

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

School of Management Studies

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN A WORKWEAR
DISTRIBUTION COMPANY**

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A research project submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, University of Cape Town,
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in
People Management

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis “**An investigation into employee engagement in a workwear distribution company**” is my own work, and that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that the resources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Signed by candidate

.....
Randall Alvin van Wyk

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the levels and drivers of employee engagement in a South African organisation that distributes personal protection equipment. The organisation relies on its human resources to retain a competitive advantage in the industry. An understanding of employee engagement is essential for the attraction of new talent and the retention of existing employees.

The researcher employed a mixed method design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods. A survey was sent to all employees to determine levels of engagement. It was followed by focus groups to probe deeper into the survey results. The findings of the survey and the focus groups are contradictory. The survey results indicate that respondents are engaged within the workwear distribution company, whilst the findings of the focus groups depict a different narrative. The researcher believes that participant responses to the different methodologies explains this contradiction. The survey contained a number of closed-ended statements, where participants were required to tick a particular box, indicating their responses. The researcher believes that this approach was very clinical and elicited certain responses. Furthermore, participants might not have felt comfortable sharing their true feelings in writing. The approach to the focus group was very interactive and the researcher posed open-ended questions to the participants. This approach was organic and participants might have felt more comfortable sharing their feelings and views in this forum.

The study revealed that a work environment characterised by poor communication and conflict impacted negatively on employee engagement. It also revealed that the organisation is characterised by an autocratic leadership style whereby top management make the decisions and are not open to suggestions from employees. While support between co-workers was acknowledged, relationships were also described as strained and that there is no synergy between departments. Maintaining positive relationships with management and co-workers are vital drivers to achieving increased employee engagement.

Although these findings are particular to one organisation, they will hopefully assist other organisations to expand their understanding of employee engagement and thus refine their employee engagement strategies.

Keywords:

Employee engagement, work environment, leadership, co-worker relations

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

Family-owned organisations account for approximately 80% of organisations globally. In the United States of America, 50% of the growth domestic product (GDP) is generated by family-owned organisations which also employ 50% of the workforce (Family Firm Institute, 2014). Family-owned organisations are thus the main type of business. This is similar in South Africa, where there are several successful family-owned organisations in a variety of industries from retail (e.g. Pick 'n Pay) to fast food (e.g. Nando's) to mining (e.g. De Beers). Here, 50% of the economic growth is generated by family-owned organisations (Fishman, 2009).

According to Hatten (2012), family-owned organisations are defined as those where two or more members of the same family have control, are directly involved in running the organisation and own most of the shareholding. The Family Business Association of Southern Africa (FABASA) describes a family-owned organisation as an organisation in which the founding member or an immediate relative is part of the board of directors, has a majority of the shares, possesses 25% of the voting rights and at least one of the immediate family members are involved in the day-to-day running of the organisation (FABASA, 2014a).

The work ethos of the founder generally underpins the organisational culture in family-owned organisations. The organisational culture typically centres around stability, commitment and integrity. The organisational culture within a family-owned organisation is characterised by creating a common purpose for employees, access to senior management is easier and decision-making is often quicker and more effective because it is less bureaucratic. The common thread in family-owned organisations is the application of "family entrepreneurship". The term describes the entrepreneurial activities the family engages with.

The workwear distribution company that comprises this study is a major employer within the personal protective equipment (PPE) industry of South Africa. The workwear distribution company has ten branches throughout South Africa and its clients include organisations within the industrial, building and agricultural sector. It employs approximately 200 employees.

The PPE industry is labour intensive. More than 50% of the total cost is dedicated to wages and salaries, therefore strong emphasis is placed on creating an engaged workforce. Organisations with an engaged workforce achieve higher organisational results (Khan, 1990). This is in line with a general trend in organisations which no longer see employee engagement as an human resources issue but rather as a concern for the business as a whole. It is imperative for organisations to understand what causes employees to be involved and connected with the organisation.

Kahn (1990) states that engagement is associated with meaning, wellbeing and accessibility. Additionally, he reports that high employee engagement positively affects individual and organisational results. According to Lockwood (2007), employee engagement encapsulates the extent to which an employee is emotionally and intellectually devoted to an organisation. Hewitt (2010) defines employee engagement as the state of emotional and intellectual engrossment that motivates an employee to perform at his or her best.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The study aims to determine the employee engagement levels and to examine what the drivers of employee engagement are in a workwear distribution company. The study will enable the organisation to explore strategies to improve employee engagement within the organisation.

The nature of the study necessitated a mixed method approach. Numerical data, through questionnaires (quantitative method), was collected to determine the employee engagement levels. Focus groups (qualitative method) enabled the researcher to engage the participants about their perceptions and experiences of employee engagement.

The purpose of the qualitative component was to understand what was uncovered quantitatively through the surveys. The focus groups thus attempted to understand the levels and drivers of employee engagement in more detail. This interpretive approach translates reality through a sense-making process rather than testing a hypothesis or determining the relevance of a particular theory. This process enabled

the researcher to understand employee engagement within the organisation as experienced by the participants.

1.3 Problem Statement

The workwear distribution company under study is a successful owner-managed business. It is a leading supplier of PPE predominantly to the industrial, building and agricultural sectors in South Africa. The PPE industry within South Africa is fiercely competitive and the workwear distribution company relies on its human resources for its competitive advantage.

Whilst the the importance of employee engagement is extensively acknowledged, unexpected low levels of employee engagement are reported globally. According to Gallup (2018), the most recent State of the Global Workplace report, 85% of employees are not engaged at work.

The Gallup reported disturbing results for the South African workplace, in that only 9% of employees are engaged. It is reported that 33% of employees in the United Kingdom are engaged, whilst in the United States 30% of employees are engaged. Low employee engagement levels attribute a cost of \$64.8 billion per year. Disengaged employees becomes a serious risk to organisations. According to Ayers (2006), disengagement is likened to cancer that threatens the survival of an organisation. Unless disengagement is restrained, productivity, customer satisfaction, employee retention and wellness are at risk.

Regardless of the evidence on disengagement, studies around engagement are limited to the business community (Saks, 2006). Today, the workwear distribution industry has become complacent and business practices, specifically human resources, tend to be very traditional. Gallup (2016) posits that employee engagement is not considered to be essential and very few organisations have tapped into the strategic value of employee engagement. To report on this problem, more research, specifically on employee engagement levels and the drivers of employee engagement in the workwear distribution industry, is necessary. Experts need experimental data to understand employee engagement better and also to understand what the drivers are of employee engagement within specific environments. Industry experts would be

able to use this information to establish strategies and interventions that promote employee engagement. It is therefore imperative that the workwear distribution company develops a sound understanding of its current levels and drivers of employee engagement.

Research Questions:

- (a) What are the levels of employee engagement in the organisation?
- (b) What are the drivers of employee engagement in the organisation?

1.4 Significance of the study

Although the study is conducted in a single organisation, the findings will hopefully provide researchers with insights about employee engagement in the workwear distribution industry more broadly. The findings will also offer insight into how this particular workwear company can improve employee engagement amongst its employees.

Organisations in similar or different industries can also benefit from understanding the importance of employee engagement and how it can be measured in numerous settings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In the very challenging world of work today, it is the human resource function within the organisation that constructs the plans, executes decisions and builds employee relationships. In many organisations, leaders would advocate that without the human resources, it would be extremely difficult for organisations to survive in the business world and remain competitive. Thus, human resources ultimately play an integral role within organisational success (Goodman, Zammuto, & Gifford, 2001).

Organisations rely on employees who go the extra mile, to lead proactively and take initiative. This in turn necessitates employees who are passionate and engrossed in their jobs. Organisations therefore need engaged employees (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). It is paramount that organisations understand what employee engagement is, what the drivers of employee engagement are and how it could be sustained to maintain and increase organisational success.

Engagement is often used as synonym for commitment but there is a difference. Engagement is a reciprocal process whereby the employer must engage the employee and the employee wilfully decides on the level of engagement he/she offers the employer.

The welfare and happiness of employees have become paramount for organisations to achieve their goals; attain success and satisfy customer needs. This all happens within an environment with specific values and specific ways of doing things. It is important that organisations understand how within this culture one ensures that employees are happy, feel safe and drive customer service to achieve success within the organisation.

2.2 What is employee engagement?

Essentially employee engagement advocates that all employees can contribute meaningfully and add value to the organisation. Engagement involves producing opportunities for employees to reach their full potential and feel connected with management and fellow employees in a meaningful way. More so, it is about creating

an atmosphere where employees feel motivated to be at work and genuinely care about doing a good job.

The concept of engagement has gained popularity in recent years and has been researched by numerous individuals and institutions. The academic literature states that employee engagement was first conceived by Khan (1990:694) as “the harnessing of organisation members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”. Khan suggests that engaged employees, individually or in a group, are actively involved and display a genuine concern for the organisation, its leaders and the working conditions. Engagement is an all-encompassing concept; it does not only involve the physical involvement or accomplishment of tasks but the intellectual features of people’s experiences and their feelings about themselves and their jobs.

Similarly to Khan (1990), other literature refers to employee engagement as a cognitive state. Baumruk (2006) also defines employee engagement as an emotional or intellectual obligation to the organisation.

Macey and Schneider (2009:5) state that engagement “refers to a psychological state (involvement, commitment, attachment and mood), performance construct, disposition, or a combination of these”.

Robinson, Perryman and Hayday (2004) defines employee engagement as an employee’s positive outlook about the organisation and its values.

Saks (2006:602) argues that it is a “distinct and unique construct consisting of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components that are associated with the individual’s role performance”.

Based on the above definitions, employee engagement is holistic and refers to employees who have the organisation’s best interest at heart and are willing to invest time, effort and energy to ensure that the organisation attains its goals and objectives.

2.3 Levels of employee engagement

The Gallup organisation, an organisation recognised globally for research, categorised employees according to the following types:

- (i) Engaged employees are employees who are passionate and emotionally attached to the organisation. They are characterised as innovative and optimistic. They inspire their co-workers and personalise goals, working to improve the organisation.
- (ii) Employees who are not engaged only do their jobs. They are not passionate and do no more than what is asked of them. They work to pay bills and are the type of employees that have either a positive or negative attitude towards the organisation.
- (iii) Employees who are actively disengaged are unhappy and angry. They are negative, provoke and often urge co-workers to leave the organisation. They do not meet the minimum job requirements (Gallup, 2013).

The Towers Watson study (2012) of employee engagement corroborated Gallup (2013) levels of employee engagement. Similarly, Towers Watson also classified employee engagement into four categories:

- (i) Highly engaged employees believe and embrace organisational goals, are emotionally connected and willing to go the extra mile for the organisation.
- (ii) Unsupported employees are engaged but lack drive or empowerment.
- (iii) Detached employees have vigour but are not engaged.
- (iv) Disengaged employees are negative towards organisation and are emotionally disconnected (Towers Watson, 2012).

Employee engagement is depicted as a social and affective response to a specific working environment. As an affective response, engagement comprises themes such as vigour, focus and motivation. As a social response, engagement is more than feelings and attitudes. Engaged employees do whatever it takes to complete tasks, eventually impacting business results positively (Aon Hewitt, 2013). The categorisation of employee engagement is depicted in Table 2 below:

Table 1: Levels of engagement

Engagement Category	Description
Highly engaged	Employees who strongly believe in their company's vision, goals and objectives and are willing to put in extra effort to assist their company to achieve those goals and objectives. They actively pursue opportunities to improve operations and the general work environment.
Moderately engaged	Employees who are emotionally and cognitively connected to their work and may engage in productive behaviours but are not completely committed to the organisation.
Passive	Employees who are simply present at work and go through the motions without being interested in their work. While not as problematic as the actively disengaged, passive employees, they do not participate in developing a positive environment for innovation and progress.
Actively disengaged	Employees who are emotionally and psychologically disconnected from their work. They continuously express dissatisfaction and go out of their way to negatively influence engaged employees. Their negative behaviour can result in poor performance.

Source: Aon Hewitt (2013)

In summary, organisational performance and success is positively influenced by engaged employees, whilst actively disengaged employees have negative influences on co-workers, which could lead to the organisation performing poorly (Gallup, 2013; Aon Hewitt, 2013).

Bin Shmailan (2016) believes it is in the organisation's best interests to understand the levels of employee engagement and the key drivers of employee engagement, thus facilitating an understanding of how to deal with critical issues that may impact the organisation's competitiveness and sustainability.

2.4 Drivers that affect employee engagement

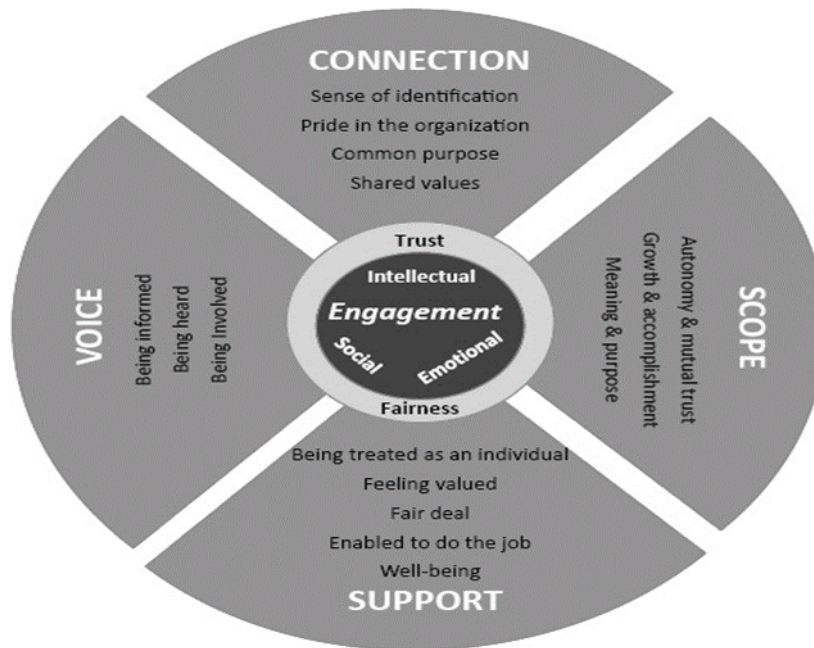
The current economic climate and the state of affairs in South Africa are very demoralising. Additionally, the challenges experienced in the workplace today could lead to employees feeling very down and not giving their best at work. Therefore, it is crucial for leadership to come to terms with what employee engagement entails and to strengthen its drivers.

Gibbons (2006) highlights that key drivers of engagement include the nature of the job, trust and integrity, career growth and the relationship with one's supervisor.

Alternatively, Hughes and Rog (2008) state that levels of employee engagement reflect the philosophy of management. This philosophy highlights that managers, at all levels, should treat employees with respect and dignity.

Holbeche and Matthews (2012) contend that engagement is motivated differently and that these drivers could be categorised in the following ways as illustrated in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Employee Engagement Model



Source: Holbeche, L.S. & Matthews, G.P., (2012)

When management and leadership understand what the levels and drivers of engagement are within their organisation, the assumption is that they are then able to develop action plans, based on their understanding of their organisations, to increase engagement levels.

Talent retention and customer loyalty are motivated by high levels of employee engagement. The complexity of engagement is influenced by a range of variables, including organisational culture, leadership, communication and management styles. The workplace consists of multiple generations and every generation is influenced differently. Thus, it is important to design and implement policies and practices that will attract and retain the relevant skills necessary for organisations to stimulate and maintain growth and competitive advantage.

The study of Khan (1990) formed a solid base for the factors influencing employee engagement, where he highlighted three factors connected to employee engagement in the working environment. The premise of the study was that if psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability were present in the workplace, employees would more likely be engaged.

Robinson et al (2004) advocated that there is no universal approach to the factors that influence employee engagement. The factors influencing employee engagement differ from organisation to organisation, the actual job being performed and the team the individual belongs to.

According to Robinson et al (2004), personal and job characteristics were linked to various engagement levels. Armstrong (2009) found that factors influencing engagement included interesting and challenging work, responsibility and control over resources. Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) indicated that interesting and meaningful work coupled with control over the work could substantially influence engagement. The Towers Perrin Talent Report (2003) substantiated these findings of challenging work and the freedom to make decisions regarding one's work as key drivers of employee engagement. The working environment influences engagement and features such as relationships with fellow employees and management, in turn, affect the working environment. Communication, specifically from management, was highlighted as a key driver of employee engagement, according to the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) report (2006). Maslach et al (2001) noted other additional factors that influenced employee engagement were equitable and unbiased recognition and reward systems.

According to Simon (2011), employee engagement existed in an organisation where employees felt supported and cooperation was fostered. Employees must feel safe to express themselves freely and without being fearful of negatively affecting their employment status or career. The Towers Perrin Report (2003) also indicated a working environment where teamwork was valued as a driver of employee engagement.

Other factors such as career advancement opportunities and developmental opportunities were also listed by the Towers Perrin Report (2003) as factors influencing employee engagement.

Anitha (2014) posited leadership, team and co-worker relationships, training and development, compensation, organisational policies, workplace wellbeing and work environment as key drivers of employee engagement, which are parallel to Glen (2006) and Attridge (2009). Anitha’s model was championed to support the key drivers of employee engagement.

Figure 2: Key drivers of employee engagement



Source: Anitha (2014)

2.3.1 Working Environment

Rich, Lepine and Crawford (2010) illustrated that the benefits to employee engagement can be derived from the numerous structures in the working environment. Anitha (2014) posits that there is a weighty relationship between the working environment and employee engagement. Working conditions are crucial to employees in determining whether they want to stay with an organisation. The working environment also facilitates an important role where employees want to feel safe in the working environment. Recruitment and selection processes would be strengthened as a safe working environment attracts new candidates to fill vacant positions.

The supportive climate within the working environment also links strongly with the extent to which employees feel engaged. According to Rana et al., (2014) offering support is valuable in encouraging a positive outcome in the working environment.

The vigorous retail environment is characterised by long working hours and extreme pressure to perform; such conditions affect employee engagement in the workplace (Oldfield & Mostert, 2007). Creating safe, encouraging and meaningful working conditions should therefore be top priority on the management agenda in order to achieve optimum levels of engagement (Shuck et al., 2011).

2.3.2 Leadership

The relationship between employer and employee is critical for an effective working environment. Welch (2011) states that managers and supervisors concede that employee engagement is a key factor affecting organisational effectiveness and competitiveness. According to Wilderman and Pauken (2008) the organisation can be jeopardised if the leader is disengaged as the entire team then runs the risk of being disengaged. A leader must lead by example.

Townsend and Gebhardt (2008) advocate that an organisation must endeavour to build trust with their employees, using effective communication, recognition, rewards and advancement opportunities to build trust and respect. Gillespie and Mann (2004) suggest that in organisations where there is trust between employer and employee, the levels of engagement are higher due to improved communication, team work and employees feeling recognised by their leaders.

In organisations where management live the organisational values and ethics, employees are likely to be confident and engaged (Towers Watson, 2013).

2.3.3 Team and Co-Worker Relationships

The importance of working relationships is highlighted by the promotion of open and supportive working environments, where employees are able to engage because of the sense of security (Anitha, 2013). This underpins the notion of Khan (1990) that where employees feel safe, they are able to focus on the job rather than focus on conflict situations within the working environment. Conflict within the organisation is destructive in most instances and the negative atmosphere is demotivating. The

demotivated employees are not productive, and they often feel unsafe (Maslach et al., 2001).

Khan (1990) suggests that a supportive working environment allows for innovation and a decreased fear of failure.

2.3.4 Training and career development

An organisation's survival and sustainability can be enhanced by identifying and managing talent within the organisation (Ahmadi et al., 2012). Ahmadi et al. (2012) suggest that due to the scarcity of skilled and talented workers, it is therefore imperative for organisations to manage talent appropriately.

Investing in the human capital of the organisation fosters a sense of belonging, thus increasing employee satisfaction. The development of human capital also improves the organisation's competitive advantage (Ahmadi et al., 2012).

Dash (2013) proposes that human resources development activities such as rewards and recognition programmes, employee feedback initiatives, training and development opportunities are regarded as significant drivers of employee engagement.

2.3.5 Compensation

Compensation is essential to employee engagement. It inspires employees to perform better, hence concentrating more on work and growth. There is much more to higher wages and improved benefits. Compensation comprises both monetary and non-monetary components. Anitha (2013) theorises that an excellent compensation package comprises a good mix of monetary and non-monetary components; thus motivating the employee to work productively and to create products and services of exceptional quality because of the recognition received.

Saks and Rothman (2006) affirm recognition and rewards as key elements of employee engagement. Kular et al (2008) state that while wages and benefits may be alluring during recruitment to attract potential candidates, they may not be deemed sufficient as part of a retention strategy.

