THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING
IN
ORGANISATIONAL
CHANGE MANAGEMENT

By

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Declaration

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this Dissertation Project is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

Signature: ……………………………… Date: …………………
Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to all employees who have experienced what it is like to go through organisational change without understanding its purpose and benefit.

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Synopsis

Organisations constantly evolve to improve their internal strengths and in anticipation or reaction to the state of the environment in which they exist. This research focussed its investigation on the effect of organisational change communication on employee attitude and employee engagement. The primary aim of this research was to offer an investigative discussion, based on literature and research evidence, around the benefit of communicating organisational change through multiple narrative perspectives. A secondary aim of the study was to determine if there is a link between organisational change communication and the achievement of organisational change business objectives. The final aim of this research was to provide inductive theories of sensemaking, role influence, and the process of narrative, within the context of Social Construction Theory (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005; Sonenshein, 2010; Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012).

This case study of natural and experimental design provided an opportunity to compare the effect of multi-level storytelling as change communication, between two groups of frontline employees, in a medium-sized Australian financial institution at a time when the employees were experiencing the trial of a new change process. This study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. How, if at all, does storytelling impact employee attitude to organisational change?
   1.1 What affect does communication between and across roles have on employee attitude to change?
   1.2 What role does time play in employee attitude to change?
1.3 Does the formal or informal nature of communication affect employee attitude to change?

1.4 To what extent does attitude affect formal change management outcomes?

The attitudes and business performance of both groups were collected and analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods.

Evidence from the study suggests that multi-level storytelling as a form of organisational change communication has a positive effect on change recipient attitude. It is proposed that this effect contributes to active employee engagement with organisational change, resulting in improved business performance. Findings from this study also recommend change practitioners enlist the support of the customer to tell their story during change, and to appoint employees who demonstrate the ability to understand multiple perspectives of change as change agents.
Chapter 1 Introduction

The Purpose of the Thesis

The purpose of this dissertation is to offer an investigative discussion, based on literature and research evidence, around the benefit of communicating organisational change through multiple narrative perspectives. This discussion is underpinned by accepted concepts about organisational change, organisational change communication, employee attitude, and employee engagement during times of organisational change. The Oxford Dictionary (online) defines a story as “an imagined or real account of both events and characters”, and narrative as a “spoken or written account of connected events; a story” (“story”, n.d.; “narrative”, n.d.). Throughout this dissertation, references to storytelling and a narrative will be used interchangeably.

The case study within this dissertation centres on the effect storytelling has on change recipient attitude and business performance, where attitude is used as a measure of change recipient understanding, and business performance is used as a measure of change recipient engagement. Change recipient sensemaking forms the framework of this discussion, influenced largely by Social Construction Theory. The discussion refers to several important factors that could possibly influence change recipient attitude to storytelling during times of organisational change. These factors include role of the change recipient, how the story is delivered, and time elapsed after delivery of the initial change communication.
1.1 Introduction

Organisations constantly evolve to improve their internal strengths and in anticipation or reaction to the state of the environment in which they exist. The frequency, complexity and simultaneous nature of organisational change challenges management’s ability to engage stakeholders from multiple levels of the organisation in different types of organisational change (Johnson-Cramer, Parise & Cross, 2007). “Managing change is tough… it isn’t easy to change attitudes or relationships; they’re deeply ingrained in organisations and people” (Sirkin, Keenan & Jackson, 2005, p 2). In his article “Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail” Kotter (1995, p64) provides a practical example of this, “A 60-year-old plant manager who has spent precious little time over 40 years thinking about customers will not suddenly behave in a customer-oriented way.”

The ability to keep change recipients engaged and positive about organisational change is imperative to the organisation achieving its strategic goals (Kotter, 1995; Piderit, 2000; Graetz, 2000; Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011). This link between change recipient attitude and business performance has been conceptualised by many authors and theories of causation discussed, however, few studies have been able to demonstrate this link and fewer still have offered causal relationships in support of such a link (Kotter, 1995; Piderit, 2000; Klein, 1996).

One of the methods employed by change practitioners to manage organisational change is communication with change recipients. Previous research has focussed on the importance communication plays during times of change, however little investigation has been made around the nature of communication from the organisation to change recipients about the organisational change, particularly at the commencement of a new organisational change
process (Boje, 1991; Rhodes & Brown, 2005; Buchanan & Dawson, 2007). Change practitioners require specific understanding of organisational change communication, and its effect on change recipient attitude, to assist change recipients to successfully interpret and implement new change processes and achieve business objectives (Kotter, 1995; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Kotter & Kohen, 2002). An understanding of organisational change communication requires consideration of the nature of the communication, including format and tone (Denning, 2005). Practitioners also need to be aware of the importance of timing in the delivery of change communication and its effect on change recipient attitude (Boje, 1991). Change recipient characteristics such as role, influence and fit with organisational culture could similarly have a bearing on change recipient attitude to organisational change (Rouleau, 2005; Maitlis, 2005; Sonenshein, 2010).

This research is specifically interested in determining the key characteristics of organisational change communication in the form of storytelling, and how the use of multiple stories of organisational change influenced change recipient attitude to a new change process being implemented in a medium-sized financial institution. This research has three aims. The first is to determine if a link exists between organisational change communication and change recipient attitude to change. A secondary aim of the study is to determine if there is a link between organisational change communication and the achievement of organisational change business objectives. The final aim of the study is to deduce possible causes for either of these links and establish what aspects of change communication most influence change recipient attitude.

This study researches the following questions:
How, if at all, does storytelling impact employee attitude to organisational change?

To address this core question, the following sub questions are relevant:

1.1 What affect does communication between and across roles have on employee attitude to change?
1.2 What role does time play in employee attitude to change?
1.3 Does the formal or informal nature of communication affect employee attitude to change?
1.4 To what extent does attitude affect formal change management outcomes?

1.2 Storytelling as organisational change communication

Traditionally, organisations have adopted a top-down approach to advising their employees of organisational change (Guha, Kettinger, & Teng, 1993; Frei, et al., 1999). This usually involves the organisational or departmental leader explaining the vision of change and either delivering this message personally or through middle management (Kotter, 1995; Rouleau, 2005; Sonenshein, 2010). Some literature has discussed how charismatic leaders use storytelling as a delivery method to explain the need for change in an attempt to influence employee attitude and increase engagement in the change (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Denning; 2006; Grisham, 2006). Whilst studies have shown the use of top-down storytelling as being successful at overcoming some employee resistance to organisational change, there is little evidence to suggest it is successful in creating positive employee attitudes to organisational change and thereby increasing employee engagement in organisational change (Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011; Kotter, 1995; Piderit, 2000; Klein, 1996). Further as Ahmed writes “… by the
time the change is dispersed throughout the organisation, many organisational participants have developed attitudes different from those which management intended. When the attitudes are negative the success of the change may be affected adversely” (2012, 146).

Organisational change theorists have proposed that at the same time as the top-down message of organisational change is being disseminated to the organisation, employees will use narratives among themselves to make sense of this change and often the attitude they form about the change through this informal narrative is either contrary or indifferent to that of the top-down change communication message (Boje, 1995; Johnson, 1992; Sonenshein, 2010). This sensemaking process has been described by Social Construction theorists as organisational actors interrelating through story to make sense of, and form attitudes towards change (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005).

This research proposes that change practitioners could harness the use of the multiple narratives that exist within an organisation to provide employees with different perspectives of organisational change to assist them make sense of the change (Bryant & Frahm, 2011; Roleau, 2005; Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012; Rhodes, Pullen & Clegg, 2009; Fenton & Langley, 2011).

In this study five different organisational change stories, representing five different employee levels of a financial institution, were delivered to a group of retail Outlets undergoing organisational change. A similar group of retail Outlets were delivered the same organisational change using a traditional, top-down approach. Participants were employees of these retail Outlets who volunteered to complete a weekly diary describing their attitude to the organisational change and the organisation itself.
Qualitative and quantitative data captured in the participant diary over the 12 weeks of the change trial was analysed and findings showed that multi-level storytelling change communication significantly and positively influenced change recipient attitude to change. More specifically, change recipients who did not receive multi-level storytelling communication at the commencement of the change, recorded significantly more negative and ambivalent attitude responses than those that did. These findings support Social Construction Theory that organisational actors interrelate through story to make sense of, and form attitudes towards, organisational change (Sonenshein, 2010; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005).

1.3 Storytelling as organisational change communication and change recipient role

Previous research regarding organisational change communication and employee role has focussed on middle managers’ ability to influence their employees’ attitudes to organisational change. Middle managers are frequently engaged as organisational change agents because they have a direct relationship with both senior management and employees (Sonenshein, 2010; Huy, 2002; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). Some theorists proposed that these middle managers refract the organisational change message as a result of the influence of their employees on middle managers’ own attitude to organisational change (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Sonenshein, 2010). Other authors propose that middle managers’ existing relationship and understanding of their employees assists them to tailor the message of change to their employees’ own circumstance (Roleau, 2005; Cuncliff & Coupland, 2012; Rhodes, Pullen & Clegg, 2009).
Very little literature exists regarding the use of customers to deliver organisational change stories. Whilst Denning (2005) advocates the customer story to communicate the benefit of change, often the customer link is missing in the delivery of the organisational change story (Gorry & Westbrook, 2011). Whilst the use of the customer story is prevalent in the promotion of products and services it could also give employees another way to make sense of organisational change, particularly when frontline employees have a key role in the provision of service to customers (Johnson-Cramer, Parise & Cross, 2007; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011; De Large, 2010).

In this case study, within the research, participant diaries were pre-coded to identify the role of each employee completing the participant diary. The role of any person that employee spoke to about the change initiative, as well as the perceived influence of the person spoken to, on the employee’s attitude to both the organisational change and the organisation was recorded by the employee in the participant diary. Data analysis compared the participant attitudes of change recipients by role, and by type of person spoken to by the change recipient, to identify if one particular person type had more influence overall, or if a particular employee, person type interaction was more influential than any other shared narrative. Additionally, these characteristics were compared between the group of retail Outlets that received multi-level storytelling communication and those that received traditional top-down change communication.

Quantitative attitude responses from this study indicated that multi-level storytelling change communication positively influences change recipient attitude to change, regardless of role. Additionally, no particular role has more influence over a change recipient than any other. Qualitative attitude comments from this study illustrated that customers did have a greater
impact on change recipient attitude than any other person type spoken to by the employee about the change initiative. These findings show that although interrelated actors’ stories affect change recipients’ attitudes to change, no particular story specifically appeals to any specific role, and the findings do not support previous theory that middle managers make effective organisational change agents (Sonenshein, 2010; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005).

1.4 Storytelling as organisational change communication and time

Several studies have demonstrated how the organisational change message can be lost over time (Jansen, 2004; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Pardo del Val & Martínez Fuentes, 2003). It has been proposed that employees formulate their attitude to change over time and that a more negative attitude to change can grow over time (Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012). Boje (1991) proposed that the success of storytelling during change is to know when to tell the appropriate story to the appropriate recipients at the appropriate time.

In the case study, within this research, employees volunteered to record their attitude to organisational change in participant diaries at weekly intervals during the trial of a new organisational change process. This trial was undertaken over a 12 week period. Data analysis compared the participant attitudes of change recipients between the group of retail Outlets receiving the multi-level storytelling change communication, across role, type of person spoken to by the change recipient, and whether or not the narrative exchanged was formal or informal. Quantitative attitude responses from this study indicate that there was no significant relationship between participant attitude and time.
1.5 Storytelling as organisational change communication and the formal or informal narrative

Organisational storytelling takes many forms, such as formal public artefacts, speeches and meeting discussions as well as informal conversations, jokes and gossip (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007; Balogun & Johnson, 2005). The narrative employees use between themselves to make sense of organisational change is often informal and the attitude they form about the change is often different to that of the formal top-down change communication message (Boje, 1995; Johnson, 1992; Sonenshein, 2010). Johnson (1992) described this as a narrative paradigm where the formal top-down conversation represents the desired state and the informal, everyday conversation reflects the actual state of the organisation. Other studies found that informal and formal organisational change communication were as important as each other (Rouleau, 2005).

In the case study, within this research, participant diaries were used by employees to record the formal or informal nature of the narrative exchanged between the employee completing the diary and any person that participant spoke to about the change initiative. Data analysis compared the participant attitudes of change recipients who received multi-level storytelling communication and those who received traditional top-down change communication by formal and informal narrative. Additionally, the nature of the communication was compared between the group of retail Outlets that received multi-level storytelling organisational change communication and those that received traditional top-down change communication. Quantitative attitude responses from this study indicate that formal and informal narrative is equally influential on employee attitude to organisational change, regardless of whether participants received multi-level storytelling or not.
1.6 Change recipient attitude to change and achievement of organisational business objectives

The need for organisations to improve their achievement of organisational change business objectives is evidenced by the high failure rate of organisational change projects. A study by KPMG (2003) revealed that 66% of change projects undertaken by the project professionals surveyed did not achieve their business objectives (Nahmias, 2009). As a result the organisation loses its investment in these projects as well as lost opportunity to invest in other financial prospects (Nahmias, 2009).

In the case study, within this research, the researcher reviewed organisational documentation of quantitative business performance measures between the group of retail Outlets that received multi-level storytelling organisational change communication and the group that received traditional top-down change communication. This documentation revealed that multi-level storytelling organisational change communication resulted in greater performance and achievement of the organisational change business objectives than the group who received traditional top-down communication. Additionally, business performance in the group of retail Outlets that received traditional, top-down change communication was significantly lower than that of the remaining retail Outlets that did not experience any change. These findings suggest that storytelling as organisational change communication has a significant effect on change recipient attitude, which is linked to change recipient engagement and improved business performance.

1.7 The structure of this dissertation
Following this introduction, Chapter 2 presents a review of relevant literature, discussing the theory of organisational change communication, storytelling and employee sensemaking. This chapter provides empirical examples to support the discussion. Chapter 3 contains a description of the case study, research design and methodology utilised to address the research questions. Chapter 4 details both the data analysis undertaken and the findings of the study, relating these findings back to the literature in the form of emergent themes. This chapter also summarises the limitations of the study and proposes future research opportunities that may overcome these limitations. Chapter 5 reviews the findings of the study in relation to theory, and presents a conclusion based on these findings for a suggested approach for practitioners to consider when communicating process change. The Appendices contained copies of the documentation used during the case study, including the data collection instrument and detailed results of the data analysis. It is suggested that findings from this research will substantiate change management theory and also assist practitioners to utilise more effective change communication methods for organisational change processes (Sonenshein, 2010; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005).
Chapter 2 Literature Review

The aim of this literature review is to explain the fundamental concepts of organisational change and organisational change communication and to describe how these concepts relate to the research questions guiding this study. The literature review uses empirical research and theoretical papers to define themes identified in past literature and to provide an epistemological context for the discussion of storytelling as a method of organisational change communication. The discussion that follows builds on the seminal theory of organisational change proposed by Lewin (1951), and then centres specifically on contemporary social theory of organisational change communication. The review explains the need for research to assist in improving communication during times of organisational change and how multi-level storytelling could be an effective way to do so. The initial topic commences by explaining the factors influencing organisational change.

2.1 Organisational Change

Internal and external environmental factors define anticipatory and reactionary change in organisations (Johansson & Heide, 2008). Change unfolds by either leaders of organisations making a deliberate choice to transform their business, or organisational ecology dictating change to conform to customer demand, technology, regulation, or industry benchmarks (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Stacey, 1995). Where change results from choice it can be implemented strategically at any level, from an individual to the whole of organisation, impacting both structure and resource, to create an output that aligns with organisational objectives (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995; Rajagopalan & Spreitzer, 1997; Nadler & Tushman, 1989). A common form of organisational change is restructuring, which is undertaken to
achieve flexibility, cost-reduction and re-alignment of resources (Rhodes, Pullen & Clegg, 2009; Zorn, Christensen & Mangan, 1999; Johnson-Cramer & Cross, 2007). Competitive advantage can also be brought about by other kinds of organisational change, for example, leveraging customer data requires implementation of new systems, and innovative design requires the implementation of new process and practice (Kitchen & Daly, 2002; Porter, 2008).

Failure to change in response to internal and external environmental pressures can cost organisations money, momentum and market share (Sonenshein, 2010; Johnson-Cramer, Parise & Cross, 2007; Kotter, 1995). As a result, change is being introduced in organisations with more frequency, requiring longer periods of implementation and often in competition with other organisational changes (Lehn & Makhija, 1996; Eisenhardt & Brown, 1997; Huy, 2002; Turner & Rindova, 2012). The effectiveness and timeliness of organisational change implementation is therefore critical and employee engagement in change is essential for change to succeed (Sonenshein, 2010).

Process change is an aspect of organisational change specifically implemented to meet organisational efficiency and or effectiveness strategies (Kumar & Crook, 1999; Rouleau, 2005). It involves changing the fundamental reason a process is undertaken and re-engineering how the process is enacted, including altering employee actions by redefining procedures associated with the process (Jackson & Harris, 2003). Changing organisational process requires an understanding of organisational culture, key responsibilities and the environment encompassing and surrounding the organisation, business unit or team participating in the change (Burn & Robins, 2003; Buchanan et al., 2005). Organisations often introduce process change to employees as a program such as Total Quality Management or Six Sigma in an attempt to influence cultural, responsibility and environmental factors to create a positive attitude within change recipients towards changing
processes (Buchanan, Fitzgerald & Ketley, 2005; Klein, 2014). As there are many facets to process change it is commonly introduced in an incremental manner and requires change management through multiple stages of implementation. Frequently this task falls to the organisation’s middle managers (Klein, 1996; Jackson & Harris, 2003).

During process change, middle managers are required to manage business as usual activities as well as negotiate with their superiors and peers to reorganise assets and resources in an attempt to achieve change objectives (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; O’Reilly & Tushman, 2008; Abdallah, Denis & Langley, 2011). Additionally customer-facing employees have to handle direct feedback from customers about the effect the process change has had on them (Rouleau, 2005). Most process change is therefore reliant on these employees’ ability to adapt their behaviour, and real behavioural change can only be realised through effective communication and training (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Buchanan et al., 2005).

2.2 Organisational Change Communication

Historically, research and theory on successful organisational change focussed on how top management and change leaders communicate change down to employees (Burn & Robins, 2003). This focus on the importance of leadership in the execution of change communication placed a great deal of emphasis on leadership style and its effect on the successful implementation of change (Dunphy & Stace, 1993; Appelbaum, St-Pierre & Glavas, 1998; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Jackson (1997) argued that effective change leadership required clear vision and strong symbolic guidance, whilst Goleman (2004) described the importance of charismatic leadership, emphasising motivational direction and dissemination of organisational values. Kotter (1995) summarised the change communication approach used by an organisational leader as commencing with a ‘big bang’ vision that explained the high-
level organisational objectives of the change followed by a description of how this change linked to the organisation’s corporate strategy. This top-down method of communication has traditionally been employed for the introduction of major process change (Guha, Kettinger, & Teng, 1993; Frei, et al., 1999).

The initial change message and first year communications have been found to be as critical to ensuring the success of organisational change programs, specifically at the very first action of implementation (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Frahm & Brown, 2007). This initial communication is often crafted by the top leadership team to avoid specific details of the change in an attempt to apply relevance across a whole business unit or organisation and to inspire an urgent need for action (Kotter, 1995). Following the launch of the initial communication middle managers are briefed on details of the change and in effect they become agents for the change (Burns & Robins, 2002; Rouleau, 2005). Change details are then refracted through middle management to frontline employees, and the message received by those frontline employees can often be different to that communicated to middle management (Rouleau, 2005; Sonenshein, 2010).

### 2.3 Storytelling and Employee Sensemaking during organisational change

People seek out stories. They are central to human communication and the reason we have books, movies, plays, musicals, television, the media and games to entertain and inform us. Stories consist of a plot, characters and an understanding of the setting, especially the timing of how the plot unfolds (Boje, 1991). Organisational storytelling takes many forms, such as formal public artefacts, speeches and meeting discussions and also includes informal conversations, jokes and gossip (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007 and Balogun & Johnson, 2005).
Organisational stories appeal to employees because they provide social context, connectedness, engagement, and are enjoyable to retell (Taylor, Fisher & Dufresne, 2002).

The use of storytelling to communicate change in an organisation can be explained by both cognitive and behavioural theoretical fields. In its simplest form communication was described by Berlo (1960) as a message originating from a source that travels through a channel to the recipient. From a cognitive perspective fractal theory has been applied to organisational communication as the ability for each message to be interpreted in an infinite number of ways due to varying individual and environmental factors influencing the message (Wheatley, 1992). This is one explanation for why the top-down message of organisational change can be distorted as it permeates its way through different levels of the organisation.

Practitioners and theorists have instructed change leaders to use storytelling as a communication tool to unfreeze the existing organisational state, that is, to undertake the first phase in Lewin’s three phase model of change (Lewin, 1951; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Denning; 2006; Grisham, 2006; Marzec, 2007). Visionary stories are usually engineered for delivery in the first stages of organisational change and can be easily disseminated throughout the organisation and to the general public (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001). Such top-down stories are told as an aspiration for the future via an alternate pathway to success (Denning, 2006; Marzec, 2007). Denning (2006) believed organisational change stories should be simple and short, and include an explanation of why the proposed pathway was both appropriate and achievable. Single vision, top-down storytelling is functional in theory, as the key purpose of the story is to overcome what many theorists have thought to be, employees’ natural instinct to resist change (Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011).

Social Construction Theory provides a deeper explanation of why the top-down message of organisational change can be distorted as it permeates its way through different levels of the
organisation. Social Construction Theory specifically describes employees as organisational actors interrelating through story to make sense of, and form attitudes towards change (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld (2005) explained ‘sensemaking through narrative’, as the sharing of organisational knowledge and learning through understanding. He believed understanding of organisational change derived from shared narrative was then demonstrated by employees in the form of belief and action. Social Construction Theory suggests that the more compelling and believable the story, the more likely the employee will feel positive towards the change and engage in the change (Adamson et al., 2006).

This literature review highlights the importance of storytelling in understanding employee attitudes to change. Throughout the discussion reference was made to research and theory that describe variables that might influence storytelling during times of organisational change, like formal and informal channels of communication, cross-role communication, time’s influence on employee attitude to change and the significance of the customer story (Boyce, 1995; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Denning, 2005; Rouleau, 2005; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011).

2.4 The Customer Story

If an organisation mandates organisational change, and if that change is not directed purely for internal cost efficiency reasons, then it is likely the change will centre around quality improvement (Lengnick-Hall, 1996). By improving quality of service, product, production or supply, value is added to the organisation’s customers (Lengnick-Hall, 1996; Denning, 2005). Process change in particular may even be conceived from customer experience feedback
Jackson & Harris, 2002; Denning, 2005). Often the customer link is missed in the delivery of the organisational change story (Gorry & Westbook, 2011). Most frontline employees have strong relationships with their customers and these employees fear that by changing process the customer will be negatively impacted. If this fear is realised then employees have to consider how they will handle negative customer feedback about the change (Jackson & Harris, 2003). The customer story is traditionally used in advertising to explain product and service benefits to customers (Denning, 2005; De Large, 2010). However, limited empirical research has been conducted into the use of the customer story to communicate organisational change to employees. This review suggests enlisting the support of the customer to tell a story to employees about why proposed organisational change will be beneficial to the customer (De Large, 2010).

2.5 Why is there a need to improve organisational change communication?

The frequency, complexity and simultaneous nature of organisational change challenges management’s ability to engage stakeholders from multiple levels in the organisational change process (Johnson-Cramer, Parise & Cross, 2007). Recent literature has discussed the importance of communication between middle managers and change recipients in the successful implementation of organisational change (Sonenshein, 2010; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). Often middle management are unaware of the key role they play in engaging change recipients and are not provided with the opportunity to develop the communication skills required to disseminate the organisational change message across multiple levels of the organisation (Rouleau, 2005; Sonenshein, 2010).

How employees feel about organisational change greatly impacts their behaviour towards the change, in terms of their initial engagement and ongoing commitment (Kotter & Cohen,
2002; Buchanan, Fitzgerald & Ketley, 2005). Change practitioners have linked change recipients’ negative or ambivalent attitude to change with failed change initiatives (Kotter, 1995; Piderit, 2000; Klein, 1996). Additionally, observers have noted that both past experience with change and or the negative attitudes of peers can influence employee attitudes to become either negative or ambivalent to change (Piderit, 2000; Rhodes, Pullen & Clegg, 2009). It has also been discussed that once an initial negative attitude to organisational change has been established by an employee it can be very difficult to positively influence that attitude (Langer & Thorup, 2006; Sonenshein, 2010).

Through better understanding of the mechanisms of intra-organisational communication during organisational change implementation, organisational stakeholders can cooperatively develop simple, multi-level, communication plans that reduce the number of disaffected employees and improve internal stakeholder engagement in the change process. With improved stakeholder engagement during times of change, organisations can become more flexible in response to internal and external environmental pressures (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Roleau, 2005).

