important to be aware of the fact that the three managerial levels differ considerable in size which can influence the result. Despite this we decided to analyze some of the results on the basis of this variable, also since this aspect can be interesting and important to the assigner of this study.

7.2 The managers views on the internal communication and their own communicative responsibility

As we have already mentioned an organisation needs to prioritise communication in order to be successful. It is a fact that the communication between employees and managers is essential for an organisations' survival.[131] For that reason we find it relevant to find out how the managers view their own role as communicators and the different aspects of internal communication such as the important preconditions for effective communication. Our intention is that the results from this will help us explain why there is an impression that important information does not reach everyone intended at Volvo IT.

7.2.1 Communication to subordinates considered important and rather successful

When it comes to the managers' views on the importance of communicating information to their subordinates the respondents are unanimous. 79% of the respondents think that it is important to a great extent and 18% that it is important to some extent. This is crucial since it is the management's responsibility to spread the word and show that communication is an important factor. It is also their role to emphasize to the employees that the organisation will be more effective if communication is regarded important.[132]

When it comes to whether the managers think that their subordinates receive and understand the vital information they communicate a majority of the respondents (55%) think that their subordinates do receive and understand the information. 35% have a mixed opinion and 10% do not think that their subordinates receive and understand the information they communicate. When we look at the results divided between the managerial levels there are some differences.

Table 4. Division between managerial positions and opinions about whether the managers think that their subordinates receive and understand the vital information they communicate (in percent)

	Executive Management Team and Director/general manager	Manager/first line manager
Agree	67	51
Mixed	21	40
Disagree	12	9
Total percent	100	100
Number of respondents	67	160

Commentary: categories strongly agree and agree have been brought together to one category and the same with strongly disagree and disagree. Also the two highest managerial groups, EMT and directors, have been brought together to one group.

The table above shows that 67% of the Executive Management Team (EMT) and the directors/general managers agree with the statement that their subordinates receive and understand the vital information they communicate and 21% have mixed opinions. This is compared to 51% among the managers/first line managers that agree and 40% that have mixed opinions. According to us a possible explanation for this could be that the managers with higher positions feel like they do not need to follow up if the vital information is

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[131] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:478)
[132] Heide etc. (2005:17)

received and understood to the same extent as the lower managers. This since the higher managers'subordinates also are managers. The first line managers have more subordinates with different backgrounds and positions within the organisation. The fact that 40% of the managers/first line managers had mixed opinions of whether their subordinates receive and understand the information that they communicate could be an indication that they are not completley sure about how to find out if the information has gotten through. They might not be used to following up if the information they communicate has gotten through and is understood, and for that reason there is a large group with mixed answers.

Another thing to keep in mind is that the ability to communicate often is seen as a natural knowledge for managers. This also seems to be the case at Volvo IT where communication, in the sense of how to communicate effectively with employees, is not a main priority on the agenda for their leadership courses.[133] This is due to the fact that there are often courses in media training but very seldom courses on how to communicate effectively with subordinates. This often results in that many managers are for example better at communicating with media than with their own employees.[134] Since communicative ability is seen as natural, the managers might also assume that their communicative ability is good and so their view is that the subordinates receive and understand the information they communicate. Communication between the manager and the employees is often expected to work more or less on its own but according to Simonsson this is a very optimistic assumption.[135]

7.2.2 Traditional verses modern communicator – a tie

One of the questions for this study was what view the managers have of an ideal manager and communicator. The intention with this question was to find out if the managers view of an ideal managers agreed with the view of an ideal manager in a modern organisations. This is also the view that is recommended and defined in Volvo's communication policy where it is emphasized that it is often required that the managers cascade information. Cascading is the process where the manager has to prioritise which messages to pass on, and how and when.[136] We defined gatekeeper and sender as two extremities regarding the way of communicating information to subordinates. To facilitate the interpretation of these words we chose to add a small explanation next to each word: gatekeeper (select received information before passing it on to subordinates) and sender (forward received information directly to subordinates). However, we are aware of the fact that the choice of the words gatekeeper and sender might have influenced and made it more complicated for the respondents to answer this question.

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[133] Volvo Group main leader training activities presentation (2007)
[134] Högström (1999:124)
[135] Simonsson (2002:13)
[136] *Communications in the Volvo Group, Policy and Guidelines* (2005:8)

Figure 1. Opinions about the managers' view of an ideal manager and communicator when it comes to communicating information to subordinates (in percent)
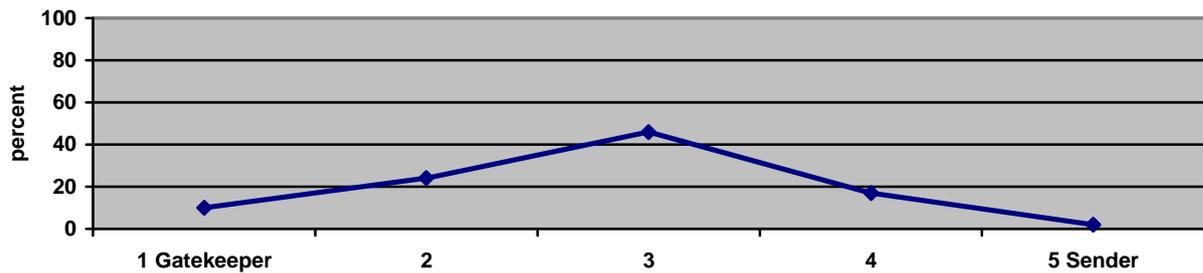
Commentary: Number of respondents= 231

46 % of the respondents put themselves in between the two categories gatekeeper and sender on the scale. This could be an indication of having difficulties understanding this question. However 34% answered that they view the gatekeeper as most ideal and 19 % answered that their view of an ideal manager and communicator is closest to the sender.The fact that there are 34 % of the respondents that view the gatekeeper as an ideal manager is positive. That means that this group is probably aware of that sifting through and sorting out information is an important managerial task in order to achieve effective communication. With a lot of information all around it is crucial to for the managers to sort out information and have a gate keeping role.[137] An effective gatekeeper has the ability to decide which information is relevant for their employees and which is not, [138] which is why we find it important to analyze this question as part of the study of finding out what factors might prevent important information.

However our results show that not all of the managers seem to be aware of the fact that a manager's assignment in the modern organisations no longer is to simply forward and spread information. [139] There are still those, whose picture of an ideal manager is to be a sender. To simply be a sender is the more traditional way of communicating where the management is supposed to create and send messages to the employees on what to do, how to do it and why.[140] This is a very common way of thinking in hierarchical organisations. [141] One way information can in best case achieve awareness and superficial understanding, but it often leaves little room for dialogue.[142] If the respondents that view the sender as the ideal manager also practises this way of communicating themselves this could be a factor that prevents important information of reaching everyone intended.

7.2.3 The managers' views of the important preconditions for effective communication

Communication in general is viewed as a strategic instrument of great importance for Volvo IT's business. In the Volvo Group's communication policy effective communication is expressed as essential in order to realize their vision, reach their strategic and financial objectives and strengthen confidence in their brands.[143] In order for an organisation to be

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[137]Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:347)

[138] Ibid.

[139] Lönn (2005:3)

[140] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:350)

[141] Ibid.

[142] Simonsson (2006:46)

[143] *Communications in the Volvo Group, Policy and Guidelines* (2005:3)

successful it needs to prioritise communication.[144] Investing in internal communication is a great development potential for organisations[145] and effective internal communication is a precondition for success. [146] For that reason many researchers claim that every organisation ought to focus on and invest in it.[147] This is why we wanted to find out what the managers' views regarding to what extent they think that internal communication is proritized at Volvo IT.

