FROM SPRING TO WINTER: A PATHOLOGY OF CULTURE MANAGEMENT

by

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SUMMARY

The concept of organizational culture has been an enduring managerial fad, with more recent studies highlighting the benefits of fun workplace cultures.

This thesis presents the findings from a longitudinal ethnographic study of the I.T organization, WebCo; an organization that emphasizes its unitary culture as the central driver of its success. The author conducted two separate periods of ethnographic research and interviews in order to understand the managerial attempts at sustaining WebCo's strong organizational culture that exhibited many elements of fun.

The dynamics between employees and the on-going managerial attempts at sustaining normative forms of control are used to explore the manageability of organizational culture debate. Furthermore, this thesis comprehensively analyzes the inter-relationship between organizational culture and structure. Through the longitudinal research design, this study explores the use of a range of introduced structural practices in order to sustain the organizational culture through a period of rapid growth in organizational members.

The results of this study contradict any notion of unitary culture and indicate major fractures between different sub-cultures located within WebCo. The highlighted complexity of social relationships critiques the dominance of functional literature in the area of organizational culture and attention is drawn to the knowledgeable employees and their agentic power in circumventing normative forms of control. A further finding of this study is that the management of culture can be effective, but only when supported with other aspects of 'good work'.

The study concludes therefore, by noting how organizational culture can be managed, yet not as a distinct and separate activity.

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For Mum and Dad

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The concept of managing organizational culture has attracted much interest and many different taxonomies have been offered to help understand its complexities (Ogbonna and Harris, 1998; Martin and Frost, 1996; Alvesson, 2002). The general trend throughout the offered taxonomies moves from the practitioner orientated, technical diagnoses of culture production to interpretivist accounts that aim to understand and explain how individuals make sense of organizational culture. The body of research into organizational culture has also attracted many a critical scholar with their aims of emancipating employees by illuminating the domination of totalizing and monolithic culture management programmes (for example, Willmott, 1993). More recently, critical scholars have focussed their attention on the concept of fun cultures at work which appears to be a popular trend within managerial practice (see Bolton and Houlihan, 2009). As an enduring managerial fad, it is difficult to neglect the continued interest that surrounds the topic of organizational culture for managers. Practical n-step guides to achieving competitive advantage through culture frequently top bestselling book lists (for example, Connors and Smith: 2012; Cameron and Quinn, 2011) and recruitment agencies continue to extol the benefits of culture branding for long term success (www.KellyServices.co.uk).

Empirical evidence continues to be provided by scholars to suggest that an organization's culture can contribute to company performance (Kotrba et al., 2012) and also to firm effectiveness (Gregory, Harris, Armenakis and Shook, 2009). Sustained competitive advantage is also posited given the unique nature of organizational cultures that are difficult to duplicate (Barney, 1986). The majority of research that investigates organizational culture change continues to assume a positive impact on employees and draws on quantitative methods of measurement (Jung et al., 2009) with positivist or post-positivist perspectives (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Accordingly, our knowledge of factors that influence how employees may perceive changes to culture is limited and scholars have suggested longitudinal methods in order to capture the complexity of such experiences (Van de Ven and Poole, 2005).

In view of the continued managerial and academic interest in the study of organizational cultures, this longitudinal ethnographic study is based on an I.T firm (WebCo, a UK subsidiary of WebCO US) and focuses on the managerial attempts to sustain a strong organizational culture during a period of rapid growth. WebCo's core cultural value was offering their trademarked Fanatical Support™ to customers and the organization had won many awards for their expertise in this area. It was also the industry leader at the time that the research was conducted. This study examines the managerial attempts at securing normative control at both research periods and critiques the functionalist literature that suggest stable value systems are a result of internalized values (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982). Preferring to view culture as a dynamic and on-going process of meaning construction (Meek, 1984), the more complex plurality of workplace relations are illustrated throughout this thesis and active employee agency that circumvents managerial control is noted.

In addition to evaluating the normative forms of control at WebCo, the longitudinal nature of this thesis investigates the relationship between normative forms of control and the introduced structural practices that aimed to sustain the strength of the organization's culture. This thesis highlights the changes to employee agentic powers' in shaping the organizational culture due to the introduction of formal practices that standardized the employment relationship. The structural changes and practices further fuelled changes to the organizational culture that resulted in apparent fractures between two different groups of employees; those that were new to the organization (with experience of less than one year), and those that I elect to term 'established employees' (over one years' experience).

Ultimately, the specifics of the case study illustrate how, despite the pathological desire to sustain the organizational culture (via normative forms of control) which was claimed to be central to the organization's success, rapid organizational growth and the introduced structural changes led to a dilution in strength of WebCo's organizational culture (as measured by their preferred metric). Accounting for this finding, the thesis claims that organizational cultures can be managed, but not as a distinct and separate activity. This thesis contributes to existing knowledge by noting how organizational structures and the conditons of work have a

mediating effect on the success of normative forms of managerial control. This thesis is organized in the following way.

1.2 Structure of the Rest of the Thesis

The style of presentation of this study is common to most empirical studies. The theoretical background is discussed first before the empirical findings are presented. This is then followed by analysis and conclusions. The following chapter is devoted to the concept of organizational control and the links with organizational culture are investigated. The third chapter examines the use of structural practices to sustain organizational culture. Subsequent to the research questions being identified, chapter four describes the methodology that was employed in this study. It outlines my research philosophy and the longitudinal single case study research design. The chapter then turns to consider why the methodological triangulation of participant observation and interviews were employed before outlining how access was gained and how the snowballing of interviews developed once in the field. The inductive nature of analysis is then noted with grounded theory before the coding of data is explained at both research periods. The rationale for two separate sections is due to the qualitative computer assisted software package that was used at the second period of research to make sense of the large volume of data. Notions of validity and reliability are then discussed before the chapter concludes by detailing the ethical considerations of the study and how these were overcome. Chapter five offers the first insight into the research site, detailing information on both computer hosting organizations and the nature of work for all types of WebCo employees.

The first of three subsequent data chapters concerns the data from the first research period. It notes the charismatic cultural creator (Peter, UK MD) and how artefacts and cultural events were commonplace as a form of normative control. Employee agency is a central concept throughout this thesis and their thoughts on the socio-ideological forms of control were sought and are presented throughout this thesis. The chapter then focuses on Peter's awareness for the organizational culture to be supported with structural practices. Here, the chapter uncovers the importance of recruitment, and aspects of 'good work' such as rewards, autonomy and work

engagement as key structural factors that complimented, supported and were central to cultural control at the first research period.

Chapter seven, like all subsequent data chapters, draws on empirical data from the second research period. These chapters note how the normative attempts of managerial control continued at WebCo, however, they were less successful due to employee perceptions of 'poor work' practices that had been introduced through structural changes. The implication strengthens the argument of this thesis that, for culture management to be successful there is the need for congruence between socio-ideological forms of control and good organizational practices. The following data chapters also question therefore, the claims of many scholars that bespoke forms of culture management can be successful as sole forms of normative control. This thesis emphasises the importance of other aspects of work and in doing so, chapter seven details how the process of culture management at WebCo had become bureaucratized and focusses on the increased structural standardization that occurred at WebCo through the period of growth. This chapter evaluates two metrics that were introduced as performance measures. The first metric, Economic Value Added, curtailed lavish expenditure on cultural events and the impact on employee engagement with the organizational cutlure is discussed. The second metric, The Net Promoter Score was used by managers to reify the strength of the WebCo culture. However, it accurately noted its demise. Chapter seven also offers empirical data on managing performance through remuneration strategies. Contradictions can be found between management and employees with regard to the introduced Account Manager pay review team. These highlight inconsistencies in the managerial approach that went against their own espoused values. The last finding is given in chapter seven through its focus on the career management practices at WebCo and the changes to established employee levels of work-life balance.

The final data chapter, chapter eight, focuses on the use of recruitment in an attempt to sustain the WebCo culture. It establishes that WebCo continued to invest in an elaborate process with the intention of scientifically securing person-organization fit. By contrast, the chapter discusses employee reactions that denote the nature of WebCo recruitment as a social process. A level of cynicism and candidate

knowledgeability is uncovered that challenges the dominance of technical notions of person-organization fit. The recognized agency of cynical employees is also shown to offer a psychological distance from the managerial attempts at normative control. Chapter eight also notes the challenges that rapid organizational growth brought to WebCo's desire to recruit for person-organization fit. The changes to the structural practice of recruitment between the two periods are detailed and a heightened degree of candidate instrumentality to work for a successful organization is examined. The chapter concludes by illustrating the increased dominance of WebCo US and the enforcement for all sales candidates to have a minimum of two years sales experience. This is again shown to contribute to the dilution of the delivery of fanatical customer experiences which was WebCo's core cultural value.

The chapter then considers the changes to the WebCo work organization through the period of growth in an attempt to sustain the organizational culture. Three work design factors are suggested that reduced the levels of worker empowerment and engagement with the core organizational values; the increasingly standardized nature of WebCo work; the work intensification due to higher employee turnover; and the introduction of new forms of work organization in Cross-Functional Teams. The chapter highlights the development of sub-cultures and accordingly, how the strength of the overall WebCo culture had been reduced through structural changes that altered the employee identificatory reference points away from a unitarist conception of culture and to that of their immediate, newly formed cross-functional team.

Chapter nine of this thesis provides an analysis of the challenges of managing organizational culture through a period of rapid organizational growth. The interplays between the introduced structural practices in relation to WebCo's organizational culture provide a background against which the research questions stated in chapter three are evaluated. There is also a section on the directions for future research which are formed as a result of this study. In-depth critical literature evaluations are provided in the following two chapters in order to highlight the gaps in current knowledge. The first of these considers the mechanisms of organizational control that then leads to an evaluation of cultural control and a wider analysis of organizational culture.

CHAPTER TWO: CONTROL AND CULTURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is organized in the following way. It commences by examining the strategies of organizational control with particular attention to direct control and the seminal work of Braverman that highlights the de-skilling of employees. The claimed totality of managerial control is then questioned via reflections on the work of Burawoy (1985) and also Knights and Willmott (1989) with their work that denotes the availability of power and subjectivity for all. The chapter then continues with a discussion of Freidman's notion of 'responsible autonomy' before considering normative control which leads to an evaluation of the management of culture debate. The seminal work of Smircich (1983) made early inroads into the topic and is used here in relation to the different treatments of the topic, from functionalist accounts to those of poststructuralists. The complexities of Smircich's (1983) argument still seem highly sophisticated in understanding the conflicting viewpoints that surround organizational culture. This chapter then turns its attention to the different forms of employee resistance as a reaction to the managerial attempts at controlling organizational cultures before addressing a recent shift in the literature that considers 'cultures of fun' and the cynical reactions of employees.

2.2 Strategies of Organizational Control

The many theories of organizational control examine the processes by which behaviours are influenced. Early studies concerned themselves with evaluating the effort intensity of individuals at work (Baldamus, 1961) and the duration of time that was spent engaged with their occupational duties (Thompson, 1968). The later work of Edwards (1979) noted three forms of control, simple, technical and bureaucratic. Small, privately owned organizations in the nineteenth century were characterized by simple forms of personal control that typically derived from a charismatic, authoritative owner who would drive the control agenda. For example, they may set the task, evaluate a worker's performance and then administer rewards or

punishments. In simple control, it is not necessary for the employee to actively participate in or internalize the control process.

The second form of Edward's (1979) control replaces a supervisor or manager with a technical device. This method of control became popular during the Industrial Revolution where managerial desires were channelled through the physical devices and hence, the space for workers to question or resist such acts was minimized. Contemporary forms of technical control would be the surveillance of workers via CCTV or the recording of call centre telephone conversations. Links can be made here to the panopticon (Bentham, 1791) where, because individuals know that they could be being watched, and therefore might be punished, they obey whatever laws are enacted. Edward's (1979) third form of control was that of a bureaucracy. Bureaucratic control is based on rigid rules, structures and mechanisms that shape an employee's work. These could be the processes of securing permission for making decisions, and typically involve communication with different levels within organizational hierarchies.

This chapter now turns to delineating the differences between direct forms of control and control via normative means. Importantly, the focus moves beyond the functional accounts of organizational control such as that of Parsons (1960: 23) who denotes it to be 'a generalised capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations by uniting in a system of collective organisation when the obligations are legitimised with reference to their bearing on collective goals'. Instead, a more critical understanding is taken; one that regards control as inherently problematic and uncovers the complexities of both organizational contexts and individual behaviours (see for example, Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980; Chua, Lowe and Puxty, 1989).

2.3 Direct Control, De-skilling and Responsible Autonomy

Friedman (1977) suggested two managerial control strategies, direct control and responsible autonomy. This section details the former approach which is synonymous with Taylor's (1911) principles of scientific management. Notably, direct forms of control involve the close supervision of employees whose work is

narrow in scope, simple, fragmented and largely devoid of skill. Informed by the analyses of Marx, Braverman (1974) focussed on the characteristics of control and his work concentrates on what he believed to be the central tenet of Taylorism, the progressive separation of 'thought and action, conception and execution, mind and hand' (Braverman, 1974: 171). Braverman (1974) notes how all aspects of work design have moved to being controlled by managers and highlights the fragmentation, degradation and de-skilling of work to solely being what are repetitive, standardized tasks. McGregor's (1960) Theory X compliments this nature of work where rational-economic employees typically exhibit an inherent distaste for their work (see Schein, 1972). Braverman's de-skilling thesis has become a central part of contemporary labour process theory (see Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980; Thompson and McHugh, 1995) and his deterministic writings emphasized the totalizing nature of control where any attempt of human agency to circumvent such subordination would be in vain. The strength of Braverman's work will be longstanding but contemporary authors do acknowledge that while he may have remained true to his notion of the historical, systematic elimination of worker subjectivity, he may have welcomed the work that spawned following his death; work that highlighted the agentic capabilities of workers within organizational structures. Exemplars of this are Knights and Willmott (1989) who posited that labour process theorists could be more optimistic for the sources of worker resistance while also perhaps de-skilling the level of ability that was attributed to managers at that time.

The subjectivity debate was therefore opened and the work of Burawoy (1979) detailed how employees were able to subvert direct forms of managerial control. Taking a different perspective to Braverman who based his understanding of capital development on the separation of conception from execution, Burawoy (1979) preferred to view the involvement of employees in reproducing capital that was instrumental in obscuring the extraction of profit. Workers could therefore resist forms of organizational control (within parameters), the hegemony of management control practices was questioned, and emphasis placed on understanding production processes in order to comprehend how work organization is maintained. Burawoy's (1979) findings suggest that this is the case where workers would largely cooperate with management but do so via a variety of 'games' that were designed to beat the management control system and to secure micro-emancipation from the

fundamentally skewed nature of the game (Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis, 2005). As Baldmus states (1961: 53), coping gives 'temporary relief from the discomfort of certain work realities' (a factor that is noted later in this chapter in relation to employee cynicism). Burawoy's work occurred in the way the labour market was structured by both managers and the capacity of employees 'to maintain, develop, extend and reshape organisation and bargaining power' (for a deeper review of dual labour market segmentation, see Rubery, 1978: 34) and many others have offered empirical studies that illustrate employee agency in the face of employer control systems (see for example, Edwards and Scullion, 1982)

Friedman's (1977) second managerial control strategy from his dialectic of managerial control and worker resistance is that of responsible autonomy, a strategy which could help to avoid the limitations of direct control that have already been detailed. Responsible autonomy 'attempts to harness the adaptability of labour power by giving perks, leeway and by encouraging them to adapt to changing situations in a manner beneficial to the firm, to do this, top managers give them status, autonomy, and they aim to win their loyalty to the firm's ideals (the competitive struggle) ideologically' (Friedman, 1977: 5). There are parallels here with normative control in that employees are conceived as a variable and managerial attempts are targeted at aligning labour to the interests of capital, as opposed to supressing their power. Workers given responsible autonomy enjoy a larger diversity of tasks and discretion for their decisions, with limited forms of supervision. Control is largely target based and similarities in this style of control can be seen with McGregor's (1960) Theory Y which assumes that employees wish to contribute to their job, with it being as natural as rest or play. The next section illustrates not only how managers had become aware of the social and emotional aspects of work through the assumptions of Theory Y (McGregor, 1960), but also how the 1980s saw a more deliberate and systematic engineering of these aspects through cultural control (Ray, 1986; Willmott, 1993).

2.4 Cultural Control

Reed (1992: 205) notes that there has been a shift in organizations from 'control by repression to control by seduction' and here enters control through internalized organizational norms. The aim of such normative control through

corporate culturism is to encourage employees to accept, or even embrace the values and desired attitudes of their leaders, while initiating a sense of belongingness to the organization (Athos and Pascale, 1981; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982). This control method has clear parallels with Etzioni's (1961) 'moral involvement' of individuals in organizations, where the target of managers is employee emotion, and their aim is to mobilize it towards their desired objectives. Here, managers seek to regulate the 'employee's self, rather than the work they are engaged in' (Kunda, 1992: 2) ensuring that all employees are committed to the same goal and 'concurring in the same faith' (Durkheim, 1973: 158). In the extreme, employees may possess a 'corporate consciousness' (Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980: 122). Organizational culture as a discourse can be considered to conceal management's desire for largely a controlled operating environment, with compliant and productive employees (Casey, 1999). However, 'paradoxically, barely covered by the velvet glove of corporate culture is the iron fist of instrumental rationality' (Willmott, 1993: 527), with normative control not only determining employees behaviour, but 'offering elaborate scripts for their cognitive and emotional lives' (Kunda, 1992: 229; see also Grugulis et al., 2000). A comparison can be made to a Party member in Orwell's Oceania where the employee 'is expected to have no private emotions and no respites from enthusiasm' (Orwell, 1948: 220).

Normative commitment occurs where an individual has an affiliation with their employer and their attachment to it is based on their beliefs that characterize the organization (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986). It is this genuine internalization of an organization's values that Alvesson and Willmott (1992) term 'microemancipation'. Examples of this can be seen in Ogbonna and Wilkinson's (1990) study of Westco Millennium, where employees who genuinely internalized the cultural change programmes values are examples that Willmott (1993) (using Orwellian terminology) terms believers of 'crimestop' or 'doublespeak'. Furthermore, one can relate the workers in the same study that continually commended co-workers to the Orwellian notion of 'mind police'.

For these reasons, many writers proclaim that through normative control, the 'the scope and penetration of management control has been considerably extended' (Willmott, 1993: 522; Anthony, 1977) with managers intending to 'transform and

reify not only what we think, but the way we think' (Wendt, 1994: 36). Authors contend that these forms of socio-ideological controls are more invasive than the bureaucratic controls of the past (see Ouimet, 1991). Others argue that normative forms of control serve to support any existing control structures and any technical controls (such as employee surveillance through CCTV) to the extent that they are rendered invisible. It is argued that this leads to higher levels of work intensification. Clearly, there are also moral implications here, with some authors pointing to the brainwashing of employees or as Rose (1990: 110) suggests, the 'engineering of the soul'. Schwartz (1989) points to various degrading outcomes for both the individual and the organization through the 'narcissistic disorder' that he terms organizational totalitarianism.

This section has detailed the use of culture as a control mechanism but the concept of culture merits further attention as the assumption here is that it can be managed. Therefore, the manageability of culture debate will be considered in the next section. Smircich's (1983, 1983a) framework is used as an organizing framework as her seminal work offers a way of classifying cultural writings – those that view culture as a critical variable in organizational analysis and propose that an organization 'has' a culture, and those that prefer to conceptualize culture as a root metaphor, believing that an organization 'is' a culture. This section will now analyze cultural management research through Smircich's framework and illustrate the different viewpoints of key respective authors' within this subject area.

2.5 Organizational Culture as a Critical Variable to be Managed

The first approach to organizational culture views organizations as bound entities; one where the organizational culture can be classified and measured by independent observers that seek to manipulate its facets in order to increase organizational performance. Accordingly, this perspective holds that organizational culture is 'a controllable variable' and 'managing corporate culture is now possible' (Kilmann et al., 1985b: 423, 431; see also Baker, 1980; Allen and Kraft, 1982). Moreover, organizational culture is viewed as tool for achieving effectiveness and the generated knowledge from technical academic writings 'aims at developing

knowledge of causal relationships in order to manipulate and control variables for the sake of accomplishing certain wanted outcomes' (Alvesson, 2002: 8).

The functionalist and prescriptive nature of technical writings therefore assumes that unitary, harmonious, homogenous, and unified cultures are achievable (Schein, 1985). To link to the work of Smircich (1983: 343; 1983a), here, an organization 'has' a culture. Accordingly, such writings draw on objectivist epistemologies and typically employ positivist methodologies in attempting to measure culture as a managerially engineered variable. This viewpoint has led authors to label the attempts to secure performance gains through manipulating organizational culture as 'value engineering'. The basis of such prescriptive and managerial work posits that through unified organizational values, opportunities develop to increase corporate profit, gain employee commitment and improve organizational efficiency (Brown, 1990; Kotter and Heskett, 1992). In order to facilitate achieving such benefits and clearly assuming that culture is an entity to be managed, research evidence also points to organizations that employ 'culture managers' (see Grugulis et al., 2000).

An influential framework for analyzing changes in the internal situation of a given organization was developed in the 1980s by Peters and Waterman at the Management Consultant firm, McKinsey and Co. Their 7S framework (Structure, Strategy, Systems, Skills, Staff, Style and Super-ordinate goals) comprises both 'hard' and 'soft' organizational elements. The 'hard' factors (the first three) include tangible organizational structures, communication channels, IT systems and strategic statements. The 'softer' elements are more obviously influenced by organizational cultures and include leadership styles and employee capabilities.

Super-ordinate goals are 'the significant meanings or guiding concepts that an organization imbues in its members' (Pascale and Athos, 1982: 81) and are diagrammatically placed at the centre of a circle which is surrounded by each of the first six. This positioning is symbolic of the centrality of shared values in influencing and developing the other six elements that always stem from the core values of the company. Such core values are represented in an organization's culture. The work of Peters and Waterman at McKinsey Co. highlighted the need for a high degree of fit

between the seven mutually reinforcing organizational elements in order to secure organizational performance. It also directed managerial attention towards the importance of the softer S's (the last four) with Peters and Waterman (1982: 102) themselves asserting that,

> In retrospect, what our framework has really done is to remind the world of professional managers that "soft is hard". It has enabled us to say, in effect, "All that stuff you have been dismissing for so long as the intractable, irrational, intuitive, informal organization can be managed".

The research of Pascale and Athos (1982: 204) draws on the McKinsey framework and focuses on the contrast of cultures between Japanese and American organizational cultures,

> What we saw was that generally we were very similar to the Japanese on all the "hard-ball" S's - structure, strategy and systems. Our major differences are in the "soft-ball" S's - skills, style, staff, and subordinate goals. Their (Japanese) culture gives them advantages in the "softer" S's because of its approach to ambiguity, uncertainty, and imperfection, and to interdependence as the most approved mode of relationship.... Their careful attention to their human resources from the initial recruitment all the way through retirement make us look as wasteful of our people as we have been of our other resources. We saw how the boss-subordinate relationship encourages a degree of effective collaboration that we might envy, and how consensus is used to accomplish smooth implementation, which often eludes us.

However, some American organizations were posited to have a high degree of synergy between in their 7S framework in the same era. Pascale and Athos (1982: 205-6) note how IBM,

> … Pay as much attention to the recruitment and indoctrination of staff and the inculcation of super-ordinate goals as does Matsushita (the founder of electrical firm, Panasonic). Both companies do so in a disciplined, systematic way that is woven into their institutional fabric. This results in staff members who have a high degree of shared understandings and beliefs about the company, about what takes priority, about what is expected of them, and about their high value to the enterprise.

Ouchi furthers the research into the differences between Japanese and American organizations, where he argues that the Japanese business techniques can be adapted to American organizations that then stand to gain from claims of increased productivity, employee commitment and hence, lower turn-over rates. Ouchi highlights the downturn of Western economies in the 1980s and denotes the economic

success of Asia at that time to 'Japanese management', an approach that is characterized by a focus on employee well-being, morale, loyalty and stable employment with a job of life. In his book 'Theory Z: How American Business Can Meet the Japanese Challenge', Ouchi (1981) highlights organizational culture as a critical variable to be managed and defines Theory Z as 'a managing style that focuses on a strong company philosophy, a distinct corporate culture, long-range staff development, and consensus decision-making' (Ouchi, 1981: 16).

With management supporting employees and considering their well-being both inside and outside of the workplace, Theory Z assumes that managers can be confident that workers perform their job effectively. A further assumption of Theory Z is that employees participate in decision making and Walton (1985: 77) points to the gain of eliciting commitment on the premise that 'workers respond best – and most creatively - not when they are tightly controlled by management, placed in narrowly defined jobs, and treated like an unwelcome necessity, but, instead, when they are given broader responsibilities, encouraged to contribute, and helped to take satisfaction in their work'.

Symbolic of the interest surrounding different national means of engaging with management and, arguably the most influential book that views culture as a critical variable, is Peters and Waterman's (1982) 'In Search of Excellence: Lessons From America's Best-Run Companies'. In this book, the authors analyzed the practice of managers in 43 'best-run' American companies that were all Fortune 500. Examples include Disney and Hewlett Packard and in each 'excellent' organization, eight cultural values were found that were central to the organization's performance. These common themes formulated a claimed recipe for excellence. Peters and Waterman's work notes the 'value-driven' nature of the best-performing organizations and their explicit, managerially defined overarching beliefs. With parallels to Durkheim's (1973) 'collective conscience', Peters and Waterman stress the managerial prerogative of managing the organizational culture and instilling social integration through the creation of common purpose and shared organizational norms and values,

The essential functions of the executive are, first, to provide the system of communications; second, to promote the securing of essential efforts; and third, to formulate and define purpose." ... In the excellent companies, we see just that. Values are clear; they are acted out minute by minute and decade by decade by the top brass; and they are well understood deep in the companies' ranks (Peters and Waterman, 1982: 97-98).

In addition to highlighting the importance of organizational values, Peters and Waterman's (1982) book draws extensively on the work of Selznick in order to convey the means through which values are transmitted to organizational members. Selznick states that,

To create an institution you rely on many techniques of infusing day-to-day behaviour with long-run meaning and purpose. One of the most important of these techniques is the elaboration of socially integrating myths... Successful myths are never merely cynical or manipulative... To be effective, the projected myth must not be restricted to holiday speeches or to testimony before legislative committees... The art of creative leadership is the art of institution building, the reworking of human and technological materials to fashion an organism that embodies new and enduring values (Selznick, 1957: 151).

Taking into account the contributions of Peters and Waterman (1982), managerial work, hence, has shifted to include attempts at securing employee shared values and instilling guiding concepts with Pascale and Athos (1982: 206) arguing that 'the best firms link their purposes and ways of realizing them to *human values* as well as to economic measures like profit and efficiency'.

Parallels can be seen with the work of Deal and Kennedy (1982) who offer another influential study that views organizational culture as a critical variable. They too assume that harmonious and unified cultures are achievable. In their book, 'Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life', Deal and Kennedy (1982) argue that culture is *the* most important factor that accounts for the success of failure of any given organization (see also Schein, 1985a). The authors identify four facets of culture (values, heroes, rites and rituals, and the culture network) and claim that 'strong' cultures are those that have a high degree of homogeneity in, and of, commitment to the values. Like Peters and Waterman (1982), Deal and Kennedy (1982: 15-6) emphasize the role of managers in constructing 'a system of informal rules which spells out how people are to behave most of the time' and 'enabling people to feel better about what they do, so they are more likely to work harder'. The

authors suggest using organizational cultures to seek employee consent and value adherence, explicitly stating how they can alleviate employee fears of insecurity and freedom. Referencing Herzberg (1959) in their argument, Deal and Kennedy (1982) note the cynical nature of confused and uncertain employees. It is here where they argue that managers should be aware of such employee uncertainty, and use the critical variable of organizational culture to generate guiding values that increase employee allegiance and reduce their anxiety.

Schein (1985, 1986; 1990) stresses the role that organizational founders have in creating a culture and the mechanisms and manifestations that serve to cement this. For example, reward systems, stories, and the design organizations both in physical and structural terms. Schein (1985, 1986; 1990) posits that analyses of such aspects are critical to our understanding of organizational cultures, and that particular attention should be given to the reaction of leaders to critical incidents, role modelling, and the work aspects that leaders reward with their attention. From these, employees learn what is seen to be important in the eyes of their leaders, and their behaviour is adjusted accordingly. Schein (1990: 109) views organizational culture as,

> A pattern of basic assumptions - invented, discovered or developed by a group as it learns to cope with the problems of external adaptation and internal integration - that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to problems.

This highlights the use of organizational culture as a control mechanism and that managers can teach members the 'correct' way to perceive, think and feel. Such an assertion has clear implications for our sense of self and it raises ethical issues that are imbued with exploitative corporate power relations (see Kunda, 1992; Willmott, 1993). As a result of managerial efforts therefore, Clegg and Dunkerley (1980) argue that brainwashed employees may develop a corporate consciousness and an inability to draw the lines of their once clear work-life balance.

Another key area of interest goes beyond noting the technical consequences (such as increased profit) of attempts to manage organizational culture and highlights ceremonial value (Trice and Beyer, 1984). Here, Weick (1979: 42) notes how

'managerial work can be viewed as managing myth, symbols, and labels ... because managers traffic so often in images, the appropriate role for the manager may be the evangelist rather than accountant'. The contribution of Weick's (1979; 1995; 2001) work on organizational psychology is his focus on sensemaking; the human process through which beliefs are adopted. He states that, 'the basic idea of sensemaking is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs.' (Weick, 2001: 106). Managers that attempt to create a strong organizational culture therefore form a reality for employees, and hence, eliminate any employee uncertainty or ambiguity that they may have (see Durkheim, 1973). Should this organizational culture be beneficial for employees (for example, in terms of satisfaction or increased remuneration), then the positive reinforcement supports their beliefs and influences behaviour. Importance is therefore placed on the ability of management to convey the organizational culture in such a way for it to be internalized by employees.

Ogbonna (1992) further illustrates the potential need for managers to exhibit flair in their speech and practices that communicate the culture, hence, fulfilling their ceremonial duties. The literature suggests that research into organizations with 'strong' cultures reveals well established organizational rituals, rites, ceremonies and stories that often highlight key players, myths and legends from the organization's past (Frost et al., 1985: 17; see also Pettigrew, 1979; Martin et al., 1983; Turner, 1989, 1990). The key challenge for managers is to both communicate organizational culture to employees as if they were given by the Managing Director, and to design practices that support the cultural values (Wilkins, 1984). Beer et al. (1985) suggest that if the organizational culture is not articulated in a clear way, then it may become diluted, while interpretivists would argue that the 'correct' interpretation of these stories is not necessarily a given.

Schein (1985, 2004) suggests that culture is communicated through three respective levels (or layers) of organizational culture – artefacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions. Organizational artefacts are the tangible manifestations of culture. These may include the organization of geographical space, company furnishings and any employee uniforms. Functionalist writers posit a unitary interpretation of such

artefacts although interpretivists argue that the manifestations are open to interpretation, and are easily mis-interpreted by employees (Martin, 1992). The espoused values level of organizational culture contains the philosophies, strategies or goals of the organization which may include mission or value statements from Managing Directors. The espoused values are often expressed to employees through the first layer of culture, for example, company slogans may manifest themselves in artefacts such as banners that are posted on the walls of organizations in an attempt to manage their culture. Schein's (1985) final level of culture, basic assumptions, notes our unconscious, taken for granted ways of seeing the world. These unquestioned assumptions are the values that the culture represents and operate at the deepest level. In an organizational context, proponents of culture management contend that it is at this level of basic assumptions that managers need to target in order to change or truly manage organizational culture.

Sathé (1985) offers a conceptual model that illustrates how an organizational culture is disseminated and points to the communication of cultural values that are taught to new members by a process of socialization (see also Harrison and Carrol, 1991). Torrington and Hall (1998: 151) postulate that socialization is 'valued as a means of creating commitment and the oral presentation to stimulate discussion is the central method of explanation in order to get everyone on the same wave length'. Furthermore, 'the objective is to "fuse" the individual and the company by imposing collaborative (company) goals over the distinct interest of workers' (Delbridge and Turnbull (1992: 61). While Sathé's work draws on an evolutionary and natural viewpoint of culture change, another perspective is that of managed cultural change (see Ogbonna and Harris, 2000) and it is to this perspective that our attention will now be directed.

Beer et al. (1985: 29) argue the need for a 'management philosophy' which is the 'guided philosophy for human resource development practice, and if strongly articulated, results in internally consistent human resource policies, which ultimately leads to the development of a strong organizational culture through the shaping of employee belief systems'. It is therefore suggested through the forms of 'intensive training, planning, continuous learning, and the use of various human resource

management techniques' (Heydebrand, 1989: 344), that individuals acquire, and become accustomed to the organization's culture (see also Chatman, 1991).

Salancik and Pfeffer (1978: 102) elicit that it is the 'social environment [that] provides a direct construction of meaning through guides to socially acceptable beliefs, attitudes and needs, and acceptable reasons for action'. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) postulate that identities are socially constructed, where individuals may uncover institutional principles through the encoding of scripts in a specific arena. Primarily scripts are deemed a cognitive phenomenon (Shank and Ableson, 1977) and individuals make sense of information through their own psychological schemas (Markus, 1977). Bartunek and Moch (1987) refer to 'organizational schemas' as the essence of culture, where employees can orient their actions within organizations through the utilization of these mental maps. Individuals internalize 'the rules and interpretations of behaviour appropriate for particular settings' (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 32). With increased duration in the environment, a greater degree of clarity of social information appears, where 'as a result, the group's shared schema knowledge becomes somewhat self-perpetuating' (Harris, 1994: 40). It could therefore be argued that a strong organizational culture could just imply that employees are more coherently socialized. To note, an alternative perspective is suggested by Barley and Tolbert (1997: 98), who believe that 'it is empirically more fruitful to view scripts as behavioural regularities instead of mental models or plans… scripts are observable, recurrent activities and patterns of interaction characteristic of a particular setting'. Hence, such scripts encode the logic of what Goffman (1983) terms an 'interaction order'.

In agreement with Habermas (1984), Levy et al. (2003) suggest that managers become encapsulated by organizational ideologies, and highlight that managers use the term 'colonization' (as opposed to employee socialization) to refer to the process of dominant organizational values overriding former employee practices. Habermas (1981) also solicits the term 'lifeworld', which 'refers to the belief that people are born into a symbolic world of meanings that are repaired, elaborated, changed and integrated through communication and the negotiation of action' (Coates, 1999: 14). It is through the process of 'colonization' that such 'lifeworlds' become internalized

and therefore, behaviour maybe predicted in line with corporate norms with the reduction of employee ambivalence and the promise of greater productivity.

However, we should remind ourselves that the socialization attempts on employees into the various managerial ideologies serving corporate interests, as opposed to their own, are not always adhered to or wholly embraced. Although Nelson and Quick (2006) would have us believe that established employees set the norms for those entering the organization, and that these are then embraced by newer recruits, many studies can be found in the literature that question universal employee acceptance of 'strong' organizational cultures. Notably, differing employee reactions, ranging from cynicism to compliance, emerge as outcomes of the organizational indoctrination and socialization processes (see Kunda, 1992; Casey, 1999).

This section will now discuss what is at the centre of the culture debate from a managerial perspective, where, 'those who believe culture can be used as a mechanism of control are accused by those who do not of being unrealistic about the potential to control interpretations' (Hatch, 1997: 234-235). Accordingly, this chapter now changes its focus of considering organizational culture as a critical variable to be manipulated, and now discusses those who prefer to conceptualize it as a root metaphor.

2.6 Organizational Culture as a Root Metaphor?

The second of Smircich's (1983) categories views an organization as a culture and not therefore, as a measurable, tangible variable that can be managerially manipulated (see also Gregory, 1983). Instead, root metaphor conceptualizations of culture state that an organization 'is' a culture (Smircich, 1983), and the term culture is used to interpret the reality of organisation as a *process* in which meanings are sustained and changed through processes of symbolic interaction. Work in this dimension follows subjectivist epistemologies while a variety of methodologies allow for researcher preference. The tendency for ethnographic studies within this approach is worth noting, as it is through this methodology that rich data sets can be gained (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Research data then allows for the comparison of subjective

interpretations between organizational members and hence, facilitates a comprehensive analysis avoiding surface level rhetorical accounts of managerially desired cultural norms and values (Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989).

From this perspective, any hope of a unitary culture is challenged through the inconsistent and subjective nature of individual sense making (see Prasad, 2005). To this end, Sypher et al. (1985: 17) note that this viewpoint, 'focuses on the creation of meaning in organizational communities – interpretation and description take precedence over questions of function and causal explanations'. Hence, culture is posited as being dynamic, fluid, and an 'ongoing process of meaning construction' (Chan, 2003: 312, in Westwood and Clegg, 2003). The academic work of interpretive researchers on organizational culture 'seems to mean talking about the importance for people of symbolism - of rituals, myths, stories and legends - and about the interpretation of events, ideas, and experiences that are influenced and shaped by the groups within which they live' (Frost et al., 1985). Here, while it is therefore acknowledged that it is not possible to manage cultures per se, scholars do note that managers and leaders can design organizational structures, roles, rules, resources and symbols that change behaviour since culture is intangible, and always mediated through symbols. Therefore, as we learned earlier in this chapter, organizational logos, slogans and office layouts all communicate culture internally and externally and hence, employee interpretations of these symbols are the centre of interest for interpretive researchers.

In addition, recognizing that 'culture can be carried only by the individuals' (Van Maanen and Barley, 1985: 35) some interpretivist studies seek to understand how employees make sense of the repeated, habitual and meaningful collective acts of employees (the rituals) that attempt to cement the culture and also the managerial storytelling techniques (for example, of workaholics, myths and corporate legends) that try to frame culture and generate a unitary understanding. Cultural research from an interpretive viewpoint therefore highlights the requisite of comprehending how employees make sense of their meanings (Smircich, 1983).

One author that emphasises the significance of symbols and language for those who study organizational cultures is Pettigrew (1979). As an organizational theorist

following anthropological traditions, Pettigrew argues that culture is central in explaining human action (see also Hays, 1994). His work includes a focus on the symbolic acts of rituals and organizational myths, where the former are posited as creating unique characteristics and the latter determine legitimate agendas for employee action. Further studies have centred on the use of organizational legends and tales that communicate organizational cultural values, investigating their centrality to its continuation (see Frost et al., 1985: 17; Turner, 1989, 1990).

Meek (1984, 1988: 464) is an influential author who asserts this conceptualization of culture, and claims that 'people do not just passively absorb meanings and symbols; they produce and reproduce culture, and in the process of reproducing it, they may transform it'. The importance of cultural process and its links with social reality is highlighted here, and Meek further challenges the theories of functionalist writers who argue that internalized norms lead to stable structures. Preferring to view this theory as an area for empirical investigation as opposed to any prescriptive theoretical managerial templates, Meek (1984: 465) stresses that in order to offer interpretations of the behaviour of actors', both culture and structure are abstract concepts which are not 'concrete entities'.

Similarities can be drawn with the work of Hays (1994). In her work, Hays (1994: 65; see also Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Geertz, 1973) notes the complex nature of culture which is 'a social, durable, layered pattern of cognitive and normative systems that are at once material and ideal, objective and subjective, embodied in artifacts and embedded in behaviour, passed about in interaction, internalized in personalities, and externalized in institutions'. Highlighting culture as a 'social structure', Hays goes on to deconstruct social structure into two interrelated elements; systems of both meaning and social relations. Hays (1994: 65) defines systems of social relations as 'patterns of roles, relationships, and forms of domination according to which one might place any given person at a point on a complex grid that specifies a set of categories running from class, gender, race, education, and religion all the way to age, sexual preference, and position in the family'. Systems of meaning are stated as the norms, values and beliefs, rituals and language of actors.

Cultural research from a root metaphor perspective therefore highlights that social action occurs due to 'consensually determined meanings for experiences that to an external observer, may have the appearance of an independent rule-like existence' (Smircich, 1983: 354). The focus moves away from the managerial, political and ideological interests and towards the entire organizational community, comprehending how employees make sense of their meanings (Smircich, 1983), or more informally, establishing 'what the devil they [employees] think they are up to' (Geertz, 1983: 58). Within this perspective 'culture refers to the socially transmitted patterns for behavior characteristic of a particular social group [and] definitions highlight culture as historical, as including beliefs, values and norms that guide the action of cultural members, as being learned and as an abstraction from behavior and products of behavior' (Iivari, 2002: 68). Both the socio-historical and contextual richness of social life are considered, and in addition to the typical focus on the elaborate rituals and stories of organizational culture, Barley (1983) highlights the importance of studying the more mundane aspects of organizational life in order to grasp the codes that lend it coherence.

Due to the many different employee viewpoints of organizational culture, any managerial hope for a unitary monolith is challenged with interpretivists emphasizing the local nature of cultural processes and many plausible interpretations (Turner, 1986; Glaser, Zamanou and Hacker, 1987; Trice and Beyer, 1993; Alvesson, 2002). Martin (1992) draws our attention to organizational inconsistency in interpretation of its culture through the subjective and varied experiences of employees (see also Alvesson and Berg, 1992; Rowlinson and Procter, 1999; Clair, Beatty and MacLean, 2005). Additionally, she notes how consensus and clarity may exist, but only at a sub-cultural level (see also Martin and Meyerson, 1988; Young, 1989) and later posits that 'subcultures often appear along the lines of functional, occupational and hierarchical differentiation, often coalescing into overlapping, nested groups that co-exist in harmony, conflict or independence from each other' (Martin et al., 2006: 731).

Since Martin's (1985) work, many authors have investigated the existence of organizational sub-cultures either at vertical (Alvesson, 1993) or horizontal levels (see Trice and Beyer, 1993). Parker (2000) also notes how these sub-cultures are driven

either by an employee's occupational/professional standing (see also; Martin, 2004), their geographical/spatial dispersion within the organization, or, through generational differences among workers. It has also been suggested by Meek (1992: 197) that organizational "norms and social meanings are structured by 'class cultures', and are a constant potential source of dispute" negating the idea of a single, homogenous organizational culture.

In looking at sub-cultures, Martin and Siehl (1983) focus on the extent to which their nature is synonymous with the overarching organizational culture (see also Louis, 1985). They identify three types; enhancing, counter, and orthogonal sub-cultures. Enhancing sub-cultures are those that are supportive of the wider culture while counter cultures exhibit oppositional thought from their members. Orthogonal sub-cultures have attracted much attention from academics (see Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Fleming and Spicer, 2003; Brown and Hesketh, 2004) and they typify organizational members who are able to maintain their individual values while also demonstrating a surface compliance to the managerially espoused culture. The work on sub-cultures typically notes how this is viewed as a coping mechanism for employees (see Grugulis et al., 2000; Ogbonna and Harris, 2002).

Such research points to the implications for the identity of members who engage with such activities (see Alvesson, 2002; Willmott, 2003). Accordingly, emancipatory scholars claim that the work of interpretive researchers is devoid of any consideration of organizational power relations. These authors highlight the further need to focus on factors that may limit employee agency, to research those that set the agenda and, to question the managerial values and ideologies that may serve corporate interests and not those of employees (see Casey, 1995; Parker, 2000). Many of these studies investigate the distinctive forms of employee resistance in response to the totalizing discourses of management, and examples of this can be seen in the following section.