2.6 Resistance to Change

When change recipients choose not to engage in change this behaviour is termed ‘resistance to change’ (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). Resistance to change is often thought to be an individual’s instinctive fear of uncertainty and the possibility of negative consequences or loss as a result of a change (Dent & Goldberg, 1999; Dubrin & Ireland, 1993). This is a cognitive explanation of resistance and by its nature this explanation provides the change practitioner with a defeatist perspective that change recipient resistance will always be received at the commencement of organisational change (Gill, 2002). Many contemporary
theorists still classify employee resistance to organisational change as a reflexive, cognitive response to changing from a known path to an unknown path (Sonenshein, 2010). Yet as early as 1969 Lawrence urged managers to dismiss the assumption that all employees naturally resist change. He believed that by explaining change in layman’s terms and listening to feedback regarding employee concerns about a change, change implementation could be made easier. Less than a decade later it was proposed that careful consideration of how change is communicated reduces the likelihood of resistance (Flower, 1962).

The most common theory applied to organisational change implementation is the social psychologist Lewin’s three phase model of change (Lewin, 1951). Change was described by Lewin (1951) as a process of unfreezing an existing state, moving to a new state and then freezing in place that new state. Lewin described factors influencing a change situation as opposing systemic forces, including individual attitudes and beliefs that might assist or prevent movement to the new state (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). It was Lewin’s (1947) belief that for change to be successful either the negative forces against change should be lessened, or the positive forces for change increased. In essence these systemic forces controlled the likely level of resistance from change recipients.

Lewin’s (1951) change model has oft been interpreted as a need for top level management to unfreeze an existing organisational state and move to a new state by countering employees’ instinctive, negative opposing force to change, with a directive message of urgency (Buchanan et al., 2005). Theorists and practitioners have proposed that change leadership qualities and techniques are the most significant factors required to sell the message of urgency and overcome internal resisting forces to organisational change (Kotter, 1995; Graetz, 2000; Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006). Denning (2005) described how leaders should communicate in a way that challenges and inspires change recipients to overcome negative attitudes towards organisational change.
From a social construction perspective however, resistance to change occurs when change recipients misunderstand the change message. By not comprehending the benefit of the change to themselves they allow their own or other change recipients’ pre-conceived attitudes and beliefs to negatively influence their attitude towards the change. Social Construction Theory suggests that change practitioners should attempt to align the values and attitudes of change recipients with those of the organisation in order to describe the benefit of the change from the viewpoint of the individual employee (Zander, 1950; Pederit, 2000; Kirkman & Shapiro, 2001; Pardo del Val & Martínez Fuentes, 2003). Positive attitudes shared between organisational actors will reduce change recipient resistance to organisational change.

This study has been designed to expand on Denning’s (2005) assertion that to overcome employee resistance to change a compelling story should be told that overcomes any pre-existing negative attitudes that employees may have towards organisational change. The organisational change communication delivered in the study was designed by selected organisational change recipients in a way that they felt would overcome any pre-existing negative attitudes their peers may have to the change.

2.7 Change Agents

Another way senior management can communicate and support organisational change is through change agents. A team of change agents can rally employees to support change by influencing the attitude of change recipients through open discussion. The change agent team is usually comprised of members from the organisation nominated by top management to provide formal and informal communication and support to recipients of the change (Ford & Ford, 1976; Langer & Thorup, 2006). In the case of changing an organisational process the change agent is empowered to assist in process re-engineering by providing end user
relevance and assessment of the new process for any possible negative consequences (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007). Individuals who are chosen as change agents generally possess an understanding of the workplace within which the change will be undertaken (Langer & Thorup, 2006; Buchanan & Dawson, 2007; Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). Change agents provide change recipients with guidance and motivation, and they also manage challenges faced during the implementation of the change process with the aim of increasing recipient engagement (Ford & Ford, 1976; Nahmias, 2009).

Often change agent responsibilities fall to middle management who may be unaware of the key role they play in engaging change recipients. In his qualitative study analysing content and discourse in a Fortune 500 retailer, Sonenshein (2010) observed that middle management feel torn between the staff they oversee and top management they report to, often only paying lip service to the importance of the change, whilst commiserating with their employees about the pain the change will cause and preferring to downplay its significance (Huy, 2002). Middle management attitude during the change was described by Sonenshein (2010) as preservational was designed to reduce conflict. A manager’s relationship with their employees should be considered before the manager is appointed as a change agent. In fact, Graetz (2000) observed that if middle managers are not proactively engaged in the change process they themselves can become barriers to change recipient engagement.

As change agents, middle managers are required to balance workload and resources between assisting with the change process and conducting business as usual activities (O’Reilly & Tushman, 2008). To bear the increased workload brought about by organisational change, middle managers need a specific set of skills that Huy (2001) describes as entrepreneurial, communicative, therapeutic and acrobatic. Huy (2001) argues that active and effective change agents exercise emotional intelligence to navigate the complexity of change recipient attitude to organisational change. Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability and
willingness of managers to relate to employees’ changed circumstance, and their awareness of the best way to handle recipients’ reaction to change (Huy, 2002). Crawford & Nahmias (2010) suggest that most managers lack this level of emotional understanding of their employees (Langley, 2000; Huy, 2002). Any lack of empathy incubates existing negative attitudes and if these increasingly negative attitudes are in turn poorly managed, the manager’s role as change agent is compromised and the disengagement of recipients is reinforced (Huy, 2002; Gill 2002).

Recent literature has discussed the importance of ensuring well-planned communication between middle managers and change recipients to assist middle management successfully reprise the role of change agent (Sonenshein, 2010; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). Middle management is often not given the opportunity to understand the value they can provide, particularly in the communication of change implementation (Huy, 2001). These managers already have strong communication networks across multiple levels of the organisation and established informal feedback mechanisms (Huy, 2001; Kitchen & Daly, 2002). They know how to read the reactions of the change recipients who work for them and can not only interpret the change message in the natural language of the change recipient, but deliver it in a way that is not perceived as threatening (Huy, 2001).

Through a better understanding of the mechanisms of intra-organisational communication during organisational change implementation, organisational stakeholders can cooperatively develop simple, multi-level, communication plans that reduce the number of disaffected employees and improve internal stakeholder engagement (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Kitchen & Daly, 2002). Empowering change agents to leverage storytelling as a communication device to explain change in a language the recipients understand will assist in influencing recipients to understand the intention of the change and form a positive attitude towards it (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007; Bryant & Frahm, 2011). This can be very difficult at a time when the
organisation and its processes are in flux and people are less likely to commit to the organisational change message (Huy, 2002; Vakola & Nicolaou, 2005; Buchanan & Dawson, 2007).

An alternative to middle managers as change agents has been discussed in the literature. By identifying key resistors prior to the implementation of organisational change, giving these resistors responsibility for aspects of the change, and utilising them as change agents it has been proposed that their newly appointed accountability reduces the likelihood of their resistance (Flower, 1962). Practitioners have described resistance as useful to the change process as the passion and tension created by resistors can be leveraged to influence the attitude of others within the workgroup to create a sense of urgency (Weisbord, 1987; Johnson, 1992). Other authors have discussed the use of advocates of the organisational change as change agents or champions to influence resistors and change their attitudes in favour of the change (Ginsberg & Abrahamson, 1991). Kotter (1995) explained this idea further by describing the identification of key influencers within the organisation to use as change agents. Each of these alternatives to middle managers as change agents describes the use of change recipient employees themselves as agents to influence other change recipient attitude during organisational change.

Social Construction Theory explains the use of change agents as intervening in the normal organisational discourse that occurs during a time of change and leveraging key organisational actors who influence other employees through narrative (Weick & Quinn, 1999). By investing more time and effort increasing key resistor understanding of the benefit of the change these resistors are then encouraged to interact with other change recipients by positively changing the meaning of organisational change to other actors (Weick & Quinn, 1999). Positive attitudes shared between organisational actors will strengthen employee engagement in organisational change. With improved stakeholder engagement during times
of change, organisations can become more flexible in response to internal and external environmental pressures (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Roleau, 2005).

This study has been designed to expand on Weick & Quinn’s (1999) finding that leveraging key organisational actors through narrative can influence other employees’ attitudes to change. This study chose employees representing all roles receiving the change and deemed to be influencers within the organisation, and empowered them to design their own messages of organisational change. Additionally, this message of organisational change communication was then delivered by the same employees. Traditionally the organisational change communication would, in the organisation under case study, have been delivered by middle management.

2.8 Storytelling as Change Communication

Practitioners and theorists have instructed change leaders to use storytelling as a way to unfreeze the existing organisational state, that is, to undertake the first phase in Lewin’s three phase model of change (Lewin, 1951; Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Denning, 2006; Grisham, 2006; Marzec, 2007). These top-down stories are told as a compelling reason for change, a vision for the future with an alternate pathway to success, these stories can be easily disseminated throughout the organisation and to the general public (Kotter, 1995; Denning, 2006; Marzec, 2007). Denning (2006) believes this kind of organisational change story should be simple and short, and include an explanation of why the alternative pathway is both appropriate and achievable. Single vision, top-down storytelling is functional in theory, as the key purpose of the story is to overcome what many theorists have believed to be employees’ natural instinct to resist change (Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011). Adamson et al.’s (2006) examination of a case study during the introduction of changed delivery of patient care in a hospital saw employees
more motivated to achieve organisational change goals as a result of a compelling story. Such visionary stories are usually engineered for delivery in the first stages of organisational change (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Huy, 2001).

This top-down storytelling by management is not the only story that is told during times of organisational change. Beneath the surface of the organisation employees engage in everyday narrative. Historically, however, the use of narrative analysis had been dismissed as unreliable in business research, because stories by nature were believed to be fallacious, particularly when collected from employee sources (Sarbin, 1986; Rhodes & Brown, 2005). In 1991 Boje undertook ethnographic research at a time of organisational change in an office supply company. Analysing the recorded narrative he demonstrated how each change recipient’s own use of storytelling was an integral part of the change process. Boje’s (1991) study revealed that storytelling evolves and mutates as it makes its way through an organisation and is therefore constructed by more than one perspective. In contrast to the functionalist perspective, Boje’s (1991) study emphasised the importance of multiple narratives during organisational change. Boje’s (2006) inductive approach to the analysis of organisational discourse presented a deconstructive theory of organisational storytelling, where multiple voices destabilised the meaning of the top-down, functional message of change. These multiple voices found opportunities to undermine the proposed pathway to success (Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011). Such resistance presents the greatest obstacle for organisations attempting to move from a current strategy to a future strategy because employees relate better to stories than systems, numbers and graphs (Lewin, 1947; Lewin, 1951; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011). Stories of resistance are designed to evoke emotion and compete with the top-down organisational change narrative for acceptance over the life of the change process (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007). Emotional storytelling is often used as a tool by the disempowered to regain political Control of an organisational change process (Brown,
Gabriel & Gherardi, 2009; Langer & Thorup, 2006). In other words, the discourse that embodies organisational relationships is often defined by power and knowledge (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001). This depth of understanding of organisational narrative was only made possible through the use of narrative analysis (Rhodes & Brown, 2005; Buchanan & Dawson, 2007).

Boje’s (2006) deconstructive theory of organisational narrative was criticised due to his use of ethnographic research. From a social theory perspective, by embedding themselves within the organisation to record narrative, the researcher then becomes another actor in the change process, and the content and interpretation of the organisational actors’ stories may become influenced by the researcher’s agenda (Rhodes & Brown, 2005; Buchanan & Dawson, 2007). Yet Ford & Ford’s (1995) review of literature about communication and organisational change concluded that conversation was the currency of organisational change.

Subsequent researchers have identified the same employee narrative patterns during times of organisational change. Rouleau in her 2005 ethnographic study of a Canadian fashion house at a time of organisational re-orientation determined that informal conversations mattered as much as formal communications. In a phenomenological study of a not for profit organisation, Boyce (1995) differentiated formal, top-down narrative from casual, everyday storytelling. These findings were replicated by Heracleous & Barrett (2001) in a longitudinal case study undertaken at a time when the London Insurance Market was introducing electronic trading. Using hermeneutic analysis of discourse, Heracleous & Barrett (2001) described narrative as occurring both on the surface of an organisation and beneath it. This aligns with Johnson’s (1992) description of the organisational re-orientation paradigm, where the cultural reality of an organisation is much different to its declared culture. As a practitioner Johnson (1992) offered that introduced change is filtered by the paradigm so that it deviates from its intended meaning as it permeates throughout the organisation.
Whilst employee narrative is explained by deconstructive theory as a function of power and control, Social Construction Theory explains this dialogue as a function of understanding. Fisher (1989) believed that all humans tell stories to rationalise the world around them. In Taylor and Van Every’s (1999) book on communication within organisations, they proposed that individual attitudes and values influenced the different conversations and actions undertaken by employees as social actors. Social Construction Theory explores the use of narratives in organisations from an interpretive epistemology and constructivist ontology in an attempt to understand the influence of one organisational actor on another (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001). Heracleous & Barrett (2001) analysed individual narratives from the lower levels of organisations up, to try to understand how individual employees are influenced by both complementing and competing narratives the stakeholders of organisational change. In their five year study of two insurance brokers, Heracleous & Barrett (2001) explored the behavioural and social context of organisational change on individuals, and found that employee attitudes changed over the course of their research as a result of exposure to multiple narratives. In their constructivist study of corporate social responsibility in an oil petroleum company, Wehemeier & Schultz (2011) put this more simply by describing employees as actors, co-contributing stories during a situation of uncertainty to create social reality. This idea supports Johnson’s (1992) re-orientation paradigm that social reality during organisational change, as described by employee narrative, is often different to the intended top-down message of organisational change.

One interpretation of the re-orientation paradigm was discussed by Piderit (2000), whose literature review concluded that individual attitudes influence employee response to organisational change. Boje (1995) proposed that employees seek out stories for different perceptions of reality, in an attempt to form their own interpretation of what is occurring during the change. Applying these findings in an organisational change context, Fleming
(2001) described how intra-organisational storytelling was a way that employees clarified change. Gioia & Chittipeddi’s (1991) ethnographic study of a large university undergoing strategic change, found that employees try to make sense of proposed change from each of their own perspectives and experiences. In other words, employees are trying to make sense of what the change will mean to them and how the actions they choose in response to that change will be viewed by other employees (Wehemeier & Schultz, 2011).

Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld (2005), expanded on Social Construction Theory, conceptualising organisational sensemaking through ‘Enactment Theory’. This theory described individuals making sense of a situation as interrelated actors who choose relevant information from a selection of situational observations and stories, and then re-process this information as a story to reason why a situation occurred the way it did (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). Enactment Theory incorporates individual, group and organisational attitudes as fundamental to the individual reasoning process and draws on an individual’s past experience to define a plausible explanation that fits with how the individual is seen by others (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005; Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011). In their case study of a public-private partnership, Whittle, Mueller & Mangan (2009) discovered that employees developed characters and storylines to explain situations of change and protect pre-existing identity. Cuncliffe & Coupland (2012) agree that individuals act in response to their perceived identity and self-assess how realistic possible explanations for actions are, however they criticise Weick’s theory as being too cognitive. Their narrative analysis of a crisis situation in a sports team interpreted sensemaking as more of an embodiment of experience, including many forms of body language and feelings (Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012). Cuncliffe & Coupland, (2012) believed that emotion and individual values assisted an individual make sense of an unusual course of events, over time, after those events had occurred.
This study has been designed to expand on Cuncliffe & Coupland’s (2012) belief that narrative analysis influences change recipient sensemaking after the change has occurred and that employee narrative, along with emotion and individual values, influence employee attitude to change. The researcher collected data about change recipient attitudes to organisational change at the commencement, during and at the end of the organisational change period. The attitude of change recipients was measured as a function of narrative they exchanged with others about the organisational change.

2.9 Multi-Level Storytelling and Organisational Change

The role of middle management in storytelling during organisational change has been acknowledged by Social Construction Theory. In their interpretive, qualitative, case study of a privatised utility, Balogun & Johnson (2005) found that senior managers used formal channels to communicate with middle managers, whereas communication between middle managers and employees and middle managers and other middle managers was mostly undertaken informally. Their study observed that middle managers were mostly influenced by informal conversation and the findings emphasised the important role middle management plays in refracting the organisational change message (Balogun & Johnson, 2005).

In her study of strategic change in a top-of-the-line clothing company, Roleau (2005) found that managers who were successful at selling change tailored the message of change to individual factors such as gender and ethnicity, and leveraged off personal commonalities with the change recipient. Maitlis (2005) qualitative ethnographic study of three symphony orchestras showed that leaders assisted employees make sense of what was going on around them and that the animation and Control expended by the sense giver affected the
sensemaker’s understanding and care for an issue. It is proposed that managers who actively expend a great deal of effort to have their stories stand out and appear more believable and emotional than other actors have more influence over their employees (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007).

Considering functional, deconstructive and social construction theories of storytelling in organisations during times of change, Sonenshein (2010) aimed to find evidence to support his belief that resistance to change was multi-dimensional, born from a sensemaking process commenced by middle management’s initial communication of change and not from a natural reaction to change. In his qualitative study analysing content and discourse in a Fortune 500 retailer, Sonenshein (2010) found that managers simultaneously told preservational and progressive narratives to employees regarding organisational change, and that the meaning of these narratives changed over time. Sonenshein (2010) concluded that middle managers did this in an attempt to make the change message appear more credible to their subordinates. Additionally, he observed that employees constructed their own meaning of the functional top-down change message from both the constructive or deconstructive narrative they were exposed to from different levels of the organisation. Sonenshein (2010) concluded that the narrative of other organisational actors, organisational context, and individual factors determine an employees’ own construction of meaning in response to change.

Further investigation of multiple organisational narratives is important. In their review of narrative research in organisations Wehmeier & Schultz (2011) use Bakhtin’s (1984) term polyphonic, to explain how multiple organisational voices determine the outcome of a changed situation. The term polyphonic was created by Bakhtin (1984) to differentiate Dostoevsky’s multiple perspective storytelling style from a traditional author directed story. Wehmeier & Schultz (2011) propose that the storyline of organisational change develops in the direction that organisational actors take it, rather than from top-down, monological
Control over organisational communication (Whittle, Mueller & Mangan (2009); Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011). Langer & Thorup, (2006) use the analogy that employees belong to an organisation as instruments belong to an orchestra, with each instrument contributing equally to the outcome of the change. Using participatory action research, co-productive methods and appreciative enquiry, Langer & Thorup’s, (2006) case study of an airline during a significant period of change concluded that the use of polyphonic storytelling was effective at aligning employee attitudes to organisational change.

Sonenshein (2010) provided qualitative evidence to support the researcher’s belief that storytelling is not just a singular, top-down, factor in organisational change, but that storytelling between and within different organisational levels contributes to employee attitudes to change. Bryant and Frahm (2010) liken this phenomenon to a multi-genre movie where certain stories and characters appeal to different segments of the audience, and that appeal then determines audience interest in, and understanding of, the storyline. It is supposed that the more an employee relates to the story of change, the more likely they will be to understand and appreciate that change. The idea of polyphonic storytelling representing different levels of an organisation aligns with some theorists’ belief that employee participation in organisational change improves its chance of success (French & Bell, 1995; Kotter, 2007; Carnall, 2007). After interviewing employees of a technology company that had recently been downsized, Rhodes, Pullen & Clegg (2009) proposed that providing change recipients with multiple interpretations of change could decrease the likelihood of employee inertia. Additionally, recent research and theory has proposed that multiple stories reflecting different benefits of change work more effectively to reduce employee resistance to change by appealing to individual factors and assisting change recipients to make sense of change (Bryant & Frahm, 2011; Roleau, 2005; Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012; Rhodes, Pullen & Clegg, 2009; Fenton & Langley, 2011).
If the narratives of different levels of an organisation are interpreted as dialects, it is proposed that each dialect represents a separate set of attitudes (Czarniawska, 1998). In their theoretical paper Kitchen & Daly (2002) advise the importance of communicating in the words of the change recipient and constructing communications plans that address both formal and informal communication strategies. Kreitner (1992) suggested that resistance is contagious, and each unique situation breeds its own form of resistance. He advocated a different approach to communicating change, dependant on each unique situation and possible form of resistance. In the context of storytelling this could be interpreted as the development of tailored stories of change (Kreitner, 1992). This study has been designed to expand on Wehmeier & Schultz’ (2011) idea of polyphonic storytelling to ensure organisational change communication represents the benefit of organisational change to all organisational levels involved in the change process. The researcher designed the change message in this study to be delivered by stakeholders who are representative of each organisational level affected by the change, and delivered in an organisational dialect tailored to each organisational level of change recipient.

2.10 Knowing the Customer

A very influential voice in multi-level storytelling is the voice of the customer. Internal and external customer experiences must be important considerations in any change, however, this is particularly true of change that impacts frontline employees. The change practitioner Denning (2005) has described the importance of using storytelling as a simple way of explaining how change will function in a given situation and what value it will add to the customer. He suggests that communications plans should actively seek out the customer story to describe the benefit of the change to the customer in comparison to the current
problems being experienced by the customer (Boje, 1991; Denning, 2005; Rouleau, 2005). The customer story is particularly beneficial for frontline employees because they have a personal connection with the customer (Johnson-Cramer, Parise & Cross, 2007; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011). The use of the customer story also assists the organisation to influence employee attitude and develop a customer-oriented culture, however, the customer story will not work if the culture of the organisation is in direct opposition to customer commitment (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011).

The literature recommends explaining the customer perspective as a compelling story. Consider when and where formal and informal narratives take place, and to include these places and times in the communication plan as the means to tell new change stories repeatedly to various stakeholders (Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012). Customer stories require a plot, characters, and an understanding of the setting, especially the timing of how the plot unfolds (Boje, 1991). Often employees identify their relationships with customers as genuine and personal (Cutcher, 2008a). Use customers in change stories as victim characters and employees as hero characters, with a current state, negative situation compared to a future state positive outcome (Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012). Cutcher (2008a) advises the use of nostalgia to engage employees in improving customer service through emotional connection. As part of the story highlight where employees are falling short of the perfect pattern of changed behaviour, remembering that the best customer stories are ones which are convincing and empathetic so that the employee can put him or herself in the place of the customer (Boje, 1991; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011; Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012). In essence learnings from the past assist the employee to understand the need for change (Cutcher, 2008a). Use real life examples that repeat the same theme and give a lucid argument in favour of genuine care for the customer that the employee can respect (De Large, 2010).
Change agents will need to be trained to understand the customer perspective and use first person narrative to assist change recipients to understand the purpose of the change and why a customer would welcome the change (Denning, 2005). Customer feedback first hand can be very powerful and the thought of being confronted by customers unhappy about the change can frighten frontline employees into sticking to what they know rather than adopting the change (Bell & Luddington, 2006; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011). At the time of a customer impacting change the advantage of the change should be explained to the customer in comparison to competitors and peers so it seems like the employee is knowledgeable and is giving the customer inside information and assurance (Rouleau, 2005, De Large, 2010). Cutcher’s (2008c) comparative case study analysis of two customer owned banks described how the way in which customer impacting change is delivered to frontline employees can negatively affect the relationship between employees and customers. True understanding of customer need is often compromised and at the mercy of technology, however, Gorry & Westbrook (2011) suggest that electronic networking provides a mechanism by which customers can share their needs, stories and experiences. In the midst of the change, change agents should measure customer responses and share these stories as examples of how the change has positively impacted customers including customer surveys, benchmarking and mystery shopping (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011). This provides the additional benefit of a feedback loop where employees can feel empowered about tweaking the change process based on these stories to make the customer experience even better (Balogun & Johnson, 2005).

Then comes the time to ask the key question: is the change working? If the answer is no then consider the following: Functionally is the change meeting customer need? From a deconstructive viewpoint, is there an underlying culture or political agenda that is opposed to the change? Is there compromise or additional training that can be used to improve
organisational knowledge of the change? From a social construction perspective do change recipients truly understand the purpose and benefit of the change? If the reasoning for the change has been clearly explained in multiple ways and from multiple perspectives, including the customer’s story, and some of the change recipients comprehend the reasoning and engage yet a component of recipients continue to resist, then consider the cognitive concept of Theory of Mind.

Theory of Mind describes an individual’s ability to understand the reasoning of another individual. Only humans have this ability yet many choose to ignore it (Gorry & Westbrook, 2011). Neurological constraints determine Theory of Mind and people with autism, for example, possess varying levels of understanding of another’s thought processes (Scholl & Leslie, 1999). In other words, no matter how the explanation of change is delivered, some people do not have the capability to understand the reasoning of the actors in the story benefiting from the change (Fletcher et al., 1995). If this is true, perhaps screening change agents through questions and comprehension exercises that establish each individual’s Theory of Mind may be a proactive approach to minimising resistance (Fletcher et al., 1995). It would be interesting to test change agents in a similar way to establish if they are more likely to understand the benefit the organisational change will bring to internal and external customers, and therefore more likely to engage in the change process, because they can comprehend the value the change will bring (Zunshine, 2006).