2.3.6 Organisational policies

There are numerous policies and procedures within organisations. In some organisations, the policies and procedures are public knowledge and many of these are associated with employee engagement e.g. recruitment and selection. The initial interaction with an organisation can leave a lasting impression with an individual e.g. a fair and transparent recruitment process can have a positive effect on a candidate. Internal employees of the organisation can easily become disengaged if they perceive the very same recruitment and selection process as biased. Accordingly, Schneider, Macy and Babara (2009) link the employee's future levels of engagement with the recruitment policy used by an organisation.

2.3.7 Workplace wellbeing

Anitha (2014) emphasises workplace wellbeing as the concluding key driver of employee engagement. Employees that are mentally and physically healthy are more likely to be engaged and therefore an employee's wellbeing is critical to the management of any organisation. Anitha (2014) posits that managerial interest and investment in the wellbeing of employees increases levels of engagement.

2.5 Business case for employee engagement

The Human Capital Trends 2014 Report by Deloitte indicates that 78% of business leaders believe employee engagement is a business imperative (Deloitte, 2014). Gallup research states that employee engagement affects vital performance indicators irrespective of the organisation, industry or country. The results of various organisations are based on nine performance indicators:

- Customer ratings
- Profitability
- Productivity
- Turnover
- Safety incidents
- Shrinkage

- Absenteeism
- Patient safety incidences
- Quality

According to Matthews & Holbeche (2012), “Above all, it is engaged employees – who are aligned with organisational goals, willing to ‘go the extra mile’ and act as advocates of their organisation – who are most critical to business success.”

Gallup’s 2013 study “State of the American Workplace: Employee Engagement Insights for U.S. Business Leaders” emphasises the link between employee engagement and key performance indicators. Miller & McCartney (2011) supports the Gallup studies by stating that there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and key performance indicators. Numerous studies have shown the link between employee engagement and organisational outcomes e.g. low turnover, productivity, profitability, intent to stay and customer satisfaction.

The research conducted by Gallup during 2012, in 34 countries, spanning 49 industries and covering 1.4 million employees, shows that regardless of the organisation, country or economic state of the country, employee engagement remains a crucial ingredient of competitive advantage for organisations.

Organisations across all industries are affected by the worldwide waning of productivity that is caused by disengaged employees (Shuck & Reio, 2014). According to Gallup (2013), across 91% of South African employees, 45% are actively disengaged. During 2014, the South African mining sector experienced long and costly industrial action, the worst in the history of South Africa (Bohlman, Dixon, Rimmer and van Heerden, 2014). The Gallup (2013) survey highlights the mining industry in South Africa. This industry is pivotal to employment in South Africa and has been crippled by the destructive labour unrest. Bohlman et al., (2014) states that apparently half of the world’s platinum production was affected and that employers lost R23 billion in income and employees lost R10 billion in wages.

Ross and Vasantha (2014) believe that engaged employees would go over and beyond what is expected of them. It is thus crucial that organisations determine and understand the key drivers of employee engagement amongst their employees.

2.6 Employee engagement and diversity

The composition of the South African workforce is varied, and diversity is an evident characteristic, in that different people from various races and cultural groups work together to achieve common goals. Organisations are compelled to effect diversity by labour laws like the Employment Equity Act and Black Economic Empowerment. Shead (2011) states that organisations operate on a global scale and are experiencing enormous pressure to include marginal groups in the workplace. It is therefore important to appreciate and embrace the differences to understand the opposing viewpoints of individuals regarding the job, workplace and leadership.

Booyesen (2007) posits that South Africa has undergone a political makeover, that is displayed in modifications in the power bases, status and dominance of different population groups. According to Booyesen and Nkomo (2014), the most noticeable identity groups in South Africa are race, gender, culture and language. The South African workplace mirrors the international norm in that tensions and conflict are rampant between various groups. Conflict in the South African workplace is constructed around the modifications and struggles linked with race and gender (Booyesen and Nkomo, 2014).

Employee engagement is challenged by diversity although it is a vital component to building a successful organisation. The absence of employee engagement can cause organisations to struggle to adapt to the impact of external forces and constant change and similarly battle to retain the employees that add value to the organisation. The conflict in the South African workplace can be positively utilised as a facilitator to debates, engagements and discussions that cultivate organisational growth and performance.

Diversity breeds synergy and linkages if it is well managed. Organisations that implement and manage diversity effectively can successfully accomplish their goals and objectives (Sacramento and West, 2013).

2.7 The challenges of employee engagement

As has become clear across a variety of studies, the majority of the workforce is not engaged. They invest only time but are not passionate and lack enthusiasm (Seijts and Crim, 2006). Disengaged employees express dissatisfaction concerning the organisation and undermine leadership as well as those employees who are engaged.

Reasons for disengagement include lack of resources, poor communication, no support from fellow employees and leaders (Baker and Demerouti, 2008). Communication forms the backbone of any organisation. Poor communication can have devastating effects on organisations; whereby organisations lose time and money. Where employees are not engaged, they are not going to communicate important issues to their managers.

According to Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage (2014), trust is pivotal in any relationship, more importantly in the working environment. Where employees are able to trust leadership and vice versa, engagement is likely to be high. Employees are less likely to leave and the organisation is able to meet goals and objectives. Destructive leadership is damaging to employee engagement and leads to a breakdown in trust that affects the psychological wellbeing of the employee.

Another challenge is that employers do not always involve employees in changes concerning the organisation. Alterations within the organisation affect employees and by involving them creates a sense of belonging, makes them feel valued and that their voices are important. Most employees want to improve their current situations and move up the ranks within the organisation. When managers don't inspire and motivate employees to advance themselves, they will most probably go search for it somewhere else. In organisations where resources and opportunities are limited, the intention to stay is diminished (Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage, 2014).

Pace (2013) suggests that organisations must train and develop employees. Organisations comprise individuals from different races and cultures and sensitivity training is needed to foster a deeper understanding of the dynamics of culture. The multi-cultured environment often acts as a hindrance to employee engagement due to lack of understanding.

Feedback is fundamental to the employee engagement process. It is also paramount for the survival of the organisation that employees receive feedback. Every employee must know whether they are doing a good or bad job. It is also crucial for the goals and objectives to be clear as this provides clarity and direction within the business. It is important to provide a platform where employees are able to give input and provide feedback without prejudice and judgement (Vestal, 2009).

2.8 Conclusion

Employee engagement appears to be strategic for organisations, as it is believed to be pivotal to the success of the organisation. As much as employee engagement is an important ingredient of success for organisations, it can also be very challenging and there are barriers to employee engagement.

A disengaged workforce is an enormous challenge. Kahn (1990:694) defines personal disengagement as “the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally during role performances.”

The South African workplace is changing rapidly, and it is suggested that employee engagement plays a key role in the planning and development of human resources (Hirsh & Jackson 1996; Mayo 1991). The common trend in organisations is to replace staff instead of focusing on developing holistic employee engagement and retention approaches (Aon Hewitt, 2013).

Organisations will be able to create blue prints of employee engagement and the drivers of employee engagement if they conduct employee engagement surveys and examine data within their organisations. The time has come for organisations to have robust and honest discussions to ensure their survival (Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2013). The results of employee engagement surveys may not necessarily align with the views of management but provide critical information and insights for strategy and competitiveness.

In summary, employee engagement is a current issue and the literature clearly repeats multiple themes. The research also suggests that employee engagement is advantageous to organisations and has strong correlations with enhancing

organisational performance, customer satisfaction and employee retention and wellbeing.

The purpose of this study is to determine employee engagement levels and drivers in a workwear distribution company. It endeavours to explore the drivers of employee engagement in detail and to provide the employer with the ability to respond adequately to how different employees are engaged within the working environment.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction

The framework of the research methodology is discussed in this chapter. It will outline the research methodology, research design and sample selection utilised in this study.

3.2 Research Design

Cooper and Schindler (2011) state that the research design represents the plan and approach used to illustrate data collection and endeavours to answer the research questions. The researcher employed a mixed method design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method was used to measure the levels of employee engagement and quantify the participants' feelings and behaviours. On the other hand, the qualitative method provides insight into the meaning participants attach to the level of employee engagement and assists in developing themes for the research. It also provides an opportunity for the researcher to probe and dive deeper into the problem.

The mixed method methodology was embraced due to the limits that the quantitative and qualitative approaches respectively would have provided. The methodology involves collecting, analysing and integrating quantitative and qualitative research. The rationale for this approach was that the researcher was able to provide statistical information but also gain an understanding of the psychological and social experiences of participants in relation to employee engagement.

Creswell (2013) differentiates between experimental and non-experimental designs. Experimental design focuses on the researcher providing specific circumstances for a group but not for the other group and compares the results of both groups. Non-experimental design predominantly focuses on surveys and furnishes quantitative feedback on attitudes and opinions, by analysing a sample of a population.

For this study, a non-experimental design was applied. According to Saunders and Lewis (2012), surveys are utilised as a structured approach to collect data from a large population. The surveys can be self-administered, conducted telephonically or face-to-face. In this study they were emailed to the participants who then completed them on their own.

Due to the exploratory nature of the study within the organisation, it was necessary for the researcher to first establish the levels of employee engagement. The researcher therefore required participants to complete questionnaires (quantitative approach). Upon completion of the surveys, the researcher computed the results and subsequently ran focus groups (qualitative approach), to explore some themes associated with employee engagement in more detail. Surveys and focus groups were used because they are a quick, inexpensive and precise means of assessing information about the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

Creswell (2009) posits that the researcher's personal experience can also influence the research design. The researcher's field of study and type of training may also impact the research design. For example, if the researcher is technically and statistically strong, the researcher will be drawn towards a quantitative research design as opposed to someone who's strengths lie in articulating narratives. They would most likely gravitate towards a qualitative research design.

Creswell (2009) also suggests that the choice of research design is also inspired by the audience and participants of the research. The researcher adopted a reflexive approach to illustrate the extent to which he shaped the research design, implementation and interpretation of the findings. These reflections will be discussed at a later stage.

3.3 Population

In research, the population refers to the number of people, groups or organisations that comprise the research (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The population in this study included all employees within the workwear distribution company. The total number of full time employees in November 2017 was 195. The majority of the participants were female (62%) and 64% of the respondents were between the ages of 25 and 44 years of age. 74% of the respondents classified themselves as Coloured.

TABLE SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS

Gender	%	Age	%	Race	%	Department	%
Male	38	Younger than 25	8	African	14	Admin	21
Female	62	25-34	35	Coloured	74	Internal Sales	15
		35-44	29	White	12	External Sales	4
		45-54	21			Counter Sales	14
		55-64	4			Stores	46
		Older than 65	3				

3.4 Sampling method and size

Sampling refers to the selection of people, groups or behaviours of the total population that will be researched. A sample is often used when it is impractical to collect information from the total population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

As all employees in the organisation were included in the study, the demographics with reference to gender, race, age and occupational category were covered. Sample selection was only applied to the focus group participants. It was random based on focus group size and availability of the participants. Numbers were allocated to each participant and the resulting employee list with random assigned numbers made it easier for the researcher to draw numbers randomly. This ensured the elimination of sampling bias. As a result, the findings from the focus group could be generalised to all the employees within the organisation.

3.5 Design of the questionnaire

The ISA Engagement scale was used to gather the data and to measure the engagement levels of participants. It has been scientifically developed through academic studies. Thus, the scale has been verified to be valid and reliable (Soane et al., 2012).

The ISA Engagement scale was utilised to investigate employee engagement in a research study conducted by Phuangthuea et al. (2018). Data was collected from 152 government officials in the Thailand Ministry of Interior. According to the analysis,

the ISA Engagement scale proved to be valid and was deemed applicable and suitable in the Thai context.

In another study conducted by Sharma (2016), research was conducted at an autonomous Management Education and Research Institute in Madhya Pradesh, India. The ISA Engagement scale was utilised to establish the level of employee engagement at various levels of the organisation.

The ISA engagement scale is premised on the understanding that engagement has an intellectual, a social and an affective component. Combined, the components provide a general level of engagement for each participant.

The scale consists of nine statements, where participants are required to indicate their views on a seven-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Statements 1-3 measure the intellectual engagement (the extent to which people are intellectually absorbed in their work or think hard about the work they are doing). Statements 4-6 measure the social engagement (the degree to which individuals feel socially connected to their work environment and share the values of their colleagues). Statements 7-9 measure the affective engagement (the extent to which individuals experience positive and energising feelings about their work).

An average score can be calculated for every component and the overall engagement can be calculated by an accumulation of the overall score for the nine statements. The maximum average score per component is 7. Scores of 6-7 suggest that employees are engaged, whilst scores of 1-2 suggest that employees are not engaged.

3.6 Data collection process

Data collection is the process whereby information is collected and measured from targeted groups of people in a recognised methodical manner, which allows the researcher to answer the specific research questions.

Surveys and focus groups were the preferred methods for collecting data. Data was collected from full-time employees at the workwear distribution company. The statistical data from the questionnaires was collected using Likert scales.

To determine the employee engagement levels of staff within the workwear distribution company, hardcopies of the questionnaire with a covering letter (see Appendix A), were sent to all branches, where the employees at the respective branches were requested to complete the questionnaires. The completed surveys were returned via the internal mail system of the organisation. The covering letter provided participants with an overview of the research project, what motivated it and an outline of the scope and purpose of the research, including the intentions of the researcher for the project.

After completion of the surveys, four focus groups were held. The purpose of the focus groups was to explore the survey findings in more detail and to determine the drivers of employee engagement within the workwear distribution company. The focus groups were conducted in a private venue, where participants could speak freely. The focus groups were also recorded and transcribed.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Empirical research involves the input of individuals that form part of the population, where the research is conducted. Conducting research may infringe on individual well-being, rights or dignity. The researcher must contemplate the ethical risks and evaluate whether conducting the research will compromise the participants.

The research is based on a problem or issue within the workplace and therefore it necessitated approval from the organisation. For this study, a letter was sent to the directors of the workwear distribution company, requesting permission to conduct the research within the organisation and the approval was granted (Appendix B). An ethics clearance application was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Commerce (University of Cape Town) and approval was also granted from the Faculty of Commerce (University of Cape Town) (Appendix C). The research only commenced once ethical clearance had been granted by the organisation and the university.

The participants completed a survey, which was confidential and anonymous. The contribution to the research was voluntary and participants could withdraw at any time. The participants were informed about the purpose and procedure of the research

process before signing a consent form (Appendix D), indicating their understanding and acceptance of the research process. The researcher ensured that all completed surveys were confidentially and carefully handled. The survey did not require participants to provide personal information to ensure anonymity (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

3.8 Reflexivity

As an individual, it has always been important to me that I was happy at work, that I love what I do and that I am able to apply my all at work every day. One of the main reasons I became an human resources professional, was to ensure that I would be able to assist other employees to meet their full potential in life and at work.

Upon commencing service at the workwear distribution company, I quickly observed that most employees ensured that they met the minimum requirements. Exceeding expectations and going the extra mile was not the norm.

Swiftly I gained knowledge of employees - who they were, where they were from and what they liked and disliked. As an human resources professional, knowing the employees is an important aspect of my job. This knowledge enables me to better understand the various challenges in the respective departments.

The research problem presented me with a challenge. I was now performing a dual function – an human resources manager and a researcher within the same organisation. As human resources manager, I was privy to information that I would not have gained as a researcher coming into the organisation from the outside. As researcher, it was expected of me to be neutral and impartial. It was a challenging task to remain impartial and to ensure that my own voice as the human resources manager did not surface too strongly throughout the research process. Whilst conducting the focus groups, the challenge was to pose the questions in a way that would get the participants to respond freely and honestly; and not to respond in a way that would be pleasing to me as the human resources manager. I also needed to guard against my own expectations that employee engagement within the organisation would be low.

3.9 Limitations

With reference to this study, it was important to be mindful of the following limitations:

The research was only conducted in a single organisation within the PPE industry in the Western Cape; therefore, the results might not be applicable to other organisations within the industry. Due to geographical constraints, focus groups were only held with participants in Cape Town and thus may not be a true depiction of the entire workforce. Due to the nature of the survey, respondents did not have the opportunity to provide detailed responses to statements. The participants could have completed the surveys to ensure favourable results, which might not necessarily have been a true reflection of their current levels of work engagement. Participants might have felt conflicted by the researcher representing the dual role of human resources manager and researcher.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the research was to investigate the employee engagement levels and drivers within the workwear distribution company. The research objectives were two-fold. Firstly, to establish the current employee engagement levels and secondly, to determine the employee engagement drivers.

There were 120 targeted participants from the Cape Town, Worcester, Wellington and Saldanha branches. The rationale for selecting these branches was that it was convenient and easily accessible. Of the 120 participants, 112 completed the survey, which resulted in a 93% response rate. Top and senior management did not participate in the study. As management styles are indicated as one of the key influences of employee engagement, it was decided to exclude senior managers from the sample. The researcher also felt that focus group participants would feel more comfortable to express their feelings if senior managers were not present.

4.2 Overview of the participants

A total of 112 completed surveys were returned. 38% of the participants were female and 62% of the participants were male. The majority of 74% of the participants classified as Coloured, 14% of the participants classified as African and 12% of the participants classified as White. 43% of the participants were drivers and stores assistants, 44% of the participants were clerks in stores, sales and accounts and 13% of the participants occupied supervisory and junior management positions.

The males dominated the unskilled workers (drivers and stores assistants), whereas the gender representation in the other levels reflected a balanced view. Coloureds dominate the organisation and there is an inadequate representation of other races.

4.3 Levels of engagement

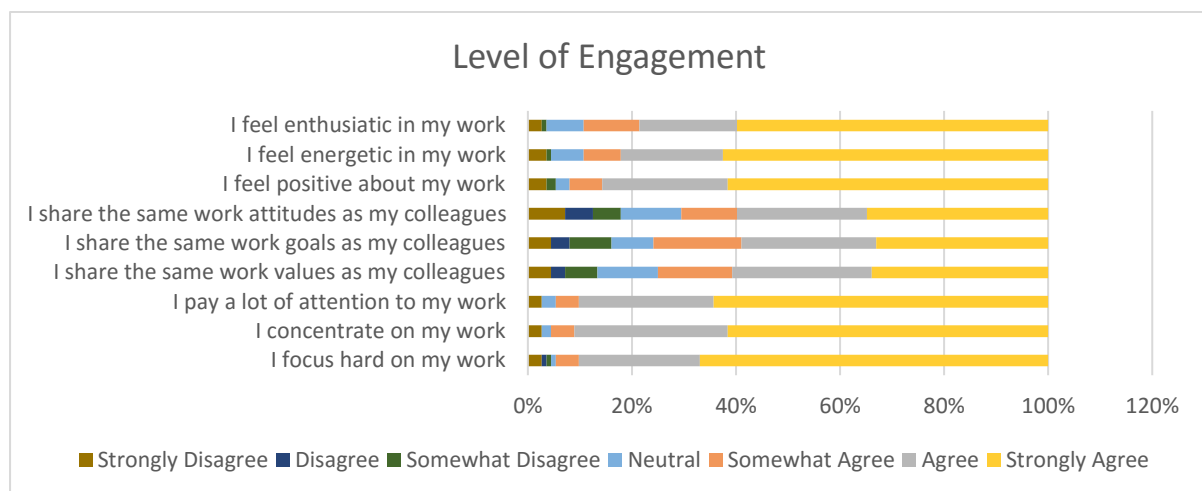
Section B in the survey comprised the ISA engagement scale. This instrument measured the levels of engagement within the workwear distribution company. The scale consisted of nine statements, where participants were required to indicate their views on a seven-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

4.3.1 Total Level of Engagement

To provide an overall engagement, the researcher grouped strongly agree; agree and somewhat agree and strongly disagree, disagree and somewhat disagree from the survey responses.

Subsequent to evaluating the survey responses for the three dimensions of employee engagement, the researcher was able to provide an overall engagement. The figure below illustrates that 86% of the employees are engaged, 8% are disengaged and 6% of employees are neutral.

Table 2: Level of engagement



4.4 The drivers of employee engagement

Following the employee engagement surveys, the researcher conducted focus groups to corroborate the findings from the surveys and to gain a better understanding of the drivers of employee engagement. The focus groups were recorded and transcribed. The themes emerged from a thematic examination of the transcripts.

To analyse the data, the researcher selected the thematic approach. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:78) *“thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data”*. Braun and Clarke (2006:79) also define thematic analysis as a method for *“identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data”*. They describe that a theme

“captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within that data” (Braun and Clarke, 2006:83).

Each focus group commenced with the researcher outlining the purpose of the focus group and explaining the key concepts of employee engagement. The following themes relating to drivers of employee engagement emerged from the focus groups. An overview of each theme is provided.

4.4.1 Working Environment

Working environment is defined as the physical space people work in and includes the psychological aspects of the environment and wellbeing at work.

The workwear distribution company has a strong brand and an excellent reputation in the marketplace. Yet respondents feel that the workwear distribution company does not foster a positive working environment and employees are not treated fairly and equally. The following excerpts from the transcripts capture how respondents view the work environment:

It's not a positive working environment, so in general people are demotivated. What I like about my working environment is some of my colleagues I work with. My dislikes include the poor communication, no opportunities for development, no future growth opportunities and the autocratic leadership style (Participant IE4 - 161).