The general view among the managers is that internal communication at Volvo IT is prioritised. 48% think that internal communication is prioritised and 18% think that it is not prioritised. It is a fact that communication is not a priority in many private and public organisations which can be seen as an organisational overall problem.[148] Since the most comprehensive factor that can have an impact on how a manager communicates and if he or she understands communication, is that communication is not a priority the results from our study are fairly positive. It means that most of the managers to some extent have the basic condition for their communicative responsibility.

Dialogue highly prioritised

One of the main preconditions for effective and succesful communication is the existence of dialogue. A well working internal communication should be open and two-way based with questions and answers arising from both directions. This means that dialogue is the ultimate way of communicating[149] and that is why we find it important to see what the managers' views are when it comes to this aspect of communicating.

Figure 2. Opinions about whether the managers prioritise dialogue in their role as a communicator (in percent)
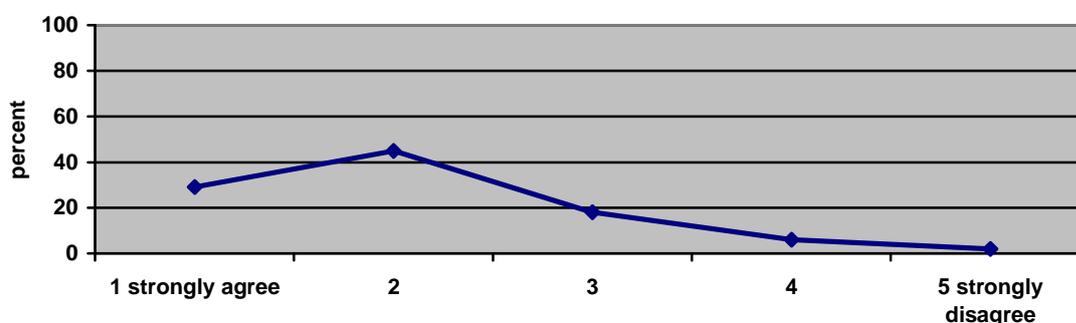
Commentary: *Number of respondents=230*

74% of the managers agree with the statement "I prioritise dialogue in my role as a communicator" and only 8% disagree. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are well aware of the importance of dialogue and the preconditions for a modern leadership. Managers today can not only forward information to their subordinates, they have to explain it, sift it through and create a dialogue.[150] Since Volvo IT is a global and complex

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[144] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:478)

[145] Larsson (2001:70)

[146] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:337)

[147] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:337)

[148] Simonsson (2002:14)

[149] Lugn (1990:16)

[150] Lönn (2005:3)

organisation also messages within organisations like that are often more complex and more difficult to interpret. Hence, dialogue is necessary in an organisation like that.[151] The advantages of dialogue are several, creating meaning, opening up for new ideas, contributing to involvement, creating reciprocity and equality and not manipulating.[152] These are factors that facilitate the the process of important information reaching everyone intended. For that reason it is important to see that the managers are aware of that a well working internal communication must be two-way based where questions and answers arise from both directions.[153]

Another aspect that we find important to keep in mind is wheter the managers really understand the meaning of dialogue. Managers might interpret dialogue in different ways and are for example not always aware of the fact that a dialogue requires sharing thoughts and ideas both ways. It is common that managers think they are having a dialogue, when in fact it is only one way communication. If managers are doing all the talking, there is simply no room for response.[154] This is not anything that our results show us but we still think that this is as aspect that we find important to keep in mind.

Managers actively ask for feedback from their subordinates

The most important part of dialogue is feedback. The reason for this is that it is through feedback, which is a response of a message, that a two-way based communication process takes shape.[155] This is why we also find it important to study the managers' views of their own role as communicators when it comes to feedback.

Figure 3. Opinions about whether the managers actively ask for feedback from their subordinates regarding information that has been passed on (in percent)
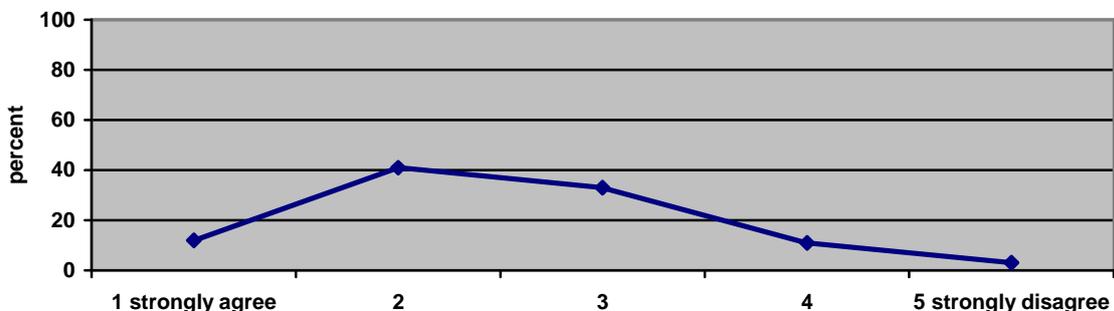
Commentary: *Number of respondents=232*

The table above shows us that the majority of respondents think that it is relevant to actively ask for feedback from their subordinates. A majority (53%) of the respondents agrees with the statement "I actively ask for feedback from my subordinates regarding the information that has been passed on" and 14% disagree. This is a positive sign, since feedback is an invitation for a dialogue. Feedback is essential if the goal is to achieve effective communication since it is through feedback that the receiver can make the sender aware of if the message is understood or not understood. Without feedback there is no chance for the existence of a

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[151] Simonsson (2006:7)
[152] Ibid. (2006:46)
[153] Lugn (1990:16)
[154] Simonsson (2002:13)
[155] Rogers & Agarwala-Rogers (1976:35)

dialogue.[156] Asking for feedback also indicates that there is an interest from the mangers to see how their directions have been understood and implemented.

Table 5. Division between the managerial positions and their opinions about actively asking for feedback (in percent)

	Executive Management Team	Director/general manager	Manager/first line manager
Agree	60	49	55
Mixed	30	35	33
Disagree	10	16	12
Total percent	100	100	100
Number of respondents	10	57	161

The opinions are divided fairly even between the three managerial positions which mean that we can not point out any of the managerial positions as deviant when it comes to their own view of asking for feedback. What we can say is that all three groups regardless of the managerial level are well aware of the importance of asking for feedback. This is a sign that there is a mutual understanding for the important preconditions for successful internal communication and leadership. This is also part of the communication policy that emphasize that it is the responsibility of each manager to provide context and motivate employees to participate in the dialogue that is created. It also states that "...leadership requires active communication – listening, motivating, explaining decisions, and asking for feedback."[157] However we need to be aware of that this is the respondent's opinions about themselves and actively asking for feedback. We can only assume that this resembles the reality.

Context – important part of the managers' role

To be able to put information into a relevant context is a very important precondition for effective communication. It is the managers' role to sift through, interpret and give meaning to the general information before they forward it to their subordinates.

