A framework for strategic communication management in small sized pharmacies in the Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District

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Reading make'th a man, learning make'th difference. What we have discovered today is a Gift, Yesterday is History and Tomorrow remains a Mystery. "Knowledge comes from learning but, Wisdom comes from GOD"

ABSTRACT

The healthcare market has become increasingly competitive due to the opening of in-store, chain store pharmacies such as Dis-Chem, Clicks, Medirite, Spar and even Pick n Pay countrywide. The growth in the number of chain store pharmacies underscores the fact that large buyers have a competitive advantage. Due to the unpredictability of environmental issues, clearer communication is needed to remove operational barriers. The benefits of a communication strategy to ensure that the communication plan is on track cannot be underestimated, and therefore formative and summative research should be conducted. In addition, top management, who must approve project plans, budgets, and personnel decisions, should be involved on a frequent basis. This will guarantee their understanding of the implications and limitations, which should be conveyed clearly and confidently through forthright communication.

Attention must also be focused on the complexities within the pharmaceutical management environment, and the role that strategic communication planning can play within this context. The contributing part of the pharmacy owner or -manager should not be overlooked, as they have the potential to enhance the pharmacy's success by utilising the management process. Ultimately, the glue that holds these elements together will be set out in the communication strategies, which will aim to reduce the complexity of communication.

In order to adhere to the previously mentioned, the guiding steps in the process were consulting literature by utilising books, journals, and internet browsers such as Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, JSTOR, Medline and Nexus. The empirical research methods strived to answer particular research questions by means of empirical observations or data collection. Thereafter, semi-structured interviews supplied a clear set of guidelines that had contributed to producing qualitative, comparable and reliable data. Multi-stage sampling were used. Cluster sampling allowed for all the small pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District to be included in the study. A stratified sampling process took place within each cluster. Thereafter, a convenience sample within each stratified cluster, was used.

Based on qualitative thematic analysis and on the data gathered, fusion between the literature and current practices resulted in the findings with regard to strategic communication and pharmacy management, and, building on the overall interview questions, it indicated that the interviewees have in some intuitive instances established their own strategic stakeholder needs and issues. Suggestions towards the resulting impact of communication and relationship management were advised upon. Consequently, recommendations were made with regard to the prioritisation of stakeholders, key strategic issues, identification of whom and what in order to

utilise communication, as well as the focus on relationship building, keeping in mind the time limitations and financial constraints.

The interviewees focused on issues, such as communication campaigns, stakeholder prioritisation, or management areas such as marketing- and strategic management in order for the small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District to apply their sparse resources carefully and with the utmost long-lasting effect.

Keywords:
Strategic communication, small sized pharmacies, small sized retailers, small sized businesses, healthcare, healthcare stakeholders, communication role, qualitative research, communication plan, communication strategy

OPSOMMING

Die gesondheidsorgmark het toenemend mededingend geword weens die groei in die aantal kettingwinkelapteke wat binne winkels oopgemaak het, soos Dis-Chem, Clicks, Medirite, Spar en selfs Pick n Pay-apteke landswyd. Die groei in die aantal kettingwinkelapteke onderskryf die feit dat groot kopers 'n mededingende voordeel het. Weens die onvoorspelbaarheid van omgewingsfaktore is duideliker kommunikasie nodig om operasionele struikelblokke te verwyder. Die voordele verbonde aan 'n kommunikasiestrategie kan nie onderskat word nie. Om te verseker dat die kommunikasieplan op die regte pad is, behoort formatiewe en summatiewe navorsing gedoen te word. Verder behoort topbestuur, wat projekplanne, begrotings en personeelbesluite moet goedkeur, betrokke te wees op 'n gereelde basis. Dit sal hul begrip van die implikasies en beperkinge waarborg, wat duidelik en vol vertroue deur direkte kommunikasie oorgedra moet word.

Aandag moet ook gefokus word op die kompleksiteite binne die farmaseutiese bestuursomgewing, sowel as die rol wat strategiese kommunikasie binne hierdie konteks kan speel. Die bydraende faktor van die apteek-eienaar of -bestuurder moet nie misgekyk word nie, aangesien hulle die potensiaal het om die apteek se sukses te verbeter deur gebruik te maak van die bestuursproses. Uiteindelik is die aspek wat al hierdie elemente saambind, uiteengesit in kommunikasiestrategieë wat sal poog om die kompleksiteit van kommunikasie te verminder.

Om te voldoen aan die bovermelde was die leidende stappe in die proses die konsultasie van literatuur deur gebruik te maak van boeke, joernale en internet-blaaiers soos Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, JSTOR, Medline en Nexus. Die empiriese navorsingsmetodes het daarna gestreef om bepaalde navorsingsvrae te beantwoord deur middel van empiriese waarnemings of data-insameling. Daarna het semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude 'n stel duidelike riglyne verskaf wat bygedra het tot die voorsiening van kwalitatiewe, vergelykende en betroubare data. Bondel-steekproefneming het dit moontlik gemaak vir alle klein apteke binne die Dr Kenneth Kaunda Distrik om ingesluit te wees. 'n Gestratifiseerde steekproefnemingsproses het binne die bondel plaasgevind, waarbinne 'n gestratifiseerde steekproef, of meer spesifiek 'n gerieflikheidsteekproef, gelewer is.

Gebaseer op kwalitatiewe tematiese analise, sowel as op die ingesamelde data, het 'n fusie tussen die literatuur en huidige praktyke gelei tot die bevindinge ten opsigte van strategiese kommunikasie en apteekbestuur en, gebaseer op die algehele onderhoudsvrae, is aangetoon dat die respondente, in sommige intuïtiewe gevalle, hul eie strategiese belangegroepbehoeftes en -kwessies daargestel het. Aanbevelings ten opsigte van die resulterende impak op

kommunikasie en verhoudingsbestuur is gemaak. Gevolglik is aanbevelings gemaak ten opsigte van die prioritisering van belangegroepe, sleutel strategiese kwessies, die identifisering van wie en wat om kommunikasie te gebruik, sowel as die fokus op die bou van verhoudings, gegewe die tyds- en finansiële beperkings.

Die eienaars van klein apteke kan fokus op aspekte, selfs op kommunikasieveldtogte, belangegroep-prioritisering, of bestuursareas soos bemarkings- en strategiese bestuur om sodoende te verseker dat die klein apteke in die Dr Kenneth Kaunda Distrik hul skaars hulpbronne met sorg en met die mees langdurende effek, aanwend.

Sleutelterme:
Strategiese kommunikasie, klein apteke, kleinhandelaars, kleinsake, gesondheidsorg, gesondheidsorg-belanghebbendes, kommunikasie-rol, kwalitatiewe navorsing, kommunikasieplan, kommunikasiestrategie.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 Background

The healthcare market has become increasingly competitive due to the opening of in-store, chain store pharmacies such as Dis-Chem, Clicks, Medirite, Spar and even Pick n Pay pharmacies countrywide. The growth in the number of the chain store pharmacies underscores the fact that large buyers have a competitive advantage. They are in the favourable position to extract price concessions or discounts from suppliers, which is otherwise known as countervailing of power *(*Keany, 2002:122), to give them the edge over small sized pharmacies.

Historically, the viewpoint of whether retail trade should be undertaken by a pharmacy or not was of a conflicting nature, resulting in a popular debating point. Keeping the latter in mind, the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain indicated that commercial trading may have an adverse effect on the professional standing of pharmacists. Nevertheless, the Society's viewpoint proved to be powerless as it was severely challenged in the 1970 case of Dickson v Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain; House of Lords. Dickson stated that: “comparatively few chemists' shops could survive without engaging in some degree of trading” (Harding & Taylor, 2016:12).

Today, to survive the mass merchandisers, small sized pharmacies need to develop distinctive ‘trading’ competencies. In practice, it means the focus should shift to quality patient care, including quality instead of quantity, where the efficacy of primary care is the aim. This can be achieved by delivering a caring and nurturing service that is personal and interactive. This leaves us with a clear indication that nurturing a customer-focused strategy remains key to all small sized pharmacies (Love & McGee, 1999).

To strengthen the case of the small sized pharmacies, the Business Press has featured reports of a “backlash against huge, impersonal discount stores in which low prices usually come at the expense of good service” (Love & McGee, 1999). Preliminary interviews exploring South African pharmacists’ experience show that patients would much rather pay a higher levy or higher price for medicine in return for quality service, where they do not feel like just another number.

In a preliminary interview, one of the pharmacists employed in a small sized pharmacy in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District highlighted the latter: “Where I have worked previously, there was no plan or strategy but every employee in the pharmacy knew that our quality of service was what attracted patients, so we strived to keep that level of service and customer satisfaction”. To confirm this opinion, the provider that puts more emphasis on ‘personal’ care as a service, is evaluated as more satisfactory (Clearly & McNeil, 2008:25-36; Larson *et al*., 2002:2).

Still in the realm of identifying important factors, location, for small sized pharmacies, plays an eminent role (Carreras & Serra, 1997). Pharmacies situated next to doctors' consulting rooms are favoured, as patients feel they would much rather pop into the pharmacy next door than stand in long queues to pay a better price. This contributes to accessibility, as explained by Anthony Giddens, a British sociologist who is known for his theory of structuration and his holistic view of modern societies, when he states that locale is "a setting which is not just a spatial parameter, and physical environment, but set the grounds to routinely drawn upon from by social actors (situations, context, place) in the sustaining of communication" (Giddens, 1979:84-85).

To set these social actors in favour of the patient's expectations, pharmacists need to re-investigate their behaviour roles to ensure the appropriate actions when interacting with their patients. Research has shown that patients' perceptions of a trusting, caring and respectful pharmacist, measured as interpersonal relationship quality, were found to be an important component for patient-pharmacist collaboration (Hermansen & Wiederholt, 2001:308). Neglecting these important factors may result in patients exploring and consulting other options before visiting the pharmacy or their medical practitioner (Blenkinsopp *et al*., 1991:116). For example, "Ask a Doctor online now" made patients more knowledgeable regarding their illnesses and diseases. This often causes the clients of pharmacies to disagree with the diagnosis provided by a healthcare professional such as a pharmacist (Yousef *et al*., 2008:1). These self-aware patients are more demanding to such a degree that requesting "antibiotics for the flu or a spider bite..." seems to be at the order of the day, according to a pharmacist and reflected upon by literature (Dickinson & Raynor, 2003; Grigoryan, 2008). The vast majority of individuals who seek medical advice and treatment will access pharmacy services as the 'first line' of contact, even for traditional services such as clinic services (Merrill, 2017).

Focusing again on the fact that the pharmacy profession continues to shape its role in the healthcare system, guidelines towards the pharmacist-patient role are much needed for relationship optimisation. The ultimate goal of these relationships or partnerships is to optimise patient care outcomes.

These outcomes can be influenced by the challenges posed by a diverse country such as South Africa. Referring to cultural differences, the interviewed pharmacist replied, "the onus is on us to respect each person's culture and beliefs", which is clearly highlighted by the literature (O'Connell *et al*., 2007:1062). Language- and cultural barriers have a huge impact on consultation, especially when explaining illnesses. This was shown in the preliminary interview: "The wording they use is unfamiliar to us and may actually mean something entirely different... They are even reluctant to use western medicines at times" (Bakx, 1991:21). Practitioners should state problems in a language that is descriptive of the patient's situation (BusinessTopia, 2016). This further

ensures communication success, as it forms the cornerstone of the stakeholder's preference, which lay the foundation for the communication content design (McDonald & Hammer, 2016:7).

The interviewee also noted that: "the following categories are of extreme importance for a small-scale pharmacy, especially in patient management where contra-indications are one of the most important services that a community pharmacy can deliver". The categories mentioned included human resources, change management, risk management, marketing management, strategic management and communication between the pharmacy and patient. Steyn and Puth (2000:52), focusing on the communication challenge experienced by organisations, state that successful communication relies on a well-planned communication strategy that is incorporated in a strategic communication plan. The plan reflects the organisation's strategy through:

- expert thinking and the monitoring of all activities in the communication process;
- the setting of context and guidance for all communication activities; and
- the linking of tactics and objectives in a logical manner.

The corporate communication strategy framework comprises several steps, which can be used for organisations of any size, big or small. Research is of paramount importance in every step as it provides invaluable clues towards strategic issues surrounding stakeholders and publics. It furthermore reveals their attitude towards the organisation. Important to note, even though the model indicates a linear flow, in reality, situations do not always appear to happen in a linear order. The answer lies in sound judgement and the execution of the solution.

It is noteworthy to remark that compiling a communication strategy is an ongoing process (Steyn & Puth, 2000:52). The reason is that a corporate strategy becomes relevant to the organisation's responsive needs, a process that is continuous and will never become static. Some of these changes or adaptions might be major or relatively minor. Needless to say, with any change or adaptation, certain elements need to be in place (Rowe, 2008:1). These elements are important, as even small changes or adaptations may influence the quality of care. It is perceived that strategy execution is much more difficult than the development thereof. Crucial to execution is the use of a logical set of interconnected activities – disciplined processes that will allow for the business strategy to work (Hrebiniak, 2005:45).

According to Jones (2014), the business strategy should follow a set of guiding tools. These tools, as listed below, will offer support towards the planning-, design- and implementation phases of strategies relevant to a healthcare environment (Swanton & Frost, 2007:82), by:

- involving the public, patients and carers;
- building capacity in terms of staff, equipment and facilities;

- setting up appropriate education and training programmes;
- ensuring effective IT systems in primary care;
- establishing good communication; and
- providing sufficient funding for all elements of the strategy (Swanton & Frost, 2007:82).

In the current economic environment, communication from small size pharmacies needs to be regarded as effective. Applying effective communication strategies will lead to positive communication (Argenti & Forman, 2005:257).

In conjunction with the latter, literature revealed that the role of the pharmacists matured immensely to such a point where the inclusion of information, education and pharmaceutical care services became crucial. These inclusions direct the focus to collaborative pharmacist-patient professional relationships, stating that the pharmacists and the patients both have responsibilities that they have to abide to (Worley & Schommer *et al*., 2007:1). Keeping the statement in mind, Scholes and Clutterbuck (1998:237) stated that by maintaining and stimulating successful communication outcomes, the small sized pharmacies' stakeholders should be directed towards a communication process that uses a six-step holistic plan:

- Take a more strategic and more professional approach to communication;
- Aim to align needs, rather than satisfy or pacify individual groups;
- Build relationships;
- Understand, then shape, attitudes and behaviours;
- Aim to coordinate the management of all communication; and
- Make communication management a core competency (Scholes & Clutterbuck, 1998:237).

In summary, the corporate communication strategy aims to supply guidelines for the strategic communication plan and the operational communication plans or programmes that small sized pharmacies can use to adapt to and thrive in their current environment.

1.2 Problem statement

Pharmacists in small sized pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District face strategically important issues in the communities they serve (Khandoobhai & Weber, 2014). These issues need to be resolved and strategic communication could provide a solution to achieve the desired outcomes, as explained above (Eckel *et al*., 2012:9).

In addition, limited literature is available on the topic under investigation. Small sized pharmacists may therefore understand the need for a communication intervention, but have restricted information and research on the topic available to guide them (Kerr & Strawbridge, 2017).

1.3 Research questions

The above problem statement leads to the following research questions:

1.3.1 General research question

What should a framework for strategic communication in small sized pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District consist of?

1.3.2 Specific research questions

(1) What are the guidelines for the development of a framework for strategic communication?

(2) What are the basic tenets of pharmacy management with a specific focus on strategic communication by small sized pharmacies?

(3) What are the views of pharmacists (in small sized pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District) regarding issues pertaining to strategic communication management?

1.4 Research goals

1.4.1 General research goal

This study aims to develop a framework for strategic communication in small sized pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, guided by related literature and the empirical views of pharmacists.

1.4.2 Specific research goals

Specifically, this study aims to:

(1) consult literature on strategic communication and communication strategy development in order to explicate the guidelines for the development of a framework for strategic communication;

(2) explore literature to outline the basic tenets of pharmacy management with a specific focus on strategic communication by small sized pharmacies;

(3) collect and describe the views of pharmacists, in small sized pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, regarding issues in strategic communication management through semi-structured interviews and qualitative thematic analysis.

1.5 Theoretical arguments

In the current economic environment, communication by small size pharmacies needs to be regarded as effective. Applying effective communication strategies could lead to positive communication (Argenti & Forman, 2005:257).

The corporate communication strategy is the framework for the strategic communication plan and the operational communication plans or programmes, and comprises seven steps (Steyn & Puth, 2000:73). The strategy is an ongoing process comprising seven steps that suggest a linear flow, but in reality can be adjusted to suit the specific situation. The corporate communication strategy process is an ongoing process, responsive to the organisation's needs, and therefore should never become static.

The communication strategy should be developed in conjunction with the business strategy. Jones (2014) suggests that the business strategy should follow a set of guidance tools that should offer support towards the planning-, design- and implementation phases of strategies relevant to a healthcare environment (Swanton & Frost, 2007:82) to create collaborative pharmacist-patient professional relationships (Worley & Schommer *et al*., 2007:1).

Steyn and Puth (2000:63) suggested the following nine steps to compile a framework to formulate a communication strategy:

1. **Analyse** the **internal environment:** The intent was to find out where the pharmacy sees itself in the future (CGMA, 2013) and to understand their vision. The vision is what the organisation believes is the perfect circumstances in which it will thrive. The organisation will thrive when the vision is (Fernandes, 2017; Nagy & Fawcett, 2017a; Steyn & Puth, 2000):

    - clear and supported by the community members;
    - flexible enough to include an array of local perspectives;
    - encouraging, inspiring and uplifting to all involved; and
    - briefly worded so that the slogan can easily be remembered.

To purposefully fulfil its mission, Drucker (1954:84) described it as an indication of an organisation's positioning for the future, deciding what should be done rather than how it should be done.

2. **Classify strategic stakeholders and publics in the external and internal environment**: Formative research (analyse the situation, organisation and publics), according to Smith

(2002:10), is necessary to portray the details that will be encapsulated in the problem statements. These details may also be referred to as a situation analysis. It provides a detailed explanation of the opportunities and threats that reside within the organisation and its environment. A SWOT analysis will produce invaluable information in this regard (PESTLE Analysis, 2016).

Deploying the outlines of a stakeholder map does not only confirm the strategic stakeholders and publics, but also the added benefits, including 1) opinions of the most powerful stakeholders can be utilised, 2) powerful stakeholders may contribute to obtaining more resources, 3) frequent communication with stakeholders results in stakeholder buy-in, 4) and allowing the organisation the opportunity to use back-up plans to gain the public's support (HealthKnowledge, 2010; Thompson, 2015). This analysis has the advantage that the communication team may formulate a notion about possible solutions for the problem (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:27).

3. **Identify and describe key strategic issues in the macro-, task- and internal environment:** Steyn and Puth (2000:69) mentioned that the importance of this step will be to identify the primary issues that strategic stakeholders must face when developing a corporate communication strategy; in other words, determining how the strategic stakeholders might feel towards a certain issue. Issues should be addressed by the organisation; it should also take into account the effects of corporate strategies. The reason is that strategic issues have the potential to alter the organisation's strategy. It must be kept in mind that not all issues need to be classified as strategic (Steyn & Puth, 2000:67). Closely related to the forgoing topic of classifying strategic issues is the matter of differentiating between (a) internal- and (b) external strategic issues.

From the external environment, organisations may also face strategic issues. These are referred to as external strategic issues and normally may result in catastrophe as the impact of government legislation and competitor advantage may seriously harm the pharmacy if there is an absence of compliance (Steyn & Puth, 2000:68).

4. **Decide on a corporate communication strategy:** The corporate communication strategy, in short, is built on the organisation's mission, vision and values. Beforehand, it has to state that top management is concerned about the key issues and not so readily in communication problems. The link between communication and the pending issues may at this stage appear blurred by top management. This holds true especially when measuring these issues not on the levels of their communication, but rather on reaching organisational goals. Identifying key issues and providing solutions by means of corporate communication

strategy indicates how communication can solve these issues (Steyn & Puth, 2000:68). According to the literature, if the communication process is being undertaken without keeping the latent issues in mind, inappropriate solutions might be suggested to the problem. When a corporate communication strategy supports business strategy, the organisation would be in a position to compete more effectively. Firstly, one needs to decide what should be communicated to the stakeholders to alleviate the problems, for instance (a) "How does the pharmacy improve productivity?" and (b) "How do you capitalise on the opportunities at hand, especially in the case of government legislation regarding a product or service?" If the previous information is communicated to stakeholders, the organisation has successfully capitalised on an opportunity (Steyn & Puth, 2000:84).

5. **Establish communication goals:** The main purpose for the organisation is to reflect what the outcome would be with the intended communication. In other words, is the aim to disperse information, or to change attitudes or behaviour? In numerous instances, if the conduct of the stakeholders needs to be changed, it is important to (a) supply the necessary information on the issue to them first, and then aim to (b) change their attitude. Normally, the communication goals are obtained from the key strategic issues related to the implications it has on the corporate communication strategy and its stakeholders.

The step of setting communication goals is the link between the communication strategy and the communication plan. Another advantage of goal setting is that it connects the corporate communication function with the mission. Important to keep in mind is that the communication goals reveal the corporate goals and therefore play a part in reaching the corporate mission (Steyn & Puth, 2000:70-71).

6. **Establish a communication policy:** The communication policy's function is to coordinate stakeholder engagement. To clarify, more than one person might be responsible for communicating with an individual stakeholder or maybe a group of stakeholders concerning different topics. However, according to Steyn and Puth (2000:71), it should be stated more clearly: (a) "**Who** is allowed to communicate **what** with **whom.**" Another point for questioning was with regard to (b) crisis communication, the reason being that, according to Grunig *et al.* (1992:117-156), a successful performance under a crisis situation can only be traced back to an organisation that has the following in place: open organisational structure, good communication system, and organisational culture warranting democratic participation and the opinion offered has been able to successfully perform crisis management.

7. **Draft to top management**: This section is concerned with obtaining management approval and acknowledgement of every step the corporate communication strategy consists of. The focus should be on the rationale behind the strategy formulation, as well as reflecting how communication will solve any crucial organisational issues that exist. If, by any means, research results are available, it should be included. If management can more clearly understand how the communication function can aid in reaching organisational goals, gaining funds for strategy implementation will be effortless, counteracting any negative beliefs that top management might have about the valuable contribution that communication has on the 'bottom line' (Steyn & Puth, 2000:72-73).

8. **Conduct an overall corporate communication media analysis**: The purpose of a corporate media analysis is to gather communication information that will assist in determining which media types to assign to the various stakeholders (Steyn & Puth, 2000:73). During the strategic planning stage, the media necessary to reach the key stakeholders must be determined. The communication style is crucial; it has been advised that it is important to become familiar with the recipient's preferred style of communication, otherwise the message will be unnoticed. The aforementioned plays an important role in the intended media selection (thoughtLEADERS, 2017). Note of advice: if the media should be more specific, take time to plan, this will be an advantageous step by which the most suitable media mix can be combined (Steyn & Puth, 2000:91).

   Good external communication has been stated as the forerunner of good internal communication (Media & Writers Firm, 2014).

9. **Develop a strategic communication plan:** The communication strategy aims to indicate ***what*** the corporate communication function should entail, while ***how*** to communicate is what strategic communication planning strives towards (Steyn & Puth, 2000:52). This component is not part of the corporate communication strategy stage, but rather indicates the start of the planning phase. It is included to provide clarity with regard to the strategic communication plan (and the subdivision thereof: plans, campaigns and programmes). The strategic communication plan provides the framework as to where communication programmes (repeated communication with stakeholders), communication campaigns (once-off or periodical) and communication plans (created to reach certain communication goals) are slotted in (Steyn, 2000b:10). The communication plan is based on communication goals. An important aspect to pay attention to in the plan is the image created by the organisation. Image is also determined by means of the organisation's corporate social responsibility, and therefore public opinion should be monitored continuously. A communication schedule is important to ensure that the plan is executed

correctly. Lastly, in planning the campaign, sponsorship can become important for pharmacies, but most of all pharmacies need to evaluate and measure the success of the plan.

1.6 Research approach

The explorative and interpretive nature of the study makes a qualitative research design the most appropriate. The study's emphasis and value are placed on the human (and the management of human relations), while the researcher's own interpretation and understanding of the social world are incorporated in the phenomena that are studied (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:7).

According to Elwell (2005), Max Weber (1864-1920), proposed two types of understanding: Direct observational understanding and explanatory or motivational understanding. He stated that these two types of understanding differ between the natural sciences and the social sciences. Natural sciences produce law-like propositions, while social sciences aim to understand subjectively meaningful experiences. Using interpretation and observation to understand the social world around us, also referred to as interpretivism, will be utilised in this study to aid in the development of a context-specific framework for strategic communication in small sized pharmacies (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:6).

Qualitative research focuses on the interrelatedness of the different parts of people's lives by incorporating social, historical, psychological and cultural factors that are important in helping shape people's understanding of their world, or for the purpose of this study, their 'working world'. A qualitative research approach provides a holistic understanding of the participants' views and actions within their overall context (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:6).

1.7 Research methods

1.7.1 Literature study

The following existing literature was consulted: books, journals as well as internet browsers such as Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, JSTOR, Medline and Nexus, for instance:

- Pharmacy in practice by Geoffrey Harding and Kevin Taylor;
- Patient satisfaction with pharmaceutical care: Update of a validated instrument by Lon Larson, et *al*.;
- Distinctive competencies and competitive advantage: A study of small independent retailers by Leonard G., Love and Jeffrey E. McGee;

- Management competence development for professional service SMEs: The case of community pharmacy by Roger Ottewill, Peter L. Jennings, *et al.*;
- A systematic review of the research on communication between patients and health care professionals about medicines: The consequences for concordance by Fiona A. Stevenson and Kate Cox, *et al.*;
- Use of visual symbols to promote communication by Masaki Moriyama and Delwyn L. Harnisch;
- Ask the patient; they may know more than you think by David Dickinson, D K Theo Raynor;
- Brand personality and customer trust in community pharmacies by Jason Perepelkin and David Di Zhang;
- Countervailing power in wholesale pharmaceuticals by Sara Fisher Ellison and Christopher M. Snyder;
- Pharmacy strategy by Pat Murray;
- Pharmacy management essentials for all practice settings by Shane Desselle and David Zgarrick;
- Essentials of pharmacy management by Dennis Tootelian, Albert Wertheimer and Andrey Mikhailitchenko;
- Policies and procedures: Enhancing pharmacy practice and limiting risk by James O'Donnell and Randy Vogenberg;
- Good pharmacy practice manual by the South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC);
- Impact of working environment on job satisfaction by Abdul Raziq;
- Fundamentals of management by Stephan Robbins, David DeCrenz and Mary Coulter;
- Achieving patient centeredness in pharmacy practice by Djenane De Oliveira and Sarah Shoemaker;
- How patients perceive a doctor's caring attitude by Quirk, M., Mazor, K., Haley, H.L., Philbin, M., Fischer, M., Sullivan. K. & Hatem, D.;
- Discovering the value of personality types in communication training for pharmacy students by Mariet Eksteen & Marietta Basson.;
- The AMA handbook for developing employee assistance and counselling programs by Dale Masi;
- Making strategy work by Lawrence G. Hrebiniak;
- Planning Public Health Strategies by J. Rowe;
- Communicating strategy qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers by Phil Jones;
- The qualitative researcher's companion by A. Michael Huberman and Matthew B. Miles;
- The challenge of quality by P.D. Clearly and B.J. McNeil;

- The research imagination by P.S. Gray, J.B. Williamson *et al.*;
- Customer relationship management in a pharmaceutical industry by Thomas Puschmann and Alt Rainier;
- Washington reporter publics of corporate public affairs programs by James Grunig;
- Inactive publics: The forgotten publics in public relations by Kirk Hallahan;
- Organisational culture by Geert Hofstede;
- Executive cognitive control in communication by Jerry Jordan;
- Exploring corporate strategy by Gerry Johnson, Kevan Scholes and Richard Whittington;
- Prioritizing stakeholders for public relations by Brad Rawlins;
- Communication with stakeholders: An integrated approach by Eileen Scholes and David Clutterbuck;
- Corporate communication strategy by Benita Steyn and Gustav Puth.

As no such study or research has previously been conducted with regard to the topic, the aim of this literature study is to construct a background from which to explore the views of pharmacists (in small sized pharmacies) regarding issues in strategic communication management. Another important point is to understand how small sized pharmacies' management can achieve these desired outcomes by incorporating a strategic communication framework. Current literature will be reviewed to create content from which theoretical assumptions can be derived.

1.7.2 Empirical methods

Empirical research methods strive to answer particular research questions by means of empirical observations or data collection. This type of research is normally used in academic research, but has also been proven to be very helpful in answering practical questions.

1.7.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are the most appropriate to use in situations where the interviewer will not have another chance to interview a respondent, according to Bernard (2006:212). The interview guide supplies a clear set of instructions that will contribute to producing qualitative, comparable and reliable data (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:74; Bernard, 2006:212).

In the first place, based on the nine steps necessary to compile a framework to formulate a strategy, suggested by Steyn and Puth (2000:63), the subsequent main themes will provide the context from which the corresponding interview questions had been derived. The interview schedule is shown in Table 4-2.

An exploratory interview was conducted at the start of this study to investigate the view of pharmacists on the topic, and to determine the need for this study. These results were included in the discussion in Chapter 1. This interview data was not included in the analysed data, as the purpose of this interview was preliminary, as explained. The respondent interviews used for data reporting in this study were sampled as explained next.

1.7.2.1.1 Sampling method

The most common four random sampling methods are: simple, stratified, systematic and cluster sampling. In applied social studies, the tendency is to use more complex variations of the above-mentioned. An important fact to keep in mind is that any of these methods may be combined to answer in sampling needs by applying the most effective combination possible. In this study, a combination of cluster, stratified and random sampling will be used to pave the way for multi-stage sampling. The combination of various sampling methods achieves a rich variety of probabilistic sampling methods (Trochim, 2006).

Via cluster sampling, all the small pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District will be included. Then, a stratified sampling process will take place within the cluster. Within the stratified sample, a convenience sample will be produced (Trochim, 2006). Advisably, specific thought should be given to which categories of staff or function are closest to the specific questions addressed by the study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:88).

Based on the process outlined by Dudovskiy (2016), the following sampling process is followed:

1. The nine provinces in South Africa form the sample frame, from which the North West Province is selected, with the knowledge that it contains distinct groups.

2. The relevant sub-groups are selected from the previous specified distinct group. From the four districts in the North West Province (Bojanala Platinum District, Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District, Ngaka Modiri Molema District), the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District is chosen for this study.

3. This selection method is repeated. A small sized pharmacy is chosen from each town that makes up the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District: Atomic Pharmacy Orkney, Medi-Plus Potchefstroom, Kampus Pharmacy Potchefstroom, Wollies Pharmacy Wolmaransstad, Hartbeesfontein Pharmacy, HealthPharm Klerksdorp, Leeudoringstad Pharmacy, De-Ka Pharmacy Stilfontein, Ventersdorp Pharmacy, and Oudorp Pharmacy Klerksdorp. From the previous sample, members of the sample group from the sub-groups are selected using some variation of probability (convenience) sampling. The members of this sample group will consist

of the pharmacist, pharmacy technician, cashier, stock worker and administrative staff (Dudovskiy, 2016).

The advantages and disadvantages of cluster or multi-stage sampling can be listed as follows:

- Convenience, economy and efficiency are linked to multi-stage sampling as the prominent advantages. It does not need a complete list of units (members) in the target population. The complete list only becomes crucial during the final stages of multi-stage sampling when those chosen form part of the cluster.

- The selected population units will be closer together, and therefore the cost implication for personal interviews will be eliminated, leaving fieldwork simplified (National Statistical Service, 2016).

Disadvantages include, in general, that cluster sampling is less accurate than samples of the same size, because the sample obtained does not cover the population as evenly as in the case of samples of the same size. However, it is often preferred because it is more economical (National Statistical Service, 2016).

1.7.2.2 Data analysis: Qualitative thematic analysis

After the revision of selected material, the research notes of the interviews will be used again in an attempt to identify the key issues, concepts and themes by which the data can be examined and referred to. To sift and sort the data, a thematic framework needs to be set up (Huberman & Miles, 2002:313). For this study, the themes identified in the semi-structured interviews section will be used as the themes for data analysis.

1.7.2.3 Qualitative validity and reliability

Gray and Williamson (2007:12) suggest that those who question the outcome of the study may repeat the questions, and when the same results are presented, the research may be deemed reliable. It is also possible that there might be variances in conditions over which the researcher has no control; therefore, it is important that the design in data collection should be done in such a way that replicated preclusion will not have an influence.

Validity is the fit between the evidence for a concept and the concept that the researcher wants to examine. Literature suggests that if the definition of the components is too broad, it will result in misunderstanding. The solution is to be as clear as possible about the definition of the concepts as well as the situation it applies to (Gray & Williamson *et al.,* 2007:13). To introduce **quality,**

credibility and **trustworthiness** to this research, a method of 'member checking' will be introduced (Dipeolu, 2010):

- All data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions will be evaluated with the group members from whom the data was initially acquired.
- It can be conducted formally and informally as opportunities arise for member checks during the interviews.
- This means that the participants will be able to reconsider and explicate previous statements.
- Member checking is regarded as a technique to verify the validity of an account.

Additionally, this research study needs to comply with the quality standards set by ethical virtue. In order to be deemed compliant, the following pointers will be adhered to:

- Social researchers have the daunting task to inform the intended target group of the limits of reliability and applicability of the data.

- The double-barrel danger of over- and under-estimating the validity to which data can be generalised is a practice easy to fall prey to.

- Actions such as covering up issues, or maybe to practise over-interpretation, have implications not only for the researcher involved, but also for the reputation of social research as a whole.

In other words, researchers should practise transparent methods in order for the academic community to assess their work clearly and it should be free from any confidentiality restrictions in order to form part of the common intellectual property of the profession (The Social Research Association, 2003:30).

1.8 Ethical implications

Ethical behaviour represents a set of moral principles, rules or standards governing a person or a profession. The bottom line of ethical is to "do good and avoid evil" (Lichtman, 2006:51).

The major principles associated with ethical conduct, as applied to this study, can be summarised as follows:

- **Do no harm:** Confidentiality must be protected. By doing so, respondents' privacy and anonymity are protected (University of Pretoria, 2016:11). In addition, if by any means this study at any point causes any emotional distress, the interviewer will advise the participants to discontinue participation (Fresnostate, 2014).

- **Confidentiality:** In order to protect confidentiality, no information will be shared of any individual respondents with their corresponding supervisors or pharmacies (Fresnostate, 2014).

- **Informed consent:** It is crucial to inform participants of the extent of the study. It will include an accurate explanation of the evaluation as well as of the risks and benefits of this study. In addition, the interviewer will offer to answer any questions about the study by supplying contact information. The participants will be informed that if, for any reason, they want to discontinue, it will not be held against them (Fresnostate, 2014).

- **Cultural competencies:** The interviewer will check to make sure that participants understand the concepts described in the interview guide, with a special focus on terms that may have different meanings in different cultures (Fresnostate, 2014).

- **Inappropriate behaviour:** The interviewer has to remember to remain objective in order not to get too close to the subject of study, and thereby should create more distance in order to ensure that the interviewees receive the respect they deserve. In other words, set appropriate boundaries, suggesting appropriate amounts of involvement versus social distance (University of Pretoria, 2016:7).

- **Data interpretation:** All information that may contribute to an individual will be kept confidential. Fictional names or code numbers will be assigned to interviewees to conduct the analysis. Respondents will be referred to by using terms that do not indicate names/characteristics of individuals (such as “respondent” or “participant”). The interviewer will note not to reveal too much about personal characteristics of the respondents, such as ethnicity or job title, as it might help readers identify individual respondents (Fresnostate, 2014).

- **Respect for the individual:** The moral duty of the interviewer will be to respect the autonomy of the individual (University of Pretoria, 2016:6).

- **Professional standards:** The interviewer should, in his/her capacity, uphold integrity, quality and accountability. Integrity implies that the interviewer will present the findings faultless and uphold quality standards. These standards will be utilised in the planning, implementation and reporting of the study. Because the interviewer will be held accountable for the originality of this study, he/she must take measures such as submitting the study through Turn-it-in in order to alleviate text similarities (University of Pretoria, 2016:6).

1.9 Chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction and problem statement

The purpose of Chapter 1 is to provide a general overview of the study. Included will be the problem statement, research goals and questions.

Chapter 2: Guidelines for the development of a framework for strategic communication

This chapter shows that a communication strategy for a small organisation is possible when the steps in the model are applied accordingly. It provides the guidelines necessary to use to continuously develop as this process is not a 'once-a-year' exercise.

Chapter 3: Formulating basic tenets of pharmacy management with a specific focus on strategic communication by small sized pharmacies

Current literature on small sized pharmacies will be consulted to discuss the nature of small sized pharmacies. The context of small pharmacies, with specific reference to the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District of the North West Province, will be clarified.

Chapter 4: Research methods

The qualitative research approach, accompanied by the chosen research method for this study, is discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussions and findings

Based on qualitative thematic analysis and on the data gathered, this chapter will strive to accomplish a fusion between the literature and current practice.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations will consist of the suggested framework for the strategic management of communication by small pharmacies in the North-West Province, which will in effect answer the problem statement and general research question. All research targets will be adhered to and all constraints and suggestions will be laid out.

CHAPTER 2 GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter gave an overview of the study and defined the general and specific research questions. This chapter will explain the theoretical framework, followed by Chapter 3 which will elaborate on the small size pharmaceutical context in which the theory needs to be applied.

More and more attention is being paid to the prominence and value of strategic communication in society and in organisations. The growing importance of strategic communication is being pinpointed as the success factor in organisational survival. However, communication professionals and communication departments struggle with their low status in organisations (Falkheimer *et al*., 2016:121). Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929), France's president during the later years of World War I, once replied cunningly, that the war is too important of a matter to be left to the generals. Along this line of thought, the question that becomes prominent is: "Is communication too important to be left to communication professionals?" Earlier research reveals that managers in general do not perceive strategic communication as important as for instance *sales*, *marketing* or *HR* (Brønn, 2014:67; Zerfass & Sherzada, 2015:294). In the meantime, practitioners feel that strategic communication is being taken for granted and that the complexity of communication is being disregarded by managers (Axley, 1988:433-435) who misinterpret the importance in production and reproduction in an organisation. Furthermore, communication professionals were accused of being "stuck in a rut" following old and outdated communication paradigms that were ruled by "media logic" – suggesting a strong focus on publicity and external messages. Due to the latter, communication professionals have become excluded from any core and strategic activities in organisations.

Nonetheless, based upon empirical data derived from The Communicative Organisation in Sweden's study, it was revealed that communication value plays a large part on a strategic level, enabling business goals and organisational success. Overall, confirmation indicated that communication professionals contribute to effective internal and external communication (Falkheimer *et al*., 2016:122). In light of this, the aim is to propose a mind shift among healthcare practitioners, as the overall impression in Chapter 1 showed a lack of strategic communication frameworks in the pharmaceutical sector, specifically for small sized pharmacies.

This study will endeavour an assemblage thereof, offering the benefit of aiding pharmacy management and enhancing their services.

2.2 The strategic management process

2.2.1 Strategic management and competitive advantage

The strategic management process does not only supply the rules for guidance, but is best implemented when everyone is on par with the company's strategy. Furthermore, Rothaermel (2008:203) stated that the strategic management process has led to a prosperous competitive advantage.

The tell-tale signs that managers conceive of and implement a strategy by are evident as the following becomes visible (Duff, 2017). Gathering of mass support in order to comply with a policy, adapting to the ever-changing environment while seeking a balance between the organisational goals and resources, reflecting the organisation's future alignment, indicating the rationale behind the decisions and doing what is expected from the organisations.

2.3 Importance of strategic planning

Arguably a good strategy will lead to a competitive advantage for the organisation. Competitive advantage is known for keeping organisations ahead of their competitors. Rothaermel (2008:208) stipulated that a company that performs financially better than another or above average is evident of a company that has the competitive advantage. It is possible for some companies to achieve the same results without a strategic plan, but for most, strategic planning is vital. It entails a continuous process of analysis, creation, implementation and monitoring. The truth is that this is not a bullet proof solution to reach a competitive advantage, but at least it is a step in the right direction to sustain it.

By relying only on finances, marketing or operations to create a competitive advantage, is too narrow to be used as a guideline, as managers from each of these areas often view the situation from their own perspective (Johnson *et al.,* 2008:38). It has been stated that only managers (e.g. CEOs or strategic planners), who are in the position to view the picture as a whole, in other words the company and its surrounding areas, are in the position to orchestrate the competitive advantage successfully.

In short, to achieve the competitive advantage, strategic planning is necessary whereby the integration of all functional areas is of the utmost importance. This can only be accomplished by facilitating the managers on all levels by means of communication (Strategic Management Insight, 2017).

2.4 The thinking process behind communication strategy

The strategic thinking process offers the strategic communication team the opportunity to formulate a strategic communication plan. Important to remember, before starting a communication plan, the team should keep the qualitative facets of both the organisation and its environment in mind.

The main purpose of a communication strategy is to construct a framework to which communication ideas can be benchmarked. It scrutinises the path that corporate communication should follow. It further supplies a charter for key areas, according to which communication plans should be designed, leaving the opportunity to shape the strategy (Steyn & Puth, 2000:52; Nagy & Fawcett, 2017c). The advantages of shaping the strategy lead to the enablement of communication, which in totality supports the strategic management decisions by incorporating its innovation potential, as well as fostering thought leadership and crisis resilience. In order to contribute to this value dimension, the communication department should act as an attentive listener. Methodically monitoring public opinion in mass media, social media, politics and society and markets allows for altering strategies for upcoming socio-political and economic developments. In other words, corporate communication aids in determining the competitive advantages (Zerfass & Viertmann, 2016:50).

Drucker (1954:65) sees it as an indication of an organisation's positioning for the future, deciding what should be done rather than how it should be done, to purposefully fulfil its mission. Strategy requires choices – deciding what particular kind of value the organisation wants to deliver to whom (Porter, 1997:3495). Many organisations have a strategy to apply to each different communication discipline present in their organisation (Porter, 2013).

2.5 Applying the term 'strategic' to communication

The term *strategic* offers the most opposed contradictions in the field of communication (Hallahan *et al.,* 2007; Porter, 2013), due to its many-faceted application (*public relations strategy, marketing communications strategy, social media strategy* and *sales strategy*). Steyn (2002:2) states that "It is certainly unusual to come across a memorable, cogent, sustained, and effective communications strategy. Not a brand strategy. Not a marketing strategy. Not an advertising strategy – a communication strategy."

Porter (2013) advises using a clear-cut and interconnected strategy that binds these different communication activities together, advising that a communication strategy should address the following successfully: The utilisation of experts and activity processes for all communication

programmes, the conditions, and rules, for all communication activities and the connection between the 'why' and the 'how'; the rationale that joins aims and strategies together.

Strategy can be defined as the thinking, the logic behind the actions (Robert, 1997:22). "Remember, we may live in a new world, but the old rules still apply. Powerful communication has always been about getting people to pay attention and take action" (Hobson, 2006). The latter can only be guaranteed once the organisation has taken the whole picture into account and focuses its attention on the thinking process beforehand.

2.6 Why does strategic planning fail?

Literature states that the top five reasons why strategic planning fails are due to a lack of the following elements: communication, leadership, planning, passive management and personal ownership. It is further suggested that where communication breakdown is present, difficulty to properly reflect the vision and strategic objectives of the organisation to stakeholders will be experienced, leaving the intended target group with little or no information to respond to (Johnson, 2006). Clearer communication is needed to remove these barriers. It is advised that leadership should describe the organisation's goal better to employees, as well as their participating role in it, in order to achieve the desired goals (Latif *et al.,* 2012:18).

Without taking the latter into consideration, new aims and objectives might exist, but are not communicated throughout the organisation with regard to its function (Johnson, 2006):

(a) The implementation team has poor communication among themselves;
(b) Prospects and inputs are not shared freely;
(c) To understand the importance of communication and the role it plays in supporting the strategic objectives, its meaning should first be explored, starting by looking at the strategic management process (Johnson, 2006).

2.7 Framework for developing a corporate communication strategy

Firstly, however, it is important to clarify the concept of what a corporate communication strategy is. A corporate communication strategy framework is a planning tool to assist in the communication of the organisation's employees, customers, suppliers and investors. Zerfass and Viertmann (2016:45) suggest that instead of arguing from the perspective of the corporate communication function and looking for yet another magic formula of communication value, the proposition is to start with a reflection on corporate strategy and the generic contribution to business goals.

The steps needed to implement a strategy successfully are based on a list that managers use during the strategic management process. The list may entail seven to 30 steps, but leans towards more formality in well-established organisations (David, 2009:19-21).For the purpose of this study the communication strategy as defined by Steyn and Puth (2000) in the South African environment, will be used.

As argued in Chapter 1, the applied corporate communication strategy framework should be able to create business value across medium-sized pharmacies by improving stakeholder communication, which is important to those stakeholders whose attitudes and actions influence the organisation's success (Linton, 2016).

The model, as proposed by Steyn and Puth (2000:62), comprises the following:

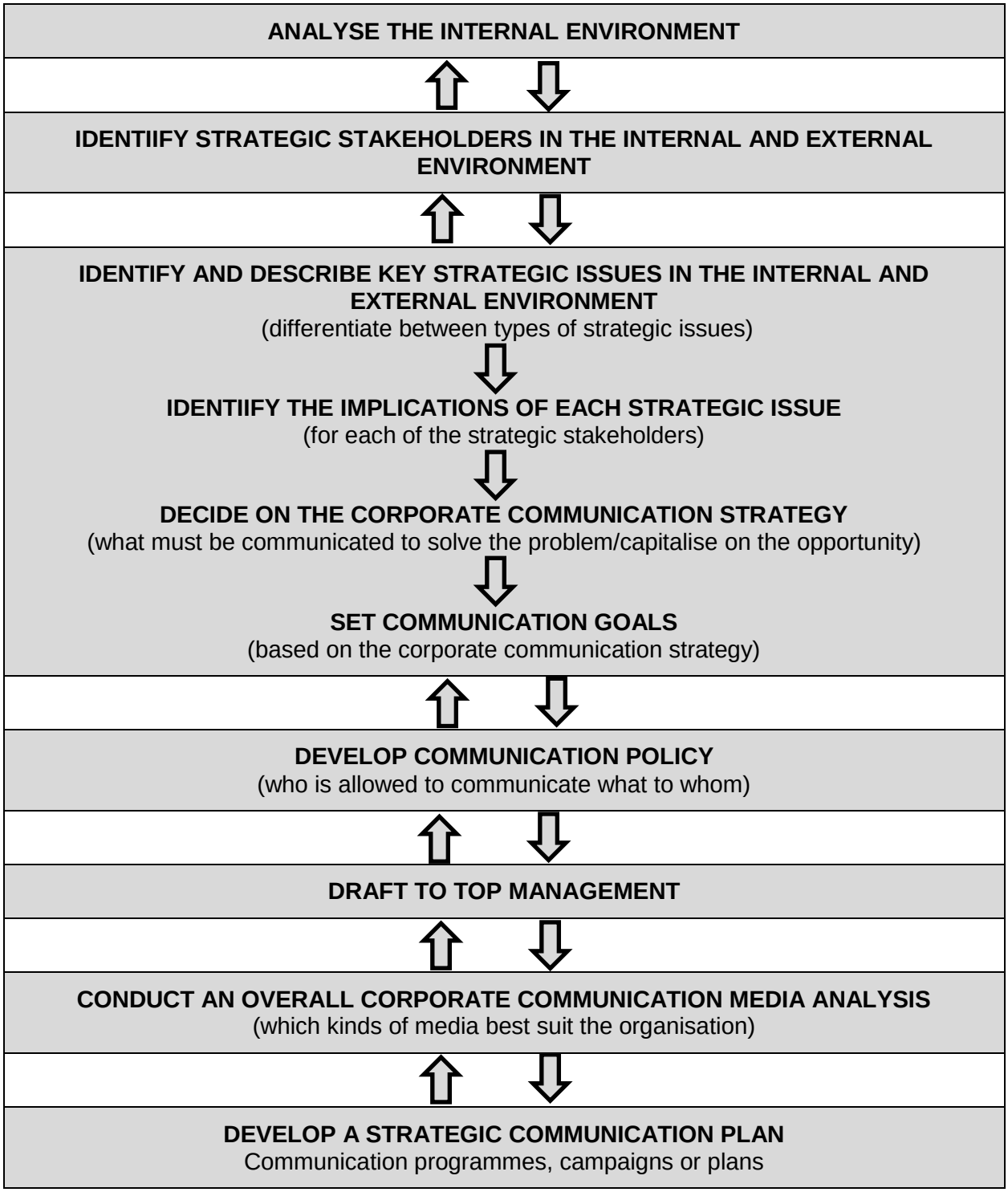

Figure 2-1: Guidelines to develop a corporate communication strategy (Steyn & Puth, 2000:63).

The environment in which enterprises operate is fraught with challenges: emerging competitors reinventing traditional business models; changing demographic, regulatory and socio-political

conditions; new modes of work; and an ongoing paradigm shifts in how individuals engage with one another and with organisations. Spurred by these changes and enabled by social media, stakeholder groups have become more empowered, emboldened and organised. The evolution of the enterprise in the face of these new realities is required, and CCOs increasingly will be central to guiding these changes (Arthur W. Page Society, 2016).

The breakdown and discussion of the steps in the framework will provide the detailed information necessary, as this model provides the link between the organisational mission and communication plans (Steyn, 2002).

2.7.1 Analyse the internal environment

Internal environment analysis includes the assessment of the organisation's resources, primary competencies and activities. An organisation consists of both tangible resources (capital, land, equipment), and intangible resources (culture, brand equity, knowledge, patents, copyrights and trademarks) (Rothaermel, 2008:208). For example, an organisation's core competencies may be superior skills in customer relationships or efficient supply chain management. To some organisations, it is crucial to analyse the internal firm's activities. The motivation is to find out which internal activity of the organisation is most profitable (e.g. the source of cost or differentiation advantage). When a company produces goods at lower costs than the market price, or supplies superior products, the organisation will generate a profit. To compile a corporate communication strategy, the organisation should have a good grasp of its internal environment (Steyn & Puth, 2000:64).

Another perception fostered is that a 'communicative organisation' that underlines the overall knowledge and awareness by means of communication will ensure the longevity of an organisation. In addition, a recurring supposition is that "organisations that communicate well with their internal environment, will enjoy a sustained competitive advantage" (Nothhaft & von Platen, 2015:125). Hereby, the transformative aspect of communication is highlighted, as communication is much more than only a message sending tool (Dewey, 1916:5) – it portrays any internal issues that might be surfacing in the organisation.

A corporate profile encompasses the organisation's financial status, the reputation of the organisation among its peers, up to the introduction of products and services (Steyn & Puth, 2000:54; BusinessDictionary, 2017b).