Okay what I like is, okay, the people but sometimes it can be, you know, a lot of unfairness when it comes to the dislikes within the company. I like working here, it's just at times it feels that you're not allowed to voice how you feel here at the workwear distribution company and on many occasions if you do say something then it's like you... how can I now put it? Almost like you the bad seed, at the end of the day. And I think you should be comfortable in saying and how you're feeling when you work here (Participant IE2 - 161)

The only negative thing that I've been feeling lately is that there is a lot of conflicts between the... especially between the higher management, which does come down to affecting us as well because it does make us feel a little bit unsure what's happening.

And also... okay, which is not the workwear distribution company' fault, but there's a lot of competition out there now, which we didn't have before, so our sales are down (Participant IE2 - 151).

4.4.2 Leadership

Leadership is defined as a process whereby a leader influences followers to achieve a common purpose.

Leadership is a critical element of employee engagement in organisations. Subordinates are reliant on their managers for guidance and direction. People management is dependent on the leadership skills of managers. Some respondents commented that only the director makes decisions, there is very little trust and leadership practices and styles do not inspire engagement.

The director. And if the director doesn't have the final say, it would be [name], our boss, at the end of the day. And if she feels that that's not to your advantage, she will go and tell him (Participant IE1 - 151).

They're not intimidating. They're very old school. So, they're not very open to suggestions or to other people's opinions (Participant IE2 - 151).

I feel that the organisation is run in a very autocratic manner. The business depends on the owner and once the owner retires or leaves the organisation, it will be left directionless. People are not empowered and decision-making is top-down (Participant IE3 - 151).

4.4.3 Team and Co-Worker Relationships

Team and co-worker relationships are defined as the relations that exist between co-workers and team members resulting from the employment relationship.

It is imperative that employees get along and collaborate. The workwear distribution company is a family business and harmonious working relations are vital to create a positive working environment.

Respondents feel that teamwork is important but that it is not evident across all departments. Departments do not communicate and conflict exists between departments. Some respondents view the working relationships in the following ways:

Yes, teamwork is important especially with a company the size of the workwear distribution company, but we don't have any teamwork. We operate in silos (Participant IE4 - 161).

Especially in your workplace and especially in terms of the work that we do. You have to have team work there, without team work you can get frustrated and I feel like that lately, but, you know, you can't take it out on a customer because customers need to be assisted but a lot of team work, we need in internal sales (Participant IE1 - 161).

There's no communication. There's a lack of communication (Participant IE4 - 151).

Even our CEO, he comes in here. He does... He comes in here but he's selective in who he greets and who has conversation with. That is downright rude. So why go to these staff parties? You know what I mean? (Participant IE4 - 151)

4.4.4 Training and Development

Training and development are the organisational activities intended to enhance the performance of employees in the working environment.

Training and development provides employees with opportunities to learn and grow in their respective roles. Every employee has their own career path and the manager must provide the mentoring and coaching to enable each employee to achieve their goals (Zhang and Li, 2009).

The respondents believe that they are not given development opportunities and that more training could be provided to increase skills and knowledge.

No. I think we can always exceed and (to) excel more in what we do but I don't think that we get that provision. We got provision once and, I mean, at the end of the day, you're still sitting where you sit.. Skills or whatever training or whatever, you still sit at the same spot, so what's the use of going...? (Participant IE1 - 160)

I think they don't give us enough opportunity. Like a lot of people could do so much more with training. Like I said earlier on, you sit in your chair and that's where you stay. They don't give you scope to grow. They don't give you the opportunities. For myself there is actually a lot of time in the day that I would be wanting to do other stuff but I... (Participant IE2 - 151)

4.4.5 Compensation

Compensation is defined as an organised approach to providing financial value to employees in exchange for their services rendered. The workwear distribution company is very established in the market and offers compensation packages that include an annual bonus, incentives and profit share. However, respondents cite money as one of the main reasons employees leave the organisation.

The main thing, especially I think in the store, is salary (Participant IE1 - 161).

Money is the first issue. Sometimes they get a better offer. That they earn too little money (Participant IE2 - 160).

There's a lot of benefits. There are many companies that don't offer 13th cheque (Participant IE2 - 151).

And there are benefits like incentives as well and profit shares (Participant IE3 - 151).

They probably get a better job with better pay and, at the end of the day, they don't get the happiness (Participant IE3 - 151).

Another component of compensation is rewards and recognition. This component is both monetary and non-monetary in nature. Recognising employees who perform well has been shown to result in greater productivity, increased employee and job satisfaction, decreased absenteeism and increased retention of quality employees. The respondents at the workwear distribution company feel they are not recognised.

They don't recognise people at all (Participant IE4 - 161).

Sometimes you just feel, you know... Say, for example, I've got a huge order for 100 000. All I want, at the end of the day, acknowledge and just say, thank you, [name], well done. Because, at the end of the day, it actually makes you feel good as a person, knowing that your boss actually is taking note of you. Whereas, at the end of the day, if you don't get that, it feels like, ag, you know, it's just the same old thing every day. Just to have that recognition, that's all (Participant IE2 - 161).

Just a thank you, yes, at least (Participant IE1 - 161).

That's the thing. I wanted to say that. They don't recognise people that work hard, from my side. They don't because there are plenty guys working hard in the store, but they don't get recognition (Participant IE3 - 164).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presents the findings of the survey and the focus group discussions. The findings of the survey indicate that participants are engaged, while the focus group findings mostly contradict the survey results. In the survey, participants might have felt that they needed to portray a positive picture as they were responding in writing. Whereas during the focus groups, participants had an opportunity to voice their opinions and elaborate on their views in a confidential setting. The survey was set up with close-ended statements, whereas the focus groups comprised open-ended questions that encouraged participants to share their views and discuss them with each other. As human resources manager, I have a good working relationship with the participants. The focus groups might therefore have felt like a safe place to share honest views and opinions about the working environment. In the next chapter, the findings are discussed in relation to the research questions and specific insights are put forward.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide the links between the findings of the research and the existing literature of employee engagement. It also puts forward additional insights that have arisen from this study.

It is important to note that as human resources manager of the organisation, the researcher had become frustrated that the organisation was exhibiting complacency and that business practices, specifically human resources, were still very traditional. This motivated the researcher to conduct a study into the levels and drivers of employee engagement so that employees would no longer only be viewed as assets and the strategic value of employee engagement would be acknowledged.

The findings of the survey indicate that respondents are engaged within the workwear distribution company. However once these findings were probed more deeply in the focus groups, a different narrative emerged. These results will be discussed in detail below.

5.2 Levels of employee engagement

Table 2 presents the findings in relation to the level of employee engagement within the workwear distribution company. Generally, respondents indicate that they are engaged. Interestingly, respondents are highly engaged in intellectual and emotional dimensions as opposed to the social dimension. Even though the results of the survey indicate that respondents at the workwear distribution company are engaged, the results from the focus groups indicate that respondents are not engaged. According to Macey and Schneider (2008), to improve employee engagement, it is necessary that the working environment is trusting and supportive.

Employees have different reasons for working and their goals differ. Respondents reported that they do not completely trust management and that they are not treated in a fair and equitable manner. This could explain the high levels of conflict within the organisation. Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998:395) posit trust as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon

positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another”. When employees trust their superior, the expectation is that the superior’s actions and conduct will be favourable and acceptable to employees and that the employees can entrust their work life to the control of the superior.

5.3 Drivers of employee engagement

5.3.1 Working Environment

According to Bakker (2011), the engagement of employees affects production within the organisation. It is therefore crucial that organisations make concerted efforts to increase employee engagement and to restrict disengagement.

Although the workwear distribution company has strong brand identification, respondents do not feel that it has a positive working environment and employees are generally demotivated. The respondents feel that the working environment is characterised by conflict, poor communication and there is no synergy between departments. This negatively impacts the trust relationship with the parties involved and possibly influences the engagement negatively. Employees engage emotionally when they perceive the working environment as supportive and safe (Shuck et al., 2014). They are unlikely to engage when they feel that their confidence, professional development or social status are jeopardised (Rothmann and Welsh, 2013).

The working environment in South Africa and elsewhere in the world demands more and different requirements from employees than it has in previous eras. The employment relationship is altered, dictating what people do, when they do it and how they do it (Booyesen, 2007). Employment legislation like the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and Labour Relations Act now provide guidelines for the employment relationship. The employee has been empowered and employers must ensure that the rules within the working environment are aligned with current legislation.

Conditions in the working environment determine employees’ intention to stay or quit. Respondents indicate that the tension between members of management and the competitive environment creates feelings of uncertainty and a lack of safety. Respondents also state that when they voice their opinion or feelings to management and they don’t like it, they are treated differently. According to Anitha (2014), there

is an important connection between the working environment and employee engagement. When employees or applicants perceive a safe working environment, it can attract new candidates to create a pool from which vacant positions may be filled. Khan (1990) found that psychological safety is promoted by supportive management and trusting interpersonal relationships, where transparency and openness characterise the working environment. In a safe working environment, employees may feel free to show initiative without the fear of failure. When employees experience a meaningful working environment, it positively impacts employee engagement (Popli and Rizvi, 2016).

5.3.2 Leadership

The workwear distribution company is a family business that has been in existence for more than fifty years. The organisation has now expanded to ten branches and employs two hundred employees. The organisation is still led by the founder and the leadership style has not changed. Respondents feel that the organisation is characterised by an autocratic leadership style. The findings indicate that the directors make the decisions and that they are not open to suggestions from employees. Autocratic leaders typically make all decisions without input from others and prescribe how things ought to be done. Regardless of the expertise of others, they make decisions based on their experience and judgement (Redman, 2011). This leadership style is based on models from the past and does not necessarily have relevance in an organisation today.

Towers Watson (2012) echoes that the relationship between the manager and subordinates is crucial for business survival. Organisations that practice employee involvement have higher engagement levels than organisations who do not practice employee involvement. Respondents feel that some managers are technically sound and always help where needed. However, it is apparent from the focus group findings that the interpersonal skills of the management team require development. Respondents say that they cannot trust their managers to discuss personal information with them. The information does not remain private and leads to a breakdown in the trust relationship. Respondents also feel that they are not kept abreast with new information and are not informed about important organisational information. When

employees feel that they are unable to strike a connection with the manager, it is highly unlikely that they will exert more effort and probably only ensure that they meet the minimum performance standards. This could be due to not feeling understood and valued. Robinson et al., (2004:15) describe engagement as “sense of feeling valued and involved”. The CIPD (2006) reiterates the importance of feeling well informed about what is happening in the organisation. Maintaining positive relationships with management is a vital driver to achieving increased employee engagement.

5.3.3 Team and Co-Worker Relationships

Relationships with co-workers affect the psychological conditions in the working environment (May et al., 2004). Positive relations increase the sense of belonging and friendship (Wilderom et al., 2015). A working environment that is characterised by appreciation will foster caring and this in turn advances feelings of safety amongst employees.

The respondents feel that relationships amongst co-workers are strained and that there is no synergy between departments. Respondents claim that there is a lack of communication. Communication creates a safe space where employees feel that they are trusted and supported by co-workers (Khan, 1990). Respondents mention that the annual staff party is an important event as it is an opportunity for all employees to be together and have fun. However there are always a few employees that never attend.

The psychological conditions of meaningfulness and safety are impacted by relationships with supervisors and co-workers as well as the extent to which supervisors are available to employees (May et al., (2004). Some respondents state that co-workers provide emotional support. Other respondents feel that co-workers provide support when they are absent or have an urgent task to complete. Respondents state building meaningful relationships are important because employees spend most of their time at work.

Rothman and Welsh (2013) believe that individuals who feel a connection with co-workers and are appreciated, will experience psychological meaningfulness in the working environment. Thus, employees will avail themselves if they know their co-workers care for them. A sense of belonging is fostered through the interaction with

co-workers. The level of employee engagement is determined by the level of emotional safety an employee experiences within the working environment (Saks and Gruman, 2014). Social identity is strengthened and a sense of purpose is fostered. Confidence increases and psychological security emerges. This in turn strengthens engagement between employees. It is important to note that the support between co-workers that was expressed during the focus groups correlates with the high employee engagement levels determined by the survey.

5.3.4 Training and Development

The respondents believe that they are not given opportunities and that more training opportunities should be created to increase skills and knowledge. Respondents state that they occupy positions for lengthy periods with scarce opportunities for development. Respondents expressed the need to feel empowered and to grow with the organisation.

According to Zhang and Li (2009), human resources practices endeavour to equip employees with skills and competencies to enhance motivation. The importance of human resources as a competitive advantage is therefore linked to business performance (Towers Watson, 2012). The competition in the PPE industry is rife, considering that competitors can easily replicate business processes, technologies and access human capital.

The reluctance to train and develop employees at the workwear distribution company impedes the ability and competence of employees. In a quest to remain competitive and sustainable, empowering the organisation's human resources has become the most important factor to challenge forces such as globalisation and replication of technology (Lee et al., 2010). People development is considered as a key element in recruitment strategies today.

Internally and externally alike, employees want to know that the organisation is willing to invest in their personal and professional development. Where the organisation does not recognise the employee's desire to grow, the lack of personal development becomes the chief reason for resignation (Kreisman, 2002). When organisations invest in the development of their employees, they attract and retain the best talent.

Recognising and responding to the needs of the employee, the employee in turn gives the best to the organisation. Organisations who invest in their employees, strengthen the bond with their employees and also enhance the image of the organisation in the labour market (Steel et al., (2002).

Training and development also facilitates meaningful work particularly if it fosters an understanding of the underlying purpose of work activities. Forck (2014) posits that when employees understand why they are doing certain tasks and why these tasks are important to the organisation, they feel that they are performing meaningful work. Employee engagements is thus strengthened.

5.3.5 Compensation

Compensation comprises monetary and non-monetary components. Anitha (2013) posits that a significant package includes a combination of monetary e.g. annual bonus and incentives and non-monetary components e.g. extra leave days. Towers Watson (2012) reiterate that the total rewards model should comprise of tangible, intangible and performance-based components. Some respondents stated that the organisation offers numerous benefits, including an annual bonus, incentives and profit share. Other respondents felt that they are not recognised or rewarded for good performance. Respondents claimed that employees within the sales department earn commission as part of their package but employees in other departments receive no recognition or rewards. All the employees receive an annual bonus but respondents also expressed the view that it is not always about the money.

Respondents stated that they wish to be recognised for what they do. Respondents indicated that recognition in the form of a “thank you” or a certificate would be beneficial and improve employee engagement. When employees are recognised or rewarded, they are more inclined to commit to and engage organisational goals (Maslach, Schaufelli and Leither, 2001). Roberts et al (1999) believe that financial reward is a major factor to increase employee engagement in an organisation.

In the workwear distribution company, the performance management system is solely utilised to determine the annual increase and the incentives issued twice a year. Employees are not informed of any performance criteria linked to organisational goals.

Performance criteria are only determined at the time when it is needed and employees are assessed accordingly. In today's economic climate, employees want to understand how the remuneration systems work and how they are able to earn more money. Employees seek progress through the ranks and once they have reached the ceiling, other factors like career development and flexible working arrangements become important (Farris, 2000). Where employees perceive fairness and experience meaning when performing their duties, this is likely to facilitate the fit between employee and organisation.

Studies have shown that employees are mostly interested in financial rewards, as it provides an income to survive, provides stability and recognition. Financial rewards still remain the chief incentive to improve performance (Farris, 2000). Although respondents state that the workwear distribution company pays well and offers numerous benefits, respondents cite money as the main reason for employees leaving the organisation.

5.4 Conclusion

Employee engagement is posited as a critical driver to organisational success and sustainability (Swarnalatha and Prasanna, 2013). High levels of work engagement reflect employees who feel acknowledged, respected and understood. The findings of the survey indicate that participants are engaged, while in the focus groups, participants mostly contradicted the survey findings. In the survey, participants might have felt that they needed to portray a positive picture. Whereas during the focus groups, participants had an opportunity to voice their opinions and elaborate on their views. The survey was designed with close-ended statements, whereas the focus groups comprised open-ended questions, that required participants to explain their views and opinions. During the focus groups, participants might have also felt that because they were interacting with the human resources manager, it was a safe space to share their views and opinions regarding the working environment.

Subsequent to the discussion of findings, the researcher suggests that the main drivers of employee engagement are working environment, leadership, team and co-worker relationships. The respondents felt strongly that these drivers are most influential in impacting on their levels of engagement in the organisation.

In comparison to previous quantitative studies concentrating on measuring employee engagement, it was important for the researcher to utilise focus groups to probe deeper into the findings, to understand how employees at the workwear distribution company experience their work environment (Jose & Mampilly, 2014; Kim et al., 2013).

It would also be useful for organisations to investigate employee engagement levels at regular intervals in order to gauge whether levels are increasing or decreasing,

While a study of employee engagement is applicable to all work environments, these findings are particular to one organisation. The South African labour market has experienced turbulent times containing labour unrest, political instability and tough economic times (Lane et al., 2015). It would therefore be relevant to extend this kind of research to other sectors and organisations within South Africa.

In conclusion, organisations that fail to see their employees as assets, miss golden opportunities to maximise the strategic value of employee engagement (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015). The leadership team is primarily responsible for creating a workplace where employees can perform their best. Employees want to be recognised, rewarded and appreciated. Managers must trust the employees they have employed to execute the vision and mission of the organisation, with the necessary guidance and support. In this unstable global economy, the employees are the organisation's competitive advantage.

5.5 Limitations to the study

The study and findings were limited to one organisation and might not necessarily be applicable to other organisations in similar industries. It is not in a position to reach any generalisable conclusions. The task has been to work meaningfully within one organisation.

The researcher planned on conducting more focus groups but due to the peak season, only a limited number of employees were released to participate in the focus groups. Although the questions in the focus group were open ended and the researcher continuously reminded participants of the confidentiality, the researcher believes that some of the participants in the focus groups were still nervous to verbalise their exact thoughts.

5.6 Implications for management

The study emphasises the importance of engaged employees in the contemporary workplace and the value of understanding what drives employee engagement. The leadership team must be aware of the levels of employee engagement across all occupational categories in the organisation.

Employee engagement is not an human resources issue; it is a business imperative. Employee engagement is a long-term process, linked to organisational success. To ensure successful implementation of an employee engagement strategy, time and commitment is required from top management and all other employees.

Recommendations

Management needs to invest in a formal employee engagement strategy and programme. Employees spend a significant portion of their time at work. It is crucial that the organisation attracts and retains the best talent. In an environment where competition is fierce and training new talent is expensive, employee engagement is paramount. Engagement surveys need to be regularly administered to measure and monitor progress.

Strategies

A. Working Environment

This strategy aims to create and maintain a working environment that attracts, retains and motivates people. There are internal and external facets to this approach. The internal aspects revolve around the vision of the organisation, the organisational culture and safe working environment with clear and concise standards and operating procedures. The external facets speak to the layout of the building and employee amenities.

Environmental strategies include:

- (i) Clear vision and mission statement
- (ii) Promoting diversity and integrity
- (iii) Supporting excellence
- (iv) The ergonomic design of office equipment
- (v) Making work fun

B. Employee Relationships

This strategy expresses how people are treated and the interactions between co-workers. It is important for managers and employees to understand one another. Employees must feel valued and recognised. Managers must therefore aim to foster meaningful relationships with their subordinates.

Relationship strategies include:

- (i) Celebrating employee birthdays
- (ii) Recognising employees with long service
- (iii) Celebrating publicly when the organisation hits milestones
- (iv) Setting up a buddy system and mentoring new employees

C. Employee Support

The premise for this strategy is that employees require the tools and equipment to execute their responsibilities. This strategy is rooted in the belief that people want to excel but the employer must provide them with the tools to get the job done and provide the necessary support to achieve the targets.

The mindset of both the employee and the manager is an integral part of the support strategy. Both parties must establish the standards to be achieved. Organisational excellence cannot be achieved by mediocre efforts.

It is vital for employees to understand how they fit into the bigger picture. Therefore, information is a key element of this support strategy. When employees understand what they are doing, the reasons behind their actions and how they are expected to act and behave, the experience becomes more valuable.

Support strategies can include:

- (i) Allowing employees to take initiative
- (ii) Clearly defining the job and tasks
- (iii) Steering away from micro-management
- (iv) Establishing transparent and effect communication channels
- (v) Keeping promises that are made

D. Employee Growth

The focus of these strategies are personal and professional development. Training and development enables employees to hone their skills and it also enhances self-esteem.

Training and development are organised and guided by an organisation's workplace skills plan. Managers can use departmental meetings, performance discussions and one-on-one sessions to gauge what training employees would be interested in and how it can be incorporated into personal development plans.