Figure 4. The managers' views on the importance of interpreting information before passing it on to their subordinates (in percent)
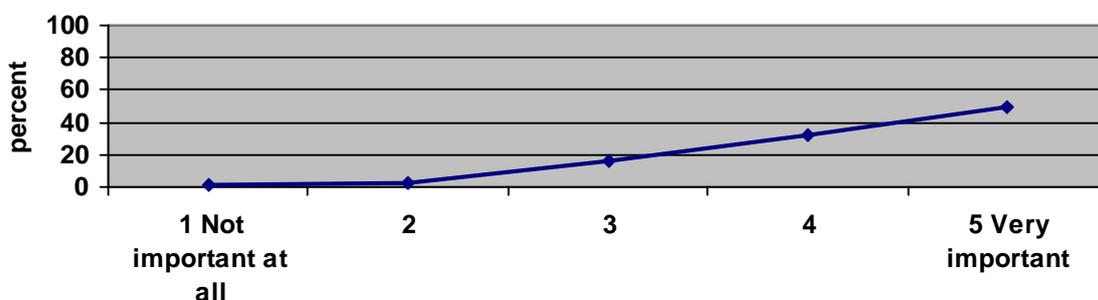

Commentary: Number of respondents=232

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[156] Rogers & Agarwala-Rogers (1976:35)
[157] *Communications in the Volvo Group, Policy and Guidelines* (2005:3)

There are hardly any differences at all between the different managerial positions when it comes to this question. The pattern in this table shows that the majority of respondents think that interpretation of information is important before passing it on. Only 3% of the respondents do not think that it is important and 81% think that it is important to interpret the information. This indicates that managers are well aware of the importance of interpreting messages before passing them on. As we mentioned before this is the managers' subjective opinions and we do not know if it satisfies the real picture. The importance of interpreting information is immense. This is especially vital for messages that contain information about the organisation's vision, goals and values, mainly because these subjects are indistinct.[158]

Figure 5. The managers' views about whether they find it easy to interpret the information they receive before passing it on to their subordinates (in percent)
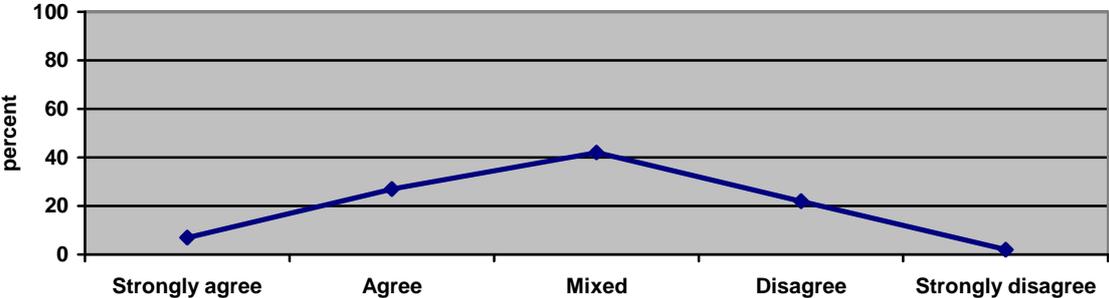
Commentary: Number of respondents=231

In the figure above we can see that 34% of the respondents find it easy to interpret the information they receive and 24% find it difficult. The table curve looks different from the one showing whether the managers think it is important to interpret information before passing it on.

We can see that 34% of the respondents do find it easy to interpret messages which we believe is a result of several factors. The horizontal communication at Volvo IT, which is of a more informal nature, provides its members with the same symbols, language, and a possibility to communicate without major risks of misinterpretation.[159] One of the reasons to why horizontal communication exists at Volvo IT is as we already mentioned the fact that most managers and employees have similar backgrounds in education, which automatically makes it easier for them to communicate and understand each other. Through this social interaction they support each other and strengthen the tendency to think and act the same way.[160] The fact that there are no blue-collar workers at Volvo IT has most likely also contributed to this. All of these facts have also made Volvo IT's culture very strong and we believe that this could be on factor to why such high percentage of the managers find it easy to interpret the messages before passing them on.

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[158] Simonsson (2006:11f)
[159] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:359)
[160] Lipsky (1980) in Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:172)

Figure 6. The managers views about whether it is their role as managers to put a message into a relevant context in order for their subordinates to understand the information they pass on (in percent)
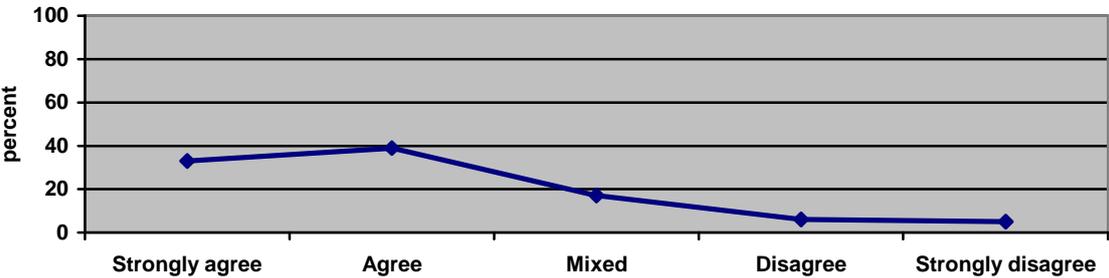
Commentary: Number of respondents=232

In this table we can clearly see that there is a good understanding for the importance of putting messages into a relevant context. 72% strongly agree or agree that it is their role as a manager to put a message into a relevant context in order for their subordinates to understand the information that they communicate. Only 11% disagree or strongly disagree.

According to Volvo IT's communication policy, it is the responsibility of each manager to put a message into a context, motivate and explain decisions for their subordinates. [161] The communication policy is supposed to provide the managers with guidelines for their communicative leadership. 11% of the respondents that do not think that it is their role as a manager to put a message into a context are also not familiar with the policy's context. They are probably also not aware of that to sift through and value information is one of the most important aspects of the mangers' communicative responsibility.[162] If managers fail with this there is a risk that the organisation will not work properly. This because the employees will not be able to relate to the news and tasks if these are not put into a relevant context.[163] This is another confirmation that in theory, managers at Volvo IT know what is important for a well working internal communication and also how to achieve it. However, this can be rather hard to implement in practise. Even though the majority of managers at Volvo IT are aware of their communicative responsibility when it comes to putting messages into context, there is an obvious need to go over the main responsibilities for the managers once more.

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[161] *Communications in the Volvo Group, Policy and Guidelines* (2005:3)
[162] Simonsson (2002:26)
[163] Lachotzki (2005:139)

Table 6. Relation between managerial positions and whether the managers think it is important in their role as managers to sift through information before passing it on to their subordinates (in percent)

	Executive Management Team and Director/general manager	Manager/first line manager
Strongly agree	22	24
Agree	46	42
Mixed	15	18
Disagree	12	12
Strongly disagree	4	4
Total percent	99	100
Number of respondents	67	161

Commentary: The two highest managerial groups, EMT and directors, have been brought together to one group.

There is good knowledge about sifting through information and its importance throughout all managerial levels. 68% of the managers at the top level agree that sifting through information is important in their role as managers, while 66% of the first line managers share their opinions. The importance of sifting through information before passing it on to the subordinates is vital. It is common that only managers have the knowledge and experience to assist their subordinates in sifting out the important messages in today's information overload.[164]

Table 7. Connection between to what extent the managers think that they receive relevant information from their superiors and managerial position (in percent)

	Executive Management Team and Director/general manager	Manager/first line manager
1 Not at all	3	1
2	12	12
3	19	41
4	44	36
5 To a great extent	22	10
Total percent	100	100
Number of respondents	68	162

Commentary: The two highest managerial groups, EMT and directors, have been brought together to one group

The table above shows that 66% of the EMT and general managers think that they receive relevant information from their superiors and 46% of the first line managers think that they do. The percentage of respondents that do not think that they receive relevant information is more or less the same, 15% of the higher managers and 13% of the lower managerial group. One of the managers at Volvo IT expressed that he /she wants to receive structured information with comments and instructions on what is mandatory to communicate to different teams and what responsibility managers have.[165] It is essential to get the right information from the top management with clear explanations. If not, the managers at the lower level of the organisation will not be able to pass on information correctly to their

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[164] Simonsson (2006:11f)
[165] Manager at Volvo IT

subordinates.[166] And if the information is not preceded correctly with proper explanation the employees will not relate to it, and for that reason will not be interested in it.[167] This could be seen as an effect of managers that chose to concentrate too much on what to mediate and not on how to mediate.[168] A manger can give orders, but people will not necessarily accept them if they can not understand them.[169]

To sum up it up we can say that there is a high awareness among managers of the fact that interpreting and putting message into a context is important, although we see a need for more guidelines on how to interpret received information. There is obviously a will to interpret information but perhaps not always knowledge. This could be one explanation to why important messages are not always getting through. The managers at Volvo IT have some suggestions of their own on how to improve and facilitate interpretation of information. They believe that better packaging and classification could make it easier to interpret information before passing it on. There is a great need for more structure and guidelines regarding how to interpret information.[170]

7.3 Concrete factors that can affect or prevent the manager's way of communicating

In this section we will present different aspects of factors that can have an effect or impact on the way managers communicate. These factors are divided into organisational and personal categories. Our main goal here is to identify the most influential factors in order to present concrete measures on how to improve the manager's way of communicating.