2.7 Overt and Covert Resistance to Organizational Culture

Employee resistance in organizations can be either overt, where it is observable, or take a covert form where co-workers or managers are unable to detect

that resistance is occurring. This section illustrates both forms of employee resistance which take many different forms and are a consequence of managerial attempts to control organizational culture. In their study of British Airways, Grugulis and Wilkinson (2002) suggest that not all workers appear to internalize organizational values, with accounts of workers 'entertaining' or 'putting up with' corporate culture in exchange for increased work autonomy and high levels of remuneration. The responses of employees appear to be similar when they are looking to advance their careers. In their study at Westco Millennium, Ogbonna and Wilkinson's (1990) argue that as career advancement was based on the positive impression of management of employees' immediate subordinates, employees engaged in instrumental value compliance and hence, displayed the appropriate managerially espoused behaviours.

Suggesting the term 'resigned behavioural compliance' (Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 1990: 14), here, employees actively suppress their own desires and preferences to the wishes of management (or others) in exchange for extrinsic remuneration (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1996). This level of attachment is therefore less desirable for management, as instead of a deep identification with corporate beliefs, employees cognitively accept these values to the limiting parameter of their financial gain or prospects of career advancement. Parallels can be seen with the concept of 'cool alternation' (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, 192), where employees are psychologically and emotionally distanced from, yet are compliant with organizational values (see Kunda, 1992). However, it can be a source of relief for bored employees (see Wilkinson et al., 1991) and Goffman (1959) argues that due to the element of psychological distancing, individuals negate feelings of responsibility for their consequences. In this sense, employees emotionally create their own personal space which is exempt from managerial conditioning.

Giddens (1984) notes that once an employee commits to an individual 'role play', they may well have to act in certain ways that elude their conscious monitoring. Similarly, Fineman and Gabriel (1996: 87) suggest that,

> People may be rebelling even as they appear to be conforming … and orders may be obeyed willingly or unwillingly; they may equally be obeyed grudgingly, inaccurately, ritualistically or sarcastically. In all of these cases, compliance and resistance can coexist in the same form of behaviour.

An example that details both covert and overt forms of employee resistance to managerial attempts to sustain organizational cultures can be found in Van Maanen's (1990, 1992) study of Disney.   The totalizing discourses of Disney's culture ensured that staff uniforms were termed 'costumes', employees 'cast members', and the study provides clear parallels with the suggestions of Peters and Waterman (1982) and other practitioner based writings. For example, training sessions (termed traditions one and two) were conducted as if Walt Disney was in the room, and managers drew on organizational symbolism to reinforce cultural values (see Schein, 1985; Legge, 1992). The physical appearance of employees was not outside of managerial control either, with set requirements for employees that included simple make-up and no beards. Furthermore, Disney had codes of conduct that emphasized the need for employees to constantly smile when 'on-stage'. To be 'on-stage' was to be in an area with the customers and the paper demonstrates a marked difference in behaviour between these locations and those 'offstage'. Clear similarities can be drawn with the work of Goffman (1959) with his dramaturgical conception of 'on' and 'offstage' selves where an employee's authentic self is reserved for 'offstage' areas.

The 'Magic Kingdom' is elevated and there are a series of private tunnels below where employees can 'be themselves', they can chew chewing gum and take their character costume off. The latter was again a policy of Disney, where, in no circumstance would the true identity of Mickey Mouse, Pluto or Donald Duck be disclosed. While, Van Maanen (1991: 73) notes 'the ease with which employees glide into their smiling roles is, in large measure, a feat of social engineering'. His study also reveals both covert and overt forms of employee resistance. An example is where frustrated ride operators would pretend that they had inadvertently pushed the safety bar down too hard on some frustrating customers. Critically, this could be viewed as a form of escape away from the monolithic and totalizing organizational culture.

Ackroyd and Crowdy's (1990: 4) study in an abattoir also questions 'the extent to which a culture is something a management can create or control'. The monotonous nature of Slaughtermen' work was countered with much enjoyment with in-worker bullying and joking which had been built organically. This distancing

away from corporate rules enabled the workers to complete their jobs with a feeling of escapism (see also; Vaught and Smith, 1980; Boland and Hoffman, 1983; and Collinson, 1992). Connections here to Kunda's (1992) study at Tech abound and the study complicates the traditional conceptualizations of control that commenced this chapter by noting how management would tolerate (if not explicitly value) these instances in order not to break the strong sub-cultural values that were generating successful output for managers.

This section has considered many empirical case studies that focus on employee resistance with the various coping mechanisms and forms of employees examined. In doing so, an understanding of context has been shown to be necessary in accounting for these acts and the extent and scope of managerial practices that aim to control organizational cultures has been explored. The following section addresses a recent shift in the literature on organizational culture to its focus on 'cultures of fun'. Links to critical literature will be made in order to illustrate the controlling nature of fun organizational cultures and this is then followed by a discussion of the cynical employee responses to the claimed fun organizational values.

2.8 Organizational Cultures of Fun

A special issue of the journal Employee Relations (2009) investigates the topic of fun organizational cultures in depth (see also Rodrigues and Collinson, 1995; Meyer, 1999). We could ask; how is it possible for an employee not to be enthusiastic about fun cultures? What is clear, is that many organizations are investing in cultures of fun. One example is Kwik-Fit, a car maintenance chain that has won many industry 'best company to work for awards'. Their commitment to reinforcing a fun workplace is perhaps best exemplified by their full-time managerial post entitled 'Minister of Fun' (Sunday Times, 2005). Extensive evidence in both academic and the more practitioner orientated literatures suggests that fun cultures generate many benefits for organizations and their members (Zbar, 1999; Karl and Peluchette, 2006;). These include increased employee satisfaction (Karl and Peluchette, 2006), a lower probability of worker burnout and absenteeism (Mayer, 1999), and the fostering

of creativity and innovation (Abramis, 1989; Caudron, 1992). Therefore, as Lamm and Meeks (2009: 613) note, the concept of,

> Workplace fun is growing in acceptance and popularity, having outlived the 'fad' life cycle (Fleming, 2005) – an important distinction as fads have been characterised as having symbolic utility but little organisational improvement (Abrahamson, 1991).

Lamm and Meeks (2009) go on to emphasize the importance for us to further investigate the relationship between fun at work and its implications. In doing so, they suggest the consideration of factors such as culture, gender, or as they stress in their article, the generational cohort of employees. In their guest editorial of the Employee Relations special issue, Bolton and Houlihan (2009) argue that the current literature on organizational fun is largely functional in its nature and that human agency is overlooked. Accordingly, they call for further research that investigates the reactions of employees and how they 'variously engage, enjoy, endure, or escape managed fun' (Bolton and Houlihan, 2009: 556). One article that responds to this is by Sturdy and Fleming (2009: 569) and it is located in the same special issue. At their study of Sunray (an Australian call centre) the authors 'raise questions about the nature of workplace control, resistance and the meaning of authenticity at work'.

In contrast to much of the critical literature that notes how managers of strong organizational cultures seek to normalize employee behaviour, Sturdy and Fleming (2009) argue that employees at Sunray were subject to neo-normative control. Here, employee difference is celebrated and the concept of fun was viewed as an expression of self. As opposed to the customary commitment of leaving their private selves at the factory door that can be seen in the scientific management regimes of Taylor (1911), and where workers were once expected to have no private emotions (see Kunda, 1992; Grugulis et al., 2000), at Sunray, they are the target of management. Employees are encouraged to 'be themselves' at work and it appears that management views employee difference as a locus for control. This notion holds many consequences for employee identity, although employees 'subverted difference and prescribed fun through solidarity/sameness based on the work tasks' (Sturdy and Fleming, 2009: 110). With managers aiming to secure the 'authentic' selves of call

centre operators at Sunray, employees used cynicism as an act of resistance and in an attempt to create an alternative sense of authenticity.

Sturdy and Fleming (2009) are not alone in uncovering forms of employee resistance through the cynical remarks of organizational members (Dean, Brandes and Dharwadkar, 1998), and it is to this literature base that our attention will now turn. Various ethnographic studies highlight the cynical viewpoints of employees that are directed towards the managerial attempts at controlling organizational cultures (Kunda, 1992; Collinson, 1992; Casey, 1995; Du Gay, 1996). Through such writings we learn that people are not cultural dopes, they can 'judge such ideological appeals for what they are and test the exhortations of top management against reality' (Hill, 1995: 50).

2.9 Cynicism about Organizational Values

While the organizational literature is replete with examples of employee cynicism, there is much variation in scholarly interpretation of the meaning and significance of cynicism. Fleming and Spicer (2003, 2007) provide a comprehensive account of such writings and offer three interpretations of cynicism. The first of their accounts draws on the functionalist literatures and authors who would see organizational culture as a 'critical variable' (Smircich, 1983; 1983a; c.f Alvesson's 'technical' viewpoint). From this perspective, cynicism is viewed as a psychological 'defect' that is harmful to an organization. Here, the emphasis on objectively minimizing cynicism is noted through the work of Dean et al. (1998: 350), who state that 'research on cynicism should help us to better understand a phenomenon that is pervasive in modern organizations, and perhaps find better ways to manage or prevent it'. Fleming and Spicer (2003, 2007) contrast this interpretation with authors who favour a radical humanist paradigm and hence, who would be more interested with releasing social constraints that limit human potential (c.f Alvesson's 'emancipatory' viewpoint). Drawing on the work of Goffman (1959) this interpretation of cynicism protects the workers' 'backstage selves', and "is a way of escaping the encroaching logic of managerialism ... [it] provides an inner 'free space' for workers when other avenues have dried up" (Fleming and Spicer, 2003: 155).

The third interpretation views cynicism as an ideology and contradicts the first by suggesting that cynicism is 'the inadvertent success of corporate power relations' (Fleming and Spicer, 2003: 160). Here, the seminal work of Willmott (1993: 518) notes how workers dis-identify from their work roles and how they enter into a 'vicious circle of cynicism and dependence' that limits employee challenges to the existing power relations. According to Žižek (1989: 33) … 'cynical distance is just one way to blind ourselves to the structuring power of ideological fantasy…. Even if we do not take things seriously, even if we keep an ironical distance, *we are still doing them'*. Critically, if one appreciates that identification serves as the core mechanism for cultural control, then following such an assumption, any notion of dis-identification must offer freedom from such control. To this end, Fleming and Spicer (2003: 174) suggest that it is precisely this 'alluring breathing space' that permits individuals to act as purposeful and efficient team members in portraying images of compliance to the organizational values. It is clear therefore, that while employees may have a certain sense of disillusioned autonomy; surface level compliance is still given to core organizational values (Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 1990).

In particular, a reading of Kunda's 'Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-tech Corporation' (1992) demonstrates how the ideology of cynicism facilitated the organization. In his study of Tech, Kunda (1992) highlights that the target of managerial techniques to develop a corporate culture need not be the colonization of employee 'minds', but simply their discursive practices. The managerial attempts at sustaining the organizational culture therefore remain unchallenged and the organizational values are reproduced through the language of employees**.**

This colonization resonates with the literature on individual power, resistance and subjectivity. Succinctly, Tracy and Tretheway (2006: 172) propose that 'organizational discourses incite members to enact particular identities'. In view of this, workers create a distinction between their public and private selves as a form of resistance towards the espoused corporate identity (Kondo, 1990). Accordingly, employees can retain an 'autonomous' or 'real' self while continuing to enact their 'fake' organizational self (Collinson, 1992; Nippert-Eng, 1995). However, in a similar vein to the writings of Willmott (1993) and Fleming and Spicer (2003), Tracy

and Trethewey (2006: 184-185) note that 'although such compartmentalization may feel like resistance, it can, ironically, bind employees to the colonizing power of organizational discourse'. Furthermore, Kosmala and Herrbach (2006: 1393) suggest that such distancing can be potentially beneficial to organizations in the short term where, 'the distancing from the organizational culture … appears to be more symbolic of individual agency than truly harmful'.

2.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the concept of organizational control and it has identified the many different viewpoints on the subject. In doing so, direct control has been detailed and Braverman's (1974) critique of this strategy noted. The studies that note employee agency have been examined before responsible autonomy has been analyzed (Friedman, 1977). The concepts of employee agency and context have been central to this chapter and elaborations of organizational control in relation to cultural control have been made explicit. Normative measures of cultural control were then discussed which led to the work of Smircich (1983) and an outlining of different approaches to studying culture within her useful framework. If an organization 'has' a culture, then it is assumed that culture can be manipulated and therefore, used as a vehicle to achieve organizational objectives (Smircich, 1983b). The alternative viewpoint is to state that an organization 'is' a culture and hence, any attempt to create homogenous thought conventions are viewed as being fundamentally flawed.

This chapter then focussed on the types of employee resistance to managerial attempts at controlling organizational cultures. Notably, the covert micro-political forms of resistance were analysed before this chapter then considered the recent shift in the literature that considers 'cultures of fun' and employee cynicism. The agentic capabilities of employees remained a consistent theme in these discussions and this chapter has illustrated the great complexity that surrounds our working world. Context is vital in understanding the relevance and success of control strategies, be they direct, technical, bureaucratic or normative (see Edwards, 1979; Etzioni, 1961). Academic literature has been noted in this chapter in order to detail the managerial need for control in different contexts and here, we have learned of the importance of

symbols, myths and leadership in managing organizational cultures (see; Selznick, 1957; Schein, 1996). The following chapter focuses on the links between organizational culture and structure. Specifically, the structural factors of recruitment, reward systems, career progression and cross-functional teams will be explored and the implications for cultural control noted.

CHAPTER THREE: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES FOR CULTURAL CONTROL

3.1 Introduction

Chapter two has already noted how the 'rules of the game' are often articulated to employees through socio-ideological controls such as bespoke forms of culture management. This chapter extends our analysis of control and considers the structural factors that have been shown to have a significant impact on the management of organizational culture.   As per the previous chapter, employee agency is noted throughout as this chapter neither privileges the prescriptive managerial accounts of culture management, nor the totalizing narratives of Braverman (1974) that minimize the space for employee resistance. The chapter commences by focussing on the use of recruitment as a cultural control mechanism before considering the use of rewards (in their many forms) to manage organizational culture. Both of these structures have been highlighted by Ogbonna (1992) to be significant in the management of organizational culture. The chapter then considers the concept of career as a structural mechanism that binds individuals to organizations (see Fournier, 1997) and this leads to an analysis of the final structural aspect of work examined in this chapter, teamwork; specifically, cross-functional teams. The aims and objectives of my research are then noted before the chapter concludes.

3.2 Recruiting for Cultural Control

The selection of employees has been highlighted by Ogbonna (1992) as one of the most popular structural tools that facilitates culture management. The literature pertaining to recruitment and selection has traditionally been based around the person-job fit (Russel and Werberl, 1994). Here, the identification of an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities with reference to the specific job tasks forms the basis of the selection criteria (Hedge and Teachout, 1992). However, the context of all organizational activity has fundamentally altered through socio-economic changes such as the rise of the service sector and knowledge economies. The increased flexibility demanded by less hierarchical organizational structures has led to new socio-ideological forms of control within organizations where organizational cultures

integrate workforces (Alvesson and Karreman, 2004). Changes to recruitment practices can be seen in at shift to recruiting those that have the ability to work adaptively and flexibly within an organization. Consequently, many authors point to a significant shift within recruitment 'away from task-based job analysis as the basis for developing person specifications, [and] towards the use of competency modelling' (Corcoran and Keenan, 1998: 146; see also Townley, 1989).

According to Bartram, Robertson, and Callinan (2002: 10), competencies are defined as 'sets of behaviours that are instrumental in the delivery of desired results or outcomes'. As opposed to the job analysis process of recruitment that focuses on the desirable and necessary behaviours required to perform a job adequately, the competency profiling approach, according to Kurz and Bartram (2002: 89), is one based on 'identifying, defining, and measuring individual differences in terms of specific work-related constructs that are relevant to successful job performance'. Succinctly, it is hence the repertoire of capabilities, activities, processes, and responses available, that enable a range of work demands to be met more effectively by some people than by others.

In a shift in technical and prescriptive literatures away from recruitment techniques of person-job fit to those that centre on employee competencies and person-organization fit (Adkins, Russell and Werbel 1998), there is now greater emphasis on the apparent congruence of belief and value orientation between the individual's personality, and the organizational culture, norms and strategic needs (Bowen, Ledford, and Nathan 1991; Maccoby, 1976; Kristof, 1996). Direct links can be made with Guest's (1987) 'quality' dimension of Human Resource Management (HRM); in that high-calibre employees sustain organizational cultures. The study conducted by Earnshaw et al. (1998) illustrates that flawed decisions in the recruitment of personnel in small firms are typically used to account for any subsequent employee poor performance that may involve disciplinary action. As a consequence, the study highlights the increase in effort of these small firms to recruit candidates who are a fit with the organizational culture (Earnshaw et al., 1998; see also Williamson, 2000; Williamson et al., 2002). Here, managers are 'aligning the applicant competencies with organizational values and culture rather than aligning

basic knowledge, skills, and abilities with minimum qualifications for the job' (Heneman and Berkley, 1999: 17).

The managerially prescribed view of an organization's culture therefore appears to play an important role in influencing those who are selected to work in a particular company. Accordingly, employees are increasingly being selected for their perceived receptivity to the core organizational values, with the candidates' illustrated coherence to such values being used primarily as selection criteria (Corcoran and Keenan, 1998). It is argued that the functions necessary to the survival of the organization are enhanced by such compatibility (Schein, 1985). An important study within this literature base is that of Callaghan and Thompson (2002: 250). Through their study of the call centre case study (Telebank), we learn how 'the recruitment and selection process is used to identify, through experience or predisposition, the existence of social competencies functional to service interactions'. Their analysis of Telebank evaluates the suitability and inconsistencies of the elaborate recruitment, selection and training process and the nature of call centre work. Importantly, the paradox between the routine call centre work and emotional demands upon its workers is drawn and the study notes that the selected candidates are either those who have internalized the customer service discourse, or those who are able to manage their emotions in order to provide a convincing account.

A similar study that emphasizes the importance of ensuring value congruence through recruitment is that of Grugulis Dundon and Wilkinson's (2000) study at ConsultancyCo. The organization placed an emphasis on carefully selecting employees that were a fit with their organizational values and character profile. The recruitment process was designed to replicate the characteristics of the founders of ConsultancyCo (as per Moore's [1962] homosocial reproduction) and 'suitable souls' were chosen for their 'character and ... profile' before questions were asked about their technical competencies. This study echoes the shift in the literature that notes the preference to recruit for attitude and not ability (see also Van Maanen's study of Disney, 1991) and illustrated how the structural factors of recruitment, pay and work design were 'at least as important as cultural ones in this process of 'culture management'' (Grugulis, Dundon and Wilkinson, 2000: 123).

In terms of recruitment, it would appear that culture management has largely operated on the basis of normative control (see the previous chapter; see also; Etzioni, 1964; and the investigations of Kunda, 1992; and Willmott, 1993). However, numerous commentators (Jermier et al., 1991; Kunda, 1992) have illustrated the limitations of normative control where groupthink may occur (see Janis, 1971; Foster and Kapflan, 2001) and the dis-identification of employees through cynicism (Fleming and Spicer, 2003). Recent research notes the decline of normative strategies of recruiting for standardized norms (Kunda and Ailon-Souday, 2005). Tom Peters, co-author of one of the most influential culture management textbooks (In Search of Excellence) also acknowledges the shift to 'pursue variation, not to manage (stifle) it' (Peters, 1994: 51) through the recruitment of 'zanies' to 'joyous anarchies' where neo-normative forms of control encourage employees to 'be themselves' (see also Florida, 2004).

Fleming and Sturdy's (2009) study at Sunray, a US-owned Australian call centre where employees are encouraged to be just that, notes how the recruitment strategy aims to hire young individuals as they 'find [the]… culture very, very attractive because they can be themselves and know how to have fun'. The notion of having fun at Sunray reflected the contemporary 'fun at work movement' by employers (see Courpasson, 2006) that 'build[s] a distinctive employment identity through highly interactive, seemingly leisure-oriented places of work... fun cultures are very much about working and playing hard, and an associated pressure to conform and act the part' (Bolton and Houlihan, 2009: 10).

It is typical for 'fun' companies to have a young workforce (with the majority under 35 years old, see Woudhuyesen, 2001) and to heavily invest in hiring employees that 'fit in' (Bolton and Houlihan, 2009). Apart from the economic benefits of hiring young workers with little previous work experience (Castilla, 2005), Fleming and Sturdy (2009: 157) uncover another rationale for this recruitment strategy. They argue that younger individuals are more likely to be 'expressive and playful, including with identities' and the authors also note how this is in direct contrast to the rationale of hiring young individuals as they are more susceptible to inculcate *into* a normalized organizational culture (Fleming and Sturdy, 2009). This is advertised to potential Sunray employees in job advertisements headed with the

phrase, "Do you know how to party?" and the emphasis is on 'the expression – rather than the suppression or transformation – of what hitherto might have been seen as private, individual and authentic identities, feelings and lifestyles and on the acceptance, and even celebration, of difference' (Fleming and Sturdy, 2009: 165). In their more recent analysis, Fleming and Sturdy (2011) note how a Sunray manager extols the totality of the fun culture at Sunray such that it leaves no space for cynical employee resistance 'It's impossible – since I would not have selected people who thought like that in the first place' (see also Callaghan and Thompson, 2001, in relation to 'recruiting attitude').

Iles and Salaman (1995) suggest two perspectives by which one can conceptualize the acts of recruitment, selection and assessment; the scientific, and social process viewpoints. From the dominant scientific perspective in the literature and perhaps that of the Sunray manager, individuals have a stable set of skills; hence recruitment can be based on a firm, objective notion about the candidates' proposed future performance (Iles and Salaman, 1995: 206; see also Steffy and Grimes, 1992). For the example at Sunray, it would have been inconceivable for the manager to hire someone that does not characterize fun. However, such scientific prescriptions fail to emphasize the role of candidate agency in the social process of recruitment. Conversely, it can be argued from a social process standpoint that recruitment, selection and assessment procedures are venues where candidates engaged in impression management.

A key venue for impression management is the employment interview (Gilmore, Stevens, Harrel-Cook, and Ferris 1999) where the strategic tactics of candidates' and their 'conscious or unconscious attempts to influence images during interaction' (Gilmore et al., 1999: 322) are considered to undermine the accuracy of the recruiters' decision making (Anderson, 1992). Here, research points to the knowledgeable agency of candidates' in interviews in strategically and primarily socially constructing their individual identities (Brown, 2004). Candidates therefore manipulate the recruitment techniques in order to secure employment (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). The effectiveness of recruitment practices is therefore brought into question where, candidates encode the scripts demonstrated by assessors, interpret the

information (see Shank and Ableson, 1977; Markus, 1977), and orientate their behaviour accordingly (see Bartunek and Moch, 1987).

Parallels can be drawn with Giddens (1984), where, in particular arenas, the social action of individuals may be mediated through both the 'knowledgeability' and 'capability' of human agents to utilize and manage the available scripts. Additionally, such representation of social identity by the candidates can be compared to that of an actor, where the image presented is not that of the 'authentic self', but is constructed according to the contextual requirements by both the 'actor' and their 'audience' (Goffman, 1971). The importance is therefore to maintain a believable and consistent 'identity performance' for the purpose and duration of the situation. In this sense identity is 'malleable and instrumentally defined' (Goffman, 1961: 75).

In a rare critical study that notes the how graduates manage their employability, Brown and Hesketh (2004: 186) illustrate that 'candidates are getting smarter at understanding how to play the recruitment game' and they offer a taxonomy of graduate behaviour in recruitment assessment centres. The authors refer to the labels of 'players and purists'. Here, 'players', engage in impression management, view the assessment centre as a positional game, and attempt to learn the 'rules of the game' and what is required to be displayed. In order for players to be 'competent at being competent' (Brown and Hesketh, 2004: 132), their narrative of employability is honed through various self-reflective discourses and self-packaging. For such 'players', the manipulation at such social arenas poses few moral challenges. Instead, it would appear that the key challenge for players is to have an accurate conception of the 'rules of the game' and to ensure their 'act' escapes the recruiters' detection. Purists by contrast, while no less determined to succeed, view acting a role in recruitment processes as cheating and industrial sabotage, genuinely believing that the assessment centre would select the best person for the post.

In view of the knowledgeability of 'players', psychometric testing could arguably be deemed worthless (see Garrety, Badham, Merrigan, Rifkin and Zanke 2003) and talk of organizations recruiting for profile and character first and technical skills second may, through these methods at least, be in vain (Grugulis, Dundon and

Wilkinson 2000). Therefore, organizations that recruit for culture control, either through the aforementioned normative, or neo-normative methods, may well be manipulated by the considerable power of candidates, who strategically construct the managerially desired personality. Alternatively, if could be argued that managerially espoused 'strong' organizational culture may be reproduced, yet not as a result of any technically competent recruitment measures that conceptualize competencies as measurable, tangible entities (see also Torrington, Hall and Taylor, 2008) or those that accurately measure the candidates' synergy with the organizational values (see Grugulis et al., 2000). Instead, it is through the high levels of candidate' knowledgeability of and pre-disposed manipulation to recruitment processes and this would therefore challenge the prescriptive and largely technical conceptualizations of recruitment that pervade the literature.

Ogbonna (1992) identifies reward management as an important structural area that is linked to the management of organizational culture. The next section therefore, focuses on reward management and its links with sustaining 'strong' organizational cultures.

3.3 The Use of Rewards for Culture Control

The allocation of rewards has traditionally been seen as a poor relation of performance management, being 'the turgid, unimaginative and inflexible world of wage and salary administration' (Smith, 1993: 4). However, in conjunction with the claims of managing organizational culture (Peters and Waterman, 1982), the partial significance of the reward strategy in determining employee behaviours and forming an integral part of the overall business strategy has become acknowledged (see Livy, 1988). Smith (1992: 177) highlights the shift in managerial discourse from the 'administration of pay' to that of reward management, where 'pay is now performance'. Fombrun et al. (1984) also identify reward management as a key function and both Ogbonna (1992) and Chatman and Cha (2003) note its importance in terms of facilitating the management of organizational culture. As Armstrong and Murliss (1988: 10) note,

'The emphasis has moved from relatively inflexible salary structures to the increasing use of PRP systems … the remuneration strategies of an organisation should not only

be appropriate to the corporate culture but can as necessary be used to change the culture'.

There is much support for this argument where Kerr and Slocum (1987: 99) state that 'the reward system ... is an unequivocal statement of the organization's values and beliefs', and other authors note the more imaginative era of organizational remuneration (Flannery, Hofrichter and Platen, 1996; Brown, 2001). Within this literature base, Flannery, Hofrichter and Platen (1996) posit the concept of dynamic pay and in doing so, highlight the need for managers to ally employee remuneration policies not only to strategic organizational objectives, but also with the norms and values of an organization's culture. Furthering the importance of this finding, Brown (2001: 125) asserts that the 'alignment of your reward practices with employee values and needs is every bit as important as alignment with business goals, and critical to the realisation of the later'.

The literature also points to a dynamic relationship, between the considerable impact of organizational reward systems in influencing an organization's culture, and the viewpoint that culture is a key determinant of reward systems (see Kerr and Slocum, 1987; Kopelman et al., 1990; Mabey, Salaman and Storey, 1998; Ogbonna, 1992). Here, in addition to the reward system illustrating the compensation that employees can anticipate for any given effort, the authors note how it expresses the organizational values to which employees must conform, and that the organizational culture is reinforced through the promotion of values upon which employees are measured and rewarded. Critically, they suggest that 'much of the substance of culture is concerned with controlling the behaviors and attitudes of organization members, and the reward system is a primary method of achieving control' (Kerr and Slocum, 1987: 99). It is the business strategy that implies the need for particular behaviours that are cohesive with such strategies. Lawler (1984; 1995) illustrates the significance of the compensation strategy in generating the desired employee behaviours, and identifies three components to the reward strategy, its values, structure and processes. Here, the reward values are what the organization stands for and also serves to inform the principles on which the strategy is founded. The structural features include the administration of procedures and strategic features such as performance-related pay, while the process element focuses on the communication

of reward strategy and the level of employee involvement in its formation. Together, they form the reward strategy.

There are many examples of reward strategies that map onto core organizational values (for example, the investigations of Kunda, 1992; Casey, 1999). Studies highlight the use of away days, shopping trips to New York and how other such rewards attempt to reinforce the organizational culture. Grugulis, Dundon and Wilkinson (2000: 102) note how a culture manager works at ConsultancyCo and receives 2% of the company's turnover to 'actively control (and preserve) the company culture'. ConsultancyCo gives employees a degree of freedom in their working lives in return for the regulation of their social time, and many activities held outside of working hours are themed in order to give employees a 'more complete immersions of self than would be achieved in everyday wear' (Grugulis, Dundon and Wilkinson, 2000: 102). The rewards issued from top management, such as the awards for 'model workers'; those that best exemplify the organizational values, are substantial and clearly linked to cultural values. The distinctive culture at ConsuntancyCo is also marked with the less prestigious 'brick' awards – a fun mark of achievement that mocked its winner.

While the strategies of reward management at ConsultancyCo are synonymous with the organizational culture, Lawler (1995) notes that should inconsistencies arise between the managerial rhetoric and the reward strategy, then, employee discontent and resistance may follow. The assumption, therefore, is such that the reward values promulgated by management are of significant relevance and their promise on reward strategy an important employee consideration. The studies of British Airways by Hopfl (1993) and Grugulis and Wilkinson (2002) highlight the discrepancy between rhetoric and reality. The authors note how a form of language ('rhetoric') that aims to construct certain ways of thinking about employment (and colonize individual subjectivities) misrepresented the situation at BA (the 'reality'). Their findings illustrate how a cultural change programme that aims to 'put people first' is in stark contrast to the claims of managerial bullying of BA employees (see The Economist, 'British Airways: A Wapping Mess', 10.07.97); and the statement that workers on strike were re-informed of their 'duty to co-operate with their employer' (Grugulis and Wilkinson, 2002: 189). This example illustrates the apparent gulf between the

managerial rhetoric of a customer focussed and inclusive organizational culture and the official actions taken by employees during the strike that led to lower levels of worker morale.

As opposed to a unitarist perspective of organizations, pluralism acknowledges the gap between senior management's espoused and enacted values. Espoused values represent the explicitly stated values and norms that are preferred by an organization whereas enacted values represent the values and norms that actually are exhibited or converted into employee behaviour (Kreiner, Kinicki and Buelens, 2002). Many studies detail the heavy organizational investment that attempts to achieve the enactment of organizational cultures, however, in her study at British Rail, Clarke (1999) notes how employees became cynical about their safety at work as a result of seeing inconsistencies between managerial behaviour and the espoused safety values. This gap between espoused and enacted values significantly influenced an organization's culture and employee attitudes.

For any organization that claims a unitary and homogenous culture, it would be sensible to assume that reward practices (such as pay and promotion) that illustrate 'oneness', fairness and transparency are central to supporting the organizational culture. Reward management has been defined as 'the formulation and implementation of strategies and policies that aim to reward people fairly, equitably and consistently in accordance with their value to the organization' (Armstrong and Stephens, 2005: 4) and the literature regarding reward management is largely based on the principles of equity theory (see Adams, 1963). Assuming 'equal pay for equal value', it is argued that employees desire to perceive fairness between their effort/ reward bargain and that of their co-workers. In addition, principles of consistency and transparency are also common within reward management literature. Here, employees are motivated by consistency in terms of rational managerial decisions that do not vary arbitrarily, and transparency in the reward process where employees clearly understand the reasoning behind managerial decisions.

Armstrong and Murlis also note that 'reward management processes should operate fairly in accordance with the principles of distributive and procedural justice' (2004: 35). With clear parallels to equity theory (Adams, 1965), Leventhal (1980)

details how distributive justice focuses on the amount of the allocated rewards to employees, where the value of workers effort is rewarded and delivered fairly. Conversely, procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the process through which managers decide to allocate rewards and how the payment procedures are initiated (Folger, 1977).

Tyler and Bies (1990) note five factors that alter employee perceptions of procedural justice. The first is the degree to which the employee feels that their voice is heard and that their thoughts regarding reward management are treated seriously. Secondly, any notion of discrimination towards certain employees has been shown to reduce the perceived levels of procedural justice as too has the degree of applied standardization of the assessment criteria among the workforce. The fourth and final factors concern the feedback mechanisms of the managerial decisions regarding remuneration. Here, employee perceptions of procedural justice are higher where early feedback is received from the managerial decisions and also where managers provide detailed accounts of the reasoning for given outcomes. There has been much evidence to suggest that distributive justice has a greater impact on employees' perceptions of fairness than procedural justice (see Tyler, Rasinski, and McGraw, 1985). However, although Folger and Konovsky (1989) support these findings, they are keen to stress the importance of the latter and agree with Lind and Tyler's finding that 'the great practical value of procedural justice lies in its capacity to enhance ... positive evaluations of the organization. .... Fair procedures may be one of the crucial elements of organizational viability' (1988: 191). Moreover, the centrality of fair procedures in sustain a strong, unitary organizational culture is an important consideration for organizational reward strategies.

The next section focuses on the importance of careers as a cultural control mechanism. The concept of a career has obvious implications for ensuring high levels of employee retention which can sustain strong cultural values but this chapter will detail how it also provides a strong platform for employees to make sense of an organization's culture. Particular attention is given to the importance of careers for graduate employees as they formed the basis of my collected empirical data (see Chapters 6.5.2 and 7.8 for further information).

3.4 Careers for Cultural Control

The relationship between a career and organizational socialization has been a focal point of interest for Fournier (1997: 365) who illustrates that 'a career becomes a vehicle through which individuals embody the social and institutional, one of the key mechanisms of socialization linking individuals and institutions'. Three key factors have been suggested with regard to the conception of career. Firstly, Barley (1989) notes how the career is both at once a measurable and tangible concept where positions in organizational hierarchy can be clearly demarcated, yet it is also holds a subjective dimension that draws on the individual's sense making of their own careers. Secondly, careers are posited as facilitators of change with individuals assuming different identities given the requirements of their changing roles through their career. Lastly, 'careers provide the link between individuals and social structures. Careers are like scripts or 'reading maps' which offer people interpretive schemes to make sense of the social world' (Fournier, 1997: 365).

The work of Kelly (1955) shows how individuals create inherent constructions that are used to make sense and foresee forthcoming events, and how the specific construction would then influence their behaviour. Such constructions are then revised from the knowledge gained and experience of the event. The work of Fournier (1997) is of particular relevance here, where the careers of 33 graduates were investigated as a venue for construct innovation, a process where individuals change the constructs that they use to order their social world. Fournier (1997) acknowledges how the lived experience of graduate careers in their early years may lack the speed of development that they would desire (see also Arnold and Davey, 1994; Keenana and Newton, 1985). This work focuses on how graduates engage with construct innovation in order to make sense of the careers and their lives more generally,

> Graduates entering organizational life and encountering different parts of the organization as their careers develop new constructs to make better sense of their new emerging reality. Indeed, the encounter of new experiences or entry into a new culture are seen as obvious examples where construct innovation is called for (Fournier, 1997: 369-70; see also; Fransella and Dalton, 1990).

However, Fournier's study also illustrates the resistance of graduates to readily accept managerial espoused 'logics'. Here, the knowledgeable employees reformed such logics from their own viewpoint, preferring to view managerial incentives such as 'job enrichment' as one of employee 'exploitation', and ultimately changing their construct of self and that of their employer. A parallel can be drawn to the work of Ogbonna and Harris (1998) on managing organizational cultures. Notably, with their term 'instrumental value compliance'. Here, the authors suggest that in order to support and develop their careers, certain employees may 'cognitively accept espoused values' (Ogbonna and Harris, 1998: 286). One possible implication would be a dynamic interrelationship between, and changes to, the employees' constructs of the organizational culture and of their own career.

From the work of Fournier it is possible to envisage the vastly different constructs that would occupy a graduate's thoughts at the beginning and at the end of their employment within a given firm. It is also easy to imagine how, due to the lack of opportunities for promotion and mismatched graduate career expectations, the constant engagement with construct innovation may lead some graduates to leave their employer. The work of Tharenou, Latimer and Conroy (1995) highlights the considerable complexity imbued in graduate careers. Specifically, they point to the relationship of graduates with line managers, the nature of work and the availability of organizational support structures. External events may also have an impact in the changing construction of individual career constructs, where, just as organizations' cultures change over time, so too do the private lives and interests of their employees who may be looking to develop a family of their own.

The following section details the final structural aspect of organizational life that appears to be no less important for cultural control in contemporary organizations. Changes to work design have been suggested to be crucial to the success of rapidly growing firms (Greiner, 1972) and accordingly, the next section will focus on the use of cross-functional team working.

3.5 Coping with Growth – The Introduction of Cross-functional Teams for Cultural Control

Grugulis et al. (2000) argue that work organization is as important as active culture management attempts in order to sustain organizational values. As organizations grow, there is increasing pressure for firms to coordinate their activities and the implementation of teamwork becomes a potential panacea (see Greiner, 1972; Daft, 1992). Peters and Waterman (1982) note how 'excellent' companies tended to operate with flat organizational structures and Hambrick and Crozier (1989) note that the use of cross-functional teams (CFTs) has been a popular method for rapidly growing firms to avoid issues with employee co-ordination in decision making (see also; Webber, 2002; Jackson et al., 1995). In his book 'Cross Functional Teams: Working with Allies, Enemies and Other Strangers', Parker (2003: 6) defines a CFT as,

> A group of people with a clear purpose of representing a variety of functions or disciplines in the organization whose combined efforts are necessary for achieving the team's purpose' and notes the suitability of CFTs in dynamic organizational environments, in particular, those where there is a time pressure and desire to deliver to customers (see also; McCutcheon et al., 1994).

Much is known about temporal CFTs that may be set up to deliver organizational projects, yet with the exception of Clark and Fujimoto (1987, 1991), Denison, Hart, and Ichijo (1994) and Takeuchi and Nonaka (1986), very few studies currently exist to inform the alleged merits and dynamics of more fully dedicated teams. It is fair to assume that CFTs which form a permanent organizational structure place additional demands on organizational resources as within this context, Sundstrom et al. (1990) illustrate that organizational systems and structures, including reward systems, training structures and the organizational culture, largely determine the success of CFTs. A related point to the importance of organizational culture in facilitating CFTs can be made from the studies that focus on the importance of trust within CFTs (see Webber, 2002). The management of organizational culture can impact on work teams where managers aid group members in 'learn[ing] how to deal effectively with issues of individual differences within the group … in which members gradually build a climate of interpersonal trust within the group' (Hackman and Morris, 1975: 82). Therefore, with trust posited as 'a psychological stage comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another' (Rousseau et al. 1998: 395), distrust can be

located 'when an individual or a group is perceived as not sharing key cultural values' (Sitkin and Roth, 1993: 371). Webber (2002) suggests that teams can be successful when managers use their capacity to shape workplace cultures that foster trust in CFTs.

Many challenges to CFTs can be found within the literature and most centre around the question of whether their heterogeneity benefits, or is detrimental to performance (see Northcraft et al., 1995). Additionally, Jassawaslla and Sashittal (1999) suggest that poorly administered CFTs may lead to cynicism, lowered employee morale, and that they could also create fractures between workers in their respective team. Another stream to the CFT literature considers the impact of the plurality of different interests that CFT employees may possess (Ford and Randolph, 1992; Katzenbach and Smith, 1993) where,

> By definition, cross-functional teams are composed of individuals from different disciplines, occupations, or professions and who have varied backgrounds, experiences, and interpretive schemes for analyzing problems (Lichtenstein, Alexander, McCarthy and Wells, 2004: 322; see also; Dougherty, 1992).

Within this area of research, authors point to differing employee 'thought worlds' which may emanate from their precious habitual routinization of tasks and institutionally ordered action (see Dougherty, 1992; Dougherty and Heller, 1994; Gregory, 1983; Griffin and Hauser, 1996). These differences may bring challenges for CFTs in terms of achieving a homogenous organizational culture and this further highlights the importance of an integrating mechanism that creates coordination (Ancona and Caldwell, 1987, 1990; Barker, Tjosvoid, and Andrew, 1988; Mintzberg, 1978). In addition, the competing social identities of employees that are derived from their functional bases may pose further challenges to the effectiveness of CFTs (Alderfer, 1987; Alderfer and Smith, 1982; Brown, 1983). It is surprising to note that no empirical study that focuses on the employee reaction to the introduction of dedicated CFTs exists. Accordingly, in order to shed light on this important area, our attention will now turn to the key studies within the broader teamworking literature.

The nature of teamworking has been suggested to be a contested concept and one with many different meanings for academic and practitioner writers. Locating the

literary views around three themes, the first approach follows the managerial and prescriptive literatures that conceptualize teamworking as a liberating approach to job design. Within such literature, the general theme is that through the implementation of teamworking practices, managers can organize the work of employees so as to enable self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). The second approach sees teamworking as an upbeat and prescriptive approach to improving organizational efficiency and many success stories can be found in the literature to support such claims (see Drucker, 1992; Katzenbach and Smith, 1993; Cohen and Ledford, 1994). However, it is the third approach which will now frame the discussion that concludes this section. Here, the work is more critical in its nature and most authors posit teamworking as an insidious form of managerial control, work intensification and increased managerial surveillance which results in the 'surviving employees becom[ing] narrow-minded, self-absorbed and scared of taking risks. They are more shell-shocked then empowered' (Purcell and Hutchinson, 1996: 60; see also; Legge, 1995; Parker and Slaughter, 1988; Burawoy, 1979; Sewell, 1998).

Within this more critical literature base, many empirical studies focus on employee reactions to the implementation of teamworking practices. At his ethnographic study of Nippon CTV, Delbridge (1998) notes how the emphasis on quality control and high levels of shop floor surveillance, led employees to develop a blame culture that enabled them to elude the responsibility for manufacturing defects. This study illuminates the apparent contradiction between the support function of team and the fragmented shop floor culture which serves to undermine the encouraging team environment. Another example is that of Barker's (1999) study of ISE Communications. One key finding of his work is that the workers exhibited 'concerted control' where employees became 'willing participants in and creators of a system that controls our own behaviour' (Barker, 1999: 40). Conceptualized as a broader extension of culture management strategies, a strong sense of ownership and empowerment was created amongst workers who aimed to work together to achieve organizational objectives. Barker's case illustrates how members were encouraged to take responsibility for not only their own behaviours, but also those of their team. Concertive control is a powerful mechanism as employees identify strongly with the organization and therefore object to resisting managerial control efforts. Additionally, the given empowerment to create the working regulations in Barker's case also

minimized worker resistance and the importance of context is also central in explaining employee reactions to the implementation of teamworking practices. At ISE Communications, the situation was one of redundancies. Hence, there were strong incentives for employees to conform to the teamworking incentive.

Contradictory findings can be found however, which again serves to highlight the importance of context. An example here is the work of Ezzamel and Willmott (1998) at StitchCo, a factory that made dresses and home furnishings. Following the implementation of teamworking, factory workers were found to be reluctant to manage their fellow workers. StitchCo ran on traditional Fordist assembly line structures with individual piece-rate bonuses for employees. The organization faced many problems that included low productivity where there were stockpiles of part-finished goods, high quality failure rates, and pressure from investors to outsource their manufacturing (see Atkinson's distancing flexibility, 1984). The managerial intervention was that of introducing self-managing teams with a group bonus being allocated if production targets were reached or exceeded.

