

**ELISE RIANNE HENRIEKE NANNINGS (S1012037)**  
MASTERTHESIS COMMUNICATION STUDIES  
FACULTY OF BEHAVIOURAL, MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

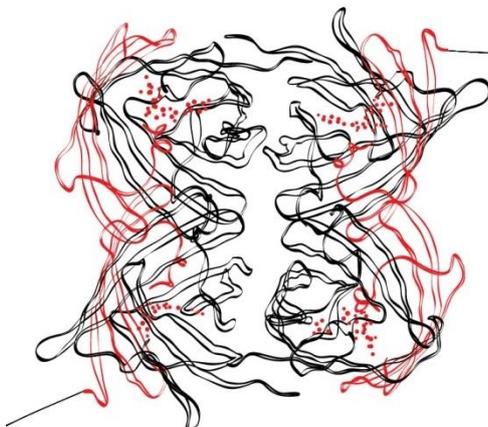
# Middle managers' roles and behaviours during organizational change

---

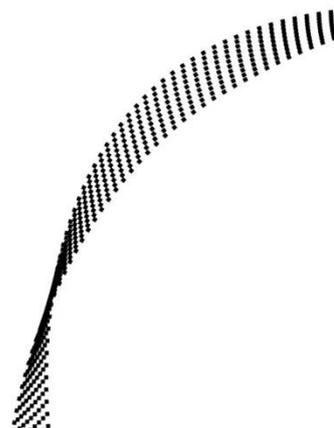
A qualitative study among managers and employees.

**FIRST SUPERVISOR:** DR. JANSSEN, S.  
**SECOND SUPERVISOR:** DR. VAN VUUREN, M.

**DATE:** 11-05-2017



**UNIVERSITEIT TWENTE.**



*It is not the strongest leaders that survive, not the most intelligent; instead it is the ones that are most responsive to the change – Charles Darwin*

*Leaders become great, not because of their power, but because of their ability to empower others – John Maxwell.*

*A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be – Rosalynn Carter*

## Table of content

Summary .....	4
1. Introduction .....	5
2. Theoretical framework .....	7
2.1. Leadership during an organizational change .....	7
2.2. Roles of middle management during organizational change .....	7
2.3. Behaviour of middle management during change .....	9
2.4. Overview .....	11
3. Research method .....	12
3.1. Research context .....	12
3.2. Research method .....	14
4. Results .....	19
4.1. Perceptions of the change .....	19
4.2. Communication style of senior management .....	20
4.3. Attitude of middle management .....	21
5. Discussion & Conclusion .....	28
5.1. Discussion .....	28
5.2. Limitations .....	29
5.3. Practical implications .....	30
5.4. Conclusions .....	31
6. References .....	32
Appendix A: Topic List (in Dutch) .....	40
Appendix B: Informed consent (in Dutch) .....	43
Appendix C: Approval ethical committee (in Dutch) .....	44

## Summary

**Topic** – In the last couple of years a lot of research has been conducted on effective leadership during an organizational change. A critique on these studies is that it does not include the effect of the leadership on employees. Next to this, the role of middle management is also an important topic during change and sometimes underestimated. Middle managers are close to employees and therefore have a big influence in successfully implementing the change. They can adopt different roles and behaviours to influence the implementation of the organizational change. Therefore, this research focusses on what roles and behaviours middle management adopt during change and how these roles and behaviours are perceived by employees during an organizational change.

**Goal** – The goal of this research was to investigate what kind of roles and behaviours middle managers take on during an organizational change, and how employees experience these roles. Furthermore, what behaviours and roles employees prefer of their middle manager during a change was investigated.

**Method** – The research was done at a technical organization in Overijssel during an organizational change. The organization wanted to combine two separate departments into one. This new department was divided into seven 'clusters' which should cooperate together. Semi-structured interviews were held just after the organizational change was implemented. The participants were selected in a purposive manner: the goal was to include three employees of every cluster (in total seven clusters) and the middle manager of these three employees in this cluster. 20 employees and 7 managers of the organization were interviewed on their perceptions of the organizational change, on the relationship between employee and middle manager and on how the employees experienced the behaviour of their middle manager. The interviews were analysed using an inductive approach.

**Results** – The data analysis shows three important themes. First the perception of the change is described; employees and managers express themselves positively on the idea of the organizational change, but have a negative perception on the process of implementation. Second, both managers and employees felt that information and communication lacked by the senior management. Finally, the behaviour and role of the middle management is explained. The middle managers who were not involved in the decision making process during the change, felt insecure about their job and therefore adopted a passive leadership behaviour. Because of this adopted behaviour they acted more like an employee and did not take their full responsibility of being a manager.

**Conclusion** - The main conclusion of this study is that the middle management adopted an passive leadership behaviour during the organizational change and did not adopt the role of sensemaker. Surprisingly, the employees did not judge their middle managers for this 'wait-and-see' attitude. This can be explained by the relational oriented behaviour the managers showed towards their employees before the organizational change. This relational-oriented behaviour was perceived very positively by employees. A possible conclusion of this research can therefore be that the role and behaviour of a manager during change is not perceived as important by employees as long as the managers were relation oriented manager before the organizational change. This insight can implicate that future research should focus more on the relationship between managers and employees in order to analyse effective leadership.

## 1. Introduction

Organizational changes are daily practice in today's industry (McKinley & Scherer, 2000). Throughout the years, a lot of organizations have experienced an organizational changes. Some examples in the Netherlands are KPN, Fokker, Rabobank, Holland Casino, Sanoma Media Nederland, Wegener and Imtech. Hammer and Champy (1993) state that only 30% of all organizational change projects are successfully implemented. Leadership is one of the crucial factors to successfully implement change (Kotter, 1995) and has been studied for a long time. More than 2.000.000 hits on Google Scholar for the term 'leadership organizational change' show the large interest in this field .

Traditionally, three categories of leadership approaches are classified in literature: the trait approaches, the behavioural approaches and the situational approaches (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). These three approaches will be described below.

First, the trait leadership approach argues that leadership is something that an individual cannot develop. An individual must have certain traits to be an effective manager. People have to inherit these traits (Galton, 1869). Four traits were found the most effective for leadership: extraversion, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to experience (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). However, this theory is criticized since managers can be trained. Therefore researchers had to look beyond the traits and had to focus more on how behaviour of the manager predicts their effectiveness. As a result, the behavioural approach emerged (Davis & Luthans, 1979).

The second approach is the behavioural approach. The behavioural approach classifies the different leadership behaviours (Avolio, Sosik, Jung & Berson, 2003; Fleishman, 1991). All manager behaviours found in previous research fit into four categories: relational oriented, task-oriented, change-oriented and passive behaviour (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman & Humphrey, 2011). Some studies also include the transformational and transactional approach in the behavioural approach (Johns & Moser, 2001). Literature shows that especially the relational oriented behaviour of the leader plays an important role in order to create effective leadership (e.g., Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang & Chen, 2005; Bartram; Batram & Casimir, 2007; Kearney, 2008; Dick, Hirst, Grojean & Wiekseke, 2007). This can be explained since high-quality relationships between managers and employees not only predict a high level of performance, but also predict organizational commitment and higher sales of employees (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Other studies state that an organizational change the most effective and relevant manager is the transformational manager (e.g., charisma, inspirational, intellectual stimulation) (Herold, Fedor, Caldwell & Liu, 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006). On the other hand, Yukl (1999) states it is hard to determine whether the behaviour of a manager is transformational or transactional because the definitions of those two concepts are too vague.

It is criticized that the behavioural approach only focuses on managers (Derue et al., 2011) and does not include the effect of the leadership behaviour on employees. Most research focuses primarily on the manager and not on the employees. Several authors (Shamir, 2007; Herzig & Jimmieson, 2006) recommend to focus future research on how employees experience the behaviour of their manager. Uhl-Bien (2014) states: *'the study of followers as key components of the leadership process through their enactment of followership has been largely missed in the leadership literature'* (p. 83). According to the work of Collinson (2006) the leadership process will be better understood if more is known of the employees. Heller and Van Til (1982) state that *'leadership and followership are linked concepts;*

*neither can be comprehended without understanding the other'* (p. 405). Therefore, the perceptions of employees is included in this study.

The third approach is situational leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1995). Two assumptions are made in this theory (Irgens, 1995): there is not one overall leadership style that fits all purposes, since it depends on the employees and tasks, and behaviour of the manager has two aspects namely directive behaviour and supportive behaviour. The strength of the situational approach is that it not only is a person centred approach, but also situational variables are taken into account (Hollenbeck, McCall & Silzer, 2006). Weaknesses of this theory are found in the ambiguous concepts in the situational approach, and lack of explanatory processes (Blake & Mouton, 1982).

These three approaches can deliver some theoretical insights on an effective leadership behaviour. This will be investigated in the next chapter, the theoretical framework. Besides these three sorts of categories of leadership approaches, in most companies three major groups of people can be distinguished: employees, middle management and senior management (Rouleau, 2005). Middle managers are important to successfully implement change for four reasons: they often have entrepreneurial ideas, they can use their informal network to make change possible, they have better insight in the emotions of the employees and they manage the continuity and change (Huy, 2002; Wooldridge, Schmid & Floyd, 2008). Wooldridge et al. (2008) state also that middle managers are essential during organizational changes since: *'middle managers are central to explaining key organizational outcomes'* (p. 1191). According to Huy (2002) and McKinley & Scherer (2000) only little research has been done on the role of the middle managers in a change. Furthermore, Huy (2002) states that little research has been done from a middle management perspective. Finally, according to Balogun (2004) more research is needed to better understand the role of middle management during a change. Based on the lack of research on the role and behaviour of middle management during organizational change, this research will focus on the middle management.

The following research question will be addressed in this study during an organizational change at a technical company in Overijssel:

*Which roles and behaviours do middle managers adopt during organizational change, and which understandings appear when employees and managers talk about these roles and behaviours?*

In order to answer this research question, 27 interviews were conducted at a technical company during an organizational change: In October 2015, this organization announced an organizational change and 200 jobs would be lost.

## 2. Theoretical framework

In the introduction, three categories of leadership approaches are described. This chapter gives a more elaborated literature review on the different leadership approaches. First, the importance of leadership during an organizational change will be described in this section. Second, the different roles of middle management will be explored. Third, different kinds of leadership approaches will be explained.

### 2.1. Leadership during an organizational change

Leadership during an organizational change plays an important role in how the change is implemented and how employees will react on this change (Van Dam, Oreg & Schyns, 2008; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Kotter, 2008; Graetz, 2000). One important step in order to create a successful change is the creation of vision and to carry out this vision (Kotter, 1995). Managers have to motivate the employees and play an important role in explaining the vision and letting the employees believe that the organizational change is necessary. Behaviour of the managers, therefore, very important to make the change successful. They have to behave like a role model and have to make a good example (Lawrence, 1969; Miller, Johnson & Grau, 1994; Bass, 1991; Kotter, 1995; Stoffers & Mordant-Dols, 2015).

An effective organizational change requires managers who take a leading role in formulating and carrying out a strategy and help to organize processes (Nadler & Tushman, 1990). Furthermore, when business leaders do not support their employees sufficiently in the change processes, this will lead to dissatisfaction and complains and, therefore, unsuccessful implementation of the change (Meijer, Berkhout & Ruiten, 2001).