By definition, reputation cannot be controlled, since it is formed by stakeholders, increasingly in the uncontrollable digital environment. It is possible for companies to influence stakeholders' perceptions by operating responsibly and communicating effectively (Aula & Mantere, 2008:30-

31; Floreddu *et al*., 2014). The corporate communication function has been experienced by scholars as a key role to maintain and foster favourable reputations with the stakeholder groups of the company (Cornelissen, 2014:5; Forman & Argenti, 2005:246). Dowling (2006:83) suggested three important roles that corporate communication plays in enabling a good corporate reputation: (1) raising awareness and generating appreciation towards the company among external stakeholders, (2) explaining or defending the company's actions when necessary, and (3) engaging own employees by clarifying the company's mission and employees' role in it.

To maintain the corporate profile, it is important to be knowledgeable about the business structure function. For example, if there is an informal power structure, it should be noted, as it influences decision-making. It has been portrayed that effective communication plays a crucial role in the functioning of an organisational structure (Steyn & Puth, 2000:54; Nagy, 2017).

Organisational culture is defined as the way in which members of an organisation relate to each other, their work and the outside world in comparison to other organisations. It can enable or hinder an organisation's strategy (Hofstede, 2017). Therefore, the function of the corporate culture is to provide meaning, as well as determine attitudes and behaviours. For example, an organisation might have the outlook of: "The customer is always right" (Steyn & Puth, 2000:56).

A policy provides consistency – guiding management from making the same decisions over and over again (Steyn & Puth, 2000; Linton, 2016). Furthermore, Laforet and Saunders (1994:74) mention that company policy is a vital part of an organisation, wherein integrated communication forms a substantial part.

A broad example: Managers may delegate authority, but the corporate parameters are going to guide these decisions. These guidelines will be underpinned by the framework that the organisation intends to adopt (Olver, 2012:1). These guidelines should (Steyn & Puth, 2000; Linton, 2016):

- define the philosophy, in order to state the organisation's overall goal and the purpose,
- provide direction; preferably not too flexible or inflexible, as it would limit the adaptability of the organisation and
- include a variety of alternatives to a situation.

The vision is what the organisation believes is the perfect circumstances in which it will thrive. The organisation will thrive when the vision is (Fernandes, 2017; Nagy & Fawcett, 2017a; Nagy & Fawcett, 2017b; Steyn & Puth, 2000):

- clear and supported by the community members;

- flexible enough to include an array of local perspectives;
- encouraging, inspiring and uplifting to all involved;
- briefly worded so that the slogan can easily be remembered.

Values are a set of beliefs that signify the organisation's benchmark against which the mission and objectives are measured (Seth, 2017; Nagy & Fawcett, 2017b; Steyn & Puth, 2000:56). The purposes of these sets of beliefs are:

- to drive the attitudes and behaviours of employees, which are capsulated in the values.
- to include the values in the mission statement. These values will, in turn, form the code of ethics whereto the organisation will abide.
- to set the backdrop whereby future messages can be tested against, to make sure that there is no striking difference between internal and external messages.

Corporate philosophies are adopted from corporate values. It steers the organisational behaviour, meaning that (Johnson, 2016; Steyn & Puth, 2000):

- employees should be involved either by individual workgroups or any other means that the company sees fit, to communicate. The purpose thereof is to continually remind the employees of the company's vision.
- employees should be empowered to comply with service values. In other words, employees who lack authority or resources will not be able to ensure a positive customer experience.
- Customer service is by classification the process of serving people. This implies the series of steps taken towards customer service, aimed at pre- and post-purchases.
- quality control ensures closer relationships between suppliers, customers and manufacturers.
- continuous change and improvement are necessary to meet the needs of the various stakeholders the company serves.
- community involvement is necessary to meet and build external expectations and reputation.

The mission statement portrays the organisation's intended plan by answering the "what and the why" of an organisation's intent. The mission statements are much similar to the vision statement; however, it is more conclusive and pragmatic. General guiding rules towards the mission include it to be (Kokemuller, 2017; Nagy & Fawcett, 2017a; Steyn & Puth, 2000):

- Concise: Although not so briefly worded as the vision statement, a one sentence phrase will convey the message sufficiently;
- Outcome-oriented: The mission statement formulates the primary outcome;

- Inclusive: Mission statements should not be limited to the strategies of the community that will be involved, and instead should include more detailed context.

Objectives refer specifically to the measurable results of the organisation's goals. They lay out the percentage completion on a specific timeline (Root, 2017; Belicove, 2013). The three main building blocks of objectives are (Nagy & Fawcett, 2017d):

- Behavioural objectives: These objectives intend to change behavioural patterns of people, taking into consideration the comments and the behavioural results;
- Community-level outcome objectives: These objectives have the same principles in mind as the abovementioned, but instead focus more on the community and not on the individual as such;
- Process objectives refer to objectives necessary to achieve activities in order to implement other objectives.

Strategies account for the accomplishment in its corresponding objectives. In general, an organisation will have a broad range of strategies that include people from all sectors of the community. The five types of strategic guidelines are (Nagy & Fawcett, 2017d):

- Enhance skills and provide information (e.g. offer skills training in conflict management);
- Increase services and support (e.g. start a mentoring programme);
- Alter access, barriers and opportunities (such as offering scholarship programmes to students who would be otherwise unable to attend college);
- Modify the outcome of efforts (e.g. provide incentives for community members to volunteer);
- Change strategies (e.g. change business policies to allow parents, guardians and volunteers to spend more time with young children).

The purpose of action plans is to outline the details necessary for the implementation of the objectives (Nagy & Fawcett, 2017d). The action plan is divided into focus areas and tools for change. Each will comprise a number of actions (take the health sector as an example) (Ministry of Health NZ, 2016):

- Population and personal health has a people-centred focus. Pharmacists will support people to manage their own health by launching public health interventions. For instance, pharmacists can be utilised in screening diabetes and obesity in order to improve the general public's health literacy;

- Medicine management services: Pharmacists will collaborate in a team to improve health outcomes by providing a detailed range of medicine management services. For example, mobile pharmacists will be able to assist the public in managing medicine intake appropriately;

- Minor ailments and referral: This refers to services delivered logistically closer to home. The public might have the convenient access to self-care advice, treatment of minor ailments, acute demand triage and appropriate referral. Examples of these services are: emergency department triage services, including pharmacists and other members of the healthcare team etc.;

- Dispensing and supply services: The dispensing process will be rebuilt to conduct an accessible, sustainable and efficient medicine supply chain. For example, electronic prescription systems will counter waste, especially in the case of elderly care.

Apart from its obvious benefits mentioned above, internal communication is gravely underplayed due to a lack of time. Another problem seems to be that of excessive workload, 'hall talk', and self-serving behaviour, which stifle the purpose of internal communication. This in itself is a barrier that needs to be eradicated (Rynarzewska & Johnson, 2012:5).

The concern for organisations' internal environments will become a challenge for those involved with communication, to balance internal power relations and exert upward influence in the organisation. The ability to identify power relation structures, to use a variety of resources and tactics, and to engage in various forms of communications with both internal and external publics becomes an indispensable feature for much needed for communication (Berger & Reber, 2006; Choi & Choi, 2009).

2.7.2 Strategic stakeholders and publics in the external and internal environment

It is first of all important to point out which of the two terms, i.e. *stakeholder or publics* would be most appropriate to use within the study's context and the reasoning behind the notion. The notion of 'publics' is a better fit than the notion of 'stakeholders' if public relations are about acknowledging this uncontrolled audience, as well as guiding an organisation in the democratic milieu. On the other hand, the notion 'stakeholders' may be suitable if public relations are focused on shaping people's behaviour, irrespective of longer-term and wider political implications (Mackey, 2009).

Taking into account the argument of Habermas (1984:13), as referred to by Mackey (2009:13) above, the communication function should clearly be shaped around the stakeholder. Different

stakeholder groups have their own sets of values, needs, desires, wants, goals and objectives, which may totally differ from those of the organisation's values (Steyn & Puth, 2000:64).

Researchers interpret organisational values as "the means and ends that matter most to organisations" (Dobni *et al.*, 2000:91). Based on Rokeach's (1973:3) definition of individual values, Argandoña (2003:16) argued that values reflect desirable modes of behaviour that guide organisational choices and decisions in a manner that achieves desirable end states of existence for the organisation. Just like individual values, the core values of an organisation are like a blueprint for its behaviours. They often hold the highest priority (Van Rekom *et al.*, 2006:176) and come together to help form an organisation's culture (Schein, 1990:110). The modern business environment consists of organisations attempting to coexist with highly demanding stakeholders. The actions of the organisation, which are preceded and determined by specific values, are judged according to whether they adhere to societal standards, which are also preceded and determined by a specific set of values. Due to the unavoidable disconnect between organisations and their stakeholders, communicating values and, even more importantly, behaviours that imply these values, becomes a way in which organisations can promise to uphold the standards set to them in their external environments. Keeping this in mind, corporate communication has become "the central managerial activity involved in managing and orchestrating all internal and external communications aimed at creating favourable starting points with stakeholders on which the company depends," as opposed to communicating with different "audiences or letting different departments handle their communications autonomously, the vision of corporate communication, in other words, is to manage all communications under one banner" (Elving, 2016:6).

Grunig (1997:9) confirms the latter by arguing that these classifications dictate the stakeholder's future communication behaviour (information seeking and information processing). Habermas (1984:108) sees strategic attempts for opinion orientation within the public sphere, as an onslaught on 'communicative reason'. For Habermas (1984:108), 'communicative reasoning' is the pleasant, non-self-destructive reasoning that is only possible if people and their communities are able to associate and communicate, in a trustworthy and unrestricted manner, free from the ideological orientations of major commerce and power-politics.

Clark (2000) points out that: "Communications managers and business managers recognise the need to analyse multiple stakeholders (sometimes referred to as publics) to develop a sense of the needs and wants of those who are either critical to the corporation's existence or capable of expressing significant concern (primary and secondary stakeholders)"

Before classifying strategic stakeholders and publics in the external and internal environment, it must first be established who the stakeholders of the organisation are (Steyn & Puth, 2000:64).

2.7.2.1 Stakeholder analysis

People who have an influence on the organisation, who may have an impact on the decision-making process or organisational activities are referred to as stakeholders (Steyn & Puth 2000:42; Thompson, 2015). Stakeholder analysis enables the organisation to pinpoint the stakeholders who are most likely to change, as well as to determine their needs and motivations (Servaes & Malikhao, 2010:46; Reed *et al.,* 2009:1947). Identifying and focusing on characteristics common to a homogeneous group improve the likelihood that a message will have an impact on the identified stakeholder group (Wirtz *et al.,* 2011:960). Additionally, identifying personal traits such as cynicism will assist the organisation not only to better segment and grasp the characteristics of the stakeholder, but also to manage strategic communication (Rim & Lee, 2011:715). Cynicism refers to an attitude, where trustworthiness, sincerity, pessimism or a feeling of hopelessness is being fostered towards particular objects such as institutions, groups and management (Andersson & Bateman, 1997:450). In conjunction with the latter, Dean *et al.* (1998:1398) define cynicism as being both general and specific in attitude, defined by frustration, hopelessness and disillusionment, as well as contempt toward and distrust of a person, group, ideology, social convention or institution.

2.7.2.2 Step 1: Identify your stakeholders using the linkage model

A stakeholder map is based on the four priority public segmentations. It is obvious that an organisation may have various stakeholders, but not all of them are affected or interested in what the organisation stands for.

This process can be characterised through its emphases on drawing a stakeholder map, considering the consequences of organisational goals towards the stakeholders, deciding what should be communicated (themes) and what the communication outcomes should achieve (setting deliberate objectives) (Steyn & Puth, 2000:31). It is therefore important to distinguish between who will advance your business and who will be blocking the organisation's efforts (Mind Tools, 2015a:2).

Firstly, a list needs to be compiled of all the stakeholders of the organisation. This can be done by using the brainstorming technique. To prioritise the focus, it is important to work out their effect on the organisation with regard to their power, interests and influence (Mind Tools, 2015a:5). These stakeholders are called 'concerned' publics who "gain urgency and consequently become highly salient within the overall stakeholder map" (Sedereviciute & Valentini, 2011:231).

Your boss	Shareholders	Government
Senior executives	Alliance partners	Trades associations
Your co-workers	Suppliers	The press
Your team	Lenders	Interest groups
Customers	Analysts	The public
Prospective customers	Future recruits	The community
Your family		

Table 2-1: Indication of possible stakeholders in the organisation or within current projects (Mind Tools, 2017b).

Directing communication successfully relies on the correctness of the stakeholder identification, keeping in mind that stakeholders can consist of an organisation or individuals (Mind Tools, 2015a:2). In order to comply with the above, some organisations' stakeholder segmentation may be as clear-cut as internal versus external publics. It has been mentioned, according to literature, that Grunig and Hunt's (Creative commons, 2012) linkage model offers the best effort in identifying all stakeholders. This model will be discussed under the topic stakeholder analysis.

It became evident that once an organisation has identified its stakeholders, a struggle for attention becomes apparent: "who to give it to, who to give more to, and who to not give it to at all." (Rawlins, 2006:1). Placing the needs of one stakeholder above the needs of the other may cause a predicament with which many organisations battle. When such disagreements surface, it is crucial to the success of the organisation that each stakeholder should have been prioritised according to his/her importance (Winn, 2001:139). The latter is the first attempt to classify *all* stakeholders before prioritising or segmenting them by attributes. Thereafter, ranking strategic stakeholders occurs by means of analysing strategic linkages (Steyn & Puth, 2000:65). This is a crucial part of stakeholder management (Aaltonen, 2010:37; Freeman, 1984:44; Jepsen & Eskerod, 2009:336; Magness, 2008; Mitchell *et al.,* 1997). Linkages form the basis for stakeholder engagement through which communication, involvement and the development of relationships with stakeholders take place (Chinyio & Akintoye, 2008:5; Greenwood, 2007). As noted by Yang *et al*. (2011:11), stakeholders should be engaged as early as possible and this engagement is essential for stakeholder analysis and decision-making. This method will be explained in the following schematic overview (Steyn & Puth, 2000:65):

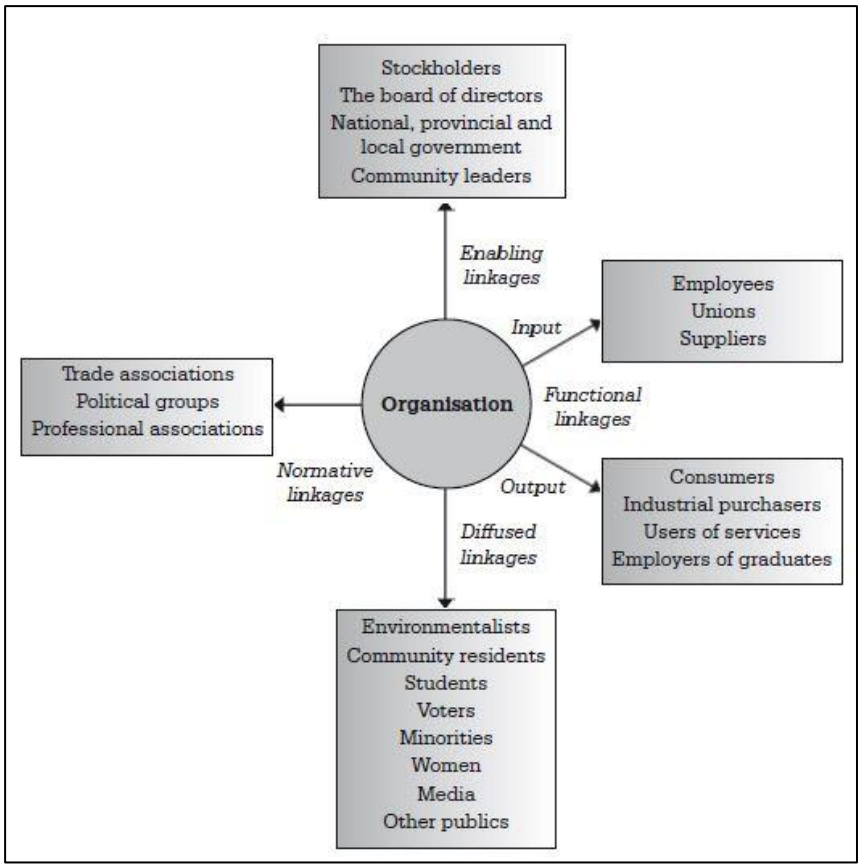

Figure 2-2: Identifying all the stakeholders of the organisation (Steyn & Puth, 2000:66).

These linkages form the cornerstone of any communication programme (Steyn & Puth, 2000:65). It has been envisaged that the improvement of the overall knowledge and information system depends on managing and improving these linkages between the actors. Advisably, only narrow stakeholders down after the successful identification process has been completed. A suggestion is to determine in which manner these groups are linked to the organisation. Grunig and Hunt's (Creative commons, 2012) organisational linkage model divides these links into four groups, i.e. enabling, functional, diffused, and normative stakeholders, as revealed below (Creative commons, 2012).

Linkage type	Description	When should it be used?
Enabling linkages	Are with stakeholders who provide power to the organisation and administrate its resources (e.g. government regulators, stockholders, the board of directors or donors).	When another organisation causes repercussion for others, it is advisable to use both *enabling* and *functional* linkages. These linkages will hinder the organisation to reach its attempted goals.

Functional linkages	Are essential to the services of the organisation and are divided into *input* and *output* functions.	The linkage provides labour and resources for the creation of products or services (such as employees and suppliers, while the *output* function is involved with the receiving of products or services (such as consumers and retailers)
Normative linkages	Are with authoritarians in the field similar to that of the organisation.	This linkage allows for the means to connect and assist in problem-solving guidance.
Diffused linkages	These are connections to groups of people not linked to any organisation. In order to establish a linkage, the organisation will attempt by using the following methods: minority relations community relations media relations environmental relations	Note should be taken of these types of groups before they form an opinion about the organisation.
Turbulent environments lead to more management and linkage change (Steyn & Puth, 2000; Creative commons, 2012).		

Table 2-2: Adopted from the organisational linkage model (Creative commons, 2012).

The linkage model should help the organisation to identify all of its stakeholders. The diffused linkage stakeholders would vary frequently based on the current situation, but the linkages to stay more stable are the enabling, functional and normative linkage stakeholders (Creative commons, 2012).

When organisations act in accordance with positive stakeholder expectations, they generally develop a positive relationship with a stakeholder, which leads to a positive reputation (Coombs, 2007:167). This leads to reputational capital, or the goodwill that an organisation accumulates through the maintenance of a good reputation (Kent & Taylor, 1998:395).

This exercise should be revisited on a frequent basis, as stakeholders' interests might differ over time (Mind Tools, 2017b). It holds the advantage that the organisation can track which activity is the most popular. Additional to the latter is to know how to involve the stakeholders in a certain project and which communication method will be the most appropriate. Questions that need to be answered are: "What monetary value or sentimental effect will the completion of the project have?

Is it positive or negative?" To find answers will require a hands-on approach by the organisation. It has been suggested that such an approach might just lead to a lucrative relationship, as stakeholders are quite at ease to voice their opinions (Thompson, 2015; KnowHowNonprofit, 2017; Steyn & Puth, 2000). It has been pointed out that at this level the organisation has a chance to transfer engagements with these stakeholders to a positive, collaborative level, which may be attained through dialogue and the quest for long-term quality relationships. The core of this action points to substantive dialogue (Bruning *et al.*, 2008:26; Taylor, *et al.*, 2001:2; Kent & Taylor, 1998:322; Svendsen, 1988:188).

2.7.2.3 Step 2: Prioritise stakeholders according to attributes

When consulting the literature, much of the information regarding stakeholder management is centred on the stakeholder's attributes (Rawlins, 2006:12). Rawlins (2006:5) explain that there are three possible characterisations under the attribute prioritisation: *stakeholders who have ownership in the organisation*; *those stakeholders who are economically dependent on the organisation;* and *those stakeholders who are not linked directly to an organisation*, *but who are concerned about the organisation's attitude towards social responsibility*. The authors Freeman and Reed (1983:91) also suggested that classifying stakeholders according to the rate by which the organisation is dependent on them for survival and prosperity may be another means.

Savage *et al.* (1991:61) took two attributes to identify a stakeholder into account: a claim, and the ability to influence. This resulted in the notion of legitimacy and power as crucial attributes to determine the stakeholders. A further breakdown of the stakeholders was according to support. Stakeholders are a low threat when they are keen to support the actions and the goals of the organisation. The marginal stakeholder has a minimal interest in the organisation and holds the least threat. The non-supportive stakeholder poses a threat and is least likely to cooperate. According to the authors Savage *et al*. (1991:61), the "mixed blessing stakeholder" as posing a threat, but possessing enormous potential for cooperation.

A more intensive model by Mitchell *et al.* (1997) was developed to include the following attributes: power, legitimacy and urgency. This model broadened the limitations that Savage *et al.*'s model portrayed, by recognising that *legitimacy, power* and *urgency* were not merely variables, but contributed to a mix that would assist to prioritise the stakeholders. The combination of these attributes, according to Mitchell *et al.* (1997), allows identifying the dependent stakeholder, which lacked from Savage's model. Stakeholder dependency on the organisation is equally as important as the influence they exercise over the organisation, especially in the sphere of social responsibility. To establish priority according to its attributes, this model will be extremely helpful (Mitchell *et al.,* 1997):

(a) Power can be categorised in three forms, according to Etzioni (1964:59-60), namely "*coercive*, *utilitarian* and *normative power*." Power can be seen as the influence being exerted to mobilise a party that would otherwise never have made a certain decision. Mayers (2005:2) claims that measuring the strength of identification with a group should offer insight into how the group is exerting influence on its members.

(b) Legitimacy: Stakeholders who have a legal, moral, or presumed claim by which the organisation may be influenced. Stakeholders are risk-takers who have "invested some form of capital, human or financial, something of value, in an organisation." (Clarkson, 1995:5). Mitchell *et al.* (1997) qualify stakeholders with a legitimate claim as those who harbour the notion of risk, as they are dependent on the organisation. Authority includes stakeholders who often are dependent on the organisation. The combination of power and legitimacy equals authority.

(c) Urgency: For stakeholder urgency to thrive, the following should be present: (1) the relationship or claim is of a time sensitive nature, or (2) the nature of a relationship or claim is of critical importance (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997).

(d) The mixture of these three attributes enables, according to Mitchell *et al.* (1997), the creation of a prioritisation list. It is further specified that latent stakeholders only possess one of the attributes, while expectant stakeholders possess two of the attributes, and definite stakeholders possess all three of the attributes. If none of these attributes are present, these groups will fall outside of the scope of the organisation.

The latent stakeholder has less prominence, due to the possession of only one attribute. Latent stakeholders may be classified as dormant, discretionary and demanding (Mitchell *et al.,* 1997).

(1) The dormant stakeholder has no legitimacy or urgency; therefore, their power remains unused.

(2) The dependent stakeholder has to rely on the organisation's goodwill, as they possess legitimacy, but no actual power or urgency to be able to claim.

(3) The demanding stakeholder holds no danger to the organisation, but might be a bit of a 'squeaky wheel' because they have urgency, although legitimacy or power eludes them.

The expectant stakeholder possesses two attributes. These stakeholders may furthermore be subdivided into the following categories: dominant, dependent and dangerous (Mitchell *et al.,* 1997).

(1) The dormant stakeholder has legitimacy and power; therefore, managers will award much of their attention there.

(2) The dependent stakeholder possesses legitimacy and urgency. To include these stakeholders is beneficial to the organisation, as this group will remind the organisation that stakeholder priority is not the end all and be all. Dependency features strongly in the social responsibility arena.

(3) The dangerous stakeholder lacks legitimacy, but possesses urgency and power. In order to reach their goals, these stakeholders might become violent. To exert change, formal channels may be used. Social activist groups, which resort under this category, may sometimes feature by means of protests and boycotts, or property damage in severe cases.

(4) Stakeholders who hold all three attributes, i.e. dominant, dependent and dangerous have the highest priority.

The stakeholder typology model, as will be explained below, presents one, two and three attributes present (Mitchell *et al.,* 1997).

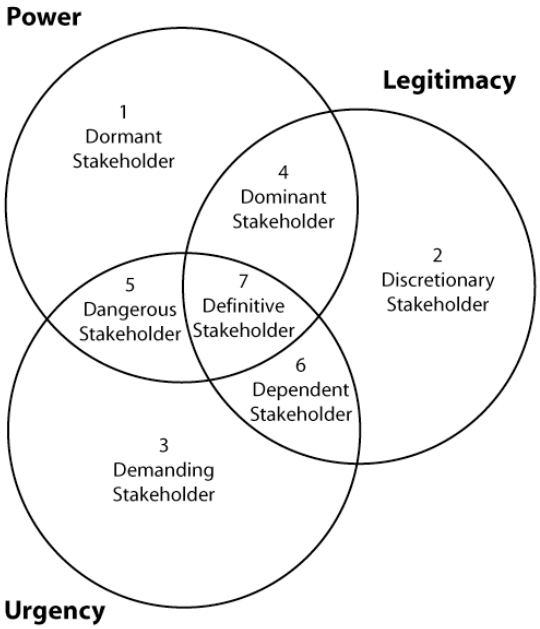

Figure 2-3: Stakeholder typology: Three attributes present (Mitchell et al., 1997).

A noteworthy aspect that accompanies this model is that each attribute is not set in stone. Groups may acquire or lose any of the given attributes (*legitimacy, urgency* or *power*); it all depends on the given situation. To become a stakeholder will strongly depend on whether a specific group is

capable of obtaining a third attribute. Further examples: A stakeholder group may become dangerous when legitimacy is obtained, for instance non-governmental organisations in the past. Dependant stakeholders may gain power in their appeal to governmental agencies with regard to corporate responsibility negligence (Mitchell *et al.,* 1997).

It became apparent according to literature that the dimension of support is lacking from Mitchell *et al.* (1997) model. In order to be regarded as inclusive, the stakeholder prioritisation model should also be able to conclude whether stakeholders are dominant, dependent, dangerous or definitive stakeholders, and are supportive or threatening (Rawlins, 2006:6).

After incorporating the Grunig and Hunt (Creative commons, 2012) linkage model with the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) attribute model, a stakeholder priority hierarchy became probable. To maintain long-lasting success, the organisation should focus on enabling and functional linkages. The enabling linkages are the organisation's primary groups that form part of the stockholders and regulatory agencies. They possess the power that defines that their interests are legitimate. Enabling stakeholders become definitive stakeholders when urgent issues have an effect. This group will, due to the latter, receive the highest priority (Rawlins, 2006:8).

Employees, suppliers and unions form part of the functional input linkages; they normally have legitimacy and high levels of involvement. The power resides with the organisation, as these stakeholder groups are economically dependent on the organisation. For this reason, the organisation has a "moral and legal" responsibility towards this group. It is crucial that the organisation should harbour a healthy relationship, as this will be beneficial to the effectiveness of the organisation (Creative commons 2012; Rawlins, 2006:8).

Consumers of organisations' goods fall in the category of functional output stakeholders. By definition, these include consumers, distributors and retailers. Organisations are familiar with the fact that these stakeholders contribute to the organisation's financial well-being. Importantly, these groups should receive the highest priority, due to their power, legitimacy and economic influence. Another group, according to Savage *et al.,* (1991:67), consisting of consumers and employees, resorts under the mixed blessing stakeholders – referred to as such, due to their possibility to switch between supportive and non-supportive action.

Normative linkages become important in cooperative purposes, especially if organisations face issues relating to an economic or regulatory impact. It becomes evident that the peer organisation relies on a contingency compatible relationship until clarity has been reached. This situation is referred to by Savage *et al*. as a non-supportive threat that the organisation's competitors belong to (Savage *et al.,* 1991:65).

It seems that diffused stakeholders are the most taxing. They are very compassionate towards the organisation's actions, but very difficult to predict (Rawlins, 2006:9). They have urgency, but not much power, and the relationship can be classified as temporary (Mitchell *et al.,* 1997). Their legitimacy is doubtful, but if a concern arises, they become dependent stakeholders who will increase their priority. Due to their lack of influence, which they can exercise on other stakeholder members, they will tend to use the enabling or functional linkages as channels (Rawlins, 2006:8).

In instances as above, diffused stakeholders form coalitions with other powerful and legitimate groups (enabling and functional linkages), permitting the shift from dependent- to definitive stakeholders. These groups can quickly shift from latent to definitive stakeholders. An example of such behaviour is, for instance, when activists request a boycott from consumers or NGOs to appeal to government to prevent certain activities (Rawlins, 2006:8).

To conclude, the greatest priority stakeholders who pose a frequent and critical effect on organisations will be those who stem from the enabling and functional linkages. Normative linkages are being considered by die organisation, not due to the crucial effect on the organisation, but rather because the normative linkage groups are the competitors of the organisation. Their importance becomes apparent when the organisation faces a crisis and needs joined effort. The diffused linkages, on the other hand, do not require the same amount of attention. However, if an urgent matter arises, this group increases in priority. Interesting, though, this prioritising method does not portray which will become the active group when an urgent situation lurks (Rawlins, 2006:9).

2.7.2.4 Step 3: Prioritisation according to relationship with the situation

Heath (2005:778-779) mentioned that Grunig developed the situational analysis to incorporate the classic theorists John Dewey and Herbert Blumer's opinion on public relations, namely that publics arise around problems that affect them. According to the latter, these groups will organise themselves into issue groups to pressure organisations to regulate the burning causes. Grunig wrote: "stakeholders who are or become more aware and active can be described as publics" (Grunig & Repper, 1992:117-156; Grunig, 1997:8). Within the stakeholder categories, situational theory can identify which publics will "communicate actively, passively, or not at all, about organisational decisions that affect them" (Grunig, 2005:778).

Publics can be classified according to the problems experienced. If no problem is present, one can refer to those publics as non-publics. Publics who know that the problem exists but do not yet recognise it as a problem are called latent publics. Those who do recognise it, are categorised as aware publics and those who take action are called active publics (Grunig, 1983:605). Grunig

(1983:606) stated that these variables (*level of involvement, problem recognition, and constraint recognition)* have led to the development of the situational theory of public behaviour. It also explains why some publics become active in certain situations. Situation theory has been singled out by Grunig (1983:612) and other researchers to show how communication behaviour affects cognition, attitude and behaviour.

The severity of people's involvement in a situation is referred to as the level of involvement. The level of problem recognition is determined by the degree of relevance between themselves and the situation. People hardly ever seek or process information about a situation unless they see the relevance pertaining to themselves. If the circumstances are relevant, and change or difference is within reach, grounds to become an active public are laid. If the notion is that nothing can be done, those people are reckoned to have a high constraint of recognition, which places them in the less active category (Rawlins, 2006:9).

Referent criteria are of another consideration, as people use them to apply past experiences as a guide to new situations. High levels of involvement and problem recognition are typical of active publics (Rawlins, 2006:10). Grunig (1983:604) stipulated that these publics will become active due to the belief in the ability to rectify the problem. Therefore, it is apparent that these publics will seek information actively and act upon it. Aware publics might act upon the problem, but are highly limited by lower levels of involvement and problem recognition, or higher levels of constraint recognition. Latent publics, on the other hand, are not cognisant or aware of the problem, but might shift to *aware* or *cognition,* depending on information levels (Rawlins, 2006:9).

	High involvement	**Low involvement**
Problem-facing behaviour High problem recognition Low constraint recognition	*Active Public*	*Active/Aware Public*
Constraint behaviour High problem recognition High constraint recognition	*Aware/Active Public*	*Latent/Aware Public*
Routine behaviour Low problem recognition Low constraint recognition	*Active (Reinforcing) Public*	*Non/Latent Public*
Fatalistic behaviour Low problem recognition High constraint recognition	*Latent Public*	*Non Public*

Table 2-3: Types of publics according to Grunig's situational theory (Rawlins, 2006:10).

Publics are defined by the same levels of problem recognition, constraint recognition, and involvement for the same issues or problems (Grunig & Repper, 1992:117–156). Grunig (1977:3) simulated issues that will lead to active and passive publics and discovered four types of publics: **problem facing behaviour** *(high problem recognition/low constraint recognition);* **constraint behaviour** *(high problem recognition/high constraint recognition),* **routine behaviour** *(low problem recognition/low constraint recognition),* and **fatalistic behaviour** *(low problem recognition/high constraint recognition).*

The theory of publics was expanded by Hallahan (2000), by adding that latent and non-publics should be divided into *inactive* and *aroused* publics. Hallahan (2000) felt that it would be erroneous to think that the only publics an organisation should deal with are those active and motivated. Inactive publics may have low levels of knowledge and involvement towards the organisation, and therefore may be classified as either satisfied with the relationship or may be apathetic towards it. In contrast, aroused publics will seek information, and although they might have low levels of knowledge, their drive is the recognition of a potential problem.

To outline the above mentioned step: active publics have greater urgency, therefore their priority will be much more noticeable than of aware, aroused and inactive publics. In order to mobilise a stakeholder to become active, will be dictated by one question: "does the problem involve us and do we feel adequate to make a difference towards the situation?" Diffused linkages are also referred to as a single-issue- or a hot-issue publics, it is short lived, and priority will change once the problem has been dissolved. Enabling and functional linkages will become active when issues have an impact on the group, as well as the fact that - the organisation has power, dependency or influence over the relationship. This will place the group in a multiple-issue public (Rawlins, 2006:11).

2.7.2.5 Fourth step: Prioritising according to communication strategy

The primary priority publics consist of the definitive stakeholders, who are also known as the active publics. It would be a great advantage if active publics could always be defined as active publics, but due to the unpredictability of human nature, this is unfortunately not the case. Taking the latter into account, organisations must gear themselves to resolve issues with the priority group. Bringing this into account will assist the organisation in creating strategies, which can be linked successfully to supportive or non-supportive and active or inactive stakeholders. The organisation would then in effect develop strategies that include the following four groups: advocate stakeholders (active and supportive), dormant stakeholders (inactive and supportive), adversarial stakeholders (active and non-supportive), and apathetic stakeholders (inactive and non-supportive) (Steyn & Puth, 2000:64; Rawlins, 2006:11).

Advocate stakeholders: These groups are crucial for organisations and should be included with regard to supportive actions, e.g. third-party endorsements, letter-writing campaigns, donations, investments and attendance at functions. The messages should be focused on action and support behaviour orientation (Steyn & Puth, 2000:64; Rawlins, 2006:11).

Dormant stakeholders: This group is not really actively involved – inactivity describes the action better. However, if it is due to the absence of knowledge, the advice is to direct messages in such a way that it will enable awareness creation and the understanding of issues, which might have an influence on them. If publics are interested but not yet active, apathy should be addressed in the messages. It should aim to reduce the concept of possible restraints that exist or increase emotional attachment by means of affective cues (Steyn & Puth, 2000:187; Rawlins, 2006:11).

Adversarial stakeholders: To apply defensive communication will be ineffective, as it will only entrench the position further. If aroused publics struggle to decide between whether or not to be supportive, defensive communication in this instance would not be wasted. If the point of non-supportiveness is apparent, organisations should be advised to turn to conflict resolution strategies in order to seek win-win solutions. These stakeholders can often be extremely helpful with project detail (Grunig, 2005:779).

- Apathetic *stakeholders:* The intuitive reaction of this stakeholder group is ignorance. If this stakeholder group is exposed to an issue, but is unaware of its relevance, they may still move to an aroused, then aware, and then active public. A strategy to follow would be to increase awareness with the specific issue in mind, distributing an invitation to collaborate with the organisation, before resulting in a problem or crisis. Since 'involved' appeared to be a tricky issue, most of the communication effort should be focused on increasing the importance of the issue and invitations for engagement (Grunig, 2005:779).

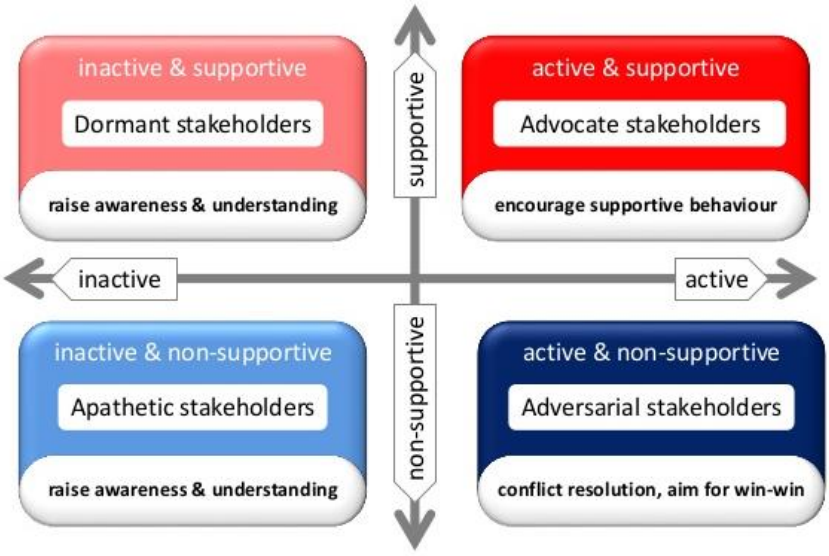

Figure 2-4: Stakeholder prioritisation process (Rawlins, 2011).

After the strategies have been developed, there is still one last step in the prioritisation process left. Wilson (2005:391-407) mentioned that there are three types of publics affected in the communication strategies: *key publics*, *intervening publics*, and *influentials*. Key publics are those responsible for accomplishing organisational goals. In comparison with the abovementioned, these stakeholders hold the highest priority, due to the power/dependency/influence attributes they possess. The urgency of an issue and their active involvement play an additional part. Key publics are of the highest priority and organisations should strive to understand them to the fullest. To effectively profile the key stakeholders, the following variables can be utilised: demographics, lifestyles and values, media preferences, cooperative networks, and self-interests. Self-interest is very appealing to key publics; therefore, it is advisable to disseminate messages through the relevant channels.

Stakeholder strategy should encapsulate publics who become active as soon as issues include them; in other words, address the self-interests. For effective management of stakeholder relations, "the interests of key stakeholders must be integrated in the very purpose of the organisation, and stakeholder relationships must be managed in a coherent and strategic fashion" (Freeman & McVea, 2001). Self-interest does not refer to one's own selfish interests, but instead to deep-seated values such as quality of life, needs of family and friends, and even economic well-being. Wilson (2005:391-407) describes self-interest stakeholders as the method to propel organisations and groups to reconsider current behaviour.

The purpose of the intervening public is to channel information to the priority publics. In this regard, they act as opinion leaders. Opinion leaders might by misperception be classified as

priority publics. The great distinguishing factor here is, if a message needs to be distributed to others, then the responsible group resorts under an intervening public. For the most, the media's participation places them in this category. Certain influentials may also be portrayed as an important intervening public, e.g. doctors who pass information on to patients, and teachers who pass information on to students. The success of campaigns and other operations is based on the solid linkage of intervening publics (Wilson, 2005:391-407).

The effect of an organisation's success can be influenced by intervening publics, who are also known as influentials. Opinion leaders may act as the swing vote, meaning that their opinion towards the organisational message may either authenticate or disregard it. These sources are in most cases more influential than the message that public relations distribute. When hosting a campaign, consideration should be given to how influentials will interpret these messages, due to their capacity of either being intervening or supportive (Wilson, 2005:391-407).

To summarise, communication strategies may award an active public the term priority public, once it becomes clear that they possess the ability to affect the organisation's success. The media can be classified as intervening publics, as this group's main provocative is to disseminate information to priority publics. Due to influential groups' ability to influence the way the priority public is going to interpret the message, they too should be included in the communication strategy (Rawlins, 2006:12).

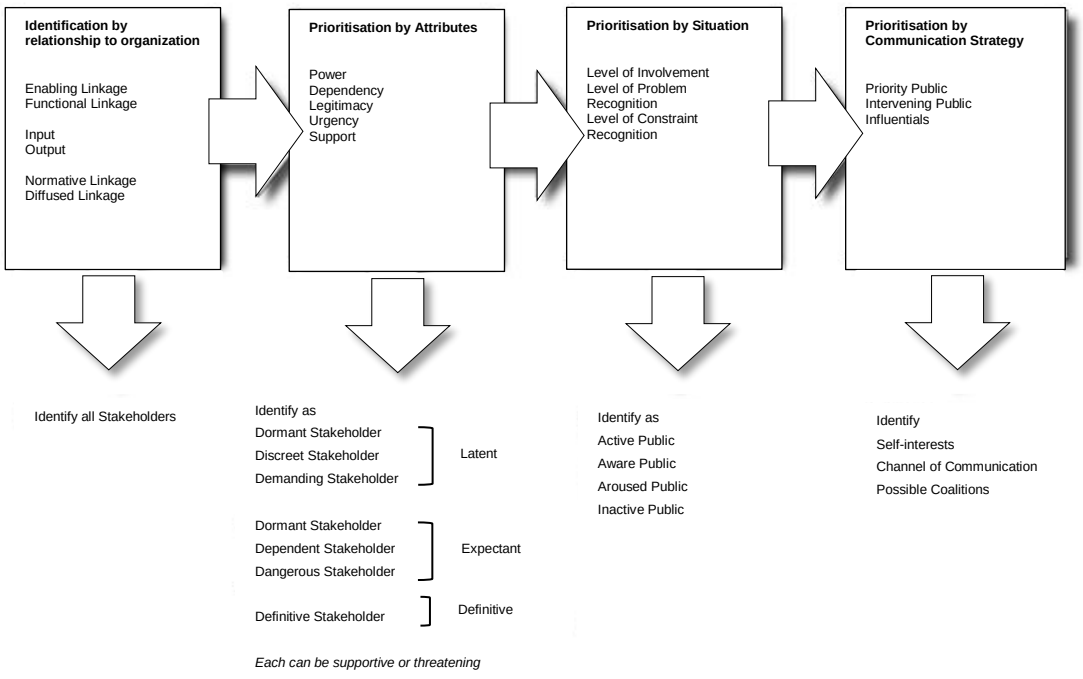

Figure 2-5: Stakeholder prioritisation model (Rawlins, 2006:13).

Steps to stakeholder analysis, according to Rawlins (2006:13), are to identify stakeholders, to classify stakeholders into meaningful groups, and to perform stakeholder prioritisation. The combination of stakeholder relations and public relations literature provides a more comprehensive process for prioritising the stakeholder groups, especially those that become active publics.

A positive relationship is very important with the organisation. However, it becomes second nature "to respond to the squeaky wheel stakeholder" (Savage *et al*., 1991:63). The purpose of the abovementioned steps was to portray that this is not the case. Using the steps will guide the organisation in the direction to compile a more systematic and comprehensive approach, when it comes to prioritising the stakeholders.

(a) Determine and estimate key strategic concerns

Steyn and Puth (2000:69) mentioned that the importance in this step will be to identify the primary issues that strategic stakeholders must face when developing a corporate communication strategy. In other words, they determine how the strategic stakeholders might feel towards a certain issue. Issues should be addressed by the organisation; they should also take into account the effects of corporate strategies. The reason for this is that strategic issues have the potential to alter the organisation's strategy. It must be kept in mind that not all issues need to be classified as strategic (Steyn & Puth, 2000:67). This is where the assistance of a communication strategist will come in handy, as this person will assist in relationship building, and focus the attention of the communication manager on the risks that the organisation might be facing.

Svendsen (1998:188) concludes that in this unsettled world, "the ability to balance the interests of all stakeholders will be a defining characteristic of successful companies in the next decade. This is not to say that companies will be able to satisfy everyone's interests all the time. However, companies that have a strong set of values and that can communicate their business goals clearly will maintain stakeholders support when the results are not in their favour". This notion is also supported by Steyn & Puth (2000:67).

(b) Determining strategic issue implications for stakeholders

To assist top management in the business improvement process, communication plays a strategic role as a means of performance booster to those involved in the process (Steyn & Puth, 2000:70).

The corporate communication strategy should take into consideration the underlying business issues. In other words, a stakeholder network can be built, which will leave room for manoeuvring, e.g. in the case of product legislation, communication to key stakeholders in this regard, and opening the opportunity to capitalise on the given opportunity (Steyn & Puth, 2000:70). The same holds true in times of change or crisis. For an organisation to be flexible, it has to ensure the strengthening of relationships. Trust or a perception of legitimacy of the corporation's values and actions will be an embedded given. For example: By putting people publicly before profit in a time of crisis, is a chord that struck well with stakeholders (Ugoalah, 2016:188). This action trumps the pervasiveness of technology as it underscores authenticity (Ugoalah, 2016:184). In today's electronic age, as was evident in the YouTube footage analysed for Ugoalah's study, the challenge for organisations to hide or reveal misleading information becomes real; therefore, it is advised that CEOs should maintain authenticity when trying to deal with organisational disaster and fostering a trust relationship (Ugoalah, 2016:189).

If the organisation's capabilities are being questioned by the relevant stakeholders, every other value dimension will be perceived negatively. Corporations have to endure various uncertain situations where nothing becomes more important than relational capital, trust and public acceptance (Zerfass & Viertmann, 2016:49).

If these issues are not taken into account, especially in the composition of a communication strategy, the outcome will disappoint, as communication practitioners might propose a wrongful solution. Taking the latter into account, a communication strategy should support the business strategy, and by doing so, the organisation would be in a position to compete more effectively. It will also allow the opportunity to communicate with stakeholders, and this will lead to a chance to solve certain problems as well as to capitalise on given opportunities that might arise (Steyn & Puth, 2000:70).

The millennial generation, which comprises individuals who were born between 1982 and 2001, exceeds the number of Baby Boomers by nearly four million people and represents 27% of the American population (Tapscott, 2009:16). Millennials are the first group of individuals born into a society where the Internet is present in both the business and social spheres of American life. In fact, a 2007 study conducted by eMarketer.com revealed that Millennials utilise user-generated sites 51% of the time in comparison to Generation X (ages 25-41) or the Baby Boomer generation (ages 42-60). These data further support the study that organisations should absorb social media tools into their overall public relations and communication strategy (Breakenridge, 2008).

(c) Establish communication goals

Communication actions take place at nearly every sector of the organisation – not only in the communication department (Belasen, 2008; Heide & Simonsson, 2011:202). For instance, employees of the financial department need to consider their communication when communicating with their stakeholders; the same holds true for members of the human resources, legal, or sales departments. Communicative consequences and effects with the exclusive link to specific communication activities such as targeted announcements, communication campaigns, and events, need to be set apart. The aim should evolve and rather be linked to everyday interactions with suppliers, business partners, public departments, potential employees, or other internal and external stakeholder groups (Heide & Simonsson, 2011:212). Furthermore, actions such as the monitoring, interpretation, and inclusion of information in decision-making processes and organisational activities need to be integrated into communicative expertise: "Because teams operate close to the frontlines of the organization (upstream systems) and often communicate directly with customers, they need to be familiar with corporate communication goals and messages. Performing diverse organisational tasks and often faced with the need to handle boundary spanning activities, team members must be familiar with core communication activities and products and act in accordance with corporate communication goals" (Belasen, 2008).

Communication goals assist in steering the organisation in the desired direction. It acts as the organisation's mini-vision. For instance, does the organisation want to distribute information, or is the aim to change an attitude or maybe perceived ideas? In case of attitudes that need change, the best would be to first supply the information and attend to the attitude alteration thereafter (Steyn & Puth, 2000:70).

The creation thereof links the corporate communication strategy and the communication plan together. When a goal is decided upon – *during the strategy phase* – it should be accompanied by two or more objectives that will be incorporated – *during the planning phase* – of the communication plan (Steyn & Puth, 2000; Cutting edge PR, 2013).

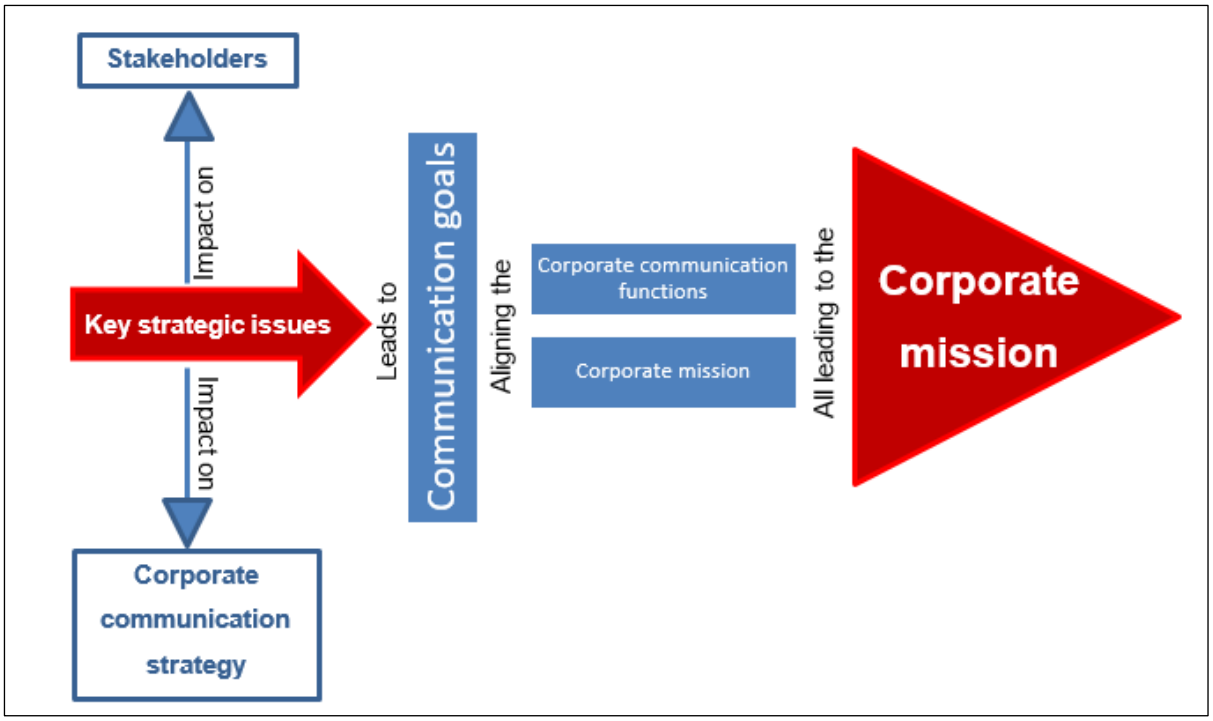

Figure 2-6: An adapted schematic representation of the establishing of communication goals (Steyn & Puth, 2000:69-70).

In Figure 2-6, it is shown that the communication goals align the corporate communication function with the corporate mission. Goals are derived from key strategic issues such as from the stakeholders' implications and the communication strategy. Based on Figure 2-6, the communication goals will reflect the organisation's goals, allowing for the achievement of the corporate mission (Steyn & Puth, 2000:71).

Heide and Simonsson (2011:205) emphasise that, beyond the scope of corporate communication goals, employees should "be able to engage in dialogue, to give and take feedback and to share information in a meaningful way." All employees are important messengers and must have a thorough understanding of their employer's strategies and values, of how their own work fits into the bigger picture, and of how to communicate accordingly. In order to meet this challenge, the relationship management by means of communication needs to be clear and not only part of certain departments, but as part of every employee's job profile (Heide & Simonsson, 2011:206). It is crucial that all employees of the organisation need to be able to communicate effectively (Van Ruler & Verčič, 2003:23; Brønn *et al*., 2009:78; Tench *et al*., 2009:151).