However, the results of this intervention did not produce the benefits that the more prescriptive teamworking literature suggests (see for example, Hackman and Oldham, 1976; Locke and Schweiger, 1979). In fact, there were no significant increases to StitchCo's productivity levels and the study reveals heightened employee hostility towards management. Ezzamel and Willmott (1998) investigated the reasons for this and found that the machinists saw themselves as 'mates' and so they were reluctant to exert peer pressure. In addition the study notes that interpersonal conflict arose from the differing material and psychological motivations of employees. Here, two groups of employees were identified, the 'breadwinning mothers' and the 'student slackers'. The first of these two groups viewed the new commission structure as an opportunity to maximize their earnings, while the second group failed to be motivated by the new incentive. The findings of this research article are accurately summarized in the quote from one machinist,

> I prefer line work and piece work rather than group work because I think there's too much bitchiness going on and you've got to be the supervisor as well and the machinist. When you're working in a line … if you have a bad

day, then you only get paid for the amount of work you do and the other girls don't suffer (Ezzamel and Willmott, 1998: 382).

Another important study whose focus is on employee reactions to the introduction of teamworking is that of Knights and McCabe's (2000) study at Intermotors. A typology of three reactions is generated, employees who are bewitched, bothered or bewildered by teamworking. Those that are bewitched appear to internalize the teamworking norms and values with minimal resistance, although it was noted that some may have done so for the reasons of instrumental value compliance where the benefits could be reaped later in their career prospects (see also; Ogbonna and Harris, 1998). Bothered employees are those that are surprised by the apparent positive reaction of bewitched employees, viewing the teamworking practices as an invasion to their lives. By contrast, bewildered employees did not see the teamworking ideology as anything new. Their position can be explained as although management brought about new labels for processes and positions, the established working practices at Intermotors negated many of the common criticisms of teamworking for this group of employees.

From these studies we can see that teamworking modifies social relations at work. This is a factor that could be further exacerbated with CFTs as many members may not have previously worked together, in Palmer's (2004) terms, they could be 'strangers'. The work of Strangleman and Roberts (1999) merits attention here, where, the authors investigate high performance work systems and their impact on social relations at Coberg, a niche supplier of engineering equipment. Procter and Currie (2004) and Boxall and Purcell (2003) highlight teamwork as an important part of high performance work systems and while the Coberg case focuses on cultural change, the authors themselves note how CFTs could also be conceptualized under a high performance work system heading. Interesting parallels can and should be drawn with their work. In attempting to change the organizational culture at Coberg,

> The reorganization and fragmentation of work tasks, broke down established patterns of social relations; and finally there was the intellectual assault on the workforce to build up the new culture and denigrate the past (Strangleman and Roberts, 1999: 65).

Direct comparisons can be made to Durand and Hatzfeld's (2003) research of factory work at Peugeot in the Sochaux plant. Indeed, in their review of high performance work systems (HPWS) Jenkins and Delbridge (2007: 210) draw on this study noting that,

> HPWS production techniques often reinforce, stimulate and exacerbate social divisions between workers, so that cleavages and fragmentations occur between different groups ... Durand and Hatzfeld's research reveals disparate groups within the factory which they term – multiple identificatory points of reference – such that there are distinctions on the shop floor between temporary and permanent workers, younger and older, nationalities as well. Lively youngsters are the recent recruits who are committed to the organization while disillusioned old-timers tend to be distanced and withdrawn.

In addition, Strangleman and Roberts (1999) illustrate where employees previously would had operated with their established practices and workplace norms, through the attempts to change the organizational culture, management had taken such autonomy away from employees and redefined its content. Accordingly, the social relations at the firm were jeopardized and the nature of their work altered.

Overall, this section has detailed the rise of CFTs and it has considered the different viewpoints that consider the challenges and effectiveness of such controlling organizational structures. In the latter part, an evaluation of the implications for employee experiences of team working practices is offered due to the lack of empirical material that investigates employees in CFTs.

3.6 Aims and Objectives of Research

The principal aim of this research is to explore the management of a strong organizational culture over a period of rapid organizational growth. The dominance of functionalist managerial literature surrounding organizational culture has already been noted in the preceding chapters, where stable and shared value systems are positioned as achievable managerial goals (Peters and Waterman, 1982). With the desire to offer a more nuanced approach, this longitudinal ethnographic study of the I.T firm WebCo interprets the managerial attempts at sustaining the organizational culture at two time periods (2005, 2006) and gives voice to employees. There is

much evidence to suggest that fun cultures may bring benefits to both employees and organizations (Zbar, 1999; Karl et al., 2005) and claims of increased employee satisfaction have been posited (Karl and Peluchette, 2006). It is hoped that a contribution will be made to the existing call from Bolton and Houlihan (2009) who ask for a better understanding of human agency in fun organizational contexts.

Another objective of this research is to analyze the potential limitations of ongoing normative forms of control, and the longitudinal research design enabled useful comparisons between the two research periods. Chapter three and four of this thesis detail the centrality of structure in managing organizational culture (Armstrong, 1987; Legge, 1989), however many scholars suggest that the links between structure and organizational culture have not been clearly developed (Ogbonna and Harris, 2002; Alvesson and Karreman, 2004). By anlayzing the structural practices that were introduced to WebCo, considering employee reactions to these practices and evaluating the implications for the normative control, this dyadic relationship forms the basis of this thesis and the combined worker experience is of greater importance for successful cutlure management. The related objectives that arise from literary gaps can be seen in the following questions which this study seeks to address:

Can strong organizational cultures be managed as a sole management activity?

If not, what other conditions of work enable strong organizational cultures?

What are the challenges of sustaining a fun organizational culture in a period of rapid growth?

How do employees experience fun organizational cultures over time?

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the relationship between organizational structures and cultural control. Focussing on three mechanisms (recruitment, reward management and employee careers), the links to controlling organizational cultures have been examined. This chapter has also investigated the current literature on cross-functional teams and the implications of their introduction to organizations. The aims and objectives of my research have then been stated and the following chapter details my research philosophy and the methodology employed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to gain a rich understanding of WebCo's organizational culture from the participants and to be able to analyze the differences between two research periods.   Given the nature of the research questions and line of inquiry of this thesis, this longitudinal research design in a single case study involved a variety of data collection methods. At the first time period, five-and-a-half weeks of full participant observation were undertaken.   The second period brought some challenges with access at the start of the observation period, but these were overcome and resulted in three months data collection. A total of 39 interviews were undertaken in order to further investigate the themes that were emerging from my observations.

This chapter aims to give an explanation of my research design and the research methods employed. An understanding of the decisions made in the field is also to be given. The chapter commences by detailing my research philosophy before providing a rationale for my case study research design.   Justifications are then provided for my research methodology and consideration is given to alternative methods. Following the details of access, the research site and participants, this chapter then details the recording, analysis and coding of the data for both respective research periods. The ethical challenges of the research are then considered before the validity and reliability of the research is examined. To conclude, a summary is offered and reflections given on the methodology. The importance of reflexivity in documenting the research process has led much of this chapter to be written in the first person narrative.

4.2 Research Philosophy

As organizational research is embedded in specific knowledge constituting assumptions, it is important to recognize the philosophy that underpins my research as this has obvious implications for the research design and elected research methods (Altheide and Johnson, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).   Scholars such as Blumer (1969) and Geertz (1973) have highlighted the distinctly deterministic nature of Held's methodological monism (1980) that reduces individuals to placid subjects with

limited agency in its quest for nomothetic knowledge. Such notions are characterized by generalizing conceptualizations that seek general apodictic propositions. I reject such monism and point to the internal subjective logics of individuals' and the varying interpretations that guide their respective actions. In agreement with Laing (1968), such logics are the subject of inquiry in order to make human action intelligible. Accordingly, this thesis rejects the quantitative line of enquiry of organizational culture that posits statistical quantification and the analysis of trends (Denzin, 1989: 88; see also Kidder, 1981; Hofstede et al., 1990).

The qualitative nature of this thesis aims to capture the meaning and interpretations that individuals subjectively ascribe to phenomena in order to describe and explain their behaviour through investigating how they experience, share, and alter the organizational culture (see Van Maanen, 1979; 1998; Patton, 1990; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; 2000; Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). As we will see, my idiographic, ethnographic research study of a single case organization seeks the individual conceptions and singular assertory propositions of WebCo employees in an attempt to understand specific aspects of the organization's culture (see Schutz, 1954). With respect to the writings of management research, Pfeffer (1993) notes the competing pre-paradigmatic schools of thought that each offer distinctive epistemological and ontological assumptions and lead to differing situational interpretations. Although certain meta-theoretical schemes such as that offered by Burrell and Morgan (1979) neglect the recognition of my personal assumptions of a subjectivist epistemology and objectivist ontology, it is to these that our attention will now turn.

My ontological viewpoint is one that is shared by many a critical theorist (Kant, 1781; Bernstein, 1983) and assumes the independent existence of a reality that is prior to human cognition. However, in an overt rejection of positivist philosophical assumptions, I note the key distinction of my belief in a differentiation between the socially constructed view of 'realities for us', and that of 'reality as it is'. This suggests an external reality that is independent of, yet resistant to, human activity which ultimately remains knowable (Kolakowski, 1969; Sayer, 1981; Latour, 1988). The result is a 'subtle' (Hammersley, 1992: 50-54) or 'transcendental' (Bhaskar, 1986: 72-5) realism, one where knowledge of a mind-independent and extra-discursive reality is always culturally determined, yet reality recursively acts to

constrain the pragmatic viability of those interpretations. While I assume that reality exists independently of one's cognitions, I would not wish to convey the natural science ideal of neutral observational language - I advocate epistemological reflexivity, however not to the extent that reality is the total outcome of our discursive practices (see Foucault, 1970; Baudrillard, 1983). Instead, I favour an objective ontology and subjective epistemology and accordingly, a longitudinal ethnographic research design was chosen for this study in an attempt to understand and explain the deep-seated attitudes and assumptions that underpin organizational structures (Alvesson and Berg, 1992). The research approach of this thesis follows the key tenants of critical theory's philosophy and notably, through the qualitative collection of primary and secondary data the aim was to learn of the impact of potentially hegemonic culture management practices on employee subjectivity by illuminating any basis of such subordination (Putnam et al., 1993).

By electing this paradigmatic and subjective epistemological perspective, it is my belief that in order to derive any meaning from individual actions to such managerial techniques, then an appreciation of their context is fundamental to our understanding (see Hofstede, 1991). Therefore, an organizational ethnography was conducted in an attempt to 'uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular work settings come to understand, account for and take action within their daily work situation[s]' (Van Maanen, 1979: 540). It could therefore be argued that ethnography, by its very essence, 'has provided researchers an obvious method for understanding work organisations as cultural entities' (Bryman and Bell, 2003: 340). Following naturalism, where there is the desire that 'the social world should be studied in a natural state, undisturbed by the researcher' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 6), such an approach offers the opportunity to free the researcher from any pre-judgements of the specific organizational issues or any reified hypothesis (see Denzin, 1970; Hatch, 1997).

4.3 Research Design

An important aspect of my study was the longitudinal research design. Rooted in pragmatism which conceptualizes social life as incremental, dynamic and changing (Rock, 1979; Mead 1982), the observational methodology at the two discrete time

periods enabled me to map changes to the organization and the meanings that employees ascribed to these and their actions. The longitudinal nature of my ethnographic study of a single case study enabled 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) and such an approach has been highlighted by Morris and Wood (1991) as being particularly useful in gaining a rich understanding of the research context and of the processes being enacted. Furthermore, the two discrete time periods enabled the opportunity to answer that most basic research questions 'has there been any change over a period of time?' (Bouma and Atkinson, 1995: 114). It also allowed for the mapping of changes to organizational structure and employee subjectivities towards the organizational culture (Pettigrew, 1990). Additionally, the substantial time periods spent at the research site enabled myself, as a participant-observer, to gain an 'emic' perspective (see Gregory, 1983) and avoid the labelling of Sutton's (1994) felicitous phrase; a 'smash and grab' ethnography.

The inductive theoretical approach is typical of qualitative researchers, especially those that use a combination of methods to understand phenomena (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991). The flexible nature of an inductive research inquiry allowed me to alter the focus of the study's specifities as it developed, although not in an attempt to further any notions of generalizable findings – a frequent criticism levelled at single case studies (Bryman, 2008). As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000) note, generalizability is not a main consideration of such methods and as I have already mentioned, idiographic knowledge was the target. Having said that, I do agree with the assertions of Stake (2000) who illustrates how case studies add to naturalistic generalizations (see also Guba and Lincoln's [1989] concept of 'fittingness'). In view of this, later, the details of WebCo are comprehensively documented in order for others to make informed judgements of the similarities to other cases (see chapters five to eight).

4.3.1 Case Study Design

Yin (2003) denotes case studies as a well-established method for the study of workplace phenomena. They are also frequently suggested to be useful in answering the 'how' and 'why' questions (Saunders et al., 2003; Silverman 2004). It was the intention of this research to understand 'how' employees, in their real life work contexts, made sense of organizational changes and the impact on the WebCo culture.

There was therefore, the need to attain 'the details of the situation to understand the reality or perhaps a reality working behind them' (Remenyi et al., 1998: 35). Although there is much debate as to an appropriate number of case studies (Yin, 1994), a common line of argument in the research methods literature is that an in-depth case study is the most appropriate method for uncovering the meanings that organizational members ascribe to their environment, as well as the ways in which such meanings are constructed and re-constructed (Martin, 1992; Schein, 1996). Eisenhardt (1989) asserts the virtues of a single case study, Miles (1979) how useful they are at contextually situating studies, and Dyer and Wilkins (1991) promulgate the benefits of a single qualitative case approach as a way of achieving penetrating accounts of organizational change.

A single case ethnographic study was therefore selected; a choice that is consistent with the precedent of many influential studies in organizational culture (for example, Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 1990; Kunda, 1992). Jones (1996) advocates the sole use of qualitative ethnographic methods in order to arrive at 'true' organizational descriptions. In addition, Schein (1992: 80) argues that a phenomenological philosophy is required in order to move beyond his 'artefact' and 'espoused value' levels of his cultural typology. Only with this may scholars attempt to uncover the 'basic assumptions' of employees in discovering the 'the reality working behind the reality' (Schein, 1992: 80). My study at the single organization, WebCo, could be considered to be a 'critical case' as the organization positions its strong culture as the key to its success. It is also broadly a 'revelatory case'; a claim of most inductive single case study analyses (Yin, 1984). The level of analysis operated at mixed levels. Focussing on individuals to understand their subjective thoughts on the organizational culture; groups to determine the impact of universal managerial practices on different departments; and at the organizational level, specifically, the WebCo culture.

Acknowledging the limitations of the case study approach, most scholars point to the aforementioned issues regarding external validity as well as the lack of objectivity (Miller and Brewer, 2003). Somewhat unfairly, Yin (2003) criticizes case studies as a research method that lacks rigour, takes too long and one that produces lengthy, unreadable documents. I do however; have more sympathy for Robson's (1993) criticisms of weak validity that are apparent through researcher bias and 'observer effect' and Gummesson's (2000) cautions of poor reliability. How each of

these were addressed are noted in section 4.10 but attention is now paid to detailing the triangulation of data collection methods before providing a rationale for, and details of, each one in turn.

4.4 Research Methodology

4.4.1 Methodological Triangulation

My data collection methods began well in advance of my empirical studies. Indeed, I was aware that I would be entering an I.T company, and that would bring specialist technological jargon. Accordingly, many hours were spent attempting to understand concepts such as firewalls, RAID (Redundant Array of Independent Disks), MYSQL (My Structured Query Language) in addition to the collection of secondary data on WebCo. Although I must admit that this did not make me totally conversant with the large amounts of acronyms, it was invaluable when I began the empirical work as it allowed me to entertain conversations with highly experienced technical employees. I also believe it illustrated a desire to make sense of their world even though I made it clear that my background was in International Business. Naivety does go a long way when conducting ethnographic research though, either through choice or honesty, and as we will see later in this section, one often finds oneself in unimaginable situations.

An influential data collection method of this thesis was the two discrete time periods of observation spent at WebCo. The rationale for this largely drew from the work of Smircich (1983: 170) who notes how the 'sole reliance on verbal data assumes that the researcher can automatically ask the appropriate questions, those that are most relevant for tapping the experience of a particular group, in most cases, an assumption with very little support'. Accepting the views of Kilduff and Mehra (1997: 254) who argue that 'no method gives privileged access to truth', and that of Adler and Adler (1987: 89) where 'observation produces especially great rigor when combined with other methods', it was decided that the initial stages of my research would consist of supplementary secondary data collection and observation with interviews occurring at a later stage. The observation helped me to learn 'elements of the setting that emerged as theoretically and/or empirically essential' (Spradley, in

Adler and Adler, 1987: 87). My reflection and analyses of these every day actions helped to funnel my attention and generate themes that formed the basis of my interview schedules. The aim of the interviews was to seek answers to the questions that were formulated from my observations and to attempt to understand the meaning that employees attached to the observed objects and their experiences (Whyte, 1984; Hatch, 1997; please see the appendix for examples of my interview schedules).

Smircich (1983), along with many other academic researchers (see Nason and Golding, 1998), favours participant observation for a significant time period with interviews conducted at a later stage as her preferred research method. I believed that my presence and interaction with organizational members would lead to a greater degree of honesty at the interviews. Another rationale for my multi-method, triangulated approach is suggested by Saunders et al. (2000), where validity is said to increase as you can cross reference responses and confirm any possible observed themes in the later interview stages. Informant verification is another technique that can add to a study's validity. This is where copies of the transcribed interviews (that include annotated notes of emerging themes) are offered to respondents in order to check that this was an accurate representation and interpretation of the interview. Due to the unfeasible practicalities of transcribing while conducting an ethnographic study, this option was not pursued. Furthermore, I wanted to minimize the amount of time that was required of respondents who had already given up a part of their day to be interviewed and I aimed to have many other informal conversations. However, during the interviews I did rephrase respondents' comments and seek their verbal approval of my interpretations in order to ensure validity (see section 4.10 for further details on my research validity; section 4.4.3 for interviews). My overall approach followed that postulated by Faules (1982), and Glaser (1983) where I attempted to neutralize the limitations of each data collection method while maximizing their benefits. We will learn of such attempts in the proceeding sections which detail the nature of each employed data collection method.

4.4.2 Participant Observation

With its roots in social anthropology and notably, the work at the Chicago School of Research, observation has long been encouraged as a research method. My

rationale for using it as the method in my research highlights my ontological and epistemological positions. Mason (2002) points to three key issues of selecting observation as a data generating method, all of which I agree with. Firstly, I had an interest in the 'interactions, actions and behaviour and the way people interpret these and act on these as central' (Mason, 2002: 85). Secondly, I believe that it is a line of inquiry that permits the depth necessary in order to understand and explain social explanations (see also Hammersley and Atkinson, 1993). Finally, due to my epistemological viewpoint that 'suggests that knowledge and evidence of the social world can be generated by observing, or participating in, or experiencing "natural" or "real-life settings"' (Mason, 2002: 87), I believe that meaningful knowledge can be gained through observation as a data generating method. Observation implies a research strategy of 'immersion [by the researcher] in the research setting' (Delbridge and Kirkpatrick, 1994: 37; see also Van Maanen, 1979), its purpose, to 'capture slice of life accounts' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 15). Specifically, participant observation is where,

> The researcher attempts to participate fully in the lives and activities of subjects and they become a member of their group, organisation or community. This enables the researcher to share their experiences by not merely observing what is happening but also feeling it (Gill and Johnson, 1997: 113; see also; Silverman, 2001; Mason, 2000).

A key advantage of observation is therefore, the ability to 'describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups form the point of view of those being studied' (Bryman , 1988: 44). Such studies are high on ecological validity as the actions of individuals are observed in their natural context (Saunders et al., 2000). Further benefits include the rich detail that can be gathered (Friedman and McDaniel, 1998); a greater sensitivity to the various nuances of employee perceptions; and the possibility of unique insights into real time experiences as they are lived. In this sense, the researcher is more likely to be 'true to the nature of the phenomena under study' (Matza 1969: 5) and avoid tentative and retrospective accounts of organizational events. In addition, the inductive nature of my study enabled the themes to develop from my observations and therefore the data guided me. No *a priori* assumptions or framework were imposed on the case study (further details of my data analysis are detailed later in this methodology section).

It has been noted that observation is particularly useful for the study of workplace cultures and sub-cultures (Collinson 1988; Smircich 1983). Furthermore, through his observations, Delbridge (1998) offers insights into employee behaviour in the workplace and it is also widely acknowledged that observation allows access to the studying of specific organizational events. There are many types of different field roles that may be assumed during participant observation. These stem from the initial classification of Gold (1958) and position the researcher as the main social research instrument. For the majority of my study I would view my field role as that of a participant observer however I also agree with the work of Junker (1960) who suggests that Gold's approach is oversimplified and that several roles may be undertaken during the research period where roles are 'constantly negotiated and re-negotiated with different information throughout the research' (Burgess, 1984: 72).

I had the time over the two summer periods to develop a rich and deep understanding of certain phenomena and to 'form a series of relationships with the subjects such that they serve[d] both as respondents and informants' (Denzin, 1989: 163). I was overt in my status as a researcher and this led to the opportunity to either formally, or informally interview employees. In terms of my personal approach to data collection and how I was wanting to be perceived, many studies note how it is necessary for the researcher to adopt a consistent role and the need to fit into the unfamiliar surroundings with people for which you may have little personal affinity. Van Maanen (1978) suggests that this often involves becoming a 'fan' of employees' work and illustrating a desire to understand what they do in their particular context. Robson (1993: 111) states that 'the observer is the research instrument, and hence great sensitivity and personal skills are necessary for worthwhile data'.

Delbridge and Kirkpatrick (1994: 40) further note that due to the need to form and build relationships, participant observation as a research method is not for everyone; you have to be 'all things to all people'. I very much wanted to naturally build trust and honesty with employees. In line with the view that people like talking about themselves and what they do, in essence, I was offering them the opportunity to do so. With my 'role' as a naive yet enthusiastic and positive researcher, I did feel that this was particularly effective and it was not a role to which I had to act. Over the two research periods I had spent the best part of half a year of my life with these employees, time that was allowed due to my personal flexibility (no children as yet

and in my role at that time as a teaching assistant, term did not recommence until the autumn). As such, I believe that anyone willing to give such large amounts of time devoted to studying organizations must be completely dedicated and naturally interested and inquisitive of human action.

I was certainly 'opportunistic' when conducting my fieldwork (Buchanan, Boddy and McCalman, 1988) and also reflexive. It is commonly accepted that 'central to good ethnographic accounts is recognition of the reflexivity of the researcher' (Watson, 1993: 85), especially in the early stages of the process (Hobbs and May, 1993). I was aware of my visual communication and the symbolic association of my dress, appearance and non-verbal behaviour. Agreeing with Snow and Anderson (1987), I believe that through reflexivity, I was able to socially construct visual identities and this facilitated my integration into the environment, whilst potentially assisting data collection. An example is the change in my attire during data collection. Employees at WebCo were not formally attired and many would wear the supplied (and free) WebCo branded T-shirts. Flip flops were the most popular choice of footwear as the research was conducted in the summer. I initially dressed in a shirt and trousers but soon changed into summer T-shirts and shorts to mimic organizational members and so as not to stand out (see Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2000). Somewhat unusually, further examples of my reflexivity were manifested in the purchase of Hawaiian shirts (for one themed open book meeting), bold jewellery, reversible caps and bright white trainers for another open book meeting which was labelled 'Chav Day' (see section 7.2 for further description).

Although Bruyn (1966: 204) notes that in terms of research access, when the 'possible and desirable clash, the former will always win through', this was not my experience at WebCo. In view of Bruyn's (1966: 204) comments, I did recognize that 'the participant observer who studies a complex social organization must be aware of the fact that clearance at one level of the organisation does not insure clearance at another level… [and the need to] take into account the levels of power and decision making extant in the group'. With my ethical training, I was continually amazed and somewhat surprised at the openness of WebCo employees and the many different situations in which I found myself. For example, as we will see later in this thesis, I was able to sit in on conference calls, training and induction sessions, team meetings with the organizational founders, and many recruitment interviews where I

assumed the identity of a WebCo member. I was also invited to industry wide events, staff parties and I will now detail an example which I believe to be a good illustration of the intricacies of ethnographic methods, the immersion of the researcher in the setting and the demands that this method makes on researchers.

In the second research period, I wanted to interview the top sales person (Gina), it was 6.30pm on a Thursday and she came out of a meeting in order to mention that she would be another 30 minutes. We had planned to conduct the interview after work in a nearby but relatively unknown public house by the canal. I had met Gina in the first research period and we had a good relationship. Whilst I was waiting in the office, I spent time talking to members of the Qualification Team (termed, Q-Team, see chapter 5.4.1 for more detail) and then Gina came running over to me. She handed me the phone, saying that it was her partner Peter and that I was to tell him what I wanted for dinner as we were going to do the interview at their house. Informally, I was aware that Peter and Gina were a couple and Peter was the ex-Managing Director of WebCo; the person who initially welcomed me and one of my supervisors to the office. After ordering take out over the phone to Peter who left WebCo between my two research periods under somewhat difficult circumstances, I then found myself driving down the M4 following Gina's Mini for 30 minutes thinking up some potential questions for Peter.

I had a warm welcome to their home. They insisted that we had wine with our takeaway and that I stayed the night on a blow up bed in their lounge (they had recently purchased the house and the bedrooms were being redecorated at that time). Following dinner I asked Peter if he would (or could) talk about the reasons why he left WebCo, he said that he 'would love to'. He then detailed his account of this difficult period of his career. We stayed talking until 3am and when I got into bed it was then time for me to silently write up my field notes of the day and of that night. I completed these at 5.20am, had breakfast with Gina and Peter at 7am and was back in the office with this gained knowledge for 9am. As can be seen in the above example, participant observation clearly requires the capacity of the researcher be able to negotiate complex social relations. The ethnographer is the principle instrument of data collection (Brown, 1984) and it has therefore been necessary to review my role so that we recognize that 'the scientific observer is part and parcel of the setting, context, culture he or she is trying to understand or represent' (Altheide and Johnson,

1998: 285). Interviews also formed a key part of my data collection methods and the rationale for this is now detailed along with my reflexivity during their conduct.

4.4.3 Interviews

Interviews, or 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984: 102), were used in both research periods. In the first, they largely fell towards the end of the research as I let my observations unveil the key themes. In the second period, the interviews were conducted from the start and they continued throughout the visit. The reason for this was that the employees that I had met the previous year were keen to let me know how things had changed within the firm. These employees appeared pleased to see me, greeting me with hugs and exclaiming 'I can't believe you left us for so long … well … you are back now'. I decided to undertake in-depth interviews as they allowed me to seek the clarification of cultural meanings. They also permitted the opportunity to gain a further insight into the meaning that employees assigned to their individual actions, including those that were culturally specific. Furthermore, they were extremely useful in setting my agenda for the themes that I could then explore in my research. As my primary interest was that of how employees made sense of the organizational culture, it has been suggested that interviews are the 'the best method for gaining an in-depth understanding of the assumptions underlying a culture' (Schein, 1987: 54). They have also been highlighted as being particularly suited to research that seeks to explain social change and social processes (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003).

Semi-structured interviews were employed in order to offer the interviewee a certain degree of free engagement. They enabled me to gain systematically gathered views through the combined format of flexibility with pre-structured themes. Respondents may develop their own themes throughout the free-flowing conversation and the process is easier to code than a focussed interview (Bryman and Bell, 2003). A key advantage of semi-structured interviews is the opportunity to probe employees (Fielding, 1988). Linking in with my phenomenological perspective, the interviewees could be asked to clarify or expand on their ideas or culturally influenced terms. It is hoped that this has increased the validity of my data, added significant depth to the

empirical material, and limited the amount of mis-interpretation of cultural difference that may exist between myself and the interviewees (Marshall and Rossman, 1999).

Another point of some significance is that by conducting the interviews, I was having to articulate the questions and with the responses, fresh insights would often emerge that I could jot down for future investigation. The more flexible format of semi-structured interviews also allowed for the discussion of topics that I had not previously considered to be important to the study (see Marshall and Rossman, 1999). An example here would be how the introduction of new cross functional teams (Fanatical Clusters) appeared to lead to fractures within the workforce in terms of their engagement with the organizational culture. As we learn in chapter eight, the established channels of workplace communication were altered through the introduction of these structural changes and this impacted on employee' identification with the organizational culture.

In terms of reliability, it was not my desire to seek to make this study replicable. Agreeing with Marshall and Rossman (1999), I believe that this would undermine the considerable strength of semi-structured interviews as a research method and that it is in any case, unrealistic. Furthermore, in terms of validity, Yin (1994) argues that generalizations are unable to be made from qualitative semi-structured interviews. I agree with this and would stress that this was not my intention for the study. Silverman (1985: 165) suggests that,

> Interview data report not on an external reality displayed in the respondent's utterances but on the internal reality constructed as both parties contrive to produce the appearances of a recognisable interview.

While I have some sympathy with this view, it is hoped that my continued presence in the organization would have helped to overcome this aspect. Additionally, the way in which I conducted the interviews was also intended to mitigate these challenges. This approach is now outlined.

As previously mentioned, my initial preparation for the interviews commenced well in advance of my observations. Healey and Rawlinson (1994: 136) state that 'a well-informed interviewer has a basis for assessing the accuracy of some of the information offered' and by the time interviews were conducted I was knowledgeable

about the organization and its situational context. I was aware of Seidman's (1991: 3) suggestion that the purpose of an interview is,

> … An understanding of the experience of other people and the meanings they make of that experience…. It requires that we interviewers keep our egos in check. It requires that we realize we are not the centre of the world. It demands that our actions as interviewers indicate that other stories are important.

As already stated, I was also conscious of the work of Robson (1993) who highlighted the appropriateness of a researcher's appearance at interviews and how individual perceptions would be influenced. As such, I was keen to wear similar clothes to the interviewees to minimize this effect.

The start of interviews is a crucial time in order to ensure that the right tone is set. After introducing myself to the interviewee I would give a brief outline of why I was there and offer the assurance that their information would remain confidential and anonymous. This has been highlighted by Healey and Rawlinson (1994) as being an important factor that relaxes the interviewees to offer open information to the interviewer. Any response bias would also be minimized through the assuring confidentiality and anonymity which hopefully led to an increase in my trustworthiness as a researcher. I commenced all interviews with biographical questions in order to make the interviewee (and myself) comfortable. Following this, I would usually (although not always due to the flexibility of semi-structured interviews) ask the employee 'what is it like to work here?' This simple and inoffensive question was targeted at understanding what cultural members thought to be important and it was extremely influential in shaping the direction of the interviews. It also generated a large number of the themes which were then explored in future observations and interviews, thereby it helped create an agenda for further interaction.

During the interviews I was aware that clearly phrased, unambiguous questions were necessary, and that a neutral and friendly tone of voice were also demanded in order to encourage a flow of discussion (Ghauri et al., 1995). The majority of my questions (please see the appendix for examples) were open ended in an attempt to reduce bias (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991) and suitable probes would be used where necessary (such as 'that's interesting…', and 'tell me more about…'). I

was aware from the work of Robson (1993) not to use two questions in one, and every one of my questions was intended to be just that, a single question that minimized the use of ambiguous academic terms. At certain times in the interviews it was necessary to use such terms however, often in attempting to explain 'organizational cultures' and 'cross functional teams'. In doing so, every effort was made to get the intended meaning across to the interviewees (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991; Ghauri et al., 1995). I was also aware that gestures may affect the responses in interviews, and so I maintained an open and attentive posture (Torrington, 1991).

Torrington (1991: 43) also highlights the need to be 'on the look-out for signals and willing to spend the time needed to listen and build understanding, deliberately holding back our own thoughts, which would divert or compete with the others's'. Indeed, I learnt how to listen actively and on a number of occasions when I was going to change the direction or add in a remark, I refrained from doing so and this allowed some fascinating elaborations from the interviews. I became competent at searching for cues to move the conversation forward and to the other (not necessarily consecutive) questions on my interview schedule (Seidman, 1991). I also avoided adding my own thoughts and views in the interviews so as not to influence or lead the interviewees (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991; Ghauri et al., 1995; Robson, 1993). Instead, I would 'evaluate the adequacy of the interpretation and correct where necessary' in attempting to ensure that I had an accurate interpretation of the voiced meanings (Healey and Rawlinson, 1994: 138). I would often paraphrase employee responses as a question and on the rare occasions when I had misinterpreted, probes were used in order to clarify meanings.

In view of the advice of Healey and Rawlinson (1994), the more sensitive questions were asked towards the later part of the interviews as this enabled a degree of trust to have been formed between myself and each interviewee. Most of the interviews were conducted in the office restaurant or at the golf club that was located in the business park. Following each interview, notes would be made on this context and any differences in tone of the interviewee. I would also write a one page summary of the key points to emerge from the interview which would then be considered in developing my analysis.

4.5 Research Access, Research Site Selection, Research Participants and Data Recording

4.5.1 Research Access and Research Site Selection

Initial access to WebCo was opportunistic where an existing student (Helen) had contacted my supervisor stating that 'suddenly all of the critical third year OB (organizational behaviour) culture theories make sense'. Referring to the lectures on culture management which also inspired me to continue with my studies, it seemed that WebCo (Helen's current employer) would be an ideal site to study culture management. A letter was drafted to the WebCo MD and through e-mail contact, a suitable time was arranged to visit the research site with one of my supervisors. Walking into the office building we were met by Helen and she soon became a key informant throughout the research periods. The visit was successful in getting a 'foot in the door' and data collection commenced soon after. During the first research period, I would self-organize my timings and I was able to complete a full, five and a half weeks of continuous observation. Negotiating access for the second was more convoluted than expected and this was largely down to the new Managing Director, John. Where the previous MD warmly welcomed the research project, John, previously a WebCo technician, was far more difficult to contact often taking time to reply to e-mails and overall, he appeared less interested in the research. Perhaps it is also a manifestation of the stricter rules and regulations that were being imposed at that time (a key finding of chapters seven and eight).

I was tactful in limiting the amount of e-mails asking for access and eventually, through my chats with Helen, I was able to visit the site to secure the second period of research. Entering the office on the Friday morning, many employees ran up to me to welcome me back but I did not meet John until later on in the afternoon. He agreed access but inferred that I would only be there for two to three afternoons a week. At that time, and not wanting to lose the opportunity, I gladly agreed and the second research period started the following week (I left it until the Wednesday afternoon, hoping to then secure the remaining afternoons of that working week). I was excited to go back and to see everyone but also aware that tact was needing to be used in order to get additional access. Luckily, there was a meeting on the Thursday morning led by one senior manager (someone that I became

acquainted with at the first period) and they invited me to attend. I do not think that John was sceptical about my presence, more so that he was really unaware of why I was there. He had recently taken on the Managing Director role and I had not met him in the first research period so I was aware that my personal relations were not as well forged as they could have been. I decided to symbolically leave on the Thursday afternoon following the meeting and made it clear to John that this was because I attended the morning instead. It is unknown what had been said to John prior to this conversation, but under the duress of employees and my persuasion, this became a revelatory informal chat at the front of the office as he was quite dismissive of his earlier 'two to three afternoons of access'.

I did decide to leave that afternoon and to type up my notes from the meeting. For the first two weeks thereafter I managed my presence at WebCo, ensuring that I was not abusing this new privilege. However, given the workload of employees and timetabling, certain interviews and meetings could only be scheduled for certain times of the week and so by week three, I was typically attending the research site for four days a week (with a strategic morning or afternoon taken away from the office as I saw fit, these would be used to interview employees who had a day off). It should be noted that this opportunity would not have been taken had I gained the impression that John was uncomfortable with this. Another factor which could have helped in his comfort with me being in the office is given in the following example. Towards the middle of the second research period, I was asked by one senior employee to help them with the mentoring of employees. Perhaps John felt that I was collating data for this report which was duly given after my observations were completed. The report offered recommendations based purely on academic literature and not the thoughts of WebCo employees surrounding mentoring. Towards the middle to end of my stay, my 'working relationship' with John became more natural and he began to ask me far more about myself and generated an interest in the research.

4.5.2 Research Participants

To combat the critique of qualitative methods that 'everyone is out to prove what they already believe in', Bryman (2001) suggests that it is necessary to outline the sampling considerations. As a qualitative researcher engaging with participant

observation and interviews, I was able to use my own judgement to select those employees that would give insights in order to achieve my research (Saunders et al., 2003). With the extended periods of time in the organization I began to understand who needed to be observed and interviewed.

In the first time period and after a few days at WebCo, I decided to start focussing my research on the 'Q-Team' as this was the initial point of contact between the firm and its potential clients and I was keen to learn about the first impression of Fanatical Support™ offered to customers. The 'Q-Team's' responsibility was to generate leads from incoming calls, internet chats or e-mails. They had criteria to which they would qualify potential leads and then these would be passed on to the sales department. Learning this, it enabled me to be able to give some form of structure to my observations where I would follow the path of a new customer. It should be made clear however, that this was only a guiding philosophy, and that every opportunity was taken to make myself known to, and have conversations with, other organizational members. In addition, I embraced one of the benefits of a longitudinal study in that I had time to be flexible and engage in a continual process of reflection that led to changes to my observations in line with thematic or theoretical developments.

Five-and-a-half weeks of full observation in the first period of research included a half-day at the external assessment centre and one open book meeting. In addition, a total of 12 interviews were undertaken. Initially there were three members in the Q-Team when I arrived, but by the end of the first research period this had tripled to nine. Three previous members of the Q-Team were interviewed along with each of the three 'original' members and three newer recruits. It was felt that this allowed for changing perceptions and increase the amount of data. The interview questions centred on the WebCo culture, the nature of their work and the recruitment, induction and performance management (please see the Appendices I-IV for examples of their interview schedule). Similar themes were also covered in my interview with the Q-Team leader, while I was also able to interview the European Managing Director and another member of the senior management team. My investigations with these interviewees focussed on the attempts to sustain the WebCo culture and the value of the performance indicators. Each semi-structured interview (please see

section 4.4.3 for a provided rationale) was over one hour in duration, the last question of each interview always asked for referrals to other employees.

In the second research period, presenters in meetings commonly chose to introduce me to the group as 'a friend of WebCo'. This generated intrigue with some of the employees that I had not already spoken to and led to further data. Those data would certainly have been captured by a less strategic method of snowball sampling (see Bryman and Bell, 2003), although as I wanted to interview a range of employees in order to get the different perspectives on culture at the second research period, it was thought that this was beneficial. The random sample also aids in avoiding the critique of some organizational culture studies (notably, those that follow a differentiation viewpoint, see Alvesson, 2002) where sub-cultural differentiation is sought while evidence of shared value systems is ignored through non-random sampling strategies.

At the second research period which lasted for three months, 27 interviews were conducted; one WebCo Presentation address digitally stored, three open book meetings recorded and one rookie orientation programme attended (a four day induction programme that had been introduced for all new starters). I was positioned next to Leanne, a 'customer experience manager' whose job specification was to 'work to provide and develop a companywide service excellence culture to ensure customers receive and feel Fanatical Support™'. I was conscious that while this was useful for getting the latest developments, I wanted to see how this was borne out elsewhere and so I would 'go for a walk' to observe and interview others.

As with the first period of research, each interview was piloted on experienced academic researchers prior to the study and the employee interviews were largely held outside of their work hours, sometimes at the employees' residence, but mostly at nearby pubs or restaurants. Interviews were undertaken throughout the observational study at the second research period. This was because the respondents that I met the previous year were keen to comment on the changes. It was felt by the end of the interviews and observations that saturation point had been reached and I returned to Cardiff with one spare day before my teaching commitments recommenced. This allowed me to meet up with my Supervisor to discuss the provisional ideas from the field. The interviews and research notes were then fully transcribed and the iterative

process of coding began. This process was facilitated by the largely standardized interview formats but there were also some atypical questions given my previous relationships with some respondents. The next section details the process of recording, coding and analysing these data.

4.5.3 Data Recording

Qualitative data are acknowledged as 'a source of well grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts' (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 1). Throughout my ethnographic study, the aim was to collect,

> The richest possible data … a wide and diverse range of information collected over a relatively prolonged period of time. And for the naturalist, the collection is achieved, again ideally, through direct, face to face contact with, and prolonged immersion in, some social location or circumstance (Lofland and Lofland, 1984: 11).

As we have already seen in this chapter, the process of qualitative research involves the researcher in a subjective and interpretative exercise (Pope and Mays, 2006) in many different situations. Based on my experience in WebCo, data were analyzed through the development and consideration of both concepts and themes in order to explain, interpret and understand those data (Blaxter et al., 1996; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

My endeavour as an ethnographer studying an organizational culture was to 'portray that culture in a realistic and enriching fashion in order to convey to the reader the authentic flavour of that culture' (Basit, 2010: 146). In order to do so, data analysis continued throughout with 'organisation, reflection, commitment, thought and flexibility [being] as essential to data analysis as they are to data collection' (Burgess, 1984: 183).   Unlike quantitative research, there are no formulae or standardized rules for analyzing qualitative data and hence, transparency in analytical methodologies is as, if not more important, to note. The following section will detail the data analysis process for both time periods of research.

Burgess (1984) suggests the collection of substantive, methodological and analytic field notes during research and all three were collated during the first time

period.   Continuous records of situations, events and conversations in which I participated were noted as substantive notes.   Following the suggestions of Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), the everyday interactions between individuals and the daily atmosphere were detailed as soon as possible following the event. Time was also spent at the end of each day where I would write down or voice record any other notes. This was always completed before I fell asleep, as is commonly recommended by many ethnographic writers. Forms of substantive notes also included sketches of the research setting layout. These were useful as I was later able to compare this map to that of the second research period and to track the physical changes. Methodological notes based on my personal reflections in the field were also taken. These included the challenges that I encountered, the impressions, feelings and hunches that I had and were often recorded into a Dictaphone at the end of the day driving back to my hotel. This rich detail of the experience of conducting research allowed me to be reflexive and engage in self-analysis during the research process.

Analytic notes, the third of Burgess's suggestions (and also advocated by Glaser and Strauss, 1967) were taken in the field following observations and each interview.   These preliminary forms of analysis included testing crude propositions, working with negatively expressed hypotheses and the establishing of rough models. I attached one page of analytic notes that took the form of a mind map to each transcribed interview and this was useful in both summarizing the key points and determining the avenues for further enquiry (Riley, 1996). A meeting with my supervisor soon after the completed periods of data collection also served to act as an interim summary to take stock of my progress. The presentation of the main themes from the data enabled me to reflect on the degree of confidence with my findings.

When my supervisor and I entered the open plan WebCo office for the first time it was a colourful surprise as each employee had their national flag hung above their desk. Within a few minutes we were taken for a tour around the office by the MD and he informed us that the culture was the 'genetics of the business'. This initial meeting was essentially just to 'get my feet in the door', to secure the opportunity to conduct research at the organization. This was also my first experience of conducting research 'in the field' and following our time there I was encouraged by my

supervisor to write down my field notes. I had already learned that observation was extremely demanding and also of the need to write down a complete set of field notes as soon as was possible. On the first day of my extended period of data collection at WebCo I was shown around the organization and introduced to many different employees. This was useful as Whyte (1984: 35) suggests 'once we are there, the first requirement is to gain some initial familiarity with the local scene and establish a social base from which we can continue our exploration until we are able to study some parts of that territory systematically'.