The perceptions of an employee of a managers' leadership behaviour are positively correlated with the level of trust in the manager and experienced emotions during organizational change (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Results of the study of Gilley, Gilley & McMillan (2009) indicate that a manager has to show person-centered behaviour: managers should motivate their employees and communicate with them in an open and transparent way about the organizational change. Five leadership skills have a positive influence a successful organizational change: coaching, communicating, involving others, motivating, rewarding and promoting teamwork (Gilley et al., 2009).

Since the attitude of managers in an organizational change is so important, the next section will focus on the roles that middle management can adopt during this change. As stated in the introduction the influence of middle management has not been studied enough in previous studies and this study takes this attitude into account.

### 2.2. Roles of middle management during organizational change

The middle management is essential during organizational change (Wooldridge et al., 2008; Huy 2002; Curry & Procter, 2005; King, Fowler & Zeithaml, 2001; Wai-Kwong, Priem & Cycyota, 2001). Middle managers are close to the employees and therefore have a big influence in successfully implementing the change (Herzig & Jimmieson, 2006). In this section a review of the roles of the middle manager is given. Middle managers take on five important roles during a change; communicators, supporters, trainers, mediators and managers of resistance (Ionescu, Merut & Dragomiroiu, 2014). Another important aspect middle managers must implement during change is a sensemaking role.

First, as a communicator, the middle manager is the person that employees will go to in order to get answers on their questions. Changes rise a lot of questions, and employees need answers to these

questions. Besides, information of the change has to be spread around the company. This information can be transmitted by middle managers (Peters, 1988; Huy, 2001).

Second, the managers as a supporter is a role model within the change. Employees are going to look to what extent the manager supports the change. When the managers do not support the change or behaves in a passive way, employees are likely to copy their behaviour. Therefore, it is important for the senior management to make the middle managers the biggest supporter of the change.

Third, managers are trainers, because they have one on one contact with their employees. This way, the managers can guide the employees on an individual level and help each employee with their barriers during the change.

The manager as a mediator is the fourth role (Ionescu, et al., 2014). The key to a successful implementation of change is the interaction between the higher management and the middle management to discuss the needs in the organization. Middle managers have most of the times more information about the real issues in the organization and have information on the opinion of employees on certain topics (Wai-Kwong et al. 2001).

Fifth, middle managers play an important role in overcoming resistance to change, since they are closest to employees who are possibly resisting the change. Middle managers are, therefore, in the best position to identify resistance and the reasons for this resistance. As a consequence, middle managers are also in the best position to manage the change (Huy, 2002).

#### 2.2.1. Sensemaking

It is important that the middle manager encourages the process of sensemaking during change. So, next to the important roles of communicators, supporters, trainers, mediators and managers of resistance, the process of sensemaking is possibly a sixth important role. Sensemaking is important, because it can eliminate uncertainty; a factor why employees are resistant to change. Uncertainty has negative effects on wellbeing and satisfaction of employees. It is important for managers to deal with this uncertainty. Middle managers have an important role in reducing uncertainty with their employees (Herzig & Jimmieson, 2006). This section describes how managers should deal with uncertainty and what sensemaking can do in this process (Weick 1993).

There are four stages of sensemaking and sensegiving when an organizational change is announced (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). First, the CEO of the organization tries to give meaning to the new situation. Then, the CEO gives sense to the managers through communication. In the third stage, the managers are trying to make sense about what the organizational change will mean to their own work activities. At last, the managers attempt to provide organization wide commitment through communication. Because middle managers work between the senior management and the employees, their role is to make sense of information they get from the senior management and give sense about this information to the employees (Maitlis & Christioanson, 2014).

Balogun (2003) shows that middle managers have two orientations in an organizational change when making sense; the team-orientation and the self-orientation. In the team orientation, middle managers need to help employees to make sense of the change. They become role models and communicate in

a formal and informal way with employees. Communication of the manager helps employees to make sense and reduce uncertainty which then increases the trust in the manager. Trust in managers can become weaker when the manager does not communicate about the change. Employees begin to talk to each other about the change and this can lead to wrong conclusions. When a manager communicates well, it does not only minimize uncertainty, but the employees also get the feeling that they have some sort of control over the situation that is related to change (DiFonzo & Bordio, 1998).

In the self-orientation, middle managers should think about their own role and responsibilities and have to figure out how they are going to form this new role. They should talk to colleague managers to make sense to this new role. Also, the senior management should inform the managers about how to form their role (Balogun, 2003). Middle managers can also experience uncertainty about an organizational change because they do not know how to form their role and how to assist employees in the change process. The senior management has an important role in reducing the uncertainty with the middle managers. They should communicate a clear goal and have to talk to the middle managers in order to do so (Herzig & Jummieson, 2006).

### 2.3. Behaviour of middle management during change

Next to different roles managers can take on during organizational change, they can choose different behaviours. In this section the behavioural approaches will be described with the different styles within these behaviours.

The behavioural approach consists of different types of behaviours; namely (1) transformational and (2) transactional behaviour and (3) task, (4) relational, (5) change oriented behaviour and (6) passive behaviour. All types will be described below.

#### 2.3.1. Transactional leadership behaviour

Transactional leadership was developed from a social exchange perspective. The social exchange perspective explains that employees in organizations have unwritten rules; when a person does another person a favour, the other expects that in the future he or she will get something in return (Wyne et al., 1997). Transactional managers have three primary characteristics: (1) The manager works with the employees to set clear goals (Den Hartog, Muijen & Koopman, 1997; Bryant 2003), (2) The manager and employee talk about rewards and the manager promises rewards when a goal is achieved (Bryant, 2003; Bass, Jung, Avolio & Berson, 2003), and (3) The manager responds to immediate self-interests of employees if their needs can be met while getting the work done (Bryant, 2003; Bass, 2008). Exchange between manager and employee takes place in order to achieve goals. This exchange involves three dimensions (Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasubramaniam, 2003): management by exception active (e.g., the managers is monitoring the performance of the employee and takes action if the standard is not being met), management by exception passive (e.g., the manager is not taking action until a problem becomes serious) and contingent reward (e.g., the manager knows what the employee wants and explains which favourable behaviour will meet this need and the manager sets clear goals).

#### 2.3.2. Transformational leadership behaviour

The transformational manager should address the employees' sense of self-worth (Bass, 2008). These managers motivate their employees to do more than the employee originally intended and thought possible. Much of the literature assumes that transformational leadership leads to more satisfied employees (Stoffers & Mordant-Dols 2015; Voet 2014; Sarros, Cooper & Santora, 2008; Nordin, 2012;

Pearce & Sims, 2002). Transformational leadership plays an important part in many outcomes that have traditionally been of interest to organizational researchers.

Transformational leadership has four primary characteristics; (1) idealized influence/ charisma (e.g., the manager is a role model, shows specific moral and ethical principles (Avolio & Bass, 1995)), (2) inspirational motivation (e.g., the manager has an appealing vision of the future, challenges employees with high standards, talks optimistic and enthusiastic, the manager encourages employees what needs to be done and the manager gives meaning about what needs to be done (Bass, 1997)), (3) intellectual stimulation (e.g., the manager is making employees more innovative and creative, the manager lets employees question assumptions and encourages them to think out of the box, employees have to be autonomous and independent (Bass, 2008)), (4) individualized consideration (e.g., the manager gives attention to the needs of the employee to achieve goals and growth, the manager helps employees in reaching successfully higher levels of development, the manager has the qualities of listening, advising, teaching and coaching (Bass, 2008)).

Next to these two approaches of behaviours, four other categories of manager behaviours are described (Derue et al., 2011) which tends to explain more variance in leadership effectiveness: task-oriented behaviour, relational-oriented and change-oriented and passive leadership or laissez faire. These four categories include behaviour of the transformational and transactional manager. These four categories will be described in detail below.

### 2.3.3. Task-oriented behaviour

The task-oriented behaviour of the manager consists of some of the transactional leadership exchanges namely contingent reward and management by exception (active). Next to that, the task-oriented manager initiates structure. The manager makes clear what he expects of the employees and gives rewards to employees who meet expectations. This behaviour can also be found in the transactional manager. The task-oriented manager helps with problems and takes corrective action (Derue et al., 2011). In short, the task-oriented manager focusses on the task that have to be done for the organization.

### 2.3.4. Relational-oriented behaviour

The relational-oriented behaviour focusses more on the relation between manager and employee. Managers show interest and respect for the employees. They are open, flexible, available and the employees can ask the manager for help. The relational-oriented manager is described as empowering (Conger, 1989), participative (Kahai, Sosik & Avolio, 1997) and democratic (Gastil, 1994). Certain characteristics of the transformational manager can be found in relational-oriented behaviour namely individualized consideration.

The leader-member exchange theory is a theory that considers the employee and manager in a relational process. It is used as a leadership construct. The theory focuses on the privileges of the manager as he drives the relationship-building process (Uhl-Bien, 2014). High quality relationships have open and honest communication and the employee trusts the manager. With low quality relationships there is a distance between the manager and the employee (Duarte, Goodson & Klich, 1994). Ilies, Nahrgang & Morgeson (2007) state that high-quality relationships between managers and employees not only predict a high level of performance, but also turnover and organizational commitment with employees (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Something that is missing in the LMX literature

according to (Cogliser & Schriesheim, 2000) is that little is known about the causality within the results.

#### 2.3.5. Change-oriented behaviour

Third, change-oriented behaviour is described as a manager who creates visions, accepts new ideas, makes quick decisions, encourages cooperation, someone who is not overcautious and does not stress plans that must be followed (Ekvall & Arvonen 1991). Yukl, Gordon & Taber (2002) state that the behaviour of a change-oriented manager shows actions such as developing and communicating a vision for change, encouraging innovative thinking, and takes risks. Many of these characteristics can also be found in a transformational manager.

#### 2.3.6. Passive behaviour

The last behaviour is the passive leadership or laissez-faire leadership. Passive (laissez-faire) leadership occurs when a manager avoids doing what he should be doing such as: making decisions, supervise, stays close to subordinates. This leadership style has negative effects on employees (Bass, 2008).

### 2.4. Overview

This study focusses on middle management and employees, because not much research has been conducted about the role of middle management and the perceptions of employees. This theoretical framework describes that middle managers can take on different roles during an organizational change. This theoretical review also shows that middle managers can choose different behaviours which lead to effective leadership during organizational change. The distinction between a role and a behaviour is difficult, because sometimes there is overlap between these concepts. A possible difference between a role and a behaviour is that behaviour is described at a higher aggregation level than a role. The reason why this study distinguishes roles and behaviours from each other is because this distinction is also present in leadership literature and previous research. Besides the different roles and behaviours, the process of sensemaking is described. The reason why this process of sensemaking is relevant for this study is because sensemaking is found in literature to be an important concept during uncertain situations like an organizational change. In this research the process of sensemaking is classified as a sixth role managers can adopt. One can argue that sensemaking is part of the other five roles that managers can adopt, but because of the importance of sensemaking during an organizational change, the context of this research, sensemaking is distinguished as a sixth role.

The many different roles and behaviours described in this section, show the complexity for middle managers to successfully influence organizational change. It is therefore interesting whether middle managers in this study can and will combine these roles and behaviours together in order to be an effective manager and how these roles and behaviours are perceived by employees.