2.7.3 Establish a communication policy

The development of the organisation's corporate communication policy of strategy resides with the corporate communication manager. The only way that this can succeed is when there is total

familiarity with the organisation's internal environment (e.g. the profile, vision, values, philosophy, mission, corporate culture and corporate policies), as well as the external environment (stakeholders and other external influences, e.g. political, economic, social, technological, ecological and judicial factors that have an impact on the organisation) (Steyn & Puth, 2000:68).

A communication strategy of substance should include a distinct policy statement. The policy statement is dependent on corporate values, culture and norms, which might differ for each organisation. The corporate communication policy should address the following (Steyn & Puth, 2000:71):

(a) Internal or external communication and certain communication programmes, e.g. lobbying or media liaison;
(b) Workable relationships between corporate communication and other departments, e.g. marketing or research or human resources;
(c) The interrelatedness of corporate communication, in other words the order and lines of command; and
(d) The goals and objectives set for corporate communication.

An aspect not to be left unmentioned is that of crisis management. Grunig *et al*. (1992) informed that successful performance under a crisis situation can only be traced back to an organisation that had the following in place: open organisational structure, good communication system, and organisational culture warranting democratic participation and the opinion offered has been able to successfully perform crisis management. Marra (1998) supports the above by elaborating: "organisations that allow attorneys, personnel or financial specialists to determine communication policy during a crisis may survive later battles in a court of law, but often fail miserably in the court of public opinion."

Although the communication policy might be a commitment of various good intentions, the bottom line is that it should be clear and the same format should be used across all departments or divisions, applying one standard throughout, internally and externally (Steyn & Puth, 2000; MyBusiness, 2016).

2.7.4 Supply a corporate communication strategy to top management

Top management should be kept in the cycle of every step during the creation of the corporate communication strategy (Steyn & Puth, 2000:73); the reason being that the person involved with communication functions is at the micro-level of the organisation (functional levels), and although the alignment of the corporate strategy and communication programmes might be a perfect match, they do not possess the same influence as the CEO. In other words, due to the latter,

they are unable to “pro-actively influence the formulation of the corporate strategy.” (Steyn, 2000). It has been so often mentioned that communication practitioners do not understand the “strategic management role” that CEOs require from them, and if they do not step into this role, in the end, it creates a power vacuum. The problem that it brings about is that corporate communication activities end up to be implemented by decisions decided by “others” (Ehling *et al.,* 1992). This leads to a twofold problem: firstly, in times of restructuring or rationalisation, the organisation might have to decide whether the need is indeed of such high priority to uphold a corporate communication function – this can lead to the marginalisation of the communication function (Steyn, 2000). It is also evident that their pre-set ideas and notions are not supporting two-way symmetric communication, and in the favourable identification of strategic stakeholders (Grunig, *et al.,* 1992), CEOs do not understand the strategic importance of stakeholders nor do they see the need to identify issues before communication programmes are being compiled (Steyn & Puth, 2000:13).

Taking the abovementioned into consideration, it will be necessary to inform management of the rationale behind the construction of the strategy, how communication may solve critical issues and to share consequences of research results even if it is only an informal research attempt. Top management provides the budget, and therefore, the clearer the communication goals are, the easier funding will be available to aid in strategy implementation (Steyn & Puth, 2000:73).

2.7.5 Oversee a media analysis

The purpose of a corporate media analysis is to gather communication information that will assist in determining which media types to assign to the various stakeholders (Steyn & Puth, 2000:73). Advising with regard to media analysis, Olgilvy’s innovative and digital leaders have taken up the task to perform an annual trend report. This online report outlines the key digital trends for 2017 and stipulates in which direction the digital and social topography field is heading (Manson & Whatley, 2017).

These types of communication media may range from interpersonal, group, organisational, public to mass media (Steyn & Puth, 2000:73).

In the realm of communication media types (social media), the differentiation can be portrayed as follows:

(1) *Personal networks*: allows keeping communication embedded in one place, on walls, timelines or private messages, and to share all updates, available in one click;

(2) *Interest-based networks:* allows finding individuals with common interests, such networks dedicated to exploration of interest, i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn Groups and Google+ communities;

(3) *E-commerce*: Polyvore combines various products of various retailers in one marketplace while Etsy enables small businesses and entrepreneurs to sell products without having a physical location;

(4) *Media-sharing networks:* Facebook and Twitter mainly share text, while Flickr and Instagram are used for image sharing, YouTube and Vimeo, or apps such as Vine and Snapchat, are primarily used for video distribution;

(5) *Discussion forums*: mentioned as the oldest type of social media such as Quora and Digg;

(6) *Bookmarking sites:* StumbleUpon, Pinterest and Flipboard;

(7) *Social publishing*: can be categorised into three types – teal-time interaction such as Twitter, Medium and Tumblr. Traditional blogging platforms include: WorPress and blogger;

(8) *Online reviews:* location-based review sites such as Yelp and Urbanspoon are regarded as very popular, while Airbnb and Uber depend on host and driver reviews for overall service rating (Sorokina, 2015).

McKinsey and Company (2013), in a global survey of more than 3 500 executives, found that the most frequently used tools in corporate communication were social media technologies. Furthermore, companies utilise social technologies in the following manners: (1) to interact with 38% of their customers and (2) 50% of all external stakeholders (McKinsey & Company, 2013). McKinsey also noted, “As in the previous two surveys, 90% of executives whose organisations use social technologies report some kind of measurable business benefit from this use with employees, customers, and business partners” (McKinsey & Company, 2013).

Predicting the future is no easy task. The advice is “check”, as every New Year brings new challenges and heaps of predictions that should be incorporated in an organisation’s strategy (Kowal, 2016). Following suit would be to consult the key digital trends report, compiled by Manson and Whatley (2017), two of Olgivy’s digital and innovative leaders, setting the tone by providing the latest on the digital environment’s future prospects.

In addition, questions to assist an organisation further in shaping predictions are: (1) What are the top trends that should be incorporated into the organisation’s strategies in the coming year? (2) How has technology changed the public relations industry? and (3) what were the biggest

challenges to the communications industry in the previous year? (Kowal, 2016). If the organisation feels that these trends will have a significant impact on the business, it should preferably be incorporated in their strategies (Kowal, 2016).

Findings released on 20 June 2017 by The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and theEMPLOYEEapp by APPrise Mobile revealed the technology usage by the communications industry. The survey was conducted on more than 600 communications professionals, and the report has shown that although social media was embraced, email is still the future as the main channel to communicate internally with employees. The study further points out that although a vast number of employees are in possession of mobile devices, companies are still not effectively utilising this root for communication purposes (PRSA, 2017).

“Communicators understand the importance of finding technology that suits our ‘always on’ culture and emphasising the role that digital storytelling has in today’s mobile-first world,” said PRSA 2017 National Chair Jane Dvorak, APR, Fellow PRSA. “Yet, based on organisations’ seemingly limited investment in newer technologies and reticence to move away from email and intranets, old-school communication tactics remain the dominant method of distributing information” (PRSA, 2017). Jeff Corbin, CEO of APPrise Mobile, commented: “The past several years have seen a very rapid change when it comes to the use of technology to communicate with an organisation’s internal and external audiences. It is safe to now say that mobile technology is here to stay. The question therefore becomes how does our industry have to change to remain relevant in light of the fact that content is now being consumed primarily through the small screens of iPhones and Androids. The research that we conducted with PRSA addresses this question and shows where we are succeeding and where we need to rethink the way our work is done” (PRSA, 2017).

2.7.6 Create a strategic communication plan

Over the years, various definitions arose with regard to planning. The following synthetic definitions have been proposed by Berger (1998:96): “A plan specifies the action that are necessary for the attainment of a goal or several goals. Plans vary in their levels of abstraction. Highly abstract plans can spawn more detailed plans. Plans can contain alternative paths for goal attainment from which the social actor can choose.”

Habermas (1979:209) posed ‘strategic’ action as directly opposed to communication action; he states that it is based on the assumption of “mutually recognised validity claims.” In the strategic attitude, “only indirect understanding via determinative indicators is possible.” Habermas did not perceive the use of strategy as negative altogether, as long as it was applied to create

understanding. However, he did associate ‘strategic attitude’ with ‘deliberate pseudoconsensual’ communication. Habermas (1979:209) also revealed that strategic communication becomes increasingly important for all players in the public sphere.

Austin and Pinkleton (2001:9) claim that a strategic management style is in need of the skilful implementation of research and planning techniques. They stress that managers should demonstrate the ability of forward thinking based on anticipation rather than reacting to opportunities as they arise. There is a further demand for innovative programmes whereby its results can be proven. Gaining autonomy and support by upper management and clients will only be possible when the following are taken into account: (1) evidence supporting the need for communication programmes, (2) reasons why proposed strategies will succeed, and (3) evidence at the end of a programme that the programme has indeed succeeded.

Certain communication experts, such as Jeffries-Fox (2004), advise that fear is the single biggest constraint preventing managers from excelling at their task of using research to guide strategic planning and demonstrate results.

Building on this notion, the communication strategy aims to indicate ***what*** the corporate communication function should entail, while ***how*** to communicate is what strategic communication planning strives towards (Steyn & Puth, 2000:52). The corporate communication strategy forms the framework for the communication programmes, -campaigns and -plans (Steyn & Puth, 2000:75).

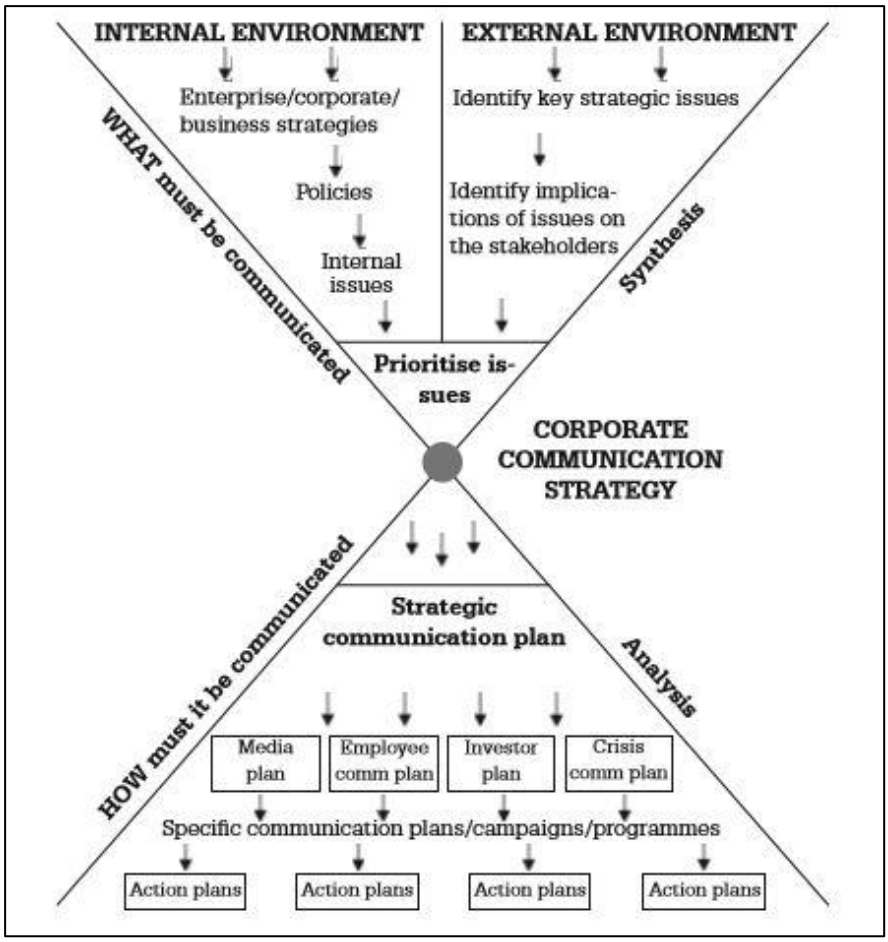

Figure 2-7: The corporate communication strategy (Steyn & Puth, 2000:53).

The following section will provide more clarity on these strategic communication plans and elements (Steyn & Puth, 2000:75).

(a) Communication programmes

The focus in communication programmes is mainly aimed at relationships – bringing stakeholders together with mutual interests. Excellent communication should be directed at these stakeholders in order to influence attitude, behaviour and opinions. Examples of continuous communication programmes are issues management, employee relations, change management, media relations, government relations and lobbying, customer relations, industrial relations, community relations, social investment, sponsorship, international relations, corporate identity, publications, corporate advertising, crisis communication and communication training (Steyn & Puth, 2000:74).

(b) Corporate communication campaigns

As suggested by Smith (2002:10), communication campaigns have a specific intention regarding a certain issue, which should be sustained over a length of time. It can be said that a

communication campaign aims to bring about a particular result. The main difference between a campaign and a programme is that a campaign is limited to a timeframe, while a programme offers more continuation. Campaigns lend themselves to measurable effects because there are clear start and end times involved. This calls for detailed planning, while with programmes the end and start dates are blurred, resulting in postponement (Steyn & Puth, 2000:74). When designing a corporate communication campaign, the following steps need to be included as definite steps are needed to be effective: (1) situation analysis – analyse a prevailing situation and attempt to allocate the corresponding source, (2) goal/objective – the analysis pave the way for incorporating an overarching goal supported by the objectives that the campaign will address, (3) target audience – outline the target audience by segmenting the specific population, (4) strategy – according to Schultz and Barnes (1995:149), a typical analogy to explain strategy in a campaign will be to use the roadmap example: "indicate the direction the campaign is heading. It points the way in terms of what is important; what messages, information, or benefits need to come through; what is valuable; and what must be done if the campaign is to succeed", (5) tactics – suggested by Wilcox and Cameron (2012:156) – are the "various methods to reach target audiences with key messages"; the most frequently used tactical communication tools are the World Wide Web, websites, web casts, blogs, YouTube, Flickr, Texting, Twitter, Wikis, Podcasts, news releases, media kits, e-kits, mat releases, media alerts and fact sheets, electronic news releases, online newsrooms, media interviews, news conferences, media tours and press parties, public service announcements, video news releases, talk shows, magazine shows, product placements, issue placements, open houses, conventions, promotional events, etc., (6) media of choice – Crawford and Okigbo (2014:11-23) state that due to the abundance of media at the disposal of the campaign, planners call for the construction of a media flowchart. The main advantage of the flowchart is that it stipulates the campaign timeline, from start to end, and (7) calendar/timeline, which portrays the various activities over the span of a particular period. The most popular software applications to use to compile these activities into well-presented formats are, Visio, Gantt charts and Microsoft Excel:

- to budget, and
- for evaluation

Examples of corporate communication campaigns are announcing decisions to the press, publishing the employee newsletter and responding to media enquiries (Steyn & Puth, 2000:74). According to Crawford and Okigbo (20142014:11-23), communication campaigns are at times unsuccessful due to audience members who resist the message on account of it opposing (1) already adopted habits or (2) deep-rooted behaviours.

(c) Communication plans

Programmes tend to deal with a number of objectives linked with the organisation's goal. They have an ongoing mandate in the organisation and focus on the relationship with a certain stakeholder group (Smith, 2002:10).

However, firstly, it should be kept in mind that to implement the strategy plan seems to be the most challenging of all aspects of strategic planning. It has been suggested that once the strategy plan has been completed, it is important to keep the momentum going (PennState, 2016:1). In other words, a strategic plan that lacks implementation is worth nothing to an organisation. Therefore, a process for applying the plan should be an additional step in the strategic implementation plan *(*Lorette*,* 2017*).*

Senior management's buy-in should be visible throughout the organisation. Furthermore, they should communicate the plan to stakeholders by utilising the different media formats available. Seeing that this is such a daunting task, it only seems logical to engage more people in order to spread the workload. Goals and objectives should be dispersed evenly, as it cannot be deployed all at the same time. In order to guarantee success, a goal leader should be appointed for every goal or initiative. The latter should set identifiable measures, as it will reveal how successful the plan is up to date. Ensure further visibility by linking the plan to daily activities. Recognise accomplishments and learn from the past, as strategic planning is about leadership and engagement with others, not only just to produce a plan (PennState, 2016:2). In order to ensure successful strategic implementation and execution, certain basic steps can be considered (Lorette, 2017):

(1) Assess the strategic plan

The strategic plan should be revised to ensure the content is well understood. Underscore challenges, unrealistic expectations or any extravagant costs with regard to time and money. The former should be kept on the back burner as well as additional plans in case of failure (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:15; Lorette*,* 2017).

(2) Construct a vision to implement the strategic plan

In order to support the vision, either through goal setting or following a step-by-step route, the answer is to confirm that all the parties involved are on par *(*Lorette, 2017). Underscore the end result in order to keep the strategic plan's intention clear. Austin and Prinkleton (2001:15) argue that this type of monitoring is closely related to research. Identify members to assist in implementing the strategic plan; in other words, identify a team that is clear on the purpose of the goals and the implementation steps of the strategic plan. Pinpoint a team leader whose responsibility it would be to address any issues and uncertainties. This includes, according to

Austin and Prinkleton (2001:15), staying on top of potential crises and emerging trends. The main aim is to anticipate and evaluate opportunities and challenges that are forthcoming from the organisation's interactions and relationships.

(3) Schedule progress report meetings

Provide a progress report list based on the goals or objectives. Whether the schedule is on time or not, reflect on the current situation; this should be accomplished on a regular basis. Adopt a reward system approach for recognising success throughout the implementation process (Lorette, 2017).

Austin and Prinkleton (2001:16) inform that it is expected from the manager to keep to the promises made in the planning process. Keeping the communication programmes in mind, the manager will oversee all the activities in order to adjust the programme accordingly. Because of the ever-changing environment that we find ourselves in, it is easy for a programme not to go according to plan. It is therefore the manager's obligation to stay motivated and supply creative leadership throughout every programme. The overarching goal is to complete the communication programme goals within the given budget boundary and the timeframe.

(4) Seek upper management's involvement where necessary

Keeping management informed with regard to the current state of affairs will be beneficial, especially when concerns or potential changes lurk (Lorette, 2017; Steyn & Puth, 2000:16).

In light of the abovementioned, a communication plan is needed, as it steers the strategy into action. The communication plan is a comprehensive, written statement based on certain goals and objectives. It distinguishes between functions, timeframes and resources within a predefined budget. The communication plan covers an annual time span and preserves contact with stakeholders by using various types of messages. In order to be effective, a systematic approach is needed; this can be very well done by referring to the various steps of the communication plan that will follow suit below (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:62; Steyn & Puth, 2000:71). During the past years, numerous academics have vouched for the presence of communicators during the strategic planning process (Ferguson, 1993). The fact that we live in an information age necessitates the demand that organisations and governments should converse regularly with their stakeholders. Due to the unpredictability of environmental issues, it has become intensely important that an organisation should invest in a strong communication component in the corporate plan (Fergusson, 1993). The benefits of the communication plan cannot be underestimated, because, in the end, the benefits outweigh the effort of constructing such a model (Pinnacle Public Relations Training, 2009:14-15).

2.7.7 Communication planning model

In a broad spectrum, it allows for targeted communication, assists in raising the organisation's profile, enables positive, lasting communication effects, and saves time as the organisation will be familiar with the exact details, at any given point in time (Pinnacle Public Relations Training, 2009:15-16). In order to understand the latter, a detailed description will be provided for every step in the communication model (Steyn & Puth, 2000:82).

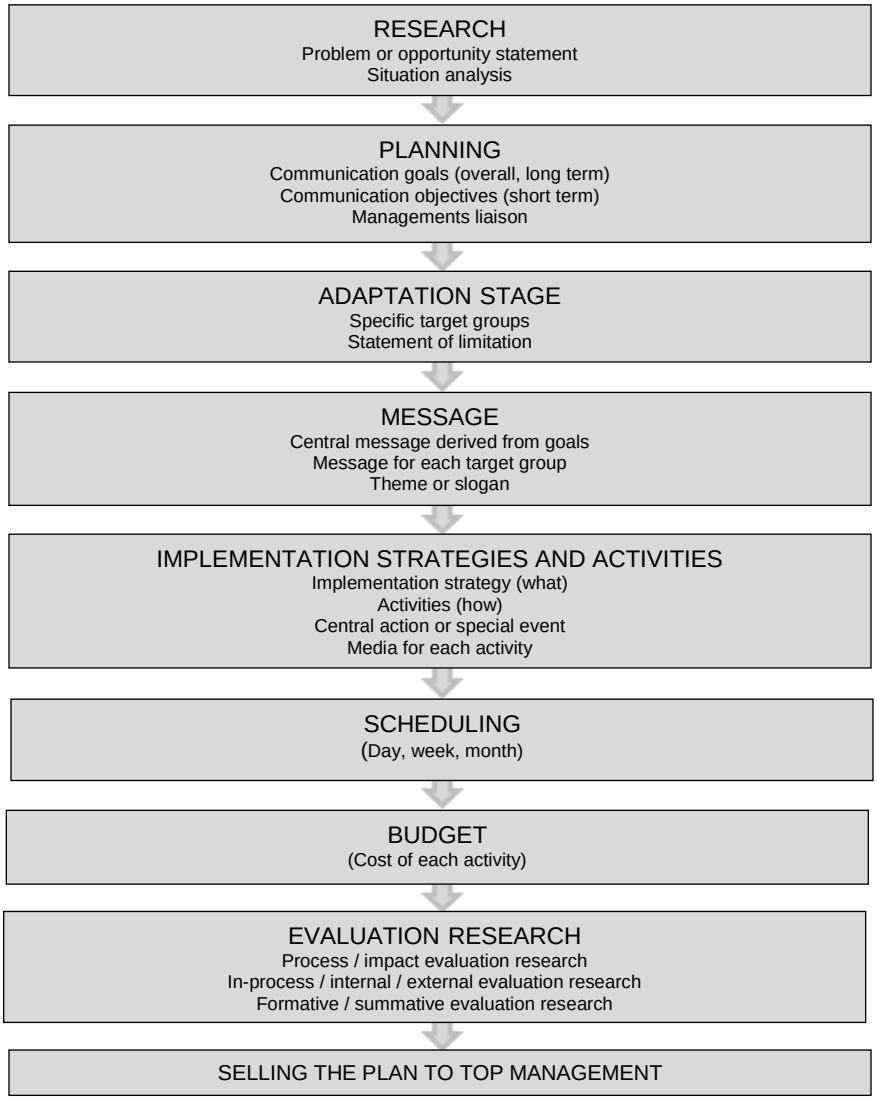

Figure 2-8: Steps used to compile a communication plan (Steyn & Puth, 2000:82).

The nine steps in the latter model address the key aspects that should be considered in a communication plan. The purpose of the different key aspects is to guide the approach that a programme will use to communicate with the different communities, which in turn, enhances the two-way communication process of information sharing (CRS, 2016:3).

2.8 Research

A research plan poses the ideal opportunity to contemplate the organisation's research needs. The situation analysis can be quite useful. In other words, what is the current knowledge about the problem, situation, opportunities or constraints? To confirm whether the current knowledge is on track, testing of this information is needed. Different types of evidence might be applied from experts' observations, surveys or sales data. It has been said that the more scientific the data can be presented, the more it will be perceived as trustworthy. The following types of evidence may be considered (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:62-63).

(1) For procedural and ethical issues, public relations fundamentals, laws and professional guidelines can be utilised.

(2) Communication and persuasion theories or assumptions have been scientifically verified. It portrays how and why certain phenomena happen; unfortunately, it does not provide the precise rules on how the phenomena function. However, the social sciences' emphasis is focused not on proving theories correct, but rather on proving the latter wrong.

(3) Although expert observation provides a certain form of validation, it is not quite as credible as an individual's quotes that have relevance to the situation. Expert observations appear to be very useful during the brainstorming stage. Hard data provide unimpeachable insight into any of the forms, i.e. surveys, sales, spreadsheets or experiments.

(4) If the route of qualitative data is being considered, the following are typical of how it would be conducted: focus groups, interviews, field observations, and informal tracking communication among stakeholders. Again, this method is extremely useful during the brainstorming stage.

It might on occasion happen that some ideas concerning a problem might purely be based on assumption. The manner in which this can be eliminated is by testing; in other words, to determine the accuracy of these assumptions. For example, a service organisation might assume a situation characterised by poor attendance, low subscriptions, or low registrations requires reputation improvement. Based on further research, another picture unfolds, as this problem rather emerged due to low awareness, which steers the communication programme into a totally new direction (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:63; Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society, 2004:12).

The problem or opportunity statement will be closely examined, as this step supports the understanding of the problem, which might be of a concern for the organisation (Yoe, 2013:66).

The latter, when left unattended, might threaten the ability of the organisation to fulfil its mission (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:20).

(a) Problem or opportunity statement

It has been suggested that the problem statement can be compared to a lead of a news story, based on the notion of its specific conciseness. Kendall (1996:235) informs that a problem statement should be a constructed with between 18 and 25 words, in a subject-verb-object format. Just like Yoe (2013:66), Kendall (1996:235) informs that a problem statement may also be referred to as an opportunity statement. Based on the content of the problem statement, it would be possible to provide ideas to support the communication plan. The problem statement consists of six elements:

(1) Allude to what the problem, issue or opportunity might be. Does it have to do with reputation, financial strain, declining membership, or a forthcoming legislation?

(2) Where is this problem occurring? This may represent an internal problem, a regional-, national-, or even an international issue (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:21).

(3) When did this become a problem, has it worsened or did it become better or is it more cyclical? (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:25).

(4) One should ask here, how did this evolve into a problem? It might be because of a lack of awareness, poor product quality, or ineffective customer relations (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:25). Yoe (2013:66) noted that to shed light on the latter, the *how* question must be answered; in other words, *how* can the researcher be sure that the stakeholders understand the purpose? After the content has been published and communicated, it is necessary to acquire feedback. Feedback will reflect much needed information.

(5) Try to determine for whom it poses a problem. The problem might only have an effect on certain stakeholders, which, in this case, might jeopardise the relationship with the organisation (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:25).

(6) In order to determine whether the problem statement can be qualified as ‘good’, an understanding of the *why* should be clear (Yoe, 2013:66), meaning, *why* should the organisation take notice of this problem? Plainly put, *why* does this problem stand in the organisation’s way to fulfil its mission? Neglecting to answer “the what” question and being unable to identify the why will make it difficult to get the buy-in of the key constitutes (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:23).

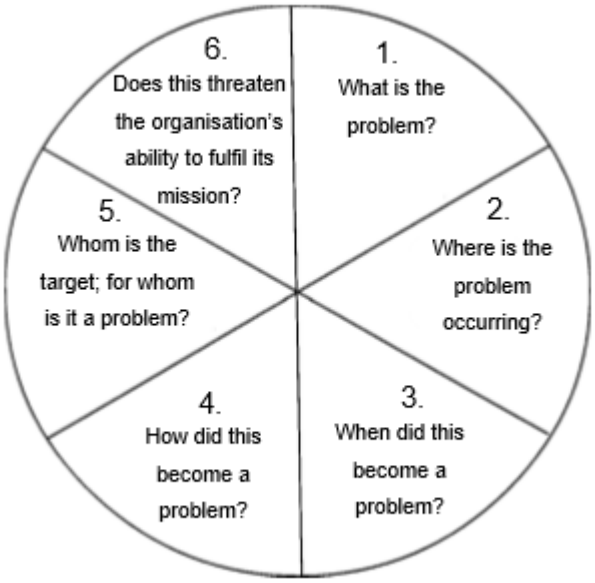

Figure 2-9: Elements of the problem statement: A statement is incomplete unless it includes all six of the elements portrayed (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:25).

Ivanov *et al.* (2016:1) suggested that it is better to rectify potential problems than to allow them to gain momentum and cause a crisis. This notion is based on the inoculation theory. However, if the inevitable does arise, it is necessary to include alternative plans. Smith (2002:1) notes that the following questions may be of guidance: What is the crisis readiness of the organisation? Should senior personnel be offered an advanced level of media training? and what should the policies for the web page be? In addition to the latter, Steyn and Puth (2000:83) supply more questions necessary to compile the statement:

1. Will there be a future event where the stakeholder's attitude might be swayed in favour of the organisation?
2. Where did the organisational, management and corporate communication issues originate from?
3. Why did the messages not reach the receivers?
4. Does it call for action in terms of counteracting the negativity that is perceived by the stakeholders?

According PR News (1998), one of the three most important characteristics of a crisis is supplying inaccurate information. Through the negligence hereof, the organisation may be missing out on the most effective diffusing tool.

(b) Situation analysis

Formative research (analyse the situation, organisation and publics), according to Smith (2002:10), is necessary to portray the details that will be encapsulated in the problem statements. These details may also be referred to as a situation analysis. It provides a detailed explanation of the opportunities and threats that reside within the organisation and its environment. A SWOT analysis will provide invaluable information in this regard. This analysis has the advantage that the communication team may formulate a notion about possible solutions for the problem. Interestingly, for example, a lack of information communication might be perceived as poor, but on further investigation, it is deemed to be poor support of the company's vision. Discoveries such as these will guide the communication programme and organisation design into a whole new different direction (Mind Tools, 2015b; Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:27).

The situation analysis allows for a thorough investigation into the motives or the situation that gave rise to the communication action (Steyn & Puth, 2000:83). It is advisable to ensure a systematic approach, for which checklists have been suggested. It has been mentioned that noteworthy generic checklists provide a comprehensive question set, factors (internal and external) and conditions to consider as well as possible solutions (Yoe, 2013:144).

Every detail should be taken into account to determine which approaches, ideas or actions should be altered, along with which stakeholders and which corresponding communication should be utilised, to ensure a positive outcome. The type of research needed would be dependent on the organisational documents or, alternatively, on the behaviour of the stakeholders involved (Steyn & Puth, 2000:83).

2.9 Planning

(a) Constructing communication goals

The organisation's mission and vision determine the organisational goals. Goals reflect the current issues and flesh out how the organisation hopes to settle it. The goal, in other words, states the general terms, but lacks providing measures, although it will be revealed later in the objectives (Smith, 2002:69). Goals assist the organisation in reaching its long-term aims. If unplanned situations arise, additional plans should be made and included in the communication goals (Steyn & Puth, 2000:84).

Communication goals can be categorised in conjunction with different types of management situations; "*Reputation management goals*, which deal with the identity and perception of the organisation; *relationship management goals*, which focus on how the organisation connects with its publics; and *task management goals*, which are concerned with getting certain things done." According to Smith (2002:69), it is highly unlikely that all three these types will be put into play

during a single campaign. Before a strategic communication planner delves in, they should first familiarise themselves with the organisation's definition of success, and thereafter develop goals based on the definition.

(b) Impact and output objectives

Before settling for specific objectives, determine beforehand which position needs to be attained with the organisation's publics. The motivation is to find out what people think about the organisation. The suggestion is to position the organisation in the competitive environment, taking the specific niche into account. Positioning is the action that an organisation takes to immortalise a unique image in the mind of their stakeholders, in such a manner to set them apart from their competitors (Smith, 2002:70). As Ries and Trout (1987:3), explained in Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind that "Positioning is not what you do to a product. Positioning is what you do to the mind of the prospect."

Objects are the shorter steps used on the way to achieve the organisational goals. It may also assist in relieving regular challenges. All in all, the objectives should be representative of the goal, as indicated by the communication plan. The two basic objectives present in a communication plan are output and impact objectives (Steyn & Puth, 2000:84).

(1) Output objectives refer to the action needed in a specific programme. For instance, it might be necessary for the communication officer to distribute marketing materials.

(2) Impact objectives focus on the stakeholder. It is concerned with the output of a specific programme, for instance, contacting stakeholders with regard to information concerning a new product release. Types of impact objectives are *informational,* in other words to educate a target group, *attitudinal,* striving to change how stakeholders feel about a certain products or services and *behavioural,* aiming to instil the modified behaviour towards the stakeholder (Steyn & Puth, 2000:84).

(c) Management liaison

It is crucial to include management in every step of the way through scheduled meetings in order to be able to make adjustments in time. Management's consent is necessary, preferably in the early stages. Winning management over towards the end, especially during the stage of submitting of the final report, would very difficult. Regular special reports are therefore necessary. Presenting this information should fulfil both the need to liaise with the communication practitioner and the CEO's timetable limitations (Steyn & Puth, 2000:86).

2.10 Adaptation stage

Adaptation can be viewed as the readiness and the ability to make crucial decisions whereby the organisation strives to create harmony between itself and the key publics. Strategic communication paves the way for organisations to enable conformity among their stakeholders. On occasion, mutual relationship enhancement is necessary in order to accomplish the latter; the organisation might need to do some changes itself (Smith, 2002:83).

This stage links to the previous discussion in the problem statement, suggesting that utilising the stakeholders and resources leads to the proper implementation of the strategy (Steyn & Puth, 2000:86).

(a) Stakeholders

During the strategy formulation process, a stakeholder analysis has been conducted (see Stakeholder analysis 2.7.2.1). The process comprises dividing stakeholders into smaller groups to ensure that message targeting is impacting the desired group (Steyn & Puth, 2000:86). It may also be referred to as segmentation. Thereafter, it is advisable to gain insight into the needs, beliefs, concerns and behaviours of these target publics, in order to make more informed decisions. The subcategories of stakeholders are known as the target publics. In other words, stakeholders are those who may be affected or may affect the organisation's programme. To find out who belongs in the problem statement, the publics may be segmented according to the following characteristics (Smith, 2002:64-65): *demographics, psychographics, behaviours and sociographics*. The latter may further be subdivided into the following (Broom & Dozier, 1990:32-36):

- Covert power will reveal who indirectly holds the power over the people who may directly influence the success of the organisation's programme.
- Position attempts to identify certain occupations or leadership positions that have the possibility to influence the context within which one operates.
- Reputation strongly points to those stakeholders who cannot be clearly categorised by their occupation or position, but can be identified by other stakeholders due to the influence they exert over others' opinions or behaviours.
- Organisational membership suggests that, with special interest groups, it is crucial to clarify the members of competing or complementary organisations, as they can be a direct or indirect reinforcement towards the programme.

- Roles in decision process: Decisions are sometimes made in a step-by-step fashion by individuals and committees. In order to gain the buy-in at each step, it may be of utmost importance to apply different strategies.

Grunig and Hunt (1984:108) mentioned *communication behaviours* as another characteristic by which segmentation may be conducted. In doing so, inactive and active publics should be included. This allows the determination of the levels of awareness towards the organisation's activities. Grunig and Hunt (1984:108) propose three measureable determents:

- Problem recognition: This is the extent to which a public recognises that there is a problem. If a problem is absent, no interest will be noted. The problem recognition level will influence the amount of information needed to clarify a situation.

- Constraint recognition: This has much to do with how an individual views his/her ability to affect a situation. He/she feels that any constraints may limit his/her own ability to change the situation. The effort to meditate a situation will be lost, as they perceive their efforts fruitless.

- Level of involvement: This is based on the individual's level of connectedness. If individuals feel the situation will affect them, they will feel more motivated to take action. The reverse is also true.

Grunig and Repper (1992:117-156) further explain that the stakeholders may further be segmented into three types; this is strictly based on the individual's level of excitement, namely long-haul types, who are extremely interested in a certain topic and the resulting effects, special interest types, who are only interested in certain parts of the topic, and hot-button types, who are only interested in topics that result in debating.

(b) List of limitations or constraints

The list of constraints describes the limitations of *time, money (if the budget is limited, fundraisers should be organised)* and *personnel* as portrayed by the situation analysis and research. Consult the calendar and keep the chronology of events in mind as it can be a useful indicator especially if commitments must be tied in with these events (Steyn & Puth, 2000:86). In addition, Austin and Pinkleton, (2001:73) inform that the *levels of expertise* available play an important role. They advise determining how knowledgeable they are with regard to data collection and the analysis process. If data cannot be outsourced to an independent research firm, confirm that it does not need specialised experts. A *need for depth and precision*, in other words, how research will be applied, might make a huge difference. If the research is too sophisticated, it will defeat the purpose, but on other occasions, it might just be that more refined information is well suited.

Research does not have to be expensive, but advisably, well-grounded reasons need to be provided to back resource investments such as time or money. To further strengthen one's case, the expected results may be based on a hypothesis, which in all likelihood might be all that is needed to explain the anticipated outcome to reluctant management (Austin & Prinkleton, 2001:74).

2.11 Theme and messages

It is important to be clear on what should be communicated to each stakeholder. A central event can be used to link the theme and messages. The benefit is that it will enhance the communication plan, reflecting it as more influential, impressive and useful (Steyn & Puth, 2000:87). It is argued that within the communication process, it is not **how we communicate,** but **what we communicate**. A longstanding issue that communication designers have been struggling with has been how to use message attributes and mediums more successfully. The solution lies within the balancing of the message form and medium (Te'eni, 2001:26-29).

Organisational factors should be taken into account in order to keep stakeholders informed, gather input and feedback, gain buy-in and support, and minimise any misunderstandings that might arise (Canic & McCarthy, 2000:42).

This model strives to bring about the reduction in **communication complexity.** Organisations mainly focus on action communication (*forming part of communication impact)* in order to get the job done. It is explained that organisation communication eventually leads to action, but not all communication will every time lead to action; therefore, the distinction should be made early to clarify the concept (O'Reilly & Pondy, 1979:119; Weick, 1979:13). This perspective sheds light on the different types of communication goals with regard to their effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

According to Te'eni (2001:5), the four main factors crucial in the communication process, i.e. (1) impact, (2) process, (3) inputs and (4) communication complexity, together with their corresponding elements, are mapped out in Figure 2-8 and described in Table 2-3.

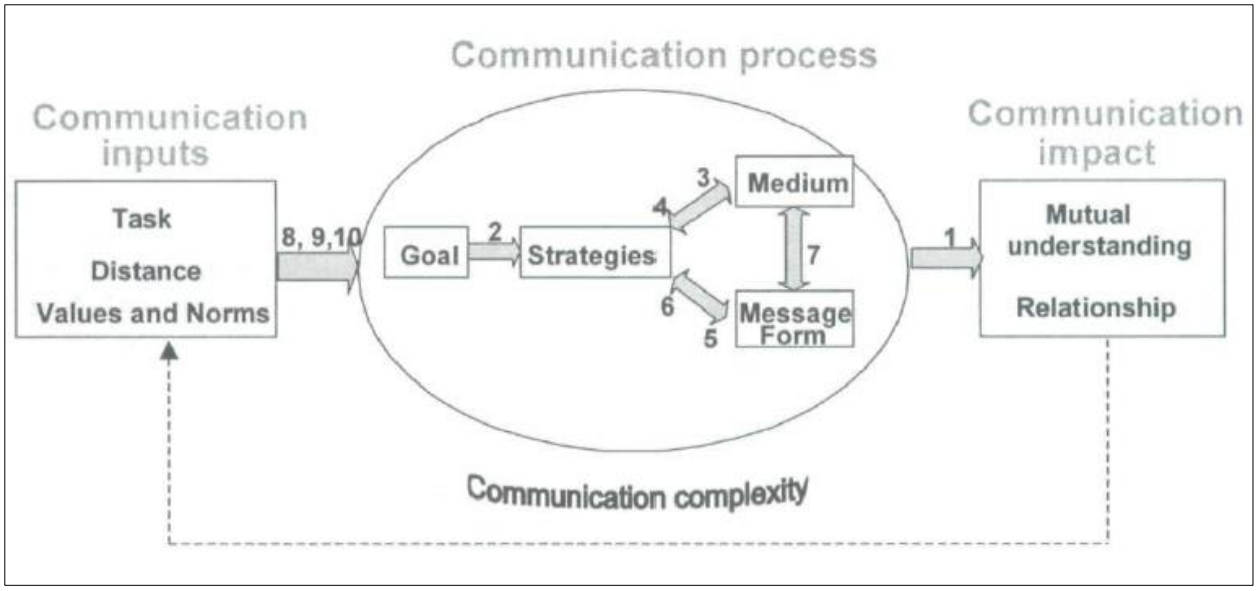

Figure 2-10: A cognitive-affective model of organisational communication (Te'eni, 2001:6).

*** Note: the main focus will be on the boxed numbered propositions.**

Factor	Element	Description: Classes and Attributes of Elements
Impact	Mutual understanding	The communicative act is judged to be comprehensible and true.
	Relationship	The communicative act is judged to be trustworthy and appropriate.
Process	Communication goals	The sender's intended impact of communication on the receiver: instruct action, manage interdependent action, manage relationships, and influence.
	Communication strategies	Methods of coping with communication complexity to achieve communication goals: contextualization, affectivity, control, perspective taking, and attention focusing.
	Message form	Characteristics of the form of the information communicated: size, distribution, organization, and formality of the message.
	Medium	Characteristics of the physical medium on which the message is transmitted: channel capacity, interactivity, and adaptiveness.
Inputs	Task	Characteristics of the task situation: analyzability, variety, and temporal demands.
	Sender/receiver distance	The relative situations of sender and receiver: cognitive and affective.
	Values and norms	Cultural values are stocks of knowledge that guide behavior of communicators belonging to that culture: individualism - collectivism.
Communication complexity	Cognitive complexity	The complexity due to the intensity of information exchange, the multiplicity of views and the incompatibility between representation and use of information.
	Dynamic complexity	The complexity due to time constraints, deficient feedback, and changes during the process.
	Affective complexity	The complexity due to sensitivity to attitudes and changes in dispositions.

Table 2-4: Glossary of elements in the model (Te'eni, 2001:7).

In Figure 2-8, the numbered arrows represent a general proposition. The clarification of the model is explained starting from right to left, beginning with the communication impact (proposition 1). The important elements of this model include the communication process, summarising the behaviour principles, and including the suggested combination of the goal, strategy, medium and message attributes (propositions 2 through 7). Propositions 8 through 11 use communication inputs as a process that can affect the behaviour goals due to the influence of personal goals (Te'eni, 2001:27).

2.11.1 Communication impact

“In the main, communication has its central interest in those behavioural situations in which a source transmits a message to a receiver(s) with conscious intent to affect the latter's behaviour”, according to Miller (1976:92). Communication impact is assessed and analyses the message, which reveals the sender’s intent.

The communicative action will be used as the ‘ideal form’ of organisational communication, whereby the theory serves as a guideline to understand organisational communication (Ngwenyama & Lee, 1997:152; Ngwenyama & Lyytinen, 1997:74).

The preceding guideline stipulates a close interrelatedness between relationship and mutual understanding. This interrelatedness facilitates mutual trust, which is important for the productive flow of communication (Hart & Saunders, 1997:36; Nelson & Cooprider, 1996:413). In other words, trust portrays sender predictability (Anderson & Weitz, 1989:312). When trust and communication are high, communication is most effective (Dore, 1983:475; Williamson, 1975:245). Apart from trust, the communication act is responsible for building a relationship between the sender and the receiver. The relationship allows for commitment towards the group or to the sender (Huff *et al*., 1989:1388).

The following conditions will allow for the communication act to take place, (Habermas, 1987:80-81):

- For the receiver to understand the sender, the act must be comprehensible;
- For the receiver to share the sender’s knowledge, the act must be true;,
- For the receiver to trust the sender, the expressions must be truthful;
- For the receiver to agree with the sender within this value system, the act should be true within a certain normative context.

Communication failure will occur if any of the above conditions are invalid, indicating that it is important to keep in mind that the reduction of communication complexity will improve communication immensely (Te'eni, 2001:12).

Below, the communication process will highlight the relationship development between the message elements (Te'eni, 2001:8).

2.11.2 Communication process

Bourgeois (1976), Scholes and Clutterbuck, (1998:237) stated that the communication process can be maintained and stimulated to ensure successful communication outcomes. However, the

first step is to direct the organisation's stakeholders or subcultures towards a communication process that uses a six-step holistic plan by:

(1) taking a more strategic and more professional approach to communication;
(2) aiming to align needs, rather than satisfying or pacifying individual groups;
(3) building relationships;
(4) facilitating understanding, to shape attitudes and behaviours;
(5) aiming to coordinate management during all communications;
(6) making communication management a core competency.

In addition, another three communication goals may be included (Te'eni, 2001:7), namely (1) instruct action, (2) manage interdependent action, and (3) manage relationships. A brief clarification will follow, describing these communication goals individually:

2.11.2.1 Instruct action

Reaching an understanding may be an 'instrumental action', implying an effort by the receiver to get the sender to act according to his/her wishes. One such example is the request for information (Habermas, 1987:63).

2.11.2.2 Manage interdependent action

Interdependent actions are more complex to manage than that of instructing actions. Due to the complexity between the different role players, actions can either be serial (one's action depends on the other's action) or reciprocal (one's action both depends on and affects another's action). On occasion, this results in simultaneous interactions, which increase complexity (Van de Ven *et al.,* 1976:332).

2.11.2.3 Manage relationships

Work relationships are not action driven, which for this reason make them more subjective (Scollon & Scollon, 1995:167; Street & Cappella, 1985:1). However, influencing can be seen as another attempt to manage a relationship. For example, influencing is about changing attitude and behaviour in order to bring about alteration. It may depend on the receiver's disposition with

regard to the sender or the subject, and due to this, it will be high in affective complexity[1] (Te'eni, 2001:14).

To maintain the communication process, strategies will be key. In other words, communication strategies may be seen as the enablers of communication goals (Te'eni, 2001:15). Although the list of strategies might be incomplete, it serves as a suggested representation of the three stages necessary: **creation** of the message by the sender, the message **transmission** between the sender and the receiver and the **receipt** of the message by the receiver. Communication can be achieved through (Te'eni, 2001:15):

(a) **Creation** to build cognitive and affective components in the message;
(b) **Transmission** to control the information transmission through planning and through testing; and
(c) **Receipt** to consider the receiver's perspective on the issue and also its effect on the receiver's information processing.

Contextualisation as a communication strategy is crucial to improve problem-solving (Kintsch, 1988:172; Mayer, 1985:76; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983:198). The steps to problem-solving are to understand the message layers, containing the following: *how to perform an action*; *how to break it down into sub-actions*; *how motivation applies to the answer and what information will be suitable for the message,* as well as what *alternative interpretations* are possible. In addition to the above, Piaget (1978:218) states that the principles of understanding include "the 'how' and 'why' of the connections observed and applying it into action", (Schwartz & Te'eni, 2000:35).

For example, an e-mail message should provide knowledge within its correct context in order to be usable and to enable the desired action. An action-related message consists of affective components, which encapsulate the moods and emotions of the message. To clarify, emotions are short-lived expressions prompted by clear-cut triggers such as excitement, most probably due to prospects of success or even meeting someone, where moods are longer lived and can occur without any salient cause (Schwarz, 1990:553). Affectivity possesses motivational possibilities. In other words, it can be used to inform or sustain favourable attitudes. The information will be compromised when subjectivity is present (Te'eni, 2001:16). To ensure effectivity, the control

[1] Affective complexity refers to the degree of communication sensitivity to changes or attitudes in disposition with regard to the subject matter or the communication partner (Te'eni, 2001:16).

function can be applied. Different types of control contribute to different communication goals, according to Te'eni (as cited by Jordan, 1998). In the next paragraph, control will be broken down into (1) *planned control* as well as into (2) *achieving control through testing and adjusting.*

(1) An example of *planned control*: “Senders sometimes copy messages to others with the intention to pressure the receiver into action” (Philips & Eisenberg, 1993). Important characteristics thereof are redundancy and repeated communication (“I’m sending this message again to your other address,” or “Attached is a summary of our phone conversation”), as well as sending to multiple recipients (including multiple copies and blind copies) (Te'eni, 2001:16).

(2) An example of *achieving control through testing and adjusting*: the sender repeatedly asks the receiver whether the communication was successful and adjusts the message according to the receiver’s reaction. Characteristic thereof is online testing of the communication: “Did you get the message?” and “Do you understand the message?” (Te'eni, 2001:16). *Taking perspective* may be included as it refers to taking interest in the receivers’ viewpoints. The sender’s attitude or expression will be characterised by the use of magnifying adverbs and attitudinally-loaded words (Eggins & Martin, 1997:233).

Communication strategy ultimately relies on message forms, which include (Stohl & Redding, 1987:494):

- **Message size,** which includes the function of the number of semantics such as words and sentences (Daft & Lengel, 1984:217).
- **Message distribution** focuses on the number of destinations to which the message must be sent. The popularity lies in the fact that the retrieval of these messages is relatively easy and no coding is needed (Rudy, 1996:208).
- **Message organisation** focuses on clearly ordered, distinguished elements that can easily be differentiated and discriminated (Schroder *et al*., 1967:174):
    - the sender provides information and the receiver is expected to take action,
    - references to documents that provide more details or a more complete rationale, explanations as footnotes, hypertext style for accessing more details (Van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983:193)
    - diary entries begin with date and author using a standard or format that is recognisable to avoid unclearness, (Berlyne, 1960:234).

This places the focus on message formality. For example, the manager uses a formal memo (or any other medium) to acquire a desired action (Iedema, 1999:50), written in a style that conforms

to the norms of the organisation. Measuring this will be easier than to base it on conformed action (Irvine, 1979:773). In this light, it is advisable to use a fitting media and message form to ensure the successful implementation of a communication strategy (Te'eni, 2001:20). In other words, prevent biases by avoiding information incompatibility, which will result in error. The information will be rejected in favour of more representable information according to Te'eni (as cited by Barber, 1988).

In the next section, communication inputs will be discussed as another important factor as they have the means to affect the communication process because of their ability to include several inputs at a time (Te'eni, 2001:18).

2.11.3 Communication inputs

Communication research shows that the host of the inputs affects the communication process stating that the *how* is not always clear (Carlson & Davis, 1998:345; Ehrlich, 1987:352; Markus *et al*., 1992:209). Accordingly, the next section will attempt to examine the effects on the communication process by identifying the input elements, which may set limitations on functional behaviour.

2.11.3.1 Task

In the information processing view of organisations, tasks are classified according to *task analysability* and *task variety* (Daft & Lengel, 1986:563). *Task analysability* characterises the procedure (algorithm) through the ability needed to complete the task, while *task variety* describes the different instances of the task by means of variation. The input element, tasks, also houses temporal demands. Temporal patterns affect the task demands and also include the time during which the task must be completed (Daft & Lengel, 1986:564).

2.11.3.2 Sender / receiver distance

For communication to take place, distance should be overcome first. Indeed, distance is connected to a physical distance, but attention should also be paid to psychological distance. Examples of psychological distance include cognitive- or affective distances, as these are the primary elements of the organisational context (Hutchins, 1991:283-307). In a **cognitive distance,** the initial gap between the sender's and receiver's interpretations must be taken into account before transmitting the message. The initial gap refers to differences in *nationalities*, *work functions*, *organisational cultures* and *languages,* causing *ways of thinking and communication* to vary (Hutchins, 1991: 283-307). A sender-receiver **affective distance** is

characterised by an initial emotional gap (negative relationship). There might be feelings and attitudes between two parties.