7.3.1 Poor knowledge of the communication policy and lack of concrete guidelines

The general idea with a communication policy is that it is supposed to provide all the employees within an organisation with guidelines for different aspects of communication purposes.[171]

Figure 7. Division of the managers knowledge of the communication policy (in percent)
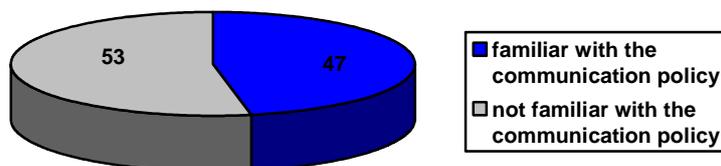
Commentary: Number of respondents=201

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[166] Manager at Volvo IT
[167] Lachotzki, (2005:139)
[168] Högström (1999:98)
[169] Lachotzki (2005:139)
[170] Managers at Volvo IT
[171] Eriksson (2007:154f)

We want to make the reader aware of that there is approximately 12 % dropout on this question among our respondents, which is relatively high. This can be a result of the fact that this question has not been constructed according to the standards. The reference to the following question could therefore be misinterpreted. This could also explain why the dropout on the rest of the questions is low. If this is the case, the category that answered no to the question regarding if managers are familiar with communication policy could be even bigger.

The results from this question are not surprising at all. As we mentioned earlier in our theoretical framework, the communication policy is just another policy among many others.[172] This means that its existence and especially its context are not well known in organisations.[173] However we were expecting the knowledge about the communication policy at Volvo IT to be better since all of the respondents are managers. This result is somewhat alarming since it is difficult for the employees to be aware of the guidelines that are stated in the communication policy if their managers are not even aware.

Table 8. Division between managerial levels and whether the managers are familiar with the communication policy (in percent)

Familiar with the communication policy	Executive Management Team	Director/general manager	Manager/first line manager
Yes	44	46	49
No	56	54	51
Total percent	100	100	100
Number of respondents	9	52	140

The table above shows that there are no significant differences between the three managerial positions and knowledge about the communication policy. Even though this result does not indicate any differences, we feel that it is important to mention.

Our next table is a connection between managers' familiarity with communication policy and whether they integrate it in their daily work. Among the respondents that are familiar with the communication policy 22% say that they do not integrate the policy in their work and 39% say that they do. There is a slight difference between the managerial positions regarding this question. 48% of the EMT and director managers answered that they integrate the communication policy in their daily work while 33% of the first line managers answered the same.

So what does this result tells us? The familiarity of communication policy is not always connected with the fact that managers integrate the policy in their work. One possible explanation could be that the managers that answered that they are familiar with the policy are not necessarily familiar with its context. If that is the case, then the communication policy at Volvo IT needs to be implemented in the managers' daily work in a more effective way. Another explanation could be as simple as that the communication policy appears to be more of a process on the side instead of something that ought to underlie the organisation.[174] The communication policy is a document that everyone in the organisation should use as an internal encyclopedia regarding different responsibilities and tasks when it comes to

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[172] Johansson (2003:333)
[173] Löfgren Nilsson (1999:142f)
[174] Johansson (2003:333)

communication.[175] That is why it is very important that managers live up to the communication standards that are presented in the communication policy and act as role models for their subordinates.[176]

Figure 8. The managers' opinions about whether they have concrete guidelines for their communicative responsibility (in percent)
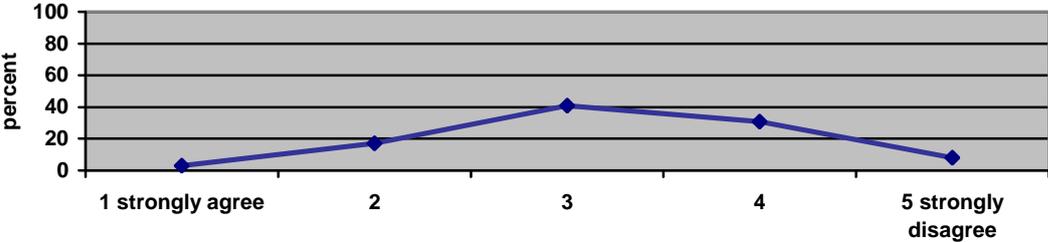
Commentary: Number of respondents=231

This figure shows us that only 20% of the managers think that they have concrete guidelines for their communicative responsibility. 39% of the respondents feel like they do not. There are no differences between the different managerial positions. 43% of the EMT and directors/general managers do not think that they have concrete guidelines for their communicative responsibilities. Among the first line managers, 42% do not think that they have concrete guidelines.

Table 9. Connection between whether the managers think they have concrete guidelines for their communicative responsibility and if they are familiar with the communication policy (in percent)

Concrete guidelines for my communicative responsibility	Familiar with the communication policy	
	Yes	**No**
Agree	17	21
Mixed	39	42
Disagree	44	38
Total percent	100	101
Number of respondents	94	109

Commentary: Categories 1 and 2 have become Agree and 4 and 5 have become Disagree.

We expected to see a strong connection between being familiar with the communication policy and having concrete guidelines for communicative responsibility. This was not the case. Instead we can see that these two connections are not dependent on one another. 38% of those who are not familiar with communication policy and 44% of those that are familiar with it feel that they lack guidelines for their communicative responsibility. So what does this mean? One possible assumption is that there are managers who know that there is a communication policy at Volvo IT, but are not familiar with its content which is supposed to provide them with guidelines for communication. This could perhaps explain why so many of

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[175] Eriksson (2007:155)
[176] Ibid.(2007:161)

the managers that know about communication policy still not feel that they have concrete guidelines for their communicative responsibility.

The communication policy is supposed to function as a guide for everybody at Volvo IT, but especially for managers. This policy presents all communication principles within theVolvo Group that managers must follow in their communication.[177] One manager expressed that he/she was not aware of the communication policy at Volvo IT, but that such guidelines could without a doubt improve his/her way of passing on information.[178]

There is an evident need to promote the communication policy and to develop and implement its guidelines. This would hopefully increase the communicative knowledge and that would be more unanimous among the managers. Our last question in the survey was an open one where respondents could express their opinions about what should be done to improve communication. Several of these opinions express the need for more structures and guidelines. Managers also feel that they need training on how to prioritise and package information.[179] .

7.3.2 Meetings – yes please

Different information channels are another factor that could have an affect on the way managers communicate. Modern technologies have both changed the way employees communicate in organisations and the way information is packaged.[180] We are interested in finding out if there is anything connected to the use of different information channels that could be part of the reason to why important information do not reach everyone.