### 3. Research method

This research was done in a specific research context and with a specific research method. The first part of this chapter introduces the company, the organization where this study was conducted, how the organization is divided and what the process of the organizational change looked like. The second part of this chapter will describe which research method was used, which participants were included in this research, in which way the data was collected and analysed.

#### 3.1. Research context

This research took place at a technical organization in Overijssel. In October 2015 the company announced an organizational change. At the same time a reduction of employees was announced. The subject of the reorganization were the specific activities. The name and goal of the organizational change was ONE X. The company had two sections that were merged into 'ONE'.

There are a couple of reasons why the combination of these two is necessary:

- The company wants to focus more on the customer.
- The company wants to standardize the solutions to optimise the customer satisfaction.
- The company wants to engage their employees.
- The company wants to align with the group to increase margin.
- The employees and different business lines do not work together and this needs to change.

#### *Role of the researcher in the organization*

The researcher was temporary part of the communication department during this study. The communication department was not affected by the organizational change, because it did not belong to the business lines that were combined. The researcher did not know the participants before the research started and did not work with them.

### 3.1.1. The Process

In the following section the process of the organizational change will be described more precisely.

#### *June – mid October 2015*

The Management Team of the company made a main concept design of One X. The Work Council must verify this design and this led to seven clusters:

1. Strategy & Marketing
2. Sales, BD and Capturing
3. Projects
4. Standard Solution management
5. Engineering Competence centre
6. Supply chain competence centre
7. X support

#### *October 2015*

The first step towards the employees was to communicate the organizational change by means of a staff briefing. The CEO explained the main reasons for this organizational change. At that moment, he did not have information about what would happen with the jobs at the company.

#### *December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015*

On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, there was a new staff briefing. In this briefing, the CEO gave clarity to the employees about One X. He announced that 200 employees had to leave the company. This did not mean that employees would be fired, but they would be moved to other locations of the company. The employees also had the opportunity to decide to leave by making use of the departure incentive. The departure incentive rules were published on the intranet. An admission committee was set up to decide who was qualified to make use of the departure incentive.

#### *Mid October – December 2015*

Project groups were formed by the Management Team to come to a detailed design of One X. These project groups had to provide insight into the processes and rolls that were necessary to enter the market as One. The project groups consisted of 45 employees of the division of the company in Overijssel. Also, the Work Council (10 employees) participated in the project groups. After this, the detailed design was sent to the Work Council for approval. At the same time the preparations for the new organization continued.

#### *January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016*

The detailed design was sent to the Work Council for feedback and advice. After six weeks, the Work Council had to give an opinion about the detailed design.

#### *February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016*

The new Management team of One Navel was presented on the internal communication platform. The management team started selecting employees for the new teams. They also had to decide their way of managing the new way of working.

### February – end March 2016

At this stage, employees were selected and the implementation of One X continued. The vacancies of the management layer below the Management Team were published. This involved about 35 jobs. After this selection, the other employees could apply for functions. Mid-April all these people were positioned before the 'Go Live' moment (start) of One X.

### April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016

'Go Live' moment ONE X.

## 3.2. Research method

It was found in literature that many studies about leadership used a quantitative research method (Lok & Crawford, 1999; White, Krueger, Meaney, Antao, Kim & Kwong, 2016; McClean, Burris & Deters, 2013; Voet, 2014; Kornor & Nordvik, 2004; Andersen, 2010; Sarros, et al., 2008; Kim, 2002; Santhindran, Chandran & Borremeo, 2013; Nordin, 2012; Eby, Adams, Russell & Gaby, 2000; Morgan & Zefanne, 2003). However, in order to explore this field and to understand why employees and managers think in a specific way, this research used a qualitative method: in-depth interviews. Being interviewed allowed participants to give better detailed answers than with other data collection methods (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Because of the large amount of quantitative studies about leadership this research can discover what conclusions differ from and what conclusions correspond with quantitative studies. Also, the use of interviews in understanding leadership, can explore the reasons why participants hold a specific attitude. With this knowledge, managers can determine whether they should change their behaviour or not.

When quantitative research is used, participants make a choice between predetermined answers. In this method, the researchers do not know the reasons for participants choosing their specific answers. When you know the reasons for participants to choose their answers, it is interesting to look for an explanation. According to Hammersley & Atkinson (1995): *'a crucial feature of language is its capacity to present descriptions, explanations and evaluations of almost infinite variety about any aspects of the word'*. With qualitative research, participants are not held back by the response options. The use of interviews provides context to the large amount of data gathered in the quantitative researches (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

The organization also wanted to know how the participants experienced the organizational change. In the interviews this was asked in open ended questions. Surveys in a quantitative research do not have this possibility.

### 3.2.1. Participants

The participants were selected in a purposive sampling manner. For this research, 27 employees were interviewed. The participants were selected out of the newly formed clusters; (a) marketing and strategy, (b) sales, (c) projects, (d) standard solutions, (e) engineering, (f) supply chain and (g) support. The goal was to include three employees of all the clusters (a-g) and from the same cluster the middle manager of these three employees. These middle managers had to be the same managers of the employees before and after the organizational change, because the interviews were conducted one to

three weeks after the implementation of the organizational change. After one to three weeks it is hard to describe someone's behaviour that you have never worked with before.

Only with one cluster there was a problem to meet the criteria as stated before: at the time the interviews were conducted, there were only four members in this cluster (three employees and one manager). One employee never responded on the invitational email or phone calls so this employee was automatically excluded. The other two employees did not have the same manager as they had before the organizational change. It was more important to include all the clusters than the variable 'same manager before and after organizational change' so these two employees were included in the research.

The participants were chosen from a list of the HR department. All the employees (except for the employees in one cluster) had the same manager before and after the organizational change. The name of their manager was also included in the file. From all the clusters one manager was randomly chosen. These managers were one or two sections below the MT. Age, gender and job description were varied as much as possible when choosing the participants. Participants were recruited by email. They were asked if they wanted to participate in the study and were explained what the study was about. All these participants agreed to participate so a date and location was picked.

Male participants (N=25) as well as female participants (N=2) were interviewed. The manager participants included 1 female manager and 6 male managers. The people that were interviewed were for example sales managers, service desk employees, configuration managers, marketing managers and middle managers. The average age of the employees was 44,68 (SD=11,2) and the average age of the managers was 48,57 (SD=6,65). The tenure for the managers was 13.78 (SD=10,19) and the average tenure of the employees was 17.81 (SD=13,64). All participants but one were Dutch, the other one was French. Their education levels differed from University (N=12), HBO (N=12), to MBO (N=3).

### 3.2.2. Data collection

For this study 27 in-depth semi structured interviews were conducted based on a topic list. The goal of the interviews was to collect data about perceptions of the organizational change, roles of the managers, and the perception of employees about their manager. Open questions were asked and the answers were recorded on a sound recorder. The interview consisted of a couple of questions about the opinion of the employee on the organizational change and his perception of the middle manager. When participants felt uncomfortable, they could at any time withdraw from the interview.

The interviews took place in an open and neutral location at the company with sitting corners, or in a private meeting room. Each participant was informed about the purpose, the research design, and the duration of the interview before it started. The participants were informed that the interview would be recorded and they were assured that their participation and answers would remain anonymous. The employees were told that the interview did not form an evaluation for their managers. They could ask questions during the interview or after the interview by sending an email. The participants also had to sign an informed consent to ensure the ethics of the research. It is possible that participants were glad they could finally talk anonymously to someone about their manager. In this way, the interview can become a lamentation, rather than a structured interview. The researcher of this study ensured this did not happen by having a clear question list and goals about the interview. The duration

of the interviews varied from 25 minutes to 55 minutes depending on how much the participant had to say about the topic.

### **Employees**

The interview started with a general question about the job of the participants, and they were asked how many years they have been in this function and how many years they have worked at the company. After these general questions, the topic of the organizational change was addressed. These were questions about how they experienced the organizational change and how they thought their manager addressed the organizational change. The second part of the interview was about the interaction and communication between the employee and their manager in order to understand their relationship better. The third and last part was about the leadership style. In this part a better understanding was created about how the manager acted and what kind of leadership behaviour he or she adopted. It was also about what kind of leadership behaviour the employees prefer. Examples of questions about these three topics are described in table 1. At the end of the interview, three closing questions were asked about their education, their nationality and if they would like to add something to the topic.

### **Managers**

The interview also started with a general question about the job of the participant. They were asked how many years they have been in the function and how many years they have worked at the company. Next the organizational change was addressed. Questions were asked how the managers experienced the organizational change and how they thought employees experienced the organizational change. The second part was about the interaction and communication with their employees. They were asked about how they would describe the relationship they have with their employees, they had to describe their communication style towards the employees, they were asked about how satisfied they are with the relationship they have with their employees and they had to describe how they think their employees experiences him or her as manager. The third part was about the leadership behaviour and the managers were asked to describe a situation during the organizational change where they, as managers, handled a situation well or less well. The next question was about if this behaviour was typical and if this was not the case, then they were asked to describe their way of leading, they had to talk about what kind of behaviour they would like to show and they had to talk about what they think is the kind of behaviour employees like to see in them as manager. Examples of questions about these three topics are described in table 1. At the end, they were asked about their nationality and education level and they could add anything that crossed their mind.

Table 1

*Examples of questions with each topic.*

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Employee</b>	<b>Manager</b>
Organizational change	How did you experience the organizational change?	How did you communicate to your employees about the organizational change?
Interaction and communication between the employee and their manager	How satisfied are you with the relationship you have with your manager?	If you look at the relationship you have with your employees, what are you satisfied about and what are you less satisfied about?
Leadership style	How would you describe the behaviour of your manager?	Are there things you want to develop in your leadership style?

### 3.2.3. Data analysis

All the interviews were transcribed verbatim on the basis of the recordings. This led to 298 transcript pages and this data was analysed. The transcripts were loaded into the qualitative data-analysis program Atlas.ti. The next step was to conduct a code list to address labels to the qualitative output of the interviews. This code list was inductively made by the researcher and was based on the answers given in this first 15 interviews. The next 12 interviews were coded with this code list. Examples of codes are: 'transactional', 'relationship' and 'coaching behaviour'.

After coding all the interviews, the codes were grouped into five categories. The first category was the organizational change. Quotations of employees and/or managers were placed in this category when they addressed perceptions of the change in general. The second category was the category change communication. All quotations specifically about the communication during and about the change were placed in this category. The third category was about the interaction between manager and employee. All quotations of expressions of employees and/or managers about the relationship between manager and employee were placed in this category. The fourth category was about leadership. When employees and/or managers addressed something about leadership behaviour or about which leadership behaviour employees preferred, these quotations were placed in this category. The last category was the employee style. When managers addressed something about how employees behaved, these quotations were placed in this category.

After grouping codes into categories, the codes were adapted and some were merged with each other. For example: one code included typical behaviours of the manager and these codes were divided between the different codes about behaviour of the manager (e.g., approachable behaviour, relational behaviour). These (sub)categories were defined in a codebook. The independent coding resulted in initial kappa's of .81 (organizational change), .32 (change communication), .85 (interaction between manager and employee), .83 (current leadership), and .88 (employee style). The next step was to give the code book to an independent coder. This coder categorized comments of three interviews. After discussing these results with the independent coder, some adjustment in the categories were made to increase the kappa of the change communication. For example, the quotations in the code 'no recent

information' and 'too little information' in the category change communication, were placed into the code 'not informed'.