2.12 Values and norms

Values and norms lie on the highest outer layer of the communication context and they are also the most difficult to relate to in the communication process. A complete discussion lies beyond the scope of this paper, but the importance needs to be taken into consideration as to how it affects the process of the model's underlying mechanisms (Te'eni, 2001:1). An excellent example of the effect of norms on communication is portrayed in the Colruyt case study (Janson *et al*., 1999:179). Colruyt (a chain of stores) has developed and emphasised a maximum worker participation culture in order to overcome limitations. Where norms are associated with organisational rules of conduct (formal and informal), and values are associated with culture, the message and medium are dictated by attributes better known as the culture and norms of organisational communication. It also has the ability to influence the selection of strategies and the priorities of goals (Fulk & Boyd, 1991:413). Another factor is that of group norms, which can be linked to either independence (associated with weak groups using low-context communication) or to interdependence (associated with strong groups using high-context communication), according to Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988:91). In high-context communication, there will be less information, while low-context communication usually conveys one's feelings (Hall, 1976:79).

Referring to Chapter 1, it seems like members' perceptions differ from subculture to subculture and play an eminent role in the communication process. For this reason, it is important to look at communication complexity in the following section, as high levels thereof can lead to communication failure (Te'eni, 2001:5). A reduction, on the other hand, proves to enhance communication (Te'eni, 2001:6).

2.12.1 Communication complexity

Communication complexity refers to communication used with limited resources under uncertain and problematic circumstances. It is mentioned that resources will reach their capacity as the demands of the communication process grow (Rasmussen, 1986:43). A schematic representation (Figure 2-11) below will show the mechanism by which the inputs will affect the complexity of the communication process.

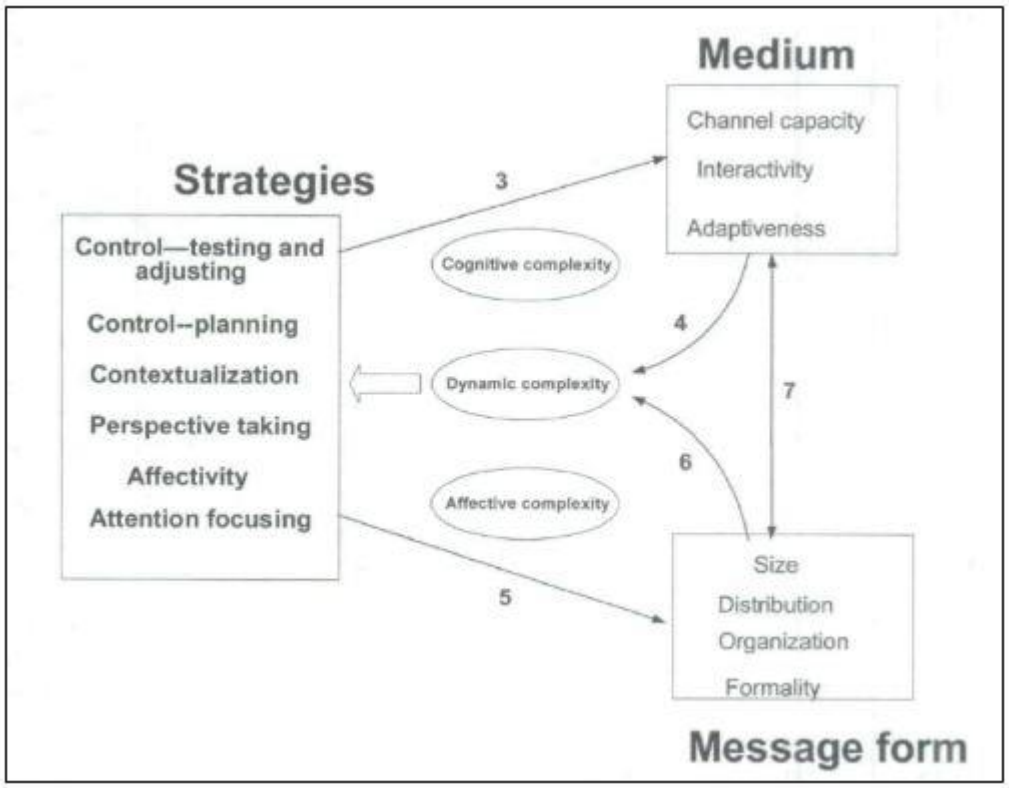

Figure 2-11: Inputs affect the communication process (Te'eni, 2001:19).

The sources of communication complexity can be categorised as cognitive, dynamic, and affective complexity.

2.12.1.1 Cognitive complexity

- Intensity of information exchange (interdependency)[2] between the receiver and sender might increase the possibility of misunderstandings (Straus & McGrath, 1994:94).
- Multiplicity of views can blur the message due to interpretation indifferences (Boland *et al.*, 1994:467).
- Incompatibility between representation and use of information, where the probability of error will increase due to the demands on the resources, e.g. to translate the message before it can be sent out (Barber, 1988:103; Norman, 1990:184).

[2] Interdependency between the different role players and can either be serial (one's action depends on the other's action) or reciprocal (one's action both depends on and affects another's action) (Te'eni, 2001:14).

2.12.1.2 Dynamic complexity

Dynamic complexity refers to how intensive the communication process depends on time constraints, changes and deficient feedback during the process. Dynamic complexity increases the possibility of misunderstanding. For example, when the receiver's attention lapses, the communication process needs to be adapted to fit the new behaviour (Diehl & Sterman, 1995:198).

2.12.1.3 Affective complexity

Affective complexity refers to the degree of communication sensitivity to changes or attitudes in disposition with regard to the subject matter or the communication partner. It is characterised by obstacles such as effective disruptions and mistrust (Salazar, 1995:187).

Clearly, if communication forms the cornerstone of an organisation, it should be utilised as the actual tool that provides the means to cope with such complexity (Te'eni, 2001:6).

From the preceding section, one can derive that for organisations to communicate effectively with their stakeholders, messages for each group should be compiled separately. Mendelsohn (1973:51) believed that messages fail because they overpromised; organisations also believed that the messages would be accepted right away, but never properly considered that the messages might nog be properly targeted. The down side is that such messages will be ignored or misinterpreted. McGuire (1989:2) later stated that successful communication depends on two types of theories: "those that explain how someone will process and respond to a message and those that explain why someone will or will not respond to a message in desirable ways." It is further stated that, the domino model, or hierarchy of effects theory of persuasion, Figure 2-4 below, acknowledges several steps necessary for message dissemination and achieving the desired behaviour changes.

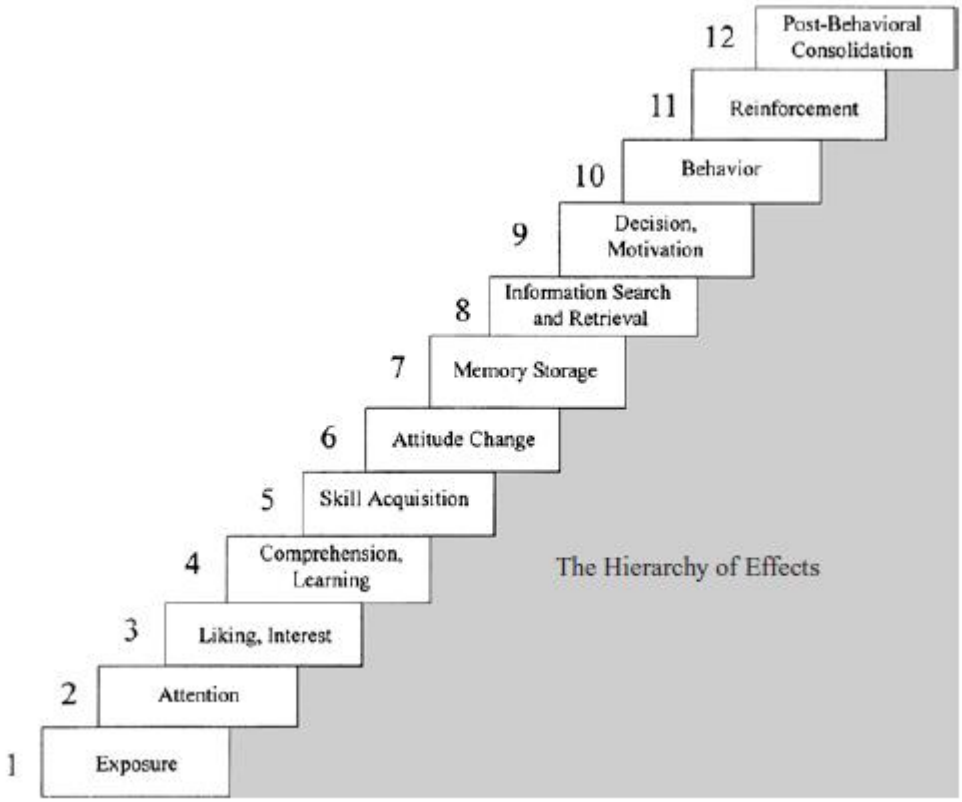

Figure 2-12: McGuire's domino model (Austin & Prinkleton, 2001:300).

*** According to McGuire's (1989) model, message receivers go through a number of responses. The steps in the hierarchy of effects, mediate persuasion of decision-making. Managers setting programme goals at the top of the hierarchy, may be unrealistic.**

The problem with the domino model is that one should keep in mind that people are not always logical. The most popular alternative to this model is the **Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM),** which was developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986:125). The ELM suggests that people will respond to a message depending on their level of involvement. This statement coincides with Grunig and Repper's (1992:117-156) situational theory of publics, stipulating that uninvolved people will not process the message as deeply and *vice versa*. The ELM provides for two routes of persuasion. The first is known as the central approach (or systematic processing) and focuses on logic and careful consideration. This approach will allow for decisions to be more long lasting. The second route favours the peripheral approach and is based on more emotional or heuristic-based strategies. Decisions based on the peripheral approach are more likely to fade away. The advantage posed by the peripheral approach indicates that changes can be achieved more quickly as the message recipients do not need a long thoughtful consideration. The advantage

posed by the peripheral approach indicates that changes can be achieved more quickly as the message recipients do not need a long process of thoughtful consideration.

McGuire's matrix is presented in Figure 2-13, designed to assist the organisation with possible strategies to motivate the target stakeholders.

State		Need for stability		Need for growth	
		Active	Reactive	Active	Reactive
Cognitive	Internal	1. Consistency (Cognitive dissonance)	2. Categorisation	5. Autonomy	6. Problem solver
	External	3. Noetic	4. Inductional	7. Stimulation	8. Teleological
Affective	Internal	9. Tension-reduction (Fear appeals)	10. Ego-defensive	13. Assertion	14. Identification
	External	11. Expressive	12. Repetition	15. Empathy	16. Contagion (bandwagon)

Figure 2-13: McGuire's dynamic theories chart (Austin & Prinkleton, 2001:312).

The chart illustrates different types of motivations that affect the ways people respond to persuasive messages. Therefore, even logically-based strategies tend to include emotional appeals. Therefore, it would be most beneficial to rather think of the top half of the matrix as systematic approaches (not emotion-free approaches) and the bottom half as heuristic (primarily, but not exclusively emotion based). The key consideration still remains: conduct research, and present findings in order to determine the best strategies for the communication plan (Austin & Prinkleton, 2001:311-312).

2.13 Implementation of strategies and activities

2.13.1 Implementing strategic activities

Strategies are concerned with a wide timeframe, while activities focus on more detail – how something is going to be done. To reach the strategic goals of a company, the characteristics of corporate communication in its mission must be deemed to be fruitful (Goodman & Hirsch, 2015:184; Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007**:**170**).** It has also been pointed out that linking communication to business strategy continues to be the primary challenge for communication professionals around the globe (Macnamara, 2015:12). Surveys among communication professionals conducted in 42 countries (Verčič & Zerfass, 2015:283) revealed that: "excellent communication departments are significantly different from non-excellent departments: they employ different types of people…"

Another aspect, according to Zerfass and Viertmann (2016), proposed that corporate strategy defines which value it supports or should create. Communication contributes to the overall value, merely by positioning a company in the marketplace or creating a favourable corporate image among investors. The concept of stakeholder value (Freeman, 1984:98) expands the notion of value-based management by considering the expectations and legitimate interests of everybody who is affected by corporate strategy.

Taking the abovementioned into account, activities are coordinated in such a sense that it will achieve the desired goal. The most desired form of information distribution should be chosen carefully as people base their perceptions upon it. It is also referenced by means of mass or electronic media, word-of-mouth, requests for advice, written messages, body language and symbolic activities (Steyn & Puth, 2000:88).

2.13.2 How to build strategic actions

- A relationship between the sponsoring organisation and activity is crucial
- Newsworthiness supplies ample cloud for the event; in other words, connection to a crisis or competition.
- Event needs a descriptive name to deem it memorable.
- Connect the activity to special calendar events or public holidays.
- Dual venture by two organisations in order to reach the same target market.
- Using a sequel of events by which the one event ensures publicity for the next.
- Important to remember to conduct basic strategic research, which will include the testing of the messages in order to observe whether they have any retention value (Steyn & Puth, 2000:89).

Adjusting strategy: Communication helps to make strategic management decisions by fostering thought leadership, innovation potential, and crisis resilience. This value dimension is built foremost on the communication department's capacity to listen. Systematically monitoring public opinion in mass media, social media, markets, politics and society helps to adapt strategies to upcoming socio-political and economic developments. Therefore, corporate communication contributes to identifying competitive advantages.

2.13.3 How to plan corporate communication media

Planning the communication activities should be done in conjunction with the most appropriate communication media in mind (Steyn & Puth, 2000:91).

Internal organisational media	Mass media
• Print communication media; • Audio-visual communication; • Intranet; • Interpersonal communication media; • Private created media; • Oramedia (Folk or traditional media).	• Internet; • The press; • Broadcast media; • Public and trade exhibitions; • Billboards; • Mobile media;

Table 2-5: Adopted from Defining internal organisational media versus mass media (Steyn & Puth, 2000:91-92).

To build on the abovementioned table, defining internal- and mass media, Figure 2-6 below will pose guidelines for the successful communication strategy usage by means of a bidirectional link between **strategies** and **media** as proposed in (1) and (2), between **strategies** and **message form** (3) and (4) between **message form** and **medium** in the proposition (5).

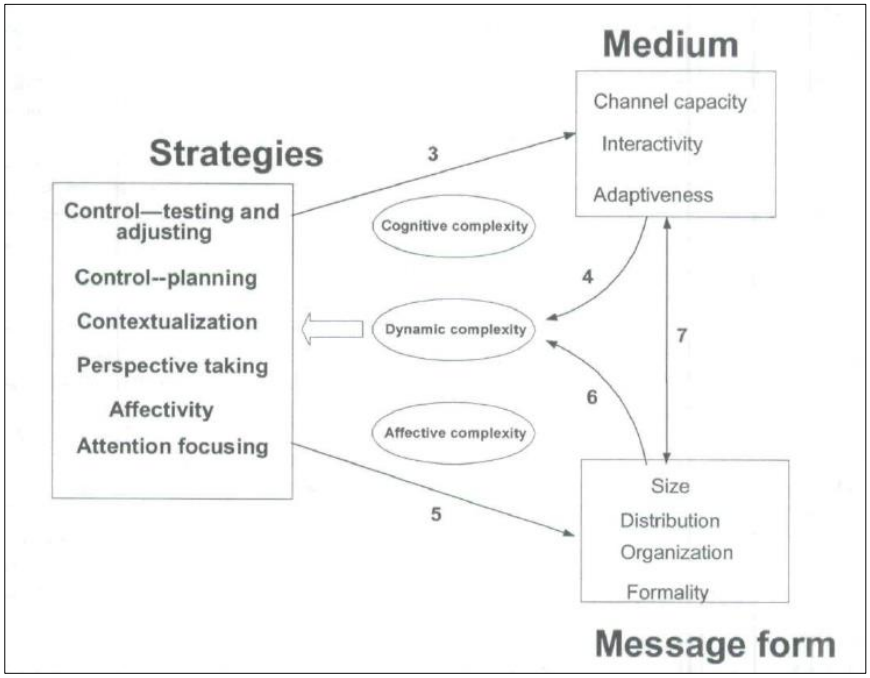

Figure 2-14: Strategies are affected by medium and message form (Te'eni, 2001:21).

When choosing a medium, it is important to keep the building blocks in mind by which a medium can be classified (see Table 2-14) (Te'eni, 2001:20). For this reason, a certain strategy should be chosen carefully as portrayed in Figure 2-13 (e.g. **control by testing and adjusting** is feasible

when the messages are sent by 'snail mail', while conveying emotions can be done through email, although face-to-face enables a person to convey the latter more easily and more effectively) (Te'eni, 2001:13).

The theory above provides valuable background information, while Table 2-13 will attempt to provide practical guidelines for small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, by explaining how the chosen **medium attributes** will influence the **action-orientation** and lastly impact the **relationship-orientation**.

Medium Attribute	Action-Oriented Impact	Relationship-Oriented Impact
(1) Interactivity	Immediate feedback improves understanding (Clark, 1992; Dennis & Kinney, 1998). Immediate feedback speeds communication, which in turn, improves understanding (Clark & Brennan, 1991; Walther, 1992). CMC with blocked concurrent input produces less non-redundant communication (Valacich *et al.,* 1993).	Interactivity is important for affect in CMC (Kiesler *et al.,*1985).
(2) Channel capacity	Multiple cues can improve but also hinder understanding (Dennis & Kinney, 1998). Higher channel capacity can speed but also slow down communication (Chapanis, 1988; Sproull and Kiesler, 1992). Higher capacity reduces explicit control (Kraut *et al.,* 1998). Video conferencing produces more awareness and conversational fluency than voice alone (Tang & Isaacs 1992), particularly in larger groups (Daly-Jones *et al.,* 1998). In comparison to audio-only, video has no effect on mutual understanding (Gale, 1990) or some improvement but less than FtF, when it is high quality (Doherty-Sneddon *et al.,* 1997).	Mixed results on whether multiple cues seem less or more friendly (Fulk & Collins-Jarvis in press; Walther, 1992, 1995). Low capacity channels reduce social cues (Sproull & Kiesler 1992) but not if communicators sense a social identity with the communicating parties (Lea & Spears, 1991; Spears *et al.,* 1990). Video conferencing is effective in promoting social activity (Fish *et al.,* 1993). Video vs. FtF shows no effect on initial trust (Muhlfelder *et al.,* 1999
(3) Adaptiveness	None found.	Voice-mail seems more personal than e-mail (Adams *et al.,* 1993)

(4)	Combined (FtF versus CMC)	FtF produces better mutual understanding than CMC (Straus & McGrath, 1994) and only so for preference tasks (Tan *et al.,* 1999). Mixed results: FtF produces more valid and novel arguments than CMC (Kiesler *et al.,* 1985; McGuire *et al.,* 1987) and equally valid arguments (El-Shinnawy & Vinze, 1998). CMC causes information suppression (Hollingshead, 1996). CMC generates less communication than FtF in hierarchical teams (Hedlund *et al.,* 1998; Hightower & Sayeed, 1996). CMC generates more productive brainstorming by reducing production blocking (Gallupe *et al.,* 1994; Valacich *et al.,* 1994) but also less productive brainstorming by increasing distraction and complexity (Pinsonneault *et al.,* 1999). CMC generates more communication in organizations (Schultze & Vanden-bosch 1998). CMC generates more communication but processed inaccurately (Dennis, 1996). CMC generates more biased discussions, especially when information load is high (Hightower & Sayeed, 1995). Technology-performance relationship depends more on experience than type of task (Hollingshead *et al.,* 1993)	Compared with CMC, FtF is rated less relationship oriented and less expressive of affect (Hollingshead *et al.,* 1993; Lea & Spears 1991; Walther, 1995). Compared with CMC, FtF is rated less relationship oriented but produces more total communication (Hiltz *et al.,* 1986). However, Siegel *et al.,* (1986) found them to be-equally task oriented. Use of e-mail decreases communication and amount of greetings (Sarbaugh-Thompson & Feldman 1998). CMC produces less trust than FtF (Rocco, 1998) and poorer social life (Markus, 1994) and closer ties within coalitions but more social unrest overall (Romm & Pliskin, 1998). CMC over time increased social orientation, trust, and informality (Walther & Burgoon, 1992) but slower than FtF (Chidambaram, 1996). A synchronous web-base conference produces less relational links than FtF (Warkentin *et al.,* 1997)

Table 2-6: Studies on medium effects (Te'eni, 2001:23).

In the passage to follow, **medium attributes** will be discussed in more detail, by referring to: (1) Interactivity, (2) channel capacity (3) adaptiveness (4) combined (*FtF versus CMC).*

(1) **Interactivity** has the potential for immediate receiver feedback, manifesting itself through simultaneous, synchronous and continuous exchange of information (Zack, 1993:213). Stating whether the sender controls the pace of the communication, interactivity is high, which minimises the sender's control (McLaughlin, 1984:114).

(2) **Channel capacity** has the potential to transmit cues and languages high in variety (Daft & Lengel, 1984:198). According to Te'eni (as cited by Russ *et al.,* 1990), high channel capacity

is used by managers for equivocal messages and low channel capacity for less equivocal messages (Daft & Lengel, 1986:561; Daft *et al.,* 1987:358).

(3) **Adaptiveness** has the potential to personalise the messages according to the receiver or target audience (Daft & Lengel, 1984:203). It is difficult to separate adaptiveness from channel capacity. It is suggested that the channel should have the capability to convey personal touch by tone, pronunciation and other non-verbal gestures; if not, people find it difficult to separate addictiveness from capacity (Adams *et al.,* 1993:13).

Combined (FtF and CMC): People are accustomed to the face-to-face medium because they literally grew up with it. In contrast, this might create an unbalanced adaptation, meaning, when face-to-face communication is applied, there is an immediate *response*, but the same does not hold true for computer-mediated communication (CMCs). Although CMCs do not reduce social communication, it has the ability to disturb relationships, due to the lack of verbal- and non-verbal gestures (Markus, 1994:3; Romm & Pliskin, 1998:96).

Another factor worth mentioning is that the reason for adopting CMCs so readily is motivated by the benefits that one will derive from using it (Te'eni, 2001:23-24).

Based on the latter, in this day and age, social media are being adopted by large organisations (Andersen et al., 2016:64). These internet-based applications enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content, and support participation, openness, conversation (two-way interaction) and connectedness (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Valentini & Kruckeberg, 2012). Leonardi et al. (2013:2) argue that social technologies that are utilised for communication and social interaction between employees within an organisation should be considered as an integral part of an enterprise's social media platform, rather than individual tools. Research studies with regard to social media, especially in the use for internal communication purposes, as conducted by Wright and Hinson (2006:3), Parry and Solidoro (2013:124), Leonardi et al. (2013), Huang et al. (2013:113) and Madsen (2016:202), argue that this phenomenon is still in its infancy and still needs to be explored extensively. In a nutshell, there is a demand for a clearer understanding and usage of social media for internal communications together with the monitoring and evaluating of the social media interactions, the outcomes, and how to embed social media communications strategically in organisations' daily activities (Linke & Zerfass 2013).

It is not always necessary to implement the most expensive option; sometimes, the best results may be achieved with an inexpensive media option.

2.14 Scheduling

Scheduling lists the beginning and end of each activity on the calendar, which emphasises the latter's importance for the implementation of the various tactics (Smith, 2002:211; Steyn & Puth, 2000:92).

The main purpose here is to link the activities to the dates and months of that specific year, and it gives an indication of the timing and the type of communication needed. Smith (2002:213) notes that the following two considerations may be very helpful during this step: (1) the pattern and frequency of your communication tactics and (2) the actual timeline of tasks to be accomplished as the tactics are implemented. Van den Bergh and Katz (1999:293) mentioned that for the majority of organisations with limited budgets, it is advisable to find a balance between reach and frequency. They further advise that, instead of attempting to reach a vast number of people, to rather aim to reach key people more frequently.

The principle of back-tracking may be used to assist in reaching the outcomes in time. In other words, use the end date and work backwards from there in order to plan all needed activities accordingly (Steyn & Puth, 2000:92). The scheduling process may categorise tasks by means of charts. The types of flow charts more commonly used are the Gantt and PERT (Program Evaluation and Review Technique) charts. The Gantt chart displays times in daily, weekly or monthly format, depending on the type of project. The PERT chart, however, includes dates and assignments to particular individuals, although the calendaring function of the Gantt chart is not a functionality included here. It is important to note that any schedule should always include more detail than just the date (Smith, 2002:216).

2.15 Budgeting

The budget goes far beyond money. It encapsulates all the resources necessary to implement the tactics. The five elements to consider are personnel, material, media costs, equipment and facilities, and administrative costs. Every organisation strives to limit unnecessary spending. In order to comply with the latter, consider some of the approaches to budgeting: *competitive parity,* bases the organisation's budget for a variety of activities on the level of similar activities by major competitors; *same-as-before,* compares how much the organisation has spent on a similar recent project and utilises the same budget for the following project; *percentage-of-sales,* draws from the marketing field, where certain companies determine their advertising budget on the previous year's profits; *unit-of-sales,* similar to percentage-of-sales budgeting, is not based on rand value, but rather on prior outcomes*; all-you-can-afford,* provides for funding when the organisation is financially sound, but in difficult times the funding is limited*; cost-benefit analysis,* where the cost

of implementing a tactic is taken into account, and compared to the cost of the expected result*;* and *what-if-not-funded,* where the consequences of inaction and the effects thereof on the organisation's mission are taken into account. Planning should take expected outcomes into consideration*,* i.e. *zero-based* considers current needs and does not focus on past expenditures; *stage-of-lifestyle* monitors the development cycle of the issue, while keeping in mind that start-up programmes are financially more taxing than maintenance programmes; and *objectives-based,* which fosters a more open-minded approach, due to the focus on objectives, aligned with the organisation's needs and goals (Smith, 2002:216-217).

Costs should be listed towards the end of each communication plan. Keep funders in mind as contributions received add to available funds (Steyn & Puth, 2000:92). After the budget has been approved, use it as a tool for project implementation. The budget may provide guided outlines towards activity scheduling, progress monitoring, and the assessment of results (Smith, 2002:222).

2.16 Evaluation research

Evaluation research can be used to portray causal events. This step is necessary to highlight any improvements that might be imperative to the organisation. There are three stages to evaluation: (a) *process/impact evaluation research*; (b) *in-process/internal/external evaluation research*; and *(c) formative/summative evaluation research* (Smith, 2002:233; Steyn & Puth, 2000:93):

(a) The implementation of each plan is scrutinised to ensure all is going according to plan. How the programme tactics were carried out is important – do pay special attention to the schedule progress to ensure it is up to date, and be careful of any delays as it may work in negatively on the plan. Difficulties and how they were resolved should be noted as well as efficiencies and how they were set in motion.

(b) This evaluation allows for strategic modifications on which further implementations can be based, to enable the project to function at its peak. One can refer to the plan as a written guideline rather than a rigid rulebook, paving the way for open communication.

(c) The summative reports review the entire programme. The various tactics are measured by impact and outcome, leaving the final evaluation to reflect whether the tactics had reached the various levels, or in other words, were the various objectives achieved?

These measures only become meaningful when done in conjunction with the outcome in mind; for instance, to alter awareness, knowledge, opinions and behaviours of the stakeholders (Steyn & Puth, 2000:93).

2.17 Presenting the plan to top management

During this phase, the decision-makers should be convinced of the logic behind the strategy, even though there might have been previous close liaisons. In addition, concentrate on the research results to support the selected strategy. The CEO should be able to understand why the communication plan can enhance the reputation of the organisation, proving therefore that it can contribute in accomplishing the business objectives. Colleagues need to be informed soon after the communication plan has been accepted during the strategy phase; otherwise, if left unattended, it might cause harm, corrective actions will not be understood, and neither how it fits the long-term strategy of the organisation. Even explaining other case scenarios might not be helpful. Furthermore, to substantiate plans, surveys will seem unnecessary as programmes will not seem to relate to organisation climate. In the end, an informal session might be utilised in order to obtain the views of those needed to assist with the implementation (Steyn & Puth, 2000:93).

Lastly, ensure that information is presented to top management in an understandable and accessible form. Due to managers' multi-faceted roles, they might not be specifically knowledgeable about the understanding of the issues. Be sure not to be vague about the findings in the final report. Instead, draw obvious conclusions, highlight the most important data and be very clear. To increase the likelihood that the evaluation will be used, is to highlight the elements that can be altered in future programmes (Smith, 2002:248).

The structure of the evaluation report may be from any of the various types available. Evaluation forms may be output in a written or verbal form, but the expectations should be clearly linked to objectives and the corresponding outcomes. Detail should be used to explain the measurement of the outcomes, also referred to the degree of achievement or the lack thereof. Recommendations should be made in close quarters of its corresponding data. Major significant reports may be amplified using visual elements, for example photographs, tables and charts, as this may vastly increase the understanding of the audience (Smith, 2002:249).

2.18 Conclusion

The ability to identify and analyse the organisation's environment is the cornerstone of an effective communication strategy. The planner must carefully examine each public in order to develop a strategy to communicate effectively. It is not sufficient to merely know how to do things. The

effective communicator needs to know what to do, as well as why and how to evaluate its effectiveness. Strategic communication planning relies on four particular skills: (1) understanding research and planning, (2) knowing how to make strategic choices, (3) making selections from an expanding inventory of tactical choices and (4) completing the process by evaluating programme effectiveness.

This chapter gave an overview of the communication strategy and planning processes, where the communication plan reflects the organisational communication strategy, which was set by the communication goals. In this process both the action of the organisation (both proactive and responsive) and the content of the messages (theme, source, content and tone) is of importance. The alignment of the strategy will ensure that the communication objectives are on par with the organisation's key strategic issues.

To ensure that the communication plan is on track, formative and summative research should be conducted. In addition, top management, who must approve project plans, budgets, and personnel decision, should be involved on a frequent basis. This will guarantee their understanding of the implications and limitations, which should be conveyed clearly and confidently through forthright communication.

The next chapter will explain the complexities within the pharmaceutical management environment and highlight the role that strategic communication planning can play in this context.

CHAPTER 3 FORMULATING BASIC TENETS OF PHARMACY MANAGEMENT WITH A SPECIFIC FOCUS ON STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION BY SMALL SIZE PHARMACIES

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the strategic communication framework that could assist small size pharmacies to ensure their survival and growth, and gain a competitive advantage. This chapter will then continue to explain the complex pharmaceutical environment in which the small scale pharmacy needs to operate. The need for a strategic communication approach in these organisations will be highlighted throughout.

The vast majority of individuals who seek medical advice and treatment will access pharmacy services. As explained in Chapter 1, pharmacies in most cases are the 'first line' of contact for a vast majority of people, even for traditional services such as clinic services (Murray, 2013:16). The aspects pertaining to small-scale pharmacy management, especially in patient management where contra-indications are one of the most important services that a community pharmacy can deliver, will each be discussed.

3.2 Human resources and relations management

One of the most crucial resources in the pharmacy setting is those of human resources. Personnel are able to transform the way goods and services are offered in a pharmacy. To increase the efficiency of their tasks, individuals rely on technology such as computers, robotics, counting machines and software programs. The latter, together with how patients are treated, will affect the pharmacy operations. Certain factors need to be evaluated in order to understand what human resources should accomplish in the operations of the pharmacy. Tools that might be helpful; such as job design and job analyses, may be of great help to assist in these evaluations. The availability and the acquirement of human resources are greatly influenced by environmental factors. Pharmacies might have difficulty to find enough pharmacists due to the supply and demand factor, which, in turn, has an influence on the operations of the pharmacy. In order to increase efficiency, managers and owners might look at alternative routes such as robotics or an increase in the utilisation of available personnel. The environmental factors may lead to higher salary offerings or more attractive working hours and increased benefits. It is advisable to evaluate the last mentioned first, in order to determine the profitability for the pharmacy (ASHP, 2017; SAPC, 2017; Desselle & Zgarrick, 2009:322).

Furthermore, the type of employees the pharmacy attracts will also have an influence on the pharmacy's operations. In other words, competent, productive and motivated employees will contribute more to the pharmacy's profitability than the other way around. Therefore, hiring the right people is of utmost importance. Providing training to employees appears to be equally important. For instance, if the phone rings, but no one feels that it is their job to answer the phone, the pharmacy might lose a sale. On the other hand, if there is uncertainty as to who should answer next, it leads to a twofold issue, namely customer dissatisfaction and lack of efficiency (Desselle & Zgarrick, 2009:524).

In summary the information above confirms that human resources can greatly affect operations management (Desselle & Zgarrick, 2009:14).

3.2.1 The staffing process

After the pharmacy's operating units have been established, staffing becomes the next focal point. Staff who do not fit in or do not comply with the intended goals of the pharmacy would cast a negative shadow. The reason for choosing cautiously is that the day-to-day tasks need to be completed properly and personnel are a major expense (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:284).

The staffing process consists of various steps, and these may, if required, be implemented simultaneously (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:285; Eckel *et al.,* 2012:5):

(a) Business activity, based on the level and objective of the business, would determine the numbers and types of personnel needed for future positions.

(b) The business owner's goals will guide how many management positions with regard to their service areas will be needed in future.

(c) A job description should be compiled for the job types mentioned in (a) and (b).

(d) The internal aspects of the employment terms with regard to working conditions, policies or policies that might have an influence on the job satisfaction of future employees. Confirm that the working environment accommodates federal, state and local legislation.

The basic conditions may be observed in Chapter 1. Here, a full description is provided with regard to the definition, purpose and application of the Basic conditions of employment Act (11 of 2002) as stipulated by the Department of Labour (2002:1-50).

(a) Match the open position and the candidate's job description in order to place potential employees.

(b) Promoting job opportunities helps to attract good personnel.

(c) Use the formal screening process to suss out the appropriate candidates. This process must be non-discriminatory, and should adhere to various employment laws.

(d) New employees should be oriented as soon as possible to make them feel at home. This is especially important to long-term employee-employer relationships.

(e) On-the-job training as well as development is important for career advancement. Without an adequate training programme, the previous steps will lose effectiveness.

(f) The wage and benefit programmes should be just – for employees as well as for the pharmacy. Wages must be proportionate and competitive with the task that needs to be performed.

(g) Keep employees motivated and be sensitive to their grievances. It is also important to stimulate their productive efforts. By doing so, the operations of the pharmacy can be kept effective and efficient. Align the employees' personal objectives with the pharmacy's goals.

Through staffing the pharmacy's long-term success can be built by ensuring a competent workforce as well as hiring personnel as a long-term investment. It is a fact that, as organisations grow, managerial structures and skills need to be kept on track through constant change (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:284).

3.2.1.1 Personnel policies

Personnel policies is for internal use only, by health care providers, and reflect how jobs should be executed or how to provide a service. A policy comprises of governing laws and regulations, and policy statements (O'Donnell & Vogenberg, 2012). The personnel policy should include information on the required licensing and registration of the employee, work hours, compensation, fringe benefits, vacation allowances and time off, training, grievance procedures, promotion procedures, employee review processes and processes for the termination of service.

3.2.1.2 Developing job descriptions

In order to achieve the correct placement, job descriptions are needed for all positions available. The biggest advantage is that the prospective employee would be able to see what the position entails and for the employer it will assist in the screening process (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:292; South Africa, 2017: 2-51).

3.2.1.3 Providing satisfactory working conditions and a work environment

The conditions under which a task must be accomplished should be clearly stated to the employee. As no 'sudden surprises' (e.g. preparations of radiopharmaceuticals) or of any dangerous (e.g. preparations of complex intravenous solutions) nature would be appreciated Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:292; Raziq, 2015).

In addition, providing a conducive working environment should be one of the pharmacy manager's top concerns. Work areas should improve the employee's morale and productivity. The physical layout should be planned around the work flow. Safety must be another crucial consideration; it is noted that most state requires a compensation insurance, whereby premiums will be influenced by the level of danger under which the tasks must be performed Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:292; Health care jobs, 2017).

3.2.2 Selecting an employee

Selecting the appropriate employee has become one of the most integral parts of recruitment and selection, the reason being that any errors made in the hiring process may influence the pharmacy's ability to survive. The following aspects should be kept in mind before the employee selection process can commence: the application form, the administering of personal interviews, checking the applicant's past, skills test, administering an employment test, requiring a physical examination test, making a selection and considering to use temporary- and part-time help. The employee should be organised when attempting this process to make sure all the procedures had been followed and no employment rules have been violated (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:292; AHSP, 2002).

3.2.3 Employee orientation

The manager should undertake measures to accustom personnel to their new environment. Questions, fears and concerns of new employees will without a doubt affect their job performance. Therefore, an orientation programme is of utmost importance for personnel who are joining a different position in the pharmacy. During the orientation process, special attention should be paid to introducing the new personnel and fitting in with existing personnel. If this part is neglected, new employees may not be accepted as readily and this might lead to high employee turnover. Further guidance can be in the form of an employee handbook, where policies and procedures are being specified in the finest detail. Negligence of the latter will result in poor job performance (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:296; Rabinowitz, 2017).

3.2.4 Employee training and development

It is important to assist new employees by means of training. If not satisfactorily prepared, they will fall short in reaching their full potential.

In addition, a well prepared employee will be beneficial to both the pharmacy and the employee (Smith, 1987:2). A decision that needs much consideration is to determine which employees should be earmarked for promotion. According to Tunsik (1989), because the training of managers is an expensive course, the owner has to decide whether it is rather justifiable to create two career paths: those for managerial and those for non-managerial staff. To fit all employees to the same criteria will be risky. For a small pharmacy, it is more viable if an employee can perform different tasks and assume it on short notice (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:297).

Furthermore, employees' tasks should be fitting to their job descriptions and should comply with legal requirements. For example, technicians are limited to their scope in the overall dispensing process. Training programmes help to solidify long-term employer-employee relationships, as the employee will realise that the pharmacy owner is investing in his/her future (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:298-299).

The training methods all depend on which route the pharmacy owner wants to take with the employee; in other words, managerial or non-managerial (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:298-299; Eckel *et al.,* 2012:14):

(a) Management training and development

Certain guidelines are of utmost importance as their sole task is to assist in the development of pharmacy managers: development is action oriented allowing the individual to make decisions, development is an ongoing process, crash courses never seem to be very successful, there should be room for error, if this is not provided the employee might feel stifled, close monitoring and feedback are necessary as employees need to know the outcome of their accomplishment, as this will shape them better for future.

(b) Non-management training

Although this programme is less expensive than the managerial training programme, it does not make it less important. The five guidelines described previously also do apply here. On-the-job training is most frequently used in these cases and do not require much of a cash outlay. Apprenticeships and internships are used for more intensive types of training. Apprenticeships are being applied in areas such as non-prescriptive sales and services, while internships are frequently applied to pharmacy students. The big question remains, should the pharmacy owner

employ a person in need of training or should he/she revert to an already qualified person? In the end, it comes down to the relative costs of skilled versus unskilled labour (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:298-300; Hemsley, 2016).

3.2.5 Employee advancement

The critical issue with which the pharmacy owner will be confronted would be to decide whether an employee should be advanced from inside, or should there rather be an appointment from outside? A promotion from within holds the advantage that the pharmacy owner is already familiar with the employee's background and work performance. This will also allow for the employee to feel valued and work even harder. Promoting from the outside brings the possibility of implementing fresh ideas. A general notion is to search within first, and if no successful candidates can be identified, the second approach may be applied. If the vacant position qualifies as a steppingstone position, then it is advisable that the training and development should not only focus on the current, but also on the future job position. Dead-end positions do not require the same amount of effort. Assuming that they are not that critical or highly specified, different types of control are needed here. With no aspirations in sight, employees will become demotivated and lax (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:298-301; Adams, 2012).

3.2.6 Wage and benefits programmes

In order to establish the appropriate wage and benefit programme, the employer has to find the balance between remunerating too much or too little. The different methods (monthly salary, hourly wage and piece rate) in which the salaries are being paid should be on par within the organisation. With regard to the benefit programme (vacation, holidays, group insurance, bonuses, saving plans, profit sharing, stock options and special services) the wage programme should be used as guideline, as this can become very expensive (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:298-308; Begley, 2007).

3.3 Human relations management

According to the Seeds of inspiration (2015), the collaboration of colleagues can greatly be improved if there is insight into different personalities types, as it is the general moulder of behaviour. In conjunction with the latter, psychological aspects, such as attitude, personality, perception and learning will be used as indicators to understand colleagues' behaviour.

3.3.1 Understanding organisational behaviour in terms of organisational focus and goals

Understanding organisational behaviour (OB), at times, has aspects that are not visible. The visible dimension is much larger that the hidden portion that is not visible. When an organisation is viewed, the visible aspects are those that are prominent: strategies, objectives, policies and procedures, structure, technology, formal authority and chain of command. The other hidden aspects, i.e. attitudes, perception, group norms, informal interactions, interpersonal and intergroup conflicts, are what managers should clearly take note of, as these have the potential to influence employees' behaviour at work (Robbins *et al.,* 2015:271; iEduNote, 2017).

The focus of organisational behaviour (OB) rests on three pillars: *Individual behaviour* – this area greatly focuses on the contributions of phycologists with regard to attitudes, personality, perception, learning and motivation*, group behaviour* – this area greatly focuses on the contributions of sociologists with regard to norms, roles, team building, leadership and conflict*,* and *organisational aspects* – structure, culture, human resource policies and practices.

Organisational behaviour (OB) goals aim to *predict* the behaviours of employees in certain situations, *influence* how employees will behave, and *explain* why some employees intend to indulge in certain behaviours rather than other employees. The following six employee behaviours raise some concerns (Robbins *et al.,* 2015:272):

- Employee productivity measures both efficiency and effectivity;
- Absenteeism relates to failure to be present at work;
- Turnover indicates voluntary and involuntary permanent job termination;
- Organisational citizenship behaviour points to behaviour that, although not part of job description, will promote the organisation's effectiveness;
- Job satisfaction concerns the employee's general attitude towards his/her job;
- Workplace misbehaviour involves any behaviour that might be injurious towards other employees or the organisation.

The following sections will reveal how four psychological factors, namely attitude, personality, perception and learning can assist in perceiving and understand employees' behaviour patterns (Robbins *et al.,* 2015:272; Waschek, 2017).

3.3.2 Does attitude play a role in job performance?

An attitude can either be favourable or unfavourable towards an event, person or an object. There are three major building blocks that make up an attitude, namely cognition, affect and behaviour.

The cognitive component has more to do with the beliefs, opinions, knowledge and information fostered by a person. The affect component points more to the feeling or the emotional part held by a person, while the behavioural component stipulates that it is an intension towards a person or situation that influences one's behaviour. Although the previously mentioned might be very useful, it is unrealistic to fathom that a manager might take every little characteristic of an employee into account. Managers are more interested in job-related attitudes. *Job satisfaction* relates in general to the attitude an employee holds towards his/her job, *job involvement* reflects the degree to which an employee connects his/her self-worth to job performance, and *organisational commitment* portrays the employee's loyalty towards the organisation by which he/she is employed. A rather new concept that concludes the list is employee engagement. Engagement can only be triggered by connectedness and enthusiasm towards the job. Highly engaged employees are passionate about their jobs, while disengaged employees have no passion for their jobs, and in general have an attitude of being 'checked out' or 'don't care'.

Importantly, highly engaged employees contribute to the organisation's success. It has been stated that highly engaged personnel are two-and-a-half times more likely to become top performers than their less engaged colleagues. Furthermore, organisations benefit from these employees, as the higher retention counteracts the high costs of training and recruiting new personnel.

Managers who are able to understand attitudes have the advantage of becoming more effective. Understanding the latter should be priority as it directly influences the employees' behaviour. To lower rates of absenteeism and turnover, managers should delve into things that keep the employees satisfied and positive. The belief is that more happy workers are more productive workers. In order to maintain the latter, managers should focus on the factors that create happy employees, for instance challenges, providing rewards and creating supportive working conditions. To lower resentment or reduce dissonance, employees might understand the situation better if external forces, such as competitors, customers or other factors, can be explained to them as why they need to do perform some task to which they harbour dissonance (Robbins *et al.,* 2015:275-276; Musakaruka, 2017).

3.3.3 Important factors about personality that managers need to know

Communication is mentioned in six of the 10 competency standards identified by the South African Pharmacy Council, which together form the minimum requirements for an entry-level pharmacist to be registered in South Africa (SA) (SAPC, 2016a). Developed communication skills are essential for the practising pharmacist and non-negotiable in building provider-patient relationships. Effective communication is at the heart of patient safety and optimal health

outcomes (Boesen *et al*., 2009). Training pharmacists to be more aware of the impact of their natural communication style on their patients (Eksteen & Basson, 2015:43) and healthcare colleagues empowers them to move their professional role from product- to patient focused. Such awareness may prompt pharmacists to develop their interpersonal skills to address the human-centred elements of patient-centeredness. The more advanced the communication skills of a pharmacist are, the better he/she is equipped to assist patients (de Oliviera & Schoemaker, 2006:56-66). In this regard, one should keep in mind that a factor that influences patient interaction is the pharmacist's personality preferences. The enabling factor of caregiving is communication. Advisable is that pharmacists should take the time to analyse how their actions are influencing the patient, by placing themselves in the patients' shoes. It could also assist the pharmacists to understand the differences in human experiences and behaviours, and the resulting impact on communication. For instance, type-theory such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator®, could demonstrate to the pharmacists why people react and experience the world in a certain way (Eksteen & Basson, 2015:43), and help them to understand his/her own natural communication style and to take into account the communication styles of the patients (Eksteen & Basson, 2015:43). Therefore, the psychological type theory can be utilised as a tool to sensitise prospective pharmacists in their differentiation between people, in order to excel in patient-centred care (Eksteen & Basson, 2015:43-46). For instance, patients with a ***sensing-thinking*** preference combination prefer to receive straightforward, clear, concise and practical facts, while patients with a ***sensing-feeling*** preference combination need a caring manner in which factual information will be conveyed (Allen, 2005).

It has been stipulated that, for the improvement of the appropriate medication use and the desired achieving of patient outcomes, effective communication is the answer as it:

- will increase the patients' recall of drug usage information;
- will contribute to significant compliance and knowledge improvements (Powell *et al.*, 2006:751);
- will improve different institutions' disease management programmes (Clarke et al., 2017);
- will have a lower rate of adverse drug preventable events (Schnipper *et al.*, 2004:568); and
- will have a noticeable reduction in ordering of errant medication.

Both patients and healthcare professionals agree that communication and relationship factors between the patient and the healthcare professionals prove to be of critical importance.

When taking the abovementioned into consideration, it shows that communication and relationship factors are immensely crucial between the patient and healthcare professions (Leonard, 2017:57-58). Effective relationships are the key to proper pharmaceutical care towards

patients NHS Scotland, 2017:10). Care, on many occasions, is being considered equal to technological interventions, such as immunisations or antibiotics, which the healthcare professional perceives as contributing to the patient's well-being. On occasion, it has been argued, that the pharmacist may not consider the patient as an individual, and this may result in a negative experience for the patient (de Oliviera & Shoemaker 2006:56-66), or that patients experience caring differently from what the pharmacist intended. The important aspects of caring should be to acknowledge the patient's perspective, being aware of the patient and reflecting on the patient's responses; otherwise, 'caring', in this instance, will be nullified (Quirk *et al*., 2008: 359-366).

3.3.3.1 Perception

In order to give meaning to their environment, pharmacists may organise and interpret their sensory impressions by means of so-called perception. Research indicates that individuals may look at the same thing, but might interpret it differently. In a work situation, a manager might view an assistant who takes time to consider the action to a decision as lazy, while another manager might perceive this as being thoughtful and thorough. The first manager might view the employee negatively, while the second manager might see the employee in a more positive light. Clearly important here is that managers might interpret what they see as reality. However, in actual fact, it is clear that none of us actually 'see' reality; it happens according to our own perception (Robbins, 2008:229; Robbins, 2012:387-388).

Interpretation is heavily influenced by characteristics such as attitude, personality, motives, interests, past experiences and expectations. Focusing on the characteristics of the target can greatly influence perception, for instance loud people are more likely going to be noticed in a group than quiet people will be; therefore, the context within which one sees the target or the event is of utmost importance (Robbins, 2008:229; Robbins, 2012:389).

3.3.3.2 Attributions according to which managers judge employees

The attribution theory intends to explain how people are being judged according to the meaning a manager assign to a given behaviour. This theory considers that an individual's behaviour may be due to internal or external causes. It is believed that internal causes are linked to an employee's own behaviour, while external causes lie outside the control of an employee. Consistency is the key factor here. An interesting fact is that errors or biases may distort the attributes of the theory. In other words, when passing judgement, the external factors might be underestimated and the internal factors overestimated. In other words, when taking part in performance appraisal, an employee tends to attribute success to internal factors, while poor performance will be attributed

to external factors. The latter is also known as self-serving bias (Robbins, 2008:231; Robbins, 2012:390).

3.3.3.3 Misinterpretations when applying shortcut methods in judging others

Managers may use a shortcut in order to be able to judge others. This process might become tiring. Therefore, a set of shortcuts allows for more manageability. The value hereof is that it allows one to make quick assessments and provide data for prediction. These tools are not always perfect and might lead to problems on occasion. Table 3-1 will provide some insight into what to be on the lookout for, as it may lead to distortion (Robbins, 2008:23; Management Portal, 2013).

Shortcut	What it is	Distortion
Selectivity	People assimilate certain bits and pieces of what they observe depending on their interests, background, experience, and attitudes.	"Speed reading" others may result in an inaccurate picture of them.
Assumed similarity	People assume that others are like them.	May fail to take into account individual differences, resulting in incorrect similarities.
Stereotyping	People judge others on the basis of their perception of a group to which the others belong	May result in distorted judgements because many stereotypes have no factual foundation
Halo effect	People form an impression of others on the basis of a single trait.	Fails to take into account the total picture of what an individual has done.
Self-fulfilling prophecy	People perceive others in a certain way, and in turn those others behave in ways that are consistent with the perception.	May result in getting the behaviour expected, not the true behaviour of individuals.

Table 3-1: Distortions in judging others (Robbins, 2008:231).

3.3.3.4 Understanding of perceptions allow managers be more effective

Managers should take close cognisance of the following. Attention should be paid to how employees view their jobs and management practices. The following is true in an equal number of cases, i.e. the valuable employee who resigns because of an inaccurate perception is just as

great a loss as the employee who leaves the company for a valid reason (Robbins, 2008:232). Lastly, if the manager wants to predict behaviour, the understanding of how people learn will provide an explanation. The process by which behaviour patterns are being obtained is called operant conditioning and social learning theory. Operant conditioning is a behavioural theory that claims that "voluntary, or learned, behaviour is a function of its consequences" (Aquinas, 2008:133). For example, desired behaviour will be engaged in more frequently when positively reinforced. If rewards follow immediately after the desired response was performed, the result is most effective. Behaviour that is either not rewarded or punished has a lesser chance to be repeated.

The theory is that people can learn through observation and direct experience. Another method of learning that is noteworthy is through observing models such as parents, teachers, peers, television and movie performers, bosses etc. Learning through observation and direct experience is called social learning theory. The influence that these models pose has a direct influence on the learning viewpoint. The following four models show the influence on an individual (Robbins, 2008:232-233; Otara, 2012:23):

1.	Attentional process	People learn from a model only when they recognise and pay attention to its critical features. We tend to be most influenced repeatedly available models we think are attractive, important or similar to us.
2.	Retention process	A model's influence will depend on how well the individual remembers the model's action, even after the model is no longer readily available.
3.	Motor reproduction process	After a person has seen a new behaviour by observing the model, watching must be converted to doing. This process demonstrates that the individual can perform the modelled activities.
4.	Reinforcement process	Individuals will be motivated to exhibit the modelled behaviour if positive incentives or rewards are provided. Behaviours that are reinforced will be given more attention and will be learned better and performed more often than behaviours that are not reinforced.