Training interventions can include:

- Seminars and workshops from external service providers
- Cross-training
- Bursaries for further studies
- Current employees conducting in-house workshops in their areas of expertise
- Educating employees on matters that affect their personal lives

E. Employee Compensation

Apart from paying employees for services rendered, it is important to realise that paying for being at work is no longer sufficient. Employees who perform well and exceed targets should be compensated accordingly. The pay-for-performance plans can comprise different components to suit the demographics of the organisation.

There are two inherent actions:

- (i) The definition of the job
- (ii) Measuring the performance in relation to targets

The compensation strategies can comprise monetary and non-monetary elements which include:

- (i) Total compensation package (base pay, benefits, bonuses, etc.)
- (ii) Rewards and recognition programmes
- (iii) Flexible benefits
- (iv) Employee assistance programmes
- (v) Staff discounts
- (vi) Flexible work arrangements

It is critical to understand that the compensation strategy on its own is not enough; it is the package as a whole that attracts, retains and engages employees.

5.7 Future research

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that the organisation conducts further studies on employee engagement at a national level. The current research design could be used as a template for these additional studies.

5.8 Personal Learning

Employee engagement in the workplace has not only been very important to me personally but also as an human resources practitioner. It has also been a goal of mine for a long time to complete this degree. The study has provided an opportunity for me to gain a deeper understanding of the topic and it has also provided employees with an opportunity to express themselves and partake in robust discussions about issues in the workplace. The research process has been extremely challenging, but also rewarding. I hope to build on this study and to establish a formal employee engagement strategy within the organisation.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE



AN INVESTIGATION INTO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE WORKWEAR DISTRIBUTION COMPANY

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Randall van Wyk and I am currently completing my MPhil People Management at University of Cape Town (UCT). As part of the course, I must conduct research within my organisation and my topic involves determining the key drivers of employee engagement within the workwear distribution company.

Your input during the research process will be highly appreciated and will provide me with insight about what encourages you to be engaged at work. The research has been approved by the Commerce Faculty's Ethics in Research Committee. The attached questionnaire will not take longer than 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary and you can choose to withdraw at any time.

The data will be kept confidential and your identity will be protected. The permission has been granted by Management for employees to partake in the study.

By completing the survey, you indicate that you voluntarily participate in this research. Should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me. The details are as follow:

Research Name: Randall van Wyk
Email: randallvanwyk@yahoo.com
Contact No: 083 883 1873

Employee Engagement Questionnaire

We are aware that some of the information requested is sensitive in nature, but it will assist us with the analysis, discussion and recommendations of the research. We assure you that your responses will remain confidential and therefore we do not need your name or any other personal information. Please read the following statements and make an "x" by choosing only one statement that best describes your opinion.

Please indicate your gender:

Male	Female

Please indicate your age range:

Younger than 25 years	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Older than 65 years

Please indicate the race group you fall in:

African	Coloured	Indian	White

Please indicate the department you work in:

Admin	Internal Sales	External Sales	Counter Sales	Stores

Please indicate how long you have worked at the workwear distribution company:

Less than a year	1 – 5 years	6 - 10 years	11 - 15 years	More than 15 years

Please indicate your occupational category:

Top Management & Senior Management	Junior Management & Supervisors	Stores Clerks, Counter/Internal Sales Clerks & Accounts Clerks	Drivers, Stores Assistants & General Workers

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I focus hard on my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I concentrate on my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I pay a lot of attention to my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I share the same work values as my colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I share the same work goals as my colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I share the same work attitudes as my colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel positive about my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel energetic in my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel enthusiastic in my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This is the end of the survey and we would like to reiterate that your participation and responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input is extremely valuable.

APPENDIX B: ORGANISATIONAL RESEARCH APPROVAL

Hi Randall

I do not have a issue with this

Kind Regards,

Jacky Bredeveldt

Executive Director

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22 Auckland Street, Paarden Eiland, Cape Town, ZA, 7405

From: Randall van Wyk

Sent: 02 March 2017 08:34 AM

To: 'Howard Spiro' <howardspiro@mweb.co.za>; Jacky Bredeveldt <Jacky.Bredeveldt@pienaarbros.com>; Warren Spiro <warrenspiro2015@gmail.com>

Subject: FW: Research Request - Randall van Wyk

I think this is a great topic Randall. Very interesting and something quite unique amongst businesses.

Warren Spiro

Please send me an sms (text message) if urgent.

+27833259485

----- Original message -----

From: Randall van Wyk <Randall.vanWyk@pienaarbros.com>

Date: 02/03/2017 08:34 (GMT+02:00)

To: 'Howard Spiro' <howardspiro@mweb.co.za>, Jacky Bredeveldt <Jacky.Bredeveldt@pienaarbros.com>, Warren Spiro <warrenspiro2015@gmail.com>

Subject: FW: Research Request - Randall van Wyk

APPENDIX C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

From: Carren Field <carren.field@uct.ac.za>
To: Randall van Wyk <randallvanwyk@yahoo.com>
Cc: Linda Price <lindaprice@mweb.co.za>; Suki Goodman <suki.goodman@uct.ac.za>
Sent: Monday, August 21, 2017 2:41 PM
Subject: RE: Ethics Application

Dear Randall

Your research has been granted ethics approval (signed form attached).

Good luck with the research.

Regards
Carren



*Mrs Carren Field
Lecturer: Organisational Psychology
School of Management Studies*

*Tel: (021) 650 3428
Fax: 086 640 9414*

Room 4.31 Leslie Commerce Building



APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM



AN INVESTIGATION INTO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE WORKWEAR DISTRIBUTION COMPANY

I agree to take part in the AN INVESTIGATION INTO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE WORKWEAR DISTRIBUTION COMPANY research project specified above. I have read and understand the study purpose as prescribed. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- I agree to be involved in a focus group
- I agree to allowing the focus group to be audio-taped, so it can be transcribed after the focus group is held. I am aware that I have the right to edit the transcript of the Focus Group once it has been completed.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I can withdraw at any time, without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the focus group for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

Participant Name:

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUPS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. How do you feel about working at The workwear distribution company? (inquire into what interviewee likes and doesn't like – and what he or she feels happy about).
2. How would you describe an employee who 'goes the extra mile'? Are you that person? Please elaborate.
3. What do you see as the goals of the organization?
4. What kinds of things do you think you should be doing to enable the organization to meet its goals?
5. In what ways does the workwear distribution company recognise employees who perform well?
6. In what ways would you like your supervisor to recognise your output?
7. How does your relationship with your supervisor enable you to be successful at work?
8. In what ways does your supervisor provide feedback to you on work-related matters?
9. Is teamwork important to you and why?
10. Why do you think some people decide to leave The workwear distribution company?
11. Why do you think some people work at the workwear distribution company for a long period of time? (you need to be specific about the time frame i.e. by long time do you mean greater than five or ten years or longer?)
12. Please comment on the negative work experiences that you have had at the workwear distribution company. Please describe specific frustrations and problems that you have experienced. How are these typically dealt with?
13. Do you feel that your job provides enough scope for you to utilise your skills and knowledge to the maximum? Please elaborate.

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUPS TRANSCRIPTS

Voice 151_sd

Speaker Key:

IV Interviewer

IE Interviewee

IV Morning everybody, thank you very, very much for agreeing to be part of the research. So the same with the questionnaires, everything that we discuss here is confidential, in terms of I'm not discussing this with the workwear distribution company. The workwear distribution company won't get the report. It is written up and it goes into my thesis and that is submitted to the University of Cape Town for examination, as part of the [unclear] that I'm studying in terms of human resources.

So I won't be discussing this with the workwear distribution company. If, in any way, at some stage, because this is all part of my job, I need to discuss it, I would then have to get permission but, I mean, you know, everything is confidential. There are no names attached and most of the things are generic anyway.

There's a lot of information out there, so if I had to share anything with that, I'd probably go and just go and do research than share the information that I gathered for the sake of the thesis. I just want this to be like a sort of a conversation feel. So there are questions that I'll ask and everybody doesn't have to answer all the questions at the same time.

It is really relating to things like, you know, how you feel about working at the workwear distribution company, what has worked for you, what hasn't worked for you. Like I said, I've done the questionnaires and I have sort of tallied the results in terms of that. So what this focus group does is it either confirms some of the results, or it will be the opposite of what the results are, in terms of delving into some of the topics that were discussed in the questionnaire. Anybody have any questions at this stage? All right.

So the first question is how do you feel about working at the workwear distribution company and what you like, what you don't like, what makes you happy at work and what doesn't make you happy at work? Anybody can go first.

IE1 Okay, the workwear distribution company, on its own, it's a very happy environment, very secure company in a sense of the fact that they make a provision with a lot of companies that don't guarantee a 13th cheque, ours do. You know, so on that point of view, it's a great advantage to the employees itself.

Where the pension is concerned, the pension is very little. Very ... The percentages are so bad, you know, and they give you a life coverage, but it's not applicable to everybody so it doesn't... There's people that it would be an advantage for because they've got kids and there's people like me, as an

individual, of age 58 this year, where there is... I've got no dependents, why deduct it?

Why not give people like me an option in a sense of saying, hello, we will take that life coverage away because you have no dependents, but, you know what, you've got the alternative to want to increase your percentage of pension.

IE2 But that's not really a the workwear distribution company thing, that's more an issue with our brokers.

IE1 Is it? [?]. But in a sense that, like I say, you know, I have discussed it with [name] already in an option to ... [name], I don't have a dependent, so I'm not going to benefit from that.

IV So what you're saying ...

IE1 I would... where we can we alleviate that when no depend... when you have no independents.

IV So you say a tailor-made package that suits...

IE1 Yes, or increase the actual ... That's a the workwear distribution company thing because it comes into your salary and it goes out in your salary again. So it's so...

IE2 I don't think it's a the workwear distribution company [overtalking].

IE3 [Name], sorry, back on that topic of the pension, I personally feel that the company's contribution is very important. I mean, I've been here... This is going to be my 18th year and if I look at my pension as a whole, I mean, it's... it sucks, to be quite honest. So that, really. But other than that, yes, what [name] said, I mean this is a lovely company to work for. There's a lot of benefits. There are many companies that don't offer a 13th cheque.

IE1 They use it as their... they use it as... what do they call it? There's a saying going, they use it as a... help me out here, [name], they use it as cost to you, where they do it every year. They do it every on a monthly basis and you just have to get it back the end of the year but you've paid it for yourself. You know, that type of thing.

IE2 And there are benefits like incentives as well and profit shares. It's a very stable company, which is number one on that list. We do have many benefits, which other companies don't have. They're... the nice thing as well is that they're very eager to help us in our own personal issues as well. So they don't just leave us out on our own, and it's our problem. They do assist where they can.

The only negative thing that I've been feeling lately is that there is a lot of conflicts between the... especially between the higher management, which does come down to affecting us as well because it does make us feel a little bit unsure what's happening. And also... okay, which is not the workwear distribution company's fault, but there's a lot of competition out there now, which we didn't have before, so our sales are down. So it is... there are a few things because of the economy that we still worry about, regardless of where we're working. But it just seems to

be affecting us more now because of all the competition, which we haven't had before.

IV Okay. [Name]? Is there anything that you don't like? Or is there anything that doesn't make you feel so happy?

IE3 Oh, sorry, favouritism as well. [Overtalking].

IE1 Okay, I've also got a very, very valid point. Very, very valid. It's something that, like [name] was trying to mention, that you are higher a power. As soon as you have a point of view that is... you voice your opinion to higher powers, they don't like that, so they tend to treat you differently. And it's actually not very healthy, because it's actually called mental abuse throughout your career, of your working environments.

So you go to another department and you seek that... How can I say? That working, colleague relationship. Because you work here, you've got that hours to spend here. So you need to be happy in your environment and as soon as that happens and you go and you voice your opinion, people are going to treat you differently. And I, personally, now this year have actually made a pact because of that, I've actually made a pact to say I am working here, I'm... Give me happiness, I'll say plus minus 60%.

I say the salary is good. Like [name] mentioned, it is secure. So I train [?] my time here but don't ask me to go to a staff party because now I've taken the trend to say, hello, don't treat me in that manner throughout the year and then expect me to have a party with you the end of the year.

And like [name] also mentioned last, but why do you want to do that? You work with others and, at the end of the day, it is a company we're going to, it's a company that's giving us. Even our CEO, [name], he comes in there. He does... he's part of the company. He comes in there but he's only selective in who he greets and who he has a conversation with. That is downright rude. So why go to these staff parties? You know what I mean? You want a company.

IE3 It's pretentious.

IE1 All companies are not going to give you... in your research all companies are not going to give you the 100% package. But these are only little things and, like I say, my environment is not healthy where I sit, but situations is the other flip side of the coin. You know what? It's a secure job and it's there's very rarely you get a secure job out there.

IE2 Especially a secure job with the benefits.

IE1 With the benefits involved. So that is just my opinion thereafter.

IV Are you saying that management feels intimidated when you come with suggestion... with obviously suggestions that can help and stuff?

IE2 They're not intimidating. They're very old school. So they're not very open to suggestions or to other people's opinions. [Overtalking]

- IE3 I feel that the organisation is run in an autocratic manner. The business depends on the owner and once the owner retires or leaves the organisation, it will be left directionless. People are not empowered and decision-making is top-down.
- IV So it's a situation of this is what I tell you to do and you do this.
- IE4 And you need to work [overtalking] changes. I mean, like where we've come from up to now, there's been a lot of changes but very...
- IE1 ...limited.
- IE4 Slow changes, because you need to really get into their heads for them to be able to move on with the times.
- IV Okay.
- IE1 I've also got another one, sorry. My money is also that there are people in certain positions here, they give you a title, but get one thing straight, it's not your 100% suggestion because there is still going to be... You get a position, you get a title but, at the end of the day, there's somebody higher that is going to also... They don't stand like if she must make a suggestion or [name] is a departmental head, you know what I mean?
- She's going to take a staff member and treat that staff member individually and actually try and discipline that staff member or do... feel that that staff member which is going to be an advantage or a disadvantage but it's going to be her opinion that's not her call eventually. That is not her call eventually, not at the workwear distribution company.
- IV So you say that she's like a department head on paper or with title but she doesn't have the power and the authority [overtalking]?
- IE1 And to have the final word, the final say.
- IV Okay.
- IE1 That is where our company virtually is at, where you get your title but you don't have your final say.
- IV Okay, so who has the final say?
- IE1 The director. And if the director doesn't have the final say, it would be [name], our boss, at the end of the day. And if she feels that that's not to your advantage, she will go and tell him.
- IV So how do you view the organisational structure from the top?
- IE1 Well, that's a bit... I don't know.
- IV Are you saying that it's the MD, the director and everybody else?
- IE1 That's right. That is absolutely so true. I think it's because you must remember this was a family business, so automatically times has changed in our country. Times has changed in corporations and I view this and I say this honestly because what

I see. You see, I can compare. There are people that was being in this company for 30 years, you know. I came from a corporation so I can actually say I can view the... I can take that and compare. There's a lot of people here that cannot compare, but I can compare because I've been already in the big corporations. You understand?

IV Yes.

IE1 And I've come here. It was just like a shell-shock to me because people count the service of their years, count the service of their years to have that authority.

IV So you're saying that you can comment if you put two organisations against each other, you can compare things like leadership, communication, team work, etc.?

IE1 Yes.

IV Okay, cool.

IE1 In a big way. In a big way. And like I say it's just that the fact that the workwear distribution company has... they were the family, so they're still in that little box where they're the family but they need it to be you. They needed to come out of that box, in a certain way, because of the structure of the country, basically. You know, what I mean? BEE, etc. etc. So they do that to their advantage like type of thing.

IV Cool. How would you describe an employee who goes the extra mile? Do you think that you are that person and then please elaborate? So if it's a yes or a no, then you tell me why you say so. Let's start with you.

IE3 I think most times I do go the extra mile.

IV Please describe what you think an employee is who go the extra mile?

IE3 Someone that does more than what they're supposed. Like I do debtors. If [name]'s not in, I would gladly, if [name] asked me to go sit, I will go sit without a problem, whatever. If someone's not in, I would obviously have to do their calls and whatever also. But I also feel like you don't get recognised for it, so it makes you feel despondent.

IV Anybody has a different of an employee that goes the extra mile? Or do you agree with person X? Let's not mention names.

IE2 I pretty much agree, it's someone that goes beyond what they're supposed to do.

IV So everybody's in agreement with that?

IE3 I think we all tend to go the extra mile.

IV Or do you have a different take on it?

IE1 I do have a different opinion. I think that an employee that does an extra mile is the fact that if they get a call, an incoming call and it's not relevant to their job, to not pass that call around. It's a reflection on the company, because I get calls. I'm

in creditors. I get calls whereby it would be a nominal payment, it would be whatever, but that person would tell me that that person has been directed to four, to five different people. The extra mile is take that information down. You, as a person, as a staff member who represent the workwear distribution company.

But a lot of staff don't come to that when they don't realise that extra mile is you're presenting the workwear distribution company. You know, don't have that call and that person on the other line go to five different places because it's not their job, it's not their department. That extra mile is a mere fact, take that information down.

And many times I do it and then you know what they tell me? You can't be a youngster, hey? You must be from the old school. And that is what people do. They forget they're representing one company. Take that message because that person will get back to us and that person will be a valuable customer. You understand? I think that is going the extra mile.

- IV What do you see as the goals of this organisation?
- IE2 To be needed in a market, to make money, to take care of their staff and their customers so that we can get more profit for them.
- IV That's a very important factor. I hope I get to work there to experience that. Do you feel that the goals are visible? Do you feel that the goals are tangible? Do you understand them? Do you know of goals that exist? Have these goals been communicated to you?
- IE1 No, no.
- IE4 Basically not. I think people are just going according...
- IE1 ...to the structure.
- IE4 Going with the flow of the company, you know, sales. Sales, reps, sales, money. You know, it's just like...
- IV So people come to work and they just action stuff because that's what they know?
- IE3 That's what's supposed to happen, yes. We need to make money and we need to... in debtors we need to collect that money and keep our overdues down. So that's basically... it's just about the structure.
- IV So nobody sits with you and says to you, so this is the organisational goals, this is... So we need to now sit and work out departmental goals that link up with the organisational goals. Nobody does that?
- IE4 No, never.
- IV Okay. What kind of things do you think you should...?
- IE1 I'm watching you and I'm thinking don't you have anything to say?
- IE2 No, I'm listening.
- IE1 Okay.

- IV What kind of things do you think you should be doing to enable the organisation to meet its goals?
- IE3 Repeat that.
- IV What kind of things do you think you should be doing to enable the organisation to meet its goals?
- IE2 You have to do your work. And I think everyone intends to make it a pleasant environment and the more pleasant your environment is, the more efficient you'll be and the better you'll... you'll be actually doing your job. And if everybody does that, you actually go towards fulfilling the company's goals and not necessarily just doing your thing.
- It's going beyond. Taking that phone call, taking that message, passing information on to the next person, seeing something on a system, something's been applied incorrectly, fixing it, or giving it to the correct person to do. Just helping each other right. Where it's... We spend more time here than we do at home and it should be a friendly, team effort and better environment.
- IV You were going to say something?
- IE3 No, she [unclear].
- IV I was going to say [overtalking].
- IE3 So I say if they are in this team, if they do what they're supposed to do, I mean the company can only grow.
- IE4 Of course, yes.
- IV You see, you know, do your job. I mean, what does that mean to anybody working here?
- IE2 Well, when you're employed here, you're told you're employed for a reason and doing your job is to actually do what you're supposed to... what you're employed for. I mean, obviously, like I said, doing the extra bits as well, so...
- IE3 So all your functions that you have that must be done.
- IE2 And also you notice things a lot. You're employed to do a certain thing but you notice things along the way. So, you know, just do it. Don't wait around and hope that the next person's going to do it.
- IE3 Yes.
- IV You also mentioned making the working environment pleasant. What do you think makes the working environment unpleasant?
- IE3 Is backstabbing. In between the departments. Like I would say... I mean, we have a lot of [shit] from sales in accounts.
- IV Who is we?

- IE3 The debtors accounts department. There will always be complaints. Like, for instance, the COBs...
- IE4 There's no statement.
- IE3 And they don't pick up and we're sitting with the money and we don't tell them that it's being paid and the customer is waiting for their goods. But I think there is no team work there because they will not come and say, look, I have an order for this person, has it been paid? They get a statement, they look past the payments and, at the end of the day, [name] or whoever will... they now run to [name] with it. I mean, they don't come to us first.
- IV So would you say that there's communication between departments?
- IE4 There's no communication. There's a lack of communication.
- IE3 That's where the conflict start because now [name] may feel, but, yes, I've done what I'm supposed to do. I've given you the information now you're backstabbing me. You're running to my boss and my boss is now coming and screaming and I know I've done it. So there's no communication. You know, they're always trying to backstab, backstab, backstab and that is very wrong.
- IE2 Maybe a part of the problem is the lack of understanding of what the different departments do. So they think we just sit on the phones all day and we think they're just taking orders all day. Maybe [overtalking].
- IE4 We don't know how their system works and they don't know how our system works, so that is where the difference comes in.
- IE3 But I can tell you when we do have stuff like that and I will go to them, I will take whatever information I have and I will go to them and I will explain to them, but this is how it works and then they will say, oh, now we understand, [name]. Next time we will do it like... And there communication comes in again. Communicate to the people. Tell them, listen, this is how we do it. You need to understand what's going on here. And, at the end of the day, people tend to understand and have a better understanding so that next time things like that doesn't happen.
- IE4 On the same topic, I think they just... we're a blind eye again because it happens again after that. So there's still that. They will always come back to you and say, we don't know how it works when you explain it to them all the time and then it's like... [Overtalking].
- IE3 I think it's also that they don't want to take blame. People like to pass on blame. When the customer calls in they say, hey, where's my goods? I've paid you that time and that time and you, the person that took that call, you just simply forgot about that cash and now you want to come and run around and say, but it's not my fault.
- IV So there's... you're saying there's no ownership in the process?
- IE3 Yes, yes.