At both of the research periods I was given a desk, a computer and my own WebCo T-shirt. Having this base was useful as it enabled me to be able to have informed discussions with the other five employees who shared the workspace which was divided into six parts. In the early stages of the research, this was beneficial in orientating myself to the geography of the office and helped me to make sense of the different departments and how they integrated. I was keen to make primary observations (Delbridge and Kirkpatrick, 1994), noting social occurrences, key events, communication patters and key participants. In doing so, I recall one instance early on in the research where the office was quiet but George (a consultant to the firm) was sitting directly opposite me. He spoke of the key organizational departments and how important the culture was in terms of binding employees to the beliefs, values and organizational objectives. The data were so rich and although I felt a little uncomfortable doing so, I typed it verbatim into my computer while pretending to send an e-mail. The gained information did highlight key actors in the firm and 'cultural champions' who I made an explicit effort to observe and interview. I would also typically 'go for a walk' (as I termed it to my nearby respondents) away from my desk and approach other employees. Having 'hoovered' up data and preferring not to write notes in front of respondents as this would have constantly remind them of my presence as a researcher, I would return to my desk and write primary and secondary conversations in a secure e-mail to myself. This was particularly useful in my analysis as each e-mail was chronologically ordered by time and date, and this helped me to contextualize individual actions and conversations. It also avoided me having to spend weeks transcribing my copious amounts of field notes.

At both time periods, within a few days I was given an electronic access card to the organization, and typically, I would enter the office at around eight o'clock in the morning in order to see who came in early and leave around six or seven o'clock in the evening. This would by no means be the end of my observations however, as after work many of the employees would go to a nearby bar which was located on the business park. I would always attend and continue to enhance my rapport with individuals while also memorizing certain quotes, instances, or feelings that were conveyed through their socializing. As with many ethnographic studies, tales of writing key quotations in the toilets formed a large part of my experience, although I found it more useful to write a text message on phone and securely save it as opposed to using toilet paper (see Whyte, 1997).

This proved invaluable in aiding the validity of my data set and on occasion, it must also be noted that if a key point was mentioned, then I would type this into my phone while pretending to text. I also felt that doing this, any employees who were aware of my presence as a researcher would be given the impression (or space) to freely voice their opinions while I was 'otherwise engaged' texting a friend. Such social events were particularly useful as they enabled me to witness employees in different settings. They certainly helped to shape my line of inquiry. In particular, they enabled me to gain secondary observations where they would 'relive' past organizational events and their interpretations of these in perhaps a more natural respondent setting away from the office. I would typically be driving back to my hotel but on certain occasions alcohol would have also helped the respondents to free some of their more critical thoughts; narratives that I was keen to follow up at later occasions in a non-confrontational manner. By spending time at the firm and attending the post-work outings, I was soon invited to employees' houses (many employees lived together in the nearby town of Chiswick – termed 'The Chis' by employees) and to their many nights out and it is here where I must stress the personally demanding nature of ethnographic studies.

Having spent a full day memorizing, typing notes and building relations with people, I would then be out until the early hours of the morning (the latest was 4.15am) before returning back to my hotel and spending at least an hour typing up my field notes from the day and that evening. In these notes I would also include what Delbridge and Kirkpatrick (1994) termed experiential observations. These were

detailed notes on my personal feelings that I experienced through the research process. They would include my reflections on the level of acceptance that I had into the lives of organizational members and any employees who appeared to be offering 'front stage' performances (Goffman, 1958). Sometimes after only three hours sleep (it took around half an hour to get to the office by car), the process would then repeat itself. Needless to say this was hugely demanding, but by immersing myself in the lives of my respondents, it was hoped that valid data would be generated and on both research periods, I was totally dedicated to gathering data. I did not want to feel as though I had wasted the great opportunity of being allowed access to WebCo.

The attended open book meeting and all 12 interviews that were conducted in the first research period were recorded with a Cardiff University supplied tape recorder, affectionately known by the respondents as 'the brick'. Turning the brick upside down for a better look, one respondent commented 'Wow! I haven't seen one of those for years!' and so I often used humour to negate their awareness of the device. Even though the tape reel would sometimes squeak and the size of the machine was bigger than most Handbooks, it was reliable throughout and did not seem to intrude on the participant's replies. However, by the second period of research I purchased a USB ready digital Dictaphone which was certainly less visibly intrusive. It also appeared to gain the approval of WebCo employees, often being met with approving nods and acknowledging smiles. This 'nice piece of kit' (a term used by one WebCo employee) could be placed outside of the interviewees' line of sight but close enough to gain complete data sets.

By recording the interviews, the challenge of selective memory was not relevant (Hall and Hall, 1996). I was able to record the entirety of each interview, and the intonation of both the interviewee and importantly the interviewer were also registered. This was a useful as I often listened back to interviews to ensure that my questions were not leading respondents and the complete data set was also valuable for my analysis and interpretation stage. Inevitably, interviewees would sometimes give their more critical viewpoints after I visibly turned off the Dictaphones, but this became less frequent towards the end of the both research periods. Only in one interview was I asked not to record it, yet they did allow me to make notes. Hand written notes were also made in the recorded interviews as I felt that this helped to maintain my focus (Ghauri et al., 1995). In each interview, I would judge the

interviewee's comfort with this practice but none appeared to be worried or inquisitive about my notes; others who were interested by my research even suggested that 'this would be a good quote to note'.   It would be duly noted.

I would always attempt to sit adjacent to the respondent to allow for a more natural eye convergence and to distil the intensity of a formal interview. In any case, strong relations with employees had been formed and generally, I felt that making notes allowed for further breaks in eye contact and it enabled me to record the non-verbal gestures. During the interviews, interviewees would mention certain files that may be of use. They would then send them through to my e-mail following the interview. These documents included press cuttings where WebCo featured and an internally filmed video that was created by the Account Management team (see chapter 7.7.1 for further information). Training manuals and job specifications were also viewed during the second observational period in addition to my reading of any relevant public media coverage which was also a feature of data recording at the first research period.

The next section explains my grounded theory methodology before detailing the processes of data analysis and coding techniques that were followed. This then completes the methodological details of the first research period.

4.6 A Grounded Theory Methodology

Bryman and Bell (2003: 427) acknowledge that 'grounded theory has become by far the most widely used framework for analysing qualitative data'. This process of data analysis is time intensive and offers the researcher no short cuts (Delamont, 1992). There is much disagreement as to the exact definitions of grounded theory, however it can be generally defined as theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process. In this method, 'data collection, analysis and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 12). It is therefore, an inductive, qualitative research method that enables a way of thinking about and conceptualizing data (Lacey and Luff, 2001). Following Glaser and Strauss (1967), my research commenced with a clearly defined, yet broad purpose – to understand and explain the organizational

culture at WebCo. Both the scope and focus of this research question were refined and narrowed as the research was undertaken through inductive methods (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The inductive nature of my research is based on the belief (as with empiricism) that we can proceed from a collection of facts concerning social life and then make links between these to arrive at theory that then aids our understanding of the social surroundings.

This leads to the development of 'grounded theory', that is, theories that aid our understanding of the social world by offering 'plausible relationships' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) among sets of concepts, which are directly developed from data analysis. Charmaz (2003: 250, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) notes that 'postmodernists and poststructuralists dispute the obvious and subtle positivistic premises assumed by grounded theory's major proponents and within the logic of the method itself'. Accordingly, Charmaz (2000; 2003) highlights the creation of constructivist grounded theory which stresses emergent, constructivist elements such as an interpretive understanding of individual's meanings. Recognizing multiple social realities and the mutual creation of knowledge between the viewer and the viewed, Charmaz (2000) asserts a more open ended practice of grounded theory without embracing the positivist leanings of earlier proponents of grounded theory.

In grounded theory, much importance is placed on concepts being supported from the data and not preconceived theories. Instead of being armed with theoretical propositions about how social relations work, it is argued that we should first observe these relations, collect data on them and then progress to generate our theoretical propositions, rendering the attachment between theory and data as close as possible. There is much debate on the use of prior knowledge in grounded theory depending on which thread is followed. In particular, writing the literature review too early in a grounded theory study may unduly influence the data collection and analysis (Welsh, 2002). However, Glaser (1992: 49) notes that,

> The analyst's assumptions, experiences and knowledge are not necessarily bad in and of themselves. They are helpful in developing alertness or sensitivity to what is going on in the observational-interview data, but they are not the subject's perspective.

Additionally, the pragmatics of research have been highlighted by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998), where they acknowledge that it is difficult in today's research environment to completely delay the writing of a literature review (due to the need for research proposals etc.).

I agree with Glaser (1992) and also Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) who argue that while an exhaustive literature review is inhibiting, some literature searching is necessary. Miles and Huberman (1994: 27) note this impossibility of a tabular rasa, where 'any researcher no matter how unstructured or inductive, comes to field work with some orienting ideas, foci and tools'. Accordingly, every effort was made to be open minded to participant data and balancing this with a level of reading in order to have an awareness and understanding of the factors that could possibly influence the study. My research inquiry was therefore, not constrained by theory, and this enabled a more flexible approach to the data where I was interested in searching for explanations that were meaningful in WebCo. In an attempt to minimize the subjectivity in my analysis, the appropriate measures of Strauss and Corbin (1998) were used. Notably, I maintained a willingness to be surprised and my open disposition; thought comparatively and compared incidents. I also juxtaposed the same phenomena from different actors and frequently stepped back from the research in order to generate the bigger picture and primary conceptual narratives. The interactive nature between field data analysis and this distancing allowed me to recognize important themes, patterns and relationships as data were collected (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen, 1993). Additionally, I was able to adjust the data collection sampling approach to review the relevant employees to discuss the emerging themes.

4.7 Data Analysis and Coding at Research Period One

The analysis of data collection merits a more holistic coding system than that of field analysis and hence, the following section will detail the data analysis process at the first period of research. Miles and Huberman (1994: 12) note that,

> Qualitative data analysis is a continuous, iterative enterprise. Issues of data reduction, of display and of conclusion drawing/verification come into figure successively as analysis episodes follow each other.

All three aspects were used as a guiding analytical framework. Each transcribed interview was analyzed using the constant comparative method and as it was not my intention to verify any hypotheses. Rather, the aim was to generate theory that was grounded in the qualitative documentary, interview and observational data that 'respect the complexity, subtlety and detail of human transactions' (Basit, 2003: 146). The analysis process of my inductive inquiry is now detailed under the three aspects suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), data reduction, data display, and conclusion and verification building.

Data reduction is not simply an organizing tool (Miller, 1999) and the distillation of data into smaller, more manageable chunks (Tesch, 1990). Through the 'intense conversation between the researcher and the data' (Ely et al., 1991: 87) it forms a key analytical process, one that has 'implications for on-going method, descriptive reporting and theory building' (Ely et al., 1991: 87). Data reduction is therefore, seen as a form of analysis because it sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards and organizes data in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified (Saunders et al., 2000). I was aware that through the categorization of data, some of the richness could be lost through simplification (Richards, 1999). Every effort was therefore made to uphold the context of each quotation when annotating interview transcripts and labelling text. I also retained the context through coding,

> A well-established style of work whereby the data are inspected for categories and instances. It is an approach that disaggregates the text (notes and transcriptions) into a series of fragments, which are then regrouped under a series of thematic headings (Atkinson, 1992: 455).

Coding 'provides a link between data and the conceptualisation' (Bryman and Burgess, 1994: 5) and Seidel and Kelle (1995: 101) view the role of coding as,

> Noticing relevant phenomena; collecting examples of those phenomena; and analysing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures. Creating categories triggers the construction of a conceptual scheme that suits the data. This scheme helps the researcher to ask questions, to compare across data, to change or drop categories and to make a hierarchical order of them.

Using the analytical process of open coding, the data were initially disaggregated into concepts, given labels from the existing literature and also the terminology used by the informants themselves (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Data were then 'unitized' into each concept (Saunders et al., 2003: 493) until the concepts

were grouped into categories; elaborated concepts that offered a higher level of abstraction. Throughout this iterative process, I maintained an up-to-date definition of each category in order to maintain consistency with later unitization (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

With the aim of further exploring and explaining the collected data, relationships and connections were then sought between the categories through axial coding. Following Strauss and Corbin, (1990,1998), I developed questions and formulated theoretical hypotheses to help understand the emerging phenomena within categories. Attention was paid to those that confirmed these hypotheses, and also those that contradicted the proposed statement. This led to the emergence of sub-categories within the data that re-organized categories into a hierarchical form. Selective coding was then employed to seek out the relationships between categories in order to develop explanatory theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998). In order to aid my understanding of these relationships, Miles and Huberman's (1994) second aspect of data analysis was used; data display.

This 'organised, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action' (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 11) enabled me to assemble the data in an accessible and visual manner. Following the suggestions of Ritchie and Spencer (1994) and Miles and Huberman (1994), I often charted themes and the connections between categories on whiteboards in order for me to view the linkages and to seek justifiable conclusions. Various different 'case charts' were also formulated primarily from interview data in order to facilitate the generation of theory that was grounded in the data (Lacey and Luff, 2009; Basit, 2010). Matrices were developed with condensed interview questions on the horizontal axis juxtaposed with each interviewees' pseudonyms inscribed vertically. Analyzing their responses in the corresponding squares offered a useful visualization of both inter- and intra-interviewee comparisons. A large whiteboard was then used to chart the links that emerged between the cases and themes, with the final picture captured by photograph and also copied on to large A3 sheets of paper. The original interview transcripts were then re-read in order to ensure that the quotations respected their initial context. The emergent story of the data was then supported in this, the final aspect of data analysis as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), conclusion drawing and

verification. With the regularities and differences in the data noted, explanations were then sought following data collection through the verification of conclusions supported by lengthy engagement with the theoretical literature. The next section details the data analysis at the second time period of research.

4.8 Data Analysis and Coding at <u>Research Period Two</u>

Given the earlier analysis of WebCo data from time period one, I already had an informed conceptual framework of WebCo at the beginning of the second research period. This provisional 'start list' of categories (Miles and Huberman, 1994) gave a different point of departure. With the anticipated large amounts of further data collection I elected to use NVivo to help with the data analysis at the second research period. The use of such packages is increasingly being used by qualitative researchers (Tesch, 1990) although there is much debate in the literature as to its benefits for data analysis. Advocates draw our attention to the potential time savings and welcome the rigour and reliability which is brought to the process (Morison and Moir, 1998; Richards and Richards, 1994). However, others claim that 'using computers for analysis of text is inappropriate if not wholly absurd' (Kelle, 1995: 3) and highlight the threat to methodological purity with foreign frameworks distancing researchers from their collected data.

In a more optimistic study, Welsh (2002) argues that combining the best aspects of both electronic and manual forms of data analysis is likely to prove the most beneficial. I therefore decided to use the combination of both methods, choosing NVivo as the primary data organizing tool. I appreciated its flexibility and the fit with the non-linear design of NVivo to my iterative preference for analysis. I also wanted to benefit from the analytical and organizational functions of NVivo (Bazeley and Richards, 2000) as it addressed the criticisms of earlier qualitative software packages (like NUD.IST) that forced the researcher to generate the minimum text units in advance of analysis. I was also aware of the advantages of NVivo where coding could be 'undone' and dynamic visualizations formed. These are useful in identifying the relationships between categories and can lead to theory generation (Welsh, 2002) while meeting the evaluative criteria of grounded theory (MacMillan

and Koenig (2004). However, in practice I chose to create valuable time and space to think about the ideas, by charting my ideas and having conversations with colleagues around whiteboards. Like Agar (1991), analysis for me went beyond the data that I could see on a computer screen. I did therefore, not fall into the temptation of using all of the NVivo tools (see Mangabeira, Lee, and Fielding 2004); I simply used those that were relevant to aid my answering of research questions and for my methodological standpoint.

With the expected large volumes of data and appreciating that 'qualitative enquiry depends, at every stage, on the skills training, insights, and capabilities of the inquirer' (Patton, 2002: 436), I decided to attend a training session at the CAQDAS Networking Project at The University of Surrey. The course lasted for one day and enabled a smooth transition to data analysis from what was previously a manual exercise of cutting and pasting from Word documents. Nevertheless, considerable time was invested following the workshop familiarizing myself with the package and before the WebCo analysis; I used NVivo for an Advanced Institute of Management (AIM) project where, in agreememt with Kelle (1998: 3) I found it to be 'an indispensable tool for storage, retrieval and manipulation of the text'. Further benefits of NVivo were the chronologically ordered analyses so thoughts are recorded as they develop in a securely encrypted database file.

Coded data were accessed quickly and I found that NVivo enabled a greater amount of time to uncover the meaning of research data, saving my time for intellectual thought as opposed to the routine of manual coding (see Silverman, 2000). As Weitzman and Miles (1995: 17) note, qualitative software analysis 'programmes take over the marking up, cutting, sorting, reorganizing and collecting tasks qualitative researchers used to do with scissors and paper and note cards'. However, it is important to note that understanding the meaning of the data is not computerized in the same way that NVivo aids with the mechanics of data management. The analysis is still conducted by the researcher and hence, the critics of such packages often simply reflect their misunderstanding of the programs; with their ideas potentially based on their preconceptions that are derived from the respective quantitative analysis packages.

When coding my data in the second research period, my start list of codes (labelled nodes in NVivo) from the first were inputted. The categories formed tree (parent) nodes and the concepts (child nodes) were placed beneath. As the analysis continued, reflexivity on the data generated new child nodes to be added to the hierarchical tree structure that facilitated comparisons between the different nodes (Richards and Richards, 1994). The Nvivo coding process had strong parallels with the manual coding of the first research period. The data were initially dissected (c.f open coding), the similarities and differences evaluated and the data grouped together to form nodes. The naming of nodes has been suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) to be the first step in theorizing. I also wanted to ensure the consistent use of codes and so annotated the description function to track which sorts of data were coded therein. Sub-codes were also generated for those nodes that were flourishing in order to better examine the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Active node names were given wherever possible to encourage further reflexivity as opposed to pure description (Glaser, 1978); for example 'socializing' was used instead of 'social contact'. To remain true to the data I also in-vivo coded where the respondents' elected terms were used as the node names (Glaser, 1978). Practically, I chose to rearrange the screen to 'list view' as this enabled me to see a greater amount of codes. When transferring the data to each code, I preferred the 'drag and drop' method of coding as opposed to using the line numbering function or coding button.

Two NVivo functions helped my analysis by searching of the data; the 'Node Coding Report' and 'Coding Stripes'. I used the first to print off individual nodes so that I was able to see all of the data that had been coded within. The second tool applied coding stripes to interview scripts in the margin alongside the corresponding coded extract of text. This useful function was well used as it offered similarities with the margin coding of the first period of research. The ordering of coded responses to semi-structured interview questions could also be seen and this informed the later conversations with informants. Coding stripes were also beneficial to see the links between categories which led to forming explanatory models and to review my coding techniques.

Further analyses of the relationships between categories were undertaken by using the attribute function in NVivo. Interviews were inputted directly into NVivo

and the demographic information of employees was added. The duration of employment at WebCo appeared to offer interesting insights with the thoughts of employees on a variety of subject matters. This cross-referencing with the attributes enabled a re-contextualization of the data that led to theory development. Memos were also used to help in this respect (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998) so they enabled my thoughts on each interview's context to be recorded. This inclusion of contextual information in memos helped to relate the micro-analysis to wider macro themes, thus, recognizing the 'social milieu' and appreciating that data are not collected in a social vacuum (Welsh, 2002). Furthermore, memos may also help to alleviate Charmaz's (2000: 520) concerns of computer based qualitative software packages, where he claims that the context of 'the whole interview, the whole story, the whole body of data' that should be taken into account. Memos were typed as soon as possible after the interviews and were later linked to the transcribed interview in an attempt to avoid the warning of Richards (1999) that memos can become reified, independent and static texts that form an existence of their own. The memos also became a research journal which enabled me to reflect on the 'reciprocal influence of the research on the researcher' (Bringer, Johnston, and Brackenridge 2004: 70).

The possibility of searching data in NVivo was beneficial and certainly compensated for the many hours spent familiarizing myself with the package. NVivo allows for coding matrices and these were invaluable in examining the collected data. I was able to juxtapose many nodes in order to uncover relationships in the text, and also to use the attributes as a way of exploring whether age, or the duration of employment had any bearing on the respondents answers for each node. As with grounded theory, I considered the degree of fit with these searches and emerging theory. The negative cases also helped me to better understand those data and to run further analyses in order to better understand the phenomena.

Having completed the analysis of the second research period, the findings were cross-referenced with those from the first. Interviews with the same respondents at the two time periods were useful in tracking the changes and I chose to use whiteboards to map out the key similarities and differences that had emerged. The following section considers the ethical challenges of my research process.

4.9 Ethical Challenges

Overt forms of observation were employed in my research which is less susceptible to ethical issues (Bryman and Bell, 2003). I believe that nearly all employees would have been aware that I was a researcher from Cardiff University as I had extensive conversations with most organizational members. Employees may also have been informed by an e-mail that was sent to organizational members; an email that also included a picture of myself for increased awareness. I acknowledge that this does not guarantee full awareness of my purpose, and that to some members I may have been covert. However, employees were informally made aware that I attended the same University as Helen (a key gatekeeper) and that led to me studying the firm. As she appeared to be a well-respected WebCo member who was not in the senior management, employees seemed unsuspicious of my intentions.

I drew on my research training throughout the ethnographic study in order to be mindful of respondent privacy and ensuring that participant consent was 'given freely and based on full information about participation rights and use of data' (Saunders et al., 1999: 133). To respect employee privacy, to begin with I would adopt a slightly coy, light footed walk up to employee desks, yet they would typically extend me a warm welcome, even when targets were to be hit. They would often wave to me to come and listen in on their calls, and in every instance, the customer would be made aware of telephone shadowing. It was more difficult to ensure full awareness at the external assessment centre. Due to the fast paced nature of the day and being introduced to the hosts of that day as 'this is Ashley, he is one of us' (a quote which denoted my acceptance by WebCo hirers), there was no obvious opportunity to raise this initially with the workers at the assessment centre. I was aware of my ethics training however, and did raise it at the end of the day.

Every effort was made to ensure the confidentiality of data and the protection of WebCo participants' anonymity was highly important (Tylor and Bogdan, 1984). Interviewees were informed that they could elect to stop the interview completely (there were no occurrences of this) or to choose not to answer any particular questions (Bryman, 1988). The name of the organization assumes a pseudonym to protect anonymity, as too do employee data and the names of individual work teams. I sought permission to record each interview and meeting with interviewees in advance,

I would encourage employees to speak freely and honestly (Gibbs, 2007) in what would be an 'informal chat'. During each interview, great emphasis was given to building on my established rapport with interviewees. Generally, I was careful not to ask too many probes so as not to appear overbearing with the interviewee although this did depend on each respondent. For example, some appeared to love the fact that I showed so much interest in their narratives and hence, further probing was welcomed. During the interviews, I ensured that sufficient vagueness was given to any information that I had already learned in order for it not to be tracked back to the research informant. Every effort was also made to ensure that no undue stress, physical or psychological harm was caused to any participant and it was hoped that respecting the sources of information limited the impact on these aspects. Interviewees were also given the opportunity to verbally agree my notes from the interview although this opportunity wasn't ever taken. Most seemed happy to just say 'it's ok, you have got it all, and you *get it* anyway'.

4.10 Validity and Reliability

Silverman (2000) argues that any research should convince that the undertaken process generated valid results through reliable methodologies. Research validity refers to the truthfulness of findings and reliability, their stability (Altheide and Johnson, 1994). Unlike a quantitative domain, the degree of emphasis placed on these concepts varies for qualitative case study research (see Yin, 2003; Stake, 1995). However, Altheide and Johnson (2011: 587) assert that 'the "ethnographic ethic" calls for ethnographers to substantiate their interpretations and findings with a reflexive account of themselves and their methods'. This section will therefore detail further consideration of validity and reliability for my ethnographic study.

There may be many effects of the researcher's micro-social focus on the research site and hence it is necessary to understand them (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). The concept of 'going native' infers the complete association of a researcher with their respondents, to the extent that this impacts on their research agenda and perspective. As I was close in age and of a similar demographic to the majority of workers at WebCo, there was the possibility that this was going to happen. In an

attempt to enhance the verifiability of my results I ensured that it did not however, by maintaining my research agenda and the daily writing up of my field notes. An 'auditor approach' was taken to the collection of my field notes in an attempt to ensure their reliability (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). At interviews, background noise was pre-empted and minimized through the utilization of a digital recorder in the second time period. This would have benefitted the reliability of my results (Silverman, 2001) and it also aided me greatly in my total transcription of all of the recorded meetings and interviews; another factor which Perakyla (2004) denotes to offer benefits to research reliability. I also engaged in 'reflexive rationalization' in which, upon learning new information at the research site I attempted to interpret this within its context and as an on-going social process. My analytical techniques also helped in this regard.

Observational research is criticized for its capacity to illustrate time and subject errors (Cassell and Symon, 2004). The longitudinal aspect of my research reduced both of these where the specific time of the research did not present issues (for example studying a retail organization at Christmas with the aim to generalizing to the whole year), and the nature of work for individual subjects was viewed over many months. Subject error was also reduced as in both research periods, the organization was in a period of continual rapid growth (as it has been since start-up in the United Kingdom). It is acknowledged that in the first period there was continuous recruitment to meet customer demand but it was more difficult for WebCo to fill job roles by the second. Thus, an impact of short staffed departments may have increased the possibility of subject error in the second research period, but it was felt that I was able to gain a comprehensive understanding of these challenges which became one of the research themes.

The reliability of ethnographic studies can be threatened by 'observer effect' – a change in the behaviour of individuals due to their awareness of it being under study (see Mayo, 1924). However, I believe that the longitudinal nature of my research reduced the negative consequences of this and that due to my daily presence in the organization, it is hoped that this led to the emergence of 'typical' employee behavioural patterns. Delbridge and Kirkpatrick (1994) highlight observer bias as the

key challenge to reliability. They recognize that the researcher is an integral part of the social world, one who draws on their experiences in order to interpret their findings. Robson (2002) suggests that structure in the analysis stages can eradicate the different interpretations of collected data. However, Silverman (2000) counters this assertion noting that no data is theory free and throughout the observational literature, it is widely acknowledged that due to variations in the theoretical understanding, philosophical preference and gender of the researcher, different notes will be made when analyzing the same phenomena. Adler and Adler (1987: 80) state that 'one of the hallmarks of observation has traditionally been its non-interventionism' and as such, it could be argued that the 'naturalness of the observer role, coupled with its non-direction, makes it the least noticeably intrusive of all research techniques' (Adler and Adler, 1998: 89). I am in agreement with Nason and Golding (in Symon and Cassell, 2004) and I believe that it is more ethical to become a temporary member of that world as opposed to basing one's interpretations on distant statistical analyses.

Bruyn (1966) details six indices (time, place, social circumstances, language, intimacy and social consensus) that serve to enhance the understanding of the researcher and thereby, the validity of research. It is believed that all six were met by my research. With the two time periods of research, nearly five full months were spent at WebCo and this should have improved the adequacy of data. Bruyn (1966) also suggests the observation of interactions in the physical environment and I was able to consider the influence of the social settings upon employee actions due to the ethnographic study (for example, the impact of the environment at filmed video conferences where employees would whisper critical comments to each other). My understanding of the social circumstances was also enhanced due to my ability to relate to the employees in terms of status, role and activities. At the time of the first period of research I was a 23 year old, recent graduate and the average age of WebCo employees (all of whom were graduates) was 25. We also shared many similar interests and would as previously noted, frequently socialize together.

In terms of understanding the language of the research site, every effort was made to become conversant in the terminologies of internet hosting before visiting the organization. Additionally, I became familiar with the language of the social setting

through my observations and listening in on telephone conversations with customers. These two research techniques also enabled a greater degree of intimacy with the research setting. As Goffman (1984: 129) notes,

> There tends to be one informal or backstage language of behaviour, and another language of behaviour for occasions when a performance is being presented. The backstage language consists of reciprocal first-naming, co-operative decision making, profanity…The front-stage behaviour language can be taken as the absence (and in some cases the opposite) of this.

Being present at telephone conversations with the customers and sitting amongst the employees for large periods of their working day, I believe that I was able to gain access to their backstage language of behaviour. The co-operative decision making concerning who was to answer the incoming calls is detailed below and is just one example of the captured intimacy through my ethnographic work. It also offers evidence that I achieved high levels of social consensus. As Hughes (1976: 135) describes it, social researchers achieve 'understanding when they know the rules of a social scene and can communicate them to another person who could then become a member of the actor's group'.

Observing the Q-Team members taking up the incoming calls was particularly insightful, illustrating many generated norms that had been founded on the goodwill of these employees. A large whiteboard was situated directly next to this team and it illustrated the amount of leads that had been processed for the week. Hitting target (five leads per day) brought financial bonuses and the informal allocation, or pretending to be too slow to answer the call was seen to be a manifestation of considered understanding of the visible statistics. At one instance, an incoming call came through and I was aware that the individual that I was work shadowing had already hit their target, and sure enough, a nod was given to another member of that team who still had three more leads to generate that week. Social consensus was also assisted by being exposed to the WebCo culture over a long period of time and the reliability of the study enhanced through this 'principle of verifiability'. However, as previously noted in this section I do acknowledge the realist critique of the possibility of observing events or relationships that are free from theories or concepts; acknowledging that my observations would have been mediated through concepts that are acquired in everyday life (Sayer, 1992).

4.11 Summary and Reflections

This chapter has aimed to detail the research process and to provide a rationale for the employed methods. As ever, the research could have been conducted differently. Time limitations were imposed on my collection of observational data due to my teaching commitments and research budgets. I would have liked to be able to spend more time speaking to the technical staff; however they were located in a secure, different location. Every opportunity was made to speak to them however, when they did visit my research site. Overall, I feel that the considerable time spent in the research site was certainly enough to gain a thorough understanding of WebCo life. I hope that his chapter has illustrated the relevance of my methods and their informed and efficient undertaking in order to generate robust research data and theoretical development.

The next chapter commences by offering a description of the computer hosting industry. It then details the research site before giving information of the roles of WebCo employees' at the first period of research.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE RESEARCH SITE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the computer hosting industry and offers an insight into the research site (WebCo) that formed the basis of my longitudinal ethnographic study. The chapter then offers a description of the types of roles that were present in the organization during the first research period (2005, chapter eight later details the changes to work organization that had occurred between the periods of conducted research and analyses the implications).

5.2 The Computer Hosting Industry

With around three quarters of a billion worldwide users (Global Reach, March 2004), the internet has been named the fastest growing business sector (www.ceonex.com). Website hosting organizations supply website 'up-time' that ensures the internet sites are available to be accessed and not therefore, experiencing any 'downtime'. Given the increasing centrality of the internet to global business, the internet hosting industry has experienced exponential growth since 1991 (www.ceonex.com). Excluding the smaller commercial web hosting firms, 2004 saw an estimated 35,000 organizations that provided 'uptime' to over 100 respective clients (Host Count, May 2004). Hosting is the hidden part of any internet site with website content being securely stored on a physical electronic server located in the respective hosting organization's data centre. Computer hosting providers offer a service that maintains these internet servers in order for organizations or members of the public to present the content that is held within each server. A server therefore stores the information that is present on internet websites and responds to those who enter a website address in order to show the respective website. Many servers can be used to support large, complex websites and at the time of this longitudinal ethnography, the computer hosting industry was categorized into three, broad tiers.

At the smaller end of the market, computer hosting organizations would maintain the servers of small internet websites, perhaps that of a small to medium enterprise. However, the hosting firm would not guarantee website uptime and only

offer limited customer support with their standardized servers which may be shared between many organizations. The second tier concerned the larger telephone companies that offered hosting as an option to the existing network facilities that they provided. The final tier were dedicated organizations that managed the entire hosting of a customer's internet site. These organizations would offer 24 hour technical support, committed levels of customer service and guarantee nearly 100 percent of network uptime for their clients. They were therefore the choice of organizations for whom it was 'mission critical' to have a working website, for example, those organizations who sell via the internet.

5.3 The Research Site (WebCo)

WebCo was in the third of these tiers, being a managed hosting specialist that was operating in over 70 countries. As an American organization, this study was conducted in the UK subsidiary located in a business park on the M4 corridor near the town of Chiswick, West London. WebCo server solutions were built exclusively for their clients with responsive customer service and WebCo followed the trend of rapid and continual growth by offering industry leading figures of one hundred percent uptime through their technological expertise. Management at the organization attributed their consistent three digit annual growth to the 'WebCo special sauce' that was the trademarked slogan of Fanatical Support™ for their customers. This core, espoused organizational value was posited as being central to winning numerous industry awards in respect of customer service and technological innovation. Additionally, the company featured highly in various independent worker satisfaction studies.

The principal reason for selecting the I.T industry as a research setting was due to the fact that it was a major employer of labour, and a key contributor to economic activity both within the United Kingdom and internationally. WebCo's strong position (at that time, the industry leader for technical support and customer service) in such a competitive and challenging sector was an element in my choice of it as a research venue. The aforementioned opportune e-mail from a previous student also led to the selection of WebCo as it appeared to be representative of an organization that emphasized its culture - it was epitomized by the company's

Chairman (Stewart) as 'the glue that makes the components work'. Parallels can automatically be drawn between this and the work of Deal and Kennedy (1982). This thesis analyses the longitudinal empirical material gained between the first research period (five-and-a-half full weeks in 2005 where 79 employees, termed Webbers, worked at WebCo) and the second (three months in 2006 with 180 Webbers). A detailed description of each worker role during the first research period can be found in this chapter in order to give an initial understanding of WebCo employee roles. Simplified diagrams that note the sales and Tech departments (managerial positions are not illustrated for simplicity) are given in appendix five. The arrows highlight the promotion paths of WebCo employees for the core business functions of sales (these work roles are located within the hierarchical triangle) in 2005.

Later on in this thesis, we learn of large changes to the organizational structure at WebCo and employee reactions to these alterations. The second diagram (see appendix six) is intended to give a visual representation of the structural changes at WebCo that had been introduced by the second research period (2006). The changes include the greater standardization and formalization of sales roles and the diagram notes the introduction of three 'Fusters' that incorporated AM, BDC and Tech roles. These 'Fanatical Clusters' were introduced as bespoke customer service units in order to provide fanatical levels of service and are later discussed in chapter 8.5. The diagram also illustrates the increasing complexity surrounding the organizational structure and the introduction on Solution Engineers (SEs) whose role it was to work with all levels of employees in order to generate bespoke solutions to technical customer requirements. Subsequent chapters talk to employees at all of these levels and it is assumed that 'an established employee' is one that has at least one year's experience at WebCo.

5.4 Work Organization – 2005

This section will detail the work organization at WebCo in the first research period (2005). It follows the progression of customer contact points with the organization and offers insights into the organizational culture at WebCo. It commences by noting the work of the Q-team and then that of the two sales teams.

Once a sale had been made, the client would be allocated both an Account Manager (AM) and a Business Development Consultant (BDC). Both of these two work domains are therefore noted before the chapter describes the work of the technically qualified members of staff, termed Techs.

5.4.1 Q-Team

At the time of the first research period, all non-technical employees that joined WebCo started in the Qualification Team (commonly referred to as the Q-Team). There were nine members of the Q-Team, five males and four females with an average age of 23 and they worked different shift patterns. The standard hours of work were 8.30-5.30pm although once a month, employees were to 'do the early shift' of 8.00-5.00pm and 'a late shift' that was 12-9pm. The atmosphere among the team was vibrant and inclusive, for example when a 'Q-Teamer' would burst out into song, other members of the group would join in. Many social activities, such as paint balling, were also organized amongst the team for week nights or weekends. It was common for Webbers to live in 'The Chis' and during my observation I learned how many members of the Q-Team shared flats together there and how it was a corporate joke that WebCo is the only thing that keeps 'the Chis' going.

The role of Q-Team employees was to qualify the leads of potential customers before passing the customer to the relevant sales team. Leads were generated in three distinct ways. Firstly, 75 percent of leads were generated through 'live chat' which was where a customer logged on to the WebCo website and conversed with a Q-Team member through the web page dialogue box. Speaking to Rhian, an established Q-Team employee, she noted how live chat was initially daunting as having a degree in Law she had no previous I.T hosting experience. However, she mentioned her good practice in having built up a Word document of standard replies to customer questions and that she would frequently 'cut and paste' the relevant response in order to save time. A further five percent of leads were generated through the website but through customers who filled in a quote form that was again sent to the Q-Team employees. The remaining 20 percent of leads were generated through incoming customer phone calls that were channelled directly to the Q-Team.

As Q-Team employees were the customers' first contact with WebCo, management placed the emphasis on 'members of the "Q" creating good impressions that set the tone for the levels of fanatical support that customers will receive'. In qualifying a lead, it was the role of Q-Team employees to ensure that they attained the following qualification criteria; the potential customer's contact details, the number of required servers, their preferred operating system (Linux or Windows) and the source of their enquiry. Furthermore, Q-Team employees were responsible for issuing a 'ball-park price' for the customer's requirement and it was necessary for them to establish whether the potential customer was able to meet this in order for the lead to be qualified. The somewhat unusual pricing process of issuing an estimate was due to the fact that the majority of Q-Teamers had little I.T experience in speccing up servers for customers and as they had been recruited for their attitude and not technical knowledge (see chapter 6.5.1). Employees typically spent nine to twelve months in this 'launch pad' role, with the aim of understanding the values of the business, gaining a sense of how to spec a server for a client's needs and how to qualify leads to the specified criteria. Their average salary would be just over £20,000 and as is later detailed in chapter six, the opportunity to increase this was available via a bonus scheme for reaching a number of qualified leads. Once a potential lead had been qualified, it would then be passed on to a member of the relevant Linux or Windows sales team.

5.4.2 The Sales Teams

Sales team members were those that had progressed from the Q-Team, and it was this team that was responsible for the majority of aural reinforcements to the organizational culture. For example, every time that a sale was closed, employees would run up to the front of the open plan office and 'honk the hooter'. This would then be closely followed by rapturous applause from each person in the office. Other noises included the constant sound of 'high fives' which would signify a successful telephone conversation that had, as Antonio (who sat under his Mexican Flag and hat) once put it, 'won over the customer with our fanatical support, they are going to go for it, I can just feel it!' Sales employees were keen for me to listen in on their telephone conversations with their potential customers. Listening to customer phone calls with Ciara, a Linux sales representative who at that time was wearing a pink

cowboy hat that she had worn for a PR release in the Guardian Newspaper in order to show the 'unique WebCo culture', it was clear that although there was no script, each conversation was based around the core cultural value of Fanatical Support™ and the promise of 100 percent internet server uptime. As Ciara stated,

> This is the main draw for our customers as it is our unique selling point, and if your website is mission critical, then with our one hundred percent uptime and fanatical support, we are the obvious choice in the marketplace.

The role of the sales team was to establish greater clarity over the desired solution of the potential customer before closing the sale. Customers would demand Linux or Windows operating systems upon which they would run their websites, and each of the eleven sales team members were conversant in the technical language of both programmes. They were, hence, able to specify and price solutions for both customer types.   Sales team members that required further assistance would frequently shout across the open plan office to ask a Tech for help in configuring the appropriate solution through clarifying the number of servers and level of managed back up that the customer required. Sales team employees would build up a 'pipeline' of future sales whereby, if the customer accepted the proposed solution via e-mail, then this was deemed 'a sale'. Ultimately, through their telephone conversations with potential customers and their selling of the company in terms of its levels of Fanatical Support™, the aim of sales team members was to secure the sale and to meet their individual targets. Sales team members would receive an average base salary of £32,000 and this could be significantly increased with the performances bonuses that were offered (see chapter 6.6.2). One they had made a sale, they would then assign each client to an Account Manager (AM).

5.4.3 Account Managers

As we have already learned, many Q-Teamers would be promoted into the sales department. The alternative promotion route was that of Account Management. It was the Q-Team leader, Charlotte, who would largely decide the perceived fit with the role of either sales representative or AM, with approximately an even split between the two departments. AMs were selected for their customer relationship skills and their perseverance in problem solving. As one AM stated, their main role

was to be 'responsible for the whole touchy feely part of WebCo which basically means that we are dedicated to problem solving and dealing with all the shit!' In doing so, it was the AM's role to be the sole point of contact for their assigned clients and to minimize customer turnover (termed 'churn') through developing relationships that understood the clients' business needs. This comparatively more conservative group of employees would ascertain the compatibility of the customers' solution to their needs through conducting lengthy telephone conversations that would sometimes include a Tech in order to give the customer a more complete picture of their technical solution.

AMs would also receive feedback on how their Tech had solved their problem in terms of its effectiveness, timeliness and level of fanaticism in their service. Accordingly, there was a high degree of interaction between these two work groups and at the time of the first research period, AMs were empowered to give financial compensation to their clients should they experience any server downtime. AMs would have little interaction with the Q-Team apart from with the friends that they had made who were still awaiting promotion into either the AM or sales teams where they would gain a higher salary base rate. Although AMs had no working relationships with the sales team members, they were all sat on the same desks and hence the two departments shared many day-to-day social interactions. Account Managers did not however, share any of the financial incentives that were offered to the sales team (their base salary was an average of £23,000 with no bonus opportunities), nor did they have the cluttered desks of the sales employees or, as we will see, the Business Development Consultants (BDCs). All of the AM desks were well ordered, with their stationery neatly organized into trays that they had all bought for each other. It appeared that in addition to taking pride in the levels of offered Fanatical Support™, AMs were also proud of their organized work stations.

5.4.4 Business Development Consultants

Prior to the introduction of the BDCs department, WebCo operated a 'one size fits all model' where sales employees would look after every aspect from the initial sale to the day to day Account Management. This created problems however as we can see in the following quote from the previous Sales Director, Xavier,

We had a bit of a conflict there, because the moment that you tried to sell something to someone they kind of didn't believe you anymore, because they didn't know whether you were just trying to flog them stuff, or whether you were trying to advise them in their best interests. So we spilt into AMs and BDCs, so the BDCs look after the sales number, and then the AMs just look after the relationship side of things, keep things sweet and keep money out of it.

Tucked away in the back corner of the office were five such BDCs who were employees that had many years of experience in the WebCo sales team. Accordingly, the average age (29 years) of the two female and three male BDCs was higher than that of the overall company (25 years). Their desks were centred around a white board that would display their statistics for the month, and also the 'word of the week'. This was a word that they would attempt to get into telephone conversations and it was not my impression that this was designed to relieve any boredom of their work role. Moreover, it was viewed as having 'a bit of fun' and throughout my 2005 research period the words ranged from easier challenges such as 'sandwiches' or 'café' to those that were more difficult, for example, 'heteroscedasticity' or 'supercalifragilisticexpialidocious'. Listening into calls, BDCs would typically just say these more difficult words and follow them up with a 'sorry, I don't quite know what came over me then, that was a bit weird wasn't it?' The BDC with the greatest tally on the whiteboard would get a free drink from the others at the month end.

In addition to their proven ability to sell, BDCs were technically trained and they were therefore able to converse on highly technical customer solutions. BDCs would typically work eleven hour days and approaching their desks I always felt as though I would be disturbing these employees who appeared to be constantly on the phone to existing WebCo customers. Their desks were covered with various documentation and also many photographs of their families and friends, many of whom were also their work colleagues. One employee was getting married at the end of 2005 and so her desk would always have the latest copy of 'Brides Magazine' on it. I noticed how this was rarely thumbed however, due to the time demands of their role that was to sell to existing WebCo clients, or as one BDC put it, 'to shake the money tree'. If organizations had grown or diversified then BDCs accommodated the clients' needs by offering upgraded servers or other technical packages. The majority

of their engagement with customers would be over the telephone; however I quickly learned that when BDCs would come to work in a suit then they would be going to visit a customer later on in the day. These visits were typically for the more profitable accounts and during these BDCs would present their revised solution to members of their client's technical teams. I noticed that the BDCs were typically a little more formally dressed than the rest of the organization, and that they commanded the respect of Techs and those in sales/AM or the Q-Team.