2.11 The Temporality of Employee Attitude to Change

Change implementation takes time (Gersick, 1994; Boeker, 1997; Huy, 2001; Amis, Slack, & Hinnings, 2004). In Jansen’s (2004) mixed method, 10 month longitudinal study of organisational culture change in a military academy, the initial top-down change message
delivered by a strategic leader was lost over time, and the intervention of other events during the change influenced how change recipients perceived that change. Several other studies have provided examples of employee resistance overcoming change, despite a clear vision and strong leadership (Nadler & Tushman, 1994; Pardo del Val & Martínez Fuentes, 2003; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001). Similarly, researchers have found that resistance demonstrated by change recipients is exacerbated when employees discover part way through the change that their attitudes and values do not align with that of the change leader, or if the change is perceived to negatively impact their personal position within the organisation (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991).

Boje (1991) proposed that the success of storytelling during change is to know when to tell the appropriate story to the appropriate recipients at the appropriate time. Gioia & Chittipeddi’s (1991) 12 month longitudinal study of an organisational change initiative in a public university found that employees’ sensemaking is cyclical over time in response to management’s sense giving actions. There is also evidence to indicate that employees are more resistant to organisational change when it becomes continuous and or simultaneous (Eisenhardt & Brown, 1997; Turner & Rindova 2012). It would seem that good leadership and alignment of values and attitudes alone do not guarantee the successful implementation of organisational change post-implementation, but reiteration of the change message may be important in countering change recipient resistance.

Some studies have proposed that once an initial negative attitude to organisational change has been established by an employee it can be very difficult to positively influence that attitude (Langer & Thorup, 2006; Sonenshein, 2010). Jansen (2004) and other researchers (Nadler & Tushman, 1994; Pardo del Val & Martínez Fuentes, 2003; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001) demonstrated how the initial change message can be lost over time when change resisters influence how other change recipients perceive change. A 15 year longitudinal, ethnographic
A study of a tertiary education institution undertaken by Humphreys & Brown (2002), interpreted shared narrative as a way to create individual and collective identities, and that these identities are constantly redefined by further shared narrative over time. Social Construction Theory would suggest that organisational identity can only exist after enough time has expended for organisational actors to exchange narrative and make sense of the change. This theory infers that by framing the message of organisational change within an identity reference that employees can relate to, their ability to make sense of the change will result in more immediate engagement and less susceptibility to stories of resistance. Cuncliffe & Coupland, (2012) believed that shared narrative alone was not enough for actors to make sense of change. Emotion and individual values assisted an individual make sense of an unusual course of events, over time, after those events had occurred (Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012).

This study has been designed to expand on Cuncliffe & Coupland’s (2012) belief that narrative analysis influences change recipient sensemaking after the change has occurred. This study seeks to analyse change recipient attitudes and understand how much formal and informal storytelling contributes to the formation of their attitudes over time. Based on the literature reviewed, it is likely that change recipients will modify their attitude to change over time, middle managers will play a fundamental role in refracting the top-down functional story of change, and change recipients will be more receptive to messages of change from their peers, the individuals whose identity is closest to their own. The researcher designed the study to collect change recipient attitudes to organisational change at the commencement, during and at the end of the organisational change period. The attitude of change recipients was measured as a function of the narrative they exchanged with others about the organisational change.
2.12 The Research Contribution

This literature review highlights the absence of research relating to the effect of multi-level storytelling on employee attitudes, within the context of organisational change. Wehmeier & Schultz (2011) suggest that polyphonic storytelling is the tool management has been searching for to validate communication within an organisation (Taylor, Fisher & Dufresne, 2002). Whilst research to date has identified that storytelling helps organisations learn, and that real attitudes to change are formed through informal and formal narrative, no studies have been completed to investigate the effect of scripted multi-level storytelling on employee attitude during organisational change, nor to understand its influence on employee attitude over time (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005; Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011; Sonenshein, 2010; Roleau, 2005).

The research and concepts comprising Social Construction Theory provide a basis for the thematic framework and qualitative methodology under which the research to follow in this dissertation was conducted. This research delivers scripted multi-level storytelling to frontline employees during the introduction of a new change process in an attempt to improve employee understanding and engagement in the new change process. It is argued that employee attitude to change is influenced by the polyphonic nature of organisational storytelling, and it is this interdependent storytelling that should be harnessed to positively influence the outcome of organisational change.

The research described in the remainder of this dissertation will provide change leaders with an understanding of how to utilise multi-level storytelling, to improve stakeholder engagement, across multiple levels of the organisation. Research findings could also assist change leaders understand why certain stakeholder groups cannot work together to implement organisational change (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001). It is expected that findings
from resulting research will assist practitioners to develop less ambiguous organisational change narratives for managers and incorporate informal storytelling in organisational change communication plans (Sonenshein, 2010). The resulting research will raise awareness that employees require sensemaking skills to help them make better decisions during unfamiliar situations and identify better social skills for middle managers to relate to employees, in determining how best to translate change (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005; Roleau, 2005).

This study was been designed to expand on Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s (2005) Enactment Theory, by investigating to what degree, if at all, narrative exchanged between employees during organisational change assists change recipients make sense of organisational change. The researcher designed the collection of change recipient attitudes to organisational change during a period of organisational change as a function of narrative they exchanged with others about the organisational change. Change recipient attitude to organisational change was used as a measure of the influence other stakeholders of the change had over the participants of the study.

Research was conducted to evaluate the role of communication in organisational change management, specifically the effect of storytelling on the formation of change recipient attitude to change. The research design was a natural experimental design based around a process change occurring in a financial institution with a retail footprint across two states of Australia. Six Outlets of similar size and volume that were undertaking the trial change process were selected for the study. Three Outlets were Control groups, where staff experienced a traditional one-off, top-down change communication, while three other Outlets experienced greater, more structured communication involving storytelling from various levels of the organisation.

The research questions were:
1 How, if at all, does storytelling impact employee attitude to organisational change?

1.1 What affect does communication between and across roles have on employee attitude to change?

1.2 What role does time play in employee attitude to change?

1.3 Does the formal or informal nature of communication affect employee attitude to change?

1.4 To what extent does attitude affect formal change management outcomes?

The study identified themes regarding organisational change communication that emerged from qualitative data volunteered by participants. This research determines the value of storytelling during process change implementation where change recipients were customer-facing employees. The research captures the attitude of change recipients as a measure of the effectiveness of storytelling delivered as both formal and informal narratives from multiple voices. Change recipient attitude was captured over the life of the change implementation period and compared to the business outcomes of the change to determine how, if at all, change recipient attitude affected the achievement of change objectives. If attitudes impact the achievement of change objectives then there is value in investing in the development of storytelling skills for change agents and including storytelling in communication plans.
Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to offer an investigative discussion, based on literature and research evidence, around the benefit of communicating organisational change through multiple narrative perspectives. This discussion is underpinned by accepted concepts about organisational change, organisational change communication, employee attitude, and employee engagement during times of organisational change. The case study, within this research, centres around the effect storytelling has on change recipient attitude and business performance, where attitude is used as a measure of change recipient understanding, and business performance is used as a measure of change recipient engagement. Change recipient sensemaking forms the framework of this discussion, influenced largely by Social Construction Theory. The discussion refers to several important factors that could possibly influence change recipient attitude to storytelling during times of organisational change. These factors include role of the change recipient, how the story is delivered and time elapsed after delivery of the initial change communication. Chapter 3 includes a description of the research method, design appropriateness, the case study under investigation, data selection, data analysis, validity and ethical issues. The chapter finishes with a discussion of the validity and reliability of the data and ethical considerations.

3.2 The Approach
3.2.1 Ontological Perspective

The data from this study was collected, analysed and interpreted within a constructivist framework. The study was designed to better understand employees’ experience of organisational change communication (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Participants were treated as organisational actors whose narrative interactions were likely to assist participants to construct each other’s actual attitudes to, and engagement with, organisational change. The researcher was very familiar with the organisation in this case, as well as the organisational change being undertaken, and therefore drew on their experience of change within the context of the organisation when designing this study (Creswell, 2002). Although the design of this research was born from Social Construction Theory that had been generated from previous empirical research, more specifically this study explores Enactment Theory, to further derive meaning regarding employee sensemaking during times of organisational change (Creswell, 2002; Sonenshein, 2010; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). Unlike prior constructivist research, this study primarily employed a positivist method to gather data about the effect of organisational change communication on employee attitude to organisational change.

3.2.1 Mixed Method Design

From Boje’s (1991) seminal ethnographic research of organisational narrative during times of organisational change to the observational research of sports team video footage by Cuncliffe and Coupland (2011), organisational change communication research has been delivered using qualitative research methods. This study has been designed to expand on Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s (2005) Enactment Theory by investigating to what degree, if at all,
narrative exchanged between employees during organisational change assists change recipients make sense of organisational change. Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld (2005) proposed Enactment Theory without themselves conducting any empirical supporting research.

This study bears some resemblance to Sonenshein’s (2010) research that analysed the content and discourse within a retail organisation experiencing organisational change. There is also a similarity to Roleau’s (2005) ethnographic investigation into middle management’s role in organisational change communication. Analysis of discourse within organisations is usually interventionist in nature, where storytelling is used to derive meaning by defining and understanding a problem (Grant & Iedema, 2005). Social construction specifically attempts to determine logic that lies beneath the surface dialogue (Pieterse, Caniels & Homan, 2012). This study, however, utilised a more pragmatic approach to developing further theory about organisational change communication (Creswell, 2002).

The researcher deliberately designed meaning in an attempt to test the variables of story and storyteller relevance, regarding employee attitude to, and engagement with, organisational change by testing and to capture commentary that might induce possible theories of causality (Van de Ven, & Poole, 2005). The researcher did this by structuring the study to collect quantitative data and qualitative data relating to employee attitudes, as well as conducting qualitative analysis of quantitative data collected independently of the research (Van de Ven, & Poole, 2005). A key issue with the mixed method approach is that the detail and independence of the qualitative data is compromised (Phillips & Oswick, 2012; Gioa, Corley & Hamilton, 2013). The purpose of this mixed method approach was to test previously proposed theory and delve deeper into theories of causality, if not upheld, the researcher can attempt to deconstruct the theory (Humphreys & McIvor, 2006; Easterby, Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Additionally, the adoption of a positivist approach assisted the organisation
to provide reasoning for a business case to quantify the benefit of the adoption of the new storytelling change process (Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas & Van de Ven, 2013). By employing multiple research strategies the researcher offers a unique interpretation of the effect of organisational change communication on employee attitude and employee engagement (Creswell, 2002).

**Employee attitudes**

Few studies about organisational change communication have applied a positivist approach and quantitative methods to the analysis of the issue (Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006). Although the aim of this study was to gather interpretive theory, as no previous research had been conducted into the use of scripted multi-level storytelling during organisational change, a positivist foundation was built upon which interpretive analysis of change recipient attitude could be conducted (Creswell, 2002). Qualitative information was collected as a means to assist interpretive analysis of change recipient attitude, and to better evaluate possible causes of quantitative results, especially in the event of conflicting or unexpected results. Additionally, the qualitative method increased the volume of responses per participant as the case study sample size was small (Gorry & Westbrook, 2011). Although the qualitative data was treated second in importance to the quantitative data, the data collection instrument used to collect both was adapted from similar qualitative tools used in social science research (Grandey, Tam and Brauburger, 2002; Butler, Grzywacz, Bass, & Linney, 2011). The tool relied on participant experiences to populate quantitative and qualitative responses.
Employee engagement

A second set of qualitative data was used to interpret change recipient engagement. Content analysis was performed on existing reporting provided by the case study organisation to the researcher that described any achievement of the organisation’s business objectives. The aim of this content analysis was to determine if a link existed between organisational change communication and change recipient performance. The researcher based this strategy on the assumption that achievement of the organisation’s business objectives would be representative of change recipient engagement in the change process.

3.3 The Case Study

This study was based around a departmental change process that occurred in a financial institution, described in this dissertation as Coast and Country, for a trial period between September and November 2013. Coast and Country had a retail geographic footprint across two states of Australia and belonged to a set of institutions known as customer owned banks, where there are no shareholders and profit is redirected to improve products and services. The frontline employees of Coast and Country, like many customer owned banks, had developed very strong, personal relationships with its customers. The departmental change was a re-engineered process for how frontline employees sold products and services to customers who did not have existing accounts with the financial institution. The average number of products and services held by each new customer was just over one. The primary business objective of the process change was to significantly increase the average number of products and services sold per new customer in the trial Treatment group Outlets during the trial period. A number of benefits would be realised by increasing the average number of
products and services held by new customers. Firstly the value of the customer’s product and service portfolio increased; secondly there was a decreased likelihood of the customer holding products and services with competing financial institutions; finally it was more difficult for customers to change over their products and services to another financial institution. An ancillary purpose of the trial was to test the practicality of the new process before designing an electronic system to support the process.

A representative team, comprised of frontline employees, designed the new Coast and Country product and service process in a way they believed would increase the average number of products and services sold per new customer. The new process purpose changed from providing new customers with products and services they asked for, to providing the same customers with products and services they needed (Refer to Table 3.1). The trial was approved by the financial institution for a two month period, but was extended mid-way to three months due to a lower than expected volume of new customer acquisition in the first two months of the trial. There were six procedural differences that the frontline employee was required to undertake during the trial to drive this change in process:

1. The customer was identified as a new at the outset of any initial conversation with that customer
2. The new customer was requested to take a seat away from the counter to allow for a more comfortable conversation with the employee
3. The employee used a list of products and services the financial institution offered to conduct a needs analysis with the new customer
4. The employee asked the new customer to take up the product or service discussed
5. The employee recorded the outcome of the conversation with the new customer and any follow-up calls that employee may need to make to the new customer in the future
6. The employee followed the customer up on an agreed date and time to ask the customer to take up the product or service discussed.

Table 3.1 Procedural Differences between the Original and New ‘Coast & Country Product or Service Enquiry Process’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th>Step 4</th>
<th>Step 5</th>
<th>Step 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORIGINAL</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>ORIGINAL</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>ORIGINAL</td>
<td>NEW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A brand new customer comes in and asks about a product or service they are not identified as a new or existing customer.
- The employee continued to have a conversation with the customer whilst they were both standing at the counter.
- The employee discussed the product or service the customer has asked about and may or may not recall a more suitable product or service for the customer.
- The employee gives the customer time to decide if they are interested in the product or service.
- The employee waited for the customer to return to the outlet.

The employee recorded the outcome of the conversation and any follow-up calls the customer agreed to receive from the employee.

Each of these procedural differences represented an aspect of quality in the interaction employees had with new customers. Achievement of the business objective of the change trial was reliant on individual employee performance during the trial. At the time of the study the financial institution had 64 customer-facing Outlets. The operational manager of these Outlets chose six Outlets to represent varying geographic locations, varying levels of existing Outlet performance (in terms of average products and services per new customer per Outlet) and varying Outlet layouts (customer lounge, an available office and no available office) across the Outlet network. These Outlets were treated as the trial Treatment group and they had to undertake the new product or service enquiry process with new customers during the trial period. The operational manager then chose an additional 6 Outlets that closely matched...
each of the Outlets in the trial Treatment group based on the criteria described above. This, second set of 6 Outlets, were treated as the trial Control group and they continued to use the original product and service enquiry process. Three further Outlets were chosen to undertake the new product or service enquiry process during the trial period but this was for research purposes only, they were not part of Coast and Country’s analysis of the achievement of the trial’s business objectives (refer to Figure 3.1 and section 3.4.2 Design for more details about research Outlets). The remaining 49 Coast and Country Outlets were referred to as the Rest of the Network. All Coast and Country Outlets frontline employees consisted of an Outlet Manager, a Team Leader and three Service Representatives.
The business objective of the process change (a significant increase in the average number of products and services sold per new customer) was determined by comparing the trial Treatment group Outlets against three baseline measures (refer to Table 3.2). The first baseline measure was in comparison to the trial Control group Outlets in the trial period of
the same year. The second baseline measure was in comparison to the same trial Treatment group Outlets in the same time period of the previous year. The third baseline measure was in comparison to the rest of the retail network branches, excluding the trial Treatment and trial Control groups.

Table 3.2 Measures Used by Coast and Country to Determine Achievement of the ‘New Product or Service Enquiry Process’ Trial Business Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF MEASURE</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TIMEFRAME</th>
<th>GROUP OF OUTLETS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Objective Measure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Trial period</td>
<td>Trial Treatment group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline Measures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Trial period</td>
<td>Trial Control group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Trial period</td>
<td>Rest of the Network group (All Outlets excluding the Treatment and Control groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Same dates as the 2014 Trial period</td>
<td>Treatment group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.1 Case Study Context

Before the trial, Coast and Country was reporting a low average product and service rate per new customer. It needed to grow the average product and service rate to remain competitive in the marketplace. The organisation had historically retained a customer service focus in its Outlet network with little appreciation for sales. Employees generally viewed their lack of focus on sales of products and services as a positive distinguishing feature from larger banking institutions, and many employees believed this was why customers chose to bank
with Coast and Country. In an attempt to address this employee mind set, a sales program had been launched a few years before the trial of the new product or service enquiry process to familiarise employees with the importance of sales as a means to improve customer service. The program was implemented through electronic, team meeting and refresher training staged over an 18 month period. This program received mixed results across the network.

At the time of the new product or service enquiry process trial frontline employees of the Outlet networks came from a diverse range of backgrounds. Some employees had worked most of their career with Coast and Country, often over a decade, and some employees were relatively new to the organisation and had been hired for their previous experience in sales driven environments. The employees varied across age, gender and individual performance results. Aside from the sales program introduced a few years before the trial, employees from the Outlet networks had experienced very little change to organisational process, and the systems they used to service their customers had been structured to support a service rather than a sales driven workforce.

3.3.2 Case Selection

This case was chosen because the researcher had unique access to a case that was representative of a time in which an organisation would require organisational change communication to frontline employees. The case also presented an opportunity to observe employee attitude to change over time. The researcher had observed resistance to organisational change from employees when the previous sales program had been implemented across the Outlet network. The organisation’s new process trial was viewed as
an instrumental case because implementing process change to frontline employees is a common phenomenon, however, the choice of a single case study limited generalisation of results across organisations and industries. The case provided an opportunity to study employee actions and belief systems simultaneously from the ontological perspective of constructionism.

3.4 Research design – Employee Attitude

3.4.1 Design rationale

This study was designed to investigate both employee attitude and employee engagement during an organisational process change.

Employee Attitude

To examine employee attitude the researcher employed a mixed method approach to data collection and analysis, within a positivist structure partially determined by the researcher and partially determined by Coast and Country. The researcher chose to leverage the structure and delivery defined by Coast and Country within this particular case study to realise process change within the organisation. The researcher added the variable of organisational change communication to the positivist framework already defined by Coast and Country for their new product or service enquiry process trial. Leveraging the existing trial framework allowed the researcher adequate time to prepare the data collection
instrument for the trial. This decision also reduced the impact to Coast and Country regarding scheduling of Outlets and employees to participate in the research, as well as reducing the time taken to deliver the research proposal to participants, overall allowing the researcher the opportunity to conduct the study with minimal negative impact on the organisation’s day to day operations. The researcher considered utilising more of the Outlets engaged in Coast and Country’s new product and service process trial for the study, however, this would have added to the preparation, distribution, delivery of procedures and collection of data because the Outlets were geographically disparate. An agreement by Coast and Country to participate in the research was made within weeks of the trial commencing, the researcher was required to respond quickly, in order to take advantage of the unique nature of the case.

Within this positivist framework a single data collection instrument gathered both quantitative and qualitative information about participant attitude during the new process trial. Other data collection instruments were considered, like surveys, interviews, or observation, however, the data collection instrument used in this study was regarded as less time consuming to prepare, easier to distribute and deliver, as well as a simpler way to collect. This data collection instrument was likely to minimise disruption to the day to day operations of Coast and Country. The data collection instrument did, however, rely heavily on active participation during the length of the trial.

**Employee Engagement**

To examine employee engagement the researcher employed a qualitative approach to understand engagement by whether the new product or service enquiry process trial achieved
its business objectives. The researcher was seeking to understand if a link existed between achieving or failing to achieve business objectives and employee engagement in the change process. This qualitative approach involved analysing data that had been collected by Coast and Country within a positivist structure determined by the organisation for the new product or service enquiry process trial. The researcher chose to leverage the structure and delivery defined by Coast and Country within this particular case study to examine the variable of business performance, already defined by Coast and Country. Leveraging the existing trial framework gave the researcher adequate time to prepare for the process change. This decision again provided the researcher with the opportunity to conduct the study with minimal negative impact on Coast and Country day to day operations.

3.4.2 Design

The research design was natural and experimental (refer to Figure 3.2). At the time of the study the financial institution had 64 customer-facing Outlets and all 64 Outlets formed part of the research. Three Coast and Country Outlets that were not part of either the trial Treatment or trial Control groups acted as the research Control group, where staff experienced traditional change communication passed down from top management to middle management to Outlet employees. Three Outlets from the trial Treatment group comprised the research Treatment group and they experienced greater, more structured change communication. Refer to Figure 3.2 which illustrates the how the research was overlaid onto Coast and country’s new product and service enquiry trial. This multi-level communication was delivered in the form of stories from various levels of the organisation, where each storyteller presented compelling narrative in favour of the new change process (Langer &
Thorup, 2006; Buchanan & Dawson, 2007; Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). These individual stories were presented together in the format of a 10 minute video to the frontline employees of each research Treatment groups (refer to Figure 3.3). The research Control Outlets were chosen to match the research Treatment Outlets in relation to geographic locations across the Outlet network, levels of existing Outlet performance (in terms of average products and services per new customer per Outlet) and Outlet layouts (customer lounge, an available office and no available office). Frontline employees from both the research Treatment group and the research Control group were expected to undertake the new product or service enquiry process within their Outlets.
Figure 3.2 Coast and Country New ‘Product or Service Enquiry Process’ Trial Structure by Outlets Overlaid by the Research Design of This Study
To achieve the purpose of this research, that is, to offer an investigative discussion around the benefit of communicating organisational change through multiple narrative perspectives, the study measured the research Treatment group in comparison to the research Control group (refer to Table 3.3). Outlet Managers were treated as a first layer of middle management in between the Outlet Network Manager and the Team Leaders. Outlet Managers were nominated by Coast and Country financial institution as change agents for the new product and service enquiry process.

**Employee roles**

**TABLE 3.3 Measures Used to Determine Achievement of Research Objectives**
Research Objective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trial period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Treatment group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparative Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<td></td>
<td>1. 2014</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Trial period</td>
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<td>Research Control group</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Research Treatment Group

The research Treatment group received communication about the new product or service enquiry process in the form of multi-level storytelling. All employees belonging to each research Treatment Outlet were delivered the communication within their own Outlet. All Outlet employees watched a video consisting of five, two minute endorsements for the new product or service enquiry process, relayed as separate stories from an executive, business unit manager, Outlet manager, team leader and service representative. Each of these stories presented a different rationale for why the change in process was a good idea. The executive spoke about how the change in process linked to strategy and contributed to the future of the organisation. The business unit manager shared poor customer experience stories about the existing process and explained that the objective of this initiative was to improve customer experience. The Outlet manager described how the new process tool would assist managers to better coach and mentor their staff and therefore help them in their role. The team leader described how the new process would add value by increasing customer satisfaction. Finally, the service representative pointed out how the new change process would help Outlet employees in their customer service role, by improving the quality of the interactions they had with customers. The Outlet manager, team leader and service representative were chosen by the business unit manager to deliver the video messages because they had formed part of the team that designed the new product or service enquiry process. These employees
had also expressed what the business unit manager deemed to be genuinely positive attitudes towards the new process. Additionally, the three frontline employees who spoke as a part of the change communication video did not belong to any of the Outlets chosen to be part of either the new product or service enquiry process trial, nor the research. The reasoning behind this decision was that the effectiveness of the change communication itself should be assessed by the research and not influenced by participants who had already formed any attitude towards it. At the commencement of the trial, however, the team leader who delivered one of the video messages was transferred to one of the research new product or service enquiry process Outlets. At the conclusion of the video the process owner delivered a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation pack that described the procedures the employees would follow to undertake the new change process. The process owner personalised the presentation pack by adding anecdotes about the benchmarking and design of the new process. The Treatment group were allowed one hour of time with an employee who had assisted to design the new process so they could ask questions and practice the new procedures. Throughout the trial the Treatment group had access to the middle manager and Outlet manager who assisted to design the new process in the form of a weekly teleconference. At this teleconference participants could share success and failures of the process and gain advice from the middle manager, Outlet manager and other participants, on how to overcome any obstacles presented by the new process.

The researcher attended each research Outlet for the delivery of the change communication. After the delivery of the change communication the researcher explained the nature of the research being conducted and advised employees that to become participants in the research study they could volunteer by returning data from the collection instruments they had each been given to the researcher. The employees were instructed on the procedures for
completing the collection instrument, including how data would be collected, and the researcher left each Outlet employee with a personal copy of the collection instrument.