After the independent coder and adjusting the codebook, a next round of analysing the codes was performed because some behaviours and roles were not initially asked in the semi-structured interviews.

Looking at the codes in category four about leadership, some quotations were directly related to leadership behaviours as found in literature: transformational or transactional leadership. These quotations were placed in a separate code. In the transactional code, quotations were placed when the manager showed behaviours like: hierarchical, setting clear goals, behaving a bit controlling and being critical. In the transformational code, quotations were placed when managers showed coaching skills, when a manager behaved as open, and when a manager asked their employees to think along with important subjects.

Quotations of relational oriented behaviour, change oriented behaviour and task oriented behaviour were not coded in the first coding analysis. During a second analysis, quotations about these types of behaviour were found in the second, third and fourth code category: communication, leadership and interaction. Specifically the codes of 'availability', 'showing appreciation' and 'relationship' were analysed to search for quotations about relational oriented behaviour. The codes 'meeting after new information', 'transformational', 'decisiveness' and 'open' were analysed to search for quotations about change oriented behaviour. The codes 'clear frameworks', 'transactional', 'pragmatic' and 'journey to goal', were analysed to search for quotations about task oriented behaviour.

Quotations about the roles that managers can adopt during an organizational change were also not coded in the first analysis. During a second analysis, quotations about these roles were found in the code categories: communication, leadership and interaction. Specifically the codes 'open', 'manager looks for answers' and 'meetings after new information' were analysed to search for quotations about the role of communicator. The codes 'communication positive' was analysed to search for quotations about the role of supporter. The codes 'transformational', 'asking for help', 'coaching' and 'firs' were analysed to search for quotations about the role of trainer. The codes 'manager looks for answers', 'manager asks employees for help' and 'listening' were analysed to search for quotations about the role of mediator. The codes 'meeting after new information', 'listening' and 'taking time for employees' were analysed to search for quotations about the role of manager of resistance. The codes 'uncertainty', 'listening' and 'communication positive' were analysed to search for quotations about the role of sensemaker.

## 4. Results

As stated in the theoretical framework, roles and behaviours of middle managers have an important influence in successfully implementing an organizational change. The perception of employees about these roles and behaviours were also included in this research design. This chapter describes the results of the interviews and how middle managers and employees experienced the organizational change and the roles and behaviours of the middle managers. The chapter is divided into three sections that are linked together. Each new section goes more into detail on the findings. First, the perception of the change is described. Next is the communication style of the senior management. After that, the attitude of the middle management is analysed.

### 4.1. Perceptions of the change

When asked about the perceptions of the organizational change, participants of this study talked about both the core idea of the change (one x) and the process of the change (e.g., the communication and implementation). Generally speaking, both employees and managers liked the initial idea of the change. There were two separate departments before the organizational change, whereas people needed to work more as one team (one x) in the new organization and both the employees and managers expressed that they liked this idea. People who worked in the former organization did not communicate with each other. Besides, in the new organization the focus is on what the customers want, which was also positive according to managers and employees. As one employee explained:

*'I was a supporter of the organizational change, because I also encountered the aspects where different departments had their own interests. I saw a lot of that. Not only in my previous job, but also at my current job. So, when One Navel was announced, I did not know a lot about the substantive, but I really liked the idea of one X' E10*

When asked about the process of the change, participants were critical however. Both employees and managers said that the organizational change took a very long time and there was too little information available. The organizational change was announced in October 2015 and by May 2016 not everyone was informed whether or not they could stay. This was something employees and managers struggled with. As one employee explained:

*'You know, normally it is all black and white. You are in, or you are out. In the current situation, they made it a grey situation. I hoped as an employee they made it more black and white. I would have preferred they told me before Christmas I was fired, because that is something concrete, instead of another three months of waiting. Then, after three months I read on my place that I had a new function, so that meant I could stay in the organization. Six hours later I could call my family that, in spite of the first information, it was still not sure whether I could stay or not, because they told me still two employees had to leave from our team. So it still kept muddling. I think that is not decisive management, that is how it looks to me.'* E16

However, there was a small number of participants (both employees and managers) that thought of the process as a structured one. They knew which step would be taken at any time as one employee explains:

*'I thought the organizational change was a structured process. In the beginning it was a little bit chaotic, but that happens with every organizational change I think.'* E6

The managers that were involved in the detailed design were a lot more satisfied about the process of the organizational change than the managers that were not involved. This can be due to the fact that the managers that were involved had more information available. When employees and managers felt a lack of information, they attribute this to the senior management. More about the feeling of missing information is described in the next section.

#### 4.2. Communication style of senior management

A prominent theme in the interviews was the communication style of the senior management. Most participants felt that an overview of responsibilities in the new organization was missing. Both managers and employees expressed that this was important information that was missing. They stated that the senior management should have given them this information and this overview of responsibilities. Participants were especially critical about the way the senior management communicated to them, as can be seen in the following example stated by one employee:

*'It's all vague, it stayed vague for a very long period of time. I do think, there was communicated a lot, and if you look at what was really communicated? That's nearly nothing. It was most of the times the same information. There were communication moments, about four or five times, about how the 'organization chart' looked like. Well, also after the first explanation, you knew how the organization chart looked like and what this meant.'* E18

There were numerous explanations why the employees and managers were critical about the communication style of the senior management.

First, they were critical about the timing of the information. For a long time it was unclear what would happen with the jobs of the employees and managers and if they could stay in the organization. Besides, some information came too late: for instance the consequences for the content of the jobs were unclear, and people did not know how the organizational change would affect their department.

Second, employees and managers stated that the senior management should have talked more often with them. The frequency of communication was too low. For example, they expressed there was not enough face-to-face communication with the senior management and that they were not visible. In particular, several employees in this study would have liked to have talked with the senior management more often.

Third, the senior management lacked in the process of sensemaking about why they made certain choices about the change. For example, not every middle manager and employee understood why the senior management had chosen the seven new clusters. In literature it is found that senior management plays an important role in the sensemaking process and in order for the organizational change to succeed it is important for the senior management to oversee the whole situation (Balogun et al., 2015). At the start of the organizational change everyone understood the reason for the change but as time passed, some indistinctness about the way of working and the details of the new organization came up. This is in accordance to what can be found in literature (Balogun & Johnson,

2004). In the beginning of an organizational change, people have a clear view but over a longer period of time they become more confused. More so, employees and managers had the feeling that the senior management was thinking more about the short term and not about the long-term and lacked an all-round view.

Lastly, employees and managers were unsatisfied with the channels which were being used to communicate by the senior management. Namely, some employees had to read the name of their new manager and in which cluster they were placed in an online portal. This is something the employees preferred to have heard from the (senior) manager face-to-face. Also, in literature it can be found that it is important to take more time communicating face-to-face instead of digital during times of organizational change (Jiang et al., 2012). One manager explains:

*'I think how they dealt with the whole reduction process is not good. There was always said: One Navel and the reduction of employees are two separate things, but I think they are linked together. And then, how they communicated things to employees, was not convenient. There are places where no face-to-face contact took place at all with the manager, and those people only read information about their new job and manager on My Place and those people are now at home, sick. That is not good.'* M2

#### 4.3. Attitude of middle management

Middle managers play an important role during an organizational change. They are the people working directly with the employees and they can influence employees about how they experience the organizational change. The middle managers are the ones that get orders from the senior management and have to communicate this to the employees in their department. They are in between layers and they decide how to communicate about information they get from each layer (Rouleau, 2005).

During an information meeting the CEO communicated that management layers would be bound together. The reaction to this message was that the middle managers became very insecure about their position in the company. As middle managers play an important role during an organizational change (Huy, 2001), their insecurity was another key theme in the interviews. In this section, the roles and behaviours of the managers in this study are described. Table 2 and 3 show examples of quotations which belong specifically to managers' behaviours or roles. Also, the description of each type of role and behaviour is enumerated.

Table 2

*Roles of the manager with example quotation of employees and managers*

Role	Explanation of role	Quotation employees	Quotation managers
<b>Communicators</b>	Provide employees with answers to question that rise during change. Spread information about the change through the organization.	<i>'To answer questions my manager arranged a meeting with the people in his group and he told every employee what they could expect.'</i> E20	<i>'At one point I invited X (x MT) to our meetings because he knew more in-depth content about the change. I am open and direct. I say what I know and I if do not know the answer, I am honest about that and I invite someone who does. I think my employees appreciated that honesty.'</i> M4
<b>Supporter</b>	Role model within the change. Manager is the biggest supporter of the change.	-	<i>'The overall content of our jobs was clear, but I started to involve my employees with the interpretation about how to fill in our department. Weekly we have a meeting for this. I want to reach a couple of primary responsibilities of our group and to discuss together how we are going to show this to the company. I am trying to include my team and want for them to come up with ideas for our new department so that they take on responsibilities.'</i> M7
<b>Trainer</b>	Manager guides employees on an individual level and helps employees with barriers during the change.	<i>'My manager held 1 on 1 conversation with employees. At a certain point, my manager told me that he wanted me in his team, and that gave me more confidence and that was something I needed at that point.'</i> E18	-
<b>Mediator</b>	Discuss with the senior management about the needs in the organization and real issues.	<i>'When there was a communication moment, after the communication moment we came together and we could ask questions and make comments. My manager then asked us if he had to communicate things to the higher management or had to address point that were not clear.'</i> E15	-
<b>Managers of resistance</b>	Overcoming resistance and manage the change	<i>'Yes, what he knew he shared with us, that is something I am sure about. We structurally had a meeting and when there was something new communicated we came together with the team to talk about what we thought of it.'</i> E14	<i>'Well, when new information about the process was communicated by the senior management, I organized a meeting with my whole group and just listened and discussed about what they had made of the message. Everybody interprets messages differently and everybody gets a different feeling with a message. So, when you make time to discuss this with each other, there was tried to reduce misinterpretations.'</i> M5
<b>Sensemaker</b>	Managers deal with uncertainty and managers provide commitment organization wide through communication.	-	<i>'When the detailed design became more clear, I was able to tell the employees what the group in the future would look like (regardless of the content). This was something they needed at that point.'</i> M5

Table 3  
Behaviours of the manager with example quotation of employees and managers