Table 3-2: The Four process models' influence on individuals (Robbins, 2008:234).

3.3.3.5 How can managers reinforce behaviour?

Managers should keep in mind that behaviour can be reinforced in such a way that it will benefit the company. Individuals will learn by using the guiding steps proposed by the manager. If certain behaviour is not being reinforced, it will gradually disappear. Both negative and positive reinforcement will result in a learning experience. A sought-after response will be reinforced and eventually be repeated. Learning still takes place, although weakened and it might disappear when punishment or extinction is involved (Robbins, 2008:234; Collins, 2017).

3.3.3.6 Managers can be more effective by understanding learning experiences

If certain behaviour is not being reinforced, it will gradually disappear. Both negative and positive reinforcement will result in a learning experience. A sought-after response will be reinforced and eventually be repeated. Learning still takes place, although weakened and it might disappear when punishment or extinction is involved (Robbins, 2008:234; Lumen, 2014).

3.4 Change management

Change means the adjustment of the organisational environment, structure, technology or people. The manager's job would have been fairly easy, was it not for change. Tomorrow would be no different than yesterday and that would have resulted in simplified planning. Organisational design issues would have been solved due to an uncertainty-free environment. Change is inevitable, as it is the reality of any organisation. It forms part of the manager's job description. What a manager might be able to change lies in these three categories: altering structure, technology or people. (Robbins, 2008:194; Rouse, 2015).

3.4.1 What is changed and how do managers deal with it?

Organisations need to change due to the influence of external and internal forces. External sources originate from a range of contributors that create this need for change. One of these contributors is technology. The internet and e-commerce have changed the way information is gathered and products are sold. The same holds true for the economic changes that affect a broad variety of organisations. If, for instance, the interest rates are decreased, more growth in the housing market becomes apparent. This, on the other hand, relates to more job creation and more hiring of employees to support the building industry, to name but one example (Robbins, 2008:194-195; Economy, 2015).

Another stimulus for change is internal forces. How internal forces originate is primarily due to the organisation's internal operation or due to the impact of external change. It has been noted

that changes form part of the normal organisational lifecycle. The fact is that the workforce of an organisation is hardly static.

Structure	+	Technology	+	People
Authority relationships Coordinating mechanisms Job redesign Spans of control		Work process Work methods Equipment		Attitudes Expectations Perceptions Behaviour

Table 3-3: Three categories of change (Robbins, 2008:194).

Structure changes with regard to age, education, gender and nationality. On occasion, managers who have occupied positions for many years might be restructured in order to allow for ambitious employees to fill these positions. If certain skills are in short supply, the compensation and benefits system needs to be altered in order to attract prospective candidates. Changes in management policies and practices become crucial as soon as employees' attitudes result in actions such as increased absenteeism, resignations and even strikes (Robbins, 2008:195).

3.4.1.1 How managers can assist by becoming a change agent

In order to bring about a change, a catalyst is needed. When looking closer at the latter, it indicates a person responsible for managing a change process. Change agents may be non-managers, indicating that an internal staff specialist or an outside consultancy may be utilised. The advantage of using an outside consultancy is that objectivity may be applied, although lacking in understanding the company's history, culture, operating procedures and personnel. Drastic changes might be enforced, while insiders will be more cautious as they have to live with the consequences. The fact is, internal change agents might be more cautious as these changes will have an effect on them too.

Often, two metaphors are being used to describe the change process: the 'calm waters' or the 'white-water rapids' metaphor. The 'calm waters' metaphor indicates: "A description of traditional practices in and theories about organizations that likens the organization to a large ship making a predictable trip across a calm sea and experiencing an occasional storm."; while the 'white-

water rapids' metaphor specifies: "A description of the organization as a small raft navigating a raging river."

To understand what each entails, a closer look will be taken at each one.

(1) The 'calm waters' metaphor was predominantly used in the past, but will be best described in using Kurt Lewin's three-step change process:

According to Ayodeji (2015:69) and Mind Tools (2017a), the success of the change process lies in unfreezing the existing status quo, implementing the change, and freezing the new state again in order to ensure permanency. It has been pointed out that the status quo can be referred to as an equilibrium state. Unfreezing is necessary to advance from the equilibrium state; it can be achieved through three steps:

(a) Increase the driving forces that steer away from the equilibrium;

(b) Decrease the driving forces, hampering the movement from the equilibrium;

(c) A combination of these two approaches may be applied.

Unless unfreezing can be accomplished, changes will not take effect, meaning that employees will just revert to the old way. The motive for refreezing is to stabilise the new situation by balancing the forces that work in positively and negatively.

Take note that the three-step process clearly indicates a break between the different states, assuming the status quo has been broken and it is necessary to establish a new equilibrium. Unfortunately, this model has become obsolete due to the many turbulences managers face today.

(2) The 'white-water rapid' metaphor takes into account today's environment where both uncertainty and dynamism are prevalent. This means that disruptions are not occasional, and managers might never escape the rapids. It is an ongoing change, underlined by chaos, forcing managers to apply rules they have never applied, as the situation progresses. Fortunately, this is not the case for all managers, but they are a selected few. It is the minority of organisations that treat change as an occasional disturbance, and if they do, it will be very unwise. Organisations need to be on the alert as too much is changing too fast. It should be kept in mind that 18 months or less is what needed for a competitive advantage to last (Ala, 2013; Robbins, 2008:196).

3.4.1.2 How does the pharmacy owner in small independent pharmacy manage risk?

Any form of change may be disruptive; therefore, the entrepreneur should take the time to explain change, excite and motivate employees to engage in best effort actions; in other words, take the role of a coach. The actual change process should be guided by the entrepreneur with regard to strategy, technology, products, structure and toward the people implementation process. During this role, questions should be answered, suggestions proposed, needed resources obtained and conflict facilitated; in other words, be prepared for anything else while implementing these changes (Robbins, 2008:199; General Pharmaceutical Council, 2016).

3.4.1.3 How do pharmacy managers manage resistance to change?

Managers should be positive and excited to bring the change about as it leads to the effectiveness of the organisation. However, in some instances, it can be seen as a threat by non-mangers and managerial staff alike. The following section will explain how to deal with such a situation and to lessen the effects on all involved (Robbins, 2008:199; Kotter, 1995:60).

3.4.1.4 Why do people resist organisational change?

It has been stipulated that people “hate any change that does not jingle in their pocket.” In conjunction with the previous mentioned, three additional reasons might shed further clarity, for example concern over personal loss, and the belief that the change is not in the organization’s best interest. Firstly, the employee will resent change for the plain reason that one has to trade the known for the unknown. Employees feel they have to learn new methods and are quite content with their working schedules and routines to which they are accustomed. In the end, the employee might develop a negative attitude or behave dysfunctionally when required to use new processes. Secondly, the fear of losing something that has been already gained; in other words, loss of position, money, authority, friendships, personal convenience, or other benefits that are being valued. Newer employees do not resist change as much as senior personnel, who have more adapting to do. Thirdly, the employee’s own belief that the change is incompatible with the organisation’s goals and interests. What the employee believes is crucial if the new implementation is going to counteract the beliefs of the employee; then, resistance will be apparent. If the resistance can be used in a positive matter, by informing the peers of the concerns, it might be used in favour of bettering the process (Tanner, 2017; Robbins, 2008:201).

What are some techniques to resist organisational change?

If management experiences resistance to change, causing dysfunctional action, which alternatives are at their disposal? Fortunately, the change agent has a few strategies at his/her

disposal. The summarised tactics are described in Table 3-4:

Technique	When used	Advantage	Disadvantage
Education and communication	When resistance is due to misinformation	Clear up misunderstandings	May not work when mutual trust and credibility are lacking
Participation	When resisters have the expertise to make a contribution	Increase involvement and acceptance	Time-consuming has potential for a poor solution
Facilitation and support	When resisters are fearful and anxiety ridden	Can facilitate needed adjustments	Expensive; no guarantee of success
Negotiation	When resistance comes from a powerful group	Can “buy” commitment	Potentially high cost; opens doors for other so apply pressure too
Manipulation and co-operation	When a powerful group’s endorsement is needed	Inexpensive, easy way to gain support	Can backfire, causing change agent to lose credibility
Coercion	When a powerful group’s endorsement is needed	Inexpensive, easy way to gain support	May be illegal; may undermine change agent’s credibility

Table 3-4: Techniques to reduce resistance to change (Robbins, 2008:201).

The attempt whereby organisational members plan change is called organisation development (OD). The purpose is to gradually change the attitude and values of the organisation members in order to accept the changes. An issue for organisation development (OD) is to establish an atmosphere that enables open communication and trust, because change brings about stress. The effort in (OD) depends hugely on group interaction and development. These include survey feedback, process consultation, team-building and intergroup development (Robbins, 2008:203; Heathfield, 2017).

3.4.2 What reactions do employees have towards organisational change?

A dynamic and uncertain environment is stressful for many employees. It is characterised by restructurings and downsizings. On top of it all, employees might feel ‘stressed out’ due to the latter. The following section will deal with how managers can empower employees to reduce anxiety (Robbins, 2008:203; Witting, 2012:23-24).

3.4.2.1 What is stress?

Stressors that relate to factors that cause stress can be divided into two main categories, namely organisational and personal. Both of these categories have the ability to affect the employee and lastly his/her job.

The organisational category can be subdivided into five sections: (a) *task demands*: employees' job design with regard to autonomy, task variety and degree of automation; (b) *role demands* relate to the pressures placed on an employee due to the job he/she fulfils, i.e. **role conflict** creates expectations that are hard to satisfy; **role overload** lends itself to more work than there is time permitted for; **role ambiguity** appears when the employee is not sure what is expected of him/her; (c) *interpersonal demands* are created by co-workers, especially where a lack of social support and poor interpersonal relationships are evident; (d) *organisation structure* refers to excessive rules and the employee's lack of opportunity to influence these decisions that may influence him/ her; and (e) *organisational leadership* refers to supervisory styles that might be resembled by causing tension, fear and anxiety (Wang & Horng, 2002: 35-45; Sharma, 2006).

Personal factors that are contributing to stress are family issues, personal economic problems, and inherent personality characteristics. It is inevitable, but employees bring these issues to work. Therefore, it would be advisable if a manager can distinguish between the different personality types to determine how susceptible they are to stress. There are two types, namely Type A and Type B. Type As feel a chronic sense of time urgency, and they have difficulty to enjoy and accept leisure time. Type Bs hardly ever suffer from time urgency or impatience, as they are more relaxed and easy-going. Although studies have concluded that Type Bs are just as susceptible to stress-producing situations, managers need to understand that Type As will always show stress, even if the personal and organisational stressors are low (Wang & Horng, 2002: 35-45; Sharma, 2006).

3.4.2.2 What are the symptoms of stress?

There are three general ways in which stress can reveal itself: 1) *Physiologically*: When high stress levels are being experienced, there will be changes in metabolism, increases in heart and breathing rates, blood pressure, headaches, and risk of heart attacks; 2) *Psychologically:* the tell-tale signs here are anxiety, boredom and procrastination, which can further hamper productivity; and 3) *behavioural symptoms*: changes might be evident in eating habits, smoking or substance abuse, rapid speech and insomnia (Robbins, 2008:207; Study.com, 2017).

3.4.2.3 How can stress be reduced?

If necessary, redesigning the job will also relieve work overload stressors. It is very useful if the employee could have input in the decision-making process, as the job will affect him/her. This type of involvement proves to lessen the stress factors (Robbins, 2012:164; Deakin University, 2016).

Although all of the above may be implemented to eliminate stress factors, some employees may still appear 'stressed out'. Because the manager has little or no control over personal stress factors, some companies offer assistance to employees and wellness programmes. The programmes are designed to give the employee guidance in areas where difficulties are experienced, such as financial planning, legal matters, health, fitness, and stress. With regard to employee assistance programmes (EAP), the main aim is to get the employee back on track again by means of educating the employee about the issue he/she might experience. In conjunction with the previously mentioned, organisations invest in wellness programmes to keep the employees healthy. These programmes have a variety of topics, such as termination of smoking, weight loss, stress management, physical fitness, nutrition education, control of high blood pressure, violence protection and team work intervention, etc. According to (Masi, 1992), the purpose of wellness programmes is to lower employees' health costs and lower absenteeism.

3.4.2.4 Encourage innovation

Innovate or ultimately die. These are the cold words that today's managers are faced with. It becomes apparent that in order for an organisation to survive, managers should look at the creation of new products and services, and incorporate new technologies. If an organisation fails to "inject useful, useable and desirable change into a product", it may lose its market to a competing product. The question might arise, "What can we do to increase the organisation's innovativeness?" The following sections will attempt to describe the factors towards creating innovative success (Robbins, 2008:207-208; Kalb, 2013).

3.4.2.5 How are creativity and innovation linked?

Creativity can be defined as "the ability to produce innovative products or services." Organisations embark on such activities as creative imagination exercises to enable creative thinking (Harmeyer, 2015; BusinessDictory, 2017a).

Innovation, on the other hand, is "Innovation is a process that transforms unique, creative ideas into new realities: products, services, or processes that deliver greater value or benefits." The

organisation that has creativity at heart will strive to channel creative ideas into useful outcomes (Harmeyer, 2015).

According to (Robbins, 2008:208), creativity is perceived as an inborn attribute, while others argue that creativity may be a learned process. The way in which the previous can be accomplished is by means of 1) *Perception* (has to do with how a person sees the world. Some may see a solution to a problem, while it eludes others); 2) *Incubation* (to progress from perception to reality does not happen overnight. It should first undergo an incubation process. During this period, information should be gathered, reshaped and moulded into something new); 3) *Inspiration* (this happens when, like a flash of lightning, the answer appears. In other words, inspiration is when all the efforts come together in one moment. This might lead to a heightened sense of euphoria, but the actual work still lies ahead); and 4) *Innovation* (taking inspiration and turning it into something useful). Thomas Edison has frequently been quoted for his famous saying: "creativity is one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration…" The 99 percent that is being referred to relates to testing, evaluating and retesting. During this stage, it is important to involve others, as the invention might be delayed or even lost due to people skills that are lacking in such a manner that the intended idea could not be communicated properly (Gilhooly, 2016; Robbins, 2008:209).

3.4.2.6 How can managers encourage innovation?

To stimulate innovation, three possible variables, which refer to the organisation's structure, culture and human resource practices, will be discussed below (Woodman, *et al*., 1993):

(a) Structural variables affect innovativeness on the basis of three statements: organic structures tend to positively influence innovation due to less work specialisation, fewer rules and more decentralisation in comparison with mechanistic structures. Adoption of innovation is much easier as it supports flexibility, adaptation and cross-fertilisation. The abundant access to resources creates the possibility for managers to purchase innovations, carry the costs of establishing innovations and digest failures. Lastly, the frequent inter-unit communications assist in breaking down any barriers that might exist that might hinder innovation.

(b) Organisations with similar innovative cultures place an emphasis on experimentation. Both successes and failures are rewarded, as well as mistakes (Perry-Smith, 2016; Shalley *et al*., 2004). This innovative climate facilitates the following characteristics:

- Acceptance of ambiguity: Creativity is hampered by too much focus on objectivity and specificity;

- Tolerance of the impractical: No individual is stifled when it comes to producing impractical answers to what-if questions. Some impracticalities may lead to innovations;
- Low external controls: Controls such as rules, regulations and policies are kept to the minimum;
- Tolerance of risk: Employees are being encouraged to take consequence-free risks, even if it could fail. The latter are seen as a learning opportunity;
- Tolerance of conflict: Opinion diversity is welcomed. Agreement is not necessarily an indication of high performance between individuals;
- Focus on ends rather than on means: Employees may follow alternative routes to reach end goals. The focus should be kept on the end; this allows for several answers to be possibly correct at any given stage;
- Open systems focus: The environment is scanned for any changes and reacts swiftly if any occur.

3.4.2.7 What human resource element influences innovation?

Training and development are key to ensure that employees retain the most current knowledge. These innovative organisations offer their employees job security, meaning that by making mistakes, it will not lead to the termination of their positions. Instead, employees are being inspired to become champions of change. Champions reveal traits that can be compared with dynamic leadership. They serve as an inspiration to others, energising them by sharing the potential of the innovation through strong conviction. Champions excel in gaining support for the mission, but in conjunction with the latter, it is possible, due to the job responsibility, to apply decision-making discretion. This autonomy assists in introducing and implementing innovation (Stjernberg & Philips, 1993; Howell & Higgins, 1990).

3.5 Risk management, quality improvement and marketing management

Risk is part of business and hereditary; it seems to follow Murphy's Law that if something goes wrong it normally happens at the worst time. Losses and failures are seen as poor management and conditions beyond control play a crucial part (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:93; Pharmaceutical Manufacturing staff, 2017).

3.5.1 Assessing business risks: The types of criminal business risks pharmacies face

3.5.1.1 The types of non-criminal business risks faced by pharmacies

Risk affects large and small pharmacies, but the latter are especially vulnerable with regard to business downturn and losses. Due to the lack of a diversified base, sufficient capital and

insurance, small pharmacies tend to be at high risk. On occasion, with regard to occurrences such as fire and earthquakes, inadequate insurance may have a detrimental effect. Damages may also be suffered when the owner of the pharmacy becomes ill for an extended period of time. It is therefore advisable that pharmacy managers and owners should plan for the unforeseen. Unfortunately, business risks cannot be avoided, but following the route of risk management will lessen the burden. Although risk cannot be avoided fully, risk management attempts through assessment and measurement to enable economic feasibility. The answer might lie in preventing unexpected circumstances to destroy the enterprise (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:94; The State of Queensland, 2017).

Non-crime-related business risks include the following: fire, natural disasters, personal liability, economic downturn, business interruption and loss of key personal items (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:94).

(a) Fire: The threat of a possible fire leads many managers to believe that investing in a fire insurance will be an ample investment. Although fire insurance can cover most of the financial losses endured, it will be unable to alleviate the loss of customers and records. Following the guidelines of the fire protection programme ensures that the premises, customers and employees do not contribute to an unnecessary fire hazard. Inspection should be performed on a regular basis to ensure that faulty construction and wiring receive the needed attention (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:94-96; The State of Queensland 2017):

(b) Natural disasters: Other catastrophes that a business might face include high winds, floods and earthquakes. These are unpredictable and can bring about damage quickly. Managers must decide to which disaster the area is more prone to. Purchasing insurance beforehand may be a good form of protection.

(c) Personal liabilities: The greatest risks that a pharmacy faces include the following: customer injury, prescription errors and other injuries within the store, which will expose the pharmacy and staff considerably. Although most businesses are protected against major lawsuits, products and premises still need to be safeguarded. The best policy is to do all that is necessary to safeguard the customer.

(d) Economic downturn and social/cultural shifts: Businesses' economic changes are largely beyond the control of management. Third-party contracts that pose the advantage for cheaper healthcare costs seem to be at the order of the day. Unemployment, for example, results in patient visits to physicians only when it is of utmost urgency. This lessens the number of prescriptions that a pharmacy generates. Building financial reserves in times

when the economy flourishes will enable the pharmacy owner to take control of the economic situation, especially during economic downturns. Increasing the equity can be utilised as a buffer against business fluctuations. If flexible and not tradition-bound, social and cultural changes can be prepared for by the pharmacy manager. Small pharmacies have the advantage to adjust quicker to the changing market conditions than larger chains. It allows for the faster update of new non-prescription merchandise, and this may enable the pharmacy to develop a competitive advantage, especially if attracting new customers is key.

(e) Business interruptions: Management should be aware of business interruptions that can limit the business potential, as shown in Figure 3-1.

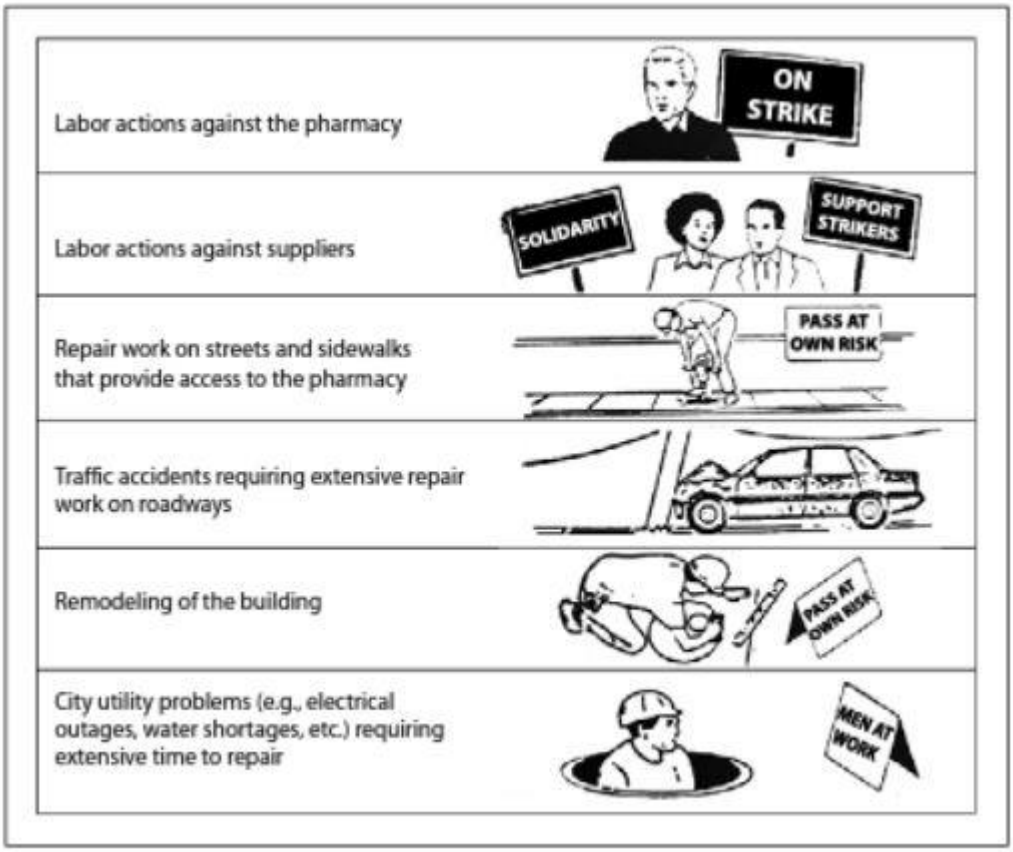

Figure 3-1: Types of business interruptions (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:96).

(f) Loss of key personnel: To protect against the loss of key personnel, a twofold approach may be applied; firstly, an investment in proper training should be priority. This will enable backup personnel to fulfil these tasks, should key personnel resign etc.; and secondly, key personnel insurance might also be an option. Although it does not replace the person, it

will serve as a substitute for the loss endured, until a replacement can be reinstated (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:94-96; The State of Queensland, 2017).

3.5.2 Crime-associated business risks

In the operating of the business, the cost of crime becomes increasingly important. To minimise the cost of external theft has become increasingly important. Examples of external theft-related crimes are (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:97-98; Pharmacists mutual companies, 2015:8; Taylor & Mayhew, 2002:1): burglary, robbery, shoplifting, credit care fraud and bad cheques, employee theft.

(a) Burglary

Above and beyond the standard precautionary measures (insurance, safeguarding the building, employing guards or using security patrols), the key is still to hinder entry and to create some form of alarm. This will discourage the burglar, who will rather opt for other premises that are less secure.

(b) Robbery

Pharmacies are extremely prone to robbery due to the housing of controlled substances. This makes the pharmacy an ideal target for persons who are addicted to these substances. Apart from having an alarm system, ample lighting and surveillance cameras, precautionary measures, such as keeping little cash, controlled substances and valuables on the premises, offer the best form of protection.

(c) Shoplifting

One of the most frequent criminal risks a pharmacy faces is that of shoplifting. The latter includes professional shoplifters who are hard to identify, who normally lean towards products that are easy to market. Small children take a product without realising it is wrong, teenagers comply with the ‘dare’ and some customers will follow suit, just because the queues are too long and out of frustration. The following Table portrays invaluable information on how to deal with shoplifters (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:97-98; Taylor & Mayhew, 2002:1).

Business policy	• Prosecute shoplifters; • Have the pharmacy 'shopped' by a professional security firm periodically.
Employees	• Acknowledge customers when they enter the pharmacy; • Be alert for unusual customer dress; • Monitor customers' movement in the pharmacy; • Watch groups of customers who disperse after entering the pharmacy.
Store layout	• Keep low-end displays; • Use low shelving; • Have mirrors for hard-to-watch areas; • Provide ample lighting in all areas of the store; • Use surveillance cameras; • Keep expensive merchandise in locked cases.

Table 3-5: Protection from shoplifters (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:98).

(d) Credit card fraud and bad cheques can have a negative effect on the pharmacy, but can be significantly reduced by following the rules as set out in Table 3-6. Certain policies and guidelines should be developed with regard to cheques. Employees should be brought up to date with regard to the latter in order to be able to distinguish between what is acceptable and what is not acceptable (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:98; Pharmacists mutual companies, 2015:31; Taylor & Mayhew, 2002:2).

Business policy	• Seek collection of all bad checks; • Establish policies concerning which checks and credit cards to accept; • Establish limits for check cashing and credit card acceptance by employees without manager's approval; • Do not allow split-ticketing for credit cards.
Employees	• Train employees to examine checks and credit cards; • Require at least two pieces of identification that have pictures and signatures; • Watch for inconsistencies between customer appearance and type of merchandise purchased; • Keep records on the number of bad checks and fraudulent credit cards employees accept, and include this information as part of their evaluations.

Table 3-6: Protection from credit card fraud and bad checks (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:99).

(e) Insurance eligibility cards

One of the most frequently experienced problems experienced by pharmacies is the prescription issuing to members who are ineligible for coverage. Fortunately, most of these are being handled electronically nowadays, before the description is being dispensed. Some older systems need verification, especially in the case where it has not recently been updated (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:99; Lamb, 2017; Taylor & Mayhew, 2002:1).

(f) Employee theft and embezzlement

Precaution is mostly taken when it comes to external factors (robbery, burglary and fraud), but internal theft is on many occasions neglected. Two of the greatest risks are employee theft and embezzlement. Unfortunately, small pharmacies are very vulnerable. The latter occurs due to cost cutting, for instance, i.e. accounting systems and controls are more relaxed, poor segregation leads to one employee performing several tasks. The easily obtainable merchandise and cash are luring to staff. Management needs to recognise this, and take precautionary steps. In order to reduce internal theft, the opportunities where theft could most likely occur should be assessed (cash register, storage rooms and open desks where payment invoices are	• Prosecute all employees caught stealing; • Segregate duties that allow funds to come into and go out of the pharmacy; • Keep good records that create proper trails of revenues and expenses, and review them periodically; • Use outside auditors/accountants to review the books once per year; • Minimise access to cash, checks and purchase and receipt documents; • Keep valuable inventory under special security; • Inspect incoming and outgoing shipments, employee lunch boxes, etc., on a periodic basis insofar as there is compliance with all local, state and federal laws.

kept). The best practice to pinpoint these trouble areas is to evaluate, through the pretence of being a shoplifter, which will easily highlight areas of risk. Some standard procedures will be handy in the safeguard process (see Z 3-7 below) (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:100; lamb, 2017): Preventing employee theft	
Clues to embezzlement	• Unusually high levels of sales returns; • Unusually high bad debts and write-offs; • Reductions in cash sales that appear unexplainable; • Cash register shortages or overages; • Inventory shortages of items that are easily marketable; • Increases in expenses that are not explainable; • Employees who appear to be living beyond their means; • Imbalances between cash receipts and cash deposits.

Table 3-7: Protection against theft and embezzlement (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:100).

3.5.3 Pharmacy practice risk

Apart from the non-criminal- and criminal risk, some more specific risks towards the profession are the unacceptable utilisation of pharmacy technicians, or inadequate record keeping and patient consultations. The manager should view this as actual threats to the organisation. Properly instated policies and procedures minimise these risks, for example to counteract inaccurate prescriptions, filing checks can be performed and pharmacy technicians and pharmacists should ideally only be tasked with their own assigned tasks. Denied reimbursements on Government and other third party contracts are another form of risk factor. This ultimately refers to patients whose eligibility has expired, and dispensing medications that are not approved on the formulary. Electronic claims management, which is becoming more and more apparent, will begin to alleviate the latter (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:101-102; Good Pharmacy Practice, 2015).

3.5.4 Risk management and practical guidance – dispensing with risk

Prescription dispensing is one of the tasks very familiar to pharmacists. Due to the high risk activity, it is detrimental when something goes wrong, due to the risks that it might impose to patients, medical aids, the professional indemnity insurers, professional reputation, business goodwill and the self-confidence, livelihood and well-being of the staff (Chitmetha *et al*., 2013:241). To the uninformed, dispensing seems like a simple task; the following will stipulate the risk areas involved in this task (Butler, 2005:147-151; Kayne, 2005:148):

(a) Ongoing professional development

In the fast-moving world of therapeutics, it is important that pharmacists stay abreast of the introduction of new products, changes in licensed applications for established medicines, the usual doses of medicines and its more specialised use in areas such as palliative care, paediatrics and psychiatry. All staff, including dispensary assistants/technicians, medicines counter assistants and prescription reception staff should be fully engaged in staff development (Dietz, 2017).

(b) Work tension

Working without a break, pressure and speed are risk factors that can result in error. The supervising pharmacist has a responsibility to check whether the predicated workload has been adequately shared, especially during busy times such as before a public holiday. Adequate rest for the staff should be compensated for, as well as following standard operating procedures (SOPs) to reduce the error rate (PDA, 2006:5).

(c) Dispensary setting

Continual interruptions by the phone interrupt concentration, and it would be best to figure out a plan that is suitable for all. Important is to pay attention to the working conditions, as even the well-trained staff will find it difficult to excel under disorderly circumstances. The implementation of the following could be considered: good lighting with no dark corners, an orderly dispensing bench, an accessible and flexible stock storage system, sufficient heating and ventilation, properly maintained equipment (computer, refrigerator, scales, etc.), and access to a range of up-to-date reference sources (WHO, 2012:30).

(d) Reading and interpreting the prescription

Doctors' handwriting still poses a huge problem, despite the availability of electronic prescribing, the same holds true for depleted ink cartridges. The pharmacist must decide how to minimise the

risk by using a magnifying glass, contacting the prescriber, or confirming by looking up previous medical records (PMR). A combination can be used, but no dispensing should take place without checking (Phelps, 2016).

(e) Verifying procedures

To employ a sturdy mechanism for checking will be in the pharmacist's best interest. Making use of a dispensary assistant may be a good solution, as two pairs of eyes are better than one. It all depends, on the other hand, if the assistant feels comfortable to speak up. In dispensaries where a pharmacist is 'single-handed', it is best to set the order aside, perform another task and return to perform the checking task (Butler, 2005:147-151; Kayne, 2005:148).

(f) Bagging and handing out of the prescription

Handing the wrong medicines to patients may not be uncommon. The situation can be worsened, especially if there are patients with similar names. Prescription reception staff may help immensely to eliminate mistakes by checking whether patient addresses are correctly shown. The pharmacist should not become frazzled by the patients who seem in a hurry and impatient, but should rather follow the rules laid down by the supervising pharmacist. Before handing out the medicine, also confirm the patient's address (Cohen, 2015).

(g) Computer errors

Computers are generally error free; it is 'human error' that predicts otherwise. Dispensary staff should be extra vigilant, especially when it comes to new or changed products (strength and formulation), which are being retrieved from the computer system. Typographical errors that might occur have to do with the erroneous retrieval of product codes from the computer system and the accidental use of labels. The label swab may occur when other labels have been pre-printed for a batch prescription, and have been taken by mistake. Be aware of repeat prescriptions, do not assume that the treatment was unaltered and produce labels solely based on the PMR (Woods, 2017.

(h) Product selection

Products with similar reference or similar-sounding names (lofepramine/loperamide; bisoprolol/bisacodyl; carbamazepine/carbimazole) or those with a 'co-' prefix (co-dydramol, co-proxamol) contribute largely to dispensing errors. The similarity in pack design received from one manufacturer is cited as the main source of confusion. Strengths of medicines are sometimes poorly displayed as the font colour and packaging background do not have a strong enough colour difference between it. The font seems to 'fade' away against the background colour. Until these

differences can be sorted out, the pharmacists have to separate and mark these products or alternatively search for a new supplier (Balram *et al*., 2017:55).

The risk and change management procedure needs to be solidified in the business, by attempting to provide quality in meeting the needs of the customer while still striving to attain professional aspirations (Butler, 2005:147-151; Kayne, 2005:148).

3.6 Marketing management

3.6.1 Selecting a location for the pharmacy

When selecting a location, the advantage that it will pose to customers should not be overlooked. Location, location, location is often said to be the three most important factors to a pharmacy's success. It is of no use if a pharmacy is just outside the flow of traffic. A prime location is one of the best competitive advantages a pharmacy can invest in. Several sources of helpful data are available to identify a prospective location (trading area). The latter can be divided into three groups, namely (1) primary trading area, which will include 55 to 75% of the pharmacy's customers. This area is the closest to the pharmacy and consists of a high density of customers; (2) secondary trading areas will contribute 15 to 25% of the pharmacy's customers and is just outside the primary trading area; and (3) tertiary or fringe trading area, where customers are very widely dispersed. Their patronage is for reasons not related to the pharmacy (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:210; Nathan, 2015).

(a) Choosing a pharmacy location within a community

It has been stated that different types of pharmacies have different location requirements. In conjunction with the latter, the following also plays a crucial part in the decision, namely the importance of front-end merchandise, the class of patron desired, accessibility and convenience for customers, the adjacent stores, and the neighbourhood. Some pharmacies may require a location within a community in one of the following: central business district (CBD), solo location or shopping centres (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:210-211; Leuck, 2016).

(b) Types of planned shopping centres

Shopping centres may fall in one of the following categories: (1) neighbourhood shopping centres, which contain five to 15 stores. The emphasis is on convenience and is normally a five-minute drive away from the centre. It will serve up to 20 000 customers and the prime traffic generator is normally a supermarket; (2) community shopping centres, which contain five to 50 stores. The emphasis is on both convenience and shopping goods, and is normally a 10- to 20-minute drive away from the centre. It will serve between to 20 000 and 100 000 customers. It may invest in

annual events to attract shoppers; and (3) regional shopping centres, which may have three or more department stores and may contain over a 100 stores, and is normally a 30-minute or beyond drive. It will serve between 100 000 and 1 million customers. In addition, it will also supply night life, eating facilities and socialisation (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:210-211; Prinsloo, 2010:1-2).

(c) Factors to keep in mind pertaining to shopping centre choice

To be considered as a tenant in a particular shopping centre strictly depends on the market and management. Developers seek successful retailers; therefore, pharmacists with a good track record and a sense of understanding the market will have a good chance to be recognised by a centre developer. The following aspects also play an important part: (1) retail compatibility is extremely crucial in the case of small pharmacies. As no extra money is available for advertising and promotion, it should be considered that the line of sales should not clash with nearby businesses products. The pharmacy should ideally be located in an area where patron lines may form, such as in the case of restaurants, theatres etc., allowing the public a chance to peek into the pharmacy's display windows; (2) rental and lease arrangements: before any contracts are signed, an attorney should first be consulted. This is essential as it can clear the understanding of lease clauses. In addition to the latter, the condition of the heating, plumbing, and air-conditioning equipment should be verified by an external party. Furthermore, the insurer should be consulted to ensure that liability and property claims are covered, in case it is not provided by the lease agreement (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:210-212; Darlington, 2013:15-16).

3.6.2 Pharmacy layout

The pharmacy layout has a significant influence on the buying behaviour of the customer. The grid layout is the most common type of layout for a pharmacy. It is less costly and more space effective than for instance the free-flow layout. Allocating space is the main objective of obtaining the highest sales volume at the lowest cost. Store space may be allocated by using standards such as industry average by merchandise type or by the sales-per-square-foot method. In order to use the latter successfully, estimated planned sales and expected sales should first be brought into the equation. Another factor to consider is that departmentalising mechanise, obtaining maximum merchandise exposure and traffic flow, and providing customer convenience ultimately utilise store space. To determine whether space has been utilised to its utmost potential, determents such as inventory turnover and merchandise density can be used. A further consideration is to apply the usage of planograms. This is an especially helpful method to arrange individual items within departments, as it supplies a diagram that shows how and where specific retail products should be placed in order to increase customer purchases. Only a few pharmacies have the necessary resources to develop their own planograms. Community pharmacies can

take full advantage of the planograms that wholesalers or consultants offer. Maximum sales turnovers may be reached by utilising a planogram that is customised to the pharmacy's exact department. The added advantage is that it will lead to the best return on investment (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:217-218; Sharma & Garg, 2015:1017).

3.6.3 Presenting merchandise

Most pharmacies have a merchandising programme. The programme will be built on the customers' needs in the marketplace. For the pharmacy manager, it entails: "a combination of techniques for positioning, arranging, and promoting a product within a store so that the consumer is motivated to buy it as he or she shops." The objective, in other words, is to convert the passers-by into actual buyers. Merchandising aids are being supplied by wholesalers or manufacturers to assist in the process of display. These artefacts may include: "cartons designed to fold out into a self-contained display; 'shelf talkers,' which are printed cards designed to be positioned on the shelf under the product; and price signs, which might compare the pharmacy's special selling price with the pharmacy's normal retail price, the pharmacy's selling price with the manufacturer's suggested price" (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:217; Pharmacy Management, 2017).

3.6.3.1 Point-of-purchase display characteristics

Point-of-purchase displays typically provide information to customers; they help to add an atmosphere and attribute to the promotional value. Good displays will be characterised by the following (Tootelian, *et al.,* 2012:217-218; De Farias *et al*., 2013):

(a) Colour and design should help to catch the shopper's eye and keep the attention as well as the interest of the customers.
(b) The design should be placed in a strategic spot and should be pleasing to the eye.
(c) The display should support the image the pharmacy wants to convey.
(d) The message should be simplistic and easy to understand.
(e) It should be a neat display, but not to such an extent that the customers will fear to take a product from it.

The benefit of display cannot be over-emphasised as it creates buying excitement and extra sales.

3.6.3.2 Selecting items to display

Certain factors are noteworthy when the decision should be made of which merchandise to select for display (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:217-218; Baltazar, 2017):

(a) New products

New merchandise contributes as an effective display to reflect the arrival of a new product; this is also true for trial products.

(b) In-season products

This type of display should reflect seasonal changes, for instance: cough medicines during the winter times and tanning lotion for the summer period.

(c) Special events products

These displays should be in line with special events such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day, Christmas Day, etc.

(d) Popular articles

Popularity items tend to attract the attention and sell easily; for instance, vitamins, gifts, sweets, and cards.

(e) Profitable articles

High-margin products should be displayed in a premium place. Products that can be categorised in this range are health, beauty and wellness products.

(f) Promotional articles

Attention should be drawn to products that remind the customers of the advertisements lately aired by the media.

(g) Possibility for impulse purchases

Items that are being bought impulsively are good candidates for display. J-hooks and cricket clips can be used to create new selling space and increase impulse sales.

Normal shelf inventory should remain stationary, as shifting the products around can hurt sales. Customers will continue to look for the products in its usual place, especially regular customers. Keep in mind that the products on display should not affect the in-department inventory (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:217-218; Baltazar, 2017).

3.6.4 Advertising

If the pharmacy manager aims to succeed financially, it is important to have a good grasp of the following concepts: advertising, promotion and personal selling. Consumers' attention can no

longer be attracted by solely relying on the word-of-mouth communication method. Without the ongoing positive feedback of the word-of-mouth method, a pharmacy otherwise will not survive. Promotion, on the other hand, as a form of communication will inform, persuade, and remind people about a pharmacy's goods, services, image, ideas, community involvement, or impact on society. Advertising relates to non-personal communication, which purpose it is to communicate about the organisation, products or services. Sales promotions are short lived; the idea is to sell a service or a product. Personal selling relies on the face-to-face selling of a product or a service to a customer. The cost aspect, when involving personal selling, is much greater than using any other of the previously mentioned methods. There is no magic formula to ensure advertising success. In order to launch a successful advertising campaign, a thorough investigation should be done, focusing on the pharmacy, products, services and customers. According to Tootelian *et al. (*2012:232), the following should be answered "Who are they? What do they know about the products, services, and prices? What is their current image about the pharmacy? Where are they located? What are their shopping habits? What newspapers do they read? and What radio stations do they listen to?" Answering these questions will allow for an insight into how to structure advertising strategies (Ad Age, 2017:18; Wood *et al*. 2011).

3.6.4.1 The advertising aim

Analyse and identify the group for which the advertising campaign is intended; it will supply a solid base from which the strategies can be launched. Pharmacies in community settings can truly reap the benefit of advertising. Using the media in this instance will not be cost effective, due to the inpatient setting. In this case, promotion will also have the added benefit of reaching a large audience base. The type of information that a pharmacy will retrieve by studying the target audience will reveal what is useful "with regard to advertising objectives, advertising appropriations, advertising message and copy, and advertising media." The latter will be discussed in the following sections (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:232; Rush, 2017).

3.6.4.2 Advertising objectives

The whole idea behind objective advertising is to inform the customer of the pharmacy's product or services. The examples hereof are (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:232-233):

- to obtain 15 new customers for prescription services
- to promote a specific product or service, such as immunisations or blood pressure monitoring
- to introduce a new product or service, such as a medication therapy management programme
- to boost daily store traffic by 2 percent
- to inform all new families in the neighbourhood about the pharmacy

- to increase the average sales per customer by 5 percent.

Due to the clear and precise measurability of advertising objectives, the pharmacy manager may conclude the success and progress to preparing the advertising budget (Suttle, 2017).

3.6.4.3 Compiling the advertising budget

How much to spend on advertising is a difficult question as there is no one-size-fits-all method. Advertising in a community setting should not be seen as a luxury that, as soon as a financial crisis borders, should be given up. Instead, it should be viewed as a necessity, supporting the marketing strategy. There are two risks when an advertising budget is being compiled: (1) spending too little, and (2) spending too much. Small pharmacies tend to spend too little, using the approach of a "one time" advertisement; the latter is surely going to produce negative results. The approach that is well supported reveals that it takes many advertisements to get through to the target audience. The spacing should be over a period of one month, or over a year, which includes a reasonable number of advertisements. Advertising should be viewed as a sales building commodity and not a liability. There are four methods advisable to use in order to establish the size of the advertising budget, namely percentage-of-sales method, the competitive-parity method, the objective-and-task method, and the 'affordable' method (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:233; William, 2017).

3.6.4.4 Message copy and creation

The size of the budget is definitely not the only determinant of the advertising success; how it is spent, trumps the latter. Focus on answering the following: What types of appeals were being used? How and where was this message communicated? How regularly were these messages disseminated? Keep in mind that the message should be relevant to the target market. To prepare for the advertisement message and to meet the copy requirements, the following may provide helpful guidelines (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:234; The national archives, 2013:4):

- Make use of media salespeople who will be fluent in providing information with regard to preparation, artwork, layout etc.
- If the products of a certain manufacturer or wholesaler are being featured, they will supply point-of-purchase and advertising materials for free, grant advertising discounts, and split advertising costs.
- Direct mail may pose an inexpensive means of advertising.
- Trade magazines that deal with pharmaceuticals may be a valuable source of information with regard to feature campaigns available.

3.6.4.5 Advertising media option

Advertisers have to find the media (print, broadcast, direct or out-of-home) that best suits their target audience. Most advertisers use the concept of *reach or frequency* to guide the strategy. *Reach* indicates the number of different target audiences or households reached once during a specific time period. *Frequency* indicates the number of times the different target audiences or households were exposed to the media in a given period of time. If frequency is being used, it would normally be the case where the pharmacy aims to inform the target audience of the prospects to buy. A formula, cost-per-thousand, can be utilised in order to calculate the media time and space when comparing the different options. Choosing the best medium to disperse the advertising message is no easy task. Using the following guides may be helpful in this situation, stipulating that the effectiveness of the medium is being based on the following: the advertising objective, the requirements of the message, the cost of the medium, and the customer's media habits. The various media available are being compared by the advantages and disadvantages (see Table 3-8 below) (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:234-236; Rai, 2011):

Media	Advantages	Disadvantages
Print media		
News papers	Flexibility Short lead time Community prestige Useful for cooperative advertising Broad acceptance	Short life span Non-selective audience Limited reproduction capabilities
Direct mail	Highly selective Flexibility of format Personalisation Speed Measurable performance	High cost per person Invasion of privacy Junk mail image
Magazines	Market selectivity Quality reproduction Long life Prestige	Lengthy lead time Lack of flexibility
Outdoor	Geographical selectivity Dominant size Exposure frequency	Audience selectivity Brevity of message Location availability
Telephone directories	Readily accessible Active users	Limited to active shoppers 12-month commitment
Broadcast media		
Television	Dramatic impact Wide market coverage Combines sight and sound Prestige	High cost Temporary nature of message Complexity of ad production Public lack of selectivity
Radio	Market selectivity Reach and frequency Low cost	Temporary nature of message Fragmentation Limited to audio presentation
Internet	Precisely targeted marketing Interaction with a customer Ability to combine advertising and sales transactions Easily changeable content	Poor reach Potential for cheating Annoying Buzz

Table 3-8: Advertising comparison media chart (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:236).

3.6.4.6 Schedule of advertising

Week-to-week promotions can be guided by a planning calendar. This calendar can feature special events such as National Pharmacy Week, National Cancer Month or Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The latter can be linked to products and services suitable for promotion. Timing patterns may be organised at the beginning of each month, intermittently, throughout the month, or on a continuous basis (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:235; Drypen, 2008).

3.6.4.7 Cooperative advertising

Cooperative advertising has the advantage that the costs are being shared between the retailers and the manufacturers. Here, the manufacturer persuades the customer on regional or national level to buy a certain product. Where to buy will be revealed by the customers, benefiting that specific retailer in the sense that the cost will be shared between them. This method can be simple and effective when complying with the following rules: identify key supplier accounts, assemble cooperative promotion data, calculate cooperative money available, allocate cooperative money month to month, integrate cooperative money into the regular advertising budget, create effective product-moving advertising, merchandise the advertisements to customers and employees, and collect money from the manufacturer (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:235-236).

3.6.4.8 Measure advertising outcomes

Due to the variety of the marketing mix, it is no easy task to measure advertising results. One reason might be that all the elements of the marketing mix contribute to sales, not just advertising. It is been said that all the advertising in the world will not be able to retain customers if the following are lacking: good location, reasonable prices and decent customer service. Pharmacies might have some techniques available to measure immediate responses, namely coupons and limited time offers. Although it is apparent that the measurement link between advertising and sales is too uncertain, the conclusion can be drawn that advertising is of a long-term nature (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:237-238; Greenberg, 2017).

(a) Tests for immediate response advertising

This type of advertising is designed to persuade the customer to buy a certain product in a short amount of time. The types of price appeals that are used include combination with clearance sales, special purchases, seasonal items, and ‘family of items’ purchases. To measure the results of immediate response advertising, the following tools may be considered: count coupons brought in, requests by phone or letter referring to the advertisement, testing advertisements, and sales

made of particular items (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:237-238; U.S. Small Business Administration, 2001).

(b) Testing image advertising

This type of advertising undertakes to instil an image of the pharmacy in the minds of their customers with regard to its merchandise, services and policies. This type of advertising is far more difficult than the abovementioned method, because a specific sale cannot be traced back to what initiated it specifically. One approach is to measure the sales after the specific week the advertisement appeared, in comparison with sales made the previous year, during the same time (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:238-239).

3.6.5 Sales promotion

Sales promotions are very popular, and the rationale behind it is to act as an incentive to the customer and it is easy to measure. There is a wide range of sales promotion methods, for example coupons, free product samples, cents-off promotions, premiums, sweepstakes, in-store demonstrations, point-of-purchase displays, frequent purchase programs etc. (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:237-238; Reference for business, 2017b):

(a) Objectives of sales promotions

The main objective is to build market share and increase short-term sales. The aim can either be to attract new customers by offering a new product or service or to reward loyal customers (Joseph, 2017).

(b) Methods of sales promotions

Utilising the tools available to enable sales promotions holds the advantage that an immediate response will follow and it is low cost. Such tools include coupons, cents-off offers, free samples, premiums, cash refund offers, demonstrations, patronage rewards, contests, sweepstakes and games. The disadvantage, on the other hand, is that it has a low life span and when successful, it can be duplicated by the competition. The type of market, the sales promotion objectives, the competition, and the costs and effectiveness of each should be kept in mind by the pharmacy manager before diving into sales promotions. To be able to have a successful read on the measurements, sales should be compared before, during and after the promotion.

3.6.6 Personal selling to gain competitive advantage

This is one of the best methods for smaller pharmacies to gain the competitive edge. It can also be applied in presenting the physicians with a quick scope of the type of advantage the pharmacy can present to their patients. In conjunction with the latter, personal contact with other healthcare professionals is what links the pharmacy to patient care and advances the operational budget. The emphasis of chain pharmacies is more on self-service, leaving a huge gap in customer service, which the smaller pharmacy may take advantage of. The competitive edge that smaller pharmacies have over chain pharmacies is that they can focus on these elements: personal selling and developing an outstanding personal sales programme. Effective selling is hard work and the pharmacy manager should take note of the following: type of salespersons, the process of selling and the characteristics of salespersons (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:240; Mbugua, 2014).

The personal selling process is applied differently among pharmacies. The main goal is to target physicians as they may be excellent referral sources for prescriptions. The sales process, can be divided into the following stages: prospecting and qualifying, the pre-approach, the approach, the sales presentation, handling objections, closing the sale, and post-sale follow-up. Steps 1 and 2 are being utilised as methods whereby the pharmacy is being sold to the physician. The latter are hardly ever used towards customers in a community setting, but all the other remaining steps are used in every other situation (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:240; Vashisht, 2006:45).