BDCs had access to all WebCo customer accounts which explained their limited levels of interaction with the AMs and those in the sales team. Being geographically separate from the other teams, BDCs had no interaction with the Q-Team and I was constantly reminded by WebCo employees in the sales teams that 'once you were a BDC then you have made it'. The average base salary for BDCs was just under £40,000 and the opportunities to add twice the amount to this figure was available should BDCs make their targets (see chapter 6.6.2). The BDCs did have a large amount of interaction with the Techs, more so than the AMs as the BDC solutions would often be 'non-standard' and their commission structure was based on their closed sales of revised solutions. BDCs would therefore have to ask the more qualified technical specialists' opinions as to whether the non-generic solution was within their building capability.

5.4.5 Techs

In comparison to the BDCs, the Techs were widely acknowledged to be underpaid for both the work that they did and in view of what they could command in other hosting companies. Employees spoke of how their salary was typically 10 percent lower than the industry average. This is a factor that chapter eight investigates in more detail. WebCo managers acknowledged the strong schooling of I.T professionals in South Africa and as such, many of the Techs were South African. Due to their technical role, it was not necessary for Techs to commence their work at WebCo in the Q-Team and during the first research period Techs would split their five day working week between the data centre (three days) and the sales office (two days). They also followed a rota of three distinct work times (9.00-18.00, 10.00-19.00 and 12.00-21.00) and were expected to work one day over a weekend every six

weeks, for which they would receive the following Friday off. Due to their varying shifts it was more difficult to develop relationships with the Techs who would often be wearing cycling shorts as they would sometimes have to cycle to the data centre. When they were in the sales office they were notoriously difficult to speak to as they were either speaking with AMs or BDCs on customer calls, translating technical language to employees or even fixing broken office computers. When I did manage to speak to the Techs in the first research period, their passion for the WebCo value of Fanatical Support™ was clear in addition to their general interest in all technologies.

The central role for a Tech when they were in the sales office was to respond to customer tickets that were placed on MyWeb, a secure online portal on which customers would write their issues with their server solution, for example they may have experienced some website downtime. It would therefore, be the role of a Tech to investigate the ticket on an issue-by-issue basis. The AM would then receive the feedback on the customers' satisfaction of the Tech's work via the client's responses to the question of 'How fanatical was your experience of the tickets resolution?' This was measured on a Likert scale that ranged from 'Fanatical' to 'Unsatisfactory'.

Techs had the discretion to select their ticket although this was largely determined by their level of experience and their grade. Techs were graded in terms of their previous experience into levels One, Two and Three. Their corresponding average salaries would be £31,000, £37,000 and £46,000. Typically, level One Techs would be able to answer most issues that were received via the secure online portal; it would then be up to the level Two and Three Techs to tackle the more complex customer queries. To reach the position of a level Three Tech, employees would have met an industry standard. In addition to solving the more complex solutions, Techs at this level would also have a training role for those at level One and Two and the targets for Techs were based on company growth rates and churn.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has detailed the nature of the computer hosting industry and offered a description of the elected research site for this thesis, WebCo. As a managed hosting provider, WebCo offered bespoke solutions to clients whose websites were 'mission

critical'. The chapter has also noted the different roles that were present at WebCo during the first period of research. The following chapter analyses the manifestations of culture that were present during this time period and the apparent successful synergies with the organizational structures.

CHAPTER SIX: CULTURE AND STRUCTURE IN HARMONY: THE MANIFESTATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, THE MANAGEMENT OF MEANING <u>AND</u> 'GOOD WORK'

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the successful management of WebCo's organizational culture at the time of the first research period. It commences by examining the role of the then UK MD, Peter, in creating a strong organizational culture before then noting how the conditions were ripe for the creation of a strong cultural milieu. The various cultural factors are then analyzed (the corporate magician, open book meetings and cuddle time) and evidence provided as to how the structural and material conditions of work facilitated the management of culture during this time period. Specifically, the recruitment practices are detailed and the importance placed on securing person-organization fit. The use of psychometric testing is also examined as both a recruitment and career development tool. Following this, the high levels of employee' autonomy are detailed for all WebCo teams before the substantial rewards for those that succeed are noted. Ultimately, it appears that a combination of cultural and structural factors successfully engaged Webbers and employee thoughts on each of the above factors that led to the successful management of the 'WebCo Way' are detailed throughout this chapter that commences by detailing the role of Peter.

6.2 A Charismatic Cultural Creator

Peter joined WebCo in 2001 and at that time, there were four other members of staff in the UK subsidiary. Peter had an MBA and considerable experience within the I.T sector, specifically within the specialisms of sales, marketing and business management. His passion however, was for securing customer satisfaction and to enable them to build their businesses. An initial insight into his vibrant and engaging character can be seen in the below quotation,

> Ok, everyone says that Web hosting is vital given the rise of the internet and that I have a great job here at WebCo leading this but come on, be honest, let's face it, website hosting is well pretty dull aye? I mean… it is plumbing for the internet; it is not sexy or exciting at all! What is exciting though and what we

do so well, is a genuine passionate for offering fanatical support. Customer service is the be all and end all for me and I work tirelessly to ensure that we build a business that supports this ethos. (Peter, UK MD WebCo)

By the end of his first four years at WebCo, Peter had successfully built the business to one with 150 members of staff. The annual revenue increased from £595,000 to over £25million in four years and in 2005, the organization was rated in the top 20 of 'The Sunday Times Best Places to Work'. Peter would often talk about his engagement with customer experience conferences and was proud of WebCo's success,

> I adore the customer service community and sit on many assessment panels for the key industry league tables. I truly believe that business is all about the people and that here at WebCo, we have an exciting opportunity to help others achieve their own goals. We feature highly ourselves in many of these rankings but I will continue to work until he hit that number one spot which I believe would be a real reflection of what we have at WebCo!

It was clear that Peter was driven to satisfy WebCo customers and he tried to achieve this through the management of culture,

> Our organizational culture is without doubt the genetics of our business but for it to be successful, it has to be managed. You have seen a copy of Peters and Waterman's book on the right of my desk, and all the other ones too. I just can't help myself enough with these as they really resonated with something in me during my MBA. I have a lot of experience in all kinds of service businesses and I know that the key to success is really only about getting people to volunteer to try harder than our next competitor. You can't make them do that, it has to be something that comes from them and therefore my job is to build an environment where all of these lovely things happen. (Peter, UK MD, WebCo)

Throughout my ethnographic study, Peter would attempt to be present in the organization every day of the week. He spent a lot of his time walking around the office and his spreading his self-deprecating cheer. He appeared to care for employees and would remember events that were important to their lives both within and beyond WebCo,

> Peter is great, he is like a pick-me up not that we really need it, he is so bubbly and always takes the piss out of his bald head of hair! He is such a warm guy and is absorbing to chat to, it is like you are the only person that matters in the world and he always remembers the little things, like your birthday or the wedding that you attending last weekend, he is awesome and is WebCo to all of us. (Margaret, AM)

What is WebCo? A good question… Well, I guess it's Peter, he not only talks the talk but walks it too, I have never met anyone who is so passionate about helping us all to build this great business around delivering great customer experiences. Fanatical support? Well, it starts from within and he certainly gives us this in his charming way! (Ken, a sales employee)

In addition to using what Webbers referred to as 'his infectious personality', Peter also attempted to reinforce the organizational culture through the use of artefacts. These artefacts supported the generation a unique culture, one that appeared to be central to the members of that time. The following section considers three events (open book meetings, the employee of the month award, and cuddle time) and notes how these were actively used as a form of cultural management. This section concludes by detailing how these events were received by employees.

6.3 Reinforcing Organizational Culture through Artefacts

At the time of the first research period (summer, 2005), seventy-nine employees worked in WebCo UK and the multicultural nature of the organization was highlighted by one senior manager who stated that 'as a company we are trying to be culturally diverse yet strong'. In the open plan office, the bright colours of various national flags above every employee's desk were symbolic representations of the different employee nationalities. The organization had various cultural symbols of its own. Employees were encouraged (by Peter) to wear brightly coloured corporate t-shirts with the corporate values of passion, commitment, 'a way of life' and 'going the extra mile' written on the back. The organization had other symbols that acted as a constant reminder to employees of the esteemed organizational culture. The windows had the visible artefacts (Schein, 1985) of the core organizational values written on them, such as 'passion for our work', 'embrace change for excellence' and 'happiness is liking what you do as well as doing what you like'. Peter mentioned that 'it is important that we get the message out there of how strong our culture is and so Webbers can receive our organizational values on window stickers for their cars'. Employees appeared to embrace this offer: 'I love it; I want to tell the whole world about how good we are as a company' (Jennifer, a sales team employee whose car had stickers in the rear window).

Another sales employee (James) characterized the organizational culture through the organization's facilities and the more visible artefacts,

> It's the little things that you notice, like we have a fridge and a Starbucks coffee machine, you can just pick up a drink whenever, also people wear trainers and are quite chilled out.

In an interview with Peter (UK, MD), he stated that…

> We don't want this place to be filled with suits and to have a stuffy culture, so people can chill out in the games room, play table football, SEGA Rally, grab free coffee whenever we want, we are free to express who we are and can be ourselves at work.

Peter was always keen to highlight the unique nature of the WebCo culture and had introduced a variety of aural reinforcements to the organizational culture. For example, we have already learned of the hooter that was placed on a separate table that was open for all to view at the front of the sales department. Employees were expected to ring this every time they generated a sale and it was then customary for all other employees to look up and see who as Peter put it 'is doing well' and then applaud their success with clapping and cheers.

Further outbreaks of clapping surrounded the corporate magician. The magician would spend two hours a week at the organization and was hired as he was preferred to conveying the values through 'a death by PowerPoint presentation'. In an informal conversation with the corporate magician, he explained that his brief from Peter was to 'make the culture come alive and to maintain the positive organizational atmosphere'. He explained how he attempted to do this by demonstrating the value of passion through a trick involving the Queen of Hearts card, whilst the idea of 'embracing change for excellence' was captured in a trick where a card would change from a low number to a King. Employees appeared to like the presence of a magician in their organization and many commented on looking forward to the days that he was on site. They also expressed sadness when they were informed (on two occasions throughout the first period of study) that the magician was not able to attend for a particular week, as Jemma stated,

> We love it when he is here, ok, it is only a couple of minutes, but it does make you see our good values play out in practice… there is a little buzz when we see him walking around the office and we are gutted on the weeks that he doesn't turn up.

The next section will detail three events (open book meetings, the employee of the month award, and cuddle time) that Peter considered central to managing the organizational culture.

6.4 Spectacles of Organizational Culture

The first spectacle was the themed open book meeting. Here, employees would gather for these monthly events and they would be informed of any new starters (termed 'newbies'), the company's financial position, and a brief overview of the previous month from each organizational department. Open book meetings had a Hawaiian theme and employees would be dressed in Hawaiian shirts, grass skirts and have many garlands placed over their necks. Before the start of the open book meeting, employees were encouraged by their departmental managers to do Hawaiian dances as 'this brings them together and it generates a fun atmosphere for the meeting'. Fun appeared to be a consistent WebCo theme that formed the basis of the organizational culture and it was one that was well received by employees: 'for me every day is a holiday here! It's like visiting the Costa Del Web!'. Employees also commented on the unique nature of the WebCo organizational culture: 'I love it! It's a cool place to work, people come in here and go back to their employers saying … boy, they are a weird bunch at WebCo!'(Paul, a WebCo newbie). Many of the sales team workers were recent graduates and this generated strong bonds both between the employees but also a willingness to bond with the organization. Employees would often liken working at WebCo to being at University, as one stated,

> I think when you first start here there's a buzz, it's different! Coming from University, everyone was telling me, you are going to get a shock working for WebCo you know, but really, it's just like being at University! (Jill, a sales employee).

Talking about the open book meeting, another sales team member, Laura, comments on the strength of the organizational culture,

> Joining WebCo is like having another family, you are immersed into the culture to such an extent that we practically live and breathe it!

At the start of the open book meeting, all of the new starters would be asked to stand in a line in front of all other employees. They would then be asked by Peter to introduce themselves, to talk about their hobbies and then to stand on a table and either sing a song or tell a joke. Peter was very keen for this 'task' to remain a secret

for the newbies: 'It is a bit of fun and it is a great way for them to fit in with our culture here, we want the element of surprise however as this puts them on the spot it is something that they should feel comfortable doing'. In practice however, employees would often subvert this and inform newbies about this 'task' prior to the event: 'informally we may pre-warn our newbies about the open book meetings to prepare them for the shock'. This appeared to be appreciated by one newbie who stated that 'I was pleased that I knew it was coming, I can't sing and am not particularly funny so at least I had a bit of time to Google a half-decent joke'.

It was at open book meetings where the individual who had won the coveted 'employee of the month' would be announced. This brought further organizational rituals where the employee of the month sign would be placed next to that employee's national flag, directly above the workstation of that employee until the next open book meeting. In addition, the winner of the award would wear the 'fanatical straitjacket' on top of their Hawaiian shirt, and it would remain there restraining them from work for the duration of the day. The rationale for the jacket was noted by Peter who joked that it was 'to stop the worker from being so fanatical, we need to slow them down somehow!' The jacket appeared to represent what it was to be successful at WebCo with this organizational ritual being highly coveted by employees: 'everyone wants to be seen to be the one in the jacket; it shows that you are the best, the most fanatical' (Amar, a sales employee). Referring to the employee of the month awards, another employee illustrated the distinct nature of the WebCo organizational culture,

> I have worked many places in my life but this is the only one where the best wear strait jackets…. It's a very unique culture, I mean, where else can you be working at your desk and someone goes past on a scooter shouting 'cuddle time everyone, cuddle time! (Edward, an account manager).

This introduces the final organizational ritual to be discussed in this section; 'cuddle time'. Cuddle time operated on an ad hoc basis (typically occurring towards the end of the month) and it was instigated by members of the senior management team. Managers would walk around their team and shout the term 'cuddle time', in response to which, employees would leave their desks and spend around five minutes in a conference room where they would hug each other while management encouraged them to talk about non-work related matters. Employees appeared to embrace 'cuddle time' and Peter stated that,

It is designed as a fun way of bringing people closer together, we know that there are pressures, especially at the month end when targets are looming, but it reinforces our cultural values, our familial feel which is at the heart of what we do.

This section has detailed the active managerial attempts at creating a strong WebCo organizational culture and it would appear that employees enjoyed the symbolic artefacts which were manifestations of 'The WebCo Way'. The next section details Peter's awareness for appropriate structural factors to support the more bespoke culture management activities.

6.5 Building a Successful Culture – The Need for Structure; Recruitment and Career Development

The first time I met Peter he was quick to state that he 'throws out 1000 ideas a day but has no idea what to do with them'. Investigating this later in an interview with the MD, he elaborated that,

> Our culture of fanatical support is our secret sauce and the key to securing sustained competitive advantage. I am always thinking of great ways to continue to build on our excellence in delivering this core value but never really know how to implement my visions. Culture is a glue, yip, I totally believe that, but you have to keep on top of it. We used to be all culture in the early days at WebCo UK, but that bubbles over and can run out of control. Now we're much more a mix of culture and process as you have to have systems.

This section investigates two processes that were used to build the strength of WebCo's culture; recruitment and the use of psychometric test that mapped a Webber's career.

6.5.1 The Importance of Recruiting for Cultural-fit

Peter was keen to highlight the importance of recruitment and illustrated the desired characteristics of Webbers,

> At WebCo we have a slightly unusual approach to recruitment – we hire based on attitude rather than core skills, and look for the selection of "suitable souls"'. We want people who are bubbly, show a willingness to learn and who strive for excellence. A lot of people are only interested in money and not interested in their job whereas we want people who are passionate about their job because then you secure their commitment.

WebCo invested heavily in their elaborate and time consuming recruitment process, spending over £100,000 a month on recruiting an average of 12 employees during each month of my ethnography. It is clear that through the recruitment stages, WebCo recruiters attempted to 'scientifically' select only those candidates whose values appeared to be coherent with those of the organization, those that had high levels of person-organization fit.   WebCo's trademarked slogan of Fanatical Support™ was a core organizational value and one that encouraged WebCo recruiters to look for employees that were capable of delivering high levels of customer service; those that were willing to 'go the extra mile'. It was of managerial importance that employees shared and embraced the organizational values, as one recruitment manager, Jenna, commented,

> To embody courtesy, patience, friendliness and empathy…these are our values that we have and look for in employees. We also expect our employees to always act in the customer's best interests.

There was no specific Human Resource department that was responsible for the recruitment of WebCo personnel; instead it was expected that staff members participated in the selection of employees. Webbers commented on their fondness of being able to shape WebCo's future here with one sales team employee stating that,

> Our roles are not confined to just selling, last week, I went to GradRecruit and it was great to be able to contribute to another part of the business. Doing a bit of recruiting was fun and I loved having the opportunity to do things outside of my immediate role. Recruitment is important as it shapes our business and I am proud to have been asked to be a part of it.

The recruitment process had two parts, both of which centred around a series of tests that investigated a candidates passion for delivering customer support. The first was situated off-site, where candidates attended an external graduate assessment centre (GradRecruit). This separate recruitment company had, like WebCo, received many worker satisfaction awards, and at the time of the study, WebCo employees were present for one day a week to fill the aim of hiring 19 more employees in the forthcoming quarter. This represented a 25 percent increase of the workforce in three months. I attended a day at GradRecruit and observed candidates engaging with zero-sum games, creating marketing pitches and delivering a pre-prepared three minute presentation on their key skills. WebCo's focus on empathy and testing candidates to secure a cultural fit can be seen in the following example of one candidate who

decided to give a presentation of 30 seconds duration. An air of intrigue (and surprise) was observed on the part of the recruiters from the truncated speech that included the statement,

> I'm selfish! I know I am, and I believe that this is what makes me a good sales person … I go out there and get the sales and want to beat everyone else!

Eddie (WebCo sales team manager) asked the candidate to explain what it was that made them a selfish individual. Again, ill-prepared, the graduate proceeded to re-word their argument which was listened to with interest by all those present, and one that Eddie later commented on as being 'somewhat limited and un-justified'. Subsequently, Eddie replied and challenged their statement,

> Oh really? I wouldn't have said that you were selfish at all! I mean, you have had what … three weeks to prepare for this presentation and you have just given us a thirty second talk … anyone who is selfish in my book would have prepared well in advance, in an attempt to make the most of what are, probably, the most important three minutes of your day … now would you really say that you are selfish?

Appearing shocked the candidate again regurgitated their previous response. Following the exit of the candidate, their name was removed from the Eddie's list of potential employees while simultaneously he stated,

> They'll [the graduate] do well for themselves … yet not at WebCo. We need someone who shows a greater degree of empathy, someone who will work well in a team, because after all, a team can always bring in much more money than any individual.

The second part of the recruitment process was held on-site and WebCo candidates had two interviews. Following these, the opportunity was given for candidates to work shadow in order to get a sense of and appreciation for what their work would entail. In the interviews, the focus was on finding 'passionate Webbers', those that felt and spoke strongly about a subject. This subject ranged from coffee to sky diving, and it was the innate passion for that topic that was sought. The interviewers followed the 'good cop, bad cop format' in that one would be pleasant and informal, while the other hard, testing and probing. In the latter, recruiters would pose challenging questions that dug deeper into candidate statements with the rationale of placing the interviewee in a dilemma. This was not necessarily directed towards a sought answer as one recruiter stated 'it doesn't matter if they do not have a direct answer; we just want to see them get out of it'. One manager claimed that the

rationale for this was that WebCo employees were in a sales environment that constantly challenged and posed dilemmas. The manager stated, 'if they can remain calm in an interview situation, then this should be a good test for sales'.

One of the common WebCo tests for potential sales employees would be an investigation into the candidates selling skills. The recruiter would typically point to the drinking glasses on the table, and ask the candidate to sell the recruiter 'the glasses on the table'. Sitting in on the interviews, I gained a good sense of what employees were looking for and this is illustrated in the following example where, instead of proceeding to talk about the qualities of the drinking glass on the table, one candidate asked 'which glasses?' as the recruiter had also placed their reading glasses on the table. This candidate was the only one in the recruiter's experience that has not proceeded to launch into the termed 'sales patter'. Instead, the candidate attempted to understand the customers' needs and following clarification from the recruiter that it was indeed the drinking glass, they then asked,

> What would you like from a glass? If it something like the one that is here in front of us, then perhaps we could look to talk further. Although, if you would like another form of glass, then I can always suggest a competitor who will be able to do that for you.

The recruiter was impressed by the candidate's ability to sell in 'The WebCo Way'. These were the sought qualities which directly linked to the way in which WebCo sold its products, in that if potential recruits or even customers are not a 'fit', then the company will not sell to them. As Kiran (a sales team member) stated,

> We are not here to sell things to people that they do not need, we are here to understand the customers' need and if possible, help them achieve their goals.

The on-site candidate interviews were conducted before a tour of the company, and numerous WebCo employees highlighted this opportunity as valuable,

> The opportunity to look around was great as it showed me what it would be like to work there. At the time I was offered two other jobs that paid better than WebCo. I always thought that I would go for the money, but after seeing it there, I was bought in by the culture.

Another employee exhibited a general degree of scepticism towards all organizations and their stated cultures, yet admitted that this was eliminated through the opportunity to visit and talk to WebCo employees,

I was pleased that you got to look around because I am not someone who is easily convinced. I never really trust what people say off the cuff.

The general consensus towards the content of the interviews of WebCo employees was positive with one employee stating that 'it was a good, hard testing interview, being entirely constructive and I really enjoyed it!' Other employees highlighted the challenging and testing nature of the questions, an example of which may be seen below,

They asked me if I was a good listener, so, I proceeded to tell them yes, I am a really good listener, you know, as you do in an interview, but then they shot me down and asked me what their name was! Thankfully I really am a good listener and I remembered otherwise I would have looked a fool!

Peter (UK, MD) believed in the success of the interview in securing a cultural fit and he would always give new recruits the choice to leave once they had joined,

After "Newbies" have been here for a couple of weeks, I have a chat to them individually and offer them a grand [£1000] if they want to get out. The interview process is effective as not one employee has taken the offer and the whole thing serves to recommit them to WebCo as something that is a part of them.

One aspect of the interview that tested this notion of fit was where candidates were given the opportunity to draw a picture. As Peter stated,

We always make up the excuse of a "forgotten five minute telephone call" and ask the potential Webber to draw a picture of something that they are passionate about while they wait for us to return. Their doodles then form the sole basis of the remaining interview as we want to secure passionate employees and can easily channel this into the selling of server space. If they have not drawn anything then they will not make it through to the next round where we use the Gallup Strength Finder. This tool enables us to fit people to the jobs that they are wired for as it highlights their top five strengths and bottom five weaknesses. I am not interested in their weaknesses, we want people to spend every minute of every day doing what they love to do, and what they do best. This way, the amount of micro-management is zero, they enjoy their job and everyone is happy.

6.5.2 The Use of Psychometric Testing for Recruitment and Career Development

The computer administered psychometric test 'The Gallup Strength Finder' used in conjunction with the book 'Now, discover your strengths' (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001) completed the WebCo recruitment process. Here 20 seconds was

allowed for each response to some 180 questions and should a question not be answered, then the default was neutral. 'Gallup's taxonomy of strengths' is located in the book and lists 34 personality traits, ranging from 'achiever' to 'woo' (win others over) that individuals may possess. The candidates' five least and most common traits were calculated and communicated as a result of the test. The test itself presented candidates with many unconnected statements, and the challenge was to position oneself on a Likert scale of five points. A widely held managerial viewpoint is that the test portrays an accurate representation of the individual's personality, for example Peter stated that,

> All of my top five strengths show me to be a creative and innovative person. This is true, as I am known for throwing out a thousand ideas a day, but it's up to these guys [the sales team] to do anything with them.

It appeared that part of the managerial rationale for using the test was to ensure that their claimed strengths and apparent personality were 'true', as one manager stated,

> The personality test is to see if you are bullshitting. We have had people who have been impressive in the interview, and yet the personality test proved otherwise … they were not hired.

The test results for this candidate illustrated traits that contradicted those claimed by the individual and the manager's impression of the candidate. The fact that the manager elected not to hire the candidate emphasized their belief in the psychometric test's accuracy in measuring the candidate's true personality and traits. In addition to the belief in the validity of the test, management also emphasized its use in finding 'WebCo fits', where one manager stated 'at WebCo, we are committed to finding the 'right' people for our organization'.

The 'right' people may have been those candidates that had 'achiever' and 'learner' strengths as 75 percent of all WebCo employees' had these in their top five traits. The 'achiever' strength was one of the traits that was desired for sales and indicated a person who had a desire to complete tasks, whilst the 'learner' trait denoted someone who continually looked to further their knowledge. Employees displaying these values were therefore more likely to be recruited. Employees were encouraged to compare their strengths to others and were issued a sticker listing their individual strengths. This was placed on each employee's computer in order to facilitate this comparison while serving as a constant reminder for employees of their

top five strengths. These were also duplicated on an organizational wall chart where each employee had their strengths listed below a photo of themselves.

The information generated from the 'strengths finder' test was also used as a foundation for future decision making concerning the employees' career development. Once an employee had 'learned the nature of the business in the Q-Team' then management were keen to highlight that they 'fit people to the jobs they are wired'. The use of this tool to support an employees' career progression was central and employees appeared to like the focus on their strengths as one sales team employee stated,

> Peter just lets us get on with it, steering this mightily fun ship full of fanatical support, everyone loves their work as we are able to use our strengths. When we see Peter, he often talks about how we are able to use our strengths in our work and they form the basis of our promotion here so yeah, we do get to do what we do best everyday which is great and looking forward, we can see how we can use our strengths in our WebCo careers.

One employee (Alan, WebCo UK training manager) also illustrated how he had internalized the rank ordering of his strengths and how he used this to organize his work,

> I have been really struggling with a work problem over the last few days for a customer and it has been a hard one to fix. But this morning, when I was in the shower, I realized that I have been trying to fix the problem by using my number one strength as this is my strongest. So I thought, aha, why not use my number two strength instead and there you have it, all day today it has been so much easier and I should have the solution to the customer query by the end of the day.

6.6 Structural Factors of Autonomy and Rewards: The Importance of Context in Building a Successful Culture

This section notes how the structural conditions at WebCo facilitated the creation of a strong cultural milieu during the time of the first research period. This section details the relationship with WebCo US and the desire for employees to buy into the opportunity to build the organization (including the opportunities that they were given to do so with high levels of autonomy). It concludes by noting the generous rewards that were offered for successful employees.

6.6.1   Building the Culture, Together

Peter frequently referred to his relationship with WebCo US as 'extremely hands off' and noted how this enabled him to have the autonomy to build his own organization,

> We are like a little satellite and I pretty much receive carte blanche from the guys in the States, it is really like "go out and see if you can make some money", and as we are delivering this, they just leave me alone.

Peter would report through the sales figures once a month to the WebCo US President and it appeared that the working relations were strong between these managers. Not once during my first research period did members from the US office visit and it did not appear to shape the relationships for employees at WebCo,

> Oh yeah, the US office, well… we don't have too much to do with them and so I guess we don't think about them at all. I mean, we work for Peter and are all keen to build our organization here in the UK and that's kind of it really. (Francessca, AM)

The above quotation was representative of all employees at WebCO where employees would talk fondly of their passion of being a part of building an exciting organization,

> It is great, we are all on board and have a super opportunity to scale this wonderful place. Having just graduated from Uni, it is no different for me really apart from the fact that I get paid for doing this! (Alyssia, Q-Team)

> We are like an ever growing family and just like that, we look after eachother, working away to preserve what we have here as it is special. It is no bother if we have to work later, come in on weekends as we do it out of our own choice, I mean, why wouldn't you want to be a part of this, we are making history here and to be a part of that is a joy. I want to stay here forever and who knows, when I retire, we'll be massive. (Suzie, BDC)

It was clear that employees were devoted to working at WebCo and their levels of discretionary effort were high in order to build the organization. Opportunities to do so were also given from Peter who was aware of how to manage Graduates,

> Our employees are not only bright and keen individual but importantly, they get it, so I do not need to micro-manage them, they wouldn't be here if they were not a real Webber and so I simply give them the space and freedom to build who and what we are… and they do a great job of it too.

An example of this can be seen in the following example where a recently recruited Q-Team employee was given the autonomy and funding to realize a proposed idea into a permanent feature in the WebCo office,

> I love the fact that any idea that we have is considered and so I thought it would be a great to have an ideas board to showcase the many thoughts that

we have. So without asking anyone, I went online to Staples [a stationary provider] and put a massive whiteboard and some marker pens on expenses and there it is [she points to the whiteboard which was to the right of the Q-Team].

We then walked over to the 'Ideas Bulb' which had a drawing of a light-bulb in the top corner embossed at its base with Fanatical Support™. On the whiteboard were three colums, the first a designated area where Post-It™ notes with employee suggestions could be placed. The second colum was split into two parts; the top half of the board had a green background and represented an idea that was to be taken forward; the lower half was red and managers would attach a note to the suggested Post-It™ that detailed why the idea was not being taken forward. Any idea that made it through to the third colum had been implemented and a variety of either pictures or managerial notes that illustrated how and where this had been taken forward were there for employees to see. As can be seen in the following two quotations, Webbers enjoyed the opportunity to create 'their' organization,

> Our "Ideas Bulb" is great, whatever you think of you can put up there and it is always looked into. I have suggested small things like those lovely clicky pencils as my degree was in Art and I prefer to write with these, two days later, there you have it, I have different coloured ones on my desk, great!

> What is great about the "Ideas Bulb" is that you can see our ideas being taken forward and you are free to write whatever you want. Managers always write something to say 'yeay' or 'ney' and nearly all of the ideas are implemented so the organization is ours. Where ideas do not get put through, this is usually because management have already thought of it and so they then get to tell us what exciting things we have to look forward to if we have not already heard!

Peter would also introduce incentives for employees to have voice in the shaping of the organization. As soon as Webbers started, Peter would give them a welcome present that took the form of a 'black book'. He would ask employees to keep a diary of things that they thought were 'rubbish' and to jot down any ideas from their previous employers that could help WebCo or processes that were more successfully implemented by their competitors. Employees were also encouraged to make a note of anything that they did not understand and these would be shared in their monthly meeting with Peter,

> I love to meet up with new Webbers once a month for their first six months and to ask them all what is in their diary. All of them can see things that we can do better and I then give them the opportunity to "fix it". It is a project for them to own and we give them whatever they need to make it happen.

> Anything that costs less than £100 to fix, we'll we just expect that they go ahead, chucking the cost on expenses. (Peter, UK MD)

Newly recruited Webbers enjoyed this opportunity to contribute to the organization and the contact with their MD,

> How great is it that not only do we get to see our super MD all of the time, but you also are given the autonomy to go and fix things that you think are holding our company back. We are in a position to really make a difference and together, that enables us to deliver Fanatical Support™ to our customers.

This section has noted the large degree of freedom that was offered to WebCo employees in order to contribute to their work and the organizational culture. The following section notes the high level of autonomy that workers also enjoyed in the work itself and also the considerable level of rewards for those that succeeded.

6.6.2 The Importance of Autonomy and Rewarding Success

The level of autonomy given to employees at WebCo was high and an intentional strategy of Peter,

> Everyone here wants to be here and so, I just shape the environment in which they can thrive. Webbers are our business and everyone is keen to build WebCo so I know not to trample on their creativity and goodwill. Instead, I prefer to reward it handsomely so that we all move forward positively. (Peter, UK MD)

This section will offer examples from each work team and demonstrate how Peter's management style manifested itself through various work practices and reward structures. The approach of the Q-Team manager (Charlottte) was relaxed and fun loving. Charlotte would always empower her team to self-manage all aspects of their work through open communication channels. If they needed any form of training, then employees noted her approachable style,

> Charlotte is great, she gives us the freedom to get on with our work and gives us lots of positive support to achieve our goals. She is always there if we need to ask her anything and cares so much about WebCo that we give our all to the job. (Ben, Q-Team)

Charlotte gave her team the autonomy to organize their annual leave themselves and would always try to be as accommodating as possible as she believed that 'these guys work hard and they need a break, so as long as I have the cover, then

it is fine by me ... they can take it'. The individual Q-Team target was five leads a day and if they hit 25 qualified leads a week, then they would receive a bonus of £100. Incoming calls were to be answered within three rings and I noticed how Q-Team employees would always race to pick up the phone and then smile to their surrounding team members as their number of leads was linked to a performance bonus. Indeed, Q-Teamers would often stick out their tongue to their slower peers or do a celebratory dance upon answering the call. However, this competitive edge and game playing was sometimes balanced by instances where, when certain Q-Team employees were falling behind target, others would let them answer the incoming calls. The typical response was a mimed 'thank you' from the in-call employee. The send of camaraderie between members was therefore high and they were allowed to organize their work amongst themselves. Once a week Charlotte would print off the live-chats of five Q-Teamers' and these would be discussed in the 'Lead of the Week'. During this meeting, five members of the team would evaluate the anonymized leads in terms of their spelling, professionalism and how they dealt with the customer in order to secure and qualify the lead. Being present at one of these sessions, it appeared to reinforce what it was to be a successful Q-Teamer and it further served as a training tool for new recruits. The winner of the 'Lead of the Week' received another reward and was given £25 in Amazon vouchers. This lead, along with the others that met the qualification criteria, was then passed on to a member of the relevant Linux or Windows sales team.

Members of the sales team also spoke of their autonomy to manage their own workload and of the substantial bonuses that they received if target was hit. Sales team employees would build up a 'pipeline' of future sales whereby, if the customer accepted the proposed solution via e-mail, then this was deemed 'a sale'. Sales team members had the autonomy to decide when to call the customer and prompt them to close the sale. As such, they were able to organize their pipelines in order to meet their monthly targets. Indeed, the team often said that they were 'Zeros to Heroes' when their monthly target was reset at the end of each month and they then had 30/31 days to assume the status of a hero in achieving their target. In terms of the game playing of sales team employees in becoming a hero, many would resist confirming any 'big deals' until the start of the next month. They viewed these as 'bankers' or 'cushions' to which they could then add further deals and reach their targets.

Typically, a week before the month end, sales employees would e-mail reminders to their potential customers in order to secure the deals before their number of sales were reset.

The last day of the month was marked for the differences in sales team members' attitudes. While those that had hit their target would relax and continue to build up their pipeline for the following month, others that were close to their target would appear to be more harassed. Encouraged by the e-mails of management that showed how close to target they were, sales team employees would often be in the office until midnight in order to hit their target, closing sales for firms that were located in a different time zone. Hitting target was well rewarded and because of this, sales employees were more reluctant than Q-Teamers in passing over 'big deals' to others. However, I was able to observe two occasions where deals were traded. One sales team member was close to making target and earning one of the end-of-month trips and on the last day of the month, their potential client decided to choose another hosting provider. The reward for those that hit target in that month was a weekend shopping trip to New York, and as this employee was born in Richmond County, he wanted to make his target and was able to thanks to the generosity of his colleagues who gave accounts from their secured pipeline in order for him to make target.

Other events for those that hit target included a weekend away racing tanks and a day trip to Monaco. The largest incentive that was offered upon hitting target was attendance at the golf away day. Here, in addition to spending the day at Stockley Park golf course with a free lunch, there was the 'golden hole' competition where a designated spot was identified on the putting green of the 18th hole, and the employee who got the closest to potting one ball would receive £10,000. Ultimately, through their telephone conversations with potential customers and their selling of the company in terms of its levels of Fanatical Support™, the aim of sales team members was to secure the sale and to meet their individual targets. They would then assign each client to an Account Manager (AM).

AMs did not experience the same level of monetary rewards given the nature of their work which was to provide on-going support for their clients. They did

however appear to enjoy the freedom that was given to do so and they appreciated being able to make a difference to their clients,

> We do not have the money of the sales guys, but that I think that our job is more fulfilling. We are left alone to look after our own clients and so you form a much better relationship with them as opposed to the sales guys who wouldn't ever speak to them again. Peter lets us manage our clients as we see fit and if you want to send them a card or little present for their anniversary with us or their birthday, then we just do it and claim it back on expenses. This way, we can get a personal relationship going with our clients who are really our friends. (Mick, AM)

The Techs in WebCo also enjoyed a high level of ownership over their workload if not the financial rewards of the sales employees. Termed the organization's 'secret sauce' by Peter, these highly qualified internet hosting technicians were able to organize their time between the sales office (two days a week) and the data centre (three days a week) where all of the clients' data were securely stored. Techs were able to swap shifts between themselves in order to 'make it work' and would frequently step in at the last minute for employees who were unable to make their weekend shift (where one day was required every six weeks). As Dave stated,

> We get a lot of space to do what we have to do which is just as well as there is quite a lot! I love it here and we make it work between us. The guys are always happy to swap shifts should something come up and all of our jobs get done nice and smoothly between us. We get paid to keep everything up-and-running which therefore gives our customers what they want, internet uptime and Fanatical Support™.

The final group of WebCo employees were Business Development Consultants (BDCs). These Webbers also appeared to enjoy their given autonomy over their workload with established members stating that 'we are the face of WebCo to our clients and so support them in whichever way possible'. BDCs would organize their own diaries, scheduling in visits to meet up with their external clients and they would also invite these customers to WebCo where following a tour of the organization, they would take them out for lunch, which would again be put on WebCo's expenses. BDCs would work long hours but the level of rewards for successful BDCs were considerable. As one AM put it, 'you can tell when the BDCs have come in by counting the number of Porsches in the car park'. Indeed, BDCs would regularly take home in excess of £100,000 a year and as their commission was

linked to sales, one BDC did confess to buying their Porsche Boxster (a sports car worth over £30,000) out of two of their monthly commission bonuses.

6.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has analyzed the successful management of WebCo's organizational culture at the time of the first research period. It commenced by detailing the charismatic leadership of Peter and his passion for delivering Fanatical Support™ in every aspect of customer service. The chapter has noted how this was effective in securing employee engagement and how Peter's active attempts of managing organizational culture were welcomed by employees. The distinctive methods of the use of magic, singing and cuddle time resonated with employees and fostered a strong organizational culture; one united by the delivery of customer service excellence. This chapter has also demonstrated how Peter was also aware of the need to systematically link active culture management strategies within embedded structural systems. The importance attached to recruiting employees that were a WebCo 'fit' has been analyzed in this chapter and the implications for organizational culture noted. One part of the recruitment process, the Strength Finder tool, also formed an important role in mapping employee' career development and employee belief in this metric as a useful practice has been noted.

In addition to analyzing the more bespoke culture management provisions and Peter's charismatic culture-led leadership, the chapter then focussed on detailing the wider conditions that appeared to be appropriate for the creation of this strong cultural milieu. Specifically, both the structural and material conditions of work facilitated the management of culture during this time period. To demonstrate this, the high level of autonomy from each team of WebCo employees was noted where Webbers were able to shape the conditions of their work. In addition, the considerable rewards that were given for high performing employees have been detailed. The implications of this chapter seem to suggest that the combination between the cultural and structural managerial techniques was effective in ensure a strong organizational culture. The next chapter considers the empirical data from the second research period. In doing so, it uncovers many differences to those that were presented in this chapter where employees appeared to have become dis-engaged by the second research period.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CULTURE V STRUCTURE: BUREAUCRACY, A LEADERSHIP CHANGE AND 'POOR WORK'

7.1 Introduction

We'll do the numbers but can we keep the values…? (Duncan, Sales Manager)

This chapter is based on data from the second period of research and it commences by detailing the introduced formal methods of organizational culture management. Employee' reflections on the managerial attempts at managing the organizational culture in the second research period are then noted. Importantly, the longitudinal nature of the research allowed for a comparison of the opinions of employees who were present and interviewed at both research periods. We learn that the established Webbers who 'bought in' to the organizational culture at the first research period, appeared to be dis-engaged by the second research period. The chapter explains the reasons that account for this change in employee response to the normative attempts of control at WebCo and then illustrates the structural and managerial factors that accounted for this shift in perception. The increase in control through the introduction of the Net Promoter Score® (NPS®) and Economic Value Added (EVA) is then evaluated, with the latter noting the significance of the reduction in employee celebratory awards. The impact of a leadership change is also analyzed and the handling of this controversial departure detailed before the negative outcomes of the Account Management pay review team are discussed. This chapter concludes by noting the lack of career progression opportunity for WebCo employees and how this also contributed to disgruntled employees.

7.2 The Bureaucratization of Culture Management

At the time of the second period of research, 180 employees worked in the WebCo UK office. The office was located in the same business park as the previous year, although in 2006 it was the sole occupier in a bigger building. The similarities to the first period of research in terms of office layout were clear. The national flags of employees remained; the games room was located towards the back of the office, and employees had the choice of playing table tennis or the many Playstation Three

games. A change to the office was the introduction of the 'Hard Rack Café'. This unofficial take on the Hard Rock Café (replacing the 'Rock' with 'Rack' – to signify the racks of servers in the data centre) had bold neon lights, and occupied the light and airy front corner of the office space, with a view into the business park. It provided communal eating space, free employee breakfast, drinks and food heating facilities. An explanation for this new café was given by one member of senior management:

> We needed something that would bring the workers together, now they can have breakfast, lunch and dinner together there if they want and this creates bonds between our Webbers. We provide free breakfasts as studies in the paper showed us that people are more productive if they have eaten in the morning, also, people do tend to chat together at breakfast and they come in earlier too so we may eke out a few more minutes work too … it [the 'free' breakfast] pays for itself.

By the time of the second period of research, the themed days had diversified and become more frequent, routinized events. The rationale for these themed days remained a way of reinforcing the organizational culture and the diversification brought a corporate barbeque on one day of each month, 'back to school days' every other Friday and notably, 'chav day'. This day would coincide with the organization's open book meetings and would run on alternate months to the aforementioned 'Hawaiian shirt days'. Prizes were given for the 'best dressed fanatical chav', and those short listed were asked to either dance or 'do a Chav rap' in order to win this award. Management would also issue tattoos for employees to wear during the day and the majority of employees would affix these temporary tattoos to their faces or arms. Managers too wore these tattoos that had the organizational values written on them, or a picture of John's (the new UK Managing Director) face. One senior manager highlighted the rationale for the tattoos: 'they [the tattoos] always go down well with new starters, they think that it is fun and they love seeing John walking around with a tattoo of himself on his cheek. They [the tattoos] are great as they are inexpensive but reinforce our 'WebCo Way' generating buy-in to our culture'.

Once a quarter, the founders of WebCo would fly over from the American headquarters to give a talk to the new employees (Rookies) in the UK branch. I was

present at one of these hour long presentations that detailed the past developments of the business. I was able to speak with the two founders following their talk and what was clear was that they were aware of culture management textbooks. They also drew references to many a Harvard Business Review article. They talked of their interest in keeping informed about the practitioner literature (and also some academic work) in the areas of management, organizational cultures and growth. Their knowledge of these areas was clear from the way that their talk was organized. The two founders began talking to the Rookies about how they met each other at University, and how they wanted to start a business. Following an 'ideas shower', web hosting was at the top of their list of the 'ways of making quick money' and the organization started in their garage. They explained to their audience how the name of the company was thought of when one of them was brushing their teeth, and that initially, they thought of web hosting as 'plumbing for the internet, it is not sexy or exciting'.