Behaviours	Explanation of behaviour	Quotations employees	Quotations managers
<b>Transactional behaviour</b>	Manager sets clear goals Managers uses rewards and punishments Responding to employees needs only when the works still gets done	<i>'My manager does not use rewards, but he uses 'punishments' in the sense of holding on to a certain pattern despite different people who question this.'</i> E2	<i>'Employees that are growing, qualify yearly for a reward, a raise. So employees receive a raise depending on their performance and development within the year of how they have performed and developed within the year. They only receive that raise as long as they are growing. But, at a certain point, employees cannot grow anymore and that is why I want more flexibility with rewards. For example when an employee performs well, reward him directly for this performance.'</i> M1
<b>Transformational behaviour</b>	Intellectual stimulation Idealized influence Inspirational motivation Individualized consideration	<i>'My manager and I have a meeting every week and we can always address each other. We email and call each other when this is necessary. My manager gives me the space to do what I have to do. This is motivating to me and it is something I need. He is a manager who motivates me and also encourages creativity.'</i> E20	<i>'I give the employees a lot of space because in the end, I really want to form a team and I want employees to continue developing. I always want to excite people so they to become confident that can do more.'</i> M5
<b>Task-oriented behaviour</b>	Manager initiates structure Manager makes clear what he expects of employees Employees are rewarded when employees meet expectations	<i>'At the beginning of the year, goals were set between me and my manager and these goals had to be signed if I agreed with them. In the middle of the year, around July, I had a meeting to evaluate these goals. If I already reached some goals, this was noted and we discussed whether the goals should be adjusted or not. At the end of the year I had a performance review.'</i> E16	<i>'I sometimes say to an employee that I want him or her to do a certain BID. And when an employee is stubborn I give him an example of another colleague and I tell him: before you start, take a look at this BID because I love this aspect and this aspect of the structure, so please do so.'</i> M4
<b>Relational-oriented behaviour</b>	Focus on relation between manager and employee Open, flexible, available and employees can ask for help Empowering, participative and democratic.	<i>'From the start, I have a trusting relationship with my manager. When I ask a question, I always receive an answer within one day. He gives me space to come up with my own ideas. The company really looked for managers who did not only have hard skills. They also looked for managers with skills to motivate employees.'</i> E20	<i>'I am trying to talk in a very open and straight way with my employees. I also try to talk to them on a personal level by having lunch meetings with them at least once a month. In these meetings the topics of the job and personal things are addressed. I also try to emphasize development.'</i> M3
<b>Change-oriented behaviour</b>	Manager creates vision, accepts new ideas, makes quick decisions, encourages cooperation. Communicates vision for change	-	<i>'When I started, I tried to involve employees in the making of plans for our department. Me and my employees have a weekly meeting and start-up sessions, to address topics like what do we stand for, what are we going to do, to what documents are we giving input and so on. In these topics I am involving my team, so that my employees can come up with ideas.'</i> M7
<b>Passive behaviour</b>	Manager avoids doing what he should be doing: does not make decisions	<i>'Many managers did not respond to the message of CEO to communicate about what was going to happen in the new organization. The managers were not informed, and they did not take any initiative to go to people with information in order to get answers. This did not happen.'</i> E11	-

As can be seen in the tables above, not all roles and behaviours were identified by the employees and managers in the interviews. The role of supporter and sensemaker was not seen by employees and the role of trainer and mediator was not described by the managers. An explanation for this is that the communication of the CEO made the middle managers insecure about their position as explained before, and therefore did not adopt the role of supporter and sensemaker according to their employees. It is interesting that there are managers who expressed themselves as supporter and sensemaker as can be seen in table 2. A possible explanation for this is that these quoted managers did not feel insecure. Hence, one of the quoted managers (M7) in table 2 was involved in the detailed design and therefore had full information about the change and his future position. The other quoted manager (M5) was a manager that did feel insecure, but asked for detailed information to the senior management in order to make sense about the change. He felt his employees needed information at that point.

Furthermore, the change oriented behaviour of managers was not identified by employees and the passive behaviour was not recognized by managers. It is interesting that a manager did express himself as change oriented, this again was the manager (M7) that was involved in the detailed design and therefore had more information than other middle manager. Passive behaviour was not addressed by the managers. A possible explanation for this is that it is less likely that managers ventilate critique about their own leadership behaviour, even though this was specifically asked.

The results of this study show an interesting pattern. The next section will show that middle managers felt insecure about whether they would still have their job after the organizational change, because in their opinion too little information was given by the senior management. This insecurity led to a wait-and-see attitude and passive leadership behaviour of the middle management. In table 3, a quotation of one employee (E11) describes this passive behaviour where a manager did not do what he should be doing. These middle managers did not adopt the role of communicator as quoted in table 2 by one of the employees (E20), or take on a sensemaking role where managers deal with uncertainty and provide commitment (table 2). The sections below will show that surprisingly the employees did not judge their manager on this attitude. Just the opposite occurred; most of the employees expressed themselves positively about their middle manager. They described their manager as open, personal, available and giving them the right amount of autonomy; characteristics of a transformational manager, as can be seen by one quotation of an employee (E20) in table 3.

#### 4.3.1. Wait-and-see

When looking at the attitude of the middle management in this research it is important to keep in mind the message of the CEO about management layers that will be combined. In the interviews it became clear that especially the middle managers felt insecure during the organizational change because of this statement. Surprisingly, most employees did not feel this insecurity and when they did, they stated that they did not let it affect their work. As one employee stated:

*'Eh well, I protected myself not to listen to rumours, and I just did my own job.'* E19

From the moment the position of the middle manager became unsure, many of them lacked a sensemaking role and did not adopt the role of communicator because they did not search for new information about the organizational change as one former manager (now employee) stated:

*'In my case, I was a manager and two weeks after the townhall meeting the CEO called me and said two people from my team had to leave. Then, one and a half month later, my manager called me again –I was lying in bed feeling sick– and he said my function was removed. Now in cluster X, I am not a manager anymore. I did not know my entire function was being replaced. This meant I had to apply for my own function (without the title manager) again. So basically it was the same work, but less difficult. And still I had to apply, do a whole assessment and a job interview with the possibility someone else got the job. This led to insecurity. ' E19*

One surprising result of the interviews is that some of the middle managers took a cautious and passive attitude during the organizational change and therefore acted more like an employee instead of a manager. Two explanations can be found for this cautious and passive attitude of the manager. First, because the managers had no idea which role would lie ahead of them in the new organization, they withdrew from their task. They adopted passive leadership behaviour. In a way, they did not feel the responsibility to search actively for extra and new information for their employees, and gave this responsibility entirely to the senior management. Contrary to the literature which states that an insecure employee would actively seek for answers in times of insecurity (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), middle managers in this study placed themselves in a wait-and-see mode because they wanted more information about their own job first. An example of this passive leadership behaviour was found with one manager who was first a part of the senior management but was demoted towards a middle management function. As soon as he became a middle manager, he let go of all his responsibilities. He did not think about the consequences of the organizational change after implementation. He expressed that it was not his responsibility anymore.

Second, some of the managers were included in a detailed design group. In this group, 50 managers were represented and these managers could actively decide how to design the new organization in collaboration with the senior management. These managers therefore had more direct and detailed information about what was going to happen. These managers did not experience the organizational change as if it was taking too long or felt that they did not have enough information. On the one hand it is good to involve employees in the design of an organizational change. On the other hand, the presence of this select group could have resulted in the other managers becoming insecure and adopting a passive leadership behaviour. This can be seen in the next quotation of a manager:

*'So, I was not involved with the detailed design group and that is why I had to wait for what came next. Then, one step at the time was made and after that step I again had to wait for what came next. I would have liked some more overarching information.' M3*

#### 4.3.2. Perception about the middle manager

Surprisingly, even with the absence of a sensemaking role, passive leadership behaviour and the fact that the middle management had little information to give to the employees, the employees did express themselves very positively about their middle manager. The characteristics of the middle managers described by employees can be found in different leadership behaviours like transactional behaviour (e.g., complimenting), transformational behaviour (e.g., open) and relational-oriented behaviour (e.g., informal and being available). Employees experienced their middle manager as

informal (e.g., being able to talk about private things with them), open, complimenting or feeling appreciated and available. One employee explained about feeling appreciated:

*'Yes that kind of appreciation is present because he expressed to me that he wants to keep me in his team. That information told me that he wanted to continue working with me and that is a form of expressing his appreciation.'* E17

Although the managers did not take their full responsibility to search for information and did not take the role of communicator, employees did not blame them. The strong connection and good relationship between the employee and manager seems to be the most important explanation for this. Most managers really try to meet the needs of each employee. Middle managers were described as listeners and coaches. They were willing to invest in the professional development of the employees. These are characteristics that can again be described as relational-oriented behaviour and individualized consideration (transformational behaviour). One employee explained:

*'Well I think he is a good guy. He is a good boss and I think we can always have a good conversation with each other. He understands what I need and I understand what he needs. I am not someone who needs a manager who is checking my moves every time. My manager does not have to tell me what I am supposed to do, that is something I cannot handle. He is someone who is more a coach and I like that. In conversations with him he is asking me what I am doing at that moment, if I need any help, and if there are things that I find important. If there is something going on, he is trying to fix it and look after it.'* E7

On the contrary there were some employees who did not express themselves so positively about their manager. They did not feel connected to their manager on a personal level. For example, they explained that they were just two different personalities that did not match:

*'I would describe him more like an authoritarian manager while I work more with consensus. Look, as a person, he is just not my type. It is, his way of living, that is different than my way of living. He probably thinks the same, the other way around.'* E12

#### 4.3.3. Giving autonomy

A characteristic of the middle managers that the employees expressed themselves positively about, is the amount of autonomy the middle manager gives to the employee. Most employees said that they liked to receive a goal, but that they want to reach this goal on their own. They think of the manager as a person who helps them when they have a problem and is responsible for setting these goals. This behaviour can be seen as a part of the transactional manager namely task-oriented behaviour:

*'Well, give me a goal and I will make sure the goal will be reached. In order to reach that goal I will make a plan and that plan I will execute. And at the end I will double check if I indeed reached the initial goal. So you verify: was this indeed the goal and if I have verified this, than that was indeed the goal and I have reached the goal.'* E1

The need for autonomy varies per person (Gagne & Deci, 2005). Almost all employees stated they like to receive a goal, as stated above, but want to reach that goal in their own way. However, some of the

oldest employees said they did not want their manager to set the goals and they did not want their manager to tell them how to reach this goal - an absolute need for autonomy. The younger employees in this study expressed to have a different need for autonomy compared to the older employees. What was expected was that the youngest employees wanted more directions from the manager (Kyndt, Michielsen, van Nooten, Nijs & Baert, 2011). This was partly found in the current research. On the one hand, some of the youngest employees said they wanted a goal (like most of the other employees), but after the goal was set, the manager should let them reach that goal on their own (need for autonomy). These were employees who worked on less complex goals (engineers). On the other hand, in occurrence with literature, some young employees did want more direction. These were the employees with a more strategic function. It is possible that not only age, but also function within a company has something to do with the need for autonomy:

*'My manager is not a team manager. He was Sales Director and he is busy getting orders. He is used to working with senior employees who are very mature in their job and that kind of people have other needs than me as a young professional. I am learning, I am developing and I just need some sort of coaching/direction and I need feedback in that process. That is something that I miss. And I also need to get the feeling that I get that space to develop myself. And if you have a boss who is constantly flying all over the world and when he gets here, he has meetings all day, well then I do not feel comfortable walking in his office discussing how we are going to do things.'* E18

## 5. Discussion & Conclusion

This research provides insight in leadership behaviour and roles of managers during an organizational change focussing both on the level of middle management and the employees. The aim of this research was to study the roles and behaviours middle managers adopt during an organizational change and to analyse how employees perceive these roles and behaviours of their middle managers. This chapter discusses the results of this research, shows its limitations, practical implications and addresses the conclusions of this research.

### 5.1. Discussion

As can be seen in the introduction a lot of research is centred around senior management instead of middle management (Balogun, 2004; Huy, 2002; McKinley and Scherer, 2000). This research specifically focusses on middle management. A first result of this research was that the middle managers who had no influence in the decision-making process during the organizational change, started acting like an employee: these managers adopted a passive leadership behaviour and did not adopt a sensemaking role or searched for information for their employees in the role of communicator. In other words, they did not take full responsibility in their function of manager.