3.7 Strategic, financial and logistics management

3.7.1 Importance of objectives, plans, policies and procedures to successful business operations

95% of all small businesses fail due to insufficient management. Knowing only the clinical aspects of dispensing is not enough to keep the pharmacy afloat. The key to success lies in following predetermined goals, which can be reached by planning future action, policies and procedures. To guarantee success, the first step will be to identify goals and recognise that a need exists to develop plans in order to reach the pharmacy's goal. Figure 3-2 below will shed more light (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:79-80; Chaney, 2016):

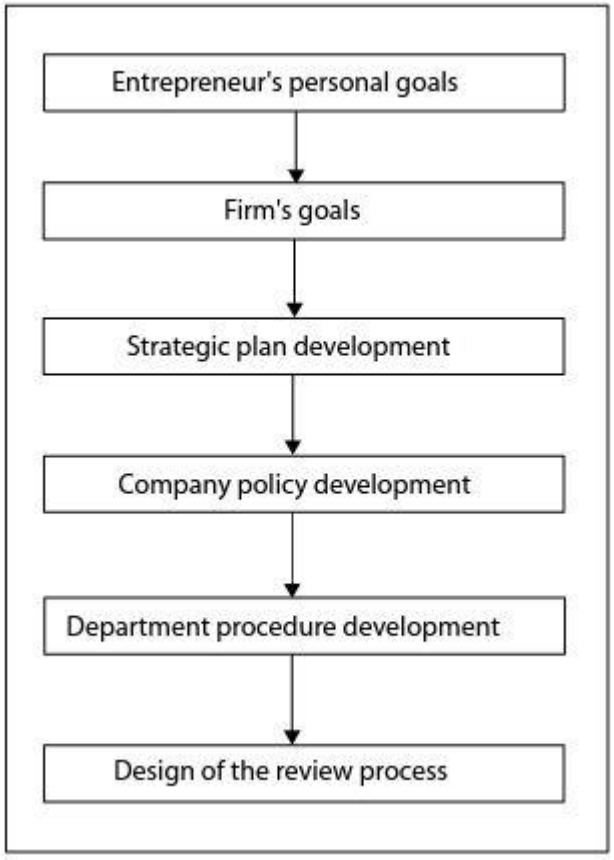

Figure 3-2: The planning process to successful business operations (Tootelian et al., 2012:80).

The direction needed will be based on who the target patients will be, what products to offer (prescription and non-prescription), what services and prices etc. In order to create a successful business plan, it is important to first realise where the pharmacy is heading. To help the manager a strategic plan and direction are necessary. This will include the following (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:79-80):

- The pharmacy's strengths should be taken into account and should serve as the focus point;
- Weaknesses should be decreased or removed;
- Take advantage of opportunities and new tendencies; potential threats to the pharmacy's existence should be eliminated;
- Direct all resources to specific goals, pointing to healthcare, profit, product quality and growth;
- Jot one to three goals in a time table, and assign responsibilities to ensure the successful completion thereof.

For existing pharmacies, building a plan would be much easier than for a start-up pharmacy, as the former already has information to build on. In fact, the process for each is quite similar. The

start-up pharmacy needs more flexibility added to the plans as the unknown breeds uncertainty. Start-up pharmacies may consider the following to add to the plan: goal options, staff organising, as well as operational controls that might differ, for instance demands greater or less than expected and changes in services that the pharmacy provides (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:79-80; Elabed *et al*., 2016).

3.7.2 Types of goals a pharmacy may have

Business goals fall in a wide range from which three are noteworthy: survival, profit and growth. Synthesising the latter forms the basis for future goal planning. Short- and long-term goals have different time spans. The period for short-term goals is anything from a year or less, while long-term goals tend to cover a time span from one to five years. Advisably, the owner should implement long-term goals, subdivided by interim short-term goals in order to reach the predefined end goal (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:80; Williams, 2017).

3.7.2.1 Main objective: survival

The main objective of most pharmacies is to survive. Pharmacy managers within a community setting are faced with the question, how to comply with the demands of creating a profit in a given span of time. On occasion, the survival goal may conflict with the profit and growth goals. At times, to keep the market advantage, price competitiveness must be considered. The negative side hereof is that pharmacy growth might be lacking due to the profit margins that are suffering. The only other solution is for managers to juggle between goals and other objectives (see Figure 3-3 below) (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:81; Ingram, 2016).

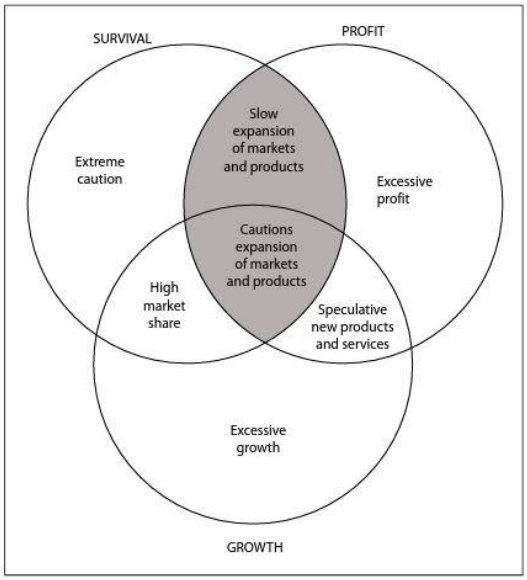

Figure 3-3: Business goals and the corresponding interactions (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:82).

3.7.2.2 Pharmacy profit

A belief that the pharmacy owner fosters is that the business will generate profits. When planning the pharmacy's operations, the latter does not provide enough substance. Utilising quantitative terms, at the end of the financial year, to determine whether 'money has been made' poses to be a proper solution. Goals should be realistic; one should not strive for a profit goal that is beyond reach, especially if it is not in the pharmacy's capacity to generate that amount of profit. The following two methods are better determinants of profit indication: return on investment (ROI) and return on assets (ROA). ROI inspects the profit in comparison with the amount of money the owner has to invest to create those profits. In the case of ROA, the total earnings of the investments are being determined, which consist of those related to the owner and to the creditor (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:81; Reference for business, 2017a).

3.7.2.3 Pharmacy growth

The most important goal, namely growth, is prone to be neglected, as survival and profits take the stage on many occasions. In fact, most successful pharmacies show growth over time. Rate and consistency are key to the growth objective. Consistency is of much more worth than intermittent haphazard growth. Knowing when to buy, for instance, inventory, equipment, appointing new personnel etc. is a difficult task. Growth utilises the same methods as profits, in other words, it must be quantified and realistic. Defining growth is done by calculating the percentage terms over a certain period of time (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:82; Investopedia, 2017b).

3.7.3 Steps in the strategic management process

To assess the future without taking the present situation into account will not allow for the successful development of plans and strategies. When taking the current situation into account, the following should be kept in mind: goals, financial situation, operating capabilities, management and employee expertise, market position and marketing capabilities (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:83-87):

(a) Past experiences are not always a good guide to draw conclusions from, as the business environment can be very volatile. The best is to evaluate how the past and the present coincide, in order to determine what the following year will bring. The first step in this process is crucial as it forms the framework for the business plan and provides the opportunity for the manager to gain experience (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:79-84; UNCTAD, 2002:3-4).

(b) *The most important step to success is to create a business plan*. The old adage points out that *failing to plan, is planning to fail*. In order to counteract the latter, thorough planning is advised. To evaluate how well the planned objectives are being followed is a top priority. The review of the objectives will provide an indication of where the pharmacy stands, at the current moment, in comparison to where it should be. In order to base the considerations, market and environmental conditions should be scrutinised. Influencing the goals are factors such as economic conditions, quality of competitors, and dispensing-related laws. Blaming environmental conditions can never be an excuse for non-performance; mangers should rather use the opportunity to create the best possible outcome (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:84; UNCTAD, 2002:97).

(c) *What is the current status of the pharmacy?* Changes in most instances cause disruption and uncertainty, and this should be done wisely, and only if it is in the pharmacy's best interest. Careful consideration should be given if the present plans are going to remain unaltered. If the pharmacy's goals can be reached with little or no change, then it is advised to follow this route. If the perceived outcome shows that change is necessary, the impact thereof should also be assessed. If a pharmacy manager ever feels trapped in a no-win situation, the chances are good that a change is needed. Fearing change, or being oblivious, is a problem, which will cause the pharmacy to become stagnant. If nurtured properly, change may be of a great advantage. Flexibility and adaptability should be applied in these various conditions (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:84; UNCTAD, 2002:107).

(d) *Where should the pharmacy be at the present?* The assessment of the present situation gives a guide to follow, namely how to progress from here on. The pharmacy's current situation, will form the basis for a more comprehensive framework. Not all conditions are under the control of the manager; plans should be created for those instances that need revision. Guidelines that need modification must be established. From the previously mentioned, strategies may now be formulated. In plain terms, managers only need to plan for those areas in which they want to be profitable (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:85; UNCTAD, 2002:107).

(e) *If no changes are initiated, what will happen to the pharmacy?* Change can be positive, but if erroneously applied, can have an enormous negative outcome. Because change has a huge impact on the pharmacy's operations, it is advisable to only be applied when in desperate need to reach the pharmacy's goals. An in-depth observation should be performed by pharmacy management to conclude that if no change is to occur, where will it place the pharmacy? If only a minimal effect would be reached, it would be best to rather stay as is. If change is inevitable, management should not only plan towards it, but

assessment must also be part of the package. Another scenario might also feature, and that is – the “no win” situation. In other words, if no changes are to be made, the pharmacy might suffer; if so, the same may be prevalent. This type of situation occurs when managers are faced with layoffs. Profits will suffer if not abiding to the process, but human relations may suffer as a result of this. The reality is, change is often necessary, and ignorance often results in a pharmacy becoming stagnant and excluded from the current trends in the business environment. Change, when dealt with properly, may take the pharmacy to new heights, and what is needed to foster these actions are adaptability and flexibility (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:85; UNCTAD, 2002:180).

(f) *What should the pharmacy do in general?* After taking all of the above into consideration, the following step will be how it should proceed. An overall business plan is needed, which will form the later framework, as shown in Table 3-9. Not all categories need revision, but plans need to be erected for those that do. Keep in mind that for every change there should be guidelines, even if it involves one of the following: marketing, finance, personnel, or claims management. Managers only need to plan for those aspects that are going to be more profitable for the pharmacy (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:85; UNCTAD, 2002:8).

(g) *What particulars, with regard to policies and procedures, require development and implementation?* Being successful requires proper planning. How goals are going to be achieved is revealed in policy statements. Policies pinpoint to the needed steps to be taken to be successful, as shown. Details should be attended to carefully, otherwise the action will become disconnected. If programmes need to be changed, the corresponding procedures and policies should be revised; often, this step is neglected and newer steps are merely being piled upon the latter.

(i) Summary	(a) Description of pharmacy	1. Name 2. Address 3. Telephone number 4. Products and services sold 5. Market area and competitive position
	(b) Goals of the pharmacy	1. Long term goals 2. Short term goals
	(c) Summary of financial position	1. Cash situation 2. Accounts receivable situation 3. Sales and profit patterns 4. Funding needs for future growth
(ii) Market analysis	(a) Description of market area	1. Geographic characteristics 2. Demographic characteristics 3. Operating characteristics
	(b) Nature of the market	1. General situation 2. Trends form the past 3. Expectations for the future
	(c) Economic conditions	1. Income 2. Employment 3. Disposable spending 4. Overall prosperity
	(d) Technology	1. Areas of development 2. Long term prospects for change
	(e) Political and legal situation	1. Political climate 2. Applicable laws
(iii) Competitive analysis	(a) Number of competitors (b) Competitor's strengths (c) Competitor's weakness (d) Competitor's target markets	

Table 3-9: Business plan outline (Tootelian *et al.*, 2012:86).

In the end, it will pose problems for the manager who desired a more streamlined process. Programmes that overlap or even conflict will not be beneficial to the pharmacy's existence (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:85; UNCTAD, 2002:14).

(h) *What type of controls should the plans include?* A good management style, so to speak, was often determined by whether the goals have been achieved. This deems to be fruitful for the future, but not versatile enough to evaluate the present situation. Conducting a review at the end of a financial year is no guarantee that the goals will be achieved. Checkpoints should be built in on three-, six- and nine-month intervals. The latter will help to remedy any situation that might occur during these time intervals. These referred examples indicate (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:86; McQuerrey, 2017):

- prescription dispensing should be varied by quality checks;
- market share calculations should be conducted on prescription and non-prescription medicines;
- profitability checks should be performed by means of ROI and percentage profit on sales.

3.7.4 Types of organisational strategies

3.7.4.1 Corporative strategy

(a) Growth strategy

The growth strategy is normally chosen when the organisation wants to increase its operations. It might result in taking on more employees, striving towards a bigger market share or increasing sales revenues. The latter is evident when an organisation ventures into "direct expansion, new-product development, quality improvement, or by diversifying-merging with or acquiring other organisations". Direct expansion results in increasing company size, operations, workforce or revenues; this in normally internally focused and no other firms are involved. Creating business within a business does also result in growth. One example is the Spar Group that moves into branded pharmacies (Blebby, 2010). Combining companies, similar in size, by means of a merger, may also result in growth. Direct expansion results in increasing company size, operations, workforce or revenues; this in normally internally focused and other organisations are involved. In the same train of thought, if a bigger company buys a smaller company, it is referred to as an acquisition. This is known as a growth strategy through diversification (Robbins *et al.,* 2015:152-153; Investopedia, 2017a).

(b) Stability strategy

The stability strategy does precisely what the name implies – it is stable, which means change is absent. In such an environment, the company is serving the same market as before, which results in the maintaining of its market share. This strategy is most applicable when the following conditions are present: a stable and unchanging environment, satisfactory organisational performance, a presence of valuable strengths and absence of critical weaknesses, and non-significant opportunities and threats. Characteristic of these companies are that they do not get the same media exposure as other companies do, because no change results in no news. Some other suggestions are that if the company wants to keep a low profile, stakeholders might find this questionable, and this might be a result of rigidity. An example is Kellogg's that did not move away from the breakfast food market (Gordon, 2017).

(c) Renewal strategy

When an organisation is feeling the consequences of technological progression, global competition or other environmental changes, action needs to be taken. In some instances, renewal will follow if mergers and acquisitions, growth and stability strategies are no longer a safeguard. Managers develop strategies, called renewal strategies, to address the subtype called retrenchment strategy. Evident of this type of strategy is the reduction of organisational size or decline in sales (Novinson, 2017*).*

3.7.4.2 Competitive strategy

Competitive strategy has the advantage to set the organisation apart from their competitors by utilising one of the following means: cost leadership, differentiation and focus strategies. Managers will attempt to position the organisation in such a manner that it will gain the advantage they seek. In order to position the organisation favourably, the managers should scrutinise the competitive forces that dictate competition rules. According to Porter (1990), no business would ever be able to perform above the average profitability level by trying to accommodate each and every one. Porter suggests that the ideal would be to choose a competitive strategy, which is most likely to utilise the strengths of the organisation. The three strategies have been mentioned above. He further argues that if a cost leadership strategy is going to be predominant, the organisation will aim to be the lowest-cost producer. To be successful, the organisation must strive to be the cost leader and not the contestant. To obtain the cost advantage, the following routes should be followed: efficiency of operations, economies of scale, technological innovation, low-cost labour, or preferential access to raw materials.

3.7.4.3 Functional strategy

According to Robbins *et al*. (2015:152-153) and Pokharel (2015), functional strategy is achieved by arranging similar activities together (see Figure 3-4 below). The purpose of the functional structure is to enlarge the functional orientation to become the dominant structure of the organisation. The accumulation of work specialisation is the stronghold of functional strategy. Economies of scale are accomplished by grouping similar specialisations together; this will result in a decrease in personnel duplication. Furthermore, personnel have the same common interests as their peers. The disadvantage that this function holds is that sight can sometimes be lost due to the pursuit of functional goals. Functional members might become shielded from other departments, leading to little understanding of what other employees do.

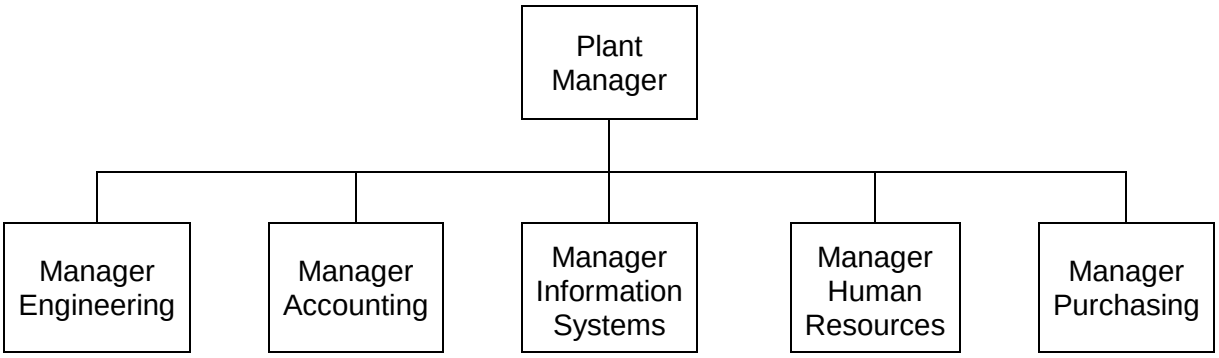

Figure 3-4: Functional structure (Robbins *et al*., 2015:152-153).

3.7.5 Planning strategies obstacles

The planning exercise is a guide to point out what the pharmacy should accomplish in the future. It is not clear why so many managers fail to do so, as this is of such importance. The most likely excuse is that planning is 'fuzzy' in nature. It is seen as a time waster due to the uncertainty that the future predicts. The feeling is that to plan for the unknown is a recipe that is destined to fail. Nonetheless, planning provides the opportunity to prepare for various situations. The successful owner or manager is flexible in nature; in other words, uncontrollable environmental and market changes call for their adaptability. Although there is extreme variability in these environments, it still cannot justify poor management. Managers are in a great position to bring about changes in the environment through the pharmacy's operations, and should take advantage of the opportunities. 'Flexible budgets' are a great tool to use, because they are adjustable to various circumstances. For instance, if revenues are below expectation, pharmacy managers will not spend too much, and if the opposite occurs, there will be enough money to utilise. Planning is a process dreaded by pharmacy managers, as it is time consuming; but in the end, when failing to do so, the pharmacy runs the manager instead of the manager running the pharmacy. Lastly, why

do small pharmacies fail? Because of a manager with an ill approach. There are no defined goals, they are short-term focused and only deal with the daily issues and have no clear idea what their pharmacy will be like in the future (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:87-89; Desselle & Zgarrick, 2009:42).

3.7.6 When and on what basis reviews of goals, plans, policies, and procedures should be undertaken

3.7.6.1 When to evaluate goals and strategic plans

Frequent reviews are necessary to evaluate whether the goal process is still on track. If quality control is involved, this needs to be verified on an hourly basis. Another suggestion is, when finances are being assessed, it could be performed on a monthly basis, as the results thereof, suggesting marketing, may be reviewed quarterly. Key issues need a quarterly revision, which, in case of difficulty, provide the manager with ample time to endorse corrective action. In case of small policy changes, the review process still has to be performed, as it provides an insight into the holistic pharmacy operations. Quarterly reviews supply the change for managers to not lose track of reality. Policy evaluation should be a standardised process, as it is quite costly. These evaluations (goal, plan and policy) lend themselves to process effectivity and efficiency (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:89; SAPC, 2010:206).

3.7.6.2 Factors to evaluate

It is a known fact that in most businesses there will be areas that demand more attention than others. The review process may sometimes become entangled in the peculiar situations as they arise, but the danger in such behaviour lies in the fact that other situations might be overlooked continuously. The more general problems are revealed in Table 3-10 below (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:89; Lohrey, 2017):

	Signs of trouble	Possible causes of trouble
Loss of working capital	• Inadequate cash supply; • Inability to take advantage of supplier deals and discounts; • Build-up in accounts payable; • Inability to meet loan payments.	• Undercapitalisation of the organisation; • Continual or large business losses; • Large non-recurring expenses or losses; • Higher-than-anticipated operating costs; • Large investment of cash in fixed assets (such as fixtures or equipment).
Low sales	• Cash flow problems; • Sales below forecasted levels; • Customer complaints; • Loss of market share; • Inventory turnover declines (cost of goods sold + average inventory).	• Increased number of competitors; • More aggressive marketing efforts by competitors; • Poor location; • Poor salesmanship; • Change in consumer demographics or their buying processes; • Failure to keep up with consumers' current needs.
Low profits	• Higher-than-anticipated costs; • Lower-than-expected sales; • Loss of working capital; • Increase in debt.	• Slow collection of receivables; • Excessive inventory; • Improper pricing; • Poor marketing program; • Internal or external theft; • Poor control over operating costs.
High levels of debt	• High interest payments; • Loss of working capital; • Inability to borrow additional funds.	• Overinvestment in fixed assets; • Overinvestment in inventory; • Inability to convert receivable into cash; • Borrowing on bad terms; • Lack of operating cost control; • Slow sales; • Undercapitalisation.

Table 3-10: Business problems for which plans are needed (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:90).

Business problems cannot solely be resolved by utilising policies and procedures. The solution lies in the 'people' who own and manage the pharmacy. Distinctive problems cannot be resolved by means of policies and procedures that have been re-established for recurring situations. This allows the managers more time to solve more urgent issues for which policies and procedures are lacking (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:90; UNCTAD, 2002:165-166; Eckel, 2013).

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the focus was on different aspects, well needed of attention in order to manage a pharmacy successful. One such focus point was human resource management, which is necessary for this chapter as people become the employees of an organisation, who, by all accounts, become the stronghold of that specific organisation. Managed well, there can be an enormous difference in their performance and the organisation's competitiveness and overall success. Therefore, managing human resources according to the legislation of South Africa will prove to be beneficial. It is further stated that employees who work together have a positive influence on the organisation. To accomplish this, personality types were investigated, as it has been stated that personality is a strong moulder of performance. The aspects in this regard, namely attitude, personality, perception, and learning, provide insight into how colleagues work and function. For the manager who has to overseer the pharmacy, the most difficult element will be change management. Change occurs on a regular base with regard to international, national and local trends. The points in this chapter deals with why it is difficult to accept change. This section points out why change is beneficial to the organisation, as well as why employees experience it as negative. Certain changes enforce stress, and managers should identify it and assist employees during this difficult time. Risk management can also be a tool to guide management in order to manage risk to a minimum or to make sure that the pharmacy has been insured accordingly. Risk may occur in many forms, such as personal liabilities, economic downturn, loss of key personnel, burglary, fire, robbery, shoplifting, etc. In addition to the previously mentioned, other risks that may occur include: safety- , clinical- and dispensing risks.

To supply in customers' needs, this chapter delved into marketing, whereby the focus was on supplying products and services. Marketing was shown to be much more than just providing in the customers' needs; it provided an insight into how to stand your ground and be a force to be reckoned with in the business market, stipulating that a transfer of goods and services can only be successful once there is an acquired need. It is further portrayed that unsatisfied needs are the main initiator for purchasing, as human beings all have basic needs that have to be satisfied.

Lastly, the role of the manager should not be overlooked, as they have the potential to enhance the pharmacy's success by means of the management process, which includes achieving the

goals by means of planning. The basic pillars are formal and informal planning, as well as different alternatives to be successful. Planning is not a random process; it is a tool crucial for daily functioning. Objectives and plans are being focused on in this chapter, encapsulating all of the above in order to become an indispensable framework for strategic management.

The next chapter, deals with research methods, as well as the pharmacy managers from the Kenneth Kaunda District's interviews, based on the guidelines gathered from the two previous chapters. This will provide insight into how theory and practice can be combined successfully, in order for a pharmacy manager to achieve the perceived goals and objectives.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 Introduction

The research question and the successive research objectives, as stated in Chapter 1, postulate an in-depth, qualitative study of a framework for strategic communication management in small sized pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. This chapter concentrates on the research methodology as best suited for this study. A quick synopsis of the qualitative research approach used in this research was highlighted in Chapter 1, and it will be conversed in more detail in this chapter. The main characteristics associated with qualitative research that provide insight into this study are: (1) description of qualitative research, (2) empirical methods, (3) analysis types, (4) population and sampling, (5) semi-structured interviews, (6) data analysis using the qualitative thematic approach and finally (7) discussing qualitative validity and reliability. The theoretical assumptions and statements stipulated in the previous chapters were linked to the content of the in-depth interviews that were conducted with managers or co-owners of the small sized pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District.

4.2 A qualitative research approach

To answer the question of: “What is ‘qualitative’ about qualitative research?” Mason (2002:3) argues that many efforts have been subjected to determine whether qualitative research in the social sciences can be distinguished from quantitative research (Bryman, 2015:392-393; Hammersley, 1992:159; Silverman, 2006:43). For instance, qualitative research has been related to specific schools known for their interpretivist sociological tradition, in particular phenomenology (Schutz, 1967:10), ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), and symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 2003:28). Lately, postmodernists have become interested in empirical research and qualitative methods, although their notion on the latter is by far more outdated than what the long-standing humanist tradition portrays (Lather, 1991:54; Plummer, 2001:12; Wetherell *et al*., 2001:1). The 'younger' disciplines consisting of media and cultural studies are heavily dependent on qualitative ways of knowing, as well as areas with a strong interdisciplinary bias (Mason, 2002:3). The previously mentioned are by no means a comprehensive list to reflect the diversity of approaches with regard to qualitative research, but alternatively the idea is to signal the range of philosophical underpinnings, methodological techniques and practices that are encapsulated by the term. The various traditions, schools and disciplines aim to highlight the importance in the social world and so forth. The different ideas are in contrast with what the extent of the meaningfulness of empirical research is, as well as how to conduct it. This range of traditions does unfortunately not fit uniformly into a type of philosophy or a type of methodological principles (Mason, 2002:157).

To develop a sense of what is qualitative about qualitative research, a working definition will supply the most common elements (Mason, 2002:157):

- Based in the philosophical realm, which in general is ‘interpretivist’, the concern of how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted is expounded upon. Although different issues of qualitative research might experience these elements differently (for example, focusing on social meanings, or interpretations, or practices, or discourses, or processes, or constructions), it is been stated that some or more of these elements might be experienced in this multi-layered social world.

- Data generation in the social world is both flexible and sensitive, meaning that rigid standards do not apply in this arena.

- Qualitative research is built on methods of analysis, explanation and argument, striving to enable contextual understandings on the basis of detailed data. The emphasis is on ‘holistic’ types of analysis and explanation, rather than on surface patterns, trends and correlations.

- Qualitative research utilises certain forms of quantifications, but statistical analysis is not the central focus in this regard.

The following table summarises the differences between qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Overall framework	• Hypothesis testing about phenomena; • Precise and rigid tools to categorise question responses; • Structured surveys, methods, and structured observations.	• Explore a phenomena; • Flexible tools and instruments that iteratively give insights about responses; • Semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and participants observations.
Analysis objective	• Quantity variation; • Predict causal relationships; • Measure population characteristics.	• Explore and describe variations; • Understand variable interrelationships; • Gain insights about individual/group behaviour.
Question format	• Close-ended.	• Open-ended.
Data	• Numerical (values assigned to responses).	• Textual (obtained from audio or video recordings and field notes).
Design flexibility	• Study design is methodological from start to end; • What questions are asked do not depend on the responses of the participants, since it are known what we are trying to quantify; • Study design are subject to statistical conditions and assumptions..	• Sometimes it is necessary to amend the study (for example, change in wordings of questions, or addition and deletion of survey questions); • Participants responses determine how and what questions are asked; • Study design are iterative – collection of data and research questions are adjusted according to insights gained.

Table 4-1: Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Data Brio Academy, 2014).

The goal of qualitative research is to obtain factual knowledge based on the ability to categorise the study by means of a method or a paradigm. The tradition of qualitative research should be reflected in the study, for instance: ethnography, case study, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. The qualitative process is underscored by recording the observations, setting up interview questions, and compiling a coding scheme. The main benefit of qualitative research is the means

to gain a broader perspective into intellectual-cultural activity – in other words, qualitative research (Lee, 2016:1).

Qualitative research is ultimately based on the gathering and exhaustive (1) observations, (2) interviews and (3) other forms of collecting information of human nature, in order to enrich the understanding of structures, processes, and perspectives that motivate human behaviour (Lee, 2016:1). Taking the previously mentioned into account, and linking it to this study, it had been stipulated that the utilisation of qualitative research, especially in a healthcare environment, poses to be tremendously beneficial. A reason for this is that qualitative research explores behavioural and social issues that may be of enormous value to pharmacy managers, which quantitative measures in this instance will fail to do. Apparently, it also contributes to a clearer understanding of complex public health issues (Isaacs, 2014:318-319). Furthermore, when delving into the understanding of these social phenomena, the views and experiences of the interviewees can be best discovered by asking qualitative questions consisting of: "what", "how" and "why" while using ''how many'' or ''how much'' would be indicative of quantitative research questions (Green & Thorogood, 2004:5).

The links to qualitative research were captured in the writings of Immanuel Kant 1871, where he stated in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that there were ways to know about the world other than direct observation. He felt people used these methods throughout (Ritchie & Lewis, 2006:6) by:

- interpreted perceptions based on what our human senses tell us,
- formed understanding on our knowledge of the world derived from our experiences,
- transcended knowing and knowledge by basic empirical study, and
- draw a distinction between scientific reason and practical reason. Scientific reason was built on casual determinism, while practical reasoning focuses on decision-making and moral freedom, which involves less certainty.

Qualitative research seems to fit the bill, due to the striking embedded similarities that were mentioned above. Furthermore, the research's emphasis and value seem to be placed on the human, i.e. the investigator's own interpretation and understanding of the social world, which was incorporated in the phenomena that were studied (Ritchie & Lewis, 2006:7).

For reasons mentioned above, it seemed that the qualitative research approach was the obvious choice as it provided for a holistic understanding of the researched participants' views and actions within their overall context (Ritchie & Lewis, 2006:6). Within the healthcare realm, this was an important factor, especially if the researcher aimed to provide a framework for pharmacy

management to explore their attitudes, in order to formulate and deliver an excellent communication strategy.

According to Elwell (2005), Max Weber (1864-1920), another key contributor, proposed two types of understanding: Direct observational understanding and explanatory or motivational understanding. He further stated that this understanding differs between the natural sciences and the social sciences. Natural sciences produce law-like propositions, while social sciences are aimed at understanding subjectively meaningful experiences. Interpretation and observation to understand the social world or the so-called interpretivism, according to Ritchie and Lewis (2006:6), form the extent to which a strategic communication framework assists to effectively communicate with the small sized pharmacies' stakeholders, as an integral part of qualitative research.

Therefore, qualitative research focused on the interrelatedness of the parts of people's lives by incorporating social, historical, psychological and cultural factors, which were very important aspects to help shape people's understanding of their world, or for the purpose of the study, their 'working world'.

Although also argued to have weaknesses, qualitative research recognises the strategic significance of the contexts and the connecting specifics that are not always possible to do in quantitative research.

In order to provide a solid qualitative study, a strict routine should be followed in order to accomplish valid and reliable results. Qualitative research therefore begs the need for the active utilisation of intellect, practicality and emotional engagement (Mason, 2002:1). In addition, qualitative research then provides an excellent opportunity to "*study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them"* (Ritchie & Lewis, 2006:3).

4.2.1 Applying a qualitative research approach to the study

A small-scale qualitative study was used to draw a wider inference about the 'social world', in other words, like Ritchie and Lewis (2003:xiv) suggest: "provided that there is appropriate adherence to the boundaries of qualitative research." Qualitative research offered opportunities such as: (1) to honour the vast variety of different approaches, and (2) scholars with their array of 'styles' and 'schools' allowed for a learning experience that provided an intellectual challenge. Seale (1999:26) argued in his discourse regarding the 'quality' of qualitative research:

> "... pragmatic social researchers can use philosophical and political debates as resources for achieving certain mental attitudes, rather than a set of underlying principles from which all else must flow, creating unnecessary obstacles to flexible and creative inquiry ... One can, then, understand such debates as conversations stimulating methodological awareness among researchers, rather than laying foundations for truth." (Seale, 1999:26)

For the purposes of this study, the qualitative characteristic of flexibility was seen as key in gathering data, and therefore distinguished the research approach used from quantitative research. In this study, it was deemed important that the relationship between the researcher and the interviewee is less formal than in the case of quantitative research; the interviewee has the chance to express him-/herself far more elaborately than what would be the norm in quantitative methods, and that this provides the researcher with an opportunity to respond immediately, based on the interviewee's response, providing a chance to tailor the subsequent questions according to the information provided by the interviewee (Williams, 2007).

For this specific study, based on small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, the phenomenon of interest refers to the perception held that through the incorporation of a strategic communication framework, and the understanding of the management process in small sized pharmacies, the desired outcomes will be achieved successfully. With this focus on perception, a link can be drawn between theory and the manifestation thereof in today's life.

4.3 Empirical methods

Empirical research methods strive to answer particular research questions by means of empirical observations or data collection. This type of research is normally used in academic research, but has also proven to be very helpful in answering practical questions. Empirical research is governed by the rules of "looking", implying that answers to empirical research questions can be obtained by looking at the world, rather than thinking about the world. It is stated that empiricism appears when the rules of looking apply, rather than the rules of thinking (Sumser, 1948:7). In other words, *"Without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without the understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty: intuitions without concepts are blind. The understanding is incapable of intuiting, and the senses are incapable of thinking"* (Coplestone, 1960:247).

The strong suit of an empirical study is based on clarifying questions. For this reason, we use an inextricable mixture of empiricism and conceptualisation to approach real life. Immanuel Kant,

the German philosopher, said: “You cannot look at the world unless you have ideas and that you cannot have ideas unless you look at the world”.

Building on the abovementioned, the data collection method involved telephone conversations with the various managers or owners of small pharmacies, situated in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District.

4.3.1 Literature study

The following existing literature was consulted in order to enhance the internal validity of the study. This was undertaken to portray the co-owners, owners or managers of small sized pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District’s approach to communication management to the fullest. The following sources were utilised: books, journals as well as internet browsers such as Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, JSTOR, Medline and Nexus.

- Pharmacy in practice by Geoffrey Harding and Kevin Taylor;
- Patient satisfaction with pharmaceutical care: Update of a validated instrument by Lon Larson, *et al.*;
- Distinctive competencies and competitive advantage: A study of small independent retailers by Leonard G., Love and Jeffrey E. McGee;
- Management competence development for professional service SMEs: The case of community pharmacy by Roger Ottewill, Peter L. Jennings, *et al.*;
- A systematic review of the research on communication between patients and health care professionals about medicines: The consequences for concordance by Fiona A. Stevenson and Kate Cox, *et al.*;
- Use of visual symbols to promote communication by Masaki Moriyama and Delwyn L. Harnisch;
- Ask the patient; they may know more than you think by David Dickinson, D K Theo Raynor;
- Brand personality and customer trust in community pharmacies by Jason Perepelkin and David Di Zhang;
- Countervailing power in wholesale pharmaceuticals by Sara Fisher Ellison and Christopher M. Snyder;
- Pharmacy strategy by Pat Murray;
- Pharmacy management essentials for all practice settings by Shane Desselle and David Zgarrick.;
- Essentials of pharmacy management by Dennis Tootelian, Albert Wertheimer and Andrey Mikhailitchenko;

- Policies and procedures: Enhancing pharmacy practice and limiting risk by James O'Donnell and Randy Vogenberg;
- Good pharmacy practice manual by the South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC);
- Impact of working environment on job satisfaction by Abdul Raziq;
- Fundamentals of management by Stephan Robbins, David DeCrenz and Mary Coulter;
- Achieving patient centeredness in pharmacy practice by Djenane De Oliveira and Sarah Shoemaker;
- How patients perceive a doctor's caring attitude by Quirk, M., Mazor, K., Haley, H.L., Philbin, M., Fischer, M., Sullivan. K. & Hatem, D.;
- Discovering the value of personality types in communication training for pharmacy students by Mariet Eksteen & Marietta Basson;
- The AMA handbook for developing employee assistance and counselling programs by Dale Masi;
- Making strategy work by Lawrence G. Hrebiniak;
- Planning Public Health Strategies by J. Rowe;
- Communicating strategy qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers by Phil Jones;
- The qualitative researcher's companion by A. Michael Huberman and Matthew B. Miles ;
- The challenge of quality by P.D. Clearly and B.J. McNeil;
- The research imagination by P.S. Gray, J.B. Williamson *et al.*;
- Customer relationship management in a pharmaceutical industry by Thomas Puschmann and Alt Rainier;
- Washington reporter publics of corporate public affairs programs by James Grunig;
- Inactive publics: The forgotten publics in public relations by Kirk Hallahan;
- Organisational culture by Geert Hofstede;
- Executive cognitive control in communication by Jerry Jordan;
- Exploring corporate strategy by Gerry Johnson, Kevan Scholes and Richard Whittington;
- Prioritizing stakeholders for public relations by Brad Rawlins;
- Communication with stakeholders: An integrated approach by Eileen Scholes and David Clutterbuck;
- Corporate communication strategy by Benita Steyn and Gustav Puth.

As no such study or research has previously been conducted with regard to the topic, the aim of this literature study was to construct a background from which to explore the views of pharmacists (in small sized pharmacies) regarding issues in strategic communication management. Another

important point was to understand how small sized pharmacies' management can achieve these desired outcomes by incorporating a strategic communication framework.

4.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

With 'qualitative interviewing', the reference was semi-structured, in-depth or loosely structured types of interviewing. It became apparent that 'unstructured' interviewing as a naming convention was being used, but as Mason (2002:67) states, it was a misnomer because no interview can ever lack total structure. On the other side of the spectrum, open-ended questions were believed to pave the way for qualitative interviewing.

Semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate to use in situations where the interviewer was not given another chance to interview a respondent, according to Bernard (2006:212). The interview guide supplied a clear set of instructions which contributed to producing qualitative, comparable and reliable data (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Bernard, 2006:263). In this light, one should keep in mind that semi-structured interviews had an own special character, although in the midst of a variety of styles and beliefs, the common denominators in all such interviews were as follow (Mason, 2002:62):

- Interactive communication is an exchange of ideas within which qualitative interviews may consist of one-to-one communication, large- or focus groups, and may occur in a face-to-face manner, telephone- or internet discussion.

- Burgess (1984:102) captures the term 'conversations with a purpose' sufficiently well, when he refers to face-to-face interviewing as an informal style where the conversation is not characteristic of a formal question-and-answer format session.

- The thematic or narrative approach is where the researcher may have numerous topics, starting points for conversations, or stories the interviewee wishes to convey. Qualitative interviews follow a flexible structure, which also enables the researcher and the interviewee(s) to create unanticipated themes.

- The approach of most qualitative research borders on the perspective that knowledge is fixed and contextual; the researchers should approach the interview in such a manner that the needed context should be highlighted in order to produce the knowledge. The agreeance would be that knowledge is not a case of reconstruction, or a simple fact report within the interview setting. Within this viewpoint, interaction can be seen as the creator of meaning and understanding, co-produced by the researcher and the interviewee(s). Therefore, the

knowledge construction and reconstruction during qualitative interviews are not an attempt to excavate it (Mason, 2002:63; Kvale, 1996:3).

To reiterate what was explained in Chapter 1, an exploratory interview was conducted at the start of this study to investigate the view of pharmacists on the topic, and determine the need for this study. This results were included in the discussion in Chapter 1. This interview data was not included in the analysed data, as the purpose of this interview was preliminary as explained. The respondent interviews used for data reporting in this study were sampled as explained next.

4.3.2.1 Population and sampling

The most common four random sampling methods are: simple-, stratified-, systematic- and cluster sampling. In applied social studies, the tendency is to use more complex variations of the abovementioned. An important fact to keep in mind is that any of these methods may be combined to answer in sampling needs by applying the most effective combination possible. In this study, a combination of cluster, stratified and random sampling will be used to pave the way for multi-stage sampling. The combination of various sampling methods achieves a rich variety of probabilistic sampling methods (Social Research Methods, 2006).

Via cluster sampling, all the small pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District will be included. Then, a stratified sampling process will take place within the cluster. Within the stratified sample, a random sample will be produced (Social Research Methods, 2006).

Sampling was a pivotal step when analysis was conducted. It was impossible to study each and every one, but it should be kept in mind that one's choices influence the outcome of the conclusion. Another point to keep in mind was to not over-simplify sampling. In order to tie it all together, the aim was to use small samples that were embedded within the context and studied in depth (Hubberman & Miles, 1994:27).

Gray *et al*. (2007:103) stipulated, with reference to the sampling that was conducted, that time and money shortages resulted in the lack of studying all the cases in the population that were of interest. Therefore, the general aim was not to find the best case, but to find a representative distribution of cases that would lead to a conclusive generalisation about the average or the typical. The abovementioned encapsulates the statement that samples of a qualitative nature were shown to be purposive, but never random. The reasons were that social processes portray a logic and coherency that random sampling can never do (Hubberman & Miles, 1994:27).

The ideal was to use an unbiased sample that would form the foundation of all the cases that will be taken into account through which an accurate generalisation could be applied to all the cases

in the population. Population is a term describing all the possible cases of interest in the population. In this study, the possible cases were owners or managers of small sized pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. Within this population, a particular subgroup was identified and was referred to as a stratum (Gray *et al*., 2007:103). In other words, the different strata within this particular population included pharmacy managers or owners. One interview per stratum had been conducted, which produced a total of ten interviews. The number of interviews was based on the fact that ten interviews had provided a conclusive saturation point, especially in the case of a magister study.

Based on the process outlined by Dudovskiy (2016), the following sampling process is followed:

- The nine provinces in South Africa form the sample frame, from which the North-West Province is selected with the knowledge that it contains distinct groups.

- The relevant sub-groups are selected from the previously specified distinct group. From the four districts in the North West Province (Bojanala Platinum District, Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District, Ngaka Modiri Molema District), the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District has been chosen for this study.

- This selection method is repeated. A small sized pharmacy is chosen from each town that makes up the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, namely Atomic Pharmacy Orkney, De-Ka Pharmacy Stilfontein, Ventersdorp Pharmacy, Witpoort Pharmacy, Wollies Pharmacy Wolmaransstad, Leeudoringstad Pharmacy, Hartbeesfontein Pharmacy, Medirite Pharmacy, Potch Pharmacy and Healthpharm Klerksdorp.

- From the previous sample, members of the sample group from the sub-groups were selected using some variation of probability (random) sampling. The members of this sample group consisted of the pharmacist, pharmacy technician, cashier, stock worker and administrative staff (Dudovskiy, 2016).

When applying multi-stage cluster sampling, its advantages and disadvantages must be kept in mind. The advantages of cluster or multi-stage sampling include:

- Convenience, economy and efficiency are linked to multi-stage sampling as the prominent advantages. It does not need a complete list of units (members) in the target population. The complete list only becomes crucial during the final stages of multi-stage sampling when those chosen form part of the cluster.

- The selected population units will be closer together; therefore, the cost implication for personal interviews will be eliminated, leaving fieldwork simplified (National Statistical Service, 2016).

4.3.2.2 Disadvantages of cluster or multi-stage sampling include

In general, cluster sampling is less accurate than samples of the same size because the sample obtained does not cover the population as evenly as in the case of samples of the same size. However, it is often preferred because it is more economical (National Statistical Service, 2016).

However, for the purposes of this qualitative study, the cluster sampling method followed fits the topic under investigation.

4.3.2.3 Semi-structured interview schedule

The pharmacies included in the study and when they were interviewed is listed below:

	Pharmacy	Interview date
1.	Atomic Pharmacy Orkney	08 August 2017
2.	Medi-Plus Potchefstroom	14 August 2017
3.	Kampus Pharmacy Potchefstroom	15 August 2017
4.	Wollies Pharmacy Wolmaransstad	17 August 2017
5.	Hartbeesfontein Pharmacy	17 August 2017
6.	HealthPharm Klerksdorp	21 August 2017
7.	Leeudoringstad Pharmacy	24 August 2017
8.	De-Ka Pharmacy Stilfontein	28 August 2017
9.	Ventersdorp Pharmacy	28 August 2017
10.	Oudorp Pharmacy Klerksdorp	05 September 2017

Table 4-2: Semi-structured interview schedule.

For a small sized pharmacy, the following questions will be divided into nine main themes (Steyn & Puth, 2000:63) (Please see Annexure A for the complete interview question list):

- Analyse the internal environment. Corresponding questions to shed light might be based on the SWOT analysis, for instance: “What do you think are the pharmacy’s assets?” “What in your opinion would be regarded as their weakness?” “What is the market missing?” “Are there competitors that can be competitive in the future?” (PESTLE Analysis, 2016).

- Classify strategic stakeholders and publics in the external and internal environment by using the outlines of a stakeholder map as reference to help confirm the strategic stakeholders and publics. A typical question to guide the interviewer in this respect could be, "Who is or will be affected, positively or negatively, by what you are doing or proposing to do?" (HealthKnowledge, 2010).

- Identifying and describing key strategic issues in the macro, task or internal environment, also known as the societal environment, can influence the long-term decision-making of an organisation (Steyn & Puth, 2000:57). Each different stakeholder group has their own set of values, needs, desires, wants, goals and objectives; these may be totally different from those of the organisation. The function of the communication strategy is to manage the relationship of the organisation and the stakeholder. However, before this can be done, it should first be established who the organisation's stakeholders are (Steyn & Puth, 2000; Keydifferences, 2015). To portray the quality of the relationships the pharmacy developed with their external contacts, the following question may be asked: "Do you think the past ways of doing things will meet the demands of the future?" (NACCHO, 2017).

- Decide on a corporate communication strategy. The corporate communication strategy, in short, is built on the organisation's mission, vision and values. In order to find out whether a pharmacy has the abovementioned in place, the question to shed some light was: "What is your pharmacy's slogan?" (Help 4 NonProfits, 2016).

- Establish communication goals. The main purpose for the organisation is to reflect what the outcome would be with the intended communication. In other words, is the aim to disperse information, or to change attitude or behaviour (Steyn & Puth, 2000:70). If the focus is on dispersing information, a possible question was: "Do you update your website regularly?"

- Establish a communication policy. The communication policy's function is to coordinate stakeholder engagement. To clarify, more than one person might be responsible to communicate with an individual stakeholder or maybe a group of stakeholders concerning different topics. It is necessary to find out who is responsible for which stakeholder's communication under which circumstances. In order to collect the latter information, the following question had been employed: "Who was responsible to communicate with whom?" (Steyn & Puth, 2000:63).

- Draft to top management. Top management should be informed every step of the way on how communication will provide a way to solve critical issues (Steyn & Puth, 2000:72). It is important to remember that management approves the budget necessary to uphold the

aspects of the corporate communication strategy (Steyn & Puth, 2000:73). This can be determined by asking: “Does this pharmacy have regular communication campaigns?”

- Conduct an overall corporate communication media analysis. The importance hereof is to determine which communication media are best suited for the organisation (Steyn & Puth, 2000:73). This might range from face-to-face to any of the following: e-mail, weekly letters or newsletters, personal letters, billboards, intranet, magazines or newspapers, SMSs and social media (The Communication Toolbox, 2008). An interview question that had been considered was: “Did the pharmacy use for instance a newsletter to communicate with the customers?”

- Develop a strategic communication plan. This phase places all the planning into context. It is during this stage where the framework is constructed, and will typically contain the communication programmes, -campaigns and -plans (Steyn & Puth, 2000:73). In order to verify the latter, the following question may be posed: “Do you think an organisation such as yours should use a communication plan?”

On occasion, actions such as observation, as well as informal and unstructured interviewing, precede semi-structured interviews. The latter aids the researcher to obtain a thorough understanding of the topic on hand. It further ensures the compilation of relevant and meaningful semi-structured questions. It is advisable to include open-ended questions, because they offer the respondents a chance to present their point of view, otherwise the interviewer might inappropriately generalise (Ritchie & Lewis 2003; Academia, 2016).

The interviewing strategies (points to the nine major components of the proposed strategic communication framework, including questions relating to pharmacy management namely: analyse the internal environment, identify strategic stakeholders and publics in the internal and external environment, identify and describe key strategic issues in the internal and external environment, identify the implications of each strategic issue, decide on the corporate communication strategy, set communication goals, develop communication policy, draft to top management, conduct an overall corporate communication media analysis, develop a strategic communication plan, human resource, change, risk, marketing, and strategic management), provided the basis on which enough information could be derived to set up 51 interview questions. Instead of using highly structured interviews as found in epidemiology, the focus was more on making the interviewee a participant in meaning than a conduit from which information should be extracted (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006:314).

When using semi-structured interviews, it was noted that the success of it depends on the communications skills of the interviewer (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007:134). Therefore, the

corresponding questions were structured clearly, and checked by the study leader, which enabled the interviewees to respond more easily when the interviewer listened attentively, paused, probed or prompted appropriately and allowed the interviewee to talk freely (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007:134). Semi-structured interviews use 'closed' questions, which, at a later stage during the interview, were used to probe for more information (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007:134).

Probing for information may be one part of the focus, but more direct; the main purpose was to gain knowledge from the interviewee. This forthcoming knowledge depended on the type of research questions asked as well as the disciplinary perspective to which the researcher belongs. In some cases, research was designed in a very structured format where stimulus and analysis were standardised in other cases to gain a better understanding from which perceptions were explored. Where the latter was true, qualitative research was on the foreground and interviewees were encouraged to elaborate on their description of phenomena. The researcher, who acted as an investigator while concerned with the analysis, aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge through which the conceptual meaning of life could be explained, based on the interviewee's experiences (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006:314).

The first step was to correctly identify the possible interviewees. The selection process was completed in the last week of July and interviews were scheduled during the first two weeks of August. Practise was necessary in order to conduct a research interview. The following guiding attributes were used to steer the selection process (Morse, 1991):

- Used an expert who is knowledgeable about the subject matter;
- Used someone who is able to reflect detailed experiential information;
- Allocated a candidate who is willing to talk.

When using semi-structured interviews, it is noted that the success of it depends on the communications skills of the interviewer (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012:134). The interviews were recorded and transcribed. After conducting the interview, the next step will be to perform a comprehensive analysis.

4.3.2.4 Data analysis: Qualitative thematic analysis

After the revision of selected material, the research notes of the interviews will be used again in an attempt to identify the key issues, concepts and themes through which the data can be examined and referred to. To sift and sort the data, a thematic framework needs to be set up (Huberman & Miles, 2002:313). For this study, the themes identified in the semi-structured interviews section will be used as the themes for data analysis.

After the revision of selected material, the research notes were used again in an attempt to identify the key issues, concepts and themes, as identified in literature, through which the data were examined and referred to. To sift and sort the data a thematic framework was set up (Huberman & Miles, 2002:313).

This framework helped to guide the researcher to match the original research aims against emerging issues raised by the respondents together with themes that arose from the recurrence. To refine a thematic framework, one needs both logical and intuitive thinking. Judgement calls were necessary for important issues as well as implicit connections between ideas (Flick, 2013:12). Furthermore, it indicated which topics were not highlighted although it might have been co-presented and independent of the interviewee's self-interpretation (Flick, 2013:3-4).

In the data analysis process, it is advisable that in the presentation thereof and the explanation of it to others, difficult questions should be revisited to acquaint yourself with how it links to the research questions, methodology and methods, up until where the researcher designed the research. One has to convince one's peers on how decisions on certain issues have been concluded, as well as the logic behind the methods chosen in order to solve the intellectual research puzzle and research questions (Mason, 2002:67).

4.3.2.5 Qualitative validity and reliability

Gray *et al*. (2007:12) suggest that those who question the outcome of the study may repeat the questions and when the same results are present, the research may be deemed reliable. It is also possible that there might be variances in conditions over which the researcher has no control, and therefore it is important that the design in data collection should be done in such a way that replicated preclusion will not have an influence.

Validity is the fit between the evidence for a concept and the concept that the researcher wants to examine. Literature suggests that if the definition of the components is too broad, it will result in misunderstanding. The solution is to be as clear as possible about the definition of the concepts as well as to the situation it applies to (Gray & Williamson *et al*., 2007:13). To introduce **quality, credibility and trustworthiness** to this research, a method of "member checking" will be introduced (DocSlide, 2010):

- All data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions will be tested with the group members from whom the data were initially acquired;
- It can be conducted formally and informally as opportunities arise for member checks during the interviews;
- By this means, the participants will be able to reconsider and explicate previous statements;

- Member checking is regarded as a technique to verify the validity of an account.