Important to keep in mind when reading this section is that the tables and figures show the respondents most preferred, most efficient and most frequently used channels. This means that the respondents only were able to choose one type of information channel when answering the question.

Table 10. Division between managerial position and information channel through which the managers receive most information from their superiors (in percent)

| Information channel through which most information is received	Executive Management Team and Director/general manager	Manager/first line manager
Management team meeting	76	61
E-mail	15	30
Individual meeting	4	4
Other	5	5
Total percent	100	100
Number of respondents	67	161

Commentary: The two highest managerial groups, EMT and directors, have been brought together to one group

In the table above we can see that a majority of the respondents answered that management team meetings is the information channel through which the managers receive most information from their superiors. This leads us to assume that if management team meetings

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[177] *Communications in the Volvo Group, Policy and Guidelines* (2005:3)
[178] Volvo IT:s manager's opinion
[179] Volvo IT:s manager's opinion
[180] Bolman & Deal (2002:367)

are the ones that are used most frequently, then they are considered to be the best forums for superiors to get the relevant information from their subordinates. Meetings are also considered to be the best communication channel through which dialogue is achieved.[181] We see this as a positive sign since creating dialogue is one of managers' main communicative responsibilities according to the Volvo IT: s communication policy.[182] 30% of the first line managers answer that e-mail is the information channel through which they receive most information from their superiors. This is a higher percentage than among the EMT and general managers where 15% think that e-mail is the information channel through which they receive most information from their superiors.

Figure 9. Connection between through which information channel managers recieve most information and through which channel they prefer to receive most information from their superiors (in percent)
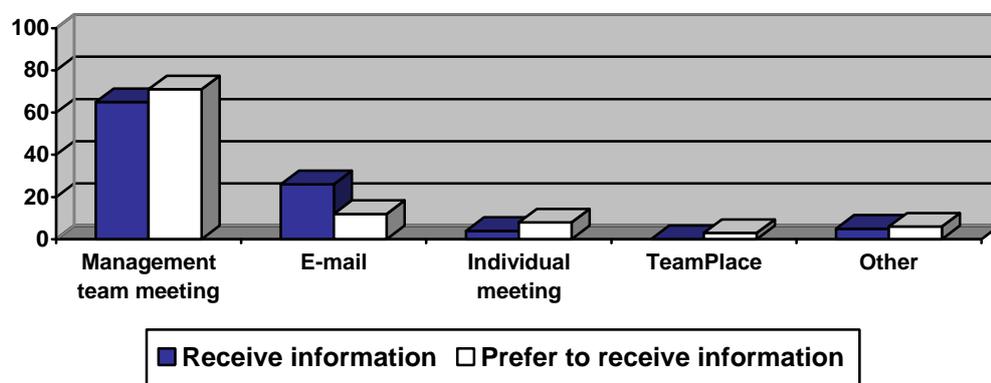
Commentary: Number of respondents for "receive information" (dark bars)=232 and number of respondents for "prefer to receive information" (light bars)=231

Management team meeting is both the information channel through which the respondents receive most information, 65%, and prefer to receive most information, 71%, from their superiors. We see similar tendencies when it comes to individual meetings. E-mail is the information channel that differs most. 26% receive most information from this channel but only 12% prefer to receive most information through email. When it comes to different levels of managers, only 8% of the EMT and general managers and 13% of the first line managers prefer to receive most information through e-mail. This is foremost a difference when it comes to the first line managers where the results show that the respondents in this group receive much more information through e-mail than they prefer to.

We believe that email is used more than preferred since it is considered to be the easiest way of communicating without having to make real contact with someone. E-mail is also considered to be a channel that is used to spread all kinds of information. The fact that important information can get lost in the overload can also be a reason why many managers do not prefer to receive information through e-mail.[183] There are clear signs that most respondents would rather receive most information through meetings, which are channels that

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[181] Högström (1999:92f)
[182] *Communications in the Volvo Group, Policy and Guidelines* (2005)
[183] Manager at Volvo IT

facilitate dialogue. Managers in general prefer meetings since it is the most effective forum for preceding and receiving oral information.[184]

Table 11. Division between managerial positions and information channel that is most frequently used in order for the managers to communicate information to their subordinates (in percent)

Mainly used information channel	Executive Management Team and Director/general manager	Manager/first line manager
Management team meeting	58	39
E-mail	15	26
Group/team meeting	9	19
Individual meeting	8	7
Town hall meeting	6	2
Team Place	0	4
Other	4	3
Total percent	100	100
Number of respondents	65	160

Commentary: The two highest managerial groups, EMT and directors, have been brought together to one group

When we look at what information channel that are most frequently used in order for the respondents to communicate information to their subordinates the results are very similar to the results presented above. 58% of EMT and director/general manager and 39% of the first line managers answered that they frequently use management team meeting for spreading information. While 15% of the EMT and general manager and 26% of the first line managers used email when communicating to their subordinates.

40% of the respondents consider the management team meeting to be most efficient when creating a dialogue. Individual meetings come second with 34%. However we do need to keep in mind that the alternative group meeting or team meeting was not an option in the survey. This alternative was unfortunately left out, since there was a lack of information about different meeting alternatives. 19% of the respondents ticked the box other and wrote down this option themselves. In spite of this we can generally see that meetings in smaller groups are considered to be most efficient when creating a dialogue and understanding for the information that is meant to be passed on. This result indicates that managers at Volvo IT are well aware of which channels are to be used when creating a dialogue.

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[184] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:484)

Figure 10. Connection between which information channel is found to be most efficient when it comes to directly passing on information and creating a dialogue and understanding for the information that is communicated to the subordinates (in percent)

	Management team meeting	E-mail	Individual meeting	Group/team meeting	Town hall meeting	Other

■ **Directly passing on information n=231** □ **Creating a dialogue and understanding n=232**
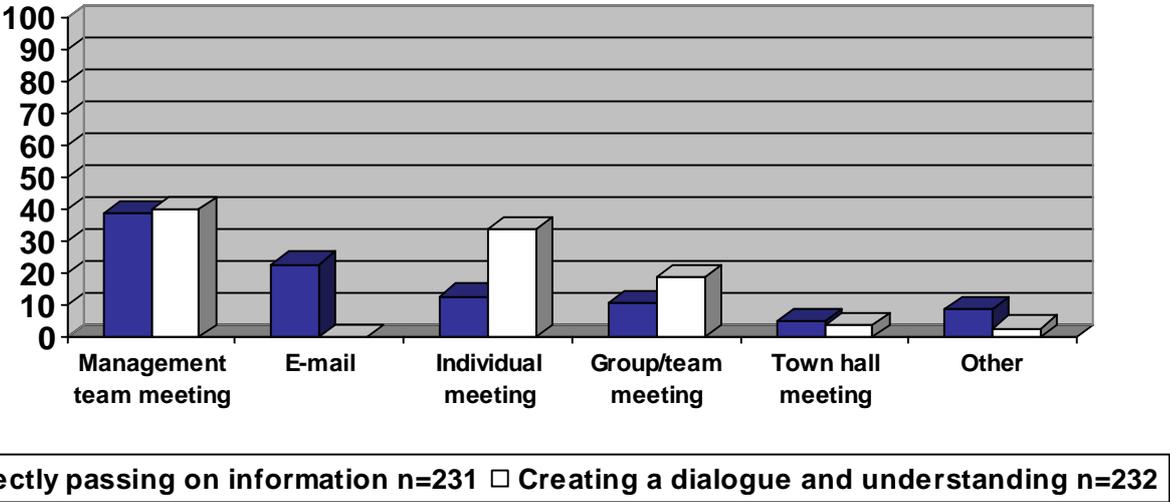
Commentary: Number of respondents for "directly passing on information" (dark bars)=231 and number of respondents for "creating a dialogue and understanding" (light bars)=232