The Research Control Group

At Coast and Country a district represents a group of Outlets that exist within a similar geographic area. The District Manager of each Outlet in the research Control group was delivered communication about the new product or service enquiry process from the Process Owner. The procedures to be followed in the new product or service enquiry process were delivered by the Process Owner to the District Manager via a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation pack (this was the same presentation pack delivered to the Control group). The District Managers were asked to communicate this presentation to Outlet Managers, and the Process Owner’s expectation of the Outlet Managers was to communicate this message to each of the employees in the Outlet. This cascading message of organisational change reflected the traditional approach Coast and Country took with regards to communicating organisational change with Outlet employees.

All Outlet Managers of research Control group Outlets informed Coast and Country they had delivered the change process message to the employees at their Outlet. Employees of Control group Outlets were not asked if they had received this communication or not. At the delivery of the change communication, research Control group Outlets did not have the opportunity to talk to any of the employees who designed the new product or service enquiry process. Throughout the trial period the employees of the Control group did not have structured access to talk to the Process Owner or any of the employees who designed the new process.

The researcher attended each of the research Control Outlets with the District Manager. The District Manager delivered the new product or service enquiry process change
communication to the Outlet Manager. The researcher explained the reason why the research was being conducted to all the Outlet employees. The employees were informed that to become participants in the research study they could volunteer by returning data from the collection instrument to the researcher. The employees were instructed on the procedures for completing the collection instrument, including data collection, and the researcher left each Outlet employee with a personal copy of the collection instrument.

The Within Case Sample

At the time of the study the financial institution had 64 Outlets employing approximately 600 customer-facing staff. The researcher was employed by the financial institution. The researcher requested that middle management at Coast and Country select the 3 Outlets that would comprise the research Treatment group (receiving the multi-level storytelling change communication) and a comparable three Outlets that would comprise the research Control group (receiving traditional change communication) for this study. The three research Treatment Outlets were selected from six Outlets that had been preselected for the organisation’s trial change process by the same middle management. Control and Treatment Outlets were chosen carefully to match in terms of historical new customer volumes and, historical business performance (average number of products and services sold per customer) and customer demographics. Potential participants of this study were employees of the Outlets chosen to be research Treatment and research Control Outlets for this study.

There were five employees in each Outlet trialling the new change process across the six selected Outlets. These employees represented three different organisational roles: Manager, Team Leader and Service Representative. The selected Outlet employees who were offered
participation in the study represented two thirds of the employees undergoing the trial change. All 30 selected Outlet employees were invited to voluntarily participate in the study.

### 3.4.3 The Data Collection Instrument

**Employee Attitude**

The instrument used for data collection was an anonymous participant diary. Historically participant diaries have been used by researchers to understand employee attitudes (Grandey, Tam and Brauburger, 2002; Butler, Grzywacz, Bass, & Linney, 2011). Balogun & Johnson (2005) used diaries to collect personal accounts of a change process from middle managers’ perspectives during strategic change in a large organisation. The design of the participant diary used in this study was based on a literature review of the use of participant diaries in social science research, yet was not an emulation of any specific diary design (Iida, Shrout, Laurenceau, & Bolger, 2012). Historically participant diaries have been used in a first person, free-form, written format to elicit rich, qualitative, data from participants, and this data was usually interpreted by researchers through narrative analysis (Balogun & Johnson, 2005). The benefit of the participant diary was that it could be completed at a time that was convenient to the participant and was a single method of data collection over a continuous period of time (Iida, Shrout, Laurenceau, & Bolger, 2012). This study capitalised on that convenience, however, the researcher altered the nature of the participant diary to collect both quantitative and qualitative data at fixed weekly response intervals (Iida, Shrout, Laurenceau, & Bolger, 2012).

The diary was issued to participants in two sections. The first participant diary was a bound collection of eight identical, paper, weekly entries, to capture both quantitative and
qualitative data regarding participant attitude towards the new product or service enquiry process. The first section of the participant diary was delivered to participants along with the new process change communication at the commencement of the trial. The first page of the first section of the participant diary contained instructions on how to complete the diary. The second page of the first section of the participant diary contained an example of a completed participant diary entry. Each diary was allocated a unique identification number and this number was hand coded on each entry of the diary. The unique identification number allowed the researcher to group and analyse participant responses according to role, research Control or research Treatment groups, and week of the trial. No participants were given an explanation of what the code represented to ensure anonymity of the diaries. The second section of the participant diary was issued to participants at the completion of the extension of the trial, in week 12. This section of the participant diary mirrored a weekly diary entry of the first section, but was designed to capture attitude, influence and participant comments for a full month. This second section also had additional, qualitative, free text questions specifically focussing on the initial change communication delivered at the commencement of the new change process trial, and participant attitude and understanding towards the new change process trial. The diary was designed for participants to complete an entry at the end of each week of the trial change, remove that entry from the diary, and return it to the researcher via internal mail. A final diary entry was completed by participants at the end of the trial after week 12. Figure 3.4 describes the timeline of organisational change communication delivery, data collection and data entry.
The participant diary was designed to collect data to address the following research sub-questions:

1.1 What affect does communication between and across roles have on employee attitude to change?

1.2 What role does time play in employee attitude to change?

1.3 Does the formal or informal nature of communication affect employee attitude to change?

An example of the participant diary has been attached (see Appendix 1).

Quantitative Attitudes

Each weekly participant diary entry contained eight prescribed statements asking participants to rate their attitude to the new product or service enquiry process. Rating of these attitude statements utilised a consistent five point Likert scale that provided a clear position of
neutrality to allow participants the ability to acknowledge any ambivalence in attitude (Hinkin, 1998). Five statements were about employee attitude, four of these related to the employee’s attitude to the change initiative and one statement related to the employee’s attitude toward the financial institution. Three of these attitude statements were positively worded and two of them were negatively worded in an attempt to discourage participants choosing the same attitude rating for all statements (Hinkin, 1998). The Five attitude statements and the reasoning for their inclusion are detailed in Table 3.4 below.

**Table 3.4 Statements to Rate Participant Attitude and the Reason for Their Inclusion in the Participant Diary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Statement</th>
<th>Reasoning for the attitude statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process is a good idea</td>
<td>This statement was written to gauge each participant’s own, independent feelings towards the initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process proof of concept will achieve its objectives</td>
<td>This second statement was created to address the main point of the video change story presented by the Outlet Network Manager about the objectives of the change initiative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process will add value to the organisation</td>
<td>The design of this statement was to address the key message of the Team Leader in the initial communication video about the change initiative being designed by frontline employees for frontline employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will help me in my role</td>
<td>The intent of this statement was to assess the impact of both the Outlet Manager and Service Representative’s video stories, who each presented elements about the change initiative that would assist all frontline employees in their role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel positive about Coast &amp; Country</td>
<td>This statement related to the narrative delivered by the executive in the communication video</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The diary also included questions and statements relating to the influence others had on participant’s rating of their attitude. These questions and statements asked:
• Did the participant speak to anyone about the new product or service enquiry process during that week?
• If so, was this person from the participant’s Outlet and was the conversation formal?
• On a scale of 1 to 5, indicate how much this person influenced the participant’s attitude to the new product and service enquiry initiative.

These questions and statements were specifically designed to investigate which organisational roles were most influential on participant attitude, and to determine if time had any effect on this influence. All influence and attitude, questions and statements, were written to assist the researcher in determining how much employee attitude related to the understanding of the new product or service enquiry process. Each of the attitude statements related back to one of the messages in the initial change communication video delivered to the research Treatment group. These questions were not adapted from any previous study, however, previous studies have demonstrated the value of quantifying abstract concepts like participant attitude, with multiple measures, as participant attitude may hold a different meaning for different participants, or a participants’ attitude may be positive for one reason but not another (Hinkin, 1998).

**Qualitative Attitudes**

Each weekly diary entry contained a free text field for the collection of qualitative responses to capture additional participant comments and assist the researcher to explore possible causes of participant attitude responses.

The free text question was worded in a way to elicit a qualitative understanding of change recipient attitude:
• Please explain in more detail a) your attitude to the new product or service enquiry process b) how it was formed c) how this communication was delivered

The qualitative comments fields were deliberately limited to encourage succinct responses to support quantitative data findings. The second section of the participant diary contained additional questions with space for succinct free text responses (refer to Table 3.5). The limited time available to the researcher to complete the study did not allow time to conduct extensive qualitative analysis and quantitative statistical analysis.
Table 3.5 Participant Diary Section Two Additional Questions and Reason for Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional question</th>
<th>Reasoning for additional question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could the initial delivery, timing or ongoing communication of the new service and product process have been better? And if so how?</td>
<td>This question was written to gauge the participant’s understanding of how effective the change communication was after 12 weeks of undergoing the trial new process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your attitude to the new service and product process and explain the main reason you feel this way.</td>
<td>This question was written as a last attempt to draw causality from participants as to the attitude responses they had recorded throughout the new process trial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you explain the new service and product process to a new staff member?</td>
<td>This question was written as a different way of attempting to establish the participants’ understanding of the new service and product process, as well as their attitude to it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of these questions were original in composition and the diary entries were not based on any test or question set of any known study.

**Employee Engagement**

The data collection instrument for employee attitude was an email from the Marketing department of Coast and Country to the researcher containing an existing report of business performance by groups of Outlets. These measures were obtained from the organisation in a spreadsheet format. These measures were used to address the research sub-question 1.4: To what extent does attitude affect formal change management outcomes?

**3.4.4 Data collection procedures**
Employee Attitude

All employees in each of the six Outlets were invited to volunteer to complete the weekly participant diary for a period of eight weeks during the trial change process. After the trial was extended the same employees were invited to volunteer to complete a second section of the participant diary entry at the end of the trial at 12 weeks.

Following the approval of Coast & Country financial institution to participate in the research, invitations to participate in the research were delivered by the student researcher to employees in the 6 research Outlets. The student researcher visited each of the research Outlets at the time the change communication was delivered to employees to explain the research and provide potential participants with a Participant Information Statement, section one of the participant diary and return addressed envelopes used to submit diary entries on a weekly basis. Participation was recorded by the researcher when respondents completed and returned an entry of their participant diary.

Participants were required to read the Participant Information Statement and if they wished to participate, they were allowed by Coast and Country to spend 10 minutes each Friday, for 8 weeks, to complete the research instrument during work hours. This permission from Coast and Country was extended to include 10 minutes for an additional diary entry at the conclusion of the trial extension at 12 weeks. Participants returned the weekly diary entries to the student researcher in a sealed, addressed envelope via Coast and Country’s internal mail. The researcher kept the entries at their place of work until collection was complete and then the entries were entered into an electronic spreadsheet. The paper entries were retained by the researcher in a secure container.
The researcher used the unique identification number on the diary entries to determine whether the returned entry was from the research Control or research Treatment groups, the role the participant held within the organisation and the week of the trial period that the diary entry was for. These identifiers were added to an electronic spreadsheet after the completion of the trial, along with the participant responses contained within each diary entry.

**Employee Engagement**

No additional data collection procedures were required for the business performance aspect of this study. Existing organisational reporting was already in place to capture the average number of products and services sold to new customers by Outlet. It is important to note that the data supplied by Coast and Country did not identify individuals or roles, only Outlets. The researcher requested a summary page to preface the data. This summary page grouped Outlets by trial Treatment group, trial Control group, research Treatment group, research Control group and the remaining Coast and Country Outlets. The summary also contained the results of statistical analysis on this data comparing groups, by pairs of groups, completed by Coast and Country data.

**3.5 Data Analysis**

Two separate sets of data were analysed for employee attitude and employee engagement. Employee attitude data derived from participant diaries was collated and analysed by the researcher. Employee engagement reporting was analysed by Coast and Country financial institution.
3.5.1 Data Collation

*Employee Attitude*

Data for employee attitudes captured in participant diaries was received from 23 unique respondents out of a possible 30 participants across six branches, they consisted of 5 Outlet Managers, six Team Leaders and 12 Service Representatives. Across group, role, and branch, a total of 166 unique responses were received over the length of the case study, an average of 11 unique responses a week. The researcher entered the data into a spreadsheet and copied the content of this spreadsheet into IBM SPSS version 1 statistical software package. At the request of the University of Newcastle Ethics Committee, this study was designed to be a voluntary participant response only. The voluntary nature of the study limited the response rate of the participants in the case study and increased the risk of non-response bias, whereby if the attitudes of the participants who did not return participant diaries, (in this case seven employees) differed greatly from those who did, then there would be an error in the significance of the results (Johnson & Wislar, 2012). The researcher chose to analyse the returned attitude data because participants who returned diaries represented 77% of the case study sample, and returned participant diaries were proportionally representative of all employee roles and therefore error in interpretation of results was less likely.
Employee Engagement

The research design was pure content analysis of Coast and Country’s existing documentation that recorded the business performance of Outlets undertaking the trial. This data included in this report was the average number of products and services per new customer per Outlet, as well as the requested additional page supplied by Coast and Country summarising statistical analysis results of the comparison of all trial and research groups of Outlets.

3.5.2 Data Cleansing

Employee Attitude

Once data collection was completed the researcher entered the data from participant diary entries into a spreadsheet and the following data manipulation was undertaken. Any reference to the organisation or the name of the new change process initiative was removed from the data and replaced with generic terms to maintain the confidentiality of the organisation. As two of the attitude questions in the participant diaries were negatively worded and the remainder positively worded, the researcher reverse coded the results for the two negatively worded questions to allow comparisons of response in the same direction across all five attitude questions (Hinkin, 1998). Participant responses ranging from 1-2 on the Likert scale were regarded by the researcher as pertaining to a negative attitude, with responses between 4 and 5 treated as an indication of a positive attitude and scores of 3 were considered to be an attitude of ambivalence to the new change initiative.
In respect to analysis of time on participant attitude the data was cleansed by removing participant responses where unique participants only submitted two or less unique responses during the length of the study. Removal of these outliers was conducted in an attempt to increase the internal validity of the data (Osborne & Overbay, 2004). This resulted in the removal of two responses from two different managers, and three responses from two different Team Leaders. As a result of poor weekly response rates (an average of 11 unique responses from a possible 30 unique responses a week), the researcher was unable to analyse the effect of time by role on change recipient attitude due to consistently insufficient data over time (Osborne & Overbay, 2004). Table 3.6 shows the remaining number of unique research participants represented by Outlet and role and Table 3.7 describes unique participant responses by Outlet and role.

Table 3.6 Number of Unique Research Participants Represented by Outlet and Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>TREATMENT</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>CONTROL</th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>Grand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outlet 4</td>
<td>Outlet 5</td>
<td>Outlet 7</td>
<td>Outlet 8</td>
<td>Outlet 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Representative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlet Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.7 Number of Unique Participant Responses Represented by Outlet and Role

|                     | TREATMENT |          |          | CONTROL |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          | Grand Total |
|---------------------|-----------|----------|----------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|
|                     | Country   | Coast    | Country  | Coast   | Country  | Coast    | Country  | Coast    | Country  | Coast    | Country  | Coast    |                |
|                     | Outlet 4  | Outlet 5 | Outlet 7 | Outlet 8| Outlet 9 |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |                |
| Service Representative | 16       | 21       | 21       |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          | 87                |
| Team Leader          | 1         | 9        | 13       |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          | 40                |
| Outlet Manager       | 2         | 3        | 8        |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          | 39                |
| Grand Total          | 19        | 33       | 42       |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          | 166               |
**Employee Engagement**

No data cleansing was required for the content analysis of business performance results.

### 3.5.3 Quantitative Data Analysis

**Employee Attitude**

#### 3.5.3.1 Data Distribution and Statistical Testing Assumptions

For employee attitudes captured in participant diaries the dependant variable was participant response to participant diary attitude statements. The independent variables included the nature of change initiative communication (research Treatment and research Control groups), participant role and the type of person spoken to by the participant about the new change process during the trial period of the change and week of the trial. The frequency of participant responses for each attitude question in the participant diary over the entire trial period was graphed for both research Treatment and research Control groups (refer to Figures 3.5 to 3.9). Responses for each of the attitude statements in the participant diary were mostly leptokurtic with only the following attitude statements exhibiting normal distributions of responses (Palmer & Strobeck, 1992):

- Initiative will achieve its objectives – Treatment group
- Initiative will help me in my role – Treatment group
- I am positive about the organisation - Control group
“Initiative is a good idea”

Figure 3.5 Distribution of response frequency for participant diary attitude statement 1

“Initiative will achieve its objectives”

Figure 3.6 Distribution of response frequency for participant diary attitude statement 2

“Initiative will add value”

Figure 3.7 Distribution of response frequency for participant diary attitude statement 3
“Initiative will help me in my role”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 3.8 Distribution of response frequency for participant diary attitude statement 4

“I am positive about the organisation”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 3.9 Distribution of response frequency for participant diary attitude statement 5

As the researcher could not rely on the assumption that data was normally distributed, non-parametric techniques were employed to undertake statistical analysis of the quantitative data (Howell, 1989). The use of non-parametric testing allowed the researcher to keep extreme outlier cases within the data during analysis, as the non-parametric analysis techniques provided an assessment of central tendency rather than averages, and therefore extreme outliers could not influence findings (Osborne & Overbay, 2004). (Analysis of time was an exception to this rule. Some cases were removed because the small number of cases collected each week were likely to result in extreme outliers accounting for an entire week’s
data) (Osborne & Overbay, 2004). The risk, however, in utilising non-parametric techniques, especially when working with a limited number of cases, is that they are less likely to find a difference between samples than parametric tests (Howell, 1989). All statistical analysis of data was undertaken in IBM SPSS Version 21 statistical software package.

3.5.3.2. Attitude between research groups and attitude between formal and informal communication

A Mann-Whitney U test was undertaken to compare the central tendency of the research Treatment and research Control groups’ responses to each of the five attitude statements in the participant diary, by summing participants’ rank scores. The same test was undertaken to compare the central tendency of formal and informal participant record of narrative to each of the 5 attitude statements in the participant diary, again by summing participants’ rank scores. The Mann-Whitney U test is a popular non-parametric technique to compare two independent groups and the test can be used to analyse ordinal data such as that obtained from Likert scales (Fritz, Morris & Richler, 2012). This test attempts to understand the likelihood that two independent samples were derived from an identical population, that is, the null hypothesis (Howell, 1989). The risk in utilising the Mann-Whitney U test is that if the null hypothesis is found to be false, the likelihood that another unknown factor influenced the difference in the two samples is greater than if a parametric test were employed (Feltovich, 2003). The confidence level for this Mann-Whitney U test was 99% for a non-directional test, to ensure the test rejected extremely high and low outcomes (Howell, 1989).
3.5.3.3. Attitude between and within research groups by participant role and participant role by formal and informal communication and by person type spoken to about organisational change

A Kruskal-Wallis test was undertaken to compare the central tendency of participant role and participant role by formal and informal communication, as well as participant attitude and person type spoken to about organisational change to each of the five attitude statements in the participant diary, both within, and between, the Treatment and Control groups. The Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric one-way analysis of variance used when there are more than two independent variables (Howell, 1989). This test uses rank sums to understand the likelihood that a number of independent samples were derived from an identical population and the test can be used to analyse ordinal data such as that obtained from Likert scales (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). The confidence level of the Kruskal-Wallis test was 99% for a non-directional test to ensure the test rejected extremely high and low outcomes (Howell, 1989).

3.5.3.4. Relationship between participant attitude and time by participant role and by formal and informal communication

A Spearman’s rho correlation was used understand if a relationship existed between time and participant attitude, both between, and within, Treatment and Control groups, and also across groups by participant role and by formal and informal communication. The spearmen’s rho correlation is a popular non-parametric test utilised to understand the relationship between ranked data, such as that in an ordinal Likert scale. The Spearman’s rho correlation is used to determine if a change in direction of one independent variable results in a change in the direction of the second independent variable, that is, the null hypothesis (Howell, 1989). This test uses ranked data to understand the likelihood that two independent samples are related,
regardless of linearity, and whether that relationship was weak or strong (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). An advantage of the Spearman’s rho correlation is that extreme outliers have less influence over its outcome, however the disadvantage of this technique is that it does not provide any indication of cause between the two independent variables (Howell, 1989). A confidence interval in between 95% and 99% was used for the Spearman’s rho correlation as a non-directional test to ensure the test rejected extremely high and low outcomes (Howell, 1989).

Employee Engagement

3.5.3.5. Business outcomes between trial research groups

The business outcomes of the new change process were analysed by Coast and Country financial institution and parametric testing was employed by Coast and Country as their analysts advised that the data collected was normally distributed. The dependant variable was the average number of products and services sold per new customer. The independent variable was the nature of change initiative communication (the Treatment group, the Control group and the retail Outlets that did not trial the new change process). A one way analysis of variance was used to compare the means between each of the Treatment, Control and remaining business groups’ average number of products and services sold per customer over the trial change period. An analysis of variance was used to compare two of each of the independent groups and was appropriate for use with ratio data such as volumes (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). This test attempted to understand the likelihood that two independent samples were derived from an identical population, that is, the null hypothesis (Howell,
The advantage in utilising the analysis of variance test was that it reduced the likelihood of test error (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). The confidence level for the one way analysis of variance was 95% for a non-directional test to ensure the test rejected extremely high and low outcomes (Howell, 1989). Results of this analysis provided the researcher with evidence as to whether multi-level storytelling had any effect on employee engagement. The researcher also used the business outcome data to compare with quantitative and qualitative attitudinal results to determine any linkage of employee attitude to employee engagement.

### 3.5.4 Qualitative Data Analysis

**Employee Attitude**

#### 3.5.3.1. Attitude between research groups by customer interaction qualitative comments

Twenty-three unique customer interactions were cited in participant free text comments (refer to Table 3.8).

**Table 3.8 Unique Free Text Comments that Cite Customer Interaction Represented by Outlet and Role**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>TREATMENT</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>CONTROL</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country Outlet 4</td>
<td>Coast Outlet 5</td>
<td>Coast Outlet 6</td>
<td>Country Outlet 7</td>
<td>Country Outlet 8</td>
<td>Coast Outlet 9</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Representative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlet Manager</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.4.1. Categorising comments

One hundred and twenty-one unique free text comments were recorded in participant diaries from 21 of 23 participants (refer to Table 3.9).

**Table 3.9 Unique Free Text Comments Represented by Outlet and Role**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>TREATMENT</th>
<th>CONTROL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country Outlet 4</td>
<td>Coast Outlet 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Representative</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlet Manager</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five unique Outlet Managers, six unique Team Leaders and 10 unique Service Representatives offered these comments (refer to Table 3.10).

**Table 3.10 Unique Research Participants Who Made Free Text Comments Represented by Outlet and Role**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>TREATMENT</th>
<th>CONTROL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country Outlet 4</td>
<td>Coast Outlet 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Representative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlet Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All qualitative comments were reviewed by the researcher to identify the attitude conveyed by the free text comment. Comments of a similar attitude were grouped into general types, then these types were categorised into Positive, Negative or Ambivalent attitude comments (Thomas, 2006). Some participant comments were coded by the researcher as having more than one category of attitude. The frequency of these categories within participant free text comments are detailed in Table 3.11. This frequency was then used to assist the researcher to
better understand possible causes for the quantitative results (Gorry & Westbrook, 2011; Scandura & Williams, 2000).

Table 3.11 Qualitative Comments listed by Research Group and Category as Coded by the Researcher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of comment</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Research Treatment</th>
<th>Research Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial launch well communicated</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the concept</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is a good initiative</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience with a customer who was pleased with the new process</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching has helped</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor launch communication</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A poor experience with a customer</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too complex</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time the process takes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict of other changes within the Outlet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not apply to all customers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are too many limitations with physical space</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambivalent</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too early to tell</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the disadvantages of this type of coded analysis is the risk of non-response bias (Johnson & Wislar, 2012). That is, if the comments of the participants who did not submit free text comments (in this case two employees who participated in the new change trial but did not return free text comments), differ greatly from those who did, then any assumption of causality will be made in error (Johnson & Wislar, 2012). Additionally, the reasoning of each type of comment was applied to each of negative, positive and ambivalent attitudes to the new change process to propose theories of causation (Johnson & Wislar, 2012).
Employee Engagement

3.5.4.2. Content analysis

The Coast and Country average products and services per new customer by Outlet Report and summary page was reviewed by the researcher. The researcher identified the results of parametric significance testing completed by the Coast and Country Marketing department that compared average product and services per new customer between the Research Treatment group, the Research Control group, and a group of Remaining Coast and Country Outlets that were not part of either of these groups nor the Trial Treatment or Trial Control groups.

3.6 Validity

3.6.1 Construct validity

Testing and exploring abstract concepts such as attitude and engagement posed a problem for the researcher, particularly in relation to quantitative method.