Additionally, this research study needs to comply with the quality standards set by ethical virtue. In order to be deemed compliant, the following pointers will be adhered to:

- Social researchers have the daunting task to inform the intended target group of the limits of reliability and applicability of the data;
- The double-barrel danger of over and under-estimating the validity to which data can be generalised is an easy practise to fall prey to;
- Actions such as covering up issues, or maybe to practise over-interpretation, have implications not only for the researcher involved, but also for the reputation of social research as a whole.

In practice, to ensure that the researcher complied with the qualitative validity and reliability standards, the following route was applied:

- Step 1 was to have a clear understanding of what features of qualitative data might be expected to be consistent (Ritchie & Lewis, 2000:271). Reliability was achieved by using the same pre-setup questionnaire for all 10 interviewees. The interviewing strategies point to the nine major components of the proposed strategic communication framework, including questions relating to pharmacy management, and form the basis through which enough information could be derived to set up 15 interview questions, of which some contained subsections.

- Step 2 was to ensure that the sample design/selection was without bias, and representative of the target population (Ritchie & Lewis, 2000:272). This was accomplished by using a multistage sample, which was valid with regard to the population it represented. In other words, according to Morse (1991), an expert was used who was knowledgeable about the subject matter; therefore, someone who was able to reflect detailed experiential information and preferably a candidate who was willing to talk.

- Step 3 included the quality control of fieldwork consistency (Ritchie & Lewis, 2000:272), by giving each respondent the same opportunity to voice his/her experiences; in other words, a half hour appointment was scheduled with each respondent well in advance so that there will be ample time to conduct the interview.

- Step 4 was to carry out the analysis in a systematically and comprehensive manner (Ritchie & Lewis, 2000:272). After revision of selected material, the research notes were used again

in an attempt to identify the key issues, concepts and themes by which the data were examined and referred to. A thematic framework was set up in order to sift and sort the data.

- Step 5, the interpretation, was well supported by the evidence (Ritchie & Lewis, 2000:272), as the evidence was based on the interviewees' statements, which then would be linked to the researched literature.

Social researchers are constantly interested in measuring abstract phenomena such as happiness, perceptions and various psychological conditions. There was much disagreement on the best way to measure these concepts because there was no unique, explicit or indicative condition to which it can be compared (Gray *et al*., 2007:12).

Therefore the best route to follow was validity, as validity was the fit between the concept and the concepts' evidence that the researcher wanted to examine. Literature suggested that if the definition of the components is too broad, measurement might fail to be precise. The solution was to be as explicit as possible about the definition of the concepts as well as to the situation to which it applied. This allowed for creating a cumulative knowledge base about social reality, although it seemed like a big challenge even in the study of human behaviour (Gray *et al*., 2007:13). The following steps, as suggested by Ritchie and Lewis (2000:274), were taken to produce validity:

- Step 1 captured the phenomena by ensuring the sufficiency of the questioning. This was accomplished by the researcher by investigating that which was intended to be investigated.

- Step 2 incorporated design strategies such as mechanical and electronic recordings by means of an external speaker using the Windows 10 voice recorder function and a telephone using the speaker function. Some of the interviews conducted in Potchefstroom were done on a face-to-face basis, and the interviews were recorded by means of an external speaker using the Windows 10 voice recorder function. This method enhanced descriptive validity, in other words, the audio portrays the unfolding of events in an accurate manner. In order to accurately present the respondents' reflection and not the researcher's reflection, interpretative validity was used. In other words, if the respondent did exclaim a statement, it was also noted in the narration. Theoretical validity was adhered to, to support the theorised relationship among the concepts within the context. This means that if respondents stated something negative, data would be produced to state that fact (Thomson, 2011:78).

- Step 3 included the identification or labelling, i.e. have the phenomena been identified, categorised and 'named' in ways that reflect the meanings assigned by the study (Ritchie &

Lewis, 2000:274)? The data was categorised by the main elements of the strategic framework and the corresponding subcategories in order to reflect the meaning of the study.

Advisably, researchers should practise transparent methods in order for the academic community to assess their work clearly and it should be free from any confidentiality restrictions in order to form part of the common intellectual property of the profession (The Social Research Association, 2003).

In addition, the study received ethical clearance from the NWU Ethics Committee (NWU – 00368 - 17 – A7). This was based on ethical behaviour principles, which were constructed utilising a set of moral guidelines, rules and standards to govern the interviewer. The bottom line of these ethical guidelines was to ensure to "do good and avoid evil." (Lichtman, 2006:51).

4.4 Major principles associated with ethical conduct

- **Do no harm:** Confidentiality must be protected. By doing so, their privacy and anonymity are protected (University Pretoria, 2016:11). In addition, if by any means this study at any point causes any emotional distress, the interviewer will advise the participants to discontinue participation (Fresnostate, 2014).

- **Confidentiality:** In order to protect confidentiality, no information will be shared of any individual respondent with their corresponding supervisors or pharmacies (Fresnostate, 2014).

- **Informed consent:** It is crucial to inform participants of the extent of the study. This will include an accurate explanation of the evaluation as well as of the risks and benefits of this study. In addition, the interviewer will offer to answer any questions about the study by supplying contact information. The participant will be informed that if, for any reason, he/she feels to discontinue, it will not be held against them (Fresnostate, 2014).

- **Cultural competencies:** The interviewer will check to make sure that participants understand the concepts described in the interview guide, with a special focus on terms that may have different meanings in different cultures (Fresnostate, 2014).

- **Inappropriate behaviour:** The interviewer has to remember to remain objective in order not to get too close to the subject of study, and therefore create more distance in order to ensure that the interviewees receive the respect they deserve. In other words, set appropriate boundaries suggesting appropriate amounts of involvement versus social distance (University Pretoria, 2016:7).

- **Data interpretation:** All information that may attribute to an individual will be kept confidential. Fictional names or code numbers will be assigned to interviewees to conduct the analysis. Respondents will be referred to by using terms that do not indicate the names/characteristics of individuals (such as “respondent” or “participant”). The interviewer will note not to reveal too much about personal characteristics of respondents such as ethnicity or job title, as it might help readers identify individual respondents (Fresnostate, 2014).

- **Respect for the individual:** The moral duty of the interviewer will be to respect the autonomy of the individual (University Pretoria, 2016:6).

- **Professional standards:** The interviewer should in his/her ability uphold integrity, quality and accountability. Integrity implies that the interviewer will present the findings faultless and uphold quality standards. These standards will be utilised in the planning, implementation and reporting of the study. Seeing that the interviewer will be held accountable for the originality of this study, he/she must take measures such as submitting the study through Turn it in, in order to alleviate text similarities (University Pretoria, 2016:6).

4.5 Challenges experienced in conducting the research

- **Time constraints:** The first round of interviews were conducted in Potchefstroom, mainly to test the water and to find out whether the questions are well understandable and clear. Although appointments were confirmed over the telephone, it became a challenge in itself once the interview started. The pharmacist would lose interest in the interview as soon as clients enter the pharmacy. The pharmacists did agree to the interview, but also mentioned that it would be impossible to conduct an interview away from the dispensary area, the reason being that the person might at that stage be the only pharmacist available and would have to adhere to the clients, who are the pharmacy’s first priority.

- **Availability:** The pharmacists (managers, owners or co-owners) are extremely busy. This was the case with each and every pharmacy in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, which formed the area of interest in this study. On one occasion, it was only possible to conduct a telephonic interview at 7:00pm. The pharmacist was extremely busy that particular day, and therefore 7:00pm was ideal, as all distractions would be minimalised by then. On other occasions, some of the pharmacists also asked if I would rather phone early in the morning, as they put it: “It is still cold outside, people will not be eager to visit the pharmacy so early in the morning…” or on occasion I was also asked that if the pharmacy becomes busy, whether it would be in order if we continue the interview a bit later…” Fortunately for me, the previous mentioned did not materialise. On the other hand, it showed that pharmacists overall have a very strong client-centred approach.

- **Distance and remoteness:** Ten pharmacists were interviewed, of whom two were face-to-face interviews and the remainders were completed telephonically. The reason for this choice was, although the interviewer made arrangements to interview the pharmacist in person, one can never really be sure if the interviewer will be fortunate to have the pharmacist's undivided attention for an half hour or more. Telephonic interviews in the end worked out for the best, even though the pharmacist did excuse him-/herself, attended to a client, and took the conversation up again. Some of these pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District were quite a drive from Potchefstroom; it is a gamble once there and the pharmacy becomes busy – chances might be slim that it will clear up later. Telephonically, the pharmacist can ask the interviewer to phone back in 15 minutes or so, which made the burden on both parties bearable.
- **Background noise:** Face-to-face interviews did not pose less of a challenge. During one of these interviews, the pharmacist did move away from the dispensary area to take a seat nearby, but as the clients came in, it was apparent that she will turn a watchful eye towards the dispensary area to ensure that the pharmacists are coping. During that interview, the cleaner mopped under our feet, which distracted the interviewer and interviewee for a bit until the task was completed. Overall, the interview was conducted in a 30-minute timeframe, but was underpinned by tension, because one had to keep in mind – as soon as the pharmacy becomes busy, the owner might leave to assist the rest of her team…
- **Concentration:** This is both difficult and a challenge when the pharmacy becomes busy, and the body language of the pharmacists reveals irritation with the current situation; especially in the case of the test-interviews. These interviews lasted 8 to 12 minutes. Having conducted the interviews telephonically, deemed to be the best solution.

4.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the research approach as well as the reason why the specific approach seems of importance in this study. The specific methods were also highlighted by referring to the underlying pros and cons. The most important part was to portray 'how' this method will be conducted as well as how the data will be described and analysed. For this study, the decision was made to follow the route of interviews. To support the choice, the time schedule was included as well as who the interviewees were and why they were chosen specifically.

Chapter 5 will be concerned with data analysis, based on an analytic hierarchy. The process that will be followed with regard to the qualitative 'findings' will be built from the original raw data. It can be described as conceptual scaffolding from which the structure of the analysis will be

derived. By no means will the information be complete, and therefore constant moving up and down the hierarchy was needed.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will strive to produce an analysis of the results of the study in order to put the findings described into perspective. The previous four chapters consist of: (a) the strategic management of corporate communication, (b) management in the pharmacy profession, in order to provide an extensive overview of the communication and stakeholder management practices, and (c) the managerial principle that pharmacists apply in the everyday life. In this chapter, the resulting findings are correlated with the research questions, objectives and specific theoretical statements outlined in the aforementioned.

It is necessary to underline that the study did not intend to differentiate between the selected small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. The selection was merely to obtain a sample as diverse as possible in order to identify general tendencies regarding their strategic communication needs and practices. The findings will be reported according to the themes identified in literature.

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews on the views of pharmacists (in small sized pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District) regarding issues in strategic communication management. The qualitative thematic analysis will analyse the selected material, and the research notes of the interviews, in an attempt to identify the key issues, concepts and themes by which the data can be examined and referred to. To sift and sort the data, a thematic framework needs to be set up (Huberman & Miles, 2002:313). For this study, the themes identified in the semi-structured interviews section will be used as the themes for data analysis.

5.2 Analyse the internal environment

As indicated in section 2.7.1, the vision and mission of the organisation are of great importance in guiding organisational actions.

Some of the interviewees indicated that their vision and mission are one and the same, while others have made a clear differentiation between the two concepts. Building on the foregoing, the interviewees claim the vision, which in this case is also their motto, to be: “good service provision and to really be there for the community.” It is further elaborated that, with regard to the local clinic that became dysfunctional, and the poverty of the community due to the mine layoffs, she informs: “a lot of our residents do not have money – when visiting the clinic they do not receive proper service or treatment in terms of medication, or wound dressings… it is here where we want to make a difference, in determining how we can assist them the best.”

Another interviewee also envisioned optimal medical service to their clients, sharing that: “we supply necessary advice, and everything that goes together with that.” While another interviewee draws heavily on a team consisting of highly independent pharmacists in the healthcare services who reflect a professional approach, superb healthcare skills and knowledge. Their goal is to “provide healthcare services that will meet and exceed the customers’ expectations. One of the ways we are doing it is by means of different clinics we run in the family of pharmacies.” The services being provided include: a healthcare clinic, which comprises the normal primary care, a Cipla Breathefree asthma and allergy clinic, overseen by a trained pharmacist, a Body Lean Diet Clinic (includes a 12-week programme), and a Bellys and Babies clinic for immunisations and baby health.

The interviewee also claims that, according to their website, they do adhere additionally to the following:

- We seek to be the most utilised and trusted pharmacy in the North West Province;
- We provide high quality healthcare to optimise value to our customers;
- Our service is aimed at improved patient outcomes, cost effectiveness, quality assurance and customer satisfaction through advanced and flexible technologies with innovative management strategies;
- Our core value system includes Professionalism, Excellence, Teamwork and Pharmacist on duty. Another interviewee has further substantiated the core values by also adding productivity to the list.

Latching onto the abovementioned, where poverty and service delivery are at the top of the list, the interviewee also stated, with regard to the clinic scenario: “we provide assistance with their babies, if you have to take a baby to a clinic for a vaccination; it is normally a very bad experience. There are people that sit there with contagious diseases. You do not want to expose a baby to that environment. There is a vision – and that is to try and better circumstances.”

The interviewee’s mission states that their pharmacy chain is committed to delivering innovative marketing and sales solutions, excellent execution and ultimately outstanding results to their business partners, dedicating themselves to humanity’s mission to achieve a better quality of life by offering a comprehensive portfolio of cost-effective, high-quality medicinal products to the communities where they operate. In addition, the next interviewee, belonging to the same pharmacy chain, concluded: “our mission statement is not officially pasted on a wall... I mean a person wants to deliver the best customer service to their ability, good price, and aim towards pharmacy’s growth.” The dialogist further replied that all the pharmacies are part of a group nowadays, and so are they, for being stockholders in that specific group. With regard to prices,

he mentioned “prices do not all originate from the group chain – they do provide us with guidelines.”

In retrospect, an interviewee converses: “being a one man business, which falls within a small radius of the much larger chain group pharmacies” it had been stated: “if you take the previous into consideration, the pharmacy has to have something that makes it special, the owner stated right from the beginning – that service would differentiate us… His mission was to produce an outstanding service to the clients. The pharmacy is about 14 years old, this was the mission right from the start and it is still continuing up until now. We may as well add an excellent and effective personal relationship with our patients”, which he admits, may be more difficult in certain other environments. This was being underscored by another interviewee who stated: “our mission is to be maybe more unique, to deliver a personal service.”

In total compliance with the aforementioned, the dialogist informed of their mission, by first explaining how the geographical location plays a contributing part: “we are the only pharmacy in an extremely small town. It is a rural town. The closest pharmacy is 30 km to Klerksdorp and the other is 50 km to Ottosdal. A lot of children stay at Klerksdorp boarding schools, so we are aiming to have the same prices as these big retail pharmacies in Klerksdorp. We really try to help our patients, for us it is really about supplying the most affordable products. We have an extremely poor community, a large township, and two old age homes. The way we help them, is with inexpensive products, and trying to have the generic equivalents of all the medicines available, they are normally the cheapest.”

Another interviewee informs of a skills set that can be associated with earlier days, *type of pharmacies* (compounded medications). Utilising this skills set enables the interviewee to conduct a personal service, explaining that: “we still make our own cough medicines and nappy rash ointments, etc. We supply anything from shoe laces to photo frames. Our pharmacy envisions the world where everyone stays healthy and we are dedicated to care for the health needs of the people, in other words our mission supports our vision.”

In summary then, it would seem that the interviewees understand the need for a mission and vision. Their mission and vision are also aligned with the organisational goals of providing healthcare suitable to their community. The vision and mission are, however, not a clear sentence or description, and are not visibly written for all to see. There is also the chance that the responsible pharmacist may see the vision and mission clearly, but that it is not distinctively explained to the pharmacy employees.

5.2.1 Classify strategic stakeholders and publics into the external and internal environment (SWOT).

The *SWOT analysis* will be discussed in its various individual parts; (a) Strengths, (b) Weaknesses, (c) Opportunities and (d) Treats.

(a) Strengths

Starting off by describing the views of pharmacists with regard to strengths, it came under the attention that genuine attempts in trying to help the public are the cornerstones on which one interviewee is building his strengths. This is being underscored as striving to complete the task to the best of his ability, which automatically will lead to offering possible help, and inevitably will reflect in walking the extra mile.

On the other hand, another interviewee indicated that financial statements would specify where more attention should be focused. “The latter is important because we focus mainly on growth. Our strength lies in the ability to bring ‘something’ to the table, apart from the obvious – service and personal relationship, to ensure further growth.” Keeping in mind that the owner himself is an athlete (long-distance athlete), his contributions are as follows: advice that will in effect be focused on sport and sport injuries. This boils down to being dynamic; if there is a lack thereof, the pharmacy will stagnate and growth will be impossible. This is where the pharmacy’s strengths are really highlighted: “performing analysis to ensure that the business does not become stagnant.”

Although certain approaches cannot be pinpointed as an official SWOT analysis, indicatively one interviewee highlighted the use of an informal type of method that is being applied. Environmental changes or the change of the public composition will compel them to perform a more in-depth analysis. “But if there is one example which I can think of, straight off the bat, then it would be that we strive to provide enough personnel to accommodate the public so that we can eliminate long queuing…which is an example of our unique and personal service we supply” the owner informs. Another North West Pharmacy does operate on the same principle, but does admit that: “one of our strengths is, we sell a variety of products – the pharmacy offers comprehensive healthcare products to a diverse range of patients.”

Being an entity that has survived many ‘business years’ may be deemed as a strength in its own right. As the owner of another pharmacy in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District replies: “apart from client service, both our managers have been in this town for over 30 years… We know everyone here and everyone knows us, it is not like it is a new story, where we had to start from scratch, we have been in business for a while…” So another owner admits: “we are quite popular in town,

the pharmacy has been in existence since 1949. I started in 1970. Our strength is our service as we do produce our own mixtures, such as nappy rash ointment…"

Strengths may manifest themselves by keeping the needs of people in mind, as stated by the next interviewee: "most of our patients in the local townships, do not have transport to town, plus they do not have a clinic there, we do not charge them for taking their blood pressure, a minimal fee is being charged for testing blood sugar…"

Independence, experienced by the forgoing dialogist, indicates a privilege that may be coupled with strengths: "We add value – we resolve problems, we are an independent community pharmacy that has the privilege to make decisions, we do not have to consult head office…"

(b) Weakness

Addressing the issue of weaknesses, the interviewee of a pharmacy situated in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District suggested that more work is needed on the pharmacy's front of shop (area in pharmacy that is concerned with gifts, toiletries etc.). The reason is that it is an area where there is a great deal of competition in the market. Focusing there will allow the pharmacy to blend in with the market in general. It became apparent that that which might be a strength had now turned out to be a weakness. As the interviewee of another pharmacy revealed: "we don't really have a clinic in the pharmacy, for us it is difficult to pay someone for their services, we cannot find someone that really wants to do pro bono work… although we have the space for a clinic…" The latter also holds true for another interviewee, informing that the community is extremely poor due to the mines that had closed down. That resulted in people moving away, once thrived by utilising an opportunity such as marketing to advertise their services, for example flu injections, but now ceased to do so. "The remaining population do not have the money to pay clinic fees, they would all rather go to the local clinic that is situated in the street across from us…"

Apart from the above-mentioned, having the competitive advantage, in the case of the big retail pharmacies, can lead to a situation where the smaller pharmacy might find itself in a negative position. For example, the co-owner of one of the interviewed pharmacies concluded: "these bigger pharmacies can lower their prices by a vast amount, even go under cost price, therefore it is impossible for us to compete with them."

A further example within this sphere of weaknesses is portrayed by the following interviewee, suggesting that: "I am getting to the retirement age, I have reached all my dreams, I am now in the relaxing stage of my life…"

(c) Opportunities

The interviewee shares how obvious stumbling blocks may deem opportunities for their pharmacy, by elaborating that: “the clinics are mostly out of stock, we keep these things in consideration – we replace watch batteries, have a small little library, and even a lady that performs foot massages...” In addition to utilising opportunities, a second pharmacy provides assistance to government with regard to their DG (disability grant) patients. Unfortunately, these patients do not receive sufficient help in the clinics. “We help the clinic to manage the patients from the pharmacy’s side. They can post the prescription to the pharmacy and the patients may pick it up from us. We ask about R10 per prescription. This way we can alleviate the enormous queueing at the clinic.”

An elated interviewee commented: “I think we are doing above what is expected, we are well equipped, we have a clinic, we have appointed a clinic sister to take care of wounds, although one of our pharmacists is also very handy in this regard. I think we have really excelled this year with regard to the latter, we can pay attention to these types of opportunities as they present themselves, without ruining our budget.”

By capitalising on previous studies and steering it towards success, the interviewee gave the example: “the owner took the opportunity to upgrade his pharmacology knowledge in 2012 – he also did an MBA, all to ensure he has the business management skills to successfully manage the pharmacy and to progress financially.” In conjunction with the latter, the next interviewee reveals that: “in the pharmaceutical industry we have our stakeholders, which is beneficial for us, as it is an obviously win-win situation, due to the obtainment of certain market shares and products that we can benefit from financially. In addition, he replies: “we know most of our clients, I am not referring to our walk in clients, I am referring to our more permanent clients, those we know by name, we even are familiar with the type of medicine they use, and we do make it our business to follow up on it…”

School schedules pose a huge opportunity, as the interviewed pharmacy owner explains: “when the schools are open or during exam times, we post on our Facebook page or webpage – remember these products are available for enhancing your concentration. For the athletes we do provide advice with regard to supplements.” The same holds true for another pharmacy in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District – their opportunity is well spotted in the single phrase: “The products supplied cater for everyone’s health needs…”

Threats might sometimes pose as a blessing in disguise according to another interviewee, informing that: “everyone said Clicks is a threat… we don’t see them as a threat. The previous

pharmacy which Clicks has bought, lost most of their customers to us. These patients did not want to make use of the Clicks pharmacy at all. Our medicine prices are the same, although maybe not the front of shop… But by us, you are not just a number, like by the big retail pharmacies, where there is no personal service…" This view was seconded by another interviewee, and a third stated a similar experience, by revealing that: "a friend of mine once said, you will never be influenced by these big retail pharmacies on the same level as the guys that are in bigger towns, because you are situated far from them." Keeping this in mind, the interviewee exclaims: "in our case we focus on what we do here. We are aware of what these big retail pharmacies may do, but if you talk about threats one can mentioned the general economy. We try not to be influenced by the general "noise" of the outside world, if you say the mines are closing down the miners are being laid off, it is recession, it is draught, depression, it won't make a difference in our business, that type of things we choose to leave outside the pharmacy door, we are aware of it, but we try not to let our focus be clouded by this. We try to do that what we do, well…"

(d) Threats

With regard to external threats over which an organisation has no control, the interviewee confided: "our biggest threat is more of a permanent nature – we have mines that have closed down and people that have moved away. The people who had a medical fund mainly did work at the mines. The mines provided our main source of income, so if these threats of mines closing to circulate, one worries, because of the uncertainty of the long-term effect. The number of people that have left, inflicted a visible impact on our town. People had looked for jobs elsewhere, this will forever be a threat…our community suffers immensely due to poverty, that is why we do take the big retail pharmacies' prices into consideration, our community cannot say that they have to drive all the way to Klerksdorp to buy from these big retailers because they are cheaper…" The succeeding interviewee admits that it is not possible to really lower their prices, as he continued: "I am being viewed as a crook – because by the current perception the pharmacy is very expensive, the expectancy is that my prices should be the same as the big retail pharmacies. Problematic in our small town, we lose business, with respect to chronic medicines, as people buy it from the big neighbouring retail pharmacies." The same pertains to our residents, fetching their children from the neighbouring towns, resulting in the pharmacy under discussion to not stock certain medicines. This poses complications, especially when somebody needs those medicines urgently over the weekend. He states: "it becomes a crisis." He further elaborates that: "these big retail pharmacies do not have a delivery service, they are also not open after hours, while I have to go out after hours in the evenings, and this is a practical problem that holds a threat to us." It has been suggested that: "for the big retail pharmacies, it is not about the medicine,

it is the front shop that plays a role, pots and pans that they want to sell, they do not mind to make a loss on one item. Their expensive brands and hairdryers are more important. The pharmacy owner admits that he cannot blame anyone, as he puts it: “for going out to look for cheaper prices, times are very tough, there are guys that are really struggling.” He further explains: “this creates a distorted picture, these big retail pharmacies have their own warehouses, they have huge stores where they house their stock, they will for instance not buy from the wholesalers like us, and their products they do obtain from their own warehouses. We on the other hand experience shortages, as they bought all the stock… We had one product that we had great difficulty in obtaining (it was just not available…) and the patient living in the township for whom it was impossible to get to these bigger groups, was without the medicine. This is really an extremely big problem. Things like this have a lot of implications that people are unaware of.”

In conjunction with the big retail pharmacy issue, another interviewee announced innovatively: “we have positioned ourselves as a “value-add” organisation, instead of only focusing on being price driven, we do focus on relationships and marketing, reason being, our clients and patients are very important to us.”

With regard to the organisation’s outside environment that can adversely affect its performance, in this case the new emerging N12, the interviewee informs that: “it is not really any threat, the N12 might be a bit of a problem as they are busy building it right next to the pharmacy, they are cutting us off a bit, it seems like it won’t be a very long process after all, it seems like the total sum of the project will be in the region of 8 months. It might even bring new opportunity about where more clients may visit the pharmacy…”

Apart from the economic climate and outside threats, the next interviewee admits that school holidays pose a threat to their pharmacy, as she advises:” I am not quite sure if we can call it a “threat”, but in our town the long holidays leave their mark, it means fewer customers, maybe not really a threat to such an extent, but one has to adapt and be flexible to compensate for the situation. December is normally very quiet in town – therefore you must save up for these…”

In summary, the interviewees have a clear understanding of the value a SWOT analysis holds for the referring pharmacy. It was admitted that a weakness holds the added advantage of becoming an opportunity. It became apparent that quite a few of the interviewees have the notion that the corresponding front shop needs more attention, as that area, as it had been pointed out, holds the opportunity to generate a profit for the pharmacy. Another interviewee stated that due to the economic influence in the local town, with regard to the mines that had closed down, residents find it difficult to pay for clinic services. The residents would much rather visit the local clinic across the street. Although the pharmacy does have the space for a clinic, it would not be feasible.

Competitive advantage was also mentioned as a threat, to such an extent where smaller pharmacies find it difficult to compete. It was mentioned that the bigger retail pharmacies are in such a favourable position, lowering prices way beyond cost price is advantageous; for the smaller pharmacies, it is a mere wish.

Utilising a SWOT analysis will be very powerful in these instances, as it can unravel the opportunities that a pharmacy might be so well placed to exploit.

5.3 Identify and describe key strategic issues in the macro-, task or internal environment

The interviewees were questioned on internal and external issues, because the importance thereof lies in the fact that internal strategic issues have the possibility to adjust the organisation's performance if neglected. For example, productivity may be hampered by aspects such as organisational management, staffing or even the décor of the pharmacy, all of which the interviewee has control over. Aspects over which the interviewee has no control emanate from outside the organisation's boundaries. These are referred to as external strategic issues and normally may result in catastrophe as the impact of government legislation and competitor advantage may seriously harm the pharmacy if there is an absence of compliance (Steyn & Puth, 2000:68).

(a) Internal strategic issues

- Organisational management

Strategic issues might surface from time to time. As the quest for service delivery might seem plausible at the time, it might later result in refraining from the initial notion. The example given by the interviewee was the implementation of an ATM in the pharmacy. The interviewee admitted that:

- It was an erroneous decision, as wages were being paid out at the first of every month, and the queuing had blocked the entrance to the pharmacy;
- The general public struggled to gain access;
- These long rows favour the opportunity for goods to be stolen;
- Incorrect cash pay-out becomes the interviewee's problem.

The previous caused "numerous explosions of misunderstandings; to wait until cashing up in the evening, would bring a person no closer to the truth," the interviewee admits. "The means to verify

if the pay-out was too much or too little were non-existent. All that was left was to weigh the astronomical losses against the loss of client patronage without the ATM…"

With regard to organisational management as a sub-division of the internal control category, the interviewee stated "cash control" as an important part of their day-to-day function. A personalised control system has been created in order to counteract fraudulent or unauthorised transactions. The duplicate till slip and proof of credit card payment both need to be clipped together and produced. The interviewee states that: "my co-business partner and I are the only two people allowed to cash up – the trust relationship is evident of being together in business for over 40 years; utilising the system of reconciliation ensures that money does not disappear."

- Staffing

On some occasions, internal control with regard to staff issues may be shifted to the back burner, due to "great working relationship and 'nice' personnel", as indicated by one interviewee, which allows for efficient dealing with and solving of staff problems. The relationship is characterised by an association of openness, leaving no room for 'back stabbing'. Although now part of the pharmacy's history, the interviewee admits some previous incidents of the forgoing did exist. Once the particular employee resigned, those corresponding issues were resolved, but currently all (if any) are being resolved in a timely fashion. The same interviewee informed that the staff compliment consists of only women, which at this stage has an added benefit, as she explains: "a woman will understand a mother who has a problem with her sick child better. Our focus is to be as accommodating as possible to support this market." Therefore, as one interviewee responded: "having immediate accessibility to professional people in the dispensary area, without having to make an appointment as in the case of a doctor, sits well with productivity."

Service delivery as a subdivision of internal control poses the possibility to be strongly hampered by the manner in which the staff handle the public and the patients. To counteract any room for error, the interviewee described that: "the owner will from time to time schedule meetings with his staff – to brush up on certain matters, say for instance communication skills, or maybe like recently warned staff not to play on their cell phones while at work…" The interviewee mentioned that the above pharmacy comprises a small workforce, 4-5 people, declaring: "I would say it is a more casual type of relationship that the owner has with his employees, they work closely together on a daily basis, and staff meetings will be organised on the basis of necessity."

- Décor

Pharmacy décor comprises the following: freestanding fixtures referred to as gondola ends are used in pharmacies to display special themed merchandise, placed perpendicular to the end of

an existing row. These are maintained by sales representatives. Seeing décor as a sub-division of internal control, it was highlighted by one of the interviewees that this facet supplies a means by which control and management can be exerted in the pharmacy. Supporting the previous mentioned, it became apparent that when paying attention to detail with regard to décor, another interviewee concurred that: “it can result in perfecting the function to such an extent that one may refer to it as “impeccable.” However, one interviewee stated, although their pharmacy might be structurally old: “the aim is to keep it as tidy as possible; it reflects productiveness and order, which would otherwise not be deemed in the same light, if it is not maintained.” Still within the realm of infrastructure and referring laws, the next interviewee stated: “our fridge in the pharmacy, for instance, must operate within certain temperature frames, there must be control over the temperature, and we must have standard operating procedures (SOPs) for everything we do in the pharmacy. Yes, there are certain aspects that make it difficult for us, but eventually we have to comply with it. We are not permitted to do what we want to do; we have to function within a certain framework.”

(b) External strategic issues

- Government legislation

External control, which falls outside the normal internal pharmacy’s control, stipulates laws that have to be adhered to. As indicated by the interviewee: “the law has to be obeyed at all times.” These laws may be enforced by government, the pharmacy board, or the medicine control council. In addition to the previously mentioned, various medical funds may at times also pose additional guidelines. For instance, stating which medicine types are allowed on which medical fund, as well as how and where patients should obtain their prescriptions. On top of these laws and legislations, the interviewee indicated that external factors have the ability to change price structures, which is a factor not to be taken lightly.

Being indicated as a preferred provider leads to numerous challenges. The interviewee admits that they have to abide to the medical scheme’s rules, implying that they have to provide the cheapest generic medicines, which the medical fund approves of; if not, a co-payment will result, and the pharmacy will receive a penalty. Points will be accumulated against the pharmacy, leading to being marked down. If the pharmacy reaches a certain level of non-compliance, their preferred provider status will be revoked. It has been expressed that the patient has a choice in accepting generic medicine or not, but in reality if the pharmacist is unable to convince the patient to use the generic medicine, the pharmacy will receive a penalty. The interviewee stated that: “I have to convince the patient otherwise, I am not allowed to label the expensive medicine with the generic medicine’s label as that is against the law, even if you pay the difference, it is still unlawful. The

funds complicate things immensely." On this point, the interviewee provided two more examples indicative of medical fund decisions:

- A further difficulty that the interviewee and most of the other interviewee's have encountered is a patient with a certain allergy, which may only be relieved by a specific medicine. The pharmacist is not allowed to dispense it, as the medical aid does not cover it, leaving the patient paying for it.

- "In the case of a six-month-old baby, a specific medicine is being subscribed for the baby, but the medical fund does not pay for it. Unfortunately, there is no substitute, and the question remains, what should I give the baby now?" The interviewee expressed concern especially if money is an issue.

- He further states how painstaking and difficult the situation is to bear. Especially when it has been decided already by the medical fund that the patient is not entitled to have a certain mucus release agent... This leads the interviewer to pose the following question: "With regard to compounding medicines (in other words, compounding medicine are produced according to the patient's needs) is there no possibility? The interviewee explains that this type of medicine will also not be covered. Sadly, the interviewee stipulated that decisions are being made by medical funds, regardless what the doctors find and what the patient needs. The obvious big issue for retail pharmacies is the third party payers (or otherwise known as the medical funds). The position, in which clients or patients are being forced with co-payments, has a big influence. In conjunction with the latter, certain channels are also being forced upon the patients. For instance, the *web-based medicine order service*[3] had an enormous influence on one interviewee's area. It was mentioned that a certain medical fund gave patients a choice to either order medicine online or to visit the pharmacy in person. The result was, according to the interviewee, that private pharmacies attended to much more patients than what the web-based medicine order could (this was mentioned in a meeting the interviewee attended – although specific figures could not be mentioned at the time of the interview). This shows, states the interviewee: "that patients are more concerned about convenience as what they are about utilising dedicated pharmacies or certain groups, or remote delivery pharmacies, or web-based medicine order service, for the most, people are not bothered by these, although important to the medical funds."

Another interviewee admits that all is at the expense of medicine. For the interviewee, it poses a huge strategic issue, which brings the interviewee to another point: "The thought of the

[3] Due to ethical implications, the web-based ordering service's name has been concealed.

institutionalisation of the proposed NHS system, another big headache…" Reference was also made of the cost implication: "it is going to cost the taxpayer a hefty amount." The interviewee also exclaims that "hospitals and clinics suffer due to poor management, how the NHS system can succeed in such uncertainty, and not even to mention the effect thereof on private pharmacies… we will see where it is going to take us." In conjunction with the latter, another interviewee claims concern when mentioning the unavailability of medicines or chronic medicine, so the question remains: "how are they going to maintain the NHS system?" The goal seems to be unreachable. The interviewee says: "it is going to be one huge failure. Where it is going to end up is yet to be seen…" The latter is underscored by another interviewee, who disclosed the following perception: "there are challenges, within the health sciences – the National Health Insurance that is going to be implemented will definitely have an influence on us, but we are still unaware of what it will be…"

- Competitive advantage

Based on the abovementioned and the statements made earlier about medical fund discounts, which strained some pharmacies financially to the state of shut down, for others, the answer lay in sprucing up the front shop (housing presents, sport supplements, make up, toiletries etc.) to boost profits. In retrospect, healthy competition seems to be the solution. The interviewee supplied the following background: "Our town comprises two pharmacies. The referring pharmacy's pharmacist has recently completed a course, allowing to subscribe certain medicines, even more than us – but in all honesty the town is big enough for two pharmacies… we borrow from one another in time of a crisis." It was also indicated that in case of a client becoming impatient with the one pharmacy, the second pharmacy will be visited and *vice versa*… "this is not an indication of a 'conflict relationship', but rather of a 'good working relationship'".

The next interviewee informs: "It is difficult to compete in an environment where the big corporate groups have their own corporate supplier, which we do not have. So, if you have your own corporate supplier, there are distribution fees, which your supplier gets, which we do not. It changes the profit market, it makes it difficult to be competitive – that is why the owner said right from the beginning he cannot compete with the prices of the corporate groups. He brings to the table service and a personal relationship, to give the pharmacy a chance to be competitive. And at this stage, it works."

The abovementioned interviewee claims that: "legislation is very difficult for us. We must also keep in mind that the standards and the laws are instilled by the pharmacy board. These have to be taken into consideration and be adhered to. We are not permitted to do what we want; we have to function within a certain framework. Important to remember, the fee that we are able to

ask for the service that we provide is regulated by law. The regulation indicates a maximum – so what happens, in some cases, certain pharmacies do not charge the maximum fee, they charge less than that."

- Service delivery

Local government's failure to provide service delivery was highlighted as another indicated point of frustration. The interviewee mentioned that the town is very dirty, informing that: "numerous calls to the municipality have fallen onto deaf ears." The messiness is a result of sewage flowing down the street, right past the main entrance of the pharmacy. In the past, people were utilised to assist with the cleaning process, but at this stage, they are very reluctant to do so. The interviewee is sceptical of the local municipality and the recurring problems. In order to cope in this day and age, one interviewee admits: "Our occupation is one characterised by challenges. It is a dynamic career – we have to change frequently to stay abreast."

In effect, the strategic issue that poses the single biggest frustration and is influencing each and every small pharmacy in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District is that of government legislation, which resorts under external issues, over which the interviewees unfortunately have no control. Government legislation presents law-like guidelines that have to be adhered to under all circumstances. In addition, factors mentioned by a wide number of interviewees that cause immense stress among the pharmacists are those of medical funds. Medical funds have the ability to dictate how and from where patients should obtain their prescriptions, stipulating which conditions validate co-payments, and the pending institutionalisation of the National Health Service (NHS), all of which contribute to casting its shadows. The level of frustration is understandable, as the latter has the ability to recur, causing temporary setbacks, wasted efforts and interruptions in production.

Internal control, on the other hand, favours interviewee intervention. Pushing the envelope on service delivery caused the pharmacy owner to rethink the pharmacy strategy. In a situation such as this, where the implementation of an ATIM in the pharmacy had daunting effects, it was possible to rectify erroneous decisions. Although it is apparent that each and every small pharmacy's ideal is to grow and prosper, managers at times lack in fully recognising and dealing with the changing internal and external climate that the pharmacies are an integral part of.

5.4 Decide on a corporate communication strategy

The corporate communication strategy, in short, is built on the organisation's mission, vision and values.

(a) Improve productivity

The interviewee assured that their focus is on walking the extra mile. In order to adhere to the forgoing, if, for example, a patient is looking for a certain type of medicine, which the pharmacist might be unsure of, instead of rejecting the request straight away, the suggestion was to request the old medicine containers to be of better assistance. It has also been disclosed by another interviewee that productivity can always be improved; for instance, it had been brought to the attention of staff to be available to customers instead of playing on cell phones. As afterthought, the interviewee remarked: "If you can refer to this as productivity… otherwise no, I do not think we ever had other problems related to productivity."

In terms of the big "green and yellow" monster, as referred to by another interviewee: "which had opened in our vicinity four years ago, this caused the personnel enormous stress." In order to counteract the effects, personnel training over a period of three months was presented by a training centre. Three contact sessions were offered, exposing staff to very actual cases, covered through relevant topics. This was done in preparation to supply the personnel with physical and emotional coping techniques. In addition, the interviewee reveals that frequent staff meetings were also introduced to cover certain issues. For example, their next meeting challenged the 22-member personnel compliment to join, accompanied by 10 new ideas, revealing how the pharmacy may operate better, cleverer, faster, more accurate and more cost effective. Admitting, the interviewee replies: "business is flat, it is single figures, month to month, double figure growth is scarce. If you look at retail business in totality, retail is under pressure."

The forgoing interviewee further remarked that: "the pharmacy must be open to categories for expansion, upgrade, or need to venture into new business opportunities. If a retailer remains dormant and never participates in any new undertakings, different outcomes may never be experienced. Innovation should be an ongoing process." The preceding information was verified by another interviewee, who, in addition, added that: "maintenance of high standards improves the quality of healthcare service all together."

(b) Capitalise on an opportunity

"Our lives revolve around medical funds", a respondent advises. A while back one of the biggest medical funds in the country forced their members to obtain medicine from the *web-based medicine order service.* And after great pressure from their patients and other role players, the fund had to give in, accepting or appointing private partners and independent retail pharmacies. The fact that the pharmacy forms part of the previous mentioned, was clearly communicated to all the stakeholders, correctional services, schools, in other words all of these bodies that are

using this fund. We informed that chronic medicines can also be handled, and that there will be no penalty clauses when obtaining the medicine from us. The pharmacy also indicated that:

- The patient may receive their holiday medicines well before time, which the pharmacy, in turn, will claim on the due date. Ensuring the patient is free from regulations and limitations and seeing to it that the medicines will be delivered.

- The pharmacy has a system whereby the local government buys medicine from the pharmacy for distribution to the local clinics, preceded by a process of quoting, producing a pro forma invoice, waiting for three months, and finally when the money shows in the pharmacy's bank account, the medicines will be distributed.

- Another example given by the interviewee is of WCA's (Workman's Compensation Act) for occupational injuries. As the interviewee puts it: "it is normally a nightmarish experience, you do not get your money, this is a situation characterised not only in the private healthcare, but in general, where the employer is responsible for injury on duty. We the employer have to pay this money and then claim it, we have to wait extensively before being refunded." Due to the system lacking credibility, the pharmacy is reluctant to participate, as it is being deemed risky to claim the money.

Another interviewee is in total agreeance with the abovementioned on how medical funds can influence their lives, by stating: "on certain occasions the medical funds would cease payment of a certain product. In such instances, we will best try and explain the situation to the patient, especially if the payment was approved up until now." The interviewee describes that fortunately the patients do understand and are fully compliant. One other interviewee also follows the same route and explains that: "patients are not being notified about the new medical fund changes in advance, only once the situation arises within the pharmacy."

Strict medicine regulations exist, which, according to another interviewee, "does not allow for advertising of any random information, all pharmacies deliver the same services, you cannot use that as advertisement. Permitted, is to state that the pharmacy is a preferred service provider for a certain medical fund. So is a certain diet that is associated with that pharmacy. Pharmacies are not allowed to advertise services and prices in order to reflect negatively on other pharmacies. This will be considered unprofessional and a pharmacy might even be convicted." The point is, advertising is a regulated action. In other words, the interviewee cautioned: "if my 'looking good' is going to make another pharmacy look bad… then that is unprofessional – I am not allowed to do that."

Another interviewee reasoned that by means of legislation the pharmacy does not only lose profit, but also gives hope as more feet will be lured to the pharmacy. Take, for instance, a large medical fund that the government subsidises; if it contracted for chronic medicines, the members will not have to endure any co-payments by the participating pharmacy. Profit might be lost, but it produces an opportunity for the patients to buy something else from the front shop.

In addition to the previous mentioned, one incident paved the way to overcome a difficult situation. The interviewee reveals that the wholesaler forced certain stock specials onto the pharmacy. Due to previous experience, it became apparent that these products do not really sell, especially because the community will not be able to afford it. To sell the products at cost price still did not work; in the end, it had to be sent back as that method of advertising does not attract much reaction. The interviewee continued: “You have to cater for your market and they do not understand our small pharmacy’s needs…. They take the bigger retail pharmacies into consideration, but it does not work here by us.” Taking the interviewee’s market into consideration, it was stated that Lennon’s products should rather be promoted as the public is accustomed to ‘doctoring’ their babies with Lennon’s products.

Setbacks in the pharmacy environment are numerous. One example that could be recalled was the one of mail orders. The interviewee implied they have lost many chronic medicine patients as well as money due to this. They had to communicate the preceding information to the public, informing of their inability to provide chronic medicines. Starting from now on, medicines should be obtained through the post.

The interviewee refers to this matter as the biggest obstacle they had to face. Fortunately, the medical scheme under discussion did see it fit to supply the patients with another alternative, allowing them to obtain the medicines from the pharmacy as was the procedure previously. The interviewee had reservations: “It is 100% if the patient may be provided with choices, but they cannot force a person to obtain their chronic medicine by post. I do put in all the effort with regard to chronic medicines, get it registered on behalf of the patient, and now they have to get it through the post…” The problem here, as the interviewee states is: “that older persons’ medicines at times go through name changes, which poses dangerous if not aware of this. In other words, the generics were changed, and the older people do not know that it is basically the same pill, then they will take the both together.” As an afterthought, the interviewee mentioned it is impossible for the postal orders to be cheaper than their pharmacy, as the pharmacy does not even charge delivery. She exclaimed: “I am totally flabbergasted.”

“Following these rules are challenging” claimed the interviewee. “Especially when the Pharmacy council does its inspection visits; it happened two or three times this year.” It was claimed that

during this visit: “a whole bunch of new rules have been proposed, some of which can be recalled as absurd… Decisions that were made, were done without the knowledge of what is really happening on ground level…luckily nothing to such an extent that influenced the pharmacy… Stakeholders such as our personnel had to be informed and communicated to.”

Coinciding with the previous interviewee regarding information sharing among stakeholders, the one interviewee relayed an incident where the doctors on a regular basis have to be informed of the availability of medicines. If there is a communication breakdown: “I would not know what to give to the patient,” the respondent informed. In addition to the recent mentioned, another interviewee adds that these conversations with the doctor might also entail an enquiry to the dosage strength of medicines, especially if a sudden change has been picked up by the pharmacist, it first has to be verified to alleviate any possible mistakes.

In reference to the corporate communication strategy, with specific reference to the pending issues experienced in the subsequent sections, i.e. (a) improving productivity and (b) capitalising on an opportunity that are being dealt with accordingly, the interviewees lack the ability to link the pending issues to the absence of a proper composed communication strategy.

One interviewee enlightened that “our lives revolve around medical funds.”Taking this statement into consideration, the latter may be included in the overall goals and methods of the pharmacy’s communication activities, among this, in addition, the pharmacies’ wishes should be shared with the public, including stakeholders who the pharmacy aims to reach. This step is necessary and should not be dealt with on a hunch, as effective communication and crucial pharmacy objectives will never be dispersed successfully to their internal- and external stakeholders. This results in patients, suppliers or other key publics who might be unaware of policy adjustments, approaching events and other applicable pharmacy information. Capitalising on an opportunity will become a challenge in itself as intermittent communication from different people will portray the pharmacy as disorganised, which will withhold the pharmacy from utilising this advantage.

If some staff members are uninformed regarding key issues, an inability to complete duties will occur and will hamper productivity. Consistent information flow creates the impression of transparency, leaving staff members to feel in touch with their environment. A lack thereof will breed suspicion towards management.

5.5 Establish communication goals

The step of setting communication goals is the link between the communication strategy and the communication plan.

(a) Supply necessary information to the stakeholder

The interviewee informed: “let’s take the following example, for a while a type of antibiotic was not available, due to problems experienced with import. This scenario repeats itself from time to time and may alternate according to product demand and so forth.” Information with regard to certain medicine availability or, an enquiry about the medicine a patient had received a month ago, for instance, all needed to be communicated to doctors on a regular basis. Another interviewee stresses the latter as a scenario close to their own, concluding: “therefore, good relationships exist between the pharmacy and the surrounding doctors…”

The interviewee admitted that the pharmacy’s communication has a wider spectrum of audiences than only the surrounding doctors. “If a problem arises with regard to the supplier, the pharmacy will contact the wholesaler in order to explain these issues. If these issues are related to a doctor’s queries, the pharmacy would take it upon themselves to contact the medical representative in order to provide the doctor with the much needed information.”

Another interviewee disclosed the impact of generic medicines, stating that the aim of the communication, in this instance, is to obtain permission, explaining: “we are supposed to give generic medicines, some of the medical funds compel us to do so... they also advise on medicine prices. Therefore, medicine within that price range has to be distributed by the pharmacy, otherwise the fund will penalise the client with a co-payment.” The interviewee enlightens that although familiar with the patients, permission is needed to dispense the generic equivalent. The interviewee confesses that:” If we do not give them the equivalent, the patient receives an SMS from the referring medical fund. The whole thing is about money – medicines become expensive – the generics are at times very cheap and it does the same job. Some of these medicines are clones of certain medicines, being manufactured in the same factory, it is only a label difference…”

According to literature, stakeholder communication, on a regular basis, creates goodwill that leads to a positive relationship between key stakeholders. Strong relations result in a wide range of advantages (Schamotta, 2017). Drawing from the foregoing, the interviewee informed that: “We belong to an organisation ((ICPA) Independent Community Pharmacy Association); this organisation also communicates with us, we all have to be part it, otherwise we will be uninformed. We as pharmacists also need representation, in other words a body that can talk on our behalf.” The interviewee quoted from the website https://icpa.co.za/about.php: “The objective of ICPA is single-mindedly to assist members in securing a vibrant and sustainable future as independent, owner-managed pharmacies. With this, gaining or retaining the understanding and recognition by stakeholders and industry players of the role that independents can (and do) play in delivering

important healthcare services to the communities that they serve, is imperative." The interviewee states that: "they are our voice giving us guidance to the amount we should charge for dispensing fees."

It became apparent, according to the interviews conducted, that certain occasions called for the utilisation of communication's various channels, in order to address issues successfully. With regard to our patients, an interviewee declared: "it is not uncommon to receive a phone call from a patient, requesting a repeat prescription while on holiday at Mossel Bay…" The interviewee admits that this does not pose any issues, and they had complied gladly. The next interviewee informs that: "if any situation arises, which needs to be communicated, the clients that hold accounts with us will be notified via a written message at the bottom of their accounts." The reason being, the interviewee admits: "Half of our clients do not have mailboxes, left alone street addresses… Therefore, it becomes increasingly difficult to distribute information. Even notifications have been used before, but face-to-face communication tends to be the best form of communication in the end." The benefits of face-to-face communication have been *unmistakably true for the following interviewee, as she portrays:* "quite a lot of Namibian students have the perception that in South Africa they have to pay their medicines out of their pockets, we have stipulated to them that the pharmacy handles all medical schemes, even the Namibian funds…"

(b) Change of stakeholder attitude

In order to find out whether the various interviewees ever faced a situation where stakeholder attitude had to be changed around an issue, it resulted in an interviewee response as follows: "We had an issue with a patient trying to falsify a prescription..." The interviewee immediately had to notify the referring doctor. "Needless to say, the doctor was extremely upset and wanted to notify authorities. I had to reassure the doctor that we are all familiar with this patient, this is a 22 yearlong ongoing problem… and we have been handling the situation by various means possible… This reassurance eventually had a calming effect on the doctor…" Although the previous incident could be defueled successfully, the following interviewee replies: "In general, we as pharmacists are by no means entitled to be prescriptive when it comes to medicine and what a doctor had prescribed. If a doctor requires advice with regard to a substitute for medicine currently out of stock, the pharmacists may gladly oblige, but by no means otherwise."