The Rookies learned that it was a negative customer comment that led the founders to develop the core organizational value of Fanatical Support™. This customer had experienced data loss and one of the founders stood up in the garage and said, 'we can't keep on like this, we need to be fanatical!' This founder then informed the group how this value of Fanatical Support™ soon became the company slogan, where customers responded to it, and it guided the business decisions through focussing on service delivery. To emphasize what it is to be fanatical, many stories from past 'WebCo heroes' were recounted. These included one employee who worked through the night to ensure that a particular server was initiated before the start of business the following day, and a member of the sales team who 'went the extra mile' by sending one of their customers a birthday card.

As we have seen in this section, management continued to engage in attempts to manage the organizational culture through symbols, myths and corporate rituals. The next section introduces the viewpoints of established employees on WebCo as an employer and stark contrasts are found compared to the first research period.

7.3 Keeping the Religion?

What was apparent in the second research period was an increased scepticism and an awareness of the attempts of management to control the organizational culture and the motives behind this. As one employee with three years service stated,

> There are a lot of people coming in, and if you don't know the history, and if you are not in the management meetings, then you don't know that it is being enforced ... The management are super smart about it, people buy into WebCo as is a great place to work, they are happy, it has a good vibe - it is not boring, you know, you get a games room, flags on the ceiling, wow, but it is a way of getting the most out of you.

Furthermore, another established employee stated that,

> Last time you were here [2005] the reason why we worked here was due to the culture, we felt it, we live and breathed it, now ... well it feels imposed and I don't think that it can be a management initiative that is directed down on the staff.

Such levels of employee awareness of the culture management attempts and their views of it as a control mechanism were not found in the previous study (2005). Furthermore, established employees had become disgruntled by the active management of symbolic cultural manifestations, and this also reflected their lack of felt appreciation for the duration of their organizational service. As one sales team member commented,

> The problem now is what they are trying to do is force culture on people, new people love it, they eat it up, but others … you kind of look at them and they are going are like "what?" … I have always argued culture is great, but don't equate it with Hawaiian shirts, you know, "you're disengaged as you are not wearing a Hawaiian shirt at work" ... No! I am not actually, or if I am for the meantime and I have been here long enough, Jesus, give me the respect.

Similarly, another established employee highlighted their frustration with the incessant symbolic focus of culture management. In the below quotation, this Tech noted the inconsistencies in the application of culture management techniques, where there appears to be a different understanding of the term Fanatical Support™,

> I had once been at work overnight for twelve hours. My shift is only eight but I stayed on to help out a customer. As I was still about the following morning, I thought that I would just stay for the Hawaiian shirt open book before heading home for some sleep. I didn't have my Hawaiian stuff with me and after that meet I was pulled aside and told by management that I was not

fanatical... I mean fuck off! What would they rather, me doing a twelve hour day with four hours free overtime or for me to wear a fucking t-shirt?

This example is typical of those that relate to managerial inconsistencies with the management of organizational values. Such instances have led established employees to express a reduced level of attachment to the organizational values, and also served to highlight the attempts of management to control the organizational culture. Similarly, established employees appeared to draw a greater distinction between their time at work, and their leisure time. This is illustrated in their thoughts on the corporate away days. Such events were managerially led opportunities that would give employees the opportunity to socialize together, outside of work. These events aimed at sustaining the organizational culture, yet established employees highlighted their clear work-life boundaries, and a recent lack of desire to attend such away days. Such employees also noted how the away days are an extension of work and a further means of culture management. As one employee stated,

> I am less inclined to go to the WebCo events now … I used to love them, I used to be devastated if I couldn't make it, I would want to move the days that I was doing stuff so that I could make it, they were like a big thing and now…it is like ohhh ... not again, it is just work really!

This section has illustrated the greater enforcement of the WebCo culture and the awareness that established employees had developed of the symbolic attempts of management to introduce cultural manifestations that attempted to sustain the core organizational values. The following sections also combine to provide the rationale for such disgruntled employees and the first notes the introduction of EVA and accordingly, the dramatic reduction in celebratory rewards.

7.4 The Introduction of Economic Value Added and Reduction in Celebratory Rewards

Noted earlier in this chapter, the introduction of a 'free' employee breakfast and of the use of inexpensive tattoos as attempts to reinforce the organizational culture were calculated as a form of cost/benefit analysis in order to deliver a return on investment. Both examples were used in WebCo US and the new MD for WebCo UK followed by implementing them in the UK branch. It was apparent in the second research period

that WebCo US had a greater influence over the UK office. In 2006, the UK office was a fifth of the size of the US headquarters, yet they were responsible for generating a third of all corporate revenue. As one employee stated,

> We used to be this little satellite, like "go out and see if you can make some money", but now we have become too important for them, our number is too big and we are no longer a boil on their back.

The rationale for the increasing involvement of WebCo US is partly financial, but also an attempt to exercise greater organizational control. This section will detail employees' thoughts on the increasing US domination in considering both aspects. The business metrics of EVA had been enforced on the UK office from the US headquarters, and it conceptualized WebCo gain where the cost of the capital employed is less than the return that it generates. EVA appeared to have become a central driver of what was considered to be important in WebCo, and established employees noted the change to this new economic rationale,

> The organization itself has changed, now... every decision is based on EVA, everything is focussed on money, people who haven't had the experience of older Webbers wouldn't see it, but now everything has to be costed.

Many established employees commented on how this focus has impacted on the events that aimed to sustain the organizational culture. The following example is from a sales team member,

> Before, if we hit target it was a big event, so exciting and it was so much fun and I used to really look forward to the end of the quarter to find out where we were going, we used to do really cool stuff, stuff that we wouldn't necessarily have been able to do ourselves as we would never have been able to afford it, things like having a capsule on the London eye, but now ... it is like "well we might go out and you might get a drink token", it is all due to EVA.

Similarly, another sales team employee highlighted the change,

> We used to go to nice restaurants on St Martin's Lane, but last time we went to Nando's chicken and I overheard our manager saying that he was pleased because he got change from the budget ... that is not the WebCo I know.

The above quotations illustrate the impact of the curtailing of the UK's expenditure by the American headquarters. They appear to highlight the impact of the managerial attempts that aimed to sustain organizational cultures, where staff appeared to be

more motivated when the cultural rewards were more elaborate. This could indicate an inconsistency between managerial and employee' definitions of the organizational culture. In addition, it could denote lower levels of attachment to organizational culture and simply represent the employees' preference for free social occasions.

The change in focus towards EVA also appears to have limited the amount of established employee discretionary effort. The opportunity for employees to contribute to their work has been reduced through the removal of certain organizational incentives. As one established sales team member stated,

> The other day I had the idea of putting up photos from the last company social, but I can't go through with the idea as they won't give me the money ... All I need is a couple of whiteboards and some magnets, but they won't give it to me ... In the old days you would have just bought the boards and put it on expenses ... and made a difference, now ... well it is up to them.

This section has noted how the dominance of WebCo US appears to have led to a reduction of expenditure for culturally reinforcing activities, and it has shown how this has impacted negatively on the established employees. Employees expressed feeling less attached as a consequence, and that they attached importance to the grandeur of the culturally enhancing activities. As one employee succinctly expressed, 'we are all greedy buggers and we want them to spend lots of money on us and now that they don't we hate it!'

7.5 The Net Promoter Score®

Another increase in the control of WebCo workers involved the changes to employee performance management that had been introduced between the first and second research period as a result of rapid organizational growth. We will learn how such continued rapid rates of growth of the London branch led WebCo US to increasingly standardize its global performance measures. In doing so, the heightened influence of WebCo US over the UK branch is reflected in their introduction of the greater surveillance of employee performance through the Net Promoter Score® (NPS®). This performance measure exemplified the decreased levels of customer

satisfaction with their received levels of Fanatical Support™ and hence, illustrated and reified the reduction in employee delivery on this core cultural value.

To address the claimed ineffectiveness of customer satisfaction surveys, Reichheld (2006) introduced the NPS® in his bestselling book 'The Ultimate Question' as a metric that claims to move customers beyond satisfaction to true loyalty through attempting to help solve organizational growth dilemmas. The practitioner orientated book suggests that the one question of 'How likely is it that you would recommend WebCo to a friend or colleague?' provides a rigorous measure of an organization's performance in the eyes of its clients, that it clarifies the link between the quality of a company's customer relationships and its growth prospects, and that it holds employees accountable for the correct treatment of customers while creating 'communities of passionate advocates that stimulate innovation and growth' (Reichheld, 2006: 10).

The objective of the NPS® is to turn customers into 'promoters' who generate good profits and true, sustainable growth. It is argued that promoters are those customers who are less likely to defect from the organization and hence have more profitable and longer term relationships. Promoters are also claimed to be less price sensitive, as they believe that they are getting good value for money from the overall company, and to increase their purchases more rapidly than detractors as they are more likely to consolidate more of their purchases with their favourite supplier. Promoters are also deemed to bring cost efficiencies through consuming less customer service resource and through their lower customer acquisition costs owing to their longer duration of relationships and their role as referral generators. It is argued by Reichheld that 80-90% of positive referrals come from promoters, while detractors are responsible for 80-90% of the negative word of mouth comments.

Reichheld (2006) suggests that the responses to 'the ultimate question' are based on a ten-point Likert scale with answers of nine and ten being classified as promoters, a score of seven or eight being passive and any customers that give a six or below are viewed as detractors. The percentage of detractors is then subtracted from the percentage of promoters to obtain the NPS®. The following quotation is taken

from the Net Promoter® website and it provides a context of what is considered to be a good promoter score.

> Companies with the most efficient growth engines operate at NPS® efficiency ratings of 50 to 80%. But the average firm sputters along at an NPS® efficiency of only 5 to 10%. In other words, Promoters barely outnumber Detractors. Many firms — and some entire industries — have negative Net Promoter Scores, which means that they are creating more Detractors than Promoters day in and day out. (See www.netpromoter.com)

Additional questions such as 'What is the primary reason for the score you just gave us?' and 'What is the most important improvement that would make you rate us closer to ten' are also suggested to be beneficial as it offers the customer the opportunity for corrective feedback where organizations can contact their clients in order to better understand their disappointment.

George (a management consultant who worked for one day a week in the WebCo office) introduced this metric in 2005 and he had since passed ownership of this to Leanne. As WebCo's customer experience manager, it was Leanne's role to issue and calculate the NPS® through analyzing the customer responses to the ultimate question and the additional questions via the quarterly on-line customer surveys. Leanne would then follow up on the negative customer responses and look at the individual performance of the AMs, Techs and BDCs in generating promoters. In this sense, she was able to hold Webbers responsible for their levels of customer service. Leanne noted that detractors (customers who gave a score of six or below) were always 'blown away' when she called them in order to find out more about their problems.

In the first two completed surveys that fell in-between my research periods, WebCo were the industry leaders having NPS® efficiencies of over 85. However, during the second research period, another set of results were released and the NPS® efficiencies had halved from the previous score of over 85 to 42. While this result remained above the industry average (which at that time of research was negative), it was clear that Webbers were not performing at their previous levels and upholding the core cultural value of 'Fanatical Support™ in all we do that creates customer experiences that generate recommendations'. Speaking with established WebCo employees, they expressed a belief in the accuracy of the NPS® score where they felt

it was a true reflection of the levels of fanaticism surrounding the overall customer support. This chapter continues to account for the reasons that have led to this lowering of employee and therefore customer satisfaction. Should employees receive low NPS® and negative feedback from their customers, then the practice of surveillance involved a meeting with Leanne. As one employee noted 'if you get lots of negative comments in one quarter, then the chat with Leanne is fairly informal, I have heard that things get a little more serious if this continues to the next quarter though, and should this go on into the next, then, well… good luck!!'. This greater surveillance of employee performance has therefore, exacerbated the pressure for them to perform and this has reduced their levels of work satisfaction.

7.6 A Leadership Change

This section details how the change in leadership at WebCo UK has resulted in lower levels of established employee engagement with the organizational culture. The established Webbers' view of the previous Managing Director (MD), Peter, was one that was seen to be synonymous with the organizational culture. Furthermore, we will see how his controversial departure appeared to have left the established employees with a vacuous sense of the organizational culture as Peter's replacement was unable to reinforce it with the same passion.

Peter was the first Managing Director of WebCo UK, and was hired in the year 2001. He has since left the organization. As was detailed in Chapter 6.2, every employee that had worked for Peter spoke fondly of him, with many stating that he was an 'inspirational and visionary leader' (see Siegel, 1998). Peter's centrality to the organizational culture is illustrated at length in the following quotation from an established Account Manager,

> I remember what happened a few years ago when the customer excellence award people came in to see how well we were doing … they asked Ciara "what would happen if Peter left WebCo?" Apparently, her face just dropped and she had no idea what to say, she was like "oh, um, ergh, not quite sure on that one I am sure that someone from the US would fly over and it would be fine" … but apparently, that was one of the things that we severely fell down on because basically they thought that Peter was WebCo! And they were right … if you lose an inspirational leader in any organization you are going to feel it.

Duncan (sales manager) also commented on the importance of Peter as a figurehead of the organizational culture,

> This year we need a spectacular Christmas party to boost the culture, just so that everyone thinks "ok, Peter has gone, but we are still spending money and looking after staff".

Peter left WebCo under controversial circumstances which are explained by Julia, an established sales employee,

> We had a week where we didn't know where Peter was, we knew something was up on the Friday because the senior managers kept going to the window to look at the car park. Then suddenly, Gina [Peter's partner who worked in WebCo] was taken into a room, we could see her crying and then she didn't come back to work. A week later, Gina turns up again and she is back at her desk. That Friday, we got told that Peter was on permanent leave and John was the new MD. Well, there was a lot of crying that Friday, but they had orchestrated it so that the WebCo Olympics happened on the same day, we had ice creams, games of tug of war, free food and they really tried to make it a fun day, they did orchestrate it very well and even Stewart (WebCo Chairman) came over to make a speech. We know that they sacked Peter because of Gina, Stewart didn't like it at all, I also think it was something to do with the fact that the US wanted to have the power, as Peter wasn't one to just roll over and implement what they said.

Julia draws our attention to the active attempts of WebCo management at minimizing the impact of Peter's departure. In interviews with other WebCo employees, it appeared that its controversial and mis-managed nature served to underline his previous standing at the company. The quotation also highlights the increasing domination of the WebCo US and their desire to gain increased control of the UK office which itself brought certain tensions for established employees. As Clara, an established sales team member stated: 'I hate a man in America making a decision about my life and not actually understanding the culture and why things are why they are like what they are'.

It would appear that the established employee appreciation for the values has been diluted through the increasing control of WebCo US. It was the US headquarters that appointed Peter's replacement, John. Simon (another established Webber) reinforced the desire WebCo US to shape and co-ordinate the UK division,

> John? This is the man that was a tech when I started at WebCo. He has never been a fantastic manager, he has got results, but I don't like his style of management. He has always been too focussed on money. He is getting

better on what he says and how he says it, but still … He also doesn't quite get the culture, he thinks it is wacky, it is not wacky, it is fun … Oh and open book meetings, they were fun and natural with Peter, now they are so humiliating, we have to watch him trying to get the new starters to sing a song or tell a joke, it is so awkward!

This quotation expresses the impact that John has had on the meaning that established employees derived from the rituals of organizational culture. Furthermore, it raises possible insights into the rationale for John's selection as MD. Namely, his capacity to realize results and his focus on capping financial expenditure. This is further explored in the chapter eight.

Since Peter's departure, WebCo management attempted to remove any manifestations that would remind employees of his previous employment. This was a key point of tension for the established employees who had worked for Peter. For example, I remember entering the office early one Friday and the established employees were angry at the removal of all organizational photographs that featured Peter. This had been done overnight. In addition, Peter was never mentioned in any meeting, informal conversation or any of the culture management sessions that I attended.

This section has illustrated that in the minds of established Webbers, the previous WebCo UK MD personified the organizational culture. Due to his departure from the business, established employees seemed to derive less meaning from the culturally specific symbols that he created. As such, the manifestations of organizational culture appeared to have less resonance for these employees who had become detached from the organization. The managerial attempts to mask his departure were also noted by established employees who appeared to have become more knowledgeable about the culture management; a factor that has also led to their lower levels of workplace satisfaction. The following section notes another episode of poor management at the second research period.

7.7 The Need for Higher Pay?

In the first research period, employees did not talk about their dissatisfaction with the level of remuneration that they received. However, pay appeared to be a key issue for employees at WebCo in the second research period. Throughout my many

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conversations with Webbers in 2006, it became apparent that WebCo was then renowned in the hosting industry for being 'a low payer', typically paying between 20 and 30 percent less than their competitors for equivalent job roles. During my research in 2006, it was clear that management had a different ideology of remuneration at WebCo than the employees. While managers would proclaim that, 'people don't work here for the cash, they work here for our culture', employees commented on how 'WebCo is meant to be the 6th best company in the FT top companies to work for, they want the best staff, the most fanatical in the industry, so why don't they pay us like the 6th best company should?' These different viewpoints illustrated how the managers were of the view that the WebCo pay is substituted by other forms of reward, while the employees considered it to be inconsistent with what they would term a 'good company'.

Employees frequently spoke of how their expectations on the level of remuneration were unmet given their respect for the firm as a good employer. Another difference between the management and employee viewpoints is given in the example where in an open book meeting, John (the UK MD) referred to his workers not as employees, but as 180 volunteers. This immediately met with surprised expressions on those 'volunteers' who were sitting next to me. At the end of the meeting, I remained in the Hard Rack Café with some AM employees and they were discussing John's statement,

> 180 volunteers, *what* is he on! People *do* work for money, come on, 99 percent of us wouldn't be here if we weren't being paid! [Emphasis added] (Katharine, AM)

> I know, especially in London, you can't live if you don't earn a decent wage, he may not come into work for money but to think of us as volunteers, well it is a far away dream, money is such a prime motivator for us being here and we don't get enough of it. (Julie, AM)

7.7.1 The Account Management Pay Contradiction

We all live by the values and the management team don't!(Eric, Account Manager)

The comparatively low levels of WebCo pay had the greatest impact for AM employees who were the lowest paid workers in the organization. Due to the opportunities for bonuses for Q-Team staff who, in the organizational hierarchy were located below AMs, many established AM employees stated that they had earned less money in every year that they had worked at WebCo. They explained that although their base rate of pay is higher than the 'Q-Teamers', the opportunity for bonuses was removed at AM level and hence, their 'take home' salary had been annually reduced. This alone led some workers to decide to leave which brought both resource and financial implications,

> At the moment we are losing AMs for the money … Our competitors are getting wise to the fact that they can offer them an awful lot more money and they will go … 'cos essentially it [an AM position with a WebCo competitor] is the same role but just five to ten grand more in their back pocket … we really cannot afford for this to continue because for each AM that we lose it costs us £60,000 to £120,000 to replace in terms of training and also we won't have any AMs left. (Alan, training manager)

In this sense, the loss of AMs could be explained by the well-rehearsed argument that pay is a key indicator of an employee's worth. However, in the second research period and during my time in the WebCo office, I became aware of other intangible tensions between the AM team and the rest of the organization. Spending an average of ten hours on each of my days in the office, I was able to detect a sense that the AMs were somewhat separate and distanced from other work groups. For instance, AMs would refer to the partition wall that separated them from the sales department as 'The Great Wall of China'. Similarly, at the July open book meeting, Anne, the then recently recruited AM Manager, played a video about the role of an AM to all employees who were gathered in the Hard Rack Café. Filmed by Ian (AM), the five-minute video clip had been made the night before in the otherwise empty office. It commenced by showing some AMs who, although their telephones would be ringing, would either be reading magazines with their feet up on their desk, or asleep at their workstations. Following the meeting, I joined Ian and Anne who were going for lunch together and I spoke to them about the rationale for the clip. They informed me that their intention was to change the Webbers' perceptions of the AM team away from one that was apathetic, un-fanatical and full of 'slacking employees that commanded little respect'. The video was full of sarcasm and was well received by other WebCo employees.

I decided to explore the department in greater detail and having learned of the low levels of AM pay (largely due to their lack of commission structures) and their lack of respect within the organization, our attention will now turn to the introduction of an incentive that played a significant role in explaining the AMs' negative attitude towards WebCo as an employer in the second research period.

7.7.2 The Pay Review Team

This incentive involved an empowered group of AMs (the pay review team) who conducted an investigation into their level of remuneration. This attempt at addressing the AM team's unhappiness with their pay levels was introduced by Leanne when she occupied the position of AM manager. Leanne had been recruited into WebCo during the period of growth since my first research study and although she sat on the same desk as me, not once did she speak of the AM pay review team disaster that this section details, even though I had probed for information. Instead, during her interview and day-to-day interactions, Leanne preferred to talk of her passion for her new role of customer experience manager and why she preferred to be customer facing as opposed to her previous AM management role that had subsequently been filled by Anne.

During my interviews with AM team members and owing to my physical proximity to Leanne, most employees asked me whether I had talked to Leanne about the incentive. Replying 'no' to Natalie (AM), she laughed and stated that 'it is so funny when you dig into what is going on in the company ... there are some issues going on that are not visible on the surface'. It is important to note that in each AM interview, every transcription highlighted that the idea for the pay review was that of Leanne's and not that of the AM team. As one AM stated,

> The pay review team was suggested by Leanne, it was her idea, no one in the AM team said we want a pay rise, one day she just sat down with us in a fuster huddle [WebCo speak for a group meeting] and said "let's look at your pay as I don't think it is fair for the work you guys do". She was a new manager and we thought "great", everyone was really up for it but we weren't like we think we should get paid like five grand more, it wasn't our idea to do it.

Following Leanne's suggestion the AM pay review team were empowered to set about collecting information in order to produce a report on their levels of pay. With the claimed backing of Leanne, the AM team invested many hours outside of those at work to initially conduct industry benchmarking. The team scheduled frequent meetings after work that would often last until gone midnight. At these meetings they would collate collected data and clarify each individual's next stage in the formation of the report. At one of these meetings, Kai (AM) told the group of how he had learned that the growth of WebCo US had led to the introduction of AM team pay bandings. As an outcome of the meeting, Kai contacted the Financial Director of WebCo US (Bruce) who offered his support to the work group and mentioned that it could be rolled out to other work groups should the results need addressing. At this point, it appeared that the team had full managerial support.

During his liaisons with Bruce, Kai learned of the three pay bands that had been introduced in the US, AM One, Two and Three. AMs in the US office would be placed into their category in view of their previous Account Management experience and each level offered a pay increment into which AMs would be promoted. Webbers promoted into the AM team from that of the Q-team would join at the first level, AM One. Here, employees would learn the role of an AM, get used to the technical systems and would typically have a portfolio of around 200 smaller accounts of one server with managed back up that would generate under £300 of revenue per month.

Kai informed the group of the differences between this and level two AMs who would have a similar number of accounts but more devices. As he put it, 'more devices mean more work, and level Twos would be those with a higher portfolio of servers, they do get good accounts though, such as River Island, Ted Baker, Saatchi and the Welsh Development Agency'. Additionally, the group learned that level Three AMs at WebCo US managed fewer accounts (between 100 and 150), but a greater number of devices per server that generated a larger amount of revenue. It was also reported by Kai that the pay bandings in the higher stages of AM level One would overlap with the lower levels of AM Two and similarly the overlap was there between AM Two and Three.

As a consequence of this research, the pay levels were introduced in WebCo UK, although as Anna put it, 'they missed out one vital part, the pay!' Talking to Anna about this, she clarified to me that although the pay bands were introduced, there was no financial incentive to move from one to the next, the pay grading remained the same, yet she sarcastically added that the higher the band, the higher your status through an increased level of complexity within customer accounts. She was just one of many AM employees who noted the de-motivating effects of this managerial decision and that it had distanced her from giving Fanatical Support™ to her customers,

> The levels mean absolute bollocks, there has to be something that makes you want to be promoted, we all ask ourselves, why would you want to go up and be a level Three and have all that extra responsibility when you can be a level One with none of it and still get the same money? You might as well come in, get paid the same money and leave on time. The managers have introduced this banding before they have thought about pay and that is shocking management … that is why we all say that you don't get promoted at WebCo, you just get moved across.

The managerial decision not to link promotion through the levels with financial gain was contradictory to the findings of the final AM pay review team. Their comprehensive report was sent to Leanne and included the recommendation of an average increase of £5,000 in the annual wage of each AM that was largely based in view of the salaries of competitors. Furthermore, the AM pay review team had included revised job descriptions for their suggested introduction of AM levels that echoed those of WebCo US inclusive of the pay increments. Details of performance related bonus incentives were also included, as were the percentage splits between each team member and the levels of each AM employee were made explicit.

As a result of the work of the pay review group, the AMs were informed that the report was being evaluated by John (UK MD) and both the UK and US finance departments. On Friday 16th July during the second research period, each AM received an e-mail from the UK Finance Department that stated their revised and increased level of pay with the amount that the respective employees could expect in August. AMs commented on how the increase was the difference in them being able to apply for a mortgage, or how it would help them pay off their student debts. The promised increase was therefore significant to AM team members whose empowered

pay review work group had appeared to have been to the benefit of all AMs. However, the AMs received another e-mail the following Friday that asked them to come to a meeting with John and Leanne. At that meeting, it was revealed to the group that WebCo US had vetoed the decision and that the pay increment was not going to be given. The reaction of all AMs can be seen at length in the following quotation,

> Everyone went ape ... those of us who had worked in other companies thought how the hell could this get this far without someone saying "hey, let's have a look at that", it was such a big cock up, Leanne had put this massive document together saying this is what you guys are getting, and apparently it went through to pay roll in the States and they came back and said that this wasn't right ... so when we got over the initial fact of not getting what we were promised, we then dug into why we didn't get it … Leanne had initially told us that "it had gone through the UK management but the States then vetoed it" and they were like "what the hell, there is a 60 grand difference between this month and last month". It turned out though that it didn't ever get to the States, that was a lie … so it was either Leanne who was lying or John who said that he had never seen or even heard of our report … so we were having meetings with Leanne and John saying "what the hell was going on, one of you is lying can we please know the truth, we have a right to know and that and in any other professional company there would be written procedures for this" ... she [Leanne] was a new manager who was trying to assert her stamp on her team but it backfired big style.

The introduction of the incentive had therefore brought many tensions between the AMs and their manager. At the peak of frustration, AMs told me that they had asked the Citizens Advice Bureau for information on their legal standing having been promised a pay increase via e-mail. The outcome of which can be seen in the following quote by Michelle (AM),

> It seemed to come down to the fact that if you had replied and agreed to it then you were owed the money … only half of us did though as others would just have said thank you to her [Leanne] in person. No one received any more money as there are so many grey areas in that part of law because in theory, anyone could have gone on to Leanne's computer and sent the e-mails for her? In theory, it wasn't definitely Leanne who sent that e-mail but come on … there is going to have had to have been a lot of history building up to that exchange of e-mail and well, how are we meant to know her password for her work station?

It is clear that the specifics of the aborted incentive have led to a fracture between the AMs and their then team manager, Leanne. The opportunity to

investigate their pay was supposed to emphasize their empowerment and reinforce the core organizational values. However, the management approach between Leanne and John revealed inconsistencies where the incentive led to the greater realization of AM's limited levels of empowerment within WebCo and experienced contradictions of the organizational values. For example, Andrea (AM) stated,

> One of the core WebCo values is "Keeping our Promises: Full Disclosure, No Surprises" … well where do I start … the promise of pay has not been met, so many conversations were not disclosed and well … let's just say that we have all been a little surprised by the outcome.

A further example is given from Leticia, a recently recruited AM who states that she would not have expected such malpractice from WebCo, an organization that she thought to have strong values,

> In my previous job at Computer Associates, they did pretty much the same to us, they promised us money and then we didn't get it, but I accepted it from them because they had a bad history, I came here thinking that they would be trustworthy as they seemed to have such strong values but I have had quite a shock! It must be even worse for those who have been here for years, through conducting the review we know what they are on and it is shit money … I am thinking of Alexandra who would finally have been recognized for the work that she does because she is on less than Q-team money ... but nobody got anything and there is a real sense here that everything costs money and that it has to be accounted for, Economic Value Added is the be all and end all now. One of the values is substance over flash, well better to spend a little bit extra in certain areas and get more for your money instead of dribbling money here there and everywhere and hope that it will be ok, hoping that the culture will survive … as opposed to 'Changing For Excellence' all I have seen so far is lots of change that is not at all excellent.

Following the pay review groups findings, AM employees were promised a pay review by WebCo US. However, AMs expressed their cynicism and lack of trust in their managers who have not, and they believed would continue not to uphold the values, specifically that of 'Treat Fellow Webbers like Friends and Family',

> The values don't mean anything anymore, our experience of the pay debacle has at least taught us that … it was like we can't trust you now, we have got e-mails from you saying that we will get X amount more pay and then we didn't get it, that is not something that I would do to my friends or family … and this new pay review from the US will probably compare us to a small IT firm in West Cornwall when we are really based in London which is the second most expensive city in the world! Yeah, they [WebCo US] listen to all of our

grievances but you don't actually believe that anything is going to be done, all they are doing this research for is to prove that they don't have to pay us as much as we want.

The lack of trust from the AM department towards their manager was thought (by the members of that team) to have contributed to Leanne's departure into the new role of customer experience manager. However, again, differences can be seen between the accounts' of managers and the AMs. Speaking with one of the senior management team regarding Leanne's changed position, they stated that 'the role just wasn't quite right for Leanne, but as she is so passionate about being fanatical we simply couldn't let her go and she will now fly being our 'fanatical fairy''. In this role, it was Leanne's responsibility to ensure that the organizational values were reinforced in all elements of customer service. If she felt that the levels of fanaticism were not quite as high as they should be, she would often proceed to skate around the office sprinkling fanatical fairy dust over workers in order to make them re-engage with delivering Fanatical Support™. Leanne was responsible for conducting the session 'Fanatical by Design' at the Rookie Orientation induction programme. That session was based on the six corporate values and offered examples of fanatical customer service and its importance to the business. However, her redeployment into this role has further served to impact on the AMs levels of engagement with and belief in such values. As Ian (AM) stated,

> How ironical, our old manager is now the one responsible for upholding the WebCo culture [he laughs], you couldn't have picked a worse person for the role as she has broken every one of our values.

The upholding of the WebCo value of 'Treating Webbers like Friends and Family' was further challenged due to Leanne's introduction of the pay review group, where, the social identity of the AM team changed from being un-fanatical to becoming troublemakers. The key reason for this change is noted by Pauline who stated that although AM employees were told not to inform others of the conflict over the implementation of the review's findings,

> Obviously rumour mills started to turn, and now it turns out that a lot of the managers and a lot of the other WebCo teams think that the AMs fucked over their manager and you can completely see how they think that … I know that they do as well because I know AMs that are going for roles in other teams and I have heard from people in other teams that XYZ manager is not going to

take them because it is commonly understood that AMs fuck their managers over ... all this because we couldn't tell anyone what really happened, that we weren't "money grabbing" and it wasn't even our idea, it was our manager's idea, who is now fannying around in fairy wings every day!

Pauline referred to the pair of fairy wings that Leanne would frequently wear around the office in addition to her 'fanatical fairy' sash. Clearly, Pauline illustrated a dislike of her former manager and the expressed negative connotations that other teams attached to the AMs would contradict the aforementioned friends and family value and that of 'Full Disclosure: No Surprises'. To this end, AMs noted inconsistencies in the management approach and linked them to their distinct and somewhat negative group identity within WebCo. Louise (AM) was a member of the AM pay review team and informed me how,

> Conducting the review definitely brought us closer together, we are a team although not many outside of our AM team know the truth of the horrendous pay review situation ... the truth is that managers do not uphold the organizational values and because of this, everyone seems to see us as money grabbing troublemakers which is kind of ironic isn't it given that we are the lowest paid and have no real commission structure! How are we meant to believe in any of the corporate values when the managers don't and it is this that has led to our issues as a team ... we are definitely more distanced from other teams and the organization than we have ever been.

As we can see in the above quotation, the outcome of the pay review team, an incentive that aimed to empower workers to make decisions and to represent the core organizational values appeared to have ultimately led to the AM teams' recognition of their limited levels of empowerment, a negative social identity within WebCo and lower levels of attachment and belief in the organizational culture through inconsistencies in the management approach. It did appear, however, to lead to a stronger social identity within the group, albeit, one that is more at odds with, and aware of the contradictions of the managerially espoused organizational values. This chapter will now detail the final factor that accounts for the higher levels of employee detachment; a lack of managerial attention towards employee progression opportunities.

7.8 A WebCo Career?

This section details how individual motivations for career promotion appeared to become diluted through the experience of a lack of managerial structures and practices. The reality of a managerial lack of attention in aiding career development in the second research period led the more established employees to experience mismatched expectations. Alan, the WebCo UK training manager and self-confessed 'culture champion', was only too aware of this fact. He called my extension number early one Wednesday afternoon wanting to have a chat about employee mentoring. Later that day we went for a late lunch and he expressed his concerns for the WebCo organizational culture by directly attributing the lack of career development to the dilution of the value of fanatical customer support. He stated that,

> We have lost our customer service focus, people are not so engaged, probably a big reason for the lack of engagement is because people lack direction about their careers and when expectations are not set they set their own, these are set higher than they would in a discussion with a manager and therefore, if they are not, the downturn from that is proportionally higher.

This section will consider how such a mis-match of expectations partly explains the reduced engagement with the organizational culture, and how it has resulted in established employees' focusing on the financial motivators that help to compensate for their boredom and lack of received respect in their organizational roles. Business Development Consultants (BDCs) were keen for me to spend time with them, partly due to the fact that I had met these experienced Webbers in the first research period. I remember being warmly welcomed back when I entered the office for the second time with Anya and Suzie running over to give me a hug. During the second stage of the research, and through spending a considerable amount of time each day with the BDC team, I became aware of a different team dynamic to that of the previous year. In contrast to their previous overwhelming levels of positivity for the company, their customers and their challenging and well remunerated roles, it appeared that the BDCs were now de-motivated in their positions. This has also led these established employees to re-evaluate their work-life balance.

Such employee de-motivation can be seen in an example that occurred when I was listening into one telephone conversation with Chloe. I noticed that when Anya

(who sat opposite Chloe) was on a telephone call to a customer she held her hand to her mouth and pretended to yawn. It was at this point where she put her feet up on the desk, sat back in her chair and flicked through a 'beautiful home' magazine while continuing to speak to the customer. Remaining on the phone, she would then show Chloe and I various pictures of furniture that she was thinking of buying, wanting a thumbs up or down. Chloe's lack of reaction to this appeared to signify that this was now common practice in their working relationship. As such, upon the completion of the customer phone call, I went with Chloe for a coffee in the Hard Rack Café, and I asked her how she felt about her BDC role, she replied,

> People only come to work for money no matter what company and I don't think that our current MD understands that, he doesn't come to work for money, so nobody else does. Sadly we have become all monetary and nasty … I think people's lives have changed, we have got married, bought houses, we are older now and your priorities change … when it is your first job, you are excited and you are keen, and maybe that is how they can get some of that back by keeping us challenged and motivated, but when it is the same thing, day in and day out, then it becomes boring and you come in for the money … I used to be here for the culture, but now, well I would rather more money in the bank, it is only the money that keeps me here and my friends.

It was apparent that changes to the lives of the established employees also led to changes in their levels of attachment to the organizational culture. Specifically, established employees spoke of their greater need to have a stronger work-life balance. It is clear from the following quotation that such employees were less engaged with the organizational culture through their reduced desire to voluntarily work overtime,

> I don't think we [established employees] care as much now that it has grown, I don't care as much, like Anya said, we used to log in on the weekends to make sure there are no tickets that have been missed. I used to log in at 8 o' clock at night, we didn't care, we loved it! I only do it now if I have to, but that is the difference.

Another experienced Webber gave a similar comment, yet they explicitly noted their lower levels of both their work effort and their engagement with the organizational culture,

> You have to segregate your time now, I didn't segregate my time before and I would be in on the weekend doing my work and I was probably a much better,

hardworking employee, they got a lot more out of me. But I just had no life, really, I was doing too much work, and now, maybe it is because I am a little bit more detached from WebCo, and aren't quite as fanatical as I used to be, I am able to actually go, "do you know what? I am walking out of here at 6 pm and I will not be back in until 8.30am" ... whereas before it sounds stupid but I cared too much. Nowadays, Saturday is my time, not work time, but it didn't used to be like that.

It would appear that established employees would previously have exerted greater effort for the company and its culture, yet they are now less engaged, less 'fanatical' and ultimately give less to the organization. This factor can be linked to the lack of WebCo promotion opportunities that led established employees to reconsider their views on WebCo as an employer. Anya, the longest serving BDC member, reflected on her experience in the organization. Having worked at WebCo UK for six years, she mentioned that although she had occupied a variety of roles, she had remained in the BDC team for two years and felt somewhat stagnant,

I feel like I am going brain dead now, I did my degree in Management and German and I want to do management, it was my main reason for joining all those years ago as I thought that I would, one day become a manager ... I wouldn't be a perfect manager, but actually when I was team leader I started to build my own management style, but I have never been given the opportunity at WebCo ... so many of us "old school" Webbers are looking elsewhere now, just because it is so boring, we do the same job day in, day out and where we used to have a variety of tasks, it is now so standardized and boring.

This apparent boredom of BDC is due to their lack of career development opportunities and has been a key explanator in the decision of other BDCs to leave the organization. One such BDC, Philip, captures some of the challenges of managing growth when he cleared a job website from his internet browser and turned to me and said,

I just don't think that they value experience and I don't think that they quite know how to take care of the "old Webbers". What we really need is a careers advisor, but I just think if we had a bit more personal development, if they helped us a bit more then it would stop us all from feeling lost ... and I do feel lost here at the moment, should I be staying? Should I look outside? I have no help with my personal development, there is nowhere to go and I have no management experience, so even if a managerial job does come up, it would only be one job and there are eight of us who want to move on to the next step ... you know, where do we [BDCs] go now ... we all complain that WebCo is

growing too fast and that we are losing the culture, but to be honest, from a progression point of view it hasn't grown fast enough! There isn't anywhere for me to go here now, there are no opportunities for us BDCs and I really just want a job that is not boring anymore, so I have decided that I'll be out of here by Christmas at the latest.

Philip's sentiment is reflected by authors such as Arnold and Davey (1994) and Huselid and Day (1991) who suggest that a lack of career development opportunities are a key reason that accounts for the turnover of graduates. Relating again to the organizational growth at WebCo, Suzie, an experienced BDC, highlighted that as the organization has grown it has become more aware of its financial expenditure (see section 7.4). She suggested in her interview that this has led to a reduced amount of managerial respect for the high earning BDCs,

> I just don't think that they see the value in us that they should … I worry that WebCo just sees as … well … as a poison, you know, we are not new, we are not excited, we are not as pro WebCo as we used to be … I do wonder whether they see us as detractors and I wonder whether they see us as people that they would like to replace, let's face it, we do earn a decent amount of money and I can't help feeling that they would like to get two new people in the organization for the same price as my salary … I don't feel appreciated for my experience and well that isn't right is it?

In addition to the lack of managerial attention to the further career development of BDCs, this notion of a lack of respect was identified in the day-to-day interactions that I had with the members of the BDC team. It was also a recurrent theme in each of their interviews. These established WebCo employees would frequently refer to their feelings of unimportance and they highlighted their lack of respect from the management team. As Anya put it,

> When you were here, what was it? Only a year ago, well I felt respected for what I had done for the company; I felt as though I was personally helping WebCo become a better company, I felt rewarded. Now that we are a year down the line and I have given even more, well I feel less valued and less important. I know that I would have been full of the joys of Spring a year ago, I have always needed to feel as though I am earning decent money to feel valued about myself, but I have always also needed an interesting job and to feel great about the culture of a company. Now, I still have the money, but not the other two, it is like I have gone backwards … I have, I have gone from Spring to Winter.

The above quote summarizes the feelings of established employees who appeared to remain in the organization due to the high salaries that they received. As we have seen, the maturing of employees and changes to their life path, allied to the lack of career development opportunities, has led established employees to feel disengaged with the organizational culture and to their feelings of boredom in their work. As such, many expressed feeling less respected in the organization, a factor that has further led to their lower levels of attachment to WebCo core value of fanatical customer service.

7.9 Summary

This chapter has investigated the managerial changes to work at WebCo and how these have led to decreasing levels of employee satisfaction with a corresponding reduction in attachment to the organizational culture. It has noted the bureaucratization and formalization of explicit culture engineering by its managers and how this has been noted by knowledgeable employees. The increasing dominance of WebCo US has been set out through the standardization of its global performance metrics and how these have impacted on the organizational culture. Specifically, the introduction of EVA has curtailed the elaborate cultural rewards for good performance and this has limited the amount of established employee' discretionary effort.

The introduction of the NPS® performance metric has raised awareness of the reduced levels of customer satisfaction with their levels of received Fanatical Support™. This metric has called into question employee performance through the greater surveillance of Webbers, and in this chapter we have seen how the NPS® has both increased the pressure to perform, and how it has decreased employee satisfaction. This chapter has also detailed the departure of the previous visionary MD and considered the negative reactions as to how this was handled by management and the lack of belief in his successor. This chapter has also described the introduction of the pay review team that was aimed at increasing employee empowerment and their identification with the core organizational values. However, this chapter highlights occasions in the process of implementation of the pay review team's findings where there were inconsistencies in the management approach that

contradicted the core organizational values. Contradictions occurred where the consequence of the incentive were the workers' expressed feelings of reduced empowerment. Furthermore, there appears to have been a creation of a distinctly negative social group identity and reduced levels of identification with the organizational culture.

Another key explanator for the decrease in employee satisfaction is offered in discussion of another performance management challenge; that of career development. While this chapter notes how the formalized performance metrics have led to reduced levels of Webber engagement with the organizational culture, this formalization did not extent to the employee career prospects. Here, a lack of managerial consideration to the practices of the career development of established employees appears to have further contributed to their reduced organizational identification , lower levels of offered discretionary effort an overall dilution of the organizational culture. Clearly, career development opportunities are an important factor for established employees, and managerial structures and practices have an impact on organizational culture. Furthermore, just as the organizational culture appears to have changed, so too have the lives of WebCo employees and this has generated implications for their work-life balance while further reducing their commitment towards the organizational culture.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CHANGES TO WORK ORGANIZATION AND RECRUITMENT: FORMALIZATION, 'FUSTERS' AND FRAGMENTATION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter focusses on the changes to WebCo structural practices that occurred between the two research periods in an attempt to sustain the strong organizational culture. In detailing data from the second research period, a lack of congruence is apparent between the new structures and the organizational culture which appears to have reduced the satisfaction of workers, their discretionary effort, and their engagement with the core cultural value of FanaticalSupport™. This chapter illustrates how by 2006, WebCo's success had led to an increased industry wide awareness of WebCo as a desirable employer that provided fanatical customer service. It is argued that this led to an increase in candidate instrumentality to 'have WebCo on your CV' and also due to the potential of more lucrative career opportunities within the rapidly expanding organization. In addition, by the second research period, WebCo US had increased their dominance over the UK division. This is evident through two key changes. The first was to change the UK recruitment process to emulate the American model. The second, their enforcement for all non-technical candidates to have a minimum of two years sales experience. It is argued that this policy change is central in explaining the higher levels of employee instrumentality and that this was influential in diluting the organizational culture.