The results in the table above show that management team meeting is found to be most efficient when it comes to both directly passing on information to subordinates and creating a dialogue and understanding for the information that is communicated to subordinates. 23% of the respondents think that e-mail is most efficient when directly passing on information and no one of the respondents think that it is an efficient communication channel in order to create dialogue. Individual meeting is viewed as most efficient for dialogue by 34% of the respondents and 13% think that it is the most efficient channel to directly pass on information. Group/team meeting is also viewed as most efficient in creating a dialogue by 19% and 11% think that it is most efficient channel to use when passing on information. This is yet another indication of the managers' awareness of which channels are more preferable in creating a dialogue. But this does not mean that there is no room for additional improvements. There is a need for a well-defined structure through various sources, such as team places, team plates and so forth. There is too much communication through various sources, which can sometimes, be very conflicting, according to a manager at Volvo IT [185]

We are aware of the fact that the communication process is complex and often demands a mixture of several channels. However we chose to only let the respondents chose one alternative in order to be able to handle the material within the time limits. This affects the results regarding the information channels in the way that they do not have many dimensions. This is something that we have had in mind when analysing these results. In spite of this, the results show, to a somewhat limited extent, that the respondents use the channels that are most preferable when creating a dialogue. This indicates that managers at Volvo IT are well aware of the importance of dialogue and which forums are best in creating dialogue, such as management team meeting.

Several managers expressed in our open question that it is very time consuming to read through all e-mails and to search for information on Violin. Managers should instead

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[185] Manager at Volvo IT

communicate important messages orally, face to face.[186] This is especially important for managers at the top level. If they do not communicate the right information, with clear explanation, then the managers at the lower levels can not forward it properly.[187] This means that the new technologies have not necessarily helped to create a dialogue. They have made it easier and faster to communicate, but the quality of communication can not be compared with the one that is received through dialogue. This could be one explanation to why important messages are not getting through. Our thought is that the new information channels are reinforcing the vertical traditional way of communicating, which is based on simply forwarding the message and not putting it into a context.[188]

7.3.3 Time – hard to pinpoint

Time and amount of information are important factors that need to be taken into consideration when talking about what factors could have an affect on the way managers communicate.

Figure 11. The managers' views about whether they have enough time to go through information before passing it on (in percent)
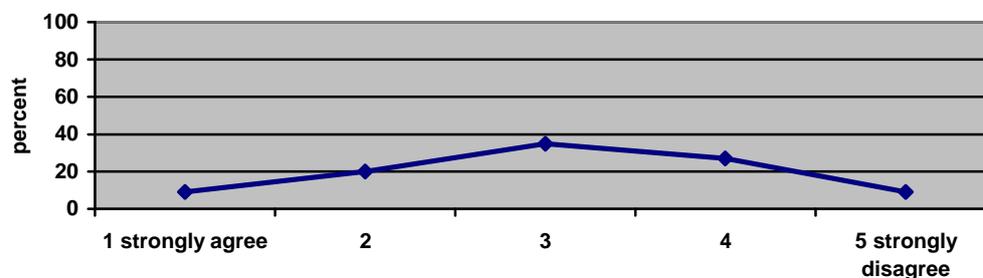
Commentary: *Number of respondents=231*

29% of the respondents think that they have enough time to go through the information they have to pass on and 36% think that they do not have enough time. The curve in this table indicates that there are more respondents that think that they do not have enough time to go through information before passing it on. This can be seen as a result of the modernisation of many organisations. Modernisation in terms of new communication technology, whose purpose originally was to facilitate the communication process. All of these new techniques such as the Intranet and messenger are constructed to save time and make communication more efficient. In reality this means that managers and employees are constantly attacked by more information than they can handle.[189]

This is considered to be a problem at Volvo IT. Several managers complained in our open question over mailboxes that are overloaded, which means that important information might get lost among unwanted mail. [190] Another problem that has been pointed out for us by one of the managers is that when there is not enough time, important information is put on hold or forgotten.[191] This can also be made as a conscious choice.[192]

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[186] First Line Manager at Volvo IT
[187] First Line Manager at Volvo IT
[188] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:350)
[189] Bolman & Deal (2005:367)
[190] Summary of quotes from managers at Volvo IT
[191] Manager at Volvo IT
[192] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:342)

"We need more time when receiving information from EMT to go through this information, ask questions and discuss in order to understand the total context and be able to give right interpretation." [193]

Another thing that has been pointed out for us from a line manager at Volvo IT is that managers sometimes need more time in order to have an extra meeting to spread information. That is often not possible due to the lack of synchronisation between the different functions.[194] Despite this, we must not ignore that fact that 35% of managers chose to answer neither nor to this question. We can only speculate what this means. Time is usually a very sensitive subject when it comes to managers. The fact that 35% of the respondents answered so neutrally could indicate that that was the easiest and fastest way to do it. The logic explanation for that could be the lack of interest in this survey or maybe lack of time.

7.3.4 Tendencies of shattered opinions regarding amount of information between managers

Figure 12. The managers' views about the amount of information the managers receive in order in order to communicate information to their subordinates (in percent)
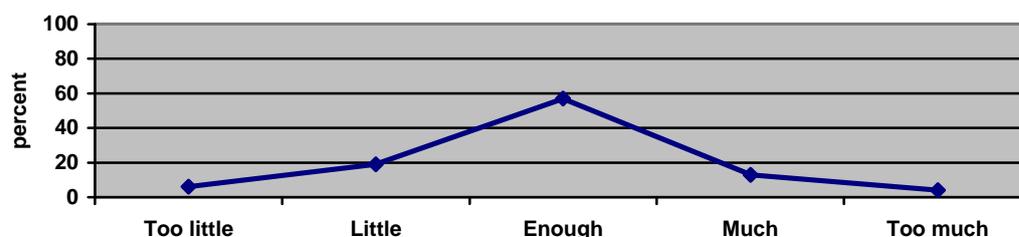
Commentary: *Number of respondents=232*

What we can see from the figure above is that a majority of the respondents, 57%, think that the amount of information that they receive is enough in order to communicate important information to their subordinates. 24% think that they receive little or too little information and 18% think that they receive much or too much information.

Even though the majority of the respondents think that the amount of information they receive is enough there is still one group of respondents that think that they receive little information and one group that think that they receive much information. Interesting for this study is to find out if the respondents think that the amount of information affects their ability to communicate important information. Among the respondents that think that they receive little or too little information 61% think that this affects their ability to communicate important information and 12% think that this does not affect them. The numbers are more or less the same when it comes to the respondents that think that they receive much or too much information. 60% think that the amount of information affects them and 13% do not think it affects them.

What is interesting about this result is that despite all new ways of communicating, which is supposed to facilitate and speed up communication, there are still those who think that they

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[193] Manager at Volvo IT
[194] Manager at Volvo IT

receive too little information. [195] A very relevant explanation for this is that information needs to be put into a context and be explained through a dialogue and no fax, mail or rapport could change that.

Table 12. Division between managerial positions and the amount of information that the managers receive in order to communicate information to their subordinates (in percent)

Amount of information	Executive Management Team	Director/general manager	Manager/first line manager
Too little	0	5	6
Little	0	9	24
Enough	56	66	56
Much	33	14	12
Too much	11	7	2
Total percent	100	101	100
Number of respondents	9	58	161

The groups are different when it comes to number of respondents and for that reason it is not possible to compare and make any clear conclusions. However, what we can see from the table above are a few differences between which group experiences that they receive little verses much information. None of the respondents from the highest managerial level, EMT, think that they receive little or too little information while 14% of the directors at the middle level think so. There is yet another increase when it comes to the lowest managerial level, the first line managers, where 30% of the respondents think that they receive little or too little information.