- IV No one takes ownership, it's just like...
- IE1 Pass the buck.
- IE3 Pass the buck.
- IV Okay. And do you see management fixing the things that causes the unpleasantness? Do they deal with that?
- IE3 Most of the times they do, yes.
- IV And how do they deal with that?
- IE3 Well they would normally call us in, you know, sit us down, have a meeting with us.
- IV But are there...? [Overtalking]. Are there training opportunities? Are there developmental sessions where people understand? Because clearly you're saying that people don't understand what people are doing? Like, you know, within the organisation.
- IE3 No.
- IV There's... You know, yes, so is there training happening? Is there development happening?
- IE4 [Overtalking]. It's like I was saying to someone yesterday, I think that person or someone from that department should actually come and sit in our department and come and see what we do from the morning till maybe lunchtime. One of us must sit on their side and actually see what they go through.
- IV Cross-training.
- IE4 Yes, that is what... So that they can actually see how things actually [overtalking].
- IE1 I think that then they probably would have respect for the next person because they don't know the detail and they don't know the time-consuming and how it affects... And they don't realise that the company is... I think the workwear distribution company staff don't realise the chain in which we work, because everybody is important and I don't think they see the importance of the next person's job.
- It is actually called... it's almost like a disrespect for them. Because, you know, if don't have a store man, then that stock is not going to come out, you know. So they're just as important as the person that sit and must see that the cash comes through. So I think there's a lack of communication because I always say it's a vicious circle, we're sitting but we don't realise that everybody's important because when that sale and that tax invoice go out for a million in billing, everybody was actually involved. And that is where we're down.
- That is where our weaknesses is here at the workwear distribution company. They tend to label certain people and treat people differently because of the divisions. They shouldn't do that. They shouldn't do that because it's like you [name] and

[name] was saying, it's just the importance of a person's job and everybody's job is important when that sale goes out because there was not only one person that generated that sale. It's that person that packed.

- IE2 But from top management, they emphasise that sales is the most important.
- IE5 Yes, I was just going to say that. You took the words right out of my mouth.
- IV Are people important within the organisation?
- IE1 No.
- IV On a scale of one to ten, where would you put people, human resources? I don't know what other words you'd like to use.
- IE1 I would say...
- IV So on a scale of...
- IE1 Sales at the top.
- IV Let me say this, on a scale of one to ten, where do you rate sales? Zero obviously being low and ten being high.
- IE3 Ten because the organisation...
- IV Sales is ten, you say.
- IE3 They're most important.
- IV And where would you list people, zero to ten?
- IE1 It depends on what position you're talking about, also true. It's cash [?] value, you can't put it that way. You... and I've been at an organisation where that organisation was so successful. I guess why was that organisation was successful because, you know what? We treated the manager and the store person on an equal level. It's all about respect and people think you're at the workwear distribution company because they... a certain period of years here.
- Like I told [Name] when I was here two years and they think that that person, because of the years of working, they should earn greater respect. It's not that way. Respect is earned and that is what is actually lacking here because they think they are a certain amount of years, they should have greater respect for the person that was just employed, that's picking the stores.
- IV So you...
- IE1 It's not that we're are all human here.
- IV So are you saying that tenure, which means is the amount of years that you are working for an organisation is not necessarily beneficial to the organisation? It creates more problems. Because the longer you work here, it could be either beneficial for you but it could be detrimental to the next person?

- IE1 That's a debatable one. That's a debatable one, Randall, because, at the end of the day, is the... It depends on your job, first of all, title you carry. Depending, I say, because a new person is going to give you their everything. They have to prove themselves and build up that relationship, which that person's got for ten years. But that person of ten years can be so complacent, reason being because they won't do anything about it.
- IV No, I hear what you're saying but you've also said that, you know, if you've been working here for long, you get paid more.
- IE1 No, I didn't say paid. I used the word respect. Did I say paid, [name]?
- IV There was a point where you spoke... But anyway.
- IE1 No, no, no, not the pay. The pay is an irrelevant thing really, you know what I mean? Because, firstly...
- IV Do you think that people who've been working here for long...? Or let's say the person has only been working here, do you think that they think that they know it all?
- IE2 You get a few like that. [Overtalking].
- IE1 I'm not going to answer. All you hear is totally truthful and my point of view of your survey you're having, but I'm not going to answer that because I can't do it truthfully.
- IV Okay, all right. Tell me, is team work important to you? And why?
- IE3 Definitely, because at the end of the day that job is going to get done the way it's supposed to get done. Because if there's one link in that team that is not working together, something is going to go wrong. So definitely team work is very important.
- IE1 Very, very important.
- IV Okay. In what ways do you think the workwear distribution company recognises employees who perform well?
- IE3 Just a pat on the shoulder or well done. [Overtalking].
- IE5 They think that if they give you... if you've been working four or five years, you get your profit share that that is it, that's your reward. It's not always about the money, it's about the recognition as well, that you mentioned as well. Often I've spoken to people before, hey. Often they don't care about the increases. They just want to be recognised for what they're doing. And especially people that go beyond.
- Because, at the end of the day, you think, well, why bother? It's not just about the money. Yes, of course, we all work for the money, that's why we're here but it would nice to just... Like, for example, at the staff parties, actually stand up and say, you know what...? Yes, they say overall thank you to everybody, it's been a good year, blah, blah, blah whatever. But, you know what, the people that work

extra, the people that actually have gone way, way, way beyond, why not just mention them? [Overtalking]. I mean, give a little certificate to them.

IE1 A gift or something.

IE5 It doesn't cost anything, it's to print it. But a little certificate, it makes a person feel good to come up there and the most happiest person in a company... Or not just silly rewards or anything [overtalking].

IE3 And also to motivate the rest of the staff, yes, you're absolutely right.

IE5 But it would be nice to reward them just once a year, to be honest. Just make a big deal about people that [overtalking].

IE1 That's a good... I've come from something like that. It's actually so good because it motivates the person for the following year.

IE3 To do much...

IE1 To do much better.

IE5 You know, if you've got children, okay, you motivate your kids. You like give them praise, you give them rewards and things. We're basically their children, so you know what we could do with rewards and congratulations or well done, I'm proud of you and thanks for doing this. I notice that you're actually going beyond and thank you. Even if it's not in front of everybody. You know, just come to me and like say, okay, I notice you're doing this, like, well done and I appreciate it. It doesn't have to necessarily be a big do or whatever. But just, you know, I see, tell me.

IE1 Acknowledge it.

IE3 And in that sense, Randall, you're also building the confidence of that employee, it becomes stronger and stronger and stronger.

IV What do you think...? How would you describe the culture within the company? You understand what I'm asking you?

IE3 That would be blacks, coloureds?

IV No, I'm talking about the vibe? Is it a...? Do we have a happy culture? Do we have a culture? Do we have a culture that is just like managers dominate people? Are like, you know, people, they don't really feel like anything matters because they just come to work? You know, that kind of thing. A culture where team work is important, a culture where people matters. What kind of culture do you think the workwear distribution company has?

IE5 Every man for himself.

IE3 Well, not in our department.

IE1 Because you've got a department of majority ladies. You've got a big department. [name]'s on her own. [Name]'s got two people. I think it's what do you, as a staff

member... I go and I make it a duty that I go to every department and greet. There's a lot of people I don't see [overtalking].

IE5 That's individual.

IV What do you think overall?

IE1 Give us a rating from... I think that's the best way to go because, I mean, if you don't...

IV Do you think the company has a good culture or a bad culture and why would you say so?

IE1 Medium, in between.

IE2 You have your people that will make it a pleasant place to be or that will try. And then you have others that just pull everybody else down. So it's very hard to actually generalise.

IE3 Look at our staff functions, like for instance, yearly. There's a few people in sales that never attend our staff parties because I don't know why they feel they do not want to attend and I think that is the most... That is also one of the most important things for the year because then we all get together, we mingle and we dance and sing and we carry on and they're just never there.

IE5 We need team-building to build a culture.

IV Okay.

IE5 And you also like bring the different partners together, yes.

IV In what ways would you like your supervisor or manager to recognise your output?

IE2 I'm on my own and [name], she does recognise me, so I can't really comment on that.

IE3 That is one thing is that he will always come and say, well done ladies or whatever, but, I mean he does recognise.

IE2 And he's the only one that does that, though.

IV So it happens in accounts?

IE1 Selectively. Let me say it's selectively done.

IV But how would you want your supervisor to recognise you? So what must your supervisor do?

IE5 Just acknowledge.

IE1 Acknowledge. There we go, coming back to [name]'s acknowledgment.

IV Acknowledge. You spoke about once a month.

IE4 Yes, just like recognise, I've seen you've collected...

- IE3 Or thank you for the hard work, especially month-end when we have all these payments and everybody's helping.
- IE2 That normally does happen in debtors, though, hey? He does normally do that.
- IE1 [Name] does that, recognition-wise.
- IE4 There's only you [?] basically that does that.
- IE2 We're talking about our supervisors and managers, he does.
- IV Anybody else? How does your relationship with your supervisor or manager enable you to be successful at work?
- IE2 Well, in our department, except for you, you're with [name], but the rest of us is with [name] and he's very open-minded and he's very easy to talk to. You can walk into him any time, discuss anything with him, tell him how the work is going, how you feel you need... where you feel you need help, he's always there to help. He's always there to give his opinion on which way you should maybe go towards or... So someone that should have an open door policy where you can actually go and speak to them about your concerns or your problems you're having with the work and...
- IV In what ways do you think your supervisor enables...? Or your relationship with your supervisor enables you to be successful at work? Does it enable you to be successful at work? Yes or no?
- IE2 Yes.
- IE4 Yes.
- IE1 Yes.
- IE3 It does.
- IV Okay, so...
- IE1 Yes, I mean... I can... if I have a problem or whatever, I can always go to [name]. [Name] and I work on par. I have deadlines, I... there's no way that I can... But I'm basically working on my own, you understand, with them. So for me is I just... [name], part of [name], part of [name] so I can't say that I have a problem where if I need anything, you know, so...
- IV In what ways does your supervisor provide you with feedback on work-related matters? Do they provide you with feedback, good or bad?
- IE4 [Name] does.
- IV And, if so, how do they do that?
- IE3 They'll just come into the office and [overtalking].
- IE4 They'll say, listen here, this is what went wrong and you need to try and figure out another way to do it or something like.

- IE3 Like for instance, they don't get the... Sorry, they don't get the full age analysis but if I see that 120, then I come to them every month and I say, ladies, your 120 days is so much, you need to... 90 or 60 days you need to collect. Concentrate on your 60 or concentrate, then they know this is the goal for the month. This is where they must concentrate more on the other month's collections.
- IV Do you...?
- IE3 So information.
- IV Are there meetings held when people...? You know, when there's an input and an output so you can give...? So you can complain, you can raise issues, you can raise suggestions and then there's an output where feedback is given? You know, a to-and-fro?
- IE4 In my department there's no... Only when I feel that I can complain about something, that's the only time, but we never have.
- IE3 We're supposed to have... we used to have meetings like maybe on a Friday afternoon.
- IE2 When [name] started here, he initiated that but it didn't last very long.
- IE3 Yes, and we are still... that is one thing that we need as supervisors and departmental heads, that is one thing that we need to really sit down and do. Make it a monthly thing where we have a meeting where all the negatives can come out. And, you know, what is so amazing is that when you have these meetings and, say for instance, [name] has some gripe against somebody, at the end of the meeting, she's going to feel better, she's going to feel lighter because it came out.
- So she doesn't come to work, sit there with all this problems and then, at the end of the day, her work will suffer. So a meeting is actually very important. It is. Especially when you have a lot of females, like we... I mean, we used to have a lot of issues but I would then sit with that people. I would do a one-on-one and I would sit with that people and persons, it's always two and we will sort it out. There'll be tears and everything and everything, but after that the air is cleared and we can carry on.
- IV Why do you think that the meetings stopped? And I'm going to call [name] because, you know, we're talking now, but it won't be when it's written up, there obviously won't be any names. Why do you think that the departmental meetings have stopped?
- IE2 I think it just became too busy. It was just trying to kind of juggle everybody's schedules and then it kind of became... You know how you like fall into patterns. So they had the routine of doing it once every... was it once a week or once a month? Whenever, once a month and then [overtalking].
- IE1 Once a month.
- IE2 Then the next time it was due, then they were too busy, there was month-end or it was this or that, whatever and then it just didn't happen again.

- IV Okay, all right. Why do you think people leave the workwear distribution company? So when I say leave, you know, it's sort of wilful thing. It's just like... we're just talking about resignations here. Why do you think people leave the workwear distribution company?
- IE5 People generally don't leave the workwear distribution company.
- IE1 They don't leave the workwear distribution company and if they do, then they come back.
- IE3 Very soon.
- IV So the ones that do decide to leave, why do you think that they...?
- IE3 They probably get a better job with better pay and, at the end of the day, they don't get that happiness.
- IE1 They go to a better corporation, which is bigger. I think they go to a bigger corporation in a sense that it doesn't become a family thing. I'm talking and I'm going to give an example now. I came in here and Karen had left. But I can only say that she was one girl that actually also went from strength to strength. She studied further, etc. etc. She went to media, whatever. And then she went to another company. And [name] is also another example where she was here, she came back, she left. But they just go to better, bigger corporations.
- IE5 Because the problem here is that there is no advancement. You're going to sit on that chair and that is where you're going to stay.
- IE1 That's true, hey. And I can tell you now, actually my assistant, she was here, she went into receiving and I offered her so many times to go to grow because here she's not going to grow. You know what I mean? They're a good company, where like [name] was saying in the earlier conversation, in the earlier meeting, was that they help you in many, many ways. But that's all...

If you're a certain age, you need to grow, you understand? And especially when you see that person's got that potential to grow, you know what I mean, then leave. But there's people that are very comfortable here, they don't leave.
- IV Why do you think people stay at the workwear distribution company for such a long time? And when I say long, let's say longer than five years because, you know, people jump. People tend to jump around.
- IE2 Twenty-one this year.
- IV That's very long. But why do...? I mean, let's talk about why you stayed here so long and then we can maybe talk about why you think other people stay so long? Because, I mean, five years is long. Five years is long to stay with one organisation. You deal with a lot, you learn a lot, you can, you know. So why...? And I think is maybe a question that we can all answer individually. Let's start on this side of the room. Why have you stayed at the workwear distribution company for so long?

IE3 How many years?

IE4 I'm not going to go there.

IE3 Say it, girl.

IE4 Maybe I just felt very... how can I say...?

IE3 Comfortable.

IE4 Comfortable, yes. And with personal reasons there was no reasons, there was not... Look, personal sides, no money to study further. But here also we only found out the other day you can study through the company, you understand.

IE2 Depending on who you are though, hey?

IE4 Yes, now what am I going to do at this age? I can study further but I'm too lazy. [Overtalking]. It's true.

IE2 I've been told that I can't study further because I'm white. Anyway, we're not going there.

IE4 And that time the people were... staff was... then were like a family thing.

IV What is that time? What do you mean with that time?

IE4 A few years ago.

IE1 It wasn't a [overtalking].

IE4 It wasn't so big then. Yes, and since we moved to the new building, everything changed, basically.

IV [Name]?

IE2 Better the devil you know than the one you don't.

IV Okay.

IE2 No, I am... The biggest thing is that it's a stable company and you hear of too many people that leave their companies and go somewhere else and then something happens and then they're obviously the first one out. So, for me, it's the stability and comfort as well.

IV Is this your only job? Is this your first and only job also?

IE2 First full-time job, yes. So you're scared of the unknown and you've been doing a certain role for so many years that you feel that you can't do anything else.

IV [Name]?

IE3 Oh, yes. Okay, for me, I think simply because management has acknowledged me for my hard work and I have gone from here to there. I've actually worked my way up and I feel that they appreciated my work and it made me feel to come to work every day. So overall, I'm quite happy working here and if I have to find a job now at my age, I don't think I will get one.

- IV Okay. [Name]?
- IE4 I would also say the stability.
- IV How long have you been here?
- IE3 I think I'm ten years. January was ten years. The stability of the company and also you aren't treated too badly and then like with [name] said about the studying thing and whatever. I think now I can actually use that opportunity to study because [name] wants me to.
- IV I assume you're on... Are you on the right colour, I assume?
- IE3 Probably. I didn't... I wasn't aware of the colour scheme, so...
- IV Don't worry, it's an internal joke.
- IE3 So, besides the whole recognition thing, also sometimes, you know. But I am happy here.
- IV Okay. [Name]?
- IE1 My age. My age and I don't actually have a problem because the nice part of my job is I work on my own. With all our nine branches, I'm on my own. I don't have to answer to anybody. I've got deadlines. I work with my deadlines. So the nice part of all is I don't work with a lot of women. I don't have that. If I have a problem, directly to [name]. If I have a problem, directly to [name].
- So I've worked in that environment and I think because of my age also that [name] would always say I'm doing appraisals. It's the fact that I'm happy in my zone, you know. I'm just happy in my zone. Where, like I say is, I know my deadlines, I know what I'm... So I don't think I would...
- IV Just, so offline, how long do you intend working still?
- IE1 Until my retirement. If I could change the situation of my pension then it won't be that long.
- IE4 Obviously...
- IV Please... okay, continue.
- IE4 No, it's okay.
- IV Please comment on the negative working experiences that you've had at the workwear distribution company. Be very specific in the frustrations and problems that you've experienced and how you've... and also describe how you've dealt with it. You've all been here for a very long time, you must have been frustrated or experienced some difficulty.
- IE1 Okay, I had a problem with one of the guys, managers and how I dealt with it is, I went directly to [name] because there are certain managers that doesn't have backbones in the sense that I know nothing would have been about it, do you understand? And that's how I would deal...

- IV But what was the problem? What was the frustration?
- IE1 The frustration was the manner in which the person spoke to me. I just didn't like and I went to report it and I wanted a letter of apology and I got it. So that I would normally deal with the problem directly, you know what I mean? I won't allow it manifest, etc. etc. but I did have that problem solved. That's how I dealt with it.
- IE2 I haven't really experienced any problems or frustrations while working here. We all have minor frustrations but it's nothing to really make note of.
- IE1 You see mine was like a constant thing and I still work with that person constantly and you can't have that verbal abuse in a manner of a constant thing, because you come to work and you feel threatened. Do you go to that person? Do you...? But it's part of your job, so you needed to solve it, so...
- IE3 Draw the line.
- IE1 You needed to draw the line somehow or another. To draw the line, yes, by going directly.
- IE3 Yes, but I think the person that you're speaking about has had the same thing... issues with a lot of people. I mean, when I started out here, the first time I think in the first week or two weeks I was on the red band because of him and one of his employees. I thought that they were sitting in that chair for ten to 15 years. So they'll just do my job for me. And I just put my foot down when I got here. I said, you do your job and I do mine.
- My job is to phone the customer and tell them their accounts is on hold, it's not your job. You do your sales. So they didn't like that, you see, so I landed on the red band, but eventually they knew what this is what it's all about, this is what I want.
- IE1 I think as an individual here at the workwear distribution company, if you are unhappy about something, you go directly and, you know, to [name] or...
- IV It's that...
- IE1 Definitely it's different now, though. [Name], it is different now. We used to do it because we were small but now there's this chain, you must go this channel and that channel. You can't go now anymore in that one. But I don't have any problems.
- IV Have you experienced any frustrating situations, negative work experiences?
- IE2 No.
- IV Okay. And you?
- IE4 Not really. I can't say. [Overtalking].
- IV You're so happy, like lucky people. [Overtalking].
- IE3 I had a bad experience. You guys know about it, a couple of years ago, where something happened. One of the employees took money and, at the end of the

day, it was all put on me. I didn't write the letter, I didn't give the letter, somebody else did because I confided in that person.

But what happened from there is that everybody started turning their backs on me and that was the most unhappiest time in my life at the workwear distribution company. But because I've got such a strong personality, I overcame that. I overcame it and eventually people started probably to realise but I did nothing wrong and eventually it went away and forgot about. But that time, it was very, very stressful for me. I used to cry when I went home every night because of this. But I came through it. I came through strong and I'm still here.