Employee Attitude

The subjectivity of attitude responses is related to the behaviour and individual personality traits of participants and this increases the likelihood of measurement error (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2001). As a consequence the researcher chose to quantify participant attitude with five different measures as attitude may have held a different meaning for different participants or, a participants’ attitude may be positive for one reason but not another (Hinkin, 1998). Additionally, the researcher chose to tie quantitative attitude statements back
to the organisational change communication messages to ensure consistency of content. The decision by the researcher to structure the participant diary to also include free text qualitative comments provided a sanity check of the quantitative attitude statements where participants had an opportunity to describe if, or why, they could not relate to the attitude statements. Although limited in length, the regular free text qualitative comments provided substantive data similar to that collected by previous research into employee attitude during organisational change. Both the attitude statements and free text comments were structured to be generalizable to other types of organisational change. The consequence of participant attitude statements and introductory statements to qualitative comments contained in participant diaries being misleading, or not representative of real employee attitudes during times of organisational change, would invalidate the use of the data collected from participant diaries in this research (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2001).

**Employee Engagement**

The researcher structured this study to investigate the effect of organisational change communication on employee engagement, based on the assumption that business performance would be an indicative measure of how engaged employees were in organisational change. No research into Social Construction Theory and organisational change communication known by the researcher has evaluated a link between change communication and the achievement of business change objectives. Structuring this study to measure both employee engagement and employee attitude allowed the author to use the results of this study to hypothesise about any possible link between these two variables. This offered the researcher the opportunity to test the convergent validity of these two variables. The use of business change objectives to measure employee engagement could be generalised across all kinds of organisational change. If business performance was not an accurate
measure of employee engagement during times of organisational change then business change objectives collected in this study would invalidate any findings about employee engagement reported in this research.

3.6.2 Internal validity

The internal validity of this study was limited as it relied on a single unique case. Specifically, two confounding variables included the selection of participants being limited both by the number of Outlets assigned by Coast and Country to undertake the trial, and the constraint of voluntary participation imposed by the University of Newcastle Human Ethics Committee. The small number of voluntary participants (23) reduced the study’s internal validity to adequately represent change recipient roles, however, the researcher collected data over time increasing total response rate to 166 diary entries (Merriam, 2009). There were 87 responses from service representatives, 40 responses from team leaders and 39 entries from Outlet managers, a ratio of 52:24:23 comparable to the trial population ratio of 60:20:20. This indicates that responses that were captured by participant diary entries were representative of the trial population.

Greater confidence in the validity of the results was also established by matching pairs of Outlets between research Treatment and research Control groups, as well as Controlling the initial communication method delivered to research Treatment and research Control groups. Additionally the internal validity of the quantitative content of this study was boosted by the use of triangulation in the application of qualitative free text comments to interpret possible causal relationships of significant quantitative findings, however as quantitative and qualitative data were collected within the same instrument this may have compromised the
claim of methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1970; Scandura & Williams, 2000; Van de Ven, & Poole, 2005). Whilst there was a representative frequency of qualitative free text comments across participants these comments were limited to seven hand written lines of text. Limited information provided in these comments decreased validity of the qualitative data collected about employee attitude towards the new change process.

Collecting data over time and using two separate data sources, that is, the diary entries designed and collected by the researcher and the trial change business success measures designed and collected by the business, provided across-method triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Miles & Huberman, 2002). By employing multiple research strategies the researcher provided three ways of interpreting the effect of organisational change communication on employees (Creswell, 2002; Scandura & Williams, 2000; Van de Ven, & Poole, 2005). The quantitative results allowed the researcher to determine causality between the variables under investigation and to understand the impact of time on these variables, whilst the qualitative comments presented the researcher with an opportunity to understand why this causality may exist (Scandura & Williams, 2000).

3.6.3 External validity

External validity is difficult to form from one case study (Merriam, 1998). The external validity of the research is limited as this study:

1. Only evaluates a retail change initiative within a single organisation, restricting the ability to apply findings to other organisations and industries. Even within this population there was no random selection, Outlets were deliberately chosen by Coast and Country to meet certain business criteria.
2. The process change being studied reduces generalisability to other types of organisational change like system, structural or transformational change.

3. The participants represent customer-facing employees from the financial sector and their attitudes may differ from other environments where external customers do not form part of the organisational change.

4. Participants knew they were part of a study and that their diary entries were being collected for research purposes. This may have changed the way they recorded their attitudes to the organisational change process. Participants were, however, told that their responses were to be recorded anonymously and not shared at an individual level with Coast and Country management.

5. This study was designed to produce results that could apply as test hypothesis in other organisational change studies.

3.6.4 Reliability

Although the specific change process in this case study is unlikely to be implemented in the same way in another organisation, the design of this study will allow most elements of the study, that is, delivery of communication and collection of data to be replicated for process change initiatives in a customer-facing environment (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As a consequence, the exact same results are unlikely to be obtained, yet it is hoped that similar outcomes regarding attitudes between Control and Treatment groups could be found.

Anonymity of responses was stressed to participants in an attempt to reduce other possible response bias. The researcher attempted to reduce acquiescence bias by asking questions
about employee attitude in four different ways and using both positive and negative Likert scales across these four questions (Schriesheim & Hill, 1981).

This study may have been inadvertently compromised by research bias through the observer-expectancy effect as the researcher worked for the financial institution and was an active member of the change initiative design team. The researcher attempted to minimise research bias where possible and did not reveal to participants what the expectations of the research results would be. The researcher chose independent parties to select the participant Outlets to increase dependability of the study (Merriam, 2009).

This research was further limited by the ethics requirement to ensure participation in the research was voluntary, which reduced the number of participants who completed and returned diary entries, which also resulted in uneven participants between groups. The decision of the financial organisation to extend the trial at short notice meant an additional four diary entries for the extra month of the trial could not be produced and distributed and resulted in a three week gap in data. As implementation of this organisation’s new change process was studied in isolation, no comparative analysis could be conducted between organisations. Results of this study hold greatest relevance to frontline employees in the financial services industry.

The researcher had individuals independent of the research review the data analysis techniques undertaken by the researcher and results to ensure accuracy and reliability. The researcher engaged business intelligence analysts at her place of work who were proficient in the IBM SPSS Version 1 statistical software package to review the appropriateness and application of the chosen non-parametric statistical tests. These business intelligence analysts suggested possible changes to data analysis techniques to better represent the results of the study.
3.7 Ethical Issues

This research was reviewed by the University of Newcastle Human Research Ethics Committee that operates in accordance with the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007. The Research Information Management System submission H-2013-0273 was cleared on the 2nd of September 2013. The ethics clearance form can be found in Appendix 4.

The financial institution was approached and given an Organisational Information Statement to explain what was required of the organisation for the researcher to conduct the proposed study. An executive at the financial institution read the Organisational Information Statement and signed the Organisational Consent form to allow researchers access to the selected six Outlet to invite staff participation (see Appendix 3). Participants were required to read the Participant Information Statement and then had a minimum of a week to decide whether or not to volunteer to participate in the study (see Appendix 3). No personal relationship was held between the researcher and any of the participants. All participants were encouraged to volunteer as their opinions considered valuable. Participation was voluntary; participants had the right to withdraw their participant diary entries from the study at any time, and participants were not supervised by the researcher.

To keep diary entries confidential participants were asked not to mark their diary with information that personally identified themselves or others. All participant diaries and entries were anonymous and the financial institution, Outlets and Outlet Position data was agreed to be re-labelled with pseudonyms before it was analysed. It was agreed that the financial
institution would be referred to with the pseudonym Coast and Country in any publication relating to the study.

It was also agreed that a summary of the results of the study would be made available electronically to the participating financial institution and to the employees at the participating Outlets once the dissertation had been accepted. This assurance was made to give employees the opportunity to understand how their participation contributed to the results of the study.

The organisational consent form from the financial institution was scanned immediately upon receipt and the hard copy shredded. Once the data from the participant diaries was entered into a spread sheet, the hard copies were stored in a secure container. All data, including the signed organisation consent form will be held on password protected computers accessible only to the researcher. The data will be kept for five years after the approval of the Doctor of Business Administration dissertation and then deleted in accordance with the University of Newcastle guidelines for the disposal of data.

A final ethical consideration of the research was that employees from the Research Control Outlets were put in a position where they had to undertake the new change process without delivered the best available change communication. These employees were deliberately put in a disadvantaged position to their peers in the Research Treatment Outlets. Research Control Outlet employees were not aware that they were only undertaking the new change process to benefit the researcher; they were not required to do so by Coast & Country.
3.8 Conclusion

This mixed method study employed experimental design within the single case study of a new process change initiative across selected Outlets within one department of a financial institution over a trial period of 12 weeks. The Treatment group was communicated to about the value of the introduced change process through multiple stories delivered by diverse roles representative of these frontline employees. The Control group, however received traditional communication about the value of the process via a single manager and a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation. Data was collected using a voluntary participant diary, to capture frontline employee attitude towards the change initiative. The researcher then entered, coded, categorised and analysed the data from completed participant diaries to determine whether participants in the Treatment group had different attitudes to the change initiative than to those in the Control group. Data was analysed to specifically answer the following research questions:

1 How, if at all, does storytelling impact employee attitude to organisational change?

1.1 What affect does communication between and across roles have on employee attitude to change?

1.2 What role does time play in employee attitude to change?

1.3 Does the formal or informal nature of communication affect employee attitude to change?

1.4 To what extent does attitude affect formal change management outcomes?

This research was designed to produce empirical evidence that assisted to induce further theory around the use of multi-level storytelling to communicate organisational change.
Previous research findings from Sonenshein (2010), Roleau (2005), Cuncliffe & Coupland, (2012), Fenton & Langley (2011) and theory proposed by Bryant & Frahm (2010) and Carnall (2007) suggest that the use of multiple levels of narrative, representative of different levels of the organisation to communicate organisational change will improve an employee’s attitude to that change and decrease the likelihood of behaviours that resist and undermine change. This research seeks to investigate if the use of multiple levels of storytelling at the commencement of a change process will produce a difference in both attitude and engagement in participants. Furthermore, the research will attempt to provide evidence of Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s (2005) ‘Enactment Theory’, that suggests change recipients respond to what they understand about the proposed change. The results may also demonstrate Johnson’s (1992) strategic re-orientation paradigm that informal discussions create the real organisational culture and real recipient attitude to change (Balogun & Johnson, 2005). The researcher will also gather information about whether recipient attitude changes over time, both with multi-level narrative change communication and without (Jansen, 2004; Eisenhardt & Brown, 1997; Turner & Rindova, 2012). Finally this study will investigate how important a role is played in delivering and receiving the change communication message, as indicated by the change in recipient attitude (Sonenshein 2010; Roleau, 2005).
Chapter 4 Findings of the Research and Emergent Themes

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter describes the findings of this research into the effect of multi-level storytelling as a form of organisational change communication on employee attitude to organisational change. Key findings from the quantitative and qualitative results of this study are described and then emerging arguments are discussed within the following themes:

- employee engagement and change
- employee role and employee engagement and change
- formal narrative and employee engagement and change
- employees as effective change agents
- the customer story and employee engagement
- the temporality of employee engagement

These themes are then summarised in terms of theory, limitations and potential future research.

4.2 Key Findings

The following provides a summary of key findings of the research. Refer to the Appendix 5 for more information regarding these findings.

4.2.1 Employee Attitude
The following key findings relate to the exploration of employee attitudes towards organisational change as recipients of change.

**Quantitative Findings**

4.2.1.1. Participant attitude between research groups

A statistical comparison of the central tendency of the research Treatment, and research Control groups’ responses, to each of the 5 attitude statements in the participant diary, over the 12 weeks of the new product or service enquiry process trial, found significant differences between the attitudes of these two groups, across all participant diary attitude statements. Table 4.1 below compares the mean rank of all participant attitude responses between the research Treatment and research Control groups, and Table 4.2 reports the significance of the difference between these attitude responses.
Table 4.1 Comparison of the Rank Responses of Research Treatment and Research Control Groups by Participant Diary Attitude Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Diary Attitude Statement</th>
<th>Research Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank of participant responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process is a good idea</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>62.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>33.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will achieve its objectives</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>61.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>35.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process will add value to the organisation</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>59.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will help me in my role</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>60.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>34.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel positive about Coast and Country Financial Institution</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>65.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 Results of Statistical Testing to Compare the Rank Responses of Research Treatment and Research Control Groups by Participant Diary Attitude Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Diary Attitude Statement</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process is a good idea</td>
<td>440.500</td>
<td>-5.493</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will achieve its objectives</td>
<td>535.500</td>
<td>-4.727</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process will add value to the organisation</td>
<td>616.000</td>
<td>-4.249</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will help me in my role</td>
<td>472.000</td>
<td>-4.872</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel positive about Coast and Country Financial Institution</td>
<td>375.000</td>
<td>-6.011</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from this study saw a higher proportion of negative and ambivalent attitude responses in the Control group than the group that received multi-level storytelling communication for whether or not; the initiative was a good idea, the initiative was thought to add value, whether the initiative would help them in their role and if participants were positive about the organisation. This would suggest that the multi-level storytelling change communication not only had a more positive effect on participant attitude to organisational change, but that it reduced participant ambivalence toward the new product or service enquiry process. Figure 4.1 illustrates that the research Control group experienced less very positive and positive attitude ratings for the “New Product or Service Enquiry Process is a Good Idea” statement, as well as many more ambivalent attitude responses.
Figure 4.1 Comparison of the Frequency of Participant Diary Attitude Responses of Research Treatment and Research Control Groups by Response Rating for the Attitude Statement “The New Product or Service Enquiry Process is a Good Idea.”

Figure 4.2 illustrates that the research Control group experienced no very positive attitude ratings and less positive attitude ratings for the “I Don't Think the New Product or Service Enquiry Process Will Achieve its Objectives” statement, as well as many more ambivalent attitude responses.
FIGURE 4.2 Comparison of the Frequency of Participant Diary Attitude Responses of Research Treatment and Research Control Groups by Response Rating for the Attitude Statement “I Don't Think the New Product or Service Enquiry Process Will Achieve its Objectives.”

Figure 4.3 illustrates that the research Control group experienced less very positive attitude ratings for the “The New Product or Service Enquiry Process Will Add Value” statement, as well as more ambivalent and negative attitude responses.

FIGURE 4.3 Comparison of the Frequency of Participant Diary Attitude Responses of Research Treatment and Research Control Groups by Response Rating for the Attitude Statement “The New Product or Service Enquiry Process Will Add Value.”
Figure 4.4 illustrates that the research Control group experienced no very positive attitude ratings and less positive attitude ratings for the “The New Product or Service Enquiry Process Will Help Me in My Role” statement, as well as more ambivalent and negative attitude responses.

Figure 4.4 Comparison of the Frequency of Participant Diary Attitude Responses of Research Treatment and Research Control Groups by Response Rating for the Attitude Statement “The New Product or Service Enquiry Process Will Help Me in My Role.”

Figure 4.4 illustrates that the research Control group experienced less very positive attitude ratings for the “I Feel Positive about Coast and Country Financial Institution” statement, as well as more ambivalent and very negative attitude responses.
These results could be interpreted to mean that multi-level storytelling gave employees a better understanding of the benefit of the new product and service change process and this improved their attitude towards it in comparison to the group that received traditional change communication. In addition it appears that participants from the research group also had greater positivity, and reduced ambivalence, towards the organisation as a result of receiving multi-level storytelling.

4.2.1.2. Participant attitude by participant role

Between research groups

A statistical comparison of the central tendency of the research Treatment, and research Control groups’ responses, by participant role, to each of the 5 attitude statements in the participant diary, over the 12 weeks of the new product or service enquiry process trial, found significant differences between these two groups, across all participant diary attitude
statements and all participant roles. Table 4.3 below compares the mean rank of Service Representative attitude responses between the research Treatment and research Control groups, and Table 4.4 reports the significance of the difference between these attitude responses.

Table 4.3 Comparison of the Rank Responses of Service Representatives by Research Treatment and Research Control Groups and by Participant Diary Attitude Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Diary Attitude Statement</th>
<th>Research Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank of Service Representative responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process is a good idea</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process will add value to the organisation</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will achieve its objectives</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will help me in my role</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4 Results of Statistical Testing to Compare the Rank Responses of Service Representatives by Research Treatment and Research Control Groups and by Participant Diary Attitude Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Diary Attitude Statement</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process is a good idea</td>
<td>19.454</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will achieve its objectives</td>
<td>9.292</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process will add value to the organisation</td>
<td>4.994</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will help me in my role</td>
<td>9.531</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel positive about Coast and Country Financial Institution</td>
<td>17.710</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not significant at 99% confidence level but included for completeness

Table 4.5 below compares the mean rank of Team Leader attitude responses between the research Treatment and research Control groups, and Table 4.6 reports the significance of the difference between these attitude responses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Diary Attitude Statement</th>
<th>Research Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank of Team Leader responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think <em>the new product or service enquiry process is a good idea</em></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think <em>the new product or service enquiry process will achieve its objectives</em></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think <em>the new product or service enquiry process will add value to the organisation</em></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think <em>the new product or service enquiry process will help me in my role</em></td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel positive about Coast and Country Financial Institution</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.6 Results of Statistical Testing to Compare the Rank Responses of Team Leaders by Research Treatment and Research Control Groups and by Participant Diary Attitude Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Diary Attitude Statement</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process is a good idea</td>
<td>12.861</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will achieve its objectives</td>
<td>7.587</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process will add value to the organisation</td>
<td>12.165</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will help me in my role</td>
<td>13.274</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel positive about Coast and Country Financial Institution</td>
<td>9.314</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 below compares the mean rank of Outlet Manager attitude responses between the research Treatment and research Control groups, and Table 4.8 reports the significance of the difference between these attitude responses.
Table 4.7 Comparison of the Rank Responses of Outlet Manager by Research Treatment and Research Control Groups and by Participant Diary Attitude Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Diary Attitude Statement</th>
<th>Research Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank of Outlet Manager responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think <em>the new product or service enquiry process</em> is a good idea</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think <em>the new product or service enquiry process</em> will achieve its objectives</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think <em>the new product or service enquiry process</em> will add value to the organisation</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think <em>the new product or service enquiry process</em> will help me in my role</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel positive about Coast and Country Financial Institution</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.8 Results of Statistical Testing to Compare the Rank Responses of Outlet Managers by Research Treatment and Research Control Groups and by Participant Diary Attitude Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Diary Attitude Statement</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process is a good idea</td>
<td>8.916</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will achieve its objectives</td>
<td>10.176</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process will add value to the organisation</td>
<td>9.235</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will help me in my role</td>
<td>5.758</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel positive about Coast and Country Financial Institution</td>
<td>8.654</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within research groups

Within the Treatment group, a statistical comparison of the central tendency of participant responses to each of the 5 attitude statements in the participant diary, between roles, found that Team Leaders had significantly more positive attitudes than Service Representatives to the attitude statements relating to, the new product and service process being a good idea, the new product and service process adding value to the organisation and the new product and service process helping participants in their role. Table 4.9 below compares the mean rank of participant attitude responses for these three attitude statements between the Service
Representatives and Team Leaders, and Table 4.10 reports the significance of the difference between these attitude responses.

Table 4.9 Comparison of the Treatment Group Rank Responses between Service Representatives and Team Leaders by Participant Diary Attitude Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Diary Attitude Statement</th>
<th>Research Treatment Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank of Outlet Manager responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think <em>the new product or service enquiry process is a good idea</em></td>
<td>Service Representatives</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Leaders</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think <em>the new product or service enquiry process will add value to the organisation</em></td>
<td>Service Representatives</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Leaders</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think <em>the new product or service enquiry process will help me in my role</em></td>
<td>Service Representatives</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Leaders</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.10 Results of Statistical Testing to Compare the Rank Responses of the Research Treatment Group between Service Representative and Team Leader responses by Participant diary Attitude Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Diary Attitude Statement</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process is a good idea</td>
<td>20.788</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the new product or service enquiry process will add value to the organisation</td>
<td>20.219</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the new product or service enquiry process will help me in my role</td>
<td>16.459</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings may suggest that the Team Leader’s message in the 10 minute multi-level storytelling change communication video was clearer than the other storytellers, or it might be that the new change process was of most benefit to the Team Leaders. No other significant differences were found between any of the other participant roles within the Treatment group.

4.2.1.3. Participant attitude and participant influence by person type

A statistical comparison of the central tendency of person type spoken to by participants in relation to the new product and service process, and perceived influence of that person to the participant, by participant role, found that no person type was perceived by any participant role to have any greater influence on their attitude responses.

A statistical comparison of the central tendency of person type spoken to by participants, in relation to the new product and service process, and attitude of participant, by participant
role, found only one person type actually influenced participants of a single role’s attitude. Where Team Leaders spoke about the new product and service process, other Team Leaders’ attitude regarding positivity about the organisation was significantly less $\chi^2(2) = 7.750$, $p = 0.021$. When Team Leaders spoke to employees about the new product and service process mean rank attitude scores regarding positivity about the organisation were 16.0 for Service Representatives, 8.9 for Team Leaders and 19.0 for Outlet Managers.

This statistical testing was repeated using participant attitude responses gathered only in the first week of trial, when change communication was delivered and no significant influence on participant attitude was found. These findings suggest that with the exception of positivity towards the organisation implementing the change, when Team Leaders speaking to Team Leaders, employees make sense of organisational change and form attitudes towards it based on narrative from various organisational stakeholders, rather than specific stakeholders who may undertake the same role or a more senior role to them. Multi-storytelling delivered at the commencement of the organisational change did not change this outcome.

4.2.1.4. Participant attitude by formal and informal narrative

This study sought to analyse change recipients’ attitudes to the introduction of a change process and to understand how, if at all, formal and informal storytelling contributes to the formulation of their attitudes. Boyce (1995) and Heracleous & Barrett (2001) differentiated formal, top-down narrative from casual, everyday storytelling and Johnson (1992) proposed that formal storytelling expresses the desired attitude of the organisation, whilst informal, everyday conversation convey the real, underlying attitude of the organisation. Balogun &
Johnson (2005) found that senior managers used formal channels to communicate with middle managers, whereas communication between middle managers and employees, and middle managers and other middle managers, was mostly undertaken informally. In their study (Balogun & Johnson, 2005) observed that middle managers were mostly influenced by informal conversation and their findings emphasised the important role middle management plays in refracting the strategic change message.

A statistical comparison of the central tendency of formal and informal narrative, across groups, between groups, across participant roles within groups and between participant roles found few significant results. When spoken to with formal dialogue, about organisational change, Service Representatives across research groups recorded a more positive feeling towards the organisation, $\chi^2(1) = 7.379$, $p = 0.007$, with a mean rank of 23.57 for formal dialogue and 11.14 for informal dialogue. Additionally, Outlet Managers across research groups perceived more influence from the person they spoke to about organisational change when that conversation was formal, $\chi^2(1) = 9.331$, $p = 0.002$, with a mean rank of 17.98 for formal dialogue and a mean rank of 8.69 for informal dialogue. This result was affected by Outlet Managers from the Treatment group, $\chi^2(1) = 9.313$, $p = 0.002$, with a mean rank of 9.5 for formal dialogue and 3 for informal dialogue. It is important to note that this affected only perceived influence of narrative not actual influence on participant attitude.

These findings suggest that Johnson’s (1992) narrative paradigm either does not exist, or, in this particular case study the underlying attitude of the organisation was the same as the desired attitude of the organisation. These findings might suggest that formal and informal narrative about organisational change communication generally has little effect on how employees make sense of organisational change nor the formation of their attitude to organisational change. These results are in keeping with Rouleau’s (2005) determination that
informal conversations matter just as much as formal communications. Findings from this study appear to concur with Kitchen & Daly’s (2002) advice regarding the importance of communicating in the words of the change recipient and constructing communications plans that address both formal and informal communication strategies.

4.2.1.5. Relationship between time and participant attitude

The relationship between time and participant attitude, both between, and within, Treatment and Control groups, and also across groups was statistically tested. No significant correlation was found. This would indicate that no relationship between time and employee attitude to change exists within at least a 12 week period from initial organisational change communication. It is also important to note that the participant diary completed in the twelfth week of the study occurred after a break for participants from completing diaries for three weeks. Attitudinal responses from week 12 were compared to the attitude responses of the first two months of the trial and no significant difference in attitude response was found.

There were not enough participant responses per week, over time, by either person type (influence response), or participant role, to test the relationship of time on participant attitude or perceived influence by either of these variables. No relationship was found between time and participant attitude by either formal or informal communication undertaken by participants during the trial. There were insufficient responses per week, over time, by group, person type or participant role, to test the relationship of time on participant attitude by these variables for both formal and informal narrative.
Qualitative Findings

4.2.1.6. Participant attitude between research groups

Of the ninety-eight unique free text comments recorded in participant diaries from twenty-one of the twenty-three participants, 72% of the comments coded as positive were from the research Treatment group, whilst 70% of the comments coded as negative, and 80% of the comments coded as ambivalent, were recorded by the research Control group (refer to Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6 Frequency of Positive, Negative or Ambivalent Coded Participant Diary Comments by Research Group

The research Treatment group comments referenced how good the initial new change process communication was and that participants thought the new change process was good. The research Control group however referenced how poor the initial new change process communication was and how complex the new process was. Additionally, many more of the
Control research group thought that the new process wasn’t applicable to all customers and that it was too early to tell if the change process was good. Both groups referenced the negative impact of other changes in their Outlet on adoption of the new change process, limitations of physical space, positive and negative interactions with customers and that coaching had helped with adoption of the new change process.