When it comes to the experience of receiving much or too much information it is the other way around. 44% of the respondents that belong to EMT think that they receive much or too much information while 21% of the general managers and 14% of the first line managers think the same. These tendencies show us that the managers with higher managerial position think that they receive more information and the managers with the lowest position think that they receive little information. This could indicate that the EMT managers are not good enough in proceeding the information they receive or maybe not good enough in putting into a relevant context for the managers in the lower levels. One of the first line managers mentioned that EMT managers should improve their skills in packaging information in a better way with clear explanations and instructions. [196]

But it does not always have to be the top managements' failure. It is common that managers at high positions in organisations feel that communication failure depends on the managers in the middle. They often blame the problem on the middle level managers' incapacity to precede information and messages in the right way. [197] That is why it is necessary that all mangers within an organisation, no matter what managerial position, have the same view on communication and the same understanding regarding it. [198] Especially since information has a tendency to change both shape and content when passing between different levels. [199]

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[195] Sandberg (2003:31)
[196] First Line Manager at Volvo IT
[197] Simonsson (2006:6)
[198] Eriksson (2005:78)
[199] Larsson (2001:13)

There are aspects of the variables regarding time and amount of information that indicates that this is something that affects the way information is being spread. That in turn could affect the way managers communicate and could also be part of the explanation to why important messages are not getting through.

7.3.5 Personal background factors that can affect communication

As mentioned before there are cultures and background factors that in some cases can have an influence on a manager's role as a communicator. This is why we find it important to look at these factors among our examined group. We want to find out if any of these factors could affect the managers' abilbity to communicate in a negative way in order to determine if these background factors can help us explain why important information do not reach everyone intended at Volvo IT.

Our study shows us that the majority (72 %) of our respondents are men and 28% women. What we have seen when analyzing the results is that the managers' answers not seem to vary depending on their sex. This is not very surprising since there are empirical studies that confirm that there are ususally very small differences between men and women. [200] It is also hard to say if any possible differences between men and women lead to different efficiency as leaders.[201]

Table 13. Distribution of age among the managers (in percent)

Age	Percent
58-67 years (1941-1950)	11
48-57 years (1951-1960)	36
38-47 years (1961-1970)	43
28-37 years (1971-1980)	10
Total percent	100
Number of respondents	234

53% of the respondents are age between 28 and 47. This generation is called the generation X and there is research showing that they differ from their parents when it comes to several cultural dimensions that are of importance when it comes to how work and management is organised.[202] One of these dimensions is that generation X often has a more modern way of looking at leadership and communication than the older generation's more traditional view.[203]

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[200] Bernstein etc. (1994) and Klenke (1996) in Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:510)
[201] Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:510)
[202] Tulgan (1996) in Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:174)
[203] Ibid.

Table 14. Division of how the managers were recruited to their current manager position (in percent)

Recruitment	Percent
From another employee position within the Volvo Group	30
From another managerial position within the Volvo Group	50
From another managerial position outside the Volvo Group	15
Other	5
Total percent	100
Number of respondents	234

Managers way of communicating can be influenced by the fact that they usually are recruited to a managerial position within the organisation they already work at. [204] This is why we found it interesting to find out how they were recruited to their current position. 30% of the respondents were recruited from another employee position within the Volvo Group and 50% were recruited from another managerial position within Volvo IT. This means that 80% of the respondents have been recruited from within the Volvo Group. Since their career is within one organisation it often deprives them of communication experiences from other work places and contexts.[205]

Table 15. Division of university degrees among the managers (in percent)

Education	Percent
Computer science	33
Technology	21
Economics	17
Social Science	2
Other	10
No University degree	16
Total percent	99
Number of respondents	234

When it comes to education, 33% of the managers at Volvo IT have their degree in computer science, 21% in technology and 17% in economics. This also strengthens the argument that the majority of the managers at Volvo IT have educational backgrounds with a lack of both theoretical and practical courses in communication. [206] This means that managers are not always aware of the effects that can be achieved through good communication.[207] This is especially true for economists that are used to measuring success in numbers, which is very hard to do in the communication field.[208] This can have an affect on how managers act in their role as communicative leaders. There are also studies that show that people with similar education have a tendency to stay together at the same workplace. Through this social

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[204] Simonsson (2002:14)

[205] Ibid.

[206] Heide etc.. (2005:20)

[207] Simonsson (2002: 14)

[208] Simonsson (2002:14)

interaction they support each other and strengthen the tendency to think and act the same way.[209] This is especially interesting since research show that managers spend up to 80 % of their working day communicating in different ways.[210] It also implies that the managers' educational background is a factor that can affect their communicative ability. Hence it is a factor to be aware of when trying to explain why there are weak links in the communication process.

Above mentioned personal and cultural aspects are the ones that are considered to be the most influential ones when it comes to leader's communicative ability. We can not see any results that indicate that variables based on the managers' background factors such as sex, age, education and recruitment distinguish themselves and show differences of any great importance. This has led us to believe that the culture at Volvo IT is the main influential factor. In order for a global and multicultural company like Volvo IT to work there is a need for mutual frames of reference. This often easier said than done since a multicultural environment consists of people with different backgrounds, knowledge and cultural values.[211] Hence it is positive to see that Volvo IT seems to have a strong corporate culture.This could be seen as a result of the many invenstments that have been done in order to create a strong corporate culture.

7.3.6 The multicultural environment – influential factor

The final part of our analyze treats the multicultural aspect of Volvo IT. We find it important to study if the mix of different cultures, languages and values has an affect on the way the managers communicate.

48% of the respondents think that the multicultural environment at Volvo IT affects the way they communicate and 21% think that it does not affect them. We have tried to identify if the respondents that agreed or strongly agreed to this statement belong to a certain group or not. What we can see from the analysis where we have looked at the background factors such as sex, nationality, age and country they work in is that there are no obvious tendencies that indicate that any of these background factors could have an impact. Since we have already commented on the fact that Volvo appears to have a strong corporate culture all the other background factors come secondary. This also makes it more interesting to see if there are any differences among these selected respondents and what unit region they belong to.

This means that we can not really draw any conclusions regarding whether any specific background factors affect the fact that 48% of the respondents think that the multicultural environment at Volvo affects the way they communicate.We have not been able to show any differences between personal backgrounds that show tendencies in affecting why 48% of our respondents think that the multicultural environment affects the way they communicate. The only logic explanation is that these 48 % of managers belong to a group that has a lot of international contacts that are connected to their work. Our conclusion is that Volvo IT has succeeded in implementing a strong corporate culture when it comes to the way managers communicate. It is very hard for managers and employees at multicultural companies to embrace corporate cultures since there are so many different frames of references, especially in communication.[212]

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[209] Lipsky (1980) in Jacobsen & Thorsvik (2002:172)
[210] Högström (1999:74)
[211] Hambrick (1998:26)
[212] Ibid (1998:25)

8. Final discussion

The aim of this study was to answer our main questions in order to get a better understanding of the communication process among the managers at Volvo IT. But what does the result that we have presented tell us? In this final chapter we will try to summarize the results from this study and also discuss the meaning of the results in order to conclude this final chapter by presenting a proposal with measures.

This study has shown us that there are several aspects to take into consideration in order to be able to identify factors that could explain why Corporate Communications has an impression of that important information does not reach everyone intended at Volvo IT. Our way of looking at it is as a puzzle.