This passive leadership behaviour may be the reason why the organizational change was not perceived by all the employees as a success. This is in line with the importance that Huy (2001) attributes to the middle management. He states that middle managers are the people working directly with employees and they can influence employees in how they experience the organizational change. This study shows that most of the middle managers did not adopt the sensemaking role and placed themselves on the same level as their employees. Together with the employees the middle managers blamed the senior management for the lack of information and communication instead of taking on the role of communicator, supporter, trainer, mediator, manager of change (Huy, 2001; Ionescu et al., 2014) or sensemaker (Weick, 1993). As seen in the results the employees did not blame their middle manager for this passive leadership behaviour. Instead, they also blame the senior management. This can indicate that adopting a specific role as a middle manager is not important to employees during an organizational change.

In the opinion of this research, the organizational change would have been perceived as more successful by the employees if the middle managers had adopted a more sensemaking role. The process of sensemaking during an organizational change is explained by Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) by determining four different stages. First, the CEO of the organization tries to give meaning to the new situation. Then, the CEO gives sense to the managers through communication. In the third stage (managers making sense of the change), the managers are trying to make sense about what the organizational change will mean to their own work activities. Lastly, the managers attempt to provide commitment through communication organization wide. In this study of organizational change, the third stage was not fully completed because middle managers felt insecure about their position and therefore could not make sense about the organizational change. It is the belief of this research that if all the managers were involved in the decision making process during the change, they could make better sense about the change and therefore communicate this meaning more successfully to their employees. This way, the employees could make sense about the change on their own and perceive this change as a more successful process. Future research should therefore investigate this

sensemaking role of middle managers during change in more depth to see if these preliminary conclusions are also true in other studies.

A second criticism addressed in the introduction is that the perceptions of employees during organizational change have not been studied enough (Collinson, 2006; Derue et al, 2011; Heller and Van Til, 1982; Herzig & Jimmieson, 2006; Shamir, 2007; Uhl-Bien, 2014). By analysing the perception of employees in this research a surprising result came forward: a passive leadership behaviour of middle managers during change was not experienced as negative by the employees. Employees stated that managers were open and always shared information. They summed adjectives about their middle manager that can be regarded as relational oriented: friendly, trusting, reliable, accountable, flexible, personal, understanding, sympathetic, supportive and considerate (Ehrhart & Klein, 2001). Because of these results it is the opinion of this research that the leadership behaviour during change does not influence whether or not employees are positive about their middle manager. When the manager is a relational oriented manager before the change and adopts a passive leadership behaviour during change, this does not affect the image of the manager and employees appreciate their relational oriented behaviour anyway. This shows the importance of the relational oriented behaviour of the middle manager towards employees before an organizational change. However, as stated above, when the middle managers had adopted a more sensemaking role during the organizational change, employees may have perceived the change process overall more positively.

Last, in literature two other behaviours of the middle managers are described: transformational and transactional. Literature about these behaviours state that the transformational manager is the most preferable manager during change (Herold et al., 2008). In the current research it was found that employees preferred a combination of both a transactional and transformational behaviour. This critique was also formulated in the introduction of this research by Yukl (1999) who stated that it is hard to determine whether the behaviour of a manager is transformational or transactional because the definitions of those two concepts are too vague. Future research should investigate which combination of leadership behaviours is most effective and in which circumstances.

## 5.2. Limitations

A result of this research is that not all the roles and behaviours as described in the literature review are observed: managers did not express themselves about the behaviour of being passive and employees did not express answers about the manager showing change-oriented behaviour. Furthermore, managers did not express themselves about taking on the role of trainer or mediator and the employees did not express anything about the manager taking on the role of supporter or sensemaker. A possible explanation for these missing quotations is that questions about roles were not addressed in the interviews. A further explanation of the absence of quotations about the passive behaviour not expressed by the managers, is that it is not likely that managers ventilate critique about their own leadership behaviour even though they were specifically asked to during the interviews. This can be a limitation of this study because a bias occurred: instead of being critical about their own role they blamed the senior management.

The second limitation is that this research was done in a specialized technical organization, which is a private organization with a high average age, a high tenure and a low number of women. The characteristics of this research context could have influenced the results of this study. The

recommendation that more middle managers should be incorporated in the decision making process may be because of the high average age and the high tenure of the participants of this research. The middle managers worked at the company for a long time and therefore are more likely to want more security about their future job. The technical background of the company may have influenced the result that the transformational manager is not the most preferable behaviour for the middle manager. This is because some aspects of the transactional manager are also perceived as positive by the participants in this study such as setting clear goals. Lastly, the preferred relation oriented leadership behaviour of middle managers is believed not to have been influenced by the research context. In probably every organization this relational oriented behaviour is perceived as positive.

The third limitation of this research is that the interviews took place shortly after the implementation. Therefore, employees may not have a clear view about the changes and the benefits in the long term. A lot of things were unclear for the employees during the time the interviews were taken, making them potentially more dissatisfied. If the interviews were held a year after the implementation, the outcome could have been more positive with possibly a more positive bias because of job security. It can be interesting to repeat the interviews two years after the announcement of the organizational change.

### 5.3. Practical implications

Organizations that have to address an organizational change could find some implications regarding the behaviour and communication of the middle and senior management in this research. They can also find how employees experience communication and behaviour of the management. Two of these implications will be described below.

The first implication of this study is that managers should be open and approachable and make sure employees trust them. Next to that, they should take time to build a relationship with the employees and have informal contact. A relational-oriented behaviour is preferred by employees and therefore other organizations should stimulate their managers to persuade this type of leadership behaviour. This can be reached by taking on a relationship oriented behaviour as senior management towards middle management to set a good example, to give middle managers enough time to invest in the relationship with their employees and to make training available to coach middle managers in becoming a relational oriented manager.

The second implication of this study is the communication style of the senior management. It is important for the senior management to make sure the managers are fully informed about the change and to make them a supporter of the change. The middle managers are the link between senior management and employees and therefore are the best bet in order to make the implementation of the change a success.

Furthermore, the senior management should spend more time in informing the managers and make them feel more involved. At the technical company this study was conducted there was a detailed design group which incorporated a small amount of middle managers. This group was satisfied about the amount of information given by the senior management. The managers who were not part of this group felt a lack of information. What can be learned from this is that not only a small number of middle managers should be included, but that all the managers should have access to all the information available. This is in occurrence with literature: the task of the senior management is to

make sure they make sense of the new situation towards the middle managers. In this way, the managers are able to make sense of the new situation and pass this on to the employees (Cioia & Chittipeddi, 1991), functioning as a mediator. It is important that all the managers can make sense of the new situation, not only a small group of managers.

#### 5.4. Conclusions

This research has three main conclusions about the roles and behaviours of middle managers during organizational change and the perceptions of employees of these roles and behaviours. On the one hand, the stimulation of more cooperation between departments by the organizational change was perceived as positive by both employees and middle management. On the other hand, the participants were critical about the process of the change: it took too long and there was too little information available. This unsuccessful process and lack of information was blamed on the senior management: the timing of the information was wrong, the frequency of the information was too low, the senior management did not show enough effort in the process of sensemaking and lastly, employees and middle management were unsatisfied with the communication channels.

Secondly, middle managers are important for a successful implementation of organizational change. In the case of this study and the attitude of the middle management, a statement by the CEO (that management layers will be bound together) played an important part. Because of this statement, middle managers felt insecure about their job and position in the new organization. This led to a wait-and-see attitude where middle managers withdrew themselves from their task as manager. They did not feel responsible for searching for extra information for the employees, and for adopting the role of communicator.

Third, even though the middle management had little information to give and did not take an active role in managing the implementation of the change, the employees expressed themselves positively about their middle manager. The behaviour of their middle manager was described by the employees as relation oriented: open, informal, available for help, complimenting and they could talk about private things. This perception can be explained by the relationship oriented behaviour of the manager before the change. This relationship oriented behaviour is still perceived during the change even though the managers adopt a passive leadership behaviour.

Concluding: this research shows the importance of middle managers during change and that they are indeed the best bet of successful implementing change.

## 6. References

- Amason, A. C. (1996). Distinguishing the effects of functional and dysfunctional conflict on strategic decision making: Resolving a paradox for top management teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39 (1), 123-148.
- Andersen, J. A. (2010). Public versus private managers: How public and private managers differ in leadership behavior. *Public Administration Review*, 70 (1), 131-141.
- Antonakis, J., Avolio, B. J., & Sivasubramaniam, N. (2003). Context and leadership: An examination of the nine-factor full-range leadership theory using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. *The leadership Quarterly*, 14 (3), 261-295.
- Avolio, B. J., Sosik, J. J., Jung, D. I., & Berson, Y. (2003). Leadership models, methods, and applications. *Handbook of Psychology*, 12, 277-308
- Avolio, B.J., & Bass, B.M. (1995). *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire: The benchmark measure of transformational leadership*. Redwood City, CA: Mind Garden.
- Avolio, B.J., & Gardner, W.L. (2005). Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16, 315-338.
- Baarda, D.B., de Goede, M.P.M., & Teunissen, J. (2005). *Basisboek kwalitatief onderzoek*. Groningen: Noordhoff Uitgevers.
- Balogun, J., & Johnson, G. (2004). Organizational restructuring and middle manager sensemaking. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47 (4), 523-549.
- Balogun, J., Bartuned, J.M., & Do, B. (2015). Senior managers' sensemaking and responses to strategic change. *Organization Science*, 26 (4), 960-979.
- Balogun, J., & Johnson, G. (2004). Organizational restructuring and middle manager sensemaking. *The Academy of Management journal*, 47, 523-549
- Bartram, T., & Casimir, G. (2007). The relationship between leadership and follower in-role performance and satisfaction with the leader: The mediating effects of empowerment and trust in the leader. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 28 (1), 4-19.
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational Leadership*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Bass, B.M. (1991). From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, 18 (3), 19-31.
- Bass, B.M. (1997). Does the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries? *American Psychologist*, 52 (2), 130-130.
- Bass, B.M., Jung, I.D., Avolio, & B.J., Berson, Y. (2003). Predicting unit performance by assessing transformational and transactional leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 88 (2) 207-218.
- Bass, B. M. (1990). From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, 18 (3), 19-31.