WebCo managers made changes to the work organization in an attempt to sustain the espoused 'strong organizational culture'. Specifically, this chapter details the changes to the organization of work in WebCo between the two research periods and it examines the impact of such structural changes on employees and the organizational culture. In this chapter, we will learn of three additional factors that have led to reduced feelings of worker empowerment and a reduction in employee engagement with the core organizational value of delivering fanatical levels of customer support. Firstly, we learn of employee frustration towards the increasingly formalized and standardized nature of WebCo. Secondly, a growth challenge is presented in the second research period where the WebCo Techs were unable to sustain the high expectations of customers. Accordingly, we learn how many Techs

re-evaluated the benefits of working for a 'fanatical' employer and, due to the relatively low levels of remuneration at WebCo, many decided to leave the organization and command a higher salary elsewhere. This served to significantly increase the remaining Techs' workload and led to an in-group conflict that again served to 'dilute' their levels of Fanatical Support™. This conflict is further exacerbated by the recruitment of newer Techs who appeared to be less 'fanatical' in their delivery of WebCo service.

Finally, the fragmentation of organizational units through the introduction of cross-functional teams (CFTs) appeared to have fractured employee occupational identities. The CFTs were introduced from WebCo US in response to the UK branch's rapid organizational growth and the aim of these 'Fanatical Clusters' (commonly referred to as 'Fusters') was to sustain the core cultural value of fanatical customer support for which the organization had won various industry awards. We have seen in this thesis that at the time of the first research period, Webbers were united in a strong and uniform organizational culture. However, the 'Fusters' created sub-cultures and, hence, a reduction in the strength of a unitary organizational culture with a change in the identificatory reference point of employees' to their immediate fuster. Furthermore, the introduction of 'Fusters' forced established employees to work with newer Webbers where previously, they would have had the autonomy to choose other workers with comparable experience at WebCo. This chapter therefore notes how a re-organization of work resulted in established employees recognizing the inability or unwillingness of newer Webbers to perform at their high levels of discretionary effort and engagement with the core organizational value of Fanatical Support™. As a consequence, established employees commented on their reduced levels of discretionary effort and how their own levels of fanatical customer service were reduced to the levels of the newcomers.

The first part of this chapter illustrates the key changes to recruitment that occurred between the two time periods. In relation to the first, it elaborates on key changes, such as the internalization of the recruitment process and the need for all non-technical candidates to have a minimum of two years sales experience. These candidates would then be place in the Q-Team who would ensure that potential customer leads meet their qualification criteria before passing them over to the

(hierarchically superior) sales team. The recruitment process and employees' reflections on each stage are then presented before the section concludes by exploring these findings and how such factors have led to a dilution of the strength of the organizational culture.

8.2 The Changes to WebCo Recruitment

A major change between the two periods of study was the internalization of the recruitment process to the new Human Resource Management department. This department included 'The Recruitment Hub' – a team of three individuals who focused solely on employee recruitment. The type of candidate that was desired remained unchanged from that of period one with the emphasis being placed on their drive and personality as opposed to their core technical competencies. This section notes the heightened candidate instrumentality in the recruitment process for the lucrative WebCo career opportunities. This was also due to the major change in the recruitment of Q-Team employees who were (in period two) required to have a minimum of two years sales experience. It is later argued that this change has stimulated an increase in candidate instrumentality in order to secure WebCo Q-Team employment. In addition, a commission structure had been introduced for WebCo recruiters that was based on the number of received CVs. This may have contributed to the difficulty in finding candidates that are a 'WebCo fit' by giving the recruiters the ability to control the quality of the pool of candidates. The implications of the following quotation given by Jenna (a recruitment manager) in an interview could explain the reduced quality of candidates in the recruitment process,

> The commission structure is weird as I can go and pull in a ton of CVs and that is it. I think it should get commissioned on the people that I successfully place, but that would make it harder for me so I am quite happy with the way that it is as I can earn more money when I need to.

8.2.1 The Need for a Formalized Recruitment Department

The new leadership team at WebCo (led by John, UK MD) decided to internalize the recruitment process. Such a decision was partly implemented due to

the UK Recruitment Director illustrating concerns over the previous lack of consistency and fairness, and his desire to have a formalized department that would change people's perceptions of the role of recruiter. He felt that the role of the department was taken 'with a pinch of salt' and employees questioned its value. However, the more significant influence on the internalization of the recruitment process was from WebCo US who asked the UK office to internalize its recruitment. Following the decision of WebCo US to internalize recruitment, the UK office therefore adopted a version of the American internal recruitment process that was modified in respect of UK corporate law. WebCo US were concerned with the amount of recruitment expenditure in WebCo UK (who had previously spent hundreds of thousands of pounds a month on recruitment producing around 12 individual hires). At one point, there were 15 different agencies, each with different service level agreements, some of which would be taking 30 percent of the employee's salary as commission. The recruitment process was therefore internalized in order to reduce organizational expenditure in this area and such an act is illustrative of the increasing influence that WebCo US commanded over the UK office and the enforcement of EVA.

Over the period between the two studies, the need to recruit employees appeared to continue to be a challenge for WebCo. For example, it was 'business critical' in November 2005 to hire some 60 people in eight weeks. An employee referral scheme was introduced between the two research periods and according to management, this was made possible through the saving of agency expenditure. As such, any member of WebCo who referred a candidate received a £1000 bonus after their suggested candidate secured employment and passed the three month probation period. Due to the recruitment drive at the start of 2006 and a slow referral rate, this was increased to £2000. At the time of the study the rate was £1500. It was expressed by one WebCo recruiter that this incentive helped to secure candidates that are more likely to be similar to the current WebCo employees, and therefore they were more likely to gain employment and be successful in their role.

8.2.2 The 2006 WebCo Recruitment Process

The introduced internal recruitment process was in its infancy in terms of formalization, although a certain structure has been implemented whose elaborate and time intensive nature continued to illustrate WebCo's commitment towards 'finding the right person'. The finance department determined the number of required employees, and, from direct applicants or the finding of potential employees on internet sites like Job Serve/ Monster.co.uk, the candidates' details were stored on the database and called in order to arrange a convenient time for a telephone interview. It was the hiring manager who conducted this telephone interview with a prescribed format of questions to ask. Should the candidate be successful, then they were invited to a face to face interview. These were held in the organization which gave the candidate the opportunity to see the organization and potentially allowed them to deselect themselves from the process. Candidates were also encouraged to spend some time shadowing Q-Team employees in order to get an idea of the type of work they would be engaged in.

There was a maximum of two face to face interviews with the hiring managers which were held on the same day subject to the recruiter's availability. However, it was the recruiters' preference to 'try to close off the candidate' in one interview. Although this process was in existence, the consistency of its application was questionable as the last Q-Team appointee had six interviews on the same day and in the same number of hours. The final recruitment decision rested with the department manager and following the decision to offer employment, the recruitment co-ordinator was responsible for drawing up the contract, posting it to the applicant and dealing with any negotiations that may occur. On the day of the interview, candidates completed the 'strengths finder test' which was unchanged from previous years. The whole process from the telephone interview to sending out an offer lasted three weeks on average. The next section offers empirical insights into the knowledgeability of employees' that occurred in the interview stage of the recruitment process.

8.2.3 Candidate' Knowledgeability in the On-Site Interviews

The 2006 WebCo recruitment interviews followed the same 'good cop, bad cop' format of the previous year. Although most candidates enjoyed the former, they gave many examples of their accumulated knowledge of how to respond during interview processes,

> She had felt tip pens and paper in her hand and said "I'll leave you to it, if you want to draw something that represents you then go for it" and I was like "what?" Anyway, I drew a skydiving picture and a target on the floor to show that I knew where I wanted to get to, but I was like how do you prepare for this, I do think I managed it quite well.

The above quote illustrates that this candidate, like many that I interviewed, exhibited the well-established tactic of 'self-monitoring' (Snyder, 1974; Snyder and Gangestad, 1885, 1986). High-self monitors are considered to be able to 'regulate their expressive self-presentation for the sake of desired public appearances, and thus be highly responsive to social and interpersonal cues of situationally appropriate performance' (Snyder and Gangestad, 1986: 125). This is exemplified in the quote where the candidate interprets the social cue and drew a picture that is sensitive to the situation and one that illustrated them in a positive way.

Candidates also remarked on the more probing nature of the later interview style where one stated that he was 'essentially grilled, I was very much put on the spot when this person came in and I was a bit taken back by it'. Interviewees also noted that it was more difficult for them to self-monitor in the 'bad cop' interviews. They therefore resorted to relying on their accumulated knowledge and used the tactics that they felt to be successful in their previous 'good cop' interview. As one employee stated,

> The interviews are very personality based and I found it hard to portray what they wanted, but they do not give anything away here, nothing, I'll always know whether I have got the job or not when I leave the interview room, I am quite good like that I have got a good instinct but I didn't know here, not at all … I was fine with Sandie [good cop], I thought that one was in the bag, I said all the right things but then I had Alan [bad cop] and he gave nothing, he is a blank canvas that one so I stuck to the same story as I did with Sandie.

Where previously candidates would not be expected to have any sales experience, those entering WebCo in 2006 were required to have at least two years. Below is an

example of a candidate who had previously worked in a firm where he was responsible for the recruitment of sales employees,

> I used behavioural questions when I interviewed in Hewlett Packard, and they do here as well. A lot of companies do that, and that is fine, I was prepared for that.

This quote shows that the candidate drew on their knowledge base in the interviews with a view to impressing the recruiters. The introduction of the need for two years work experience increased the number of candidates engaged in such activity and it is this finding that is the focus of the following section.

8.2.4 The Implications of a Changed Managerial Practice

As previously mentioned, an important change between 2005 and 2006 was the move to only recruit non-technical employees who had two years sales experience. Such employees would commence their WebCo employment in the Q-Team, as management argued that this 'launch pad role' enabled their familiarization with the organization. Employees, primarily those with little I.T experience, appeared to be content with this, one employee stated,

> I came from the Pharmaceutical industry so was glad of it; I didn't even know what a server was so I wouldn't be able to go straight into sales.

This change in recruitment policy brought inherent tensions for the employees that had previous experience in Account Management or sales. At one end of this scale, an employee had a vast amount of experience in Account Management in Australia, and management stated that it did not count. Although in their words 'slightly miffed' at commencing in the Q-Team given their previous experience, they thought that it would be beneficial in order to understand the company as a whole and the offered products and services. However, other candidates appeared less happy with being placed in the Q-team in view of their experience and pointed to a new instrumentality in their rationale for joining the company, that of career progression and opportunities, as one Q-team member noted,

> I think I am capable of more than the Q-Team … I believe my experience at least should get a role with slightly more responsibility, I mean I have been an Account Manager before! But, I can't complain, the reason why I took the

role in the end was because the company is still a good company to be at and I saw room for movement within this company.

A further implication of the new recruitment process can be seen in the heightened levels of candidate instrumentality at the interview stages in order to obtain a Q-Team role. Here, it appeared that these strategic attempts of candidates were motivated by the opportunities for promotion that had been created in this rapidly growing organization. An example of this can be seen in the following Q-team employee quotation,

> I find it very easy, there is no pressure in the Q-team compared to my last job, this is not where I want to stay though, as I have done Account Management before and for me this has been weird working as a lead generator, it is almost like a bit backward ... I was told in my interview that people move on after about six months as the company is growing so quickly and that made me want the job ... so yeah, you know ... I am not going to lie to you I was constantly thinking in the interview "who do they want me to be, what do they want me to be like", and I just thought, get the job first and then I'll soon have opportunities for promotion which is really why I am here.

This section has shown that employees appeared to be accepting Q-Team employment in return for the future potential of WebCo, and therein, their opportunities for progression in this rapidly expanding organization. This instrumentality enabled these employees to start at the level of Q-Team with the knowledge that they would progress to higher and more lucrative areas of the business in a relatively short space of time. The next section details how the success of WebCo contributed to the recruitment of candidates that exhibited a clear, instrumental desire to work at the organization in order to further their long term career prospects.

8.2.5 A New Rationale for Candidate Instrumentality?

Although experiencing rapid rates of growth, WebCo was a relatively small organization in terms of employee size for its industry. The organization had much success, however, in winning industry awards for its levels of service and had received recognition for the high levels of technical expertise. The success and reputation of WebCo as the leading industry customer service provider increased the attractiveness of WebCo as an employer. This apparently then led to greater levels of both candidate cynicism and instrumentality at the interview stage. Many

interviewees pointed to this but it is best exemplified by a Q-team member, who stated,

> The culture is OK but I never believe those sorts of things, the reason I am here is because I had heard about all of the awards that WebCo had won, they beat my last company in "The Times Higher 'Best Places to Work in the UK'" so I really wanted to be here as it will be great for my CV, in the interview I just talked about loads of previous service encounters where I turned a situation around, they loved it!

The above illustrates the candidate's instrumentality in securing the job for their personal development and career progression (see Fournier, 1997) as opposed to being a WebCo fit and having a passion for the organizational culture. The candidate opportunistically accepted their job offer in order to secure the status of having worked for WebCo. Such an act directly links to literature where, drawing from motivation theory, it is thought that the motivation for individuals to engage in strategic attempts is positively associated with the value of desired goals (Beck, 1983; Leary and Kowalski, 1995). In this case, individuals act on the basis of self-interest, where, the desirability of working for a well-regarded customer service provider stimulated candidate instrumentality. This illustrates their preference on career development as opposed to the organizational culture. Hence, management's attempts to recruit for a 'WebCo fit' may be in vain and the organizational culture was diluted where the organizational success created challenges for the implementation of recruitment practices.

The next section illustrates a difference in candidate' perceptions to the psychometric test in relation to the previous study period. Candidates used their knowledgeability to shape the results and they also expressed satisfaction as the results of the test were used to shape the candidates' career promotion. Those candidates that were hence successful in conveying their 'fit' with the organizational culture were set to reap the rewards of their instrumentality.

8.2.6 Employees' Thoughts on the Psychometric Test

Some employees were open to expressing elements of cynicism and the ability of answering the questions in the appropriate way. One rookie stated 'of course I was

influenced by the role, I was definitely trying to be the type of person that they were looking for in the personality test'. Similarly, the following quotation is from an employee and is evidence of reverse construction where the Webber questioned the reliability of the strengths finder yet also, perhaps subconsciously, raised an insight into their use as a managerial tool for sustained performance.

> I just feel that if I was to do it again that my top five would change, and if I had five completely different ones then I would make myself think that that is me, you know, well I am a bit like that, like that, you know, and channel my efforts into those.

However, the majority of new employees viewed the personality test as useful, noticeably due to its second use as a career development tool. Once candidates commenced working at WebCo they were encouraged to read the book on which the test is based ("Now Discover Your Strengths") in order to familiarize themselves with their traits and one new employee showed a high level of appreciation in its use as a recruitment and career advancement tool,

> I read it from cover to cover, and was encouraged to do so. Employees can go through their whole life not knowing what they are good at, yet this not only tells you what your strengths are, but WebCo then focuses on them as opposed to previous companies that I have worked for that concentrate on minimizing your weaknesses.

Others showed delight in the rewards for their instrumentality due to the use of the personality test as a career development tool which has set them on their preferred career path,

> The results are taken and they map out our careers. I tried hard to get salesy qualities and succeeded, I really wanted to be thought of as a sales person as the guys in enterprise sales earn so much cash, I can't wait to get there, it [WebCo] is *the* place to be [Emphasis added].

Candidates appeared content with the personality test due to their ability to influence the results and convince the recruiters of 'their' qualities. Should recruits not be content with their highlighted strengths from the personality test, then they were encouraged to do a re-test. In practice however, I did not hear of any employees who demanded to do so. This could possibly be explained by one employee who stated that 'there is no need [to take another test] as we get it right first time'. The result of such strategic candidate knowledgeability was not only that they gained employment in this organization, but in shaping their responses either to sales or

Account Management roles, then 'their' highlighted qualities in the personality test formed a basis for potentially more lucrative WebCo careers.

The next section focuses on the thoughts of established employees' on the new recruits. Importantly, they illustrate an awareness of the new candidate instrumentality and that this led to the dilution of the organizational culture.

8.2.7 Established Employees' Thoughts on the New Recruits

The problem of rapid organizational growth and finding a WebCo fit presented a key challenge for the management and recruitment teams where one recruiter stated that 'it is hard to maintain our culture, especially when a hiring manager is under pressure to fill that business need'. A different employee elaborates on this difficulty,

> The company is acutely conscious of scaling the organization, it is tough because if you grow as fast as we are growing, it is difficult to get the number of people through the door that you need, therefore at some point you will make a compromise between, "We have got three candidates, none of them are really that customer orientated, but we have got to get somebody in"; and that is the problem. It is the need for growth, not the desire that means you dilute the quality of the candidates that you recruit, then because of the general trend in the market place, trying to find people with the right kind of attitude is tough.

Established employees would often express critical comments targeted at the attitude and passion of recent recruits. Referring to the organizational culture, one established sales team member commented that 'they just don't get it; they don't get it at all'. Additionally, an established Account Manager criticized the managerial decision to commence recruiting Q-team employees with at least two years' experience as this has led to candidate instrumentalism, she also comments on the effect that this has had on the organizational culture,

> I have seen it change like the way that with the Q-team they have now got this idea of "hiring up", so it is like hiring people that have two years of sales experience into the Q. That is sort of back firing on itself though as those people are like "well I want more money", or "what kind of job is this?" They don't have the same vibe that the Q-team has generally had, and then that filters through to the rest of WebCo 'cos obviously they are there for the sole purpose of moving elsewhere, whereas when I joined in the Q-team, that was it, as far as I was concerned I could do the Q-team for the next two years. So I

think some people are there now because they want to move quickly, they have earned a lot more money elsewhere and that causes problems, for example one guy who came a few months ago, he is leaving already because of the pay. Also, the new people are just taking it on as just a job and don't care as much for the culture.

Another long serving sales employee reflected on the levels of respect of the new employees and their levels of engagement with the organizational culture,

> I had an awful lot more respect for other people and their jobs then these guys do, I remember when I was in the Q-team, I gave the sales people a lot of respect because everyone was always "more passionate" than I was. Then, when I started moving up the company, I liked seeing people coming into WebCo as having the same kind of feeling about WebCo that I had which was "oh wow you do your job so well, and the sales guys are amazing and I must work as hard as you are obviously working" … and they just … they just don't feel the same way about it.

The last quote shows that established employees questioned the quality of new candidates and their level of fit with the prescribed organizational culture. Although one could interpret these quotes as the established employees viewing their WebCo history through rose tinted glasses (see Gabriel, 1993), as we will see later, perhaps these established employees are being blinded by the fact that they now operate under the new norms of resigned behavioural compliance (Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 1990) that have been generated by working with these newer recruits. However, what is without question is that the managerial decision to recruit employees into the Q-team that have at least two years of sales experience has been influential in diluting the organizational culture.

This chapter now notes the changes to work organization that occurred by the time of the second research period (2006), specifically, the increasingly formalized and standardized work practices that have generated frustration from WebCo employees. This chapter then details the higher level of work intensification for technical employees before examining the rationale and function of the introduced cross-functional teams ('Fusters'). The chapter then details how this fragmentation of organizational departments has led to a change in the identificatory reference point of employees' and the fracturing of their identities. The effects are then noted with the rise of sub-cultures and a change to the traditional work communication channels. We will then learn how this change has forced established employees to work with newer employees, who, at least in the opinions of established Webbers, appeared to

display lower levels of cultural engagement and discretionary effort. To conclude, this chapter examines how the work ethic of newer employees has reduced that of established employees to the same (diluted) levels, and how it is hence the newer employees who set the work and cultural norms.

8.3 Changes to Work Organization

By the second research period, the number of employees at WebCo had increased from 79 to 180, and the office had moved to a building that offered twice the space of the previous year. Occupying one of the most expensive areas of the business park, the prestigious new building offered WebCo employees their own café, a larger games room, highly equipped training rooms and a reception desk that was staffed by members of newly recruited 'organization team'. This new department of three part-time staff had responsibility for the reception desk and organized much of the WebCo branded items that were given to new recruits – for example a WebCo gilet, coffee mug and their staff card that enabled access to the new building. Such changes were indicative of the expansion and increased formalization and delineation of WebCo departments in 2006. As opposed to the nine Q-Team members in 2005, 2006's Q-Team department had 17 members, two team leaders and a department manager. Whereas previously 'members of the Q' would all work around one table, employees were now centred around their team leader with the new Q-Team manager (Jenny) placed on a separate desk that was adjacent to the sales department. The sales department itself was divided by a partition that served to group sales team members into their Linux or Windows specialties.

In contrast to the previous year, sales team members would only sell to customers that required their operating system, each team had a team leader, and there was an overall sales manager who stated that 'sales at WebCo is really all about selling fanatical support, without our support guys [the Techs] we wouldn't have jobs'. Having an annual growth in the UK of over 80 percent, Thomas (the new sales director) was also keen to point out to me how the site (termed EMEA [Europe and Middle East Asia] office) had over 10,000 customers, it qualified 720 leads a month and accumulated 100 new accounts per month. I also learned that WebCo UK had a

base growth of 1.5 percent per month, i.e. even without any new monthly sales, the organization would grow at this rate due to the BDCs selling to existing customers.

The nature of the AM work remained centred around building excellent customer relationships through understanding their business needs and minimizing client churn through contract renewal. The organization of AMs had also become more formalized in 2006; they were split into two sub-sections, Managed AM (MAM) and Intensive AM (IAM). MAMs would have a portfolio of around 250 accounts with 450 devices (for example, servers or managed back up) that generated a monthly recurring revenue average of £110,000. MAMs were organized into 'Fusters', which were 'Fanatical Clusters' of employees with an AM to tech ratio of one to three per fuster. MAMs would therefore direct questions to their three assigned Techs. The key difference between Managed and Intensive AMs is highlighted by Michael (MAM),

> Yes we get a load of different types of complaints, customers are never the same though, so we could have someone who pays £200 a month chewing off your ear, and somebody who pays £7000 and doesn't care. As opposed to the Intensive guys, we are more reactive, whereas those guys are more proactive because they have fewer accounts … with us it is usually the case of the shit has hit the fan and that is when we get involved, so we do have to deal with a load of pissed off people, but again it is all part and parcel of it.

IAMs were therefore the more proactive AM group, which was partly due to their lower average number of accounts (30) and devices (300). Both the one-to-one IAM/Tech ratio and the value of the client with the monthly recurring revenue at an average of £200,000 further explain this proactivity. As Mohammed (IAM) highlighted,

> We don't just wait for clients to call us, we give them a monthly call, we do an account review with them, chat about their solution, give them a "Hi how is it going? Are you happy? What is working? What is not working?" Because we find a lot of times they are not happy about things but they just never bother to get down to giving us a call and saying, "I am unhappy about a couple of things until the day that they are really, really upset and then they leave us, and then we say "well, why do you want to leave us?" And then they list a whole bunch of things that they want to get out of, which we could of if we had given them a call to find out how they are … just to give you an idea, one of my accounts is the British Army, they have got 38 devices that we look after, and they spend £35,000 a month with WebCo so for that, we need to be on the ball all of the time, we need to understand their business and understand

where WebCo fits into their business to make sure that we understand what is really, really critical for them to do.

In a break away from the typical WebCo recruitment structure, the majority of IAMs would be recruited directly into the role. This is different to the MAMs who would have a minimum of six months experience in the Q-Team. Only one employee who was previously a MAM was an IAM due to the need for technical expertise that the role demands. As Esben (IAM manager) further adds at length,

> Our IAMs really do become an extension of our customer's I.T department, they help devise solutions, and the guys in the team are really, really skilled, they understand what they need so the same guys designing the solutions are the same guys monitoring that are looking after the systems and monitoring them. Due to the changeover with the States at night, the comprehensive monitoring operates 24/7 365, and we are waiting for stuff to happen really and if anything goes wrong we pick it up and then we get on to it to fix it so it all ties in with the whole proactive approach in intensive.

The work organization was also far more formalized for IAMs. They would select a lead Tech on their account who would work with the IAM, the allocated BDC and a designated systems administrator. The lead tech's main function was to help design the solutions and to move the client's business forward by getting an understanding of what the customer wanted to use I.T in their business to provide. The systems administrator worked together with the lead tech in designing the solution in addition to making any relevant adjustments. Should the solution prove too difficult for the system administrator, then they would hand it over to the more qualified lead Tech. IAMS would make sure that the customer was satisfied with the solution and the levels of Fanatical Support™ that they received while it remained the role of the BDC to sell upgraded solutions. By 2006, formal job descriptions had been introduced for the BDCs which removed any additional responsibilities from the previous informal practice of their work. This appeared to have created frustration for established employees who were being stifled by the increasing formalization of their job role. As one BDC put it,

> When we first arrived, we would do HR, office management and everything, but that made everything so much more exciting and interesting, now ... it is my number and my job and I am a BDC and I do my BDC job and that is it.

The empowerment of BDCs to issue instant credits to their customers had also been removed, where the process was now far more intricate and involving some

three other departments who would assess each request on a case by case basis. This increased formalization of their work role led to Anya's (BDC) lower levels of discretionary effort with the cultural value of Fanatical Support™,

> These days I have to ask six different people just to get a credit on an account, all of that just for a credit! In the past, you would just have given it on the spot to a customer over the phone, this was much better for them and ended up saving us time ... now, well there are so many hoops it makes you really not want bother, and most of us, well we just do our job now, no more.

Indeed, established employees expressed dissatisfaction towards their reduced levels of control and empowerment over their work. The contrast to the first period of research is illustrated by one established employee in the following quote,

> Before ... when you were here last time, I loved it, I thought I had the best job in the world, I had all these customers that were mine, I did their customer service and I did their sales and I could make whatever decision I liked, no one looked over me, no one said anything to me ... it was freedom, just go, do what you want, and so I learnt how to give great customer service and get sales for it ... it is not like this now ... I have never been so watched and managed, they [management] won't let us do anything anymore!

Furthermore, the lack of employee ownership over their work compared to that of the previous year was another concern for established employees. As one noted,

> We don't have ownership over our work anymore, I feel like a robot, we have the same conversations about the same topics, the same guidelines that we can't change ... before I felt as though it was my business ... I am definitely more distant now and less fanatical as a result ... the work is now boring, so boring and I really feel like I am going brain dead here.

The Techs role had also changed between the two research periods. Whereas previously they would have spent two working days in the data centre, and three in the sales office, the new role of 'Data Centre Operations' was introduced, and it was these employees who would work solely in the data centre. Of the Techs in the sales office, their department had been split into two distinct sub-sections that echoed that of the revised AMs, Managed Techs and Intensive. The 15 Managed Techs worked on the solutions of 80 percent of WebCo UK customers while the six Intensive Techs were more proactive with their smaller customer base.

Two other new departments had been introduced by the second period of research; the Lead Development Team (LDT) and the group of on-site Solution Engineers (SEs). The LDT was initially introduced as a stop gap for previous Q-Team employees before they became AMs or members of the sales teams. This newly recognized role involved outbound calling to leads that had been lost or previously rejected. At the time of the second period of research there were three members of this team who were responsible for generating 40 qualified leads a month. Often looking hassled with their heads in their hands, the aim for this role was, as one manager put it 'to toughen up the Q-Teamers for a sales role at WebCo'. The other new role was that of SE. WebCo had recruited five SEs by 2006 who were highly qualified electronic engineers who were responsible for translating technical language and deploying the more complex customer solutions.

8.4 The 'Tech Cycle'

As we have learned, the role of WebCo Techs was to respond to the tickets that customers placed on their MyWeb secure online portal. TV screens dotted around the office showed pie charts that would be composed of the various Techs that were logged into MyWeb. The size of the ticket queue was also written at the top of the screen and it was also reflected in the pie chart's colour which ranged from red which indicated a high ticket-to-Tech ratio, through orange and towards green which was indicative of a low Tech-to-ticket ratio. I was informed that the maximum number of tickets at any one time during January 2006 was 25. At the time of the second period of research (May to September, 2006) the average number of tickets was 105 and this was a result of the rapid organizational growth, and also what was termed by Dave (a Tech) the 'mass exodus of Tech staff largely as a result of the higher salaries that they can command elsewhere'. He noted the impact of this,

> All of the other departments in WebCo have grown but our numbers have stayed reduced, so many have left for competitors that will instantly give them £10,000 more for essentially the same job ... as soon as one left there was a real lack of enthusiasm for the job and it became contagious, the levels of stress per head have gone through the roof, Techs are now worn down, de-motivated, and the customers are unhappy.

Furthermore, Alan, the WebCo UK training manager and former Tech, spoke emotionally about the situation that the Techs were in and whose work he had great respect for due to his familiarity with their role. Visibly frustrated by the lack of managerial attention given to the Techs he stated that,

> They are in a trough now, what with low morale and levels of service … their magic is disappearing as we have such a high turnover of Techs. We shouldn't be struggling to get them [Techs] in, we had them! We should be struggling to keep them as opposed to just recognizing that we are, as management put it, "losing our secret sauce".

It appeared that many Techs had decided to trade the benefits of working for a 'fanatical' employer for greater financial remuneration. This led to implications for the levels of Fanatical Support™ that the remaining WebCo Techs were able to offer, and another growth challenge in sustaining the high expectations of customers in addition to those of WebCo employees. As Adam noted,

> As we are so down on numbers when you are dealing with customers, it is not "How can I exceed your expectations?', but "How can I get you off the phone as quickly as possible so that I can get you out of the way so that I can get the ticket queue down?" which is the complete reverse! So the problem starts to snowball, the customers have received all this great support in the past and now they are getting fobbed off with this attitude ... they then call their AM and they raise it and everyone gets stressed ... support has definitely gone down, with the exponential increase in tickets we can't meet expectations let alone exceed them, that is too much of an ask.

The lack of Techs and increased work intensification therefore led to a reduction in the delivery of fanatical customer support, the value that was placed at the centre of the organization's culture. This understaffed department also led to increased workloads for other departments, such as the AMs who dealt with the customer complaints of unresolved tickets or comments on their lack of received Fanatical Support™. Acknowledging this, Alexandra (IAM) stated at length that,

> Support is the real big issue at the moment, it is because we have got too many customers and not enough Techs, we are constantly getting calls about low response times from the Techs and we have to deal with these customers ... the poor Techs, they are so slammed with work … and it is difficult for us too as this company is based on the support that we offer our customers and it is hard to tell customers the solution as we know that the Techs are struggling. Whereas before we would be proactive and apologise for any downtime that

they may have experienced through the previous night, we now have no time to do so as it happens too frequently and they tell us! There is nothing that you can say really, we can't get enough Techs in and it is not as if we can get the US office to help out either as they are struggling too. We do try and tell customers that we are on a recruitment drive to get in more Techs but they are like "that is not my problem; my problem is that I am paying you to host my server and the response times are awful or that shoddy mistakes are happening".

As highlighted in the previous quotation, the lack of Techs had further implications for the WebCo recruitment team. Indeed, the HR department would constantly remind new Webbers to recommend their 'Tech friends' to apply to work at WebCo. Upon their hiring, Webbers received a bonus of £1500 at the time of the study. The recruitment of Techs was clearly a problem for the recruitment team where in contrast to the sales employees, Techs were required to have a certain level of technical competence in addition to their perceived receptivity with the organizational values. As Carrie, a member of the HR department noted,

I don't know what the answer is to get more in as we have high standards for hiring Techs *and* we need the right attitude! There will come a point where we just need bums on seats and I think we are getting near that now with the technical staff as we are aware that it can take up to three months to get Techs in after they have given their notice and had two months of training here …. Recruiting is a problem as we are out of London, it is such a commute for anybody unless they happen to live around this area and you can just see that all the Techs look so dejected, me and Tanya went and bought 'em a box of chocolates to cheer them up and it did cheer them up for a little bit, but then they jokingly e-mailed around saying "thank you could you find us some more Techs as well". We *really* feel for them and they are struggling *big* time, then another tech will leave which makes the situation even worse, they leave saying "I have worked for WebCo" and they get snapped up. [Emphasis added]

The effect of Techs leaving WebCo resulted in creating rifts within the depleted technical team that again contributed to the reduction of offered levels of fanaticism. Indeed, during the research I learned of instances where the increased workload as a result of the smaller tech team and rapid growth of customer numbers had led to in-group conflict. While one tech claimed that he did not let the increased workload affect him, he did note the indirect impact that it has had on himself and the organizational culture,

> For me, yes it is tempting to get stressed when the numbers in the queue are high, but you are you are only one person and the answer is not double the work, it is double the people, we all have a work rate you we are comfortable with and it takes time to give a good quality service, otherwise we will bodge jobs. I focus on quality and not quantity and I don't get stressed that much even if 200 tickets are in the queue, but my stress comes from other people when they start to get stressed and I can see them messing up stuff and I can see that the relationship between the team is strained …. When you see another Tech being sharp with an AM or BDC, you are like "mate, it is not your fault", 'cos every time that you do that it takes a chip off the culture and pull us back from creating this strong culture.

Divisions within the technical employees were also based around the length of duration at WebCo. Indeed, it appeared that the more recently recruited Techs were responsible for further group conflict, where their perceived lack of fanaticism was un-welcomed by established Techs. Speaking to Ben who had the largest amount of years among the technical Webbers, he remembered how there was one day where the screens were 'so red that it emitted a glow of danger in the office'. On this day, there were over 200 tickets in the queue and the numbers of Techs at work were further reduced due to illness and holidays. However, he talked of his disgust with the newer Techs who were leaving their desks to take their breaks in addition to taking their full lunch entitlement. His cynicism of the cultural value of FanaticalSupport™ can be seen below,

> FanaticalSupport™ is the feeling that it engenders in you of fear that if don't work for that many hours, like if you are always the first to leave, you always feel like you are the first to leave, and people will say "oh you are leaving now, part timer, you are not fanatical" in a jokey way but not completely jokey! It is almost big brother engrained into you and I am starting to think whether fanaticism means to me people working their fucking butts off for the same money as people who do nothing!

Similarly, another established Tech (Matthew) questioned his previous effort in striving to deliver high levels of Fanatical Support™,

> When someone leaves it is so hard to make that up in terms of work, I have always tried my best to cover for it, but it has been so hard to not let our customer service levels crack … the lack of Techs is only noticeable when they do crack though, so perhaps what we should have done is let the cracks show up earlier so that we would get help sooner.

Matthew illustrates that previously, it had not been in the nature of established Techs to let the cracks in service delivery show. An interesting paradox is inferred

from this quotation where the continuation of Fanatical Support™ and of the 'cultural bubbliness' is also the centre of its demise. However, his reflection on this could be interpreted as a lower level of attachment to the core cultural value of Fanatical Support™, where he is able to be objective and makes a distinction between the benefit to himself at the expense of the customer and the organization. In an environment of large ticket queues and under the increased pressure of a lack of support staff, the reaction of the Techs with less experience in WebCo is reminiscent of what we learned earlier in this chapter where newer WebCo sales employees illustrated an instrumentality in their work. The same appeared to be true of the recently recruited Techs. Although it was a mixture of both the established and newer Techs who were choosing to leave, the more recent recruits illustrated an instrumentality in their decision to remain at WebCo. As Adrian commented,

> It has been hard as we have loads to do compared with the company that I came from, but the reason why I stayed was because I thought that I'll get praise for staying and I just kept on thinking that if everyone goes then before you know it I will be the most experienced Tech here, and that can only be good for my career.

The above quote raises further issues over the quality of newer employees at WebCo and their potentially negative impact on what established employees perceptions of the organizational culture. In the next section we will see how the rapid organizational growth led to the introduction of cross-functional teams that changed the work organization of WebCo AM, Sales, BDC and Tech employees and how it has reduced the autonomy of established employees by 'forcing' them to alter their preferred work communication channels. We will also learn how these teams have led established Webbers to recognize the lower levels of offered newcomer cultural engagement.

8.5 The Introduction of Cross-Functional Teams – 'Fusters'

By the time of the second period, another change to work organization was the introduction of Cross-Functional Teams (CFTs) that integrated AMs, Techs and BDCs. The literature highlights the popularity of such structural solutions in fast-changing, high-technology firms, particularly; those that value adaptability, speed and an intense focus on responding to customer needs (Ford and Randoph, 1992; Parker,

2003). Cross-functional teams can be either permanent or temporary organizational structural mechanisms that typically overlay existing organizational functions (Galbraith, 1994) and can be defined as,

> A group of people with a clear purpose representing a variety of functions or disciplines in the organization whose combined efforts are necessary for achieving the team's purpose (Parker, 2003: 6).

There are frequently employed as a way of benefiting product development processes (Anacona and Caldwell, 1992a; Hitt, Hoskisson, and Nixon, 1993; Jassawalla and Sashittal, 1999), although their use in terms of strengthening service quality is also noted in the literature (see Parker, 2003). The literature points to gains in employee job satisfaction (Fried et al., 2000), employee empowerment and opportunities for professional growth (Edmonson, Bohmer, and Pisano, 2001). This section notes contradictory evidence however, by drawing on empirical data from the WebCo re-organization of work that was labelled 'Fanatical Clusters' (or more succinctly 'Fusters'). Such cross-functional teams were introduced from WebCo US in response to the rapid organizational growth and in an attempt to sustain the core cultural value of Fanatical Support™ within each respective work team. Three 'Fusters' were introduced in the UK office, and each fuster comprised of three Techs, around seven AMs, three BDCs and a team leader. The intention of 'Fusters' was to provide a dedicated team of Webbers who would be empowered to make decisions with their fuster members on their shared accounts. The workforce had therefore been fragmented and customers were assigned to a fuster where AMs worked with their Techs in order to resolve customer queries. Any customer upgrades would be passed to the BDC within the specific fuster. The rationale and advantages of these cross-functional teams can be seen in the following quote from one manager,

> 'Fusters' are our support units, they make for a more fanatical customer experience as they [the customers] get a dedicated team of Webbers who are devoted to giving fanatical support.... The teams get a better understanding of their accounts and of the customers' needs, they can cover each other's' accounts when they go on holidays as they are closer to their fuster members' clients, and this all leads to greater customer satisfaction and greater revenue.

However, while the above quotation lists the advantages that such CFTs could engender, a paradox of such 'high performance' systems has been highlighted by

Jenkins and Delbridge (2007) who note not only the benefits of increasing worker interdependence through teams, but point to the resultant fragmented and problematic social relations that reduce employee discretionary effort and organizational performance (see also Strangleman and Roberts, 1999). Direct parallels can be drawn to WebCo with many employees referring to such a structural change not as 'Fusters' but as 'Flusters' and as we will see in this section, employees illustrated their discontent with the new practices.

Centring around two factors, the respective fuster, and the employee's length of WebCo service, it appeared that employees questioned the benefits of 'Fusters' where their introduction brought the increased departmental fragmentation and altered the communication paths of workers in AM and BDC roles. As one Linux AM stated,

> I just don't see or speak to the Windows guys unless we have a full team meeting and that is only once a month, you just literally have no relation with them, none of the customers cross over and they have completely different systems. The support teams have also been divided so we just feel as though we have all been cut off from each other.

Furthermore, a Windows AM commented on an inevitable consequence of growth in how they also felt 'isolated' in their fuster. This employee then went on to note their change in identificatory reference point from that of the organization as a whole, to that of their respective fuster,

> As a company we are not together as a whole anymore, we are more a group of 'Fusters', that is the shame with these 'Fusters', things are a bit more split now, everything is more spaced out and formalized so departments don't have any need to cross over ... everything is in its own little bubble and even though you may be sitting on a table next to another fuster, you are in a separate one and there is really no need to speak to them ... I guess you don't feel the whole closeness now as a company but I think you feel closer with your team … the team is now my company and with people elsewhere, you have very little interaction.

Whereas previously this employee's identificatory reference point was to the overarching organizational culture, this has now changed to that of their immediate fuster. Contrary to the positive literature that surrounds the implementation of cross-functional teamworking practices (see for example Parker, 2003), the findings at WebCo appear to have led to fractures that have led to sub-cultural consensus.

Required through growth, the fragmentation of organizational units has led to the fracturing of work group identities and this has therefore appeared to have diluted the previous strong and uniform organizational culture, a finding which is expressed by one established BDC,

> Before the culture was everywhere, we all sang from the same hymn sheet ... but now ... the "Flusters", sorry "Fusters" [she laughs], mean that we all work with different people, you can still have that nice, fanatical unit within your fuster, but the culture in some is completely different to others even though we are all doing the same job.

The introduction of 'Fusters' has also highlighted differences in the levels of employee discretionary effort and this is now explained by changes to the preferred and natural work communication channels of established employees. Prior to the introduction of 'Fusters', BDCs and AMs had the empowerment to select the tech that they would work with on a customer solution. Due to this, it appeared that fractures that centred on the duration of the employee's service at WebCo had appeared. Notably, the established BDC and AM Webbers illustrated their previous preference to default to established Techs for their assistance. As one BDC stated,

> I have a much bigger attachment to the older Techs, you can rely on them to do things, and to do it well … if I have five Techs in front of me then I would always have gone for one from the old crew to get stuff done, I trusted them with my customers.

The lower levels of attachment to the organizational culture of new recruits has been noted earlier in this chapter, yet it merits further attention here where the change in work organization has forced established employees to work with the 'less fanatical newbies'. An illustration of the lower performance levels of newer members of staff is noted below by one established employee who remained committed to the delivery of service excellence,

> I think I am still quite attached and I would get it sorted if there was an issue, I really think that management have brainwashed me because I really just want to make sure that the customer service is what it should be … it really annoys me when I see that the new people have just been lazy and they haven't done stuff … they just take their role here as a job kind of thing and I think that they don't get it or care as much as us older members.

However, the majority of established employees who were interviewed expressed lower levels of engagement with the core cultural values as a result of the

introduced 'Fusters'. Here, their levels of discretionary effort have been reduced as they have been forced to work with newer employees who they would traditionally have avoided, where it was previously the newer AMs who used to work with the more recent Techs. Therefore, what appears to have changed in WebCo is that the established employees were unable to work with their established work groups, they have thus been unable to avoid working with newer employees. This has led to their recognition that newer employees were unable and unwilling to perform at their previously high levels of customer service which in turn, explains their own reduced levels of engagement with the core cultural value of Fanatical Support™ and discretionary effort. As one BDC with five years WebCo experience stated,

> I used to be petrified of letting the MD down, you would see how passionate he was and you didn't want to be the weak link, so I would work so hard as I didn't want to be the weak link in this WebCo fanatical kind of story, but now I watch and work with all these weak links, I see day-to-day failures and even if I do my job perfectly, you know what, it fucks up somewhere else and then I have to pick up the pieces … well not any more, I just can't be bothered.

Similarly, an established AM commented on their reduced levels of attachment to their work as a result of such 'weak links',

> In the past, we all believed that we wanted to make WebCo something and we all thought that as a team, we were working towards WebCo getting somewhere, whereas now, you will do your part in your team perfectly and then someone else just can't be bothered, we have so many weak links and culture wise I don't feel engaged anymore, our fanatical support has been watered down and there is nothing that I can do about it apart from just getting on with my day job.