These findings are consistent with the quantitative findings that multi-level organisational change communication had a positive effect on participant attitude to organisational change. These results could be interpreted to mean that multi-level storytelling gave employees a better understanding of the benefit of the new product and service change process, specifically in relation to its complexity and applicability to all customers, and that this greater understanding improved participant attitude towards the new process, in comparison to the group that received traditional change communication.

Other factors that participants referenced in free text comments, that the researcher coded as having an impact on participants’ positive attitude, were positive interactions using the new product or service enquiry process with customers, as well as coaching participants received from their Outlet manager in relation to the new process. Fourteen percent of free text comments referenced a positive customer interaction using the new product and service process and six percent referenced a positive coaching experience. Twenty two percent of all free text comments referenced a customer interaction, whether positive or negative. The frequency of participant references to customer interactions in the free text comments suggests the importance of the customer on participant attitude.
4.2.2 Employee Engagement

4.2.2.1. Business outcomes between trial research groups

Business outcomes of the change trial showed that the group subjected to multi-level storytelling performed significantly better than the group that experienced traditional change communication. The Treatment group sold significantly more products and services per customer than the Control group. In fact the Control group sold significantly less products and services per new customer than the rest of the financial institution’s other Outlets that were not included in the research or involved in the trial (refer to Table 4.12). Additionally, the Treatment group sold significantly more average products and services per new customer than that of the previous financial year, achieving the business objective of the new change initiative. These business targets were not realised by the Control group.

Table 4.11 Descriptive Statistics of the Average Products and Services Sold per New Customer between the Research Treatment Group, Research Control group and Remaining Outlets Not Participating in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Treatment Group</th>
<th>Research Control Group</th>
<th>Rest of the network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean 0.61</td>
<td>SD 0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean 0.19</td>
<td>SD 0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450</td>
<td>235</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3371</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings infer that multi-level storytelling had a positive effect on business performance outcomes.
4.3 Themes

The researcher examined the study’s findings and provided the following themed discussion around organisational change communication and Social Construction Theory, within the context of the argument presented in the literature review.

4.3.1 Employee attitude and employee engagement and change

How employees feel about organisational change greatly impacts their behaviour towards such change, with regard to both their initial engagement, and their ongoing commitment to it (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Buchanan, Fitzgerald & Ketley, 2005). Social Construction Theory suggests that change recipient understanding of organisational change assists change recipients to determine their attitude towards the change (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s, 2005). Change practitioners have linked change recipients’ negative or ambivalent attitude to change, with failed change initiatives (Kotter, 1995; Piderit, 2000; Klein, 1996). This study examined the impact of organisational change communication on both employee understanding of organisational change and employee engagement in organisational change. Participant attitude towards organisational change was used to interpret employee understanding of change and business performance outcomes were used as an indicator of employee engagement with organisational change (Kotter, 1995; Piderit, 2000; Klein, 1996).

Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s (2005) Enactment Theory takes Social Construction Theory a step further describing storytelling as a variable that influences change recipient attitude to organisational change. Literature about storytelling and organisational change has focussed on organisational actors sharing informal narrative about the organisational change between each other throughout the change to make sense of it. No known literature has measured the effect of storytelling as a form of organisational change communication on the business
performance outcomes of organisational change. This study was designed to investigate the value of telling multiple stories about change from different organisational actor’s perspectives, at the commencement of the change, as a form of formalised organisational change communication.

Of the six Outlets participating in the research, the three Outlets that experienced greater, more structured storytelling, that represented various levels of the organisation in favour of the organisation’s new product or service enquiry process, were significantly more positive in response to all attitude statements than the three Outlets acting as the research Control group. Members of the research Control group who experienced traditional change communication passed down from top management, to middle management, to Outlet employees via a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation presentation pack recorded both more ambivalent, and more negative attitudes to the new change process (Langer & Thorup, 2006; Buchanan & Dawson, 2007; Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). This study also found that no one person type or employee role, nor formal or informal conversation, nor point in the organisational change process, had more influence on employee attitude towards the new change process than any other. In other words, the narrative of all organisational actors, no matter the context or timing, is equally influential on change recipient sensemaking during times of change. Additionally, the three Outlets that experienced greater, more structured storytelling that represented various levels of the organisation in favour of the organisation’s new product or service enquiry process, achieved significantly improved business performance outcomes than the three Outlets acting as the Control group. These findings not only support Enactment Theory as an explanation of employee attitude to organisational change, but also assists us to start to understand why storytelling, employee attitude and employee engagement are linked (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s, 2005). The following discussion will
propose why multi-level storytelling as organisational change communication improves employee engagement.

4.3.1.1. Change recipient sensemaking

Boje (1995) proposed that employees seek out stories for different perceptions of reality, in an attempt to form their own interpretation of what is occurring to them during organisational change. By providing change recipients with multiple interpretations of change communication, the likelihood of employee inertia and resistance to change is reduced by appealing to individual factors and assisting change recipients make sense of change (Bryant & Frahm, 2011; Roleau, 2005; Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012; Rhodes, Pullen & Clegg, 2009; Fenton & Langley, 2011). To cope with organisational change, individuals will try to make sense of the change by reasoning its value to themselves, both in terms of its direct personal value to them, and any value it may have for the things and people within the change recipient’s organisational environment that currently hold personal value to them (Sonenshein, 2010). The change recipient may reason with themselves such questions as, “what does this mean for me when I am interacting with a customer?”, “how is this in the best interest of the organisation?” or “what does this mean for my relationships with my manager, my peers and my staff?” The multi-level storytelling organisational change communication delivered in this study provided clear answers to many of these questions, whereas for the research Control group it was likely that many of these questions would have remained unanswered from the top-down traditional organisational change communication they received. Although the change communication delivered to the research Control group addressed the benefit of the change to the organisation and to the customer, the written, business-focussed nature, and possible refraction of these messages through management
interpretation may not have been easy to understand, nor convincing for Control group change recipients (Rouleau, 2005; Sonenshein, 2010).

The multi-level storytelling change communication employed in this study consolidated the sense-making process described by Enactment Theory at a single point in time. Organisational actors within the change recipient’s environment were represented by relatable actors, who delivered stories, scripted in their own organisational dialogue. This assortment of stories assisted change recipients to reason the value of the new product or service enquiry process (Czarniawska, 1999; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s, 2005; Bryant & Frahm, 2011). Neither formal nor informal narrative was more influential on the formation of change recipient attitude (Rouleau, 2005). The specific language used by each of the storytellers in the organisational change communication was representative of the narrative of the organisational actor it was designed to represent. It is thought that this specific dialogue was more important than the formal or informal nature of the communication (Czarniawska, 1999; Kitchen & Daly, 2002).

Boje (1991) proposed that the success of storytelling during change is to know when to tell the appropriate story to the appropriate recipients at the appropriate time. Some studies have proposed that once an initial negative attitude to organisational change has been established by an employee it can be very difficult to positively influence that attitude (Langer & Thorup, 2006; Sonenshein, 2010). This research was designed to consider the temporal nature of employee sensemaking during times of change. Completion of weekly diary entries by participants allowed the researcher to examine multi-level storytelling’s effect on participant attitude over time, in an attempt to determine how everyday organisational discourse impacts participant attitude. The positive effect multi-level storytelling had on participant attitude at the commencement of the new product or service enquiry process remained relatively constant across the 12 weeks the study was conducted. Additionally, participants who did not
receive the new change communication did not alter their attitudes significantly over the same 12 week period.

Cuncliffe & Coupland’s (2012) analysis of a sports team during a crisis situation proposed that sensemaking occurs after a change event occurs, however in their case study the change recipients only had the opportunity to discuss and make sense of the changed event after it had happened. The findings from this study suggest that change recipient attitude is formed after that change recipient has had the opportunity to consolidate organisational actors’ perspectives of the change. This consolidation period may occur at any time, possibly throughout the life of the change, not necessarily after the change event has occurred as described by Cuncliffe & Coupland (2012) when that opportunity to consolidate stories is available. In this study the point of consolidation was designed to occur at the commencement of the new product or service enquiry process trial.

Jansen (2004) and other researchers (Nadler & Tushman, 1994; Pardo del Val & Martínez Fuentes, 2003; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001) demonstrated how the initial change message can be lost over time when change resistors influence how change recipients perceive change. Humphreys & Brown (2002) interpreted shared narrative as a way to create individual and collective identities, and that these identities are constantly redefined by further shared narrative over time. Findings from this study infer that change recipients’ initial attitude to organisational change is unlikely to alter, over a 12 week period at least, from normal employee discourse. The influence of change communication is important at the commencement of organisational change. The effect multi-level change communication has on change recipient sensemaking does not have a negative effect on change recipient sense stability. These findings are also contrary to Cuncliffe & Coupland’s (2012) interpretation of Social Construction Theory, that emotion and individual values assist an individual to make sense of an unusual course of events, over time, after those events had occurred. Perhaps,
however, the 12 week trial was not a sufficient amount of time to fully examine change recipient sensemaking.

In answer to Boje’s (1991) proposal that the success of storytelling during change is to know when to tell the appropriate story to the appropriate recipients at the appropriate time, this study would surmise that organisational change communication should occur before or at the commencement of organisational change to all participants. Findings from this study suggest that during organisational change the sense-making process occurs for each change recipient regardless of their role (Sonenshein, 2010).

### 4.3.1.2. Change recipient attitude

Findings of this study suggest that when change recipients understand the value organisational change offers them, they can decide whether they feel positively or negatively towards the change (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007; Bryant & Frahm, 2011). If employees understand that organisational change will provide real value to them they are likely to feel positively towards the change (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s, 2005). Eighty-one percent of the research Treatment group attitude responses were positive and only 7% were negative. Additionally, research Treatment participants’ free text comments described the initial new change process launch communication positively, and substantially more research Treatment participants than research Control participants described in their own words why they thought the new product or service enquiry process was beneficial.

If change recipients do not understand the value of the organisational change to them, and no further explanation of the change is available to assist their sensemaking, then change recipients consider whether they should concern themselves with the change. If they decide
that it is not worth worrying about then the result of their sensemaking is an ambivalent attitude towards the change. Eighty percent of research Control participants’ responses were ambivalent, whilst only 12% of research Treatment participants were. Additionally 4 free text comments were coded by the researcher as ambivalent for research Control participants, suggesting it was too early to tell if they agreed with the new product or service enquiry process. The researcher coded only 1 ambivalent free text comment from the research Control group.

If change recipients do not understand the value of the organisational change to them, yet feel it is worthwhile being concerned about the change, then the result of their sensemaking is negativity towards the change (Sonenshein, 2010). These employees are more likely to assume that the change will be detrimental to themselves, and the things and people within the change recipient’s organisational environment. Forty-six percent of research Control participants’ responses were negative, whilst only 7% of research Treatment participants were. The researcher coded 60% of research Control participant free text comments as negative. Negative attitudes in change recipients are important to understand as some theorists propose that once an initial negative attitude has been established by an employee it is very difficult to positively influence that attitude (Langer & Thorup, 2006; Sonenshein, 2010).

4.3.1.3. Change recipient action

Change recipients who have formed a positive attitude to organisational change are prepared to engage in the change and they also feel more confident to discuss, and depending on their levels of positivity, promote the change. Research Treatment participants recorded 81 instances of conversing about the new product or service enquiry process, and 33% of their
free text comments referenced that they thought engaging in the new product or service enquiry process was good.

Participants who have formed a negative attitude towards the change are more likely to resist the change and continue to act in either the way they had always acted, or to act in accordance with what they themselves believe is the right way to act. Cuncliffe & Coupland (2012) describe this as self-assessment of how realistic possible explanations for actions are. Resistors wish to demonstrate that the organisational change is flawed. Research Control participant free text comments cited reasons why the new product or service enquiry process would not be valuable to themselves, other employees and the customer, including that the process was too complex and that it did not apply to all new customers. These employees feel that they know better than the organisational direction to change and do what they think is right, based on what they know and what their experience has been.

Participants who are ambivalent in attitude to the change continue to act in the way they had always acted, almost ignoring that change is occurring or pretending to engage in the change. For ambivalent employees the outcome of the change does not matter and engagement or resistance is of little concern to them. They make sure they do what makes them feel most comfortable. Although comments coded by the researcher as ambivalent all agreed it was ‘too early to tell’ if the new product or service enquiry process was valuable, this is also a throw away statement that could be interpreted as ‘I don’t care what happens’.

4.3.1.4. Organisational change performance

Change practitioners have linked change recipients’ negative or ambivalent attitude to change, with failed change initiatives (Kotter, 1995; Piderit, 2000; Klein, 1996). Change
recipients who understand the value of the organisational change and choose to engage in and promote the change, assist to achieve business performance outcomes. Research Treatment group Outlets sold significantly more products and services to new customers than the research Control group. Research Treatment group participants were recording more positive attitude responses and positive free text comments that referred to their engagement and promotion of the new product or service enquiry process. It is therefore believed that more active participation in the new product or service enquiry process resulted in research Treatment Outlets surpassing business performance objectives by selling, on average, 3 times as many products and services per new customer than the research Control Outlets.

The actions of change recipients who do not understand the value of the change and oppose it by active resistance can worsen organisational performance and reduce the likelihood of the organisation achieving its business performance outcomes. For change recipients ambivalent to the change, who take no direct action and continue acting as they did before the change was introduced, organisational performance remains the same. Research Control Outlets recorded more negative and ambivalent attitude responses, and referenced more reasons why they didn’t agree with the new product or service enquiry process, therefore reducing their active engagement in the process. Not only did research Control Outlets achieve a similar average number of products and services sold per new customer as the remaining Outlets in Coast and Country’s network who were not part of the trial and did not experience any change, but the standard deviation of the volume of products and services sold per new customer for research Control Outlets was much higher than any other group of Outlets. This suggests that consistency in process is reduced by resistance and ambivalence to organisational change.
4.3.1.5. Employee attitude and engagement and Social Construction Theory

These findings not only support Enactment Theory as an explanation of employee attitude to organisational change, but also assists us to understand why storytelling, employee attitude and employee engagement are linked (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s, 2005). Storytelling plays a key role in the change recipient sensemaking process. Sensemaking assists employees to form attitudes to organisational change and it is positive employee attitudes that foster active participation in organisational change. Active participation in organisational change by change recipients increases the likelihood that business performance outcomes will be achieved. This theory is illustrated in the Figure below.
Figure 4.7 Change Recipient Reasoning Process: How Change Recipient Attitude and Engagement Effect Business Performance Outcomes
Change recipients do consider the stories of other organisational actors to formulate their own attitude to organisational change, however it is proposed that they only do so if they do not receive enough information from organisational change communication to assess the benefit of the change to themselves and the people and things they care about in the organisational environment (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s, 2005).

4.3.2 Storytellers

This study was designed to increase understanding as to whether any particular storytellers had more influence over change recipients than any other storyteller.

In their case study of a public-private partnership, Whittle, Mueller & Mangan (2009) discovered that employees develop characters and storylines to explain situations of change. Bryant and Frahm (2010) liken the influence of change communication to a multi-genre movie where certain stories and characters appeal to different segments of the audience and that appeal determines audience interest in, and understanding of the storyline. Their theory supposes that the more an employee relates to the storyteller and their story of change, the more likely they will be to make sense of, and appreciate that change (Bryant and Frahm, 2010). This study was designed to present multiple storylines of change where stories were intended to appeal to, and be told by, the role of each change recipient. In week 1 of the study, when initial multi-level storytelling was delivered, there was a significant negative correlation between the role of the person perceived by the participant to have influenced them, and the role of the participant themselves. In other words, perceived influence of managers came from employee stories, and in turn, managers’ stories were perceived to influence their employees. There was, however, no correlation between actual influence and
the role of the person spoken to by participants. These findings show that the storyteller role itself does not determine the value set a change recipient will identify with to formulate their own attitude.

The importance employees place on how they are viewed by each other is fundamental to Enactment Theory. Individual, group, and organisational attitudes contribute to change recipient reasoning to establish a plausible and socially acceptable explanation for the purpose and impact of the change (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005; Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011). The results of this study suggest that shared narrative clarifies change and creates collective identity, regardless of role (Humphreys & Brown’s, 2002; Fleming, 2001). The findings of this study are consistent with Wehemeier & Schultz’ (2011) belief that employees are actors, and each of these actors are storytellers co-contributing stories during a situation of uncertainty to create social reality.

Results of this study revealed only one exception to Enactment Theory’s explanation of the organisational storyteller’s role during organisational change. When Team Leaders spoke to Team Leaders there was a significant influence on their actual response to the attitude statement regarding positivity towards the organisation. When Team Leaders spoke to other Team Leaders, their attitude regarding positivity about the organisation was significantly less than if they had not spoken to another Team Leader. Emotional storytelling is often used as a tool by the disempowered to regain political Control (Brown, Gabriel & Gherardi, 2009; Langer & Thorup, 2006). This outcome is better explained by Boje’s (2006) deconstructive theory of organisational change communication (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001). Team Leaders in this study either felt disempowered because of the change, or some other general organisational issue, and their discourse reflected an attempt to redefine power and knowledge. It is however important to note that this exception was limited to how these
participants felt about the organisation, and that Team Leader to Team Leader storytelling did not affect Team Leader attitude to the new product or service enquiry process.

These findings are consistent with Whittle, Mueller & Mangan’s (2009) findings and Bryant and Frahm’s (2010) theory that change recipients process multiple stories, rather than one relational story to make sense of organisational change (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). These findings suggest that the influence of organisational change stories on participant attitudes is a more complex relationship between many storytellers’ stories and the change recipient’s workplace environment, past experience as well as other unknown variables (Piderit, 2000; Rhodes, Pullen & Clegg, 2009).

4.3.3 Change agent

This case study provided the opportunity to gather more understanding about managers as organisational change agents. The role of change agent is to model the change behaviour and espouse the merits of the change in an effort to influence the attitudes of their employees to embrace and enact the change (Ford & Ford, 1976; Nahmias, 2009). Outlet Managers assumed the role of change agents in this case study as they were expected to maintain introduced change practices in their Outlets over the timeframe of the trial, after the initial and formal change communication was delivered. If managers do not project a positive attitude to change then they can impede adoption of change and enable resistance to change from their employees (Graetz, 2000; Huy, 2001). This study attempted to understand the impact of multi-level storytelling to communicate change on the effectiveness of Outlet Managers as change agents in two ways; firstly, whether Outlet Managers exhibited a positive attitude towards the initiative, especially at the outset of the trial and secondly, if
employees also exhibited a positive attitude to the change, in the same way as the Outlet Managers.

Sonenshein (2010) and Huy (2002) proposed that middle management walk a fine line between appeasing their management and their employees, a behaviour that can compromise any change initiative by refracting the change communication message. In this study, Outlet Managers, across groups, perceived more influence from Service Representatives and Team Leaders. This implies that Huy (2001), Langley (2000) and Gill (2002) were right in proposing that part of the role of change agent is to have a certain degree of empathy with their employees. Across groups however, average responses to attitude statements demonstrated no one person type had a more significant influence on Outlet Managers’ responses to the participant diary attitude statements. It is therefore assumed that all social actors have equal influence over Managers (Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011).

Previous research suggests that Managers are quite aware of the need to please their employees (Sonenshein, 2010; Huy, 2002). In this study Outlet Managers in the Treatment group recorded significantly greater perceived influence scores than their counterparts in the Control group suggesting that multi-level storytelling can increase Outlet Managers’ perception of others’ influence over their attitudes. There was however no significant difference in a single person types’ actual influence on Treatment Outlet Managers for any of the attitude statements. These findings are consistent with Sonenshein (2010) and Huy’s (2002) proposal that Outlet Managers are influenced by both management and their employees.

According to Social Construction Theory change agents are described as actors who possess an understanding of the workplace within which change will be undertaken (Langer & Thorup, 2006; Buchanan & Dawson, 2007; Crawford & Nahmias, 2010). Across groups,
Outlet Managers’ average response to each of the attitude statements was positive; whether the initiative was a good idea, would achieve its objectives, add value, help them in their role and their positivity about the organisation. Treatment group Outlet Managers were significantly more positive than Control Outlet Managers to each of the five attitude statements. It is therefore likely that multi-level storytelling had a positive effect on Outlet Managers’ attitude to the change initiative. Perhaps articulating clear stories explaining the benefit proposed change from the perspective of each affected role, at the commencement of the change process, increases Outlet Managers’ awareness of how the change will affect all change stakeholders.

It has been proposed that managers’ emotional intelligence allows them to understand and identify with the needs of their employees during change (Crawford & Nahmias, 2010; Langley, 2000; Huy, 2002; Gill 2002). Across groups Team Leaders’ attitude responses were significantly more positive than those of Outlet Managers about the value the change initiative would add, and if the initiative would help them in their role. Also across groups, Service Representatives’ positivity towards the organisation was significantly greater than that of Outlet Managers. There were no other significant differences in attitude between roles, across groups. Within the Treatment group there was no significant difference in attitude responses between Outlet Managers and Team Leaders, nor Outlet Managers and Service Representatives. Control group Outlet Managers however had a significantly less positive attitude than their Service Representatives as to whether the initiative would help them in their role and their positivity about the organisation, however there was no significant difference in response between Outlet Managers and Team Leaders. These findings show that in general, Outlet Managers have similar attitudes to their employees. This could be due to Outlet Managers’ ability to empathise with their employees, however the findings also suggest that multi-level storytelling may have had a positive effect on Treatment Outlet
Managers’ understanding of the value the change initiative would bring and that this additional communication also made them feel better about the organisation.

To achieve more certainty in understanding whether or not Outlet Managers are effective change managers we need to understand their influence on the attitudes of their employees. Heracleous & Barrett (2001) described narrative as occurring both on the surface of an organisation and beneath it. Introduced change, Johnson (1992) offers, is filtered by the strategic re-orientation paradigm, where the cultural reality of an organisation is much different to its declared culture, so that change communication deviates from its intended meaning as it permeates throughout the organisation. So, Wehmeier & Schultz (2011) propose that the storyline of organisational change develops in the direction that organisational actors take it, rather than from top-down, monological Control over organisational communication (Whittle, Mueller & Mangan (2009); Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011).

Results of this study show that employees influence each other’s attitudes and their attitudes are influenced little by management. Frontline employees perceived significantly greater influence from management, with regards to the new product or service enquiry process.

Outlet Managers across groups had recorded positive attitude responses to the change. Outlet managers were however equally influenced by both management and employees, allowing refraction of the change message. Results of the study also indicate that Outlet Managers did not influence their employees’ responses to attitude statements. This would lead us to conclude that Outlet Managers were not effective change agents during the trial.

The literature has discussed the importance of well-planned communication between middle managers and change recipients to successfully fulfill the role of change agent (Sonenshein, 2010; Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005). Findings from this study suggest that there is no
advantage to appointing managers as change agents over other employee roles. Regardless of the role of the change agent, choice of change agents could be aided by questions and comprehension exercises that establish each individual’s Theory of Mind, as a proactive approach to minimising resistance (Fletcher et al., 1995). These instruments would assist to establish if proposed change agents are likely to understand the benefit the organisational change will bring to internal and external customers, and therefore more likely to engage in the change process because they can comprehend the value the change will bring (Zunshine, 2006). By successfully engaging employees as change agents resistance to the change is minimized as change agents actively engage and exemplify the benefit of organisational change to other change recipients (Lewin, 1947; Lewin, 1951; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011).

4.3.4 The Customer Story

Customer feedback first hand can be very powerful. The thought of being confronted by customers who are unhappy about organisational change can frighten frontline employees into sticking to what they know rather than adopting change (Bell & Ludington, 2006; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011). In this case study, participant responses to quantitative attitude statements indicated that engaging in narrative with customers was no less influential on the formation of their attitude to change than doing so with managers and employees. Qualitative comments revealed that what the customer thought about the new product or service enquiry process greatly influenced participants’ attitudes toward the change. For the following comments the wording in italics was changed to protect the branding of Coast and Country financial institution. Comments coded as positive by the researcher included:

“I had my first new customer in the trial period and felt very comfortable in having conversation with open questions. The amount of clues I was able to pick up on from
conversation was great. Customer was more than happy for me to follow-up.” Treatment Outlet (61).

“The customer was impressed with the *product and service sheet as it had so much on it. That help me to be able to cover all of our products and services.” Treatment Outlet (51).

“Moving away from the counter makes the interaction so much more personal. Seems to work well. I seem to be opening more *high interest savings accounts as a result also it gives me the opportunity to mention we also cover insurance and financial advice without sounding like I'm trying to "sell" something. I simply point it out on the *product and service sheet.” Treatment Outlet (61).