- Bass, M.B. (2008). *The Bass Handbook of Leadership*. New York: Free Press.
- Blake, R. R., & Mouton, J. S. (1981). Management by grid® principles or situationalism: Which? *Group & Organization Studies*, 6(4), 439-455.
- Bordia, P., Hobman, E., Jones, E., & Gallois C., Callan, V.J. (2004). Uncertainty during organizational change: types, consequences and management strategies. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 18 (4), 507-532.
- Boyce, C. & Neale, P. (2006). *Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input*. Watertown, MA: Pathfinder International Tool Series.
- Bryant, S.E. (2003). The role of transformational and transactional leadership in creating, sharing and exploiting organizational knowledge. *The Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 9 (4), 32-44.
- Burns, J.M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row 3.
- Caldwell, D.F., Chatman, J, O'Reilly III, C.A., Ormiston, M., & Lapid, M. (2008). Implementing strategic change in a health care system: The importance of leadership and change readiness. *Health Care Management Review*, 33 (2), 124-133.
- Cogliser, C. C., & Schriesheim, C. A. (2000). Exploring work unit context and leader-member exchange: A multi-level perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 487-511.
- Collinson, D. (2006). Rethinking followership: A post-structuralist analysis of follower identities. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17, 179 – 189.
- Conger, J.A. (1989). Leadership: The art of empowering others. *Academy of Management Executive*, 3, 17–24.
- Dansereau, F., Graen, G., & Haga, W. J. (1975). A vertical dyad linkage approach to leadership within formal organizations: A longitudinal investigation of the role making process. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 13(1), 46–78.
- Davis, T. R., & Luthans, F. (1979). Leadership reexamined: A behavioral approach. *Academy of Management Review*, 4(2), 237-248.
- Densten, L. L., & Gray, J. H. (1999). The case for using both latent and manifest variables to investigate management-by-exception. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 5(3), 80-92.
- Derue, D. S., Nahrgang, J. D., Wellman, N. E. D., & Humphrey, S. E. (2011). Trait and behavioral theories of leadership: An integration and meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Personnel Psychology*, 64(1), 7-52.
- Derue, D. S., & Ashford, S. J. (2010). Who will lead and who will follow? A social process of leadership identity construction in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(4), 627-647.

- Dick, R., Hirst, G., Grojean, M. W., & Wieseke, J. (2007). Relationships between leader and follower organizational identification and implications for follower attitudes and behaviour. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 80*(1), 133-150.
- DiFonzo, N., & Bordia, P. (1998). A tale of two corporations: Managing uncertainty during organizational change. *Human Resource Management, 37*(3-4), 295.
- Duarte, N. Goodson, J.R., & Klich, N.R. (1994). Effects of dyadic quality and duration on performance appraisal. *Academy of Management Journal, 37* (3), 499-521.
- Dvir, T., & Shamir, B. (2003). Follower developmental characteristics as predicting transformational leadership: A longitudinal field study. *The Leadership Quarterly, 14*(3), 327-344.
- Eby, L.T., Adams, D.M., Russell, J.E.A., & Gaby, S.H. (2000). Perceptions of organizational readiness for change: Factors related to employees' reactions to the implementation of team-based selling. *Human Relations, 53* (3), 419-442.
- Ekvall, G., & Arvonen, J. (1991). Change-centered leadership: An extension of the two-dimensional model. *Scandinavian Journal of Management, 7*(1), 17-26.
- Finkelstein, S. & Hambrick, D.C. (1990). Top-management-team tenure and organizational outcomes: the moderating role of managerial discretion. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 35* (3), 484-503.
- Fleishman, E. A., Mumford, M. D., Zaccaro, S. J., Levin, K. Y., Korotkin, A. L., & Hein, M. B. (1991). Taxonomic efforts in the description of leader behavior: A synthesis and functional interpretation. *The Leadership Quarterly, 2*(4), 245-287.
- Gagne, M., & Dec, E.L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 26*, 331-362.
- Galton, F. (1869). *Hereditary genius*. New York: Appleton.
- Gastil, J. (1994). A meta-analytic review of the productivity and satisfaction of democratic and autocratic leadership. *Small Group Research, 25*(3), 384-410.
- Gerstner, C. R., & Day, D. V. (1997). Meta-analytic review of leader– member exchange theory: Correlates and construct issues. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 82*, 827– 844.
- Gilley, A., Gilley, J.W., & McMillan, H.S. (2009). Organizational change: Motivation, communication, and leadership effectiveness. *Performance Improvement Quarterly, 21* (4), 75-94.
- Gioia, D. A., & Thomas, J. B. (1996). Identity, image, and issue interpretation: Sensemaking during strategic change in academia. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 37*, 370-403.
- Gioia, D.A., & Chittipeddi, K. (1991). Sensemaking and sensegiving in strategic change initiation. *Strategic Management Journal, 12*, 433-448.

- Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 6(2), 219-247.
- Graetz, F. (2000). Strategic change leadership. *Management Decision*, 38(8), 550-564.
- Hammer, M., & Champy, J. (1993). *Reengineering the corporation-a manifesto for business revolution*. New York: Harper Business.
- Hammerslay, M. & Atkinson, P (1995). *Ethnography: Principles in practice, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. London: Routledge.
- Hartog, D. N., Van Muijen, J. J., & Koopman, P. L. (1997). Transactional versus transformational leadership: An analysis of the MLQ. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 19-34.
- Heller, T., & Van Til, J. (1982). Leadership and followership: Some summary propositions. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 18(3), 405-414.
- Herold, D. M., Fedor, D. B., Caldwell, S., & Liu, Y. (2008). The effects of transformational and change leadership on employees' commitment to a change: A multilevel study. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(2), 346.
- Hersey, P. 1984. *The situational leader*. Escondido, CA: Centre for Leadership Studies.
- Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. H. (1995). Situational leadership. In J. Wren (Ed.), *The Leader's Companion* (pp. 207-242). New York: The Free Press
- Herzig, S. E., & Jimmieson, N. L. (2006). Middle managers' uncertainty management during organizational change. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 27(8), 628-645.
- Hollenbeck, G. P., McCall, M. W., & Silzer, R. F. (2006). Leadership competency models. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17(4), 398-413.
- Hur, M.H. (2008). Exploring differences in leadership styles: A study of manager tasks, follower characteristics, and task environments in korean human service organizations. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 36 (3), 359-372.
- Huy, Q. N. (2001). In praise of middle managers. *Harvard Business Review*, 79(8), 72-9.
- Huy, Q. N. (2002). Emotional balancing of organizational continuity and radical change: The contribution of middle managers. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47(1), 31-69.
- Ilies, R., Nahrgang, J. D., & Morgeson, F. P. (2007). Leader-member exchange and citizenship behaviors: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(1), 269.
- Ionescu, E. I., Meruță, A., & Dragomiroiu, R. (2014). Role of managers in management of change. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 16, 293-298.
- Irgens, O. M. (1995). Situational leadership: A modification Hersey and Blanchard. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 16(2), 36.

- Jiang, J., Dai, B., Peng, D., Zhu, C. Liu, L., & Lu, C. (2012). Neural synchronization during face-to-face communication. *Journal of Neuroscience*, *32* (45), 16064-16069.
- Johns, H. E., & Moser, H. R. (2001). From trait to transformation: The evolution of leadership theories. *Education*, *110* (1), 115-122.
- Judge, T. A., Bono, J. E., Ilies, R., & Gerhardt, M. W. (2002). Personality and leadership: a qualitative and quantitative review. *Journal of applied psychology*, *87*(4), 765.
- Kahai S.S., Sosik J.J., & Avolio B.J. (1997). Effects of leadership style and problem structure on work group process and outcomes in an electronic meeting system environment. *Personnel Psychology*, *50*, 121–146.
- Kearney, E. (2008). Age differences between leader and followers as a moderator of the relationship between transformational leadership and team performance. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *81*(4), 803-811.
- Kim, S. (2002). Participative management and job satisfaction: Lessons for management leadership, *Public Administration Review*, *62* (2), 231-241.
- King, A. W., Fowler, S. W., & Zeithaml, C. P. (2001). Managing organizational competencies for competitive advantage: The middle-management edge. *The Academy of Management Executive*, *15*(2), 95-106.
- Kornor, H., & Nordvik, H. (2004). Personality traits in leadership behaviour. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* *45* (1), 49-54.
- Kotter, J.P. (1995). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, *73-2*, 59-67.
- Kotter, J. P. (2008). *Force for change: How leadership differs from management*. New York: The Free Press.
- Kyndt, E., Michielsen, M., van Nooten, L., Nijs, S., & Baert, H. (2011). Learning in the second half of the career: Stimulating and prohibiting reasons for participation in formal learning activities. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *5*, 681-699.
- Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Lok, P., & Crawford, J. (1991). The relationship between commitment and organizational culture, subculture, leadership style and job satisfaction in organizational change and development. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *20* (7), 365-374.
- Lowe, K. B., Kroeck, K. G., & Sivasubramaniam, N. (1996). Effectiveness correlates of transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic review of the MLQ literature. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *7*(3), 385- 415.
- Maitlis, S. (2005). The social processes of organizational sensemaking. *Academy of Management Journal*, *48* (1), 21-49.

- Maitlis, S., & Christianson, M. (2014). Sensemaking in organizations: Taking stock and moving forward. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 8(1), 57-125.
- McClellan, E.J., Burris, E.R., & Detert, J.R. (2013). When does voice lead to exit? It depends on leadership. *Academy of Management Journal* 56 (2), 525-548.
- McKinley, W., & Scherer, A. G. (2000). Some unanticipated consequences of organizational restructuring. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(4), 735-752.
- Meijer, M., Berkhout, P., & Ruiten, M. (2001). Gevolgen van reorganisaties voor tevredenheid van personeel. *M&O*, 2, 46-57.
- Meindl, J.R. (1995). The romance of leadership as a follower-centric theory: A social constructionist approach. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 6(3), 329-341.
- Miller, D.V., Johnson, J.R. & Grau, J. (1994). Antecedents to willingness to participate in a planned organizational change. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 22, 59-80.
- Morgan, D., & Zeffane, R. (2003). Employee involvement, organizational change and trust in management. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14 (1), 55-75.
- Nadler, D. A., & Tushman, M. L. (1990). Beyond the charismatic leader: Leadership and organizational change. *California Management Review*, 32(2), 77-97.
- Nohe, C., Michaelis, B., Menges, J.I., Zhang, Z., & Sonntag, K. (2013). Charisma and organizational change: A multilevel study of perceived charisma, commitment to change, and team performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24 (2), 378-389.
- Nordin, N. (2012). The influence of leadership behavior and organizational commitment on organizational readiness for change in a higher learning institution, *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 13 (2), 239-249.
- Oreg, S., & Berson, Y. (2011). Leadership and employees' reaction to change: The role of leaders' personal attributes and transformational leadership style. *Personnel Psychology*, 64 (3), 627-659.
- Pearce, C. L., & Sims Jr, H. P. (2002). Vertical versus shared leadership as predictors of the effectiveness of change management teams: An examination of aversive, directive, transactional, transformational, and empowering leader behaviors. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 6(2), 172.
- Peters, T. (1988). *Thriving on Chaos: Handbook for a Management Revolution*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Podsakoff, P.M., Todor, W.D., & Skov, R. (1982). Effects of leader contingent and noncontingent reward and punishment behaviors on subordinate performance and satisfaction. *Academy of Management Journal*, 25 (4), 810-821.