- IE5 And if I just talk about what you said now, from what you spoke about earlier on about recognition and stuff, you saw that something was wrong, you made to be feel like you were the one that was in the wrong, where you should have actually been acknowledged for what you had found.
- IE1 Because it was actually to the advantage of the company.
- IE5 Management acknowledged it but they should have acknowledged it in front of everybody so that people know that this is not your fault. You actually did something good.
- IE3 Anyway, it's gone, forgotten.
- IV Do you feel that your job provides you with enough scope to utilise your skills and your knowledge to the max? Please elaborate. Yes, ma'am?
- IE4 I feel that I don't like this via, via business, you know, like the internet frustrates me. There I'm going to answer that one question. It's very frustrating having to bother [name], for instance, because where we get our emails from.
- IV Okay.
- IE4 And then having to maybe email Emma or whoever. You have to now send... type out the email...
- IE1 Go via.
- IE4 It's your thingy [?], send it to Lizette and then sometimes Lizette is busy with her so she forgets to send the stuff or whatever but the whole point is the whole via, via thing. That really frustrates me.
- IV What do you mean with via via? [Overtalking].
- IE4 External [unclear] with your customer.
- IV So you don't have a direct...? So you don't have an external email address?
- IE4 No.
- IV And it's all just internal?

- IE4 Yes, and because of that, all that is sitting on me because I sit there whole day and do emails to [name]. Most of the time we sit and we send out and we receive and we send out and we receive. I get thousands of mails every day.
- IV Why would you...? I'm just going to stop there for a moment. Why do you think that people don't have external email addresses? Or external email functions.
- IE2 People abuse it.
- IE3 Yes, thank you.
- IV Okay.
- IE5 But the company... It's... we're kind of controlled a lot of the time where you're told what you may or may not do. So even if you... if most of the people won't abuse it but they believe that it will be abused, they will cut it off.
- IV Do you think it's a power thing?
- IE3 Yes, I think so, because that is detrimental for the company. Because even sales, I mean they don't have external. They now have one email address where everybody's email so they must juggle through their emails, oh, this is not for me, this not for me and I think, in that case, they might overlook some of these mails coming through. I think if they have more confidence in the workers.
- IE2 I don't think it's a power thing, as such, more of a control thing and like a Big Daddy's watching you kind of thing.
- IV So do you think that they trust employees enough to...?
- IE1 No.
- IE2 No.
- IE3 No, they don't. I think also because it's a family business. If it perhaps was a corporate company, it would have been different.
- IE2 There are lots of ways, like with the internet, there are ways to get around not trusting people. You can put so many blocks on so many sites.
- IE1 So many sites.
- IE2 That will prevent your staff from going into the sites that you're worried that they're going to go into but by giving them the access, it enables them to do their work.
- IV So you say not having an external email facility prohibits you...
- IE3 To do your job.
- IE4 To do your job.
- IV Okay. Anything else? Anybody else feels...? How do you feel about your job providing enough scope and you utilising your skills and knowledge to the max?
- IE3 I don't have any problem with that.

- IE2 I think they don't give us enough opportunity. Like a lot of people could do so much more with training. Like I said earlier on, you sit in your chair and that's where you stay. They don't give you scope to grow. They don't give you the opportunities. For myself there is actually a lot of time in the day that I would be wanting to do other stuff but I...
- IE3 You are limited to certain things.
- IE2 Yes. Not just limited, they don't... They just don't...
- IE1 Share the knowledge.
- IE2 Share knowledge, yes, and just...
- IE1 That's the one thing. There is a very, very big selfishness that's happening. Like when we came from also was the fact that when we were trained with whatever, whatever, nothing should be irreplaceable, type of thing. Nobody should just know something. Here at the workwear distribution company, very, very, in capital letters, they do not share the knowledge. And when I say knowledge, is about the company itself.
- You don't know that, know this, etc. It's all about sharing the knowledge. It's all about sharing the knowledge, Randall. And because you can empower your staff if you can only share that knowledge, you know what I mean? We don't share knowledge here. We keep it so tight, it actually get locked [?]. The sharing of the knowledge, there's no share of knowledge here.
- IV Do you think that's it's a problem that it's a family business versus a non-family business?
- IE3 In some ways, maybe, yes.
- IV Why would you say that?
- IE2 Because they have to keep everything so close to themselves.
- IE3 Watching every second... [Overtalking].
- IE1 They need to... I think where they lack, I can stand under correction, somebody can give you another opinion, but I think the lack of sharing with the staff where the internet is concerned, etc. etc. Keeping the expenses down. Another thing is they won't give [name] a study preference because of her colour. They will do something, they would go that extra mile for training, only if it's going to be to the company's advantage. And that is the bad part.
- IE2 Everything's to the company's advantage.
- IE1 To the company's advantage.
- IE2 And not considering the staff's needs. [Overtalking].
- IE1 In growing...
- IE2 Ultimately, it's their advantage.

- IE3 I personally also feel that we haven't had a train... a debtors training session for years and the last one we had and we came back and my staff was motivated. And I think we need that also maybe once a year. Send them to a course because times are changing. There's always new things coming on the market. We don't know about it. We're sitting here behind closed doors. We don't know what's going on. So that is also good ideas, to send your staff on training once a year and to motivate them and for them to get fresher things, you know, updates.
- IE2 In last year, I think we were in there together. We did some training but because they were looking for BEEE points, it was really ridiculous training. It was stuff that we would never use in a million years. Make the training applicable.
- IE3 Oh yes, thank you, that also. But the thing that we did last year [unclear]. [Overtalking]. It wasn't applicable for us.
- IE1 I know, it's all for the company's... to the company's advantage, not the staff.
- IE2 For the BEE status.
- IE3 Look, at the end of the day, it's going to benefit us as well because we're going to get more clientele, so the business is growing but they do need to remember us as well. We also need to grow with the training. So we also need to go on training courses once a year. You know, refresh our mind. Bring new things.
- IE1 It depends on your age, my love.
- IE3 You're not going to go out...
- IE2 You're still doing the same work.
- IE3 It's not about the age, it's about what you're doing.
- IE1 What I'm saying to you is why you don't go on training is because it's not to the company's advantage, because on the BEE status, you need to be a certain status for it to be to the company's benefit. That is why you and I sitting here will not go.
- IV So you say for training there are moderators like age, and colour, or race, etc. etc.
- IE2 Everything that will benefit the BEE points, not the staff.
- IE1 And that's [unclear].
- IV Is there anything else that you would like to share with regards to, you know, supervisor relationships, trust, communication, culture?
- IE2 Can I just agree with the cross-training and more maybe... what's it called? The socials between the staff. [Unclear].
- IV Staff development.
- IE2 Like when we did that thing at [name]'s house one day. [Overtalking].
- IE1 Team building.
- IE2 Something like that but you've seen [overtalking].

- IE1 That was so fun.
- IE2 That was just the debtors department. Include the departments. Do different ones where you have the sales.
- IE1 Your sales.
- IE2 And a mix of sales and admin and store and everything. Just let us find out about the other people and the other departments and just... so we can work better with them, knowing about what they're doing as well, what their situations are.
- IE1 And, at the end of the day, is, hey, if you walk out of this to your car and you see... you walk out, sometimes there's people that works in our store and, gosh, we don't know them. That is so bad. And when I drive, I drive from the station and I just look at the workwear distribution company's jacket or whatever and I offer that person a lift of whatever. But there's so much new people here and we don't even know who works at the workwear distribution company.
- IE2 I don't even open the door in the morning because I don't know your face.
- IE1 Do you know that is like terribly bad.
- IE4 And the other thing that I also want to say, sorry [name], is that you and your staff, as a... what you call it? I think it basically goes for everybody, if you respect the next person, no matter if he's a store man, he's a tea lady or what cleans the toilets, if you respect that person, that person respects you. You will actually see growth in that person because that person isn't walking around with, sy wil vir haar net so hou, sy wil... sy dink of sy 'n manager is. Sy wil vir haar... So whatever I maybe come tell you, I'm disrespectful towards you, you're not going to do what I ask you because you don't have respect for me.
- IE3 That's true, yes.
- IE4 So, at the end of the day, respect plays a huge role in any environment, be it work, home, wherever. Respect does play a huge, huge role. And you will find that if you respect that person, that person respects you, you can ask that person, oh, don't you want to do this for me? That person is going to do it with joy because you respect me as a human being. And I think that is one of the most important aspects. That's all I can say, thank you. [Name], you wanted to say something.
- IE3 No, it's fine.
- IV Okay, ladies, thank you very, very much. This was extremely insightful. Yes, obviously for this project that I'm busy with and linking it with the results that the questionnaires have given and I thank you for just being open and honest and just sharing your experiences and thoughts with me.
- IE1 Thank you.

Voice 160_sd

Speaker Key:

IV Interviewer

IE Interviewee

IV So, I mean, the questionnaire was a very simple thing because it was just like an agree, disagree kind of tick-box thing. So this delves into more of the themes that we dealt with in the questionnaire. So I just would like to know how you feel about your working at the workwear distribution company? Sort of what you like, what you dislike or what makes you happy and what makes you unhappy? As I've said before, this is completely confidential, so it doesn't go out. This is just for academic purposes for myself.

IE1 We are glad we have a job to keep our family's mouth open. That's basically one of my likes and my love. And then there is a few things in this company that's like where something that I would say...

IV Sorry, before you go on, we're going to use names, but when we do the write-up, no names will appear, for the sake of confidentiality because it's obviously now very difficult to me referring to you and referring to you. So we'll have the conversation, the person that will do the transcribing is not in any way connected to either UCT or the workwear distribution company. It is a completely foreign person that I chose to transcribe all of my work for me. Right, so, yes. So what is it that you dislike? Or what are the issues that causes...?

IE1 There's quite some issues, especially when it comes to...

IE2 Money.

IE1 That's the first issue. Talking about the root now. That's basically it, yes.

IV So what is it about the money?

IE1 Well, as you know, we had this meeting or whatever.

IV Pretend that I don't know.

IE1 Yes, exactly, but sometimes things is unfair.

IV What is unfair?

IE1 Rulings that's been made.

IV What rulings or what is unfair about the money?

IE2 Some people is treated different to other people.

IE1 Exactly.

- IV Okay. And what are the other things that you are referring to?
- IE1 Well, that's basically it. Like, for instance, whenever you actually try to speak your mind, it's like it's speaking against the... you know [overtalking].
- IV So there's no opportunity for employees to voice their opinion?
- IE1 Well sometimes you think you're doing the right thing and, at the end of the day, it's like people's looking at you like you like, oh, like you're just turning up, you know. So that's one of the things for me that I think is like being... it's not fair.
- IV Okay. [Name]?
- IE2 Regarding the unfairness or...?
- IV No, I don't know. What makes you happy? What do you enjoy? What don't you enjoy?
- IE2 I'm grateful to have a job here at the workwear distribution company and it's been a privilege to work with this people for all the years and, yes, there's some things that is... that I agree with and some things that I don't agree with.
- IV What do you agree with? What don't you agree with?
- IE2 Say, for instance...
- IV It just helps me if you are very specific.
- IE2 Like some people is treated more different towards other people. Do you understand what I'm saying? So say, for instance, like accounts people, they get special treatment. Our sales people, they work the hardest here but they... it's almost like they don't get that acknowledgment. Do you understand what I'm saying? So, yes, that is the thing.
- IV And what do you enjoy?
- IE2 Enjoy? I enjoy the work that I do.
- IV What about the work you enjoy?
- IE2 Like the sales, picking up experience and connecting with customers.
- IV Okay. How would you describe an employee that goes the extra mile? Are you that person? And please elaborate?
- IE2 We always go the extra mile, always.
- IE1 We will always encourage one another also and support, basically. Wherever we can help, support each other in the department... [Overtalking].
- IE2 We make a way to keep that customer happy.
- IE1 If one is not there, then the other one needs to stand in at the end of the day also.
- IV Do you see yourselves as that person that goes the extra mile?

IE1 I feel like I'm a team player, yes.

IE2 I think the whole sales department, we all go the extra mile or the kind, the kind of work that we do.

IV All right. What do you see as the goals of this organisation?

IE1 [Unclear].

IV What do you see as the goals of the organisation? Do you know what they are?

IE1 Well, goals is basically to strive and go further and maybe employ more people. For people to maybe like just to earn a living as well.

IV Okay.

IE2 Goals in like...?

IV What do you see as the goals of the organisation?

IE2 I would have liked if you can maybe improve in this company. Say for instance if you come to sales, there's no improvement after that, do you understand what I'm saying? Say for instance like the company can send you for like... [Overtalking].

IV But I'm not talking about your goals. I'm talking so what do you see...?

IE2 For goals for the company.

IV What do you see as the workwear distribution company's goals? So that is a goal that is I'm sure that you would want. That you see yourself as. But what do you see as a goal of the organisation?

IE2 Just to do better now.

IV Okay, what kind of things do you think you should be doing to enable the organisation to meet its goals?

IE1 What do...?

IV What kind of things do you think you should be doing, you should be doing, to enable the organisation to meet its goals? So goals are things like, you know, profitability, a successful organisation. Those are the things. So how would you enable the organisation to meet its goals?

IE1 It's a really good question. When we maybe... I'm thinking of maybe promoting more. Do more promotion work as well, where a lot of companies actually put ads in the paper to promote and try to make more sales, try to give maybe specials on certain items that's not going out, like redundant stock or whatever, and you try to sell. So, for me, I think throw in specials is like promotion is very important as well.

IV Okay. In what ways does the workwear distribution company recognise employees who perform well?

IE1 I don't think there is a way.

- IE2 Your people should know that.
- IE1 I don't think there's any way.
- IV Okay. Do you agree? Okay. In what ways would you like your supervisor to recognise your output?
- IE1 For me, I really would say they can go to the boss and say how hard I work and give me a raise. Give me a raise. So, yes.
- IV I can't exactly put in my thesis to make [unclear].
- IE1 For me I think that's one of things as well, to also to acknowledge a person's work that they do. It's very important because you can't just see every time how hard... Everybody must run around, give their 100% and not say thank you or we can see that you're working hard, you know, for the company. So, for me, that's one of the main things, actually.
- IV [Name], and you? In what way would you like your supervisor to recognise your output?
- IE2 To speak up more for us. To stand for us as a team. Do you understand what I'm saying? We're all working in the same department, so it's not too much to ask.
- IV Do you know who you report to?
- IE1 Well, mostly we report to [Name], so, yes.
- IE2 So, yes, I think he's our team leader.
- IV No, I just need to establish whether you know who.
- IE2 Yes, [Name].
- IV How does your relationship with your supervisor enable you to be successful at work? Does it? Doesn't it? And, if so, how?
- IE2 Can you just repeat the question?
- IV How does your relationship with your supervisor enable you to be successful at work?
- IE1 Sometimes there is a relationship that you can see and sometimes there's not. Because you sometimes don't get the answers that you need at a certain time, to go back to a person and tell the person, listen here, this is ETAs, this is lead times. And, at the end of the day, you sit with the slack with the customer. But I can't say it on both. Both our superiors in our department, because the one you can actually count on. When you ask for an answer then you actually get an answer the same day or so. So, but... Yes, communication, it's a very, very good thing.
- IV So does your boss, does your supervisor communicate or not?
- IE1 They communicate, they do. But, I mean, it's like I say, communication comes from both ways and if I need to know an answer to a customer that's not going to

give you shit at the end of the day, you expect that answer. So, like I say, from one and the other one you get the answer at the end of the day. So, yes.

- IV [Name]?
- IE2 It's basically what he's saying.
- IV Okay. In what ways does your supervisor provide feedback to your work... to you on work-related matters?
- IE2 The same like the first questions. They the one they will tell you maybe or email.
- IV Okay, so who doesn't give you feedback or does give you answers?
- IE1 Well [Name] gives us answers.
- IE2 Mark, yes, that's.
- IV Okay, so let's use [Name], because I mean I don't think that, you know, [Name] is really applicable because according to [Name] he doesn't supervise any people and I mean you guys know that [Name] is sort of a stand-in person when [Name] isn't here. Let's use [Name] for the sake of the argument here.
- IE2 So then we have to...
- IV How does [Name]...? How does your supervisor provide feedback to you on work-related matters?
- IE2 Actually, it's the feedback. If we have an ETA, a customer wants an ETA on an item and we ask [Name], he immediately gives us an answer.
- IV But I'm thinking... and other work-related matters? That not necessarily has to do with sales and your phone and the phones and customers.
- IE1 Sorry, what..?
- IV So there are pay... anything that has to do with work.
- IE1 Okay, he's basically very understandable, especially when you maybe... if there's certain issues that you have. Issues, he's very... he hear what you saying. He always give an ear. Maybe you can speak to him like in a personal matter or whatever. He will assist and maybe ask you maybe, is everything maybe sorted?
- IE2 Sometimes he can be very sarcastic also.
- IE1 Oh, he's the king of sarcasm, hey. The king.
- IV Is team work important to you and why?
- IE2 Definitely, it's...
- IV [Name], you can answer this one.
- IE2 It's definitely important.
- IV Why would you say so?

IE2 Because why, basically, when you can rely on a colleague of yours and you're not there that day, it's very important that your colleague also knows what you're busy with so that they can understand when you're not here what's going on with your work. So, yes, team work is very important. Say for instance if [name] is not here, me and him, we deal with the... basically the same customers. So when he's not here, they will phone me. When I'm not there, they will phone him. Something like that. And he basically knows what's going on.

IV Okay. Is team work important to you? And why?

IE1 It's important, yes, because you're actually building relationships with these people inside, because...

IV I'm sure you know why you build relationships?

IE1 I really think that this is actually your... the place that you the most at and this is basically your house, this is my brother, I've got sisters there inside.

IV So that's why your stomach is always in order.

IE1 That's not work-related, hey.

IV Your sister ensures that you get the job done. You are fuelled for the day.

IE1 Yes, I feel that it's important to have... [Overtalking].

IV Just as a matter of fact [name], how long have you been working here?

IE1 17 years, yes.

IV So you started here when you were 17, 18? Is this your first job?

IE1 What are you actually trying to say?

IV No I'm just trying roughly making [unclear].

IE1 You actually want to put me on a spot now.

IV No man. Is this your first job?

IE1 No.

IV [Name]?

IE2 It's not my first job and I'm here 11 years now.

IE1 I almost wanted to say something wrong now.

IV No, I... it helps the topic as well, because, you know, when people stay at one place for a long time, we talk about retention. So there could be factors that ensure that people stay at a place. So what we call the happiness factors and then there are obviously factors that push people away and that cause them not to stay. And then so on both sides you could have the pros and the cons because, in my opinion, when people stay at a business too long, it could be problematic because you never have fresh blood moving into the business.

Things are stagnating because, I mean, it stays the same. If people are not growing, then things stays the same so I ask just as a matter of fact. Why do you think some people decide to leave the workwear distribution company? So why do they decide to leave?

- IE1 Money.
- IE2 Money is the first issue. Sometimes they get a better offer.
- IV What about the money?
- IE2 That they earn too little money.
- IV Okay.
- IE1 Yes.
- IV I'm not going to ask what is too little because I think then the conversation is going to go on too long.
- IE1 Yes, and then sometimes there's also unfairness when it comes to people working in the stores and they feel that they're treated...
- IE2 Some people has been working here, for instance, for ten years but never gets promoted. Now, a person that comes here like he works here for two years, he gets a promotion but the person that works here ten years don't get a promotion.
- IV Okay. Any other reasons why you think people leave?
- IE1 I think the money is the main reason why they leave because they're probably getting maybe something better for them to look out for something better and they're getting something better. But, yes, that's the main reason. Maybe financial problems is also one of the issues.
- IV Okay. Why do you think some people at the workwear distribution company work at the workwear distribution company for a long period of time?
- IE2 To support families.
- IV I think, you know, when we talk about long, we talk about...
- IE1 Shareholder.
- IV Five years is quite a long time. Let's... you know, three to five years is quite a long time and at the workwear distribution company people have exceeded that quite comfortably. So why do you think people would be working here at the workwear distribution company for so long?
- IE1 Maybe for stability. Stability, yes. [Unclear]. Providing for the families.
- IE2 Most of...
- IE1 You've got bills to pay, at least you know that it's like a permanent job that you have. You actually sometimes go to other companies and other jobs and then you see that grass wasn't greener on the other side, so that's...