“I found the new *product and service sheet was a great asset for new customers and existing customers.” Treatment Outlet (41)

These comments show how a combination of positive response from the customer, and discovered ease of use by the employee, resulted in very positive attitudes from these participants towards the new product or service enquiry process.

Comments coded as negative by the researcher included:

“Have had only 1 opportunity to go to office, 1 other declined to go to office as he has several accounts with us.” Control Outlet 71. “My customer did not have any interest in any 3rd party products. I felt she was a bit uncomfortable at first.” Control Outlet 31.

“Didn't not found beneficial sitting with a new customer of 18 asking her her needs, I also thought it was very clunky asking questions and then opening the account with her and then dealing with the cash...” Control Outlet 81.
“We have had a couple of people come in and enquire about interest rate on Terms but when questioned about if they are new customers they decline any further info.” Treatment Outlet 51.

These comments show how a negative response from the customer led to doubts from the participant as to the relevance of the new product or service enquiry process.

This review of participant free text comments suggests enlisting the support of the customer to tell a story to employees about why proposed organisational change will be beneficial to the customer (De Large, 2010). Change practitioner Denning (2005) has described the importance of using storytelling as a simple way of explaining how change will function in a given situation and what value it will add to the customer. He suggests that communications plans should actively seek out the customer story to describe the benefit of the change received by the customer in comparison to the current problems being experienced by the customer (Boje, 1991; Denning, 2005; Rouleau, 2005). The customer story is particularly beneficial for frontline employees because they have a personal connection with the customer (Johnson-Cramer, Parise & Cross, 2007; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011). Explaining how the change will assist to maintain employee customer relationships is very beneficial to employee engagement (Cutcher, 2008b). The use of the customer story also assists the organisation to influence employee attitude and develop a customer oriented culture, allowing the organisation to improve its psychological contract with the employees (Cutcher, 2008a). The customer story however will not work if the culture of the organisation is in direct opposition to customer commitment (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011). The introduction of processes that are perceived to detract from a customer oriented culture can compromise relationships between frontline employees and customers (Cutcher, 2008).
Measuring customer responses and sharing these stories as examples of how the change has positively impacted customers provides the additional benefit of a feedback loop where employees can feel empowered to own and refine the change (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011). Cuncliffe and Coupland (2012) describe how to maximise the benefit of storytelling. Applying their theory to customer stories the researcher recommends communications plans regarding organisational change to include both formal and informal narrative, and the flexibility to tell successful customer interaction stories to recipients as they occur, to reinforce the benefit of the change to the customer (De Large, 2010; Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012). The elements of the customer story include an organisational change setting, two characters, the employee and the customer and a plot where the employee acts as the hero, assisting the customer with a problem (Boje, 1991). The customer story explains how the employee benefits the customer when they change to the new organisational state (Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012).

4.4 Summary of limitations

The limitations of this research were defined by the unique nature of the case study. All limitations discussed in this study could however be improved with the following changes in design.

4.4.1 Volume of cases and participation

This study was unable to effectively examine the relationship between time and change recipient attitude by role, nor the effect of specific influence of person types on change.
recipient attitude, because of a lack of cases collected over the course of the study. Additionally, on average, only seven references to either positive or negative customer interactions per branch were made in participant free text comments throughout the length of the study. Most of these interactions were recorded in the first 5 weeks of the trial. There could have been many more customer interactions that were not recorded, however the researcher observed that there were not enough new customers during the new product or service enquiry process trial for each participant to have experienced a customer interaction. This limitation of case volume decreased the internal validity of the findings of this study and this limitation could have been avoided by increasing the number of participating Outlets and/or the length of time the trial was undertaken. A further improvement to this study would be to collect participant diaries a month or longer after the change initiative had been completed to determine if participants require time after the organisational change to make sense of it, and change their attitudes toward it.

Analysis of both the data collected for this study, and the business performance data reported by Coast and Country financial institution, demonstrated that Outlet Managers did not actively engage in the change process. When change recipients fail to actively engage in the change process resistance to change is assumed, however Outlet managers’ attitudes to the new product or service enquiry process was not significantly different to any other role across or within groups (Piderit 2000). The researcher observed that Outlet Managers’ although positive to the change may have believed that their role in the process was to manage the process and not participate and demonstrate the process. An improvement to the study would be to reinforce Outlet Manager behaviour when it was clear that these participants were not actively engaging in the new process. By reinforcing the importance of Outlet Manager participation throughout the study, there may have been more opportunities to study customer interaction across all roles. The use of incentives to increase Outlet Manager participation,
expansion of the change across more Outlets and over a greater time period would also assist in assuring the collection of more Outlet Manager customer interaction.

4.4.2 Volume and quality of variables

The quality of participant responses and free text comments was determined by the design and communication of the participant diary and its procedures. This study was limited by lack of descriptions and definition around what constitutes formal and informal communication. For example a clear definition in the participant diary procedures of what constitutes formal and informal narrative would have improved the reliability of participant responses. The participant diary procedures focussed on data collection and did not provide in enough detail, expectations of the kinds of narrative to be recorded, or the importance of understanding participant interactions with customers. The only variables collected by the participant diary about organisational change communication were person type spoken to, informal or formal communication, which week of the trial did the communication occur and whether the person spoken to was from the participant’s Outlet. This limited the researcher’s ability to understand what variables influenced participant attitude to the new product or service enquiry process. Improvements to the design of this study would be to ask participants to record the type of narrative that was undertaken, for example a conversation, performance review or presentation. Other factors, such as how long the communication took, how well the participant knew the person they spoke to, whether the participant respected the person they spoke to or if the participant thought they shared the same values as the person they spoke would also be valuable to record. Adding these variables to the
participant diary would have taken little extra time for the participant to complete and increased the depth of understanding of causality.

The participant diary contained 7 A4 landscape length lines for participants to record free text comments. The diary was deliberately designed this way to reduce the amount of time taken by participants to complete each weekly diary entry. This design limited the quality and depth of participant comment. This study would have benefited from qualitative interviews with all participants after the completion of the new product or service enquiry process trial, or the use of voice recorded participant diary entries. Employing these devices would likely improve the depth of information gathered for more reliable assumptions of causality, specifically providing a better understanding of Outlet Managers lack of interaction with customers.

Another limitation of this study was that the researcher assumed that participants recorded the narrative delivered in the initial change communication in the first week of their influence and attitude responses. A suggested improvement would be to ask participants to identify which initial change communication stories appealed to them the most and the reasoning behind their appeal.

As the recording of customer interactions was not requested of participants, and these interactions were only provided as the participant chose, assumptions about the influence of customer interaction on participant attitude is at risk of non-response bias. The lack of data collected about participant interactions with customers limited the researcher’s ability to understand customer influence on employee attitude. If participants were requested to record all customer interactions, and the level of influence of the interactions on participants’ attitude responses (either positive, negative or ambivalent), the causal inference that customer interaction has an effect on employee attitude would be more reliable.
Finally, the researcher requested business performance data from Coast and Country financial institution in the form of pre-existing organisational reporting. Requesting more specific business performance data, for example business performance by participant and role may have assisted the researcher understand in more detail the link between employee attitude and employee engagement during organisational change.

**4.4.3 Customer Story**

The multi-level storytelling change communication delivered at the commencement of the new product or service enquiry process trial to the research Treatment group did not include a customer story from a customer, rather the customer story was represented by a member of the management team. The real influence of customers on participant attitude therefore was limited at the commencement of the trial. Using a customer to tell the benefit of the change for that customer could have had a greater influence on participant attitude to the new change process. By having a customer deliver this change story all participants would have had at least one opportunity to determine if a customer influenced their attitude or not, increasing the reliability of employee free text comments.

Multi-level storytelling communication – the customer story delivered by a customer not a representative of management; participants asked to identify which initial change communication stories appealed to them the most and the reasoning behind their appeal; a mechanism by which storytellers and change recipients values were assessed prior to the commencement of the study.
4.5 Practical application

4.5.1 Storytelling as organisational change communication

Introducing organisational change through multi-level storytelling at the commencement of a change initiative assists participants to understand and develop their own attitudes about the change, thereby reducing confusion about the impact of the change to the individual (Bryant & Frahm, 2011). No one story or storyteller is of more importance to a change recipient. It is the consolidation of related stories that assists change recipients make sense of change. Once formed, change recipient’s initial attitude to change is unlikely to alter over the course of the organisational change period (within a 12 week period). In constructing these stories it is important to communicate in the language of the change recipient and construct communications plans that address both formal and informal communication strategies. The customer story needs to be integrated in the change initiative’s communication plan in a way that both promotes the value of the change, and a customer-centric culture in the organisation (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011).

4.5.2 The link between change recipient sensemaking, attitude, performance and organisational outcome

During organisational change a participant’s ability to make sense of the benefit of the change is likely to improve their attitude to the change and in turn the probability that they will actively participate in the change. By increasing active participation in organisational change, the change recipients improve business performance thus contributing to the
achievement of organisational change objectives. Organisations should consider the use of multi-level storytelling as an investment in employee engagement that returns improved business performance. Multi-level storytelling assists change recipients positively consolidate organisational narrative regarding change.

4.5.3 Change agents

Outlet Managers did not possess any greater influence over their employees’ attitudes than other employees. Organisations should reconsider the expectation that managers represent the best choice of change agent. Choice of change agent could be made from any level of the organisation, including frontline employees. It is however suggested that assessing proposed change agents with simple questions and comprehension exercises with regards to Theory of Mind would be a proactive approach to minimising resistance and engaging change agents in the change sooner (Fletcher et al., 1995).

4.5.4 Quantifying and qualifying the value of organisational change communication

An unplanned benefit of this study for change practitioners is that the mixed method approach employed by this study also provides a framework within which they can discuss the value of any return in investment in storytelling as a viable organisational change communication technique. By comparing the business performance of a matched group of recipients who do not receive storytelling, customer stories, change agents predisposed to employee and customer empathy or any other change communication technique during organisational change with the business performance of those that did, practitioners can
demonstrate quantitatively the benefit of these techniques. This value can be supported and understood even further with qualitative evidence to improve organisational change communication in later stages of the change or future change initiatives.

4.6 Future research

4.6.1 Change recipient sensemaking, attitude and performance

A further area of study offered by the results of this research is to provide more detail regarding the proposed link between change recipient attitude and change recipient performance. A better understanding of the change recipient reasoning process, and change recipient action, would benefit change management in areas other than communication. There is also great opportunity to investigate the effect of positive and negative customer interaction and time on change recipient attitude and engagement.

4.6.2 The effect of change recipient and storyteller relationships and values

An additional improvement would be a mechanism by which storytellers and change recipients values were assessed prior to the commencement of the study and or during the study to determine if correlation of values between storytellers and change recipients influences change recipient attitude. Similarly understanding the strength of relationships between storytellers and change recipients may also assist in determining if this variable impacts change recipient attitude.
4.6.3 Time and delivery of change communication

The researcher could not make any strong conclusions about the relationship between time and change recipient attitude. Further research where organisational change communication is delivered at different times during the change process (for example, the beginning, middle and end of the process) could provide assurance around the best time to deliver that communication.

This study only spanned a 12 week period. A longitudinal study over a 12 to 18 month period may better explore the effect of time on employee attitude and employee engagement. Another recommendation would be to assess the attitude of change recipients 1 to 3 months after change implementation has been completed.

4.7 Summary of findings

The questions originally considered to be covered by this research can now be addressed:

1. How, if at all, does storytelling impact employee attitude to organisational change?

A significantly better attitude to organisational change was observed from multi-level storytelling change communication in comparison to the group that did not receive this method of communication.

1.1 What affect does communication between and across roles have on employee attitude to change?

- Employees perceive influence from managers and managers perceive influence from employees, however no significant difference in actual
attitude to organisational change was observed from communication between these roles.

- Outlet managers were therefore determined to be no better change agents than any other employee.
- Findings from the study showed that a story related to a specific organisational role, and delivered by that role did not specifically influence that recipients’ own attitude formulation to the organisational change.
- Qualitative data suggested that customer interaction influences employee attitude to organisational change.

1.2 What role does time play in employee attitude to change?

- No relationship between time and participant attitude to organisational change was observed.

1.3 Does the formal or informal nature of communication affect employee attitude to change?

- No significant difference between formal or informal communication and employee attitude was observed.

1.4 To what extent does attitude affect formal change management outcomes?

- A significantly better performance and achievement of business objectives was observed from multi-level storytelling change communication in comparison to the group that did not receive this method of communication.
Chapter 5 Conclusion

This research focusses its investigation on the effect of organisational change communication on employee attitude and employee engagement. This study specifically investigated the effect scripted multi-level storytelling has on change recipient attitude towards, and engagement with, an organisational process change (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005; Wehmeier & Schultz, 2011; Sonenshein, 2010; Roleau, 2005). The primary aim of this research was to offer an investigative discussion, based on literature and research evidence, around the benefit of communicating organisational change through multiple narrative perspectives. A secondary aim of the study was to provide inductive theories of sensemaking, role influence, and the process of narrative, within the context of Social Construction Theory (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005; Sonenshein, 2010; Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012). The study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. How, if at all, does storytelling impact employee attitude to organisational change?
   1.1 To address this core question, the following sub questions are relevant:
   1.2 What affect does communication between and across roles have on employee attitude to change?
   1.3 What role does time play in employee attitude to change?
   1.4 Does the formal or informal nature of communication affect employee attitude to change?
   1.5 To what extent does attitude affect formal change management outcomes?

A review of the literature presented a discussion around the existence and importance of storytelling as organisational change communication. Historically literature about organisational change and storytelling has centred on top-down change communication or
communication between change recipients. Boje (1995) proposed that employees seek out stories for different perceptions of reality, in an attempt to form their own interpretation of what is occurring during organisational change. This communication can occur in the form of formal or informal narrative, and these stories are used by employees resisting change to deconstruct top-down organisational change messages (Boje, 1995; Rouleau, 2005). Change practitioner Denning (2005) has described the importance of using storytelling as a simple way of explaining how change will function in a given situation and what value it will add to the customer. Cognitive theory of mind however, warns that not every individual has the ability to understand the reasoning of another individual like that of customers (Scholl & Leslie, 1999).

Social Construction Theory suggests that change recipient understanding of organisational change assists change recipients to determine their attitude towards that change (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s, 2005). Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s (2005) Enactment Theory however, takes Social Construction Theory a step further, describing the use of storytelling as a variable that influences change recipient attitude to organisational change, and creates understanding amongst change recipients. Change practitioners have linked change recipients’ negative or ambivalent attitude to change, with failed change initiatives (Kotter, 1995; Piderit, 2000; Klein, 1996). Some studies have proposed that once an initial negative attitude to organisational change has been established by an employee it can be very difficult to positively influence that attitude (Langer & Thorup, 2006; Sonenshein, 2010). It has been theorised that providing change recipients with multiple interpretations of change during initial communication would decrease the likelihood of employee inertia and resistance to change by appealing to individual factors and assisting change recipients make sense of change (Bryant & Frahm,
Change agents are often used during organisational change to model desired change behaviour and espouse the merits of the change in an effort to influence the attitudes of other employees to embrace and enact the change (Ford & Ford, 1976; Nahmias, 2009). Often this role falls to middle management. Sonenshein (2010) and Huy (2002) proposed that middle management walk a fine line between appeasing their management and their employees, a behaviour that can compromise any change initiative by refracting the change communication message. Huy (2001) argues that active and effective change agents exercise emotional intelligence to navigate the complexity of change recipient attitude to organisational change. Crawford & Nahmias (2010) suggest that most managers lack this level of emotional understanding of their employees resulting in ineffective communication of the benefits of the change to the change recipient (Langley, 2000; Huy, 2002).

Boje (1991) proposed that the success of storytelling during change is to know when to tell the appropriate story to the appropriate recipients at the appropriate time. Jansen (2004) and other researchers (Nadler & Tushman, 1994; Pardo del Val & Martínez Fuentes, 2003; Heracleous & Barrett, 2001) demonstrated how the initial change message can be lost over time when change resistors influence how other change recipients perceive change. Cuncliffe & Coupland, (2012) believed that shared narrative alone was not enough for actors to make sense of change. Their observational study demonstrated that emotion and individual values assisted an individual make sense of an unusual course of events, over time, after those events had occurred (Cuncliffe & Coupland, 2012).
The researcher undertook a constructivist approach to this case study of natural and experimental design which allowed the opportunity to compare the effect of multi-level storytelling as change communication, between two groups of frontline employees, in a medium sized Australian financial institution, at a time when they were experiencing the trial of a new change process. The attitudes of employees and the business performance of both groups were obtained and analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods. Results of this analysis were represented as informing the effect of multi-level storytelling organisational change communication on employee attitude and employee engagement. Employee attitude was analysed across participant role, week of the trial, person type spoken to about the change, and the formal or informal nature of narrative engaged in by participants. As this was a unique case study external validity was limited, and some issues of internal validity should be considered when interpreting the results.

The key findings from the study are as follows:

- Multi-level storytelling change communication had a more positive effect on change recipient attitude to organisational change than traditional top-down change communication, regardless of change recipient role
- Multi-level storytelling change communication reduced change recipient ambivalence toward the change in comparison to traditional top-down change communication, regardless of change recipient role
- Formal and informal narrative about organisational change communication contribute equally to the formation of change recipient attitude to organisational change
- No relationship was found between time and participant attitude
• The frequency of participant references to customer interactions in the free text comments suggests the importance of customer story on the formation of participant attitude

• Multi-level storytelling change communication had a positive effect on change recipient engagement with organisational change, as measured by business performance outcomes, in comparison to traditional top-down change communication

5.1 Summary: Storytelling as organisational change communication contributes to improved business performance

The researcher described these key findings in terms of emerging themes:

5.1.1 Employee attitude, employee engagement and organisational change communication

These findings not only support Enactment Theory as an explanation of employee attitude to organisational change, but also assists us to start to understand why storytelling, employee attitude and employee engagement are linked (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s, 2005). Storytelling plays a key role in the change recipient sensemaking process. Sensemaking assists employees to form attitudes to organisational change and it is positive employee attitudes that foster active participation in the change. Active participation in organisational change by change recipients increases the likelihood that business performance outcomes will be achieved, as illustrated in Figure 5.1 below.
Figure 5.1 Change Recipient Reasoning Process: How Change Recipient Attitude and Engagement Effect Business Performance Outcomes
Change recipients do consider the stories of other organisational actors to formulate their own attitude to organisational change, however it is proposed that they only do so if they do not receive enough information from organisational change communication to assess the benefit of the change to themselves and the people and things they care about in the organisational environment (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld’s, 2005).

5.1.2 Storytellers

As no one storyteller had more actual influence on change recipients in this study, yet multi-level storytelling Outlets were more positive in attitude and achieved better business performance, it is hypothesised that the influence of organisational change stories on participant attitude is a complex relationship between many storytellers’ stories. It is likely that a change recipient’s values, workplace environment, past experience with change and or personal relationships with the storyteller, as well as other unknown variables assist them to decide whether or not the organisational change matters to them or the people and things they care about in the organisational environment (Piderit, 2000; Rhodes, Pullen & Clegg, 2009).

5.1.3 Change agent

Findings from this study were consistent with Sonenshein (2010) and Huy’s (2002) proposal that Managers are influenced by both management and their employees when forming their own attitudes towards organisational change. Results of the study also indicate that Managers did not influence their employees’ responses to attitude.
statements. This would lead us to conclude that Managers are not effective change agents. Findings from this study suggest that there is no advantage to appointing managers as change agents over other employee roles. Regardless of the role of the change agent, choice of change agents could be aided by questions and comprehension exercises that establish each individual’s Theory of Mind, as a proactive approach to minimising resistance (Fletcher et al., 1995). These instruments would assist to establish if proposed change agents are likely to understand the benefit the organisational change will bring to internal and external customers, and therefore increase the likelihood that they would engage in the change process because they are more likely to understand the value of the change to other organisational actors (Zunshine, 2006).

5.1.4 The customer story and employee engagement

Qualitative comments revealed that what the customer thought about the new product or service enquiry process greatly influenced participants’ attitudes toward the change. This review of participant free text comments suggests enlisting the support of the customer to tell a story to employees about why proposed organisational change will be beneficial to the customer (De Large, 2010). Change practitioner Denning (2005) has described the importance of using storytelling as a simple way of explaining how change will function in a given situation and what value it will add to the customer. He suggests that communications plans should actively seek out the customer story to describe the benefit of the change received by the customer in comparison to the current problems being experienced by the customer (Boje, 1991; Denning, 2005; Rouleau, 2005). The customer story is particularly beneficial for frontline employees because they have a personal connection with the customer (Johnson-Cramer, Parise & Cross, 2007; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011).
5.2 Limitations

The external validity of the findings and interpretation of this research was limited due to the unique nature of the case study. The internal validity of the study could be improved by redesigning the study to collect more cases over a longer period of time, involving more customer interaction, improving the data collection instrument and the data collection instrument procedures. Redesigning the study in this way would increase the volume of quantitative data collected and the quality of the qualitative data. This would provide a better understanding of multi-level storytelling and change recipient roles, over time, as well as more evidence towards possible theories of causation regarding employee sensemaking and employee attitude.

5.3 Practical contribution

Findings from this study regarding the effect that multi-level storytelling as organisational change communication has on improving employee attitude towards organisational change will assist organisational change practitioners to formulate more effective change communication plans that utilise multi-level storytelling at the commencement of organisational change. Findings from this research also recommend that communications plans utilise both formal and informal narrative, and include customer stories from the customer perspective to positively influence employee attitude.

When selecting change agents the researcher recommends screening suitable candidates to determine their ability to empathise with customers and other employees. It is proposed that the ability of a change recipient to understand customers and other employees’ perspectives
increases the likelihood that that employee will actively engage in organisational change. Reinforcing change agents’ positive behaviour is also likely to result in more active engagement by these employees in the change.

The mixed method approach employed by this study also provides change practitioners with a framework within which they can discuss the value of any return on investment in storytelling as a viable organisational change communication technique. By comparing the business performance of a matched group of recipients who did not undergo an organisational change communication technique during organisational change, with the business performance of those that did, practitioners can demonstrate quantitatively the benefit of these techniques. This value can be supported and understood even further with qualitative evidence to improve organisational change communication in later stages of the change or future change initiatives.

5.4 Future research

Further opportunities to explore organisational change recipient sensemaking on attitude and engagement is encouraged with particular attention to the change recipient reasoning process. Future research to try and understand the complex influence of previous employee experience and employee values on employee attitude would assist in explaining the link between change recipient attitude and change recipient performance. Specifically studying the level of influence of positive and negative customer interactions on employee attitude to change would assist practitioners’ decisions regarding the introduction of change to frontline employees. Results from such studies would also provide a clear explanation of how influential first person narrative of customer benefit is to change recipients’ attitude formation. Also, conducting a longitudinal study to capture change recipient attitude over
months, perhaps years, of organisational change, as well as at a time period after change, might assist to understand if employee attitude to change alters over longer time periods.
References


Appendices

APPENDIX 1 – Participant Diary Weeks 1-8
Participant Diary

New Product and Service Enquiry Process – New Customer Proof of Concept

Data Collection for Student Research Paper
September to October 2013
How to complete this diary

The organisation has scheduled time for you to complete this diary at the end of each week.

After completion please remove that week’s entry and seal it in one of the addressed envelopes provide, then return it via internal mail.

Your responses should relate to the New Product and Service Enquiry Process proof of concept ONLY.

Please remember that to keep diary entries confidential it is extremely important not to mark your diary or anyone else’s diary with personally identifiable information, for example names. This includes your identity or that of others. It is very important that you refer to people in the diary by role, for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Acceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kirsten Howell</td>
<td>Service Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch Manager Figtree</td>
<td>My Outlet Manager or Another Outlet Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Learning and Development</td>
<td>A manager at Head Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Johnson</td>
<td>A regular customer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please review the sample entry.
**Week 0  Participant Number: 43.4.3  Date: 16/09/13**

Please circle your answers.

In the past week, please list the persons you heard from, or spoke with, about the *New Product and Service Enquiry Process*?

AND

Indicate if they were from your branch and if the conversation was informal.

AND

On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate how much this person influenced your attitude to the initiative?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I communicated with:</th>
<th>From my branch</th>
<th>Informal conversation</th>
<th>This person influenced my attitude to the <em>New Product and Service Enquiry Process</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Representative</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Representative</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlet Manager</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Manager</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Office Employee</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On a scale of 1-5, please describe your attitude to the **New Product and Service Enquiry Process** this week?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the New Product and Service Enquiry Process is a good idea</td>
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<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the New Product and Service Enquiry Process proof of concept will achieve its objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the New Product and Service Enquiry Process will add value to the organisation</td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the New Product and Service Enquiry Process will help me in my role</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel positive about Coast and Country Financial Institution</td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please explain in more detail a) your attitude to the **New Product and Service Enquiry Process** b) how it was formed c) how this communication was delivered

*I think it helps me in my role because a Customer in the branch told me they appreciated the new approach. I didn’t think the trial would work after watching the video testimonials. When I was on the phone to head office someone there told me the New Product and Service Enquiry Process was a waste of time for the organisation and I tend to agree.*
Week 1  Participant Number: 4343  Date:

Please circle your answers.