- Rouleau, L. (2005). Micro-practices of strategic sensemaking and sensegiving: How middle managers interpret and sell change every day. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42 (7), 0022-2380.
- Schermerhorn, J. R. (1997). Situational leadership: Conversations with Paul Hersey. *Mid American Journal of Business*, 12, 5-12.
- Santhidran, S., & Chandran, V.G.R. (2013). Enabling organizational change – leadership, commitment to change and the mediating role of change readiness. *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, 14 (2), 348-363.
- Sarros, J.C., Cooper, B. K., & Santora, J.C. (2008). Building a climate for innovation through transformational leadership and organizational culture. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational*, 15 (2), 145-158.
- Shamir, B. (2007). From passive recipients to active co-producers: Followers' roles in the leadership process.
- Shamir, B. (2007). From Passive Recipients to Active Co-Producers: Followers' Roles in the Leadership Process. In Shamir, B., Pillai, R., Bligh, M. & Uhl-Bien, M. (eds.) *Follower-Centered Perspectives on Leadership: A Tribute to the Memory of James R. Meindl*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishers, pp. 9-39.
- Stoffers, J., & Mordant-Dols, A. (2015). Transformational leadership and professionals' willingness to change: A multiple case study in project management organisations. *Human Resource Management Research* 5-2, 40-46.
- Uhl-Bien, M., Riggio, R.E., Lowe, K.B., & Carsten, M.K. (2014). Followership theory: A review and research agenda. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25, 83–104.
- Van Dam, K., Oreg, S., & Schyns, B. (2008). Daily work contexts and resistance to organisational change: The role of leader–member exchange, development climate, and change process characteristics. *Applied Psychology*, 57(2), 313-334.
- Voet, J. (2014). The effectiveness and specificity of change management in a public organization: Transformational leadership and a bureaucratic organizational structure. *European Management Journal*, 32(3), 373-382.
- Wai-Kwong, F. Y., Priem, R. L., & Cychota, C. S. (2001). The performance effects of human resource managers' and other middle managers' involvement in strategy making under different business-level strategies: The case in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 12(8), 1325-1346.
- Wang, H., Law, K. S., Hackett, R. D., Wang, D., & Chen, Z. X. (2005). Leader-member exchange as a mediator of the relationship between transformational leadership and followers' performance and organizational citizenship behavior. *Academy of Management Journal*, 48(3), 420-432.
- Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Weick, K.E. (1993). Collapse of sensemaking in organizations: The Mann Gulch Disaster. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38, 628-652.
- White, D., Krueger, P., Meaney, C., Antao, V., Kim, F., & Kwong, J.C. (2016). Identifying potential academic leaders. Predictors of willingness to undertake leadership roles in an academic department of family medicine. *Canadian Family Physician*, 62 (2), 102-109.
- Wooldridge, B., Schmid, T., & Floyd, S. W. (2008). The middle management perspective on strategy process: Contributions, synthesis, and future research. *Journal of Management*, 34 (6), 1190-1221.
- Wyne, S.J., Lynn, M.S., & Linden, R.C. (1997). Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange: A social exchange perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44 (1), 82-111.
- Yammarino, F.J., Spangler, W.D., & Dubinsky, A.J. (1998). Transformational and contingent reward leadership: individual, dyad, and group levels of analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 9 (1), 27-54.
- Yukl, G., Gordon, A., & Taber, T. (2002). A hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behaviour: Intergrating half century of behavior research. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 9, 15-32.
- Yukl, G. (1999). An evaluative essay on current conceptions of effective leadership. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 8 (1), 33-48.

## Appendix A: Topic List (in Dutch)

### Vragenlijst voor medewerkers

*Voorkeur in leiderschapsstijlen ten tijde van een organisatie verandering* → Vragen naar specifieke gebeurtenissen, situaties en ervaringen!

- I. Gespreksstarter:** welke functie heb je op dit moment en kun je mij iets meer over je functie vertellen?
  - a. Hoe lang zit je al op deze functie en hoe lang werk je al bij X?
  - b. Op welke afdeling was je werkzaam, en op welke afdeling ben je nu werkzaam?
- II. Verandering**
  - a. Hoe heb je de organisatieverandering ervaren/wat vond je ervan?
    - i. Voorbeelden positief en negatief.
    - ii. Wie is er volgens jou verantwoordelijk voor het laten slagen van de verandering?
  - b. Hoe heeft je leidinggevende de organisatieverandering aangepakt?
    - i. Gedrag & communicatie, beschikbaarheid
  - c. Hoe heb jij zelf vorm gegeven aan het werken in de nieuwe organisatie? (dingen veranderd/zelfde gebleven enz.) + concrete voorbeelden
  - d. Staat iets je in de weg of is er iets wat je kan helpen om nieuwe doelen te halen?
    - i. Ja: wat?
    - ii. Nee: hoe faciliteert de organisatie jou?
- III. Interactie tussen leidinggevende en medewerker**
  - a. Hoe tevreden ben je over de relatie die je met je leidinggevende hebt? + uitleg
    - i. In hoeverre kun jij je leidinggevende om hulp vragen? + rol medewerker
    - ii. In hoeverre voel je je gewaardeerd door je leidinggevende? + rol medewerker
    - iii. In hoeverre is je leidinggevende beschikbaar voor een vergadering, een gesprek en dergelijke? + rol medewerker
      1. Eventueel: Ontevreden → Waar ontevreden over? Wat wil je anders zien? Welke rol heb jij als medewerker hierin?
      2. Eventueel: tevreden → waar tevreden over? Waarom ben je hier tevreden over? Welke rol als medewerkers heb jij hierin? )
  - b. Hoe zou je de communicatie met je leidinggevende omschrijven en kun je hier voorbeelden bij noemen?
- IV. Leiderschap** (huidige stijl: achter komen via de voorbeelden die ze noemen)
  - a. Ten tijde van de verandering, kun je een voorbeeld noemen waarin je leidinggevende heel goed of juist minder goed heeft gehandeld?
    - i. Kun je wat meer vertellen over deze situatie? → Wat werd er gezegd, wat werd er gedaan, waar speelde de situatie zich af?
    - ii. Waarom werd volgens jou in deze situatie dit gedrag vertoond door jou en je leidinggevende?
    - iii. Wie waren hier nog meer bij betrokken en wat was hun rol in de situatie?
    - iv. Wat was jouw rol in de situatie? En hoe ben je hiermee omgegaan?
    - v. Welk gevoel kreeg je bij deze situatie?
    - vi. Wat waren de gevolgen van dit gedrag voor je leidinggevende en voor jezelf?
    - vii. Bij neg: wat had jij in die situatie nodig gehad? Wat had je graag anders gezien of bij pos: wat was er zo goed aan dit gedrag en waarom?
  - b. Was dit gedrag typerend gedrag van je leidinggevende of gebeurde dit eenmalig?

- i. Bij eenmalig gedrag: hoe gedraagt de leidinggevende zich normaal?
- c. Zijn er nog andere voorbeelden waarop je leidinggevende goed of minder goed heeft gehandeld? Bij voorbeeld vraag i t/m vi stellen.
- d. Welk gedrag zou jij graag willen zien bij je leidinggevende?

**V. Afsluitende vraag**

- a. Wat is je hoogst genoten opleiding?
- b. Wat is je nationaliteit?

→ Zijn er nog andere dingen die je wil toevoegen of waarvan je denkt dat het belangrijk is mee te nemen in dit onderzoek?

**Vragenlijst voor leidinggevenden**

*Voorkeur in leiderschapsstijlen ten tijde van een organisatie verandering* → Vragen naar specifieke gebeurtenissen, situaties en ervaringen!

**I. Gespreksstarter:** welke functie heb je op dit moment en kun je mij iets meer over je functie vertellen?

- a. Hoe lang zit je al op deze functie en hoe lang werk je al bij X?
- b. Op welke afdeling was je werkzaam, en op welke afdeling ben je nu werkzaam?

**II. Verandering**

- a. Hoe heb je de organisatieverandering ervaren en wat is jouw mening over de organisatieverandering?
  - i. Voorbeelden positief en negatief
  - ii. Hoe hebben je medewerkers de verandering volgens jou ervaren?
  - iii. Wie is er volgens jou verantwoordelijk voor het laten slagen van de verandering?
- b. Hoe heb jij vorm gegeven aan het werken in de nieuwe organisatie? (dingen veranderd/zelfde gebleven enz.)
- c. Hoe hebben je medewerkers zich weten aan te passen in de nieuwe organisatie?
- d. Staat iets je in de weg of heeft iets je geholpen om je nieuwe doelen te halen?
  - i. Ja: wat?
  - ii. En denk je dat je medewerkers hun nieuwe doelen kunnen behalen: waarom wel/waarom niet?

**III. Interactie tussen leidinggevende en medewerker**

- a. Hoe zou je de relatie met je medewerkers omschrijven?
  - i. Hoe zorg je ervoor dat medewerkers inspraak hebben?
  - ii. Hoe laat je jouw medewerkers je waardering blijken?
  - iii. Hoe zorg je ervoor dat je beschikbaar bent voor je medewerkers?
- b. Hoe zou je jouw communicatie met je medewerkers omschrijven?
- c. Als je kijkt naar de relatie die je met je medewerkers hebt, waar ben je dan tevreden over? Ontevreden?
  - i. Ontevreden: waar ontevreden over? Wat wil je anders zien? Welke rol heb jij als leidinggevende hierin?
  - ii. Tevreden: waar tevreden over? Waarom ben je hier tevreden over? Welke rol als leidinggevende heb jij hierin?
- d. Hoe ervaren je medewerkers jou als leidinggevende denk je?

**IV. Leiderschap** (huidige stijl: achter komen via de voorbeelden die ze noemen)

- a. Ten tijde van de verandering, kun je een voorbeeld noemen waarin je als leidinggevende heel goed of juist minder goed hebt gehandeld?



## Appendix B: Informed consent (in Dutch)

Onderzoek naar voorkeur in leiderschapsstijlen ten tijde van een reorganisatie.

Verantwoordelijke onderzoeker: Elise Nannings

### ***In te vullen door de deelnemer***

Ik verklaar op een voor mij duidelijke wijze te zijn ingelicht over de aard, methode, doel en belasting van het onderzoek. Ik weet dat de gegevens en resultaten van het onderzoek alleen anoniem en vertrouwelijk aan derden bekend gemaakt zullen worden. Mijn vragen zijn naar tevredenheid beantwoord.

Ik begrijp dat de geluidsopname van dit interview uitsluitend voor analyse en/of wetenschappelijke presentatie zal worden gebruikt.

Ik stem geheel vrijwillig in met deelname aan dit onderzoek. Ik behoud me daarbij het recht voor om op elk moment zonder opgaaf van redenen mijn deelname aan dit onderzoek te beëindigen.

Naam deelnemer:

.....

Datum: ..... Handtekening deelnemer: .....

### ***In te vullen door de uitvoerende onderzoeker***

Ik heb een mondelinge en schriftelijke toelichting gegeven op het onderzoek. Ik zal resterende vragen over het onderzoek naar vermogen beantwoorden. De deelnemer zal van een eventuele voortijdige beëindiging van deelname aan dit onderzoek geen nadelige gevolgen ondervinden.

Naam onderzoeker:

.....

Datum: ..... Handtekening onderzoeker: .....

## Appendix C: Approval ethical committee (in Dutch)

Geachte onderzoeker,

Dit is een bericht vanuit de webapplicatie voor de aanvraag van de boordeling van een voorgenomen onderzoek door de Commissie Ethiek.

Aanvraagnr. : 16234  
Titel van het onderzoek : Followers' and leaders' perceptions of leadership  
Datum aanvraag : 25-04-2016  
Onderzoeker : E.R.H. Nannings  
Onderzoeksbegeleider : S. Janssen  
Lid Commissie Ethiek : J.F. Gosselt  
Gebruik SONA : Nee

Uw onderzoek is goedgekeurd door de commissie.