- IV So you are saying it's permanent, it's stable, so you're going to stick with this.
- IE1 Yes.
- IV Regardless of all the unfairness that you're talking about?
- IE1 Well it's not everybody that feels the same way.
- IV No, I'm... yes, but I'm referring to you specifically. I mean, you've been here for a long time. I mean, both of you have been here for quite a long time. And both of you have, in the first instance, mentioned what you don't enjoy about it and it was an issue of money, it was an issue of unfairness. Later on, why do people leave? Unfairness, money.
- So now I'm saying, so why do people work at the workwear distribution company for a very long time? You're saying stability and you have a job and whatever. So I'm saying... So you are working regardless of the money, regardless of the other reason, unfairness. Because that's the two main reasons that you've cited. So you say you're working here because of stability and because it's a permanent job and the grass isn't necessarily greener on the other side. Is that the summary for you, right?
- Please comment on the negative experiences that you've had at the workwear distribution company. Be specific about the frustrations and problems that you've experienced and how you've typically dealt with them?
- IE1 [Unclear].
- IV Okay. Please comment on the negative experiences that you've had at the workwear distribution company, but you must be very specific about the frustrations or what caused it to frustrate you and the problems that you've experienced and how you've dealt with them?
- IE2 Over the years, since I started here, I came to make friends with everyone and there was this group of people that was doing something wrong. So I was friends with them, so unfortunately I couldn't discuss this with anybody else, and that one person that did that awful thing, so the whole... the company looked at everybody in the same light. I was very frustrated and very cross, very upset about what he did, yes and the company as well because they...
- IV For viewing everybody in the same light.
- IE2 For viewing everybody in the same light, yes.
- IV But what have you done about that problem or frustration? How have you dealt with it?
- IE2 I just left it like it was and it faded over a couple of months, so, yes.
- IE1 I actually don't have an answer.
- IV So the money doesn't frustrate you and neither does the unfairness frustrate you?

- IE1 Yes, it does.
- IV You've mentioned that [overtalking].
- IE1 Yes, that's a lot of frustration. It even frustrates me when I speak about it, that's why I don't want to talk about it now. It's frustrating.
- IV Okay. Do you feel that your job provides enough scope for you to utilise your skills and knowledge to the maximum? Please elaborate.
- IE1 No. I think we can always go for... to exceed and to excel more in what we do but I don't think that we get that provision. We got provision once and, I mean, at the end of the day, you're still sitting where you sit. Even the company sent you [unclear] whatever. Skills or whatever training or whatever, you still sit at the same spot, so what's the use of going...? [Overtalking].
- IV Do you think that there's opportunity for growth? Do you...? Does the structure of the organisation cater for that?
- IE1 I think there is some where we... [Overtalking].
- IV Where would you move to?
- IE1 To be honest, I won't actually want to become a rep, to be honest.
- IV Okay, and why is that?
- IE1 I think there is like structures or whatever that can be improved to make it a better environment for everybody. Maybe try to [unclear] or whatever you can do just to grow the company, you understand? So there is maybe ways that can be implemented.
- IV [Name]?
- IE2 I actually don't have anything for you now.
- IV Okay, cool.

Voice 161_sd

Speaker Key:

IV Interviewer

IE Interviewee

IV All right. So tell me, how do you feel about working at the workwear distribution company? What you like, what you dislike about it and, you know, kind of what makes you feel happy about working here and what makes you feel unhappy about working here? Anybody? We're going to use the names for the sake of just obviously communicating now but when we do the write-up, there's going to be no names in the paperwork.

IE1 Okay what I like is, okay, the people but sometimes it can be, you know, a lot of unfairness when it comes to the dislikes within the company.

IV Okay.

IE2 I like working here, it's just at times it feels that you're not allowed to voice how you feel here at the workwear distribution company and on many occasions if you do say something then it's like you... how can I now put it? Almost like you the bad seed, at the end of the day. And I think you should be comfortable in saying and how you're feeling when you work here.

IE4 It's not a positive working environment, so in general people are demotivated. What I like about my working environment is some of my colleagues I work with. My dislikes include poor communication, no opportunities for development, no future growth opportunities and the autocratic leadership style.

IV Why do you think it's like that?

IE2 I think it's because here is managers here. You have your favourites and you have your non-favourites here. So if you're not... say if you're a favourite, you tend to get... how can I put it now?

IV More privileges.

IE2 More privileges, yes, that's how I see it.

IV Okay, you just said what do you like about working? You said the people.

IE1 Yes, the people.

IE2 I also like the people because telesales, we are a very nice sales team, we work well together.

IE1 You get your people, your team you just get along with and click. Besides work, you have your fun times as well.

IE2 It's enjoyable just to work.

- IV Do you like people outside of telesales too or not?
- IE1 Yes.
- IE2 Of course.
- IV I hope you like me. How would you describe an employee that goes the extra mile? And are you that person? Please elaborate.
- IE1 I'll start to answer that. The extra mile, for me, is especially... I'll take me for an example, coming to work early. I'm at work most of the time at 07:00. I don't sit, I catch up on my work, you know. For me the customer comes first. And I'm not just doing the job for myself to make my own work easier, you think of the customer. You know, like [Name] always said, the customer pays your salary, so I see it like that.
- IE2 That's how I also feel. I put the customer first. No matter what, I want to make that customer happy at the end of the day and so that they can come back for more business.
- IE4 A person that go out of his way to assist someone to be successful in something that they won't be able to do on their own and still give them all the credit for their achievement. Yes, I would like to believe that I do go the extra mile for my fellow employees
- IV [Name] there's no video, don't worry.
- IE2 And, you know, a better commission structure gave more, you know, sales in that as well.
- IV Okay. All right. What do you see as the goals of the organisation? Do you know what the goals are?
- IE1 Honestly, I don't know what the goals are at the workwear distribution company.
- IV Okay. What kind of things do you think you should be doing to enable to meet the organisational goals? If you don't know what it is, you don't know what you're going to be doing, that's the assumption. Do you agree?
- IE2 I agree.
- IE1 I agree.
- IV Okay, so you don't know what they are. What kind of things do you think you should be... no, that was the question I asked. In what ways does the workwear distribution company recognise employees who perform well?
- IE1 Technically by a bonus.
- IE2 Sometimes you just feel, you know... Say, for example, I've got a huge order for 100 000. All I want, at the end of the day, acknowledge and just say, thank you, [name], well done. Because, at the end of the day, it actually makes you feel good as a person, knowing that your boss actually is taking note of you. Whereas, at

the end of the day, if you don't get that, it feels like, ag, you know, it's just the same old thing every day. Just to have that recognition, that's all.

- IE4 They don't recognise people at all
- IV [Name]?
- IE1 Yes, more or less the same thing what [name] is referring to.
- IV So you just want to be recognised by saying thank you.
- IE1 Just a thank you, yes, at least.
- IE2 It's nice.
- IV Do you think that there are other ways how you can be recognised for a job well done or is it just the thank you?
- IE2 Incentives would be nice. It actually motivates you at the end of the day.
- IV What kind of incentives are you referring to?
- IE2 Like, say, for example, if we had like a... our structure, our commission is obviously just set accordingly, but say if somebody makes... say it's three out of 30, now you maybe get an incentive like, you know... I don't know how to put it [overtalking].
- IE1 I understand what you're trying to say. It's like top three within internal sales. So, you know, like you get like a reward. Just like a small little trophy just to say number one this month, second place. We don't expect about money. I know some people...
- IE2 It's not always just about money it's making...
- IE1 First place, second place, third place. It's like a small little prize.
- IV So you're saying you want a board there with like...
- IE1 Your picture.
- IV Well, I was going to say, we're get a...
- IE1 Like at Standard Bank, yes.
- IE2 Yes.
- IV Like at McDonalds so you can see [name], [name].
- IE1 Something like that, yes.
- IV Okay.
- IE1 And it motivates you more as well.
- IV Okay. In what ways would you like your supervisor to recognise your output? So what you do? How would you want your supervisor to recognise that? You can be open and honest, this is a very safe environment. Do you know who your supervisor is, first of all?

IE1 Is it not [name]?

IE2 [Name]? We don't even know if it's [Name] or [Name].

IV Let's use [Name] for the sake of this argument because, in my opinion, it's [Name].

IE1 [Name] knows when we do well.

IV Yes, but how would you like [Name] to recognise your output?

IE2 You know... Okay, here's where it's going to start. I feel in many a cases as working in telesales, I don't feel that our manager always has 100% backing. That's my honest opinion, when we do decide to have meetings, fine enough, he will say, yes, [name] or [name], I agree with you guys. But we don't know what happens behind closed doors because we never get...

IV Feedback.

IE2 Proper feedback to say... He will say it in front of us, but we don't [overtalking].

IE1 Yes.

IE2 Do you know what I mean at the end of the day?

IV Okay.

IE2 So I don't feel at times that our manager backs us up 100%, to be honest.

IV Yes, all right. How does your relationship with [Name]... I'm going to use [Name] just so like... with [Name] enables you to be successful at work?

IE1 [Name], one thing about [Name], he knows his products very well.

IE2 He's helpful.

IE1 He's very helpful. And I'm going to be honest, he's more helpful than [Name]. You can go to him and he won't give you a stupid answer, you know, or not come back to you. For one thing, he's always on the ball. Although he can be, at times, full of... it's too much pressure on him because we go for the smallest thing but he'll always come to you and feed back as soon as possible.

It does take a strain on him at times. So you can learn a lot from him. Look at [Name], where [Name] is today. He's on the road, he's now a rep. [Name] taught him a lot as well. So with [Name] you can move further within the company.

IV Okay.

IE2 Yes, but then it's being... being also with everyone.

IE1 Being with everyone, but he teaches you a lot as well.

IV In what ways does [Name] provide feedback to you on work-related matters?

IE1 Are you saying when we're using email and things like that?

IV Well, however you interpret the question. In what ways does [Name] provide feedback to you?

IE3 Hi, sorry, did you get that thank you letters? No. Did you email the paperwork where we sent them the notification to say that this is the donation for enterprise development? I don't think you gave it to me.

IV I think I have it here.

IE3 Hey?

IV I think I have it.

IE3 Okay, no that's what I'm waiting for, for the auditors.

IV Okay, I'll give it to you as soon as I'm done here quickly. All right.

IE1 [Name] is in the recording now.

IV Where's it? Yes, provide... in what ways does he provide you with feedback on work-related matters?

IE1 Like deliveries. When it went wrong, [Name] will always come to you and tell you, incorrectly boot was sent, re-deliver. No, he gives us the credit notes and he tells us what was incorrectly delivered to the customer. Can you rectify the invoice or call the customer back? No, he does most of that.

IE2 He does a lot.

IE1 He does a lot.

IE2 Sometimes I feel he needs a PA.

IV Okay. Is team work important to you and why?

IE1 Definitely.

IE2 Definitely.

IE1 Especially in your workplace and especially in terms of the work that we do. You have to have team work there, without team work you can get frustrated and I feel like that lately, but, you know, you can't take it out on a customer because customers need to be assisted but a lot of team work we need in internal sales.

IV And why is that?

IE1 Because, especially... I'll make a simple example now, Randall. If someone gets up, go to the store, check stock, without notifying switchboard, which is wrong and your phone rings, rings, rings, that person had left their desk phone ring and that customer that's on that line gets frustrated, the call's getting bounced back and forth. By the time you get the call, the customer gets rude and abrupt. It was a frustration all the time from hanging on from one person to the next. So team work is very important in our department.

IE2 That happens a lot.

- IV And is team work important for you and why?
- IE2 Most definitely. The thing is, if there's no team, how else is it then going to work?
- IE4 Yes team work is important especially with a company the size of the workwear distribution company, but we don't have any team work. We operate in silos.
- IV Why do you think some people decide to leave the workwear distribution company?
- IE1 The main thing, especially I think in the store, is salary.
- IE2 Salary, yes.
- IE1 That's the main thing, especially the store guys. There's a lot of store guys that don't work here that long. Like three months or four months or even less than a year and then they look for a better opportunity. So, for me, there's no way moving forward within the store.
- IE2 I left twice. It was always about money and then luckily I got an opportunity to come back. The grass is not always greener on the other side. That's what I've learnt. All [Name's] favourite word.
- IV Well, you know, in the human resources environment kind of it it's true, you know. I think that some people are just lucky in that they are able to come back twice, you know, because I am of the opinion that I don't necessarily take people back.
- You know, you must have been a superstar and something must have happened that I'll take you back, but otherwise I won't because there was a reason why you left. And if you didn't want to tell me, it was up to you, but, I mean, there must have been a reason why you left, you know. Which question did I...? Why do you think people work at the workwear distribution company for so long? Some people, I mean, work here for like donkey's years?
- IE1 I think it's more of a comfort zone.
- IE4 They are in a comfort zone and don't believe in themselves to take the next step.
- IE2 Yes, true. People tend to be comfortable. It feels like there...
- IV Is it a good thing or a bad thing?
- IE2 Not always a good thing. Reason why, because that particular person that's so comfortable, for me, they're slack in their work.
- IE1 True.
- IE2 And I've seen people that's worked here for years that tends to think... How can I say? Ag, you know what? That person is just going to do it. And that person that's in that specific job area doesn't do half the stuff what we're actually doing at the end of the day.
- IE1 Yes.

- IE2 And I'm talking about people that's working here for years.
- IE1 It's almost like they think... [Overtalking].
- IE2 I'm working 30 years here. You're working five years, who are you to tell me?
- IV Okay. Please comment on negative work experiences that you've had at the workwear distribution company. Be very specific about the description, in terms of those frustrations, problems that you've experienced and how you've dealt with them? It's almost sounds like you've seen this question somewhere. You always like you get the answers.
- IE1 Negative experience?
- IV So things that have frustrated you, because sometimes, you know, negative experiences are defined in a different way, but things that have frustrated you and how you've dealt with it? Or problems?
- IE2 I had a bad experience. We... you are aware of it with this whole Transnet thing where I spoke to [Name] one day and I just feel the way she said something to me, I didn't appreciate that. Because, to me, it's like you can't tell somebody, if you don't want to do this, then there's no place for you here. It actually really affected me in a bad way, really.
- IV How have you dealt with it?
- IE2 I just left it as is because, I mean, I need a job and, to be honest with you, Randall, if I get a better opportunity tomorrow, which I know I won't be able to return, I'll grab it with both hands because currently I am looking. I just feel here there's... growth-wise, it's not that I want to be a rep, but just acknowledge your workers and appreciate them more.
- IE1 Treat everyone fair. Fair and equal. That doesn't mean that if you're in a higher position you can speak down on the next person.
- IE2 Correct.
- IE1 We're all the same.
- IV Any frustrations that you've experienced?
- IE1 Actually, sometimes it's your work that gets to you, in that sense. You know, you deal with it and you do solve the problem at the end of the day, you know. Taking your work home with you is not worth it. So let it all out at work and, you know, it's pointless.
- IE2 And you know what, hey, if there could have been like a structure where they could have maybe just to... I know each department has got their stresses and what they have to do, but to be honest, with internal, you need to fax. You need to get up, go fax. Then you need to go to the warehouse and check stock. I really think that they should come with a system that is going to try to alleviate our pressure a bit less in telesales.

- IV Have you thought about a solution or a recommendation?
- IE2 No, not really.
- IE1 It would have been cool if we had a fax machine just there, you know you just press fax.
- IE2 Something that's... where you don't actually have to move from your desk, where you do everything, because now you're getting. Now [name]'s phone is ringing, I mean, my phone is ringing, sorry...
- IE1 No, we're going to gain some kilos if we're not going to get up from our desk [overtalking].
- IE2 I mean something to make it easier because now we're walking too [Karen] and we're scanning and your phone rings and [overtalking]. Now that person is getting irritated because she could have been doing something else.
- IV I don't know if you get a system, [name] that you don't have to get up from your desk. I have always had to walk to a fax.
- IE2 At least we could have had this... you know the phones where you have that...
- IE1 No, we tried that before. Apparently [Name] did try but it pick up into the store. Are you talking about the hands-free?
- IE2 Yes.
- IE1 They tried that, but that would be awesome.
- IE2 That's nice.
- IV All right. Do you feel that your job provides you with enough scope to utilise your skills and knowledge to the max? Please elaborate?
- IE2 Yes.
- IV Okay. And you [name]?
- IE1 Can you repeat the question?
- IV Do you feel that your job provides you with enough scope for you to utilise your skills and knowledge to the max?
- IE1 Yes.
- IV Okay, all right.

Voice 164_sd

Speaker Key:

IV Interviewer

IE Interviewee

IV So basically I'm just going to ask how you feel about working at the workwear distribution company? Basically what you like, what you dislike, what makes you feel...? What makes you happy and what makes you feel unhappy? There's no right or wrong answer in any of it.

I will judge it when I have to write my thesis because it's an academic piece of work but I'm not going say [name], you're wrong, [name], you're right, because it has nothing to do with that. So how do you feel about the workwear distribution company...? Maybe we should start with you, [name]? You've worked here the longest. How do you feel about working at the workwear distribution company? What do you like, what do you dislike? You know, what makes you happy? What makes you unhappy?

IE1 How do I feel about working with the workwear distribution company?

IV Yes.

IE1 I think possibly my impression of the workwear distribution company, the first unit [?], the company has grown in the market and it's got a monopoly also. And, you know, being employed in the workwear distribution company also gives you the [unclear] to utilise the experience that you've got and to put it into full effect, you know. And then possibly also the other thing probably that you just asked me, I think possibly the induction programme.

We previously had an induction programme, which is not... the product knowledge is not implemented anymore. You know, people are just taken at random, brought into the workwear distribution company and put into the position and they don't get... become aware of the product knowledge. It probably takes a week or two.

And then, of course, what is the other thing? It gives you a certain amount of job satisfaction, but at the end of the day, I think today I related job satisfaction also goes monetary-wise also, you know. Because you can do your utmost but if you are not compensated as you were probably pumping into the company, then you feel you become demotivated. And then it's also, I think, like I said, also in job... proper training. That is what our staff virtually [?] need.

Because, you know, you take one person who is experienced or inexperienced and he's going to take, you know, a novice and train a person, where you're losing out the expertise of that person, you can utilise him somewhere because he needs to nurture somebody for the two or three weeks. So probably the company has got something... I think many big companies, you would know, that they've got training

officers, which then trains people according as to, you know, what kind of job... what is required of them.

And, yes, we get the piece of paper that says, you know, this is what the requirement may be, but it's never adhered to, that kind of thing. Because, you know, you've got to go from pillar to post.

IV So what do you like and what do you dislike? Bullets. Three bullets. What do you like? What do you like?

IE1 What do I dislike? Yor, there's so many things.

IV List them, quickly. We only have an hour.

IE1 Okay, no I suppose, you know, it would probably... the way that handling of staff that's most probably one of things which most probably which irritate me. You know and I think possibly... I like to communicate, I like interaction with people, whatever the case will be with people, because that's very imperative for your job satisfaction at the end of the day.

You come here early because, as you just said, you start here early in the morning and late at night. You want your job satisfaction. You want to know when you leave this evening, your job is done. You know, it's that. And I think the thing probably, for me, is I dislike is making mistakes because you are not informed at first that is there and that is there. Do you understand what I'm saying? You make a mistake and then that gets highlighted and they don't go to the source where it can be probably improved upon.

IV Okay, anybody else?

IE2 Okay, what I enjoyed about the workwear distribution company is because I studied something completely different when I came here. It was something very different to what I was used to doing. I was in nature and such things. So when I came here, there was a whole different look on things and how things work in this type of industry. So I enjoyed that learning accounts and those types of things, because I never did anything like that.

The only thing that I can say that I dislike here, I just feel that here they focus more on what you do wrong and they can bring that to you and they tell you exactly what you did wrong. And it could be 10% or 5% of what the work that you do and the other 95%...

IE1 Don't get credited.

IE2 You don't get credit for it. You don't say anything. And I understand people make mistakes and if you do wrong and, obviously, you have to speak to that person and tell them, listen, this is what you are doing wrong. But I also feel that if somebody is doing right, not just myself, or anybody else, if they are succeeding what they do, that other 95% right...

IE1 Give them the credit.

- IE2 Just a small thank you. Not a big deal. Not even... It's not even about the money for me. It's just like just saying, you know, you're doing this right and you're doing this wrong, but we appreciate you for this and this is what you can work on. That's all.
- IV Okay. Anybody?
- IE3 The thing that I dislike is that our titles in the store. For example, if [name] is a checker and I'm a picker, the next day, [name] can be picker and I can be a checker. It's confusing to me. Why can't we just do what we do? If I'm a picker, then why can't I stay a picker? You understand? Why do I the next day I have to go back?
- IV Okay, I hear what you're saying.
- IE1 Can I answer him on that?
- IV Don't answer him on that. It's not that kind of conversation. That is his opinion.
- IE1 I'm just thinking, the company being so small, you cannot designate people to a specific job.
- IV We're not going to answer each other's questions.
- IE4 Okay, what I like about the workwear distribution company is I like the workwear distribution company. I like this company so much, we came late at home last night. Past three hours up again to be here by the workwear distribution company. It's a commitment. And my dislike is...
- IV Why do you do that? I mean...
- IE4 Because I love to work for the workwear distribution company.
- IV Why do you love to work for the workwear distribution company?
- IE4 Because there's very nice people and I learn a lot here. But I come with some warehousing experience, but I've learnt [overtalking].
- IE? Like a human resources person too.
- IE4 Everybody at the workwear distribution company is like a family.
- IV Okay and you were going to say what you dislike?
- IE4 And my dislike is I don't want to mention my dislike.
- IV Please do.
- IE4 You know what will say? It's just the moola.
- IV Okay.
- IE4 I go my best, but it's the moola. But I'll still go my best.
- IE1 That is what he's actually referring... the appreciation.