As we have seen in this chapter, rapid organizational growth has brought various issues. The roles of Webbers' have become increasingly standardized and we have also seen how the need to recruit members to the AM and Tech teams has undermined the organizational culture. Added to the introduction of 'Fusters' that has forced established employees to work with newer employees, fractures have appeared in terms of each individual work fuster and the preference of established employees to work with other long serving members has been highlighted. We have learned how the reduced levels of engagement with the organizational culture, competence and discretionary effort of newer employees have been recognized by established employees through the changes to work organization. Interestingly, it appeared that

this change has led to the newer employees setting the norms of discretionary effort and the levels of engagement with the core cultural value of Fanatical Support™. These sentiments are expressed and summarized in the following quotation by an established AM,

> I am just so bored, my role is the same every day, I work with the same people and when you are bored it is so hard to motivate yourself to make those fanatical calls to customers … I used to do it, and I would love it as it was my way of making sure my business was ok, but it is not my business anymore, other people are fucking up in my fuster all the time and there is only so much fire fighting I can do so, well now I just don't bother, what is the point when you know that it is going to mess up somewhere else?

The above quotation illustrates that the established employees' levels of discretionary effort and involvement with Fanatical Support™ as a core organizational value have become reduced through the recruitment of employees who are unwilling or unable to perform at the previous levels. Furthermore, it notes how the introduction of 'Fusters' has brought changes to the work organization at WebCo that has also been instrumental in reducing their discretion to deliver on the core value of 'Fanatical Support™ in all we do'. Hence, it would appear that it is newer employees that were setting the norms of discretionary effort and cultural engagement. This finding contradicts extant literature (see Nelson and Quick, 2006) that argues that it is the more established employees who are responsible for setting the norms for newer recruits to adopt.

8.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has focused on the structural changes at WebCo that had been introduced by the time of the second research period. The first of these concerns the practice of recruitment. As is later discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, recruitment is uncovered to be a social process; one that critiques technical notions of recruiting for person-organization fit. The success of WebCo's culture has also been shown in this chapter to be partly responsible for its demise. The empirical findings suggest that by the time of the second research period, WebCo appeared to attract instrumental candidates who viewed the organization not only as 'a good place to work', but also as 'a good place to leave with it on your CV'. These increased levels of candidate instrumentality were further fuelled by a structural change to that enforced the need for all sales employees to have a minimum of two years sales

experience. This chapter has detailed how this led to greater levels of both candidate cynicism and knowledgeable instrumentality.   This candidate instrumentality stemmed from their desire, and need to reach the better paid WebCo roles as they had previously earned a greater income in Account Management or sales roles with other organizations. Furthermore, the good promotion opportunities at WebCo and its well-regarded reputation in the industry formed other rationales for their instrumental engagement. Hence, the change in recruitment practice and the increasing success of WebCo contributed to the dilution of the organizational culture.

This chapter then noted the significant changes to work organization that occurred through rapid organizational growth. These changes have including the greater specialization of employee roles, a standardization of their work processes and heightened formalization of organizational procedures. It is clear that such changes to the nature of WebCo work have led to a decrease in employee satisfaction, at least for those who have seen their autonomy reduced by such measures (the established employees).   The rapid organizational growth rates have also resulted in work intensification for WebCo employees, which in turn, has created peer conflict and increased the pressure on Webbers; particularly those in the technical department. This work intensification led established Techs to recognize the lower levels of discretionary effort towards Fanatical Support™ from the newer recruits. Accordingly, this has led to decreased worker satisfaction, it has reduced their engagement with the organizational culture, diluted their Fanatical Support™ and, faced with the opportunity of a higher salary in a competitor firm, many have subsequently decided to leave, forgoing the (diluted) WebCo organizational culture for greater financial remuneration.

The increasing involvement of WebCo US has also been recognized as it has in other chapters, specifically, in terms of the enforced changes to work organization. Through their introduction of 'Fusters', fragmentation has occurred resulting in multiple groups of employees who are fractured by both their specialism (for example the AMs) and their length of WebCo employment. Accordingly, there has been an increase in the levels of peer conflict and this has degraded the experience of work for established employees while also serving to dilute the 'strength' of the overall organizational culture. This chapter has detailed the organization of work 'Fusters'

(or 'Flusters'), and it notes how they became the identificatory reference point for its members. This is in contrast to the first research period where employees illustrated a greater identification with the organization as a unitary whole. Accordingly, in addition to providing evidence of internal dissatisfaction within 'Fusters', we have learned how each fuster has brought its own sub-culture (see Boisnier and Chatman, 2003; Harris and Ogbonna, 1998; Siehl and Martin, 1984). As such, the strength and uniformity of the organizational culture has become diluted with the presence of sub-cultures.

Finally, the rapid growth of WebCo has resulted in many new employees. We have learned how the capability of the new workforce has been reduced and how the established employers were undermined by such 'weak links'. This has also limited the discretion of workers in selecting those that they would naturally have turned to for guidance. With clear parallels to the work of Jenkins and Delbridge (2007), the introduction of the CFTs changed the working dynamics of the AM, Tech and BDC roles and has forced established workers to interact and work with newer employees. An important finding is uncovered here, where, through their experience of working with more recent employees, established Webbers noted the newcomers' inability or unwillingness to perform at their levels of discretionary effort in terms of delivering fanatical customer experiences. Interestingly, it appeared that the introduction of 'Fusters' led to the reduction of discretionary effort of established employees, where they likened working with newcomers initially as 'fire fighting', but eventually gave in and reduced their effort levels at work. Therefore, decreases in employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, the organizational value of Fanatical Support™, and hence the strength of the organizational culture, appears to have become diluted. A contribution is later given (in the following chapter) by the finding of the reduced levels of established employee discretionary effort in that it was the newer employees who were driving down the expectations in terms of the norms of cultural engagement and discretionary effort. The next chapter provides a discussion of the key contributions of this thesis in relation to the existing academic literature and suggests fruitful avenues for future research.

CHAPTER NINE: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter provides a review of the issues addressed in this study in order to identify the key implications and the contributions to existing theory and practice. The literature review chapters examined the concepts of organizational control, culture and structure in detail, and highlighted the gaps in these literatures. The empirical data of this thesis was generated from a longitudinal ethnographic study that consisted of two time periods (2005, 2006) and this enabled the investigation of the managerial attempts of sustaining the WebCo culture, a culture that was directly attributed to the organization's success. The principle aim of this study was to explore the managerial attempts at sustaining the claimed strong culture through a period of rapid organizational growth.

In contrast to the functionalist literature (Peters and Waterman, 1982), or indeed the totalizing narrative of employee subordination (Braverman, 1979), attention has been given to employee agency throughout this thesis and the Webbers illustrated a clear capacity to make sense of situations and adjust their behaviour accordingly. Applying an interpretivist turn on technical orientations of WebCo managers, this research recognizes that employees are not viewed as cultural dopes, and that the shop floor does not exist in a vacuum (Grugulis et al., 2000). A finding of this thesis illustrates that, although WebCo appeared to be a high performing, rapidly expanding organization with a strong, unitary culture during the first research period; a multiplicity of meanings were present with inherent tensions and sub-cultural consensus in the second. Through the analysis of normative forms of control and the use of structure as attempts to sustain the WebCo culture, this chapter will draw theoretical insights in order to better understand the active managerial attempts at sustaining and controlling organizational culture. It therefore avoids the popular, simplistic and rational accounts from practitioner orientated literatures (see, Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Cameron and Quinn, 2011; Connors and Smith; 2012), and allows for sensitive critical reflections on the significance of managing organizational culture.

The central contribution of this thesis is that culture can be managed, but not as a distinct and separate activity. The findings illustrate how the management of

culture can be effective yet only if other aspects of 'good work' are present. The data suggest that it is the material conditions of work that fully engage or disengage employees. The implications for normative control have been teased out in relation to the material conditions of WebCo work in each data chapter. The changes that had been made to the structural aspects of WebCo work in the eight months between my two research periods had a profound impact on worker autonomy, engagement and commitment to the organization. The principle aim of this study; that of exploring the managerial attempts at sustaining the claimed strong culture through a period of rapid organizational growth, has been highlighted and the rationale for my perspective noted. The related objectives which arise from gaps identified in the literature are expressed in the following questions which are addressed by this thesis:

Can strong organizational cultures be managed as a sole management activity?

If not, what other conditions of work enable strong organizational cultures?

What are the challenges of sustaining a fun organizational culture in a period of rapid growth?

How do employees experience fun organizational cultures over time?

The following sections are organized around the research objectives of the study in order to track the changes to both the managerial attempts of sustaining the organizational culture, and employee' reactions. The remainder of this chapter links the findings of this study with the existing literature and commences by analyzing the direct managerial attempts of normative control. Subsequently, the introduction of structural practices (changes to recruitment, work organization, and career performance management) are then evaluated. Ultimately, the relationship between culture and structure offers the explanation for the apparent dilution of WebCo culture between the two periods; the shift from Spring to Winter.

The following section analyses the successful management of WebCo's organizational culture at the time of the first research period. It examines the normative forms of control and the role of the then UK MD, Peter, in creating a strong organizational culture before then noting how the conditions were ripe for the creation of a strong cultural milieu. The various cultural factors are then analyzed (the corporate magician, open book meetings and cuddle time) in addition to how the

structural conditions and material conditions of work facilitated the management of culture during this time period.

9.2 Managing Employee Subjectivity: The Successful Combination of Cultural and Structural Controls

WebCo managers proclaimed that their organization had a 'strong organizational culture', and that it was the company's 'genetics'. This analogy is comparable to the definition of organizational culture promulgated by Kilmann (1985: 72), who stated that 'culture is the soul or essence of an organization'. The functional approach of managers towards culture views it as an instrument in order to accomplish certain outcomes and falls within Smircich's 'has' approach to culture. Akin to the writers who posit culture as a variable to be controlled by managers in order to achieve organizational effectiveness (see; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982), success at WebCo was directly attributed to their corporate culture, with one manager stating that 'essentially all we do is the same as the competition, but it's the way that we go about it that makes the difference and none of our competitors are capable of catching up with our winning formula quickly enough' (c.f Barney, 1986).

WebCo's emphasis on providing customers with Fanatical Support™ was a core cultural value, one that defined the managerial expectations of all who worked at the organization (c.f. Peters and Waterman, 1982). In order to analyze culture, Weber and Dacin (2011) advocate that attention should be paid to organizational rituals. Geertz (1973) also highlights the important contribution of rituals as symbolic communicators of culture and WebCo managers engaged in habitual acts that included 'the fanatical straitjacket'. The organizational culture was also communicated to employees through the use of symbols. In an attempt to create employee shared meaning (Alvesson, 2002), a variety of organizational symbolism was noted throughout both observational periods at WebCo. Such symbols correspond to Schein's (1985) artefact level of organizational culture, with such objects inferring a greater meaning to employees than purely the object itself, therefore potentially aiding the reinforcement of corporate values (Cohen, 1974). The open plan office at WebCo was a facilitator to open communication, and certainly,

provided a platform for 'the constant reproductions of employee interpretations through social relations' (Iivari, 2002: 71). The active managerial attempts at reinforcing socio-ideological forms of control brought 'cuddle time', corporate tattoos, scooters, magicians and fanatical fairies. This thesis therefore supports authors who note the distinctive nature of modern managerial techniques (see Kunda, 1992; Schein, 1995; Legge, 1999; Grugulis et al., 2000) and also of fun cultures (Bolton and Houlihan, 2009).

Critically, this study argues that the senior WebCo managers adopted the idea of organizational culture as a control mechanism, where employees are deemed as 'emotional, symbol-loving and needing to belong to a superior entity' (Ray, 1986: 170). Within WebCo, it was apparent that these symbols were attempts to shape and mould employees' thoughts to those of the management team (see Willmott, 1993). Furthermore, the findings of this study note how organizational culture as a new discourse can be considered to conceal management's desire for largely a controlled operating environment, with compliant and productive employees (Casey, 1999). Through such attempts of normative control, managers endeavour to 'transform and reify not only what we think, but the way we think' (Wendt, 1994: 36) and seek to regulate the 'employee's self, rather than the work they are engaged in' (Kunda, 1992: 2) in their quest to mobilize employee emotion towards their desired goals (Schein, 1983). The aim of normative control through corporate culturism is to encourage employees to accept, or even embrace the values and desired attitudes of their leaders, while initiating a sense of belongingness to the organization (Athos and Pascale, 1981; Bruce-Briggs, 1982). This shift from 'control by repression to control by seduction' (Reed, 1992: 205), hence, is undertaken with the assumption that greater organizational commitment reaps increased profits. In the extreme, such managerial attempts at normative control may lead to employees who confess to possessing a 'corporate consciousness' (Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980: 122), and this was demonstrated with certain members at WebCo.

However, I would not wish to reduce employees to being apathetic, helpless and passive recipients of managerial forms of normative control. It is my position that the knowledgeable agentic actions of Webbers enabled them to judge the exhortations of management for themselves and that many other aspects in

conjunction with the high levels of normative control contributed to the success at the first research period. What is central in explaining the greater levels of 'corporate consciousness' at the time (Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980: 122) was a combination of factors that included Peter's charismatic leadership style and his management approach. Peter worked hard to create an energy around the development of 'the WebCo Way' and was given the opportunity to do so by WebCo US. I therefore acknowledge the impact of leaders who can facilitate the management of organizational culture and contend that there is some value in the work of authors such as Obgonna (1992) who note the strategic importance of capable leaders that can instil cultural values in their employees. However, to simply state this is to ignore many other factors which this thesis contributes to discussions of cultural control. The context was appropriate for Peter's hand on hand off management style and it was clear that Webbers had bought into the opportunity to build a new organization. This could also be partly explained by Fleming and Sturdy's (2009) contention that young individuals are more likely to adopt a normalized organizational culture. The conditions were therefore, ripe for culture creation. As Mintzberg notes (1983) small organizations can foster strong cultures that quickly become based on the leader's sense of mission. The leader's prior experiences become the answer to organizational problems and this sets the path for future decisions (see also Schein, 1985).

Many aspects of 'good work' were also present at the time of the first research period and I argue that, in conjunction with the bespoke and unique forms of culture management, this was another key contributor to cultural success. Webbers enjoyed the hard testing interviews in order to become a part of 'the WebCo family' and welcomed the opportunity to visit the organization where they would become accustomed to the cultural symbols. Webbers also appeared to believe in the accuracy of the psychometric tests that initially gave them their post and then formed the basis of their career development opportunities around their individual interests. The tests may have helped to limit construct innovations that deviated away from espoused organizational logics (Fournier, 1997) while also acting as a 'reading map' to orientate recently recruited graduates. The speed at which employees were promoted at WebCo during the first period of research would also have helped reduce the frustration that graduates often feel during the lived experience of their early careers (Fournier, 1997), and hence, this could also have contributed to their satisfaction with

the 'WebCo Way'. Another structural factor that led to the successful cultural control in the first period was the availability of considerable rewards for employees that were high performing. Employees could earn large bonuses and also money at the culturally themed events (such as 'the golden hole' competition and trips abroad). Ogbonna (1992) identifies reward management as a key factor of cultural control. Moreover, Kerr and Slocum (1987: 99) position reward systems to be 'the unequivocal statement of the organization's values and beliefs'. The reward practices at WebCo during the first research period reinforced the organizational culture and employees also experienced high levels of responsible autonomy (Friedman, 1977) where they were able to set their conditions of work and engage in a variety of different tasks. With obvious parallels to Ouchi's Theory Z (1981), Walton (1985) highlights how workers perform best when they are encouraged and when they receive autonomy and a range of responsibilities. This is the opposite of direct control and the structural aspects of work certainly account for the high levels of employee satisfaction and engagement with the organizational culture at the first research period. All of these factors facilitated the management of culture and these systematic and structural factors, gave a fruitful environment in which this could occur.

By the time of the second research period the complexity of social relations at WebCo illustrated the shift away from possessing a corporate consciousness for established employees. The once basic assumption and dominant organizing logic of Fanatical Support™ had subsided for these employees. A fracture between new and established employees could be seen and this empirical finding raises questions as to whether strong organizational cultures can be sustained. This finding agrees with Meek (1984) and challenges the contention of functionalist writers who argue that internalized norms produce stable value systems. The empirical data throughout this thesis illustrates culture as an 'on-going process of meaning construction' (Chan, 2003: 312, in Westwood and Clegg, 2003) and not a fixed entity.

Many structural changes had occurred in WebCo. This thesis argues that this directly contributed to the lack of employee engagement with the value of Fanatical Support™ and that while the normative forms of control were still present, they took a different and more formalized form under the stewardship of a new leader.

Importantly, the material conditions of their work had changed to become less attractive and this chapter now details each of the factors of 'poor work' that both generated and led to the managerial difficulties in sustaining a strong organizational culture.

Chapter seven explains the reduced levels of established employee attachment to the organizational culture via the employee' recognition of management's excessive focus on symbolism and of the controlling aspects of the WebCo Way. The data generated from WebCo illustrated the contradictions between delivering Fanatical Support™ (through offering great customer experiences) and the optical embodiment of values (wearing a fanatical t-shirt). Established employees in the second period of research were able to view the fracture between the two elements, and this led to their heightened awareness of the socio-ideological aim of strong organizational cultures, compounding their desire to find a work-life balance. The result was one of a dilution of the strength of the organizational culture, and this is also the outcome of the leadership change.

Schein (1985, 1986; 1990) has emphasized the role of organizational founders in creating a culture, and the departure of the WebCo UK MD evacuated cultural meaning for the established employees. The specifics of his departure included the active attempt of management to strip away any symbolic content that represented his presence, for example, organizational photographs that included Peter were stripped from the Walls. This was noted by the established employees to be an illustration of ex-communication. A related factor that led established employees to recognize the shift from Spring to Winter was the inability of John (Peter's replacement) to communicate the culture of Fanatical Support™. This finding links with Ogbonna's (1992) contention that certain managerial competencies are required for managers to engage employees with organizational cultures.

The data in chapter seven of this thesis also illustrated the inevitability of sub-cultural consensus for rapidly growing organizations. As suggested by Martin et al. (2006; see also Parker, 2000; Martin, 2004), these sub-cultures appeared along functional and hierarchical differentiation. Orthogonal sub-cultures have also been shown to exist where knowledgeable employees were able to maintain their individual values while also demonstrating surface level compliance to the managerially

espoused culture (see Ogbonna and Wilkinson, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Fleming and Spicer, 2003; Brown and Hesketh, 2004). The key divide by the second research period was the sub-cultural consensus based on the length of WebCo employment and this is illustrated throughout this discussion chapter.

The next section investigates the findings from the second research period in terms of aligning the structural practice of recruitment with culture control.

9.3 Person - organization Fit or the Re - presentation of Fit

The second critical literature evaluation (chapter four) highlighted the shift in recruitment practices towards the use of competency modelling (see Lawler, 1994) and the according increase in assessment techniques, such as personality tests and assessment centres. In addition to the on-site interviews, both recruitment methods formed the 2005 WebCo recruitment processes where the judged compatibility between the graduates' personality and the organizational cultural norms, values and belief systems appeared to be one of the main criteria for recruitment (see Maccoby, 1976; Chatman, 1989; Rynes and Gerhart, 1990; Bowen, Ledford, and Nathan, 1991). This thesis demonstrates that WebCo management placed considerable emphasis on a recruitment process that recruited candidates for their attitude and not their technical skills. The trend for strategically recruiting competencies is therefore reinforced through this case study, where, through the detailed ethnography, the process of implementation of an organization that recruits for 'attitude and not ability' is detailed. At WebCo, the managerial teams' prescribed view of their organization's culture directly influenced those were recruited, those with receptivity to the identity controlling mechanism of WebCo's strong organizational values and beliefs.

Recruitment is often posited as functional tool in order to accomplish the wanted workforce (Beer et al,. 1984). Such prescriptive writings elicit practices such as psychometric tests that conceptualize employees as measurable, tangible entities (see Torrington, Hall and Taylor, 2008). From this perspective, interviews are assumed to have considerable strength in assessing how well a person's values fit the organizational values (Dawes, 1988; Rothstein and Jackson, 1980; Snyder, Berscheid and Matwychk, 1988). Critical accounts credit recruitment procedures with greater

power however, and suggest that they provide shared meanings about organizations that sustain normative orders and therefore, produce, as opposed to discover, the individual (Deetz, 2003; Iles and Salaman, 1995; Steffy and Grimes, 1992; Townley, 1993). The WebCo recruitment process was elaborate, time consuming, and the empirical data illustrated the attempts to create powerful and coherent forms of culture regulation (see Alvesson and Karreman, 2007; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002).

In contrast to the functional literature, this study emphasizes that it is the candidate's capacity to provide a presentation of fit that is uncovered in interview situations at the time of the second research period and not that of person-organization fit. The act of WebCo recruitment is identified as a social process where candidates drew on their knowledgeability of recruitment situations and demonstrated culturally appropriate behaviours. The candidates were high self-monitors who were able to 'regulate their expressive self-presentation for the sake of desired public appearances, and thus be highly responsive to social and interpersonal cues of situationally appropriate performance' (Snyder and Gangestad, 1986: 125; see also Snyder, 1974). Drawing a comparison with Brown and Hesketh's (2004) 'players' label for graduates in recruitment situations, a complex dynamic is therefore illustrated where candidate agency in, and their knowledgeability of, recruitment processes allowed them to hone their narrative of employability through the various noted discourses (see Brown and Hesketh, 2004).

Although WebCo managers expressed high levels of trust in the personality test in measuring an individual's traits, it would appear that as candidates strategically adjusted their responses to construct the managerially desired personality, the psychometric test may therefore, be deemed worthless (see also Garrety et al., 2003) and talk of organizations recruiting for profile and character first and technical skills second may, through these methods at least, be in vain (Grugulis et al., 2000). The question of whether this has implications for the management of organizational culture has also been empirically examined in this thesis where one could argue that owing to candidates' illustrated surface levels of compliance, the culture is being reproduced, albeit measuring at diluted levels on the organizations net promoter score.

The success and reputation of WebCo as the industry leading customer service provider had increased the attractiveness of WebCo as an employer by the time of the

second research period. Through the longitudinal study at WebCo, the careers of employees appeared to drive employee instrumentality to have the organization on their CVs and for the future promotion opportunities within the rapidly expanding firm. Such instrumentality further fuelled their game playing at each stage of the revised recruitment process. It appeared that the increased levels of candidate instrumentality were compounded by the new requirement to only recruit sales employees with a minimum of two years sales experience. Such a change created a fracture with the expectations of these employees who appeared to be not as readily inculcated with the WebCo Way. A logical explanation for their reduced motivation levels was given where they claimed that they had already worked for organizations that espoused strong culture theses, a finding that further supports the popularity of interest in this academic area. The work of Hackman and Oldham (1980) would also seem logical to help understand their mismatched expectations, in that new members of WebCo staff were placed in a job which failed to satisfy their needs for responsibility and meaningful work.

The next section focuses its analysis on how the changes to work organization between the two research periods have impacted on the WebCo culture; a factor which has been shown to be as important as bespoke managerial attempts are socio-ideological control (Grugulis et al., 2000). The section continues to offer contributions through highlighting the complex social relations and plurality of different meanings that emerged as a direct result of work organization changes. The impact on organizational culture is duly noted.

9.4 Bewitched or Belittled? Work Re - Organization through
   ## 'Fusters' and Formalization

The implementation of CFTs has been shown (in chapter three) to be increasing popular in organizations (Ford and Randolph, 1992). The claimed advantages of co-ordination and speed are purported to be especially effective when timely customer service is paramount to an organization's success (Parker, 2003). Schein (1985, 1986; 1990) recognizes that work organization has an impact on organization cultures and a contribution of this thesis is the given insight into the

modification of social relations and the impact on the strength of the WebCo culture as a direct result of the implementation of CFTs. This section details these complexities that led to a decrease in the ability and willingness of established employees to deliver Fanatical Support™ (the key WebCo measure of cultural strength). Much is already known about the impact of temporal CFTs on employees yet this thesis extends the currently limited understanding of employee experiences within fully dedicated CFTs. The additional demands of permanent CFTs are now detailed in this section.

Edmondson, Bohmer and Pisano (2001) claim that CFTs bring employees benefits in terms of opportunities for professional growth and increased empowerment. However, the exact opposite was found at WebCo, at least for established employees. Sundstrom et al. (1990) highlight the impact of organizational systems and structures (reward systems, geographical proximity, training structures and organizational culture) on the effectiveness of CFTs. Webber (2002) further asserts that managers can shape the organizational culture to facilitate trust and that this leads to successful teamworking. It is the geographical proximity, trust and organizational culture aspects which are central to understanding the reduced levels of offered Fanatical Support™ from established employees in their respective 'Fusters'. As it is so often stated, culture can be viewed as the glue that holds an organization together, integrating and uniting workers to increased levels of effectiveness (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982).

However, the introduction of 'Fanatical Clusters' at WebCo led to sub-cultures (Harris and Ogbonna, 1998; Siehl and Martin, 1984) in which the dominant cultural identificatory reference point for employees became that of their immediate fuster and not any universal binding value system as per the first period of research. The imbued fragmentation and diversity of cultural values was noted by established employees who, through the introduction of CFTs, had seen alterations to their nature of work and a reduction in their agentic capacity to determine their preferred co-workers. This forced changes to social relations. Similarities can be seen with the work of Strangleman and Roberts (1999) and Durand and Hatzfeld where the rapid growth levels at WebCo introduced 'strangers' (Palmer, 2004) to the daily working practices of established employees and accordingly, the existing identificatory

reference points between established employees were removed through the limitation of their previous working relationships.

The levels of engagement of established employees with Fanatical Support™ were further undermined by their opinions of their newfound 'strangers'. Due to the close geographical proximity of fuster team members, assessments of employee ability and willingness to engage with and deliver Fanatical Support™ were ongoing and established employees did not perceive the newer employees to share the key cultural values. This led to a lack of trust between these groups (see Sitkin and Roth, 1993). Newer recruits appeared to be 'bewitched' (Knights and McCabe, 2000) by the 'Fusters'; illustrating full internalization with their new roles with instrumental compliance to advance their careers (see Ogbonna and Harris, 1998). The previously high levels of Fanatical Support™ offered by established employees at the first period of research did not conform to Knights and McCabe's (2000) 'bothered' and 'bewildered' categories. Rather, a contribution is given where their engagement with Fanatical Support™ was 'belittled' by newer recruits that appeared to be unable and unwilling to deliver at the same high levels. The recognition of these 'weak links' led to changes in the expected levels of delivery on the WebCo cultural value and a withdrawal of discretionary effort from established employees. Newer employees therefore appeared to be setting the norms of cultural engagement and this finding adds support to a key contribution of this thesis. Notably, a contrasts to the work of Nelson and Quick (2006) who state that established employees typically engender the values to newer recruits.

Although there is always the possibility of established employees viewing the previous work organization with rose tinted spectacles (Gabriel, 1999), the changes to the work organization appeared to bring a plurality of different meanings for employees who became structurally re-organized into 'Fusters'. Echoing Jenkins and Delbridge (2007), the introduction of the HPWS 'Fusters' stimulated fragmentations within each CFT and also fractured the previous social divisions (see also; Jassawaslla and Sashittal, 1999). The established employees did indeed become 'distanced and withdrawn' Jenkins and Delbridge (2007: 20) and this was also reinforced due to the lack of career opportunities for these members of staff (see the following section). The context of stagnant employment in the firm with no opportunities to advance at WebCo led established employees to claim 'the organization has not grown fast

enough'. Unlike in the case of Barker (1993), the formalization of immediate co-workers and standardization of fuster roles limited the incentives for established employees to conform to the teamworking initiative. Established employees had seen their previous levels of autonomy in delivering Fanatical Support™ reduced by the formalization of 'Fusters'.

The high level of growth was also intensifying their experience of work, especially given the difficulties that were being faced in the technical department. The challenges of recruiting industry qualified Techs compounded the work intensification for Webber Techs, yet also for the 'Fusters' as they would be dealing with many more customer complaints. Established Techs had higher workloads and they also recognized lower levels of Fanatical Support™ with those that were newly recruited to the role. This further exacerbated the social tensions and fuelled sub-cultures that were based on the Webbers length of organizational service (c.f. Harris and Ogbonna, 1998). Their understandings of the motivation theories of equity and expectancy were not being met and the rapid growth limited their opportunities to give their desired levels of Fanatical Support™. With the opportunity of more lucrative salaries in competitor firms, many decided to leave. The financial compensation of work appeared to over-ride their passion for the culture which managers believed to be the main motivator.

The level of WebCo remuneration appeared to be atleast as important (if not more so) than the fun culture and this echoes the earlier statement that it is a combination of cultural and structural factors that are necessary if a culture is to be managed. Employee reward systems have been identified as an important area that is linked to the management of organizational culture (Ogbonna, 1992; Chatman and Cha, 2003). This study has already detailed the many different forms of rewards offered at WebCo and the next section will analyze these in relation to existing academic literature.

9.5 A Cultural Career? Pay, Promotion and the Shift from Spring to Winter

The importance of pay in sustaining strong organizational cultures is too easy to underestimate. In their study of managers, Rynes et al. (2002) uncover their lack of readiness to accept the employee claimed importance of pay but this is unlikely to happen given that employees are more likely to underreport the importance of pay to

managers (Rynes, et al., 2004). There are many studies that highlight pay as the most important employee motivator (see for example, Locke et al., 1980) and research points to the competitive advantage that can be gained by 'overpaying' employees and hence, attracting and retaining the best talent (Akerlof et al., 1986). It is also recognized that a lack of synergy between an organizational culture and the embodied values in a compensation plan can lead to puzzled employee dysfunctions (Bruns, 1992).

This was certainly the case at WebCo during the second research period. Due to the increasing reputation of the firm as an employer or choice (manifested in their many 'best company to work for awards') employees expected the level of remuneration to match. WebCo typically paid between 10-20 percent less than their competitors for the equivalent work role, it would appear that the strong, fun organizational culture was not persuasive enough for some employees who decided to leave. As we saw in the chapter eight with the WebCo Techs, the work intensification that was generated through rapid growth compounded this decision and resulted in increased levels of work for the remaining tech and account managers. Chapter eight also analyzed the implications of the introduced requirement of sales employees to have a minimum of two years sales experience by the time of the second research period. These employees were not only used to more engaging forms of work but higher levels of remuneration. The structural aspects of their work therefore led to a reduction in their satisfaction and this fuelled their instrumentality to progress quickly within WebCo which led to the perception of established Webbers that newer employees were less interested in learning about the organizational culture.

At the time of the second research period, WebCo US played a larger role in the performance management practices of the UK subsidiary. They had introduced the Net Promoter Score (NPS®) and this increased the pressure for employees to perform as it reified the felt reduced levels of customer satisfaction with their received levels of Fanatical Support™. The power dynamics between the US and UK branches can also be seen in the example of the Account Management (AM) pay. The empirical data at WebCo noted the suggestion of Leanne (the then AM manager) to initiate an AM pay review team. The specifics of this example heightened awareness of inconsistencies in the managerial approach where the offer of increased remuneration was reneged. Given that the employees were empowered to complete

this benchmarking process by their manager, the result exemplified the opposite, and their pay remained at the same level. Judging the espoused organizational value of 'full disclosure, no surprises', employees were able to 'test the exhortations of top management against reality' (Hill, 1995: 50) and this also resulted in the AMs being negatively perceived as a group of employees by other employees.

However, as a result of their shared meaning, the sub-cultural consensus in the AM department became stronger. The resulting fragmented workplace relations and recognized plurality of different meanings critiques functional managerialist accounts of organizational life which evacuate organizational meaning. As WebCo attributed its success directly to its homogenously strong organizational culture, it would seem logical that the reward practices illustrate 'oneness', transparency and fairness. If Adams' (1963) equity theory is to be followed, then managers should focus on areas of perceived inequities as a matter of urgency. Leanne attempted to do so but the wider power dynamics of her hierarchical superiors supposedly prevented the pay increase. The result had implications for the AM's perceptions of procedural justice where their voice was not heard by senior management and feedback of the decision was lacking (Tyler and Bies, 1990). Additionally, the move of Leanne to then become the WebCo customer satisfaction manager resulted in diluted levels of engagement with Fanatical Support™ as the AM teams' level of trust in Leanne had been questioned.

Rapid organizational growth had enabled the introduction of the customer experience manager role and career development opportunities have been shown by Arnold and Davey (1994; see also; Huselid and Day, 1991) to retain graduates. The rationale for instrumental new Webbers to stay has been illustrated but it appeared that management gave a lack of consideration to the practices of career development for the established employees. Given the formalization of work roles, the introduction of 'Fusters' and the minimization of arenas where established employees could use their discretion due to the introduction of EVA from WebCo US, employees are more likely to lose organizational commitment and satisfaction (Walton, 1985).

Workers at WebCo at the time of the second research period appeared to have had their responsible autonomy taken away which had an impact on their engagement with the normative control systems (Freidman, 1977; Etzioni, 1964). The

standardization of their job roles, fragmentation of work, lack of discretion and stricter surveillance are reminiscent of direct controls which are inappropriate for the Webbers in that environment. It has become evident that while attempts of socio-ideological forms of control may work, the evidence from this thesis suggests that this is only the case when they are in conjunction with aspects of 'good work'. Factors external to the organization were also important in accounting for the success of cultural management. This was certainly the case for established employees as due also to changes in their personal circumstances, they sought a stronger work-life balance; one that gave less engagement with culturally specific events such as the organizational trips abroad. Their loss of a corporate consciousness (Clegg and Dunkerley, 1980: 122) compounded the dilution of the organizational culture.

9.6 Directions for Future Research

The contributions to the research topic have been clearly stated, yet there is always scope for future development within academic literature. The findings of this study have highlighted a number of areas which deserve future investigation and these are noted in this final section. This study has illustrated the complex dynamics of organizational life and it is argued that longitudinal, ethnographic studies allow access to such dynamics. This type of research is therefore advocated for future culture studies. This study appreciated the technical, functionalist accounts of organizational culture by WebCo managers, but generates further value through empirical findings that suggest multiplicities of meaning for employees whether that be at an individual or sub-cultural level. Considering a range of perspectives and especially those that are power sensitive approaches has therefore shown to be useful both for academics and managers alike. A practical implication is given here where this study extends the research that exclaims the benefits of the 'reflexive practitioner' (Delbridge, Gratton and Johnson, 2006: 135) and notes that managers may benefit from breaking free from a functional realm and appreciating difference. A further practical contribution can be given to managers where, from the empirical material in this longitudinal study, it would appear that the management of culture can be effective, yet not as a singular managerial activity. Other aspects of work must also provide a positive working environment and it is the powerful combination of both culture and structure that enables management of the former.

Much is known about the micro-political forms of resistance of employees in organizations, however, the notion of knowledgeable agents who are extensively involved in recruitment processes would benefit from further research. It would also prove fruitful to speak to unsuccessful candidates. As an empirical project to be undertaken, the focus on the predispositions of employees through schooling and their lives more widely would help understand the origins of their knowledgeability. The practical insight of the extent to which it is critical for organizational values to be internalized as a basic assumption is developed from the findings of this thesis. Employees in the second research period at WebCo were capable of illustrating surface level compliance to the core organizational values. Notably, research pursuing managers' awareness of such practices, and specifically their rationale and strategies to either admit or overcome these techniques would be beneficial. Alternatively, managers could direct their attention on investing in the clear articulation of their values to employees and society. This could then enable the espoused values to be judged by potential employees who may then elect to represent these in their behaviour.

Additional research should also focus on understanding employee reactions to the introduction of structural practices, especially in firms that posit a strong organizational culture. A limitation of research at a single case study is the inability to draw wider generalizations. It was not my intention to look to do so as ideographic knowledge was the target, however considering the interplay between organizational culture and structural practices in multiple, perhaps international contexts, could prove a fruitful point of departure for future research. Studies could also link to macro-level factors such as national cultures. Finally, the current popularity of fun cultures presents an interesting avenue for research. This thesis has contributed to our understandings of the complexities that are involved in attempting to sustain these unique organizations, yet research should continue to be conducted in the area of cultures of fun.

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Interview Schedule for WebCo Employees (2005)

Name: Job Title:

How many days of the week do you work?

What is your history before WebCo?

How did you get to hear about WebCo?

What is it like to work at WebCo?
Probe: Would you recommend it to a friend? Is it a fun place to work?

What is your WebCo history?

What is your work load like?
Probe: Compared to your last job?

What is the WebCo recruitment process like?

Did the recruitment process at WebCo give you a good idea of what it is like to work here?

Which part of the process did you enjoy the most?

I have seen someone completing a personality test, can you tell me a bit more about these please?

What were your initial impressions on entering WebCo?
Probe: Were you made to feel welcome?

How is your work organized? Who do you report to? Are there any key performance measures?

Were you informed about your job description and career development opportunities?

What are your plans for the future?

Is there anyone else that you think I should speak to?

Interview Schedule for WebCo Employees (2006)

Name: Job Title:

How many days of the week do you work?

What is your history before WebCo?

How did you get to hear about WebCo?

What is it like to work at WebCo?
Probe: Would you recommend it to a friend? Is it a fun place to work?

What is your WebCo history? Have you seen any changes to the WebCo culture since you have worked here?

If so, what have been the key changes for you?

Probe: Has this impacted on the levels of delivered Fanatical Support™?

What is your work load like? Has this changed since entering WebCo?
Probe: Compared to your last job?

What is the WebCo recruitment process like? Have there been any changes to this?

Did the recruitment process at WebCo give you a good idea of what it is like to work here?

Which part of the process did you enjoy the most?

I have seen someone completing a personality test, can you tell me a bit more about these please?

What were your initial impressions on entering WebCo?
Probe: Were you made to feel welcome?

Have you attended Rookie Orientation? If so, what did you think of it? Was it useful?

How is your work organized? Who do you report to? How is your work organized? Are there any key performance measures?

Are you in a fuster? If so, what do you think of them?

Were you informed about your job description and career development opportunities?

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

Probe: Satisfying customers?

What are your plans for the future?

APPENDIX III

Interview Schedule for WebCo managers (2005)

Name: Job Title:

What is your history before WebCo?

How did you get to hear about WebCo?

What is it like to work at WebCo?
Probe: Would you recommend it to a friend? Is it a fun place to work?

What is your WebCo history?

What is your work load like?
Probe: Compared to your last job?

Concerning recruitment, what do you look for in future employees?

WebCo states that it recruits on "attitude and not ability", is that true?

Which part of the recruitment process do you feel is most insightful?

Do you feel that the recruitment procedure is effective?

How much weight is given to the personality tests in the decision of whether to employ a candidate or not?

Are you involved in recruiting employees?

Probe: If so, did you have any specific training? What do you look for in an employee?

Do you think that the recruitment process give you a good impression of what it is like to work at WebCo?

What are your plans for the future?

Is there anyone else that you think I should speak to?

Interview Schedule for WebCo managers (2006)

Name: Job Title:

What is your history before WebCo?

How did you get to hear about WebCo?

What is it like to work at WebCo?
Probe: Would you recommend it to a friend? Is it a fun place to work?

What is your WebCo history?

Have you seen any changes to WebCo's culture since you have worked here?

If so, what have been the key changes for you?

Probe: Has this impacted on the levels of delivered Fanatical Support?

What is your work load like?

Probe: Compared to your last job?

Concerning recruitment, what do you look for in future employees?

WebCo states that it recruits on "attitude and not ability", is that true?

Which part of the recruitment process do you feel is most insightful?

Do you feel that the recruitment procedure is effective?

How much weight is given to the personality tests in the decision of whether to employ a candidate or not?

Are you involved in recruiting employees? Rookie Orientation?

Probe: If so, did you have any specific training? What do you look for in an employee?

Do you think that the recruitment process give you a good impression of what it is like to work at WebCo?

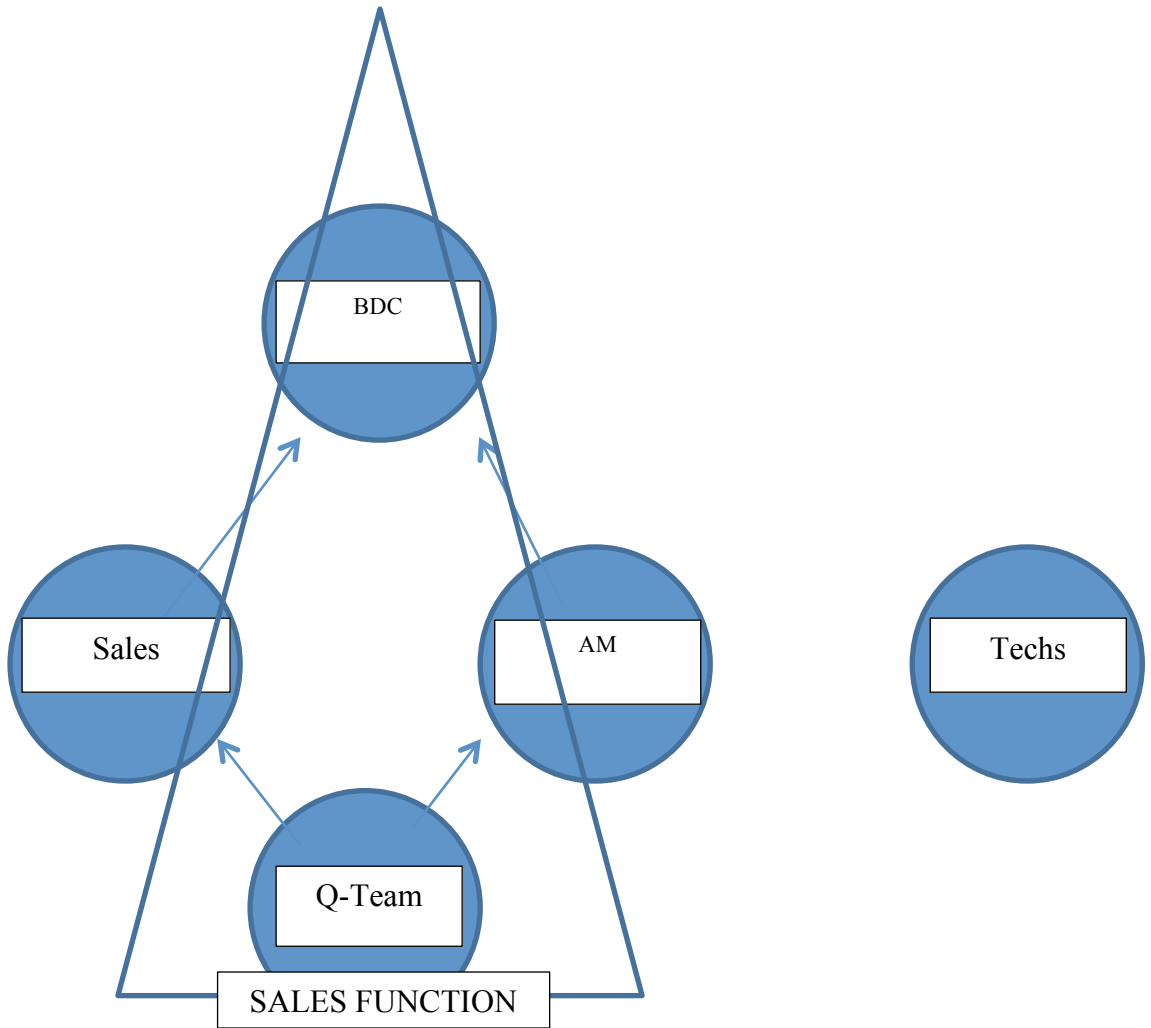Do you manage a fuster? If so, how do they work? What are their objectives?

Who are you responsible for?

What are the performance measures for your employees?

What are your plans for the future?

Is there anyone else that you think I should speak to?

SE

3 Fusters

Linux
(Sales)

Windows
(Sales)

LDT

Q-Team

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