There are quite simply different pieces of a puzzle that create a complete puzzle and an overall picture which in this case is the picture of a well functioning internal communication built on effective communication. Factors as knowledge about the communication policy, the use of different information channels for different purposes, time and amount are all factors that can affect the managers' communicative preconditions. This in turn can result in that important information does not reach all the way. These factors can also bring about that the managers are not aware of, and use, the important preconditions like dialogue, feedback and the creation of context for effective communication.

The results of our study indicate that the managers have a good knowledge about the communicative process and that the majority of the managers seem to be aware of their communicative responsibility. In corporations like Volvo IT were there is a lot of different knowledge and competence, and no blue collar workers, it is not unusual that communication is taken for granted. Although communication is the essence of organisations it is expected to "work on its own".

What we can say after analysing the respondent's answers is that the managers at Volvo IT seem to understand the importance of communication and what is expected of them. They are well aware of the important preconditions for successful communicative leadership such as dialogue, feedback and interpretation of information. This is in coordination with the previous studies conducted within the Volvo IT. However the results show that there is room for improvement. The communication policy and its communicative guidelines need to be promoted in a more effective way. We can also state that the knowledge on how to use information channels for different purposes needs to be improved.

When interpreting the results and drawing conclusions, it is of great importance to be aware of that these are the managers' subjective opinions about communication and their responsibilities. We are also aware of that many of the answers do not always resemble the reality since they are very "politically correct". This was the challenging part of the interpretation of the answers. Whit this in mind, we also focused on the answers that deviated from the majority in order to discover tendencies that could explain why important information is not getting through. .

The problems that Volvo IT are facing with communication policy implementation are not unique just for them. Policies are in general hard to promote and it is even harder to make people be a part of them and interested in them. They are mostly considered to be just documents that nobody has the time for. Policies are even harder to implement in

organisations that are complex, such as Volvo IT. The employees at Volvo IT are very educated and skilled, even in the lowest part of the hierarchy. This means that it is harder to influence them, since they rather do things their own way. It does not facilitate that there are several communication channels through which the employees at Volvo IT can choose from when spreading information. That is why it is up to the managers to act more as role models than controllers in order to inspire their employees to participate in the mutual communication process. This is something to take into consideration during the promotion of the new communication policy which will be launched in the near future.

In general we can say that the managers at Volvo IT need training in how to handle information in the most efficient way. Their knowledge about important preconditions for good communication is there, but they do not have the right tools to put them in practise. This is not a problem that is specific for Volvo IT. As we mentioned in out theoretical framework managers have more training in how to communicate with the media than with their employees. So there is a need to make communication more concrete.

This leads us to the concrete measures that we think could improve the manager's communicative ability at Volvo IT.

Measures

During this study, we have seen consistent tendencies that education among managers at Volvo IT is of a great need. It was especially clear when 53% of the respondents answered that they were not familiar with the communication policy at Volvo IT. That is why we decided to divide our suggested measures into two different categories: education and guidelines.

Education

Managers' communication skills are often taken for granted. According to both Simonsson and Svennerstål the communicative competence should be in focus when it comes to education and training in organisations.[213] This is often not the case when it comes to courses in leadership. Högström find it strange that most training for managers do not contain any education in how to communicate since 60-90 % of the leadership process is about communicating.[214] Simonsson believes that the discussion about the important and difficult communicative role might be intimidating for all those managers that have been appointed to their managerial positions due to their technical or professional knowledge. These managers probably feel like they do not have the communicative preparedness or competence that is required. This means that many managers are in need of support and education in the field of communication.[215] We also see these tendencies among the managers at Volvo IT. That is why we believe that practical and theoretical courses in presentation techniques are required in order to improve the managers' communicative ability. The education plan that we suggest for Volvo IT is the following:

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[213] Simonsson (2002), Svennerstål (1996)
[214] Högström (1999:131)
[215] Simonsson (2002:247)

- **Creating an environment for dialogue**

By this we mean that education in communication needs to be about teaching the managers to create a deeper understanding for the process of communication.[216] They need to be aware of the true meaning of a dialogue, what it takes to create a good environment for dialogue and how to encourage their employees to participate in it.

- **Packaging of information in the right way**

It is clear from our last question in the survey, which was an open question, that the managers feel that they need more education in how to properly package information before preceding it. This part of education should concentrate on giving more instructions on packaging information in the right way for the intended target group. What is the best way to present information, which information can be preceded and which information needs to be interpreted and put in to context before preceding?

- **Effective use of different information channels**

The last measurement that we believe is necessary in the education aspect is to teach the managers how to use information channels for different purposes.[217] To choose the right way of communicating one must know what the goal of that specific communication. The intranet can be used if the goal is to merely spread information. If the goal is to learn something new, then meetings where dialogue is encouraged is the recommended communication way to use.[218] All the new technologies in communication are not effective if they are not being used in the right way.

Guidelines

Guidelines are the second aspect of the suggested measures. It is important to emphasize that this part of the measures is directed to both managers and their employees. They too need to have concrete guidelines in order to take control and understand their communicative responsibility.

- **Support for communication policy**

We think that the communication policy at Volvo IT contains clear and concrete guidelines of what Volvo IT want to achieve with their communication and also how to do it. A more clear support and explanation of the policy must be presented for managers and their employees in order to create a mutual understanding for everybody at Volvo IT. Every time the communication policy is updated, managers need to attend seminars where they can get informed about the communication changes and discuss how to implement them. Very good and creative suggestions can arise during these discussions. [219]

- **Packaging of messages**

Several managers pointed out that there is a need for better package of the context of information, (messages). These messages need to be put in the right context and not simply be forwarded. Many managers feel that they do not always know if certain information needs to be spread, if it is confidential and so forth. We believe that a simple code system that explains exactly how to handle the information could come to a good use.

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[216] Simonsson (2002:14)
[217] Ibid. (1999:21)
[218] Ibid. (1999:30)
[219] Eriksson (2007:162)

When working on this thesis new questions and thoughts have come to light. With this study we have looked at the more hierarchichal levels within a large organisation. However Volvo IT is a large matrixorganisation with several networks. What impact does this have on the managers' communicative responsibility? And what is the best way to communicate information in knowledge intense organisations like this?

Another interesting aspect that we have been thinking of is that the Volvo Group have one joint communication policy. This means that this policy mainly have connections to the manufacturing industry with mainly blue collar workers. Since Volvo IT is a knowledge intense company with mainly white collar workers this might also be something to think about.

We hope that the results from this study will serve as a starting point for Corporate Communications' continued work with the complex communicative challenges. But regardless of what impact the results might have we believe that this study was a reminder about the managers'communicative responsibility. As a sign of that the following quote will be the final words of this study.

" This survey is good reminder, and also an example, that I as a manager have to remain alert for this part of my responsibility."[220]

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[220] Director/general manager at Volvo IT

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Informant interview with Ing-Marie Flodell, Volvo IT (2008-04-09)

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What do you think? Time for a survey based on managers' internal communication within Volvo IT

We would like you to participate in a survey relating to internal communication at Volvo IT. It is a web-based survey and it will only take a few minutes to complete.

Corporate Communication has commissioned students at media and communication studies at University of Gothenburg to conduct this survey. The results of this survey will be implemented in a study based on managers and internal communication.

All managers at Volvo IT are asked to participate in this survey. It is very important that as many as possible answer so that the result is representative. So we would really appreciate it if you could take the time to complete this survey. Your answers will be treated with strict confidentiality.

The survey will only take a few minutes to complete. It contains questions about your view of internal communication as a manager and your own role. Internal communication is a key question at Volvo IT and you can help to improve it by participating in this survey.

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please feel free to contact us.

Kind regards,
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