- IV Anybody else going to have a go at this?
- IE5 Okay, I'll start off by saying it's... Before I started working for the workwear distribution company, I was working in another company. I was in sales. So I was a sales rep doing like door-to-door in houses. So coming here with the workwear distribution company was a different like background, working here. But I enjoyed it as the years went by and I've been... I'm glad that I've been a part of the company, in terms of growth. In terms of colour and growth.
- Because there was like very few people that like put in like [unclear] positions like being in the management team, like being part of the committee team and all of that. There wasn't that stuff when I arrived here. Like, here I think I'd say you were promoted in terms of your colour and which colour you fit in.
- If you're like coloured, if you're like Indian or anything like that, you will be taken seriously but if you are from like a different, a different colour, you won't be treated equally. And I'm just stating it as it is just because that's how it was when I first started working. So I would in terms of that. That's what I didn't like back then. But now I'm seeing now as time goes by that it's starting to change.
- And going back to... or coming back to what I would like about the company. I like the working hours, I'll be able to say. I enjoy the working more than anything, just because I'm a sportsperson first and foremost, so on weekends I must be on field. During the week I must be on the field, the training field. So that's what I like. I don't have that much dislike for the company. All the things that I've disliked have actually changed now to what I like.
- IV Okay, you were one of the very few. How would you describe an employee that goes the extra mile? Are you that person? Please elaborate.
- IE2 How would we?
- IV How would you describe somebody, an employee, that goes the extra mile? And do you think you are that person?
- IE1 I think many of them are like that.
- IV You mustn't answer the question.
- IE1 Okay, many people are like that. It's always at the end of a line, it's where you go the extra mile but you are not appreciated.
- IV But what is that kind of person like?
- IE1 That person, because I think...
- IV How would you describe a person that goes the extra mile?
- IE1 Okay, let me share. I don't have to start at 06:30 in the morning, you know. You go the extra mile, you start early because the reason being, besides what is happening, but previously you used to work till 16:30 because you want your job done. You are committed, right? But, at the end of the day, because reason being,

it's your job, it's your function and what everything you enjoy doing, you want to be on par. Do you understand what I'm saying?

You have to be on par, so when everything, the ball really starts rolling then you know you're there already because you're a step ahead, you understand? Because I think it's also... I'm going to latch onto what [name] said, you want to be appreciated, that is the thing [unclear]. Not monetary...

- IV What would you describe as the employee that goes the extra mile?
- IE1 I would say it's a dedicated, committed person that goes the extra mile.
- IV Okay. Are you that person? And why would you say so if you are?
- IE1 It's in my nature.
- IV Okay.
- IE1 It's in my nature. Whether I'm going to work lunch time or whatever occasion, it's my nature. Sometimes you get demotivated but it's in your nature, you cannot stop a person like that, you know.
- IV [Name], hoe sou jy beskryf iemand wat altyd ekstra gee?
- IE6 Dis 'n goeie werker.
- IV 'N goeie werker. Anybody else?
- IE7 I think a committed person and a person that think of his work as not just coming to work and just work, go home. I think that person should have the future in mind so that they know they're working towards a future. Not for themselves, not for the company, also for the company. But, say take me, I work [unclear]. My aim, when I come to work, is to give my best future. I come to work, I try my best and try to go up a ladder. So don't just think of now, think of what the future. You might not be seen, but you will be seen.
- IV Anybody else?
- IE2 It's just somebody that goes above and beyond what they're expected to do in their job.
- IV Do you think that you're that person? Are you that person?
- IE3 No. The person that's raising his hands because lunch times I sit normally outside and when I sit outside I always see this guy working lunch times and he doesn't ask to leave early or anything, he leaves normal time. And, for me, that describes him, [name]. [Name] you're that guy for me. [Overtalking].
- IV Listen, okay. So what do you see as the goals of the workwear distribution company?
- IE1 The goals of the workwear distribution company?
- IV What do you see as the goals of the workwear distribution company?

- IE1 I think they need to inform people, the mission statement of the company, which has never been conveyed. People work through the humdrum but they probably have the monopoly, yes, they have the monopoly but if it comes from top structure to convey the mission statement, then people can then aspire to work [unclear] the mission statement. Because, you know, changes happen, branches get set up, you're not informed. Only thing you get, there's another branch there, there's another branch there.
- But if... I'm talking now [unclear]. If you're a soccer player, the captain plays, right? He's got a game but he's team. The captain's got to lead his team. The captain cannot play, he's got to lead his team, his other ten players to what they want to achieve, whether it be a trophy, but he's going to lead. And then, of course, with the unity that he's got, then they will achieve it.
- IV Okay.
- IE4 You said the goals of the workwear distribution company?
- IV What do you see as the goals?
- IE4 The main goals of the workwear distribution company, customer satisfaction.
- IV Okay.
- IE7 Good service delivery.
- IV Okay.
- IE5 I'd say the goals of the company, what I'd see, what I'd like to see is for them to first, before going to the customers, I think the guys internally must be happy. The guys inside the stores are not happy at all, be it in the office department.
- IV Are they not happy?
- IE5 They're not happy at all. You can read that, you can hear that.
- IV Why would you say?
- IE5 I'm saying that because last time guys speak stuff that is... we share ideas, we share stuff, we hear who's not happy, who's happy. You will hear that the majority of the guys are not happy internally. If the guys are not happy internally, then the customers outside won't be happy as well, because you will be stressed by the guys inside through what they're going through. I think that's the basic most thing.
- That's what I see about the workwear distribution company, if they can keep their guys happy financially, starting off financially. I'm not like belittling like the way they pay us, but financially, if they can keep it like, they make the guys happy financially. I'm not saying they must get like high pay cheques or anything, but financially at least, they must reach a certain mark whereby they say, yes, they'll be happy [unclear]. That's where they can start off. Those are the goals of the company.
- IV What kind of things do you think you should be doing to enable the organisation to meet its goals? You mentioned customer satisfaction, you mentioned good

service, service delivery. Yes, you mentioned I would imagine a happy workforce is one of the goals... or a satisfied workforce. So what do you think are the things that you should be doing to enable the organisation to meet those goals?

IE1 [Unclear].

IE2 Your job.

IV Yes, what should you be doing to enable the organisation to meet good service deliver, customer satisfaction, whatever the goals are?

IE1 You've got a workforce because the company previously they were part [unclear] company. What has happened is they would give an incentive to the staff and the staff at all times would get part of the bonus, whether it be half-yearly, quarter-yearly, whatever, but there would always be. And you were given an incentive, of course monetary incentive would then motivate people.

It shouldn't be like but it drives the people so the company can aspire to higher heights. This is what [unclear]. But, be it as it may, you know, as I said, if the captain can look after his players, then the players will look after the captain.

IV Okay, I'm not going to deduct what you are saying.

IE4 We need to work together from the start till the end.

IV To ensure your customer satisfaction? And your good service delivery, what do you think you need to do there?

IE4 I think from receiving till when we check it out, till the driver, make sure we pay attention to detail.

IV I have managed to infiltrate one mind last week. Anybody else? Okay. In what ways does the workwear distribution company recognise employees who perform well?

IE1 Come again?

IV In what ways does the workwear distribution company recognise employees who perform well? [Name], keep quiet.

IE5 I'll talk about myself. I'll say the only way that they actually... not the only way, but the way that they recognise workers who do well, in terms of presence, in terms of commitment, in terms of going an extra mile. I'm trying to think. They will actually spot you out after like... they will give you time to grow inside the company, but, as time goes by, they will actually pick you up and say, yes, we've selected you to go and do A, B, Y, Z. Maybe you go for maybe a drink or anything like that.

That's what they've done to me because I'm consistent by nature. I'm a consistent person, I know that very well. That's my strength, I am consistent and I am hard-working. So they've picked me out from like I would say from the floor and they've taken me where maybe I didn't even dream I would be with the company. So that's how they go about it that way [?].

IV Anybody else?

IE4 Can you repeat that question again?

IV How does the workwear distribution company recognise employees who perform well?

IE4 [Unclear].

IE1 They look after their staff.

IE3 That's the thing. I wanted to say that. They don't recognise people that work hard, from my side. They don't because there are plenty guys working hard in the store but they don't get recognition.

IV [Name], what did you say?

IE1 I said they look after their staff. I mean, I've been working here 20-odd years. If you work hard, they acknowledge you.

IV How do they acknowledge?

IE1 But not financially. That is when your increase was probably different to others. That is how they do it. This is what I can speak about.

IE4 They recognise you with five, on your incentive.

IV They recognise you with what?

IE4 With a five.

IV What is a five?

IE1 A rating.

IE2 Fives.

IV Okay. The reason I'm asking this is because obviously this has to be written out, so I know what it says but the person that's going to write this doesn't necessarily mean what you're saying. So what do you mean when you say a five [name]?

IE4 A five on your incentive.

IE7 On your appraisal.

IV So they give you a good appraisal? Okay.

IE4 He was a good worker, a good performer, eager, always willing to...

IV So there are incentives.

IE4 Always on time.

IV Anything else?

IE3 Nothing.

- IV In what ways would you like your supervisor to recognise your output? Come, [name], answer.
- IE4 A high five in the morning.
- IV Okay. Anybody else?
- IE1 I think, you know, it's when you do have staff working with you, you acknowledge him and I've probably got a habit of saying thank you. Sometimes I don't, but most times I say thank you for a job done. Normally when I leave for the floor, for me, it's imperative that you've got to thank him because without your team, without your players, you cannot achieve. But not the customer [unclear], but they won't receive the goods, whatever the case and I know everybody does a good job.
- Even though we make mistakes. Everybody makes a mistakes, but you've still got to appreciate them because it's not... you're not stuck. You need to improve on your mistakes continuously.
- IV [Name], you said that they don't. How would you want supervisors or managers to recognise your output?
- IE3 Please repeat that.
- IV You said they don't recognise good performance. So how would you want good performance to be recognised?
- IV3 By them being more aware, observe, because I don't think they take note of us, even if we go the extra mile sometimes.
- IV Because I can take note of you but it still doesn't mean that you are going to be feeling appreciated. You understand what I'm saying? Because I can look at you all day long, nothing's going to happen. I'm just going to be looking at. Do you understand what I'm saying?
- IE7 That's why they must say, [name], thank you for the good work. Thank you for going the extra mile.
- IV Why would you want the high five in the morning? [Overtalking]. No, explain to me because I have my own answer but obviously this is...
- IE7 Then I can just feel a little bit happy or eager. You're starting your day very nice. I mean, it would start your day very nice. There's a smile, there's a high five.
- IV No, the reason I'm asking this question is because I had a boss previously. Every single morning as soon as she came up the stairs and around the corner, she would start screaming, hello everybody, hello, everybody on their names and that was the one thing that everybody said was constant. I mean, she was a brilliant boss. But that is why I needed to find out why do you want a high five because I can come and high five you every morning?
- IE3 Well, I'm not talking about... [Overtalking].
- IV No, I understand, but I just wanted to get clarity on it. [Name]?

- IE5 I would like to be like recognised by [name]. I've seen that, basically on the company, I've seen that there are guys who get, what do you call it? Those cards?
- IV Gift vouchers.
- IE5 Gift vouchers for the sales inside the store. Like each and every... there's departments here inside the stores. There's the receiving, there's embroidery, there is departments. Why don't they do the same thing to others as well? The guys are doing sales this side, okay, that's fair enough, that's totally different from what we do.
- But there's a workload for each and every department, a different workload. Like why can't they just divide that among ourselves and also give separate vouchers for other? To show that appreciation. Maybe you've done like 3 000 bags in receiving, why can't they give them maybe like, let's say... or buy them [unclear].
- IV They always like to eat.
- IE5 A gift voucher or something like. Give them each a voucher or maybe a profit share amongst themselves. Like, let's be even here. Why are they getting like certain incentives that we don't get inside the stores? Why is it like that? Why can't they just divide that amongst ourselves? I think that's the only way that we can feel appreciated as well, because what we see inside there that they are more appreciated than we are in stores, whereas we push more space than them inside. That's how we see it as well.
- IV Okay. [Name] how would you like to be appreciated by [unclear]. We're talking about the question [unclear].
- IE2 How would I like to be from my supervisor?
- IV Yes. In what ways would you like your supervisor to recognise you?
- IE2 I wouldn't like anything, I would just like a thank you at the end of the day or a, you did well. With [name] and them I try and do that, like I'll say thank you all the time. If I see it's hot and they're working really hard, I buy them a Coke, because I just... you know, they're working so hard and they do so much and, you know, sometimes I feel like they come down on you very hard. They criticise me because I don't.
- But I feel like I know how it feels to do your best and people just [unclear] so I try not to do that with them. I try to just focus on what they're doing right and if they're doing something wrong, I'll just tell them, you know, I'm doing this wrong. So, for me, it would just be a thank you at the end of the day. So I'm going to treat you fair, you know, not more than anybody else. Not less than anybody else. You know, so that's all I would normally do.
- IE7 I think [name] must just acknowledge what you do and just motivate you to do better tomorrow or whenever. Just show them that you are being seen. I see you, so that I just know that I'm being seen so I'm going to work better now so that he can see.

- IV Okay, great stuff. How does your relationship with your supervisor enable you to be successful at work? Does everybody understand the question?
- IE5 Yes.
- IV So your supervisor is... the way that I see it, your immediate supervisor is [name]. How does she enable you to be successful in that boot cage? If you see it [unclear], look at the warehouse only, how does [name] enable you to be successful as a part?
- IE5 Stick to [name] please. No, I'm just like, you know, obviously... Because obviously there could be only good because there are people... I mean, I had my own opinion about everybody in this business but that's a human resources opinion. So that's what the question is to everybody. [Name] you must think, girl, you must come up with answers, you can't sit here.
- IE3 Make an example again with [name]?
- IV So how does your supervisor enable you to be successful at work?
- IE3 I think communication, that's the best answer I know. She communicates with me and asks me, look here, this is what you do and this is how you do it and she's the best in that, for me.
- IE4 I think you know your supervisor is not put there because they [name], here's a supervisor. I think it's because they what [name] could do. So [name] can transfer that on you also, so that the company can see you also what [name] has done, so then it will be... [Overtalking].
- IV What is that? What is that? Okay, so that is the transfer of skill? Is that what you're saying? Okay.
- IE6 Yes.
- IV So your supervisor enables you by means of transfer of skills.
- IE6 From experience that he has [overtalking].
- IE1 And functions.
- IV And, in your case, it's communication. You wanted to say something?
- IE5 I would say build a positive relationship with your workers and the supervisor. I think that's the first step. Build a positive relationship. Get to understand the individual. Don't just get to understand them when it comes to work. Understand the individual. What type of a person is person A? What type of person is person B?
- When I want something to be done, how do I approach A? How do I approach B? Like understand them in terms of outside work as well and their families and all of that and other [unclear] things. I think that's the only way you get to understand them, get positive answers out of them, or positive work out of them that you want

to be done at work, when you are supervisor. Because you are leader, so you must meet people in terms of emotions, in terms of worth reading [?], all of that.

IV I find it so good. Anybody else? In what ways does your supervisor provide you with feedback on job related matters?

IE7 In what way?

IV Does your job... ag, does your supervisor provide you with feedback on job-related matters?

IE1 Positive or negative?

IE2 In what way?

IV In what ways, yes.

IE3 Communication.

IE2 [Unclear].

IE4 Communication.

IE1 Just elaborate.

IV No, I mean, we know we all email each other and we talk and we phone and whatever, but like so how, you know, is it a one-on-one discussion? Is it in team meetings? Is it in, you know, that kind of thing?

IE4 Communication, here we don't have emails. We each have a telephone now.

IE1 I think possibly, you know, that is what you just said now, communication. I think our... I tried it but I don't think it worked because when you have meeting discussions with your people [unclear]. And it was not an... [Overtalking].

IV Why do you think it didn't work?

IE1 I neglected, because I neglected because there was also job function that somebody done there. Because we had, at one stage, we started... this thing came about but I didn't pursue it myself and then that guy... somebody's absent or somebody's not there, whatever the case, and that is something which is very important, communication. Because when you have a communication, especially for your team, you discuss your project for the day, whatever the case would be.

So that's the way you're going forward for the day, whatever. And also wherever challenges, you know, [unclear], you must take them out here, you must take them out, you're stupid or something like that. It's on. You look at a way to rectify that. You know, because when they pin you [?] you try and rectify that because then your mistakes become minimal.

But it's also that you've got to also make them aware that you're not going to be there forever so that they take accountability and responsibility. So, at the end of the day, you know, they must operate as if you're not around. So, you know, those

kind of things. But you've got to communicate that. But the communication is very important.

- IV Anybody else? Is team work important and why?
- IE1 Team work?
- IV Is team work important and why?
- IE1 A soccer team would never survive.
- IV Hoekom is dit belangrik.
- IE1 Getting goals scored.
- IV [Name] keep quiet. Hoekom is spanwerk belangrik? [Name], jy sal moet antwoord, anderste kry jy nie 'n twee litre Coke nie. [Name], think about that please. Yes [name].
- IE4 Team work belangrik want een man maak nie 'n span nie.
- IE7 Dis individual work as hy een is and here by the workwear distribution company we work as a department. And there isn't one department that is one. There is departments that is five in the company.
- IV What does that mean? [Overtalking].
- IE4 The amount of people.
- IV Oh.
- IE7 It was the question about team work.
- IV No, I was trying to figure...
- IE7 No matter what happens and no matter what is going on in your department, we work together.
- IV Okay.
- IE2 Team work is important.
- IV Why?
- IE2 Because if everybody knows what their role is and what their function is and how it contributes towards the team and what they are supposed to do.
- IE8 Are you guys going to be long?
- IV Fifteen minutes.
- IE8 Oh, because my school's starting now.
- IV Okay. Okay. What's the time now?
- IE1 Quarter past.
- IE7 She can give school on the grass there [?].

- IV Why do you think people leave the workwear distribution company? Quick, quick?
- IE4 I think they don't see themselves growing in the company. Sometimes they... Okay, I've only been here over two years but I feel like, myself now, I feel like I've gone somewhere in the company for this two years because I started here just as a normal person but just over a year and a half and I started checking line [?]. So it means for me I've gotten the right way. I'm not staying where I am. I try to go up.
- IV Okay. Answer the questions, I'm listening to you.
- IE7 the workwear distribution company? Why do people leave the workwear distribution company? Maybe they get a better salary. It can be because if they're not satisfied with the salary, mostly, as I understand, for the period I've been at the workwear distribution company, it's about money. The staff, they get a better offer. You can't blame the workwear distribution company for that also. It's just you get a better offer. Some companies do give better salaries.
- IV Anybody else?
- IE5 I'd say it's because of growth as well. There is growth in the company, but it's slow. It takes maybe... it take like five years or four years for a person to be moved from one department to the other or from the floor to management. It's a very lengthy process. Or maybe a person must resign or a person must actually get a new job in order for another person to be promoted. I'd say that's the reason why they end up leaving for other companies.
- IV Okay. Why do you think people stay at the workwear distribution company for so long?
- IE2 They're complacent. They're comfortable or happy.
- IE1 I think it's not complacent, it's you're content and you don't want to become a grasshopper. You become a grasshopper, at the end of the day, you know, you're never going to achieve your goal. Not that I have achieved my goal as yet, you understand? But you're quite happy with the function that you perform.
- IV Okay.
- IE5 Let me answer. The reason why people stay so long here at the workwear distribution company is it's because it's difficult now at this stage to find a job outside. If you go out of the workwear distribution company, then not being applied or maybe go for an interview or being promised anything, it's going to be difficult to find another job. You're going to stay at home. That's the main reason why they stay.
- IE4 Especially getting a Monday to Friday job is hard. Many people is looking for Monday to Friday. You don't get a lot of jobs of Monday to Friday.
- IV Okay. Do you guys...? Comment on negative things, on frustrations, very quickly, that you've experienced at the workwear distribution company?
- IE2 Sorry, repeat the question.

- IV Comment on negative... I'm going to ask you to respond to me in writing on this right? So please comment on negative experiences that you've had at the workwear distribution company. Please describe specific frustrations and problems that you've experienced and how you've dealt with them. I'll come and get your responses tomorrow on paper.
- IE5 Do we comment on negative things that we hear from outside?
- IV No, that you've experienced in the organisation and how you've dealt with them?
- IE5 From?
- IV Here at the workwear distribution company. So any negative experience that you've had, encountered or things that frustrated you and how you've dealt with it. Right, I'll come and get your responses tomorrow morning.
- IE4 Homework?
- IV Yes, it's homework. Thank you guys so much.