In the past week, please list the persons you heard from, or spoke with, about the New Product and Service Enquiry Process?

AND

Indicate if they were: From your branch and if the conversation was informal.

AND

On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate how much this person influenced your attitude to the initiative?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I communicated with:</th>
<th>From my branch</th>
<th>Informal conversation</th>
<th>This person influenced my attitude to the New Product and Service Enquiry Process</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Yes / No</td>
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<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On a scale of 1-5, please describe your attitude to the New Product and Service Enquiry Process this week?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the New Product and Service Enquiry Process is a good idea</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think the New Product and Service Enquiry Process proof of concept will achieve its objectives</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the New Product and Service Enquiry Process will add value to the organisation</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t the New Product and Service Enquiry Process will help me in my role</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel positive about Coast and Country Financial Institution</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please explain in more detail a) your attitude to the New Product and Service Enquiry Process b) how it was formed c) how this communication was delivered

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Week 2  Participant Number: 43.4.3  Date:

Please circle your answers.

In the past week, please list the persons you heard from, or spoke with, about the New Product and Service Enquiry Process?

AND

Indicate if they were: From your branch and if the conversation was informal.

AND

On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate how much this person influenced your attitude to the initiative?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I communicated with:</th>
<th>From my branch</th>
<th>Informal conversation</th>
<th>This person influenced my attitude to the New Product and Service Enquiry Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>1 Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>2 Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>3 Neither agree nor disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>4 Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
<td>5 Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On a scale of 1-5, please describe your attitude to the New Product and Service Enquiry Process this week?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I think Moments of the New Product and Service Enquiry Process is a good idea</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Please explain in more detail a) your attitude to the New Product and Service Enquiry Process b) how it was formed c) how this communication was delivered

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

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**Week 3  Participant Number: 43.4.3  Date:**

Please circle your answers.

In the past week, please list the persons you heard from, or spoke with, about the New Product and Service Enquiry Process?

AND

Indicate if they were: From your branch and if the conversation was informal.

AND

On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate how much this person influenced your attitude to the initiative?

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Please explain in more detail a) your attitude to the New Product and Service Enquiry Process b) how it was formed c) how this communication was delivered

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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Week 4  Participant Number: 4343  Date:

Please circle your answers.

In the past week, please list the persons you heard from, or spoke with, about the New Product and Service Enquiry Process?

**AND**
Indicate if they were: From your branch and if the conversation was informal.

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On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate how much this person influenced your attitude to the initiative?

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Week 5  Participant Number: 43.4.3  Date:

Please circle your answers.

In the past week, please list the persons you heard from, or spoke with, about the New Product and Service Enquiry Process?

**AND**

Indicate if they were: From your branch and if the conversation was informal.

**AND**

On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate how much this person influenced your attitude to the initiative?

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Week 7  Participant Number: 43.4.3  Date:

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Please explain in more detail a) your attitude to the New Product and Service Enquiry Process b) how it was formed c) how this communication was delivered

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Week 8  Participant Number: 43.4.3  Date:

Please circle your answers.

In the past week, please list the persons you heard from, or spoke with, about the New Product and Service Enquiry Process?

AND

Indicate if they were: From your branch and if the conversation was informal.

AND

On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate how much this person influenced your attitude to the initiative?

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<tr>
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APPENDIX 2 – Participant Diary Week 12
Participant Diary

New Product and Service Enquiry Process – New Customer Proof of Concept

Data Collection for Student Research Paper
November 2013

NB This is the final data collection for the New Product and Service Enquiry Process.

Please remember not to refer to individuals by name and that completion of this diary entry is completely voluntary, however your feedback is highly valued and will contribute towards a better understanding of how to communicate future initiatives within the retail network.
Month 3  Participant Number:  

Please circle your answers.

In the past week, please list the persons you heard from, or spoke with, about the New Product and Service Enquiry Process?

AND

Indicate if they were: From your branch and if the conversation was informal.

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Please explain in more detail a) your attitude to the New Product and Service Enquiry Process b) how it was formed c) how this communication was delivered

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Could the initial delivery, timing or ongoing communication of the New Product and Service Enquiry Process have been better? And if so how?

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Describe your attitude to the New Product and Service Enquiry Process and explain the main reason you feel this way?

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How would you explain the New Product and Service Enquiry Process to a new staff member?

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APPENDIX 3 – Consent Forms and Information Statements
On behalf of The Greater Building Society and in my position as Head of Customer Relations, I, Lisa Pocock, confirm I have read the Organisation Information Statement on the above named research project to be conducted by Mr. Vincent Nirmal under the supervision of Associate Professor Suzanne Ryan from the University of Newcastle, Australia. I have had the opportunity to have questions answered to my satisfaction.

As duly authorised by The Greater Building Society, I consent to the following:

1. That the above named researchers brief employees from Cardiff, Taunton, Salisbury Ray, Hamilton, Singleton and Lincoln Greater Building Society branches about the research and invite their participation.

2. That employees of the Cardiff, Taunton, Salisbury Ray, Hamilton, Singleton and Lincoln Greater Building Society branches be allowed ten minutes each Friday during the eight week change period to complete participant diaries about their attitudes to the Moments of Greatness initiative.

On behalf of The Greater Building Society, I give my consent freely and I understand that the project will be conducted in accordance with the Information Statement.

Print Name: Lisa Pocock
Head of Customer Relations, The Greater Building Society

Signature:

Date: ___________________________
The Greater Building Society is invited to participate in the abovementioned research project that is being conducted by Associate Professor Suzanne Ryan and Ms. Vanessa Nirmal from the Newcastle Business School at the University of Newcastle, Australia. The research is being carried out as a requirement of Ms Nirmal’s Doctor of Business Administration Degree. Associate Professor Ryan is Ms Nirmal’s research supervisor.

*Why is the research being done?*

The purpose of the research is to better understand the role of organisational change management in the Greater Building Society.

Findings of this research could assist managers to develop communication and training plans that make better use of role based storytelling.

*What is being asked of the Greater Building Society?*

We request the consent of the Greater Building Society to:

1. Brief employees from Cardiff, Salamander Bay, Hamilton, Bathurst and Casino Greater Building Society branches on what the research is and how they can participate;

2. Engage employees from Cardiff, Salamander Bay, Hamilton, Bathurst and Casino Greater Building Society branches to complete participant diaries;

The consent of the Greater Building Society would be subject to full approval of the research project by the University of Newcastle Human Ethics Committee.

*What choice do you have?*

Participation in this research by the Greater Building Society is entirely voluntary. The decision to participate or not will not affect its relationship with the University of Newcastle in anyway.
What are the risks and benefits of participating?
Participation in this study entails neither risk nor direct benefit to the Greater Building Society and its employees. However, the research findings may assist the Greater Building Society to better communicate and train frontline employees in organisational change initiatives.

How will privacy be protected?
The Greater Building Society will not be identified in the research and its subsequent publications, employee responses are anonymous and the data reported in aggregate. Participating employees will be advised not to provide any identifying information. An electronic copy of the aggregated data will be securely stored on password protected USB devices accessible only to the researcher and after data collection, the Head of Customer Relations. Hard copy diaries and participant coding will be destroyed after data collection has been completed.

How will the information collected be used?
The findings of this study will form part of Ms Nirmal’s Doctor of Business Administration dissertation and may be published in scholarly and professional journals. The Greater Building Society will be given the right to review and edit any related published works. The Greater Building Society will be provided with a summary of results, and we are hopeful that the same summary will be allowed to be made available to The Greaters’ employees.

What do you need to do to participate?
Once this Information Statement has been read and understood, should The Greater Building Society wish to provide its consent to the research project as stated above, you are requested to sign the attached form on behalf of The Greater Building Society so providing informed written consent from The Greater Building Society. The Participant Information Statement for employees and copy of the survey are also attached for information.

Further information
If you would like more information about this study, please contact Ms Vanessa Nirmal or Associate Professor Suzanne Ryan at the above emails or phone numbers. Thank you for considering this invitation.

Yours sincerely,

Associate Professor Suzanne Ryan
Nirmal
Chief Investigator

Ms. Vanessa
Student Researcher

07 July, 2013

Complaints about this research:
This project has been approved by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-2012-

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 49216333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.
Participant Information Statement for the Research Project:
The role of communication in organisational change management
Document Version 4; dated 24/08/2013

You are invited to participate in the research project identified above which is being conducted by Vanessa Nirmal, student enrolled in the Doctorate of Business Administration Course from the Graduate School of Business at the University of Newcastle under the supervision of Suzanne Ryan.

The research is part of Vanessa’s studies at the University of Newcastle, supervised by, Associate Professor Suzanne Ryan.

Why is the research being done?
The purpose of the research is to evaluate the role of communication in organisational change management. Findings of this research could assist managers to develop better communication and training plans.

Who can participate in the research?
Greater Building Society employees from Cardiff, Tamworth and Hamilton branches receiving a new, structured method of change communication and Salamander Bay, Lismore and Singleton branches, receiving a traditional method of change communication will be invited to participate. The researchers, together with Greg James, Business Owner for the Moments of Greatness initiative, selected branches of similar size and structure to apply the two methods of change communication.

What choice do you have?
Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who consent to participate in this research will be included in the project. Whether or not you decide to participate, your decision will not disadvantage you in any way and will not affect your relationship with the University of Newcastle or The Greater Building Society.

If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project until such time as the completed diary entry has been returned to the research team.

What would you be asked to do?
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete and return an entry of the attached participant diary each week for the 8 week duration of the Moments of Greatness New Customer proof of concept.

If you have any questions about how the research relates to Moments of Greatness New Customer you can direct these to Greg James, Business Owner for the Moments of Greatness initiative or your Manager.
**How much time will it take?**
The participant diary should take less than 10 minutes to complete at the end of each week. The Greater has given approval for you to take the time to complete the diary entry each week.

**What are the risks and benefits of participating?**
There are no risks or direct benefits to participants however we hope to learn better ways to communicate future initiatives to the branch network.

**How will your privacy be protected?**
All participants diaries will be anonymous and The Greater Building Society, Branches and Branch Position information will be re-labelled with pseudonyms before it is analysed, for example, ‘Coast and Country, XYZ Outlet Team Leader’. Please remember that to keep diary entries confidential it is extremely important not to mark your diary or anyone else’s diary with information that personally identifies yourself or others.

As required by law, access to the data will be limited to the researchers and the researchers alone will transcribe the data from hard copy diary entries to an electronic format. Once all data has been collected the hard copy diary entries will be destroyed and a soft copy of the re-labelled data will be held on password protected computers accessible only to the researchers.

**How will the information collected be used?**
The re-labelled data will be analysed and subsequent findings will be used in the researcher’s independent doctoral dissertation. A summary report of findings will be made available to the Greater Building Society and all participants of the study via email.

**What do you need to do to participate?**
Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, contact the researcher.

If you would like to participate, please complete a diary entry each week and place each entry in one of the return addressed envelopes supplied with your diary, seal the envelope and place it in the internal mail.

**Further information**
If you would like further information please contact Greg James, Business Owner of The Moments of Greatness initiative on 0408 516 334 or the Researcher, Vanessa Nirmal, 0428 296 527.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Suzanne Ryan
Chief Investigator
Vanessa Nirmal
Student Researcher

**Complaints about this research**
This project has been approved by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H- 2013-0273

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 49216333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.
Thank you for your Response to Conditional Approval (minor amendments) submission to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) seeking approval in relation to the above protocol.

Your submission was considered under Expedited review by the Ethics Administrator.

I am pleased to advise that the decision on your submission is Approved effective 02-Sep-2013.

In approving this protocol, the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) is of the opinion that the project complies with the provisions contained in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007, and the requirements within this University relating to human research.

Approval will remain valid subject to the submission, and satisfactory assessment, of annual progress reports. If the approval of an External HREC has been "noted" the approval period is as determined by that HREC.

The full Committee will be asked to ratify this decision at its next scheduled meeting. A formal Certificate of Approval will be available upon request. Your approval number is H-2013-0273.

If the research requires the use of an Information Statement, ensure this number is inserted at the relevant point in the Complaints paragraph prior to distribution to potential participants. You may then proceed with the research.

***Please note/action the following:
Amendments to the Information Statements.
Under 'How will your privacy be protected?' please amend the first sentence to "Access to the data will be limited to the researchers, except as required by law. The researchers alone will transcribe the data...".

This clarification acknowledges the potential for research data to be subpoenaed.

Please submit a copy of the revised documents via email to human-ethics@newcastle.edu.au.

Conditions of Approval

This approval has been granted subject to you complying with the requirements for Monitoring of Progress, Reporting of Adverse Events, and Variations to the Approved Protocol as detailed below.

PLEASE NOTE:
In the case where the HREC has "noted" the approval of an External HREC, progress reports and reports of adverse events are to be submitted to the External HREC only. In the case of Variations to the approved protocol, or a Renewal of approval, you will apply to the External HREC for approval in the first instance and then Register that approval with the University's HREC.

- **Monitoring of Progress**

Other than above, the University is obliged to monitor the progress of research projects involving human participants to ensure that they are conducted according to the protocol as approved by the HREC. A progress report is required on an annual basis. Continuation of your HREC approval for this project is conditional upon receipt, and satisfactory assessment, of annual progress reports. You will be advised when a report is due.

- **Reporting of Adverse Events**

1. It is the responsibility of the person first named on this Approval Advice to report adverse events.
2. Adverse events, however minor, must be recorded by the investigator as observed by the investigator or as volunteered by a participant in the research. Full details are to be documented, whether or not the investigator, or his/her deputies, consider the event to be related to the research substance or procedure.
3. Serious or unforeseen adverse events that occur during the research or within six (6) months of completion of the research, must be reported by the person first named on the Approval Advice to the (HREC) by way of the Adverse Event Report form (via RIMS at [https://rims.newcastle.edu.au/login.asp](https://rims.newcastle.edu.au/login.asp)) within 72 hours of the occurrence of the event or the investigator receiving advice of the event.
4. Serious adverse events are defined as:
   - Causing death, life threatening or serious disability.
   - Causing or prolonging hospitalisation.
   - Overdoses, cancers, congenital abnormalities, tissue damage, whether or not they are judged to be caused by the investigational agent or procedure.
   - Causing psycho-social and/or financial harm. This covers everything from...
perceived invasion of privacy, breach of confidentiality, or the diminution of social reputation, to the creation of psychological fears and trauma.

- Any other event which might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

5. Reports of adverse events must include:
   - Participant's study identification number;
   - date of birth;
   - date of entry into the study;
   - Treatment arm (if applicable);
   - date of event;
   - details of event;
   - the investigator's opinion as to whether the event is related to the research procedures; and
   - action taken in response to the event.

6. Adverse events which do not fall within the definition of serious or unexpected, including those reported from other sites involved in the research, are to be reported in detail at the time of the annual progress report to the HREC.

- **Variations to approved protocol**

If you wish to change, or deviate from, the approved protocol, you will need to submit an Application for Variation to Approved Human Research (via RIMS at https://rims.newcastle.edu.au/login.asp). Variations may include, but are not limited to, changes or additions to investigators, study design, study population, number of participants, methods of recruitment, or participant information/consent documentation. **Variations must be approved by the (HREC) before they are implemented** except when Registering an approval of a variation from an external HREC which has been designated the lead HREC, in which case you may proceed as soon as you receive an acknowledgement of your Registration.

**Linkage of ethics approval to a new Grant**

HREC approvals cannot be assigned to a new grant or award (ie those that were not identified on the application for ethics approval) without confirmation of the approval from the Human Research Ethics Officer on behalf of the HREC.

Best wishes for a successful project.

Professor Allyson Holbrook

**Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee**
For communications and enquiries:
Human Research Ethics Administration

Research Services
Research Integrity Unit
The Chancellery
The University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308
T +61 2 492 17894
F +61 2 492 17164
Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au


Linked University of Newcastle administered funding:

<table>
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<th>Funding body</th>
<th>Funding project title</th>
<th>First named investigator</th>
<th>Grant Ref</th>
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APPENDIX 5 – Research Results
Research Question 1:

How if at all, does storytelling impact employee attitude to organisational change?

To address research question 1 analysis was undertaken to understand general employee attitude to change by comparing the attitude of the Treatment group receiving the new, structured method of communication, to that of the Control group receiving a traditional method of communication. To determine if one group’s attitude was ordered differently to the other, a Mann-Whitney U test was undertaken to compare the central tendency of these groups’ answers to each of the 5 attitude questions in the participant diary. The following results are reported in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2.

The Treatment group’s attitudes were significantly more positive than that of the Control:

- Whether the initiative was a good idea $U(93)=440.5$, $Z=-5.493$, $p=<0.01$ (Mean Rank of 62.63 for the Treatment group and 33.68 for the Control group)

- Whether the initiative would achieve its objectives $U(94)=535.5$, $Z=-4.727$, $p=<0.01$ (Mean Rank of 61.61 for the Treatment group and 35.39 for the Control group, NB this was a negatively worded question that was reverse coded during data cleansing)

- Whether the initiative would add value $U(94)=616.0$, $Z=-4.249$, $p=<0.01$ (Mean Rank of 59.89 for the Treatment group and 37.57 for the Control group)
• Whether the initiative would help in their role U(91)=472.0, Z=-4.872, p=<0.01 (Mean Rank of 60.24 for the Treatment group and 34.04 for the Control group, NB this was a negatively worded question that was reverse coded during data cleansing)

• Whether they were positive about the organisation U(94)=375.0, Z=-6.011, p=<0.01 (Mean Rank of 65.02 for the Treatment group and 32.65 for the Control group)

1.1 What affect does communication between and across roles have on employee attitude to change?

A Kruskal-Wallis Test was undertaken to compare the central tendency of Outlet Manager, Team Leader and Service Representative responses to the 5 attitude questions in the participant diary.

a) Effect of introduced change communication on participant attitude, by participant role, between groups –

The Treatment group’s attitudes were significantly more positive than that of the Control group for all participant roles, with the exception of Service Representatives attitude to whether or not the initiative would add value to the organisation (Refer to Tables 4.4 to 4.8).

b) Effect of introduced change communication on participant attitude, by participant role, within groups –

In the Treatment group Team Leaders had a more positive attitude than Service Representatives to whether the initiative would add value $\chi^2(2) =$
9.932, \( p = 0.002 \) (where mean rank of Team Leaders was 33.15 and mean rank of Service Representatives was 21.07)

There were no significant differences in attitudes of Outlet Managers and Team Leaders nor Outlet Managers and Service Representatives in the Treatment group.

In the Control group there was no significant difference in attitudes of Service Representatives and Team Leaders.

In the Control group Outlet Managers had a less positive attitude than Service Representatives to the following attitudinal questions:

- Whether the initiative would help in their role \( \chi^2(2) = 7.560, p = 0.023 \) (where mean rank of Outlet Managers was 23.50 and mean rank of Service Representatives was 17.96, NB this was a negatively worded question)

- Positivity about the organisation \( \chi^2(2) = 7.090, p = 0.029 \) (where mean rank of Outlet Managers was 9.50 and mean rank of Service Representatives was 16.73).

There was no the significant difference between Outlet Managers’ and Team Leaders’ attitude to whether the initiative would add value in the Control group.

c) **Effect of person type (management, other employee or customer) on participants’ perceived influence on their own attitude, by participant role** –
Team Leaders and Service Representatives indicated that Managers influenced their attitude and Managers perceived influence from Service Representatives and Team Leaders.

A Kruskal-Wallis Test was undertaken to compare the central tendency of the person type (management, other employee or customer) recorded by the participant as influencing their attitude, and the perceived influence that person had on their attitude.

No one person type had a significantly different perceived influence score on participants, and this outcome was true regardless of participant role. It was interesting to note that for Managers the most influential person recorded was the Regional Manager who delivered the communications at the commencement of the trial, not their own Regional Manager who was also in attendance.

d) Effect of person type (management, other employee or customer) on participants’ attitude, by participant role –

A Kruskal-Wallis Test was undertaken to compare the central tendency of the person type (management, other employee or customer) and the actual influence that person had on participant attitude.

Where Team Leaders spoke to other Team Leaders their attitude regarding positivity about the organisation was significantly less $\chi^2(2) = 7.750$, $p = 0.021$, with a mean rank attitude score of 16.0 for Service Representatives, 8.9 for Team Leaders and 19.00 for Outlet Managers.
For all other interactions no other person type had a significantly different impact on participant attitude for any of the attitude questions, regardless of participant role.

e) Effect of formal or informal narrative on participant attitude by role of participant - Within the Service Representative role the only significant difference between formal or informal narrative effect on participant attitude was that Service Representatives were more likely to feel positive about the organisation from formal dialogue $\chi^2(1) = 7.379, p = 0.007$, with a mean rank of 23.57 for formal dialogue and 11.14 for informal dialogue.

Within Team Leaders there was no significant difference for formal or informal narrative effect on Team Leader attitude.

Within Outlet Managers the only significant difference for formal or informal narrative effect on participant attitude was that Outlet Managers were more likely to be influenced by the person type they spoke to when the conversation was formal $\chi^2(1) = 9.331, p = 0.002$, with a mean rank of 17.98 for formal dialogue and a mean rank of 8.69 for informal dialogue.

Within the Treatment group there was no significant difference for formal or informal dialogue’s impact on Service Representative attitude. There were not enough responses from Treatment Team Leaders to try to understand the effect of formal or informal dialogue on Team Leader attitude. There was a significant difference for formal and informal narrative effect on Outlet Managers’ attitude to whether or not the person they spoke to influenced their attitude (formal communication produced a more influential result) $\chi^2(1) =$
9.313, \( p = 0.002 \), (with a mean rank of 9.5 for formal dialogue and 3 for informal dialogue) and whether they thought the initiative would achieve its objectives (formal communication produced a more negative attitude to this question) \( \chi^2(1) = 6.000, p = 0.014 \) (with a mean rank of 5 for formal dialogue and a mean rank of 1.5 for informal dialogue).

Within the Control group there was no significant difference for formal or informal dialogue on Service Representative, Team Leader or Outlet Manager attitude.

1.2 What role does time play in employee attitude to change?

Spearman’s rho correlations were conducted to determine the effect of time on employee attitude. Across both the Control and Treatment groups, participant attitude remained unchanged over time.

a) **Relationship between time and the influence of conversations by formal or informal dialogue** –

When there was dialogue recorded by participants as influential there was no significant correlation over time for formal dialogue, however for informal dialogue there was a significant, strong positive correlation with participant attitude for the initiative being a good idea (rs(10)=.615, p=.033) and whether or not the initiative would add value (rs(10)=.626, p=0.29).
Within the Treatment group there was no significant correlation over time for formal dialogue, however for informal dialogue there was a significant, strong positive correlation with participant attitude for the initiative being a good idea (rs(1)=1.000) and strong negative correlations (although not significant)(positive correlation for will add value) for all other attitude questions).

Still within the Treatment group there was no significant correlation over time for formal dialogue where participants were Service Representatives, Team Leaders or Outlet Managers. There were not enough instances of informal communication recorded by Service Representatives (1), Team Leaders (0) or Outlet Managers (0) to assess the effect of time on these attitudinal responses.

Within the Control group there was a significant, positive correlation over time with formal dialogue impacting participants’ perceived influence from people they spoke to about the change (rs(37)=.374, 0.19). No other attitudinal questions had significant or strong correlations over time for formal dialogue. There was a significant, negative correlation over time for informal dialogue on participants’ positivity about the organisation (rs(7)=-.732, p=0.25).

Still within the Control group there was a significant, strong, positive correlation over time when the dialogue recorded by the Service Representative was formal for whether or not the Service Representative thought the initiative would achieve its objectives (rs(10)=.701, p=0.11). There was no significant or strong correlation over time when formal
dialogue was recorded by Control Team Leaders. There was a significant, strong, positive correlation over time when the dialogue recorded by Control Outlet Managers was formal for the influence this formal dialogue had on Control Outlet Managers (rs(12)=.621, p=0.18). There was a significant, strong, positive correlation over time when the dialogue recorded by Control Service Representatives was informal for whether or not the initiative was a good idea (rs(4)=.885, p=0.19). There were not enough instances of informal communication recorded by Control Team Leaders (0) or Control Outlet Managers (2) to understand the effect of time on their attitudes.

1.3 Does the formal or informal nature of communication affect employee attitude to change?

a) A Kruskal Wallis test was undertaken to understand if the formal or informal nature of the narrative with the person spoken to had an impact on participant attitude. No significant effect was found across all participants. A significant difference was found within the Treatment group. Participants were more likely to record a higher perceived influence from person types with whom they engaged in formal dialogue $\chi^2(1) = 7.913, p = 0.005$. Within the Control group no significant difference was found between formal or informal narrative on participant attitude.