In some cases, with reference to government legislation, medical schemes or pharmacy council guidelines, the interviewee admits: "there is not much a pharmacy can contribute to change the patient's attitude towards the implications." Informal matters lend themselves to the possibility of negotiation and will be within the pharmacy's reach. In contrast, another interviewee states: "attempting to chance perceptions happens on a daily basis. Take for instance the fact into

consideration that different generic products exist for the same medicine and that the patient has been using a certain type for a while... Suddenly, the medical fund decides to give preference to another type… This is when communication becomes crucial. The pharmacist has to explain that although the name has changed, it is basically still the same type of medicine, just a different manufacturer. The challenge is that people do not readily believe this…" Another interviewee revealed the same incident as mentioned above, but added: "The problem is", according to the same interviewee, "that patients feel that what the doctor prescribed is what they should get, the patients truly believe generic means something totally different…" She had also stated that: "single occurrences of negative attitudes are due to people having personal issues…"

Products are offered at competitive prices, whereby it is implied that staying healthy is affordable by almost everyone. The foregoing interviewee elaborated by stating that their pharmacy's quarterly advertisement sheet (broad sheet) has the general goal of covering the spectrum around price and discounts. The general public holds the perception that the corporate pharmacies are cheaper, the interviewee informed that: "with these types of promotions running, we show that our pharmacy is intensely price competitive, sensitive to the relative fashion trends and usages, portraying to the public we are also in the running for business." The interviewee admits: "our strategy is not aimed to increase sales, but rather to alter the perception of the public, bringing under their attention that it is not always so that the bigger corporate pharmacies are cheaper." The pharmacy has in operation for 15 years, proof of the fact that: "strategic communication is fruitful."

Opportunities to voice uncertainties had a favourable outcome for the subsequent interviewee, sharing the following: "Some things are very difficult" – frequent roadshows, with reference to a certain medical fund, are being hosted in places such as Klerksdorp or Potchefstroom. The opportunity is provided to all the pharmacies belonging to the same network to reflect on the difficulties being experienced. On one such occasion, the interviewee described: "we had a situation where one big wholesaler all the way from Durban revealed that small pharmacies are not allowed to place orders smaller than R5 000.00. This poses a very big problem, especially if it is a small town pharmacy. Say, for instance, I want two or three types of antibiotics, needing it urgently, I have to buy R5 000 worth of stock in order to obtain antibiotics that are unobtainable anywhere else… we plainly decided to boycott this principle. We informed the wholesaler that we are not buying from them anymore. This boycott was upheld for about two to three months, and we received a letter agreeing they have decreased the limit of R5 000 to R500. The lesson we have learnt – you have to work together, otherwise you will get no reaction…"

Regarding setting communication goals, it can be said that, between information dispersing and changing stakeholder attitudes, coherent strategy is not representative of all the pharmacies, and

so are business objectives not clearly identifiable in all the interviewed pharmacies. In such pharmacies, a good strategic framework is present, and being utilised as an intuitive 'communication-goal-link' from which these small pharmacies operate. This results in excellent relationships between the pharmacy and the surrounding doctors, patients, and corresponding suppliers. There is a definite innate supply of information with regard to the stakeholder. The latter became obvious when related doctors' queries resulted in the pharmacist taking action to contact the medical representative to provide the doctor with the much needed information. The same holds true for the feedback communication between the pharmacist, supplier and the wholesaler in order to alleviate surfacing issues. This is verified by an interviewee's suggestion, i.e. "working together results in action". Communication challenges in a diverse community, where half of the clients do not have mailboxes, nor street addresses, become an extreme challenge to disseminate information, but face-to-face communication saves the day.

For the pharmacies that process identifiable communication goals, the challenges are no less gruelling than for those pharmacies that operate without it. The fact is, apart from the day-to-day difficulties, demands of numerous medical aids, complex rules and regulations, and the diverse social contexts, South Africa exhibits a particularly difficult healthcare environment for the retail pharmacist to navigate, and to build strategic communication goals.

5.6 Establish a communication policy

The communication policy's function is to coordinate stakeholder engagement.

(a) **Who** is allowed to communicate **what** with **whom?**

"I think with regard to *what* to communicate or *what* not to communicate, the legislation of the pharmacy board will state what is allowable or not. Another important thing to mention is patient confidentiality. I am not allowed to make any patient information public, this is the ifs and buts...", reveals the locum. It became clear that the pharmacist may communicate with the patient about his/her medical condition and the prescription among themselves, but to another patient or colleague, this is out of the question. Latching on to the previous mentioned, an interviewee warned that it is most likely that information might be of such a sensitive nature that it would be preferable not to reveal it. A client's account information has also been deemed in the same light of confidentiality, and as the interviewee described: "What happens in the pharmacy stays in the pharmacy." The latter was supported by another interviewee when uttering these words of caution: "people's privacy and dignity should be respected." Further drawing on the comparison with the abovementioned: "a pharmacist's business is one of privacy, it is similar to an attorney's office, you don't want everyone to know what medicine the patients use, it is unlawful, you are not

allowed to tell someone else what illnesses a patient has. I am not allowed to even discuss the content of someone's account with somebody else. I am not allowed to discuss a client's debt. The same goes for my personnel. I am not allowed to discuss them with the general public for that matter."

In order to answer the question of *who* to communicate with, the next interviewed pharmacist informs that they do not have official communication lines jotted down on paper, but revealed: "I think it sort of happens automatically. The lady in the office takes the lead. It is normally between me and her (the owner works shifts) – we decide among ourselves what to do. She is primarily responsible for the smaller things …" With regard to the communication policy, it became clear that the HR lady is mainly responsible for personnel issues, and so forth. Her duties are to handle personnel issues, which include leave, scheduling of meetings and so forth. Another interviewee built his frame of reference on personnel expertise, as he vowed: "we delegate, we know our personnel well, especially their strong points, we know who will be more confident in the role of communicator, or who can perform certain tasks better such as filing or organising. You then utilise those people with the corresponding strengths." For example: "the sales person in the front shop will not communicate with the public when a problem arises. We have dedicated admin personnel that do understand the situation and that would be able to handle it" another interviewee revealed. In contrast with the foregoing communication practices, the following interviewee informed: "the pharmacist on duty mainly conveys the information; it also depends on how serious the matter is." The succeeding pharmacy owner portrayed his viewpoint when he noted: "I am available in the pharmacy every day of the week, and so are the pharmacist assistants and the ladies in the pharmacy. If the type of feedback falls within their scope, they may also pitch in..." On some occasions, the preceding comment posed a problem for one interviewee as she informed: communication would mainly be handled by the pharmacists or pharmacist's assistants. It has been pointed out that a temporary worker will not have enough experience or knowledge to handle the request, and therefore permanent staff would be a better choice. Problems were previously experienced because of this decision, the interviewee cautioned: "staff felt they were treated unjust, the result was that they became difficult…"

"In terms of education, all pharmacists have the same education; we have the same scope of practice, meaning we can be seen in the same light, so to speak. But when it comes to the financial matters in the pharmacy, it is best left to the owner…" an interviewee reported. Although the preceding interviewee drew the parallel between the similarities in education as a communication measure, one pharmacy owner stated that in terms of pharmacist-doctor communication, he would much rather feel comfortable with the idea of himself or the co-owner handling the matter.

Taking the general spectrum in the foregoing section into consideration, one interviewee proposed: “a calm approach without offending the client must be applied at all times...”

(b) Crisis communication

It has been stated, according to literature (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014:227-228), that, despite the interviewee’s perception of a crisis being right or wrong, this is the starting point for communication. The truth resides with the receiver. When authorities and communicators adhere to public issues, queries and concerns, the public will pay attention. Data should be focused on what the public wants to know and not what the authorities want to communicate.

One of the interviewees gave a descriptive example of the subsequent information, by revealing the following: “a time ago, the Department of Health sent notices to the pharmacies stating a case of measles – this information had to be communicated to the patients on whom this might have an effect. Other than that, this was a once-off incident…”

The interviewee further elaborated by informing the possibility of a lurking crisis. The example supplied was of the necessity of pharmacy insurance cover for dispensing errors.

According to the South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC, 2016b) there is a growing rise in the number of complaints of medicine dispensing errors being lodged against pharmacists.

Addressing delegates at the 2nd National Conference, SAPC (2016c) Vice President Douglas Defty said the increase in complaints could be due to patients being more aware or being encouraged to lodge complaints against pharmacists.

He said medication dispensing errors occurred due to the wrong dose being dispensed (30%); the wrong technique of dispensing (12%); the wrong drug being dispensed (12%); patients missing doses (7%); the wrong dose times (7%); and patients being given drugs when they have a known allergy (6%), (SAPC, 2016c).

The implication of the latter, as the interviewee undeniably exclaimed, is very telling: “although the insurance cover is a backup, one has to keep this in mind; lately, people have been going out of their way to find places to sue…we are very fortunate, we have not yet been in such a position..” As afterthought she mentioned: “The poor doctors have it worse than us… they are insured for massive amounts….”

When a crisis or an emergency arises it, follows certain lines of communication, as stated by the various interviewees in the following section. One such respondent claimed: “the path from top (owner and his wife) will first be approached in such an event. A crises relating to a patient will

result in contacting the doctor, or phoning the ambulance. If it is financial in nature, the interviewee, who is in this case also the owner, would attempt to sort it out by allocating the person responsible for client accounts." In all cases, the suggestion was to manage the crises accordingly, as the owner informed: "The onus at the end of the day will always come back to the responsible pharmacist. The pharmacists will mainly handle the big problems, but it also depends on the nature of the problem…" One other interviewee remitted: "it is very difficult to answer." The notion is held that specific guidelines or standard operating procedures (SOP) do exist, although a formal conversation with the owner in this regard, confirming the forgoing, was never established. The latter is evident, as the interviewee referred back to a previous crisis the pharmacy once suffered with regard to server failure. The interviewee mentioned:" it brought the pharmacy to a halt and the owner was phoned. An official SOP stating – phone the owner in such cases – does not exist." The interviewee further informed: "in an instance like this, it is justifiable to phone the owner." The foregoing holds true for other staff members, not only for the responsible pharmacist, as the interviewee apprised: "in a one-man business, it is easier. The owner is the next authority in line and he makes the decisions…"

Coinciding with the afore stated, the similarity ties the owner or more senior pharmacy personnel together to address the crisis. "At the end of the day the pharmacist is supposed to be professional", the interviewee replied, advising that the pharmacist should in any given situation be able to handle and maintain himself. One should not become emotionally involved, but should rather look at the facts and come up with solutions. "If a problem situation would arise with a client or a patient, handle the problem accordingly to ensure that such a client would stay extremely loyal for the rest of his/her life." The interviewee jokingly referred to the previous by saying: "they become the president of your fan club…" He further portrayed: "problems are not always negative, to solve a problem may have a lot of positive results, and the biggest misunderstandings are normally a result of poor communication or the lack thereof."

With regard to the communication policy, stating *who* is allowed to communicate *what* to *whom,* it must be applauded that the various forms of communication (including crisis communication) have well-defined **informal** plans, whereby information is dispersed in an orderly fashion. In retrospect, none of the interviewees officially stated, as advised by literature, that the order by which the pharmacy's communication policy had been addressed was as follows: compile a communication strategy, document the policies and procedures, and inform employees every step of the way, to obtain their buy-in and support. Instead, the premise revealed that a specific situation will dictate *who* will communicate, or even, what not to communicate. Indicative of the previous mentioned is patient confidentiality, which is a code of conduct held up by all pharmacists, as the patient's privacy and dignity must be respected at all times. Apart from the

foregoing, some pharmacies utilise employee strengths as a benchmark for undertaking the communication function.

Some pharmacies have definite guidelines ruling the decision, for instance temporary staff are not allowed to deal with public enquiries due to a lack of work experience, while another interviewee stated that, if the request falls within the employee's expertise, they may gladly oblige. In terms of related education, it was mentioned that all pharmacists possess the same level of education, and therefore communication should not be withheld as all have the same scope of practice. In hindsight, one interviewee added that portraying a calm approach without offending the client must be applied at all times. This was underscored by an interviewee, claiming that when a crisis situation arises, a pharmacist should be able to handle and maintain himself without becoming emotionally involved, paying attention to the facts and coming up with solutions. This advice seems to have a positive effect by ensuring customer patronage. If any condition falls outside the above stipulated scope, the owner should be consulted, or contacted if not present.

It became clear that even without an official communication policy, the small pharmacies tend to aim to a greater or lesser extent to assist the public, enabling the pharmacy to run as effectively as possible, through which the respect of colleagues and stakeholders is being gained.

5.7 Draft to top management

Only certain interviewees reported positively by drawing the attention to the following fact: "it is important for us to draw up a budget for communication." One interviewee pointed out:" the communication budget is derived from pharmacy funds." Some interviewees felt that: "it is not a priority to draw up a budget for communication." In conjunction with the foregoing, another interviewee strongly admitted that: "money is an issue…"

It would seem that, among the interviewees, there is as much controversy as there is compliance, but the consensus point could not be successfully established. Each to their own, as different acting influences cast the last vote as to whether a budget for communication is justified or not. Taking these abovementioned reasons into account, the assumptions may be drawn that, just maybe, these pharmacies had an epiphany, and are now able to separate the pharmacies' *wants* from its *needs*, and only then according to literature, the pharmacy's budget can assist as an enabling communication tool between the pharmacy and their stakeholders. Acknowledging the interviewee statements, it is easy to grasp that when a business flourishes, obtaining management's buy-in with regard to a communication budget is easier to gain than on the flip side of the coin, as it results in stress to reduce costs. Interviewees indicate the measure of a pharmacy's financial success, according to the organisation's growth rates to determine whether

the profit is above or below the curve. At the end this is the final determinant, rippling out to all aspects of strategic planning.

5.8 Conduct an overall corporate communication media analysis

Good external communication has been stated as the forerunner for good internal communication (Media & Writers Firm, 2014). Building on this notion, internal organisational media together with its subsequent subcategories will be discussed, as revealed by the interviewees of the small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District.

5.8.1 Internal organisational media (internal communication).

Excellent communication is conducive to competitiveness, and in addition seems to be an agent in ensuring the survival of an organisation. Therefore, interpersonal communication enhances collaboration assisting in achieving the organisation's mission and vision (Marepalli, 2015).

- Interpersonal communication media include WhatsApp, telephone calls, small group meetings, interviews, briefings, speeches, presentations or chance conversations.

    - **WhatsApp:** The interviewee replied, admitting that: "it is specifically for personnel, if contact is needed urgently, like in the case of a crises situation." Another interviewee supports the aforementioned by saying: "it is a great initiative mainly to keep everyone up to date, very handy for contacting the clinic sister with regard to consultations and so forth."
    - **Telephone call**: Specific information justifies a phone call, the interviewee explained: "if I can give you an example, our vaccinations for babies like for instance measles or chickenpox, are from time to time difficult to obtain. This is also our pharmacy's strong point, stock control. We do get many referrals saying that it has been stipulated, that if we don't have stock, no one else in town will have stock…" The interviewee communicates the availability through to paediatrician, and all the sisters that manage baby clinics, informing the latter of the availability of measles or chickenpox vaccinations. Other medications may also become scarce, where upon specialists like urologists, ear, mouth and throat specialists (ENT) will be notified that these medicines are in stock again.
    - **Meetings:** One interviewee claims that: "meetings are mainly held for the pharmacy's staff. Another reporter confirms the previous mentioned, but added that meetings occur when problems are surfacing and need to be addressed. With regard to meeting frequency, the previous interviewee admitted: "it should happen more frequently, but at present once a month or every three months seems to be more the going rate." The next interviewee concurred that: "we are a family business and meetings are being held now and again, we communicate among one another to sort out any issues… we would

stipulate what we want, and the staff can also say what they want…" It further had been pointed out by another interviewee that they meet: "every Monday morning", while the next specified additionally: "we notify personnel to either come in to work early, or after, it all depends on the situation. The admin lady will be responsible for the meeting details."

- **Empowerment training:** Training sessions are held with some pharmaceutical companies during the evenings. The interviewee declares that attempting empowerment session in the evening rather than before commencing work has its benefits. Attending these sessions at the pharmaceutical company's premises allows for uninterrupted focus on the material at hand. The interviewee contemplates: "the pharmaceutical businesses are very eager to sponsor these events, it happens on a frequent basis, and in addition it adds value to their products."

- Print communication media: house journals, bulletins, newsletters, news tabloids, Magazines, annual reports, speciality publications, bulletin boards, electronic publications.

5.8.2 Mass communication media (external communication)

This form of communication is most likely to be employed to obtain the attention of the external stakeholders. External communication focuses on audiences outside the organisation. The target audiences are consumers, investors, regulatory bodies, and others, through which various connections between the organisational actions and continued effectiveness can be created.

(a) Printed media: newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, posters

Pamphlets, posters and magazines: Pamphlets had been posted on occasion in the various residents' mailboxes, and additionally, the interviewee informed that: "Posters and pamphlets are immensely helpful during flu season." Another interviewee declared that: "a standard A4 page that all local pharmacies have access to can be utilised to place advertisements. Still in the realm of printed media, one other interviewee informs of an advertisement on poster format, explaining: "it is a very popular diet, the information was also distributed on pamphlets and placed in a popular Afrikaans family magazine." Still in the realm of printed media, the next interviewee explains that: "the pharmacy chain provides us with brochures to be displayed on the counter. If people are interested, they may take it free of charge…"

(b) Internet: Facebook, electronic publications, web pages, chat rooms, electronic mail, advertising and social media.

- **Electronic communication:** One interviewee reveals that: "we use Facebook for the purpose of advertising medical shoes." He stated that Facebook is used to reach the general public,

while another interviewee vowed that: “advertising for students is most effective when using Facebook.” In the electronic communication arena, another interviewee felt that using electronic communication, in specific reference to a webpage, http://www.the-diet.co.za/af/ to advertise their popular diet is ideal.

- **Social media:** Facebook is being utilised for advertising, promotions and specials etc. Another interviewee said enthusiastically: “of course we budget for communication, and not only for printed media. Social media plays an enormous role… we have hosted a lot of competitions, it creates anticipation and excitement to take part in our promotions, we supply practical and purposeful prizes.”

- **My town hub:** One interviewee conveys that: “we use **My Town Hub (http://www.mytownhub.co.za/)**. Potchefstroom also has one, and Klerksdorp, it is nationwide. One can access a wide range of topics, like: news, services, events and more to simplify your life. It is town specific. We publish our newspaper there, which shows all our specials… On the customer accounts, we specify how people may access this information, stating that they have to download the MyHub App on their cell phone or computer.”

- **Email:** The reporter stipulates that email as a form of communication does suit the pharmacy’s needs excellently. The interviewee states that: “it does not cost you a stamp and an envelope, plus there is no need to type the recipient’s address on the envelope. The account won’t be lost and the client will at all times have it available on their phone or computer…”

(c) Extrapersonal communication media: WhatsApp, word of mouth, small group meetings, interviews, briefings, speeches, presentations or chance conversations

- **Word of mouth:** The interviewee exclaims that: “We hope that our service delivery is advertising enough.” Mention was made that clients would come in and say: “we were at a certain pharmacy, but we do like your pharmacy more, we find it better and more enjoyable here by you…” It has happened in the past, and the interviewee expressed that newcomers would visit the pharmacy due to reference by other residents or doctors. One other interviewee specified that their pharmacy is in fact very small. Any information needed to be conveyed is being done by so-called word-of-mouth. An example by another interviewee with regard to word-of-mouth is: “I have realised the influence that lies in word of mouth… The pharmacy did a very interesting thing, they have made a book corner in the pharmacy as a type of a library. The public can bring old books that they don’t want to use anymore and donate it to the pharmacy. The books are being shelved here by us. There is a coffee table where the public can sit and read. The library became a waiting area. I think that is the first

time I have ever seen this in a pharmacy. The library consists of storybooks, not medical textbooks, it is more for relaxation. I have witnessed that people will come to the pharmacy to use this facility – I am not sure how they knew it, but they do." Word-of-mouth also has the added advantage that it is being utilised as a communication vehicle to inform the public of promotional items, as one interviewee informed. While another significantly stated that: "in effect, most of our communication happens verbally…"

- **Meetings:** Meetings with external stakeholders pose to be somewhat of a challenge. For example, the interviewee stated: "a situation will be addressed, like for instance the distribution of clinic medicines here by us, concerning HIV or tuberculosis. Their idea was to negotiate part of my premises for this initiative… The request hung in the air, you will hear no word about it further, and after six months they will rock up and ask if the request had been carried out? To me it seems like this request was not taken serious enough, why otherwise the time lapse and the lack of follow-ups?" The interviewee further indicated that it was mentioned that an additional member would be added to the pharmacy's compliment, appointed by the members of this initiative, but revealed the interviewee: "I did not get a chance to state my opinion as they do not come back to me on this issue. It is a nightmarish situation, but communicate you have to, otherwise you will get nowhere…"

(d) Broadcast media: films or videos for television, talk shows or special programmes on the radio.

- **Radio:** The interviewee contributed: "being part of a chain pharmacy definitely has its advantages. We benefit from their ads, even on the radio. If the public hears about it, it has a positive influence on our pharmacy."

(e) The press: media conferences or releases to newspapers, feature articles in magazines, letters to the editor, captioned photographs.

- **Newspaper:** From time to time, one interviewee indicated that: "we do use newspaper advertisements to inform the public of the availability of products." Another interviewee confirms that their pharmacy does definitely compile a budget for marketing, stating that every month the pharmacy has two ads that are circulating in the local newspaper. The interviewee portrays that advertisements on national scale will definitely be ineffective, and therefore radio ill not work either. For this reason, the pharmacy utilises the local newspaper, as they are situated in a very small town. Annual events such as Aardklop will trigger the opportunity to place advertisements in the newspaper too, one interviewee briefed.

(f) Public and trade exhibitions

One interviewee cautioned: “we have to adhere to the law. We cannot advertise that we are a better pharmacy… but I can advertise my products or certain products that are not of any scheduled range, I may also not advertise prescription medicines, but I can advertise medicines that the public may buy over the counter.” Keeping the latter in mind, the following section will reveal the reporters’ views with regard to the foregoing.

- **Display inside the pharmacy:** Product-specific advertising is performed within some pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. The aforementioned was corroborated by an interviewee saying that: “posters within the pharmacy have the purpose to reflect additional information for the clients visiting the pharmacy.” One other interviewee builds on the latter, by referring to the display of a very popular diet being stocked and advertised by them. The next interviewee emphasised that the placement of products is very important, advising that: “it does not help if I put the medicine poster over at the make-up section, also you won’t put a shoe ad at the dispensary. It would look like you as a customer would be able to buy shoes over there, which it is totally unacceptable. You have to keep the ad and the product together.” Another interviewee explains that most of the in-store displays are being maintained by their suppliers, although on occasion they also do some of it.

- **Display board outside the Pharmacy:** An advertising board was placed on the outside of the pharmacy to inform the general public about the availability of flu injections.

It was mentioned by one interviewee that advertising flu injections is a common practice that all pharmacies undertake; it is not a unique or a rare phenomenon.

- **Sponsorship advertising board:** The pharmacy’s sponsorship advertising board was erected at a local school. The interviewee stated that: “this is for advertising purposes, in other words to show what we have funded. This is by no means a method to boast…”

- **Display gondola ends (fixtures to display merchandise):** The sales representatives are responsible for the displays on the gondola ends. The interviewee admits: “they do it very well and the displays are subject to seasonal marketing, and conditions that may follow after that, such as gastro…”

- **Display in shop front windows:** The interviewee elaborated that displays in the shop front are being attended to every now and again. The ladies in the pharmacy are mainly responsible for these displays and would alternate displays on a regular basis. Keeping it relevant, based on seasonality, for example flu medicines during the winter times or at times products that

schools can utilise during the sport seasons. This is concurred by another interviewee, who also stated jokingly: “the advertising is definitely seasonal, there is no logic to advertise sun tanning lotions in the winter… Our diet is normally promoted at the end of the winter season.”

- **Information booth:** Promotions will entail an information booth outside the pharmacy, displaying products and providing information regarding it to the general public or, on occasion, to a specific group such as the health conscious.

- **Events:** Hampers or shopping vouchers might be sponsored during golf days held by the different churches or the North-West University. These are very good marketing opportunities, suggests the interviewee, claiming further that: “this creates potential customers who may revisit the pharmacy.”

(g) Outdoor advertising

- **Street pole advertising:** The one interviewee states that there is definitely a budget for marketing. Referring to the ‘orange’ street pole posters, which are aimed at the general public, the interviewee informs: “it works excellently,” stating further that “one can drive back to the spot and read it again, had they forgotten some of the information… Posters may be changed as many times as needed to accommodate different advertisements associated with seasonal advertising…”

(h) Corporate responsibility

- One interviewee explained that they comply with certain undertakings, such as: ”funding children participating in one or other venture, it may be for school décor, or a concert … or maybe something else, like a first aid bag for an upcoming outing, or a nebuliser for the old age home. We do not want to use these things that we do for the community as a medium for advertising or boasting. For us, it is our contribution to the greater good…”

In summary, conducting habitual communication media analyses is not a typical action found among the interviewees. They do have a clear instinctive notion to distinguish between internal- and external stakeholders, and which communication vehicle to utilise to successfully reach each segment, but still, interviewees fall outside the formal overall scope to perform a corporate communication media analysis, as there is no hard copy evidence available to corroborate their actions or to contradict the latter.

The latter is indicative of the majority of interviewees, and abstinence thereof could be seen among a few other interviewees. Their plea for understanding was based on the surrounding

mines closing down, as these pharmacies situated in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District are very poor.

One of the older generation pharmacists felt an email or a phone call to the pharmacy in question would satisfy the public's need for information. In contrast, there are still a lucky few it have been conceded, whose communication activities are being handled by the group they belong to. In hindsight, another interviewee reflected the importance of goodwill, stating it is not a medium for advertising or boasting, but rather a contribution to the greater good…

Although each interviewee had solidified his/her viewpoints, one may no longer assume that the current state of affairs or sentiments such as "what you're doing is working" or "that we've always done it this way" and "things are fine", are set in stone, as effective employment of the communication media analysis can build a positive profile and raise the much needed awareness about the organisation.

5.9 Develop a strategic communication plan

The following section will be indicative of a whether a communication plan was concurrently utilised to keep stakeholders informed via communication:

(a) Communication plan

"Developing a strategic communication plan was never attempted before" one interviewee claimed, while another also concurred by stating: "We don't use it." In contrast with the aforementioned, the next interviewee admitted to utilising it, but revealed how they go about: "there is always room for improvement, but currently we do provide information to our stakeholders by means of a quarterly newsletter, for the students who like electronic media (phones) – it will not pay to give them printed promotional pages, they will look at it, but will put it back again. The older generation would much rather take it with them back to their homes, and have a look there…" The next interviewee affirmed in favour of the communication plan: "this is what it is all about. You will continuously have to accommodate more and more people, whereby you want to increase your turnover. It does not necessarily mean more for me, but also better salaries for my personnel."

(b) Campaigns

The question was raised if the seasonal advertising of flu injections is being undertaken by the small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District as part of their campaign initiatives. One interviewee contradicted the question by portraying that: "we mainly only place posters in the front display window", while another also admitted: "we have never attempted any campaigns…" The

subsequent interviewee informs that: “we do go about campaigns in the same manner that we plan for competitions...” One other interviewee noted that the newsletter is also being utilised in conjunction with a certain occasion, providing them with the themes for their campaigns: “like 25 September is Pharmacy awareness week, in the newsletter we will draw the attention to this, we would do free blood sugar level- or glucose checks. The previous month we had breastfeeding week/month, then there will be a relevant article that will portray the advantages of breastfeeding, covering all aspects of it, accompanied by a link if the public would need more information.” In addition, the interviewee informed that the clinic sister performs breast examinations and is offering free advice about breastfeeding. The interviewee explained that a relevant topic is being communicated monthly. “These campaigns cause a lot of reaction, for instance, on the section on *men and testosterone shortage*, accompanied by a web link to click for more information, it became apparent that people really do read the newsletter that we send out.” He cautioned: “keep the news relevant and ‘light’ more in a laymen’s type of style – not too scientific.”

Tactical communication issues occur, whereby the available communication channels are being applied erroneously, for instance one interviewee supplied the following example: “posting letters to residents in the rural areas who do not even have mailboxes or street addresses…”

Keeping the abovementioned in consideration, the interviewees were pulsed on their type of organisational goals and, by means of communication, how do they intend to reach their intended outcomes? The following section will attempt to summarise and portray the different responses.

(c) Communication goals

Tying p18 Supply necessary information to the stakeholders and p20 change of stakeholder attitude together in the quest to comply with the pharmacy’s goals, one interviewee answered: “we use word of mouth to inform the public.” In order to reach their goal, another interviewee notified that: “we do not really utilise other forms of media, but we will put a poster in the window, or maybe something on the counter – preferably in the shop only, not really outside.” In another scenario pertaining communication goals, the next interviewee claims that the pharmacy chain to which they belong does most of their strategic communication. When, for instance, flu vaccines become available, the pharmacy would advertise to inform the public of stock availability – reminding them to book flu injections, which the in-house clinic sister will assist with.

It became clear that organisational goals do exist, but the communication vehicle to deliver the message falls short, as one interviewee elaborated: “in the near future, there might be an upgrade, especially with regard to the floor and shelve spacing, which at times might pose a problem. But up until now, we did not really.” This confirms the lack of organisational goals. The same holds

true for the next interviewee, who introduced an alternative, as she had stated that: “in accommodating our account holders, we will post flyers in their post boxes, or otherwise display it on the counter.” One interviewee gave feedback on how the renovation in the pharmacy was perceived by the general public (although not clear on how the public was informed); it was mentioned that those visiting the pharmacy were not happy and described the area between the passages and the counters as ‘too occupied’ but for the rest, it was more positive.

Changes that influence the pharmacy’s trading hours were mentioned by two interviewees, although in different scenarios. It was concurred in scenario number one that: “if there are changes, for instance business hours over the December holidays, we would make this part of our communication goals”. Students make out the specific pharmacy’s largest customer base, and when the North-West University closes for holidays, business is extremely quiet. The altered trading hours will be communicated well in advance to the general public in order to eliminate any misunderstandings. The means to accomplish this would be a notice on the glass door. In scenario two, with regard to the changing of trading hours, another respondent said: “we have never done something like this before, the pharmacy has been operating with the same trading hours for 60 years now.” Unlike the previous mentioned interviewee, the following interviewee confirmed their promotion of the trading hours: “We have a URL where we advertise our trading hours.” He also mentions the fact that beside the normal hours, there is also a night shift starting from 17:30 until 19:00 on weekdays. On Saturdays, they close at 13:00 pm, but open again from 18:00 until 20:00 pm.

Marken Communications (2013) informed that corporate image is the major contributor to carry company sales and products. From this study it became apparent, according to senior and middle managers (97%), that image notably contributes to an organisation’s failures and successes. Marken Communications (2013) further stated: “As a corporate entity, you are what people think you are,” further acknowledging that patronages are formed for more reasons than just for product quality or service. The mutual perception that customers, stakeholders, distributors and the media observe regarding an organisation may influence its sales, earnings, valuation, and the means to acquire loans and attain quality employees. Corporate image is portrayed as the sum of its parts (company’s products and services, leadership style, communications activities), including objectives and plans from which the total organisational sum can be derived. Many organisations pay little or no attention to their corporate image until it has been badly damaged. Unfortunately, when the latter becomes apparent, it is often too late for rectification. For a positive corporate image to flourish, management has to incorporate long-term planning. It is impossible to experience success in only a few weeks or even a month. Attempting a positive corporate image should leave a lasting impression (Marken Communications, 2013).

Taking the aforementioned literature into consideration, accounts will be supplied in the next section, based on the various interviewees' replies.

(d) Image

In order to portray a positive image, the one interviewee informs of utilising advertising as a vehicle, as he stated: "it was quite a while back since we have advertised in the local newspaper. At the moment we use the calendars distributed by schools, as well as the local business forum." The interviewee further admitted that donations are made to the local school, upon where the pharmacy's advertisement is being placed in the school's yearbook. Another interviewee seconds the latter, but added that church calendars and school newspapers are both an excellent source of advertising. The following interviewee firmly believes that communication does portray a positive image towards the stakeholders. "This is a very good idea, actually" informs the interviewee. "If one of the University's sports teams had a victory, we congratulate them on the pharmacy's behalf. It shows our support and care."

Another confirmed the overall benefits of reflecting a positive image by revealing: "Having a diet clinic builds the pharmacy's image. The clinic formed part of the pharmacy right from the beginning. The idea was to create awareness; there are many pharmacies in town. It was important to get something to attract the public."

In contrast, one of the interviewees claimed: "we do not use communication at all for positive image building…" One interviewee vowed that there is no need to use this method, as: "our image has been established a long time ago." Still, with the same question in mind, the subsequent interviewee replied: "this is always so – I do not think one uses communication not to reflect a positive image…"

(e) Corporate social responsibility

The interviewee stated that the pharmacy does engage in the abovementioned. An example given according to the interviewee was: "I do train pharmacist assistants, normally people who did not have access to such an opportunity in life; we have trained quite a few already. At the moment we have two new training assistants, two qualified assistants in the dispensary. We contribute to our local community's social responsibility projects, as well as schools and orphanages, on a frequent basis. Supplying medicines is also part of our community responsibility project."

It is advised by Steyn and Puth (2000:19) that the communication practitioners should be aware of what is happening in the 'real world' by having a grasp of what is happening on the inside and on the outside of the organisation. The latter, within context, translates as follows: The impact of

the organisation on public opinion should be revealed to top management as this is a preventative step to counteract the possibility to alienate the organisation from the 'outside world'. If the foregoing does not receive attention, the danger may result that management may develop an internal 'myopia', only observing issues within the organisation's barriers. Corporate communication strives to create tranquillity in the environment that it operates, resulting in credibility and acknowledgement of the organisation's actions by the stakeholders. Taking the previous information into consideration, the next section will provide insight into the various interviewee experiences with regard to stakeholder opinion.

(f) Measuring public opinion

Measuring public opinion, the interviewee claimed that: "there is no formal system. We listen to personal feedback." It has also been stated that the public will inform if there are issues, whereupon positive changes will follow. Another interviewee confirmed the foregoing, also mentioning checking social media for public responses. This will normally pave the way to: "change the situation or the way in which you handle the problem."

He also noted that: "we really go out of our way to provide a service; we do communicate issues with our clients. If there is an equivalent and they can save money, we do inform them thereof…"

(g) Communication schedule

Drawing up a communication schedule is a priority for certain interviewees, as one interviewee continued by mentioning: "yes we do – we normally plan for the students that arrive in February – to maybe do something there. We keep the sporting events in mind – we also make use of the University's calendar for important dates, as they are our main clients." One other interviewee agreed by claiming: "yes, it helps you to decide what to order." Supporting the notion, another interviewee explains that: "with flu vaccinations, the public is aware of the fact that we stock this, but most pharmacies do anyways. If there are enquiries, their names will be added on a list. They will be called back once available."

In contrast, the next interviewee admitted: "not really, we use our website as most of the information is on there..." A schedule is not formally utilised, and the interviewee states that the public knows what is available in terms of the following categories: medications and treatments (allergies and sinus; colds and flu; digestion and nausea; chronic illness), natural health, vitamins and supplements; skin care, clinic baby care, health and lifestyle products.

(h) Planning

- **Sponsorship:** The effects on the organisation are apparent, as sponsors are a dynamic stakeholder group. It has also been stated that sponsors can serve as the life-line from which the organisation operates (Steyn & Puth, 2000:111). Strengthening the relationship with sponsors deemed favourable can be achieved by keeping them informed about the outcome of the achieved results. In addition, it will lead to the possibility of attracting new sponsors (Steyn & Puth, 2000:122). The interviewee disclosed that sales representatives may at times distribute gifts, especially during the open days of the University. Although it had been admitted: "it is becoming very scarce as most businesses are feeling the financial pressures." Another interviewee agreed by stating: "we do receive support from sponsors in the form of gifts, which we had distributed to old age homes, especially with their bazaars." Another interviewee admitted that they also do receive items from time to time; however, the next interviewee did not corroborate the previously mentioned, but instead stated: "we mainly do it ourselves..." Another interviewee agreed with the previously mentioned: "We do sponsor rugby players and athletes or any other sport event, on request." In hindsight, the remaining interviewees all admitted that the abovementioned has never been adhered to by their pharmacies.

- **Evaluation:** Post-campaign research can contribute to the campaign evaluation process; this will assist in deciding whether the campaign goals have met the required outcomes. For example, if a campaign was undertaken to elevate target audience members' awareness of a given product, the post-campaign survey is a means by which they can contemplate if the campaign had reached its goal. In retrospect, campaign outcomes can be estimated by comparing post-campaign results with pre-campaign measurements (Austin & Prinkleton, 2001:167). In the following section, interviewees were questioned on the latter, and the corresponding replies have subsequently been summarised. Building on the previous mentioned, one interviewee admits that they do not really have evaluations of their communication campaigns. Another interviewee declares that they actually do partake: "if we have an open day with regard to cholesterol or blood pressure, we can see how our turnover differs from the previous year at that same time. It is our type of statistics. You will never know precisely, but you can have a ball park figure." It has been confirmed by the following interviewee that: "we do look at it, to determine if it was worth the effort. People will give you feedback and there is also coverage in the local newspaper."

- **Measure successes:** The interviewee commented: "we measure our success by our customers' happiness… we focus on a personal relationship. The clients we have a long history with, remain our customers." It has further been stated that once convinced the clients

are happy, next in line are the figures: “if the pharmacy is not economically viable, we will not survive. This is our check point…” This is also a confirmation by another interviewee: “I guess you can use your financial matters as a guideline to monitor that your profits are not going down…” The latter was confirmed by two other interviewees, who concurred: “the accountants will provide feedback in the end, stating whether it was worth it or not.” Or like the next interviewee puts it: “we look at the money aspect of it…”

Another interviewee pointed out that a computer profile for monitoring purposes may be downloaded. The purpose is to indicate who helped the most customers or completed the most prescriptions. The interviewee explained: “it is a type of a performance profile that we download on a monthly basis. This is a great way to motivate personnel.”

Still on the topic of monthly monitoring, the following interviewee described: “we do the normal statistics on a frequent basis, prescription statistics will be done monthly with regard to medical funds, private prescriptions, and over the counter sales. On the medical fund side, it will be segmented according to the biggest medical funds, to monitor the trends around our prescription patterns.”

One other interviewee confirmed the latter, stating that: “our month ends around the 25th or 26th and will be overseen by the auditors, taking into consideration income statements and balance sheets.” The interviewee claimed further: “This is nowadays the only way to manage a retail pharmacy. You have to know what is going on in the business, because the return on investment would be your returns; there is no margin for error. The days of 15 to 20% net profit are long gone, we are looking at 3 to 4%. With your co-marketing opportunities, you may push it to 7 to 8% – that is about the maximum.”

The profitability index should also be taken into account, as stipulated by the interviewee: “this is one of the tools that we use, apart from net profit and gross profit. I do not know how the other pharmacists do this; I was exposed to different sectors of the industry... such as the Retailers Pharmacy Association and I am involved with the Ask your Pharmacist campaign.”

The interviewee informed that he applies the experiences gained through the years, i.e. international conferences, being a member of the American Pharmacists Association. This paves the way to be, as he puts it: “the first pharmacy in SA which dispensary is being stocked with generic products. We are also one of the first pharmacies that started with a chronic medicine repeat system…”

Apart from the money aspects, another interviewee also informs that it is: “satisfaction that you get out of your job that is my reference. I am turning 71, I am officially the oldest practising

pharmacist, and I really do enjoy our clinic here, we assist in vaccinations, cholesterol-, blood sugar and blood pressure testing. It is great to know that you can still deliver a service to the community."

5.10 Communication plan contributes to positive reputation

The purpose of a communication plan is to construct, sustain and constantly improve relations between an organisation and its stakeholders (Steyn & Puth, 2000:132). In addition, the communication planning process does not only focus on the actual messages to those stakeholders, but is concerned with overall positioning, reputation and relationships in the wider community. A contemplative, creative communications plan will boost the organisation's ability to generate a powerful and positive reputation (Orgwise, 2005:5). Based on what the literature had reflected, the interviewees in the next paragraph will produce their viewpoints on the matter, as one interviewee stated: "nobody really has all the knowledge. There is always room for improvement. Another interviewee claimed that: "if a suggestion to the owner can be presented, he would at least give it some consideration. I am not too sure if he will accept it…" Admitting, he informs: "certain things can be of value. He is a person that is open to advice. That is one thing I can say for sure." The following interviewee shared the previous interviewee's notion to an extent, as she stated: "We are the only pharmacy in this town. The pharmacy is conveniently located so that we are accessible to many patients who need our services. So we do not really work according to a communication plan."

The remainder of the interviewees revealed that they are not utilising the benefits of a communication plan, while two other interviewees admitted that the communication plan is valuable, but firstly contradicts it by saying: "a communication plan has a lot to offer. We are part of a franchise, they also do a lot of our marketing, using promotional pages and so forth." Lastly, the next interviewee informed: "we have used the slogans of our pharmacy chain, such as: 'ask your pharmacist' and 'your first step to health'. It did much already in the arena of promoting our reputation."

In summary, with regard to the strategic communication plan, it became apparent that small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District's communication processes do not formally align with Steyn and Puth's (2000:63) model for strategic communication management, but rather rely on building relationships on an informal, intuitive manner. Not all the small pharmacies' communication processes are aligned with their vision and mission. The responsible pharmacist may see the vision and mission clearly, but it is not necessarily distinctively explained to the pharmacy employees.

The small pharmacies do not perform formal environmental scanning to analyse their internal and external environments, but do have a good grasp on an informal level of who the strategic stakeholders are, which organisational risks are lurking, and what issues of the various stakeholders are still pending, although linking the previously mentioned to a strategic communication plan is a facet unexplored by the interviewees. Utilising a SWOT analysis will be very powerful in these instances, as it can unravel more opportunities that a pharmacy might be so well placed to exploit.

For the most part, the formal or informal organisational strategy aims to provide an outstanding personal service that would differentiate the pharmacy from the bigger retail pharmacies. Although it is apparent that each and every small pharmacy's ideal is to grow and prosper, managers at times lack fully recognising and dealing with the changing internal and external climate from which the pharmacies are an integral part.

Capitalising on an opportunity will become a challenge in itself as intermittent communication from different people portrays the pharmacy as disorganised, which will withhold the pharmacy from utilising this advantage. If some staff members are uninformed regarding key issues, an inability to complete duties will occur and will hamper productivity. On the other hand, consistent information flow creates the impression of transparency, leaving staff members to feel in touch with their environment. A lack thereof will breed suspicion towards management.

For the pharmacies that process identifiable communication goals, the challenges are no less gruelling than for those pharmacies that operate without it. The fact of the matter is that, apart from the day-to-day difficulties, the demands by numerous medical aids, complex rules and regulations, and the diverse social contexts, South Africa exhibits a particularly difficult healthcare environment for the retail pharmacist to navigate and build strategic communication goals in. It became clear that even without an official communication policy, the small pharmacies tend, to a greater or lesser extent, to assist the public, enabling the pharmacy to run as effectively as possible, through which the respect of colleagues and stakeholders is being gained.

By acknowledging the interviewee statements, it is easy to grasp that when a business flourishes, obtaining management's buy-in with regard to a communication budget is easier than the flip side of the coin, as it results in stress to reduce costs. Interviewees indicate the measure of a pharmacy's financial success, according to the organisation's growth rates to determine if the profit is above or below the curve, is at the end the final determinant, rippling out to all aspects of strategic planning.

Apart from the above, each interviewee had solidified his/her viewpoints, which, for some, boils down to deep seated sentiments such as: “what we’re doing is working” or “that we’ve always done it this way” and “things are fine”, had a blurred vision to the advantages of effective employment of the communication media analysis and the prospects it will foster. As mentioned, the former is not a generalisation, but an exception. For this group that does embark on communication processes, with particular stakeholders in mind, it does portray a two-way symmetrical intuitive mutual understanding. These small pharmacies have revealed a strong desire to create outstanding customer service in order to build and maintain patronage; the latter is indicative of the outcomes of the strategic communication plan, as it provides a benchmark against which ongoing corporate communication decisions can be verified.

The small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District’s absence of knowledge about strategic communication and its resulting benefits hinder them from formally executing strategic communication processes. These small pharmacies do, in an informal and diplomatic means, apply two-way communication for building strong relationships among their stakeholders. Unfortunately, the forgoing does not contribute to acquiring formal, strategic organisational goals, which suggests that if otherwise, a positive impact thereof will be evident; a positive profile and a much needed awareness about the organisation in the immediate community.

5.11 Pharmacy management

The vast majority of individuals who seek medical advice and treatment will access pharmacy services. Pharmacies in most cases are the ‘first line’ of contact for a vast majority of people, even for traditional services such as clinic services (Murray, 2013:16). It has been mentioned that the following categories are of extreme importance for a small-scale pharmacy, especially in patient management where contra-indications are one of the most important services that a community pharmacy can deliver.

5.11.1 Human resources

The type of people the pharmacy attracts will also have an influence on the pharmacy’s operations. In other words, competent, productive and motivated people will contribute more to the pharmacy’s profitability than the other way around. Therefore, hiring the right people is of utmost importance. The role of human resources is enormous given that they are directly linked to the input- and output transformation. Building on all of the information above, human resources greatly affect operations management (Desselle & Zgarrick, 2009:73).

Drawing on the previously mentioned, one respondent informed that: “by us it is an ongoing process… frequently you will find that people enquire about a job vacancy, we will request a

Curriculum Vitae (CV) to file." The interviewee stipulated that as soon as a position becomes available, these CVs will be revised, and appointments for an interview will be scheduled based on the candidate's availability.

Another interviewee utilises newspaper advertisements; or otherwise, if a pharmacist position becomes vacant, the applicant may upload his/her CV online, utilising the website of SA locum.

Another interviewee who advertises by means of newspaper ads, suggested that: "the current personnel have been with the pharmacy for quite a long time. There is not a big turn over in personnel. I started to locum eight years ago when the pharmacy opened for the first time, and so did another lady, we are currently still employed..." He informed that with delivery people, it is a bit of a different story, as they do receive better offers. He states that: "if this happens, an advertisement will be placed in the local newspaper, CVs will be submitted to us and we do the interviews. In a one-man business the owner tends to do most of it. I know in corporate companies there is a different approach…"

One other interviewee also states they have a similar process as mentioned earlier, but on some occasions they are aware of a possible candidate beforehand. Contradicting the previous mentioned, another interviewee claimed that: "in all this time, the method we used is word of mouth, we did not advertise in the newspaper." The interviewee concluded by saying: "we have a waiting list – we do train pharmacy assistants, but can only train three at a time, these positions are always filled."

There were some indications by certain interviewees arguing that: "advertising would be the wrong thing to do." Another interviewee agrees with the forgoing and refers to advertising as: "starting a storm, because one cannot employ everyone. If I do advertise for a pharmacist assistant, then about 5 000 people would apply. If you advertise for a pharmacist even people without qualifications would also apply. You have to manage the situation, our appointments are according to word of mouth. I would convey it to the personnel and tell them what we are looking for, even if it takes months, the right candidate will pitch eventually." The latter was seconded by another interviewee who utilises customers and personnel to spread the word. Apparently, in small towns, it works very well, and the same holds true for candidates who perform job hunting, as they become an ideal source.

5.11.2 Change management

Change means the adjustment of the organisational environment, structure, technology or people. The manager's job would have been fairly easy was it not for change. Tomorrow would be no different than yesterday and that would have resulted in simplified planning. Organisational

design issues would have been solved due to an uncertainty-free environment. Change is inevitable, as it is the reality of any organisation. It forms part of the manager's job description. What a manager might be able to change lies in these three categories: altering structure, technology or people (Robbins, 2015:254-256). Relating to the preceding literature, the interviewee introduces the fact that it was never necessary to deal with disgruntled employees, as: "we sort each other out quickly – the nice thing here is the guys are very straightforward, there is no beating around the bush… if there is something… we sort it out – there is no back stabbing…"

One interviewee said that change management was never employed before, as the changes that had happened were not that huge. He states that it: "never had influenced people's jobs. In other words, such as layoffs or retrenchments." In addition, another interviewee informed that: "No one really likes change that much." At this specific pharmacy, it had been declared that there is nothing to complain about: "as everyone has their own job description, meaning the cashiers and pharmacists for instance cannot really swop jobs, but we 'gel' well together."

'No', another interviewee replied to the question, not able to recall an incident where this was applicable.

"Change management is like an athlete, or sports person, you have to practise regularly to become fit, we are constantly busy with change, there is no specific intervention with regard to this, it is a constant process.." With regard to change management, the referring interviewee mentioned that: "we were planning a meeting where the staff were requested to join the meeting with the following ideas in mind: What can be changed to make things better? How can work be done cleverer or more accurately? How to get more clients? How to add better value to our service?" Further informing: "It is like a team effort: If people are part of the decision process, they will be motivated to fulfil their commitments." The previous statement appealed to another interviewee, confessing that: "four years ago my colleague retired, the pharmacy changed quite a bit, new guidelines were implemented, it had a very positive outcome. It was not all negative. Sometimes you get to a situation thinking an idea will work extremely well, then it does not. Luckily one can adapt and change it again. But only with the buy-in of your staff..."

5.11.3 Risk management: Purchasing insurance

With a bit of extra care, the inherent business risks can be controlled. Purchasing insurance is one way of reducing the threat. Insurance allows for the reduction of uncertain costs for approximately the same amount. Some managers believe that insurance buys them a risk-free environment, although not all together true. Certain policies, on the other hand, include deductible

clauses and limitations on coverage. Full and comprehensive insurance is only warranted in very special circumstances, but is very expensive. Therefore, most pharmacy managers use insurance to ensure a risk-free environment, covering the standard risks (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:102). With regard to risk management, the interviewee, who *in this instance was not the owner*, replied: "I believe all of it is in place, I am not really involved in it. I am a 100% sure it should be there; I cannot think that it wouldn't."

Another interviewee informs: "the pharmacy has insurance for fire and burglary, not really for shoplifting. You must have a big burglary to be able to give proper figures with regard to the stolen goods. Insurance does not just pay. There is also a limit on the amount of cash that you are allowed to keep in the safe on the premises. The pharmacy is insured comprehensively." Comprehensive insurance was echoed by another interviewee. While one other stated: "insured for all the normal stuff…" The claim was also made by the subsequent interviewee: "yes we do have all of that. We had so many thefts and burglaries in the past that we are insured in order to cover all the bases including patient claims…" Building on the previous information, another three interviewees stated that: "We do, the pharmacy carries the cost." The second elaborated by adding: "we have insurance on the building as well." To conclude, the last interviewee admitted that their risk management type: "is a very 'serious' insurance. You have to be insured for strikes and rock throwing etc. You must also have insurance against malpractice…"

5.11.4 Marketing management: Criteria for display

Most pharmacies have a merchandising programme. The programme will be built on the customers' needs in the marketplace. For the pharmacy manager, it entails: "a combination of techniques for positioning, arranging, and promoting a product within a store so that the consumer is motivated to buy it as he or she shops." The objective, in other words, is to convert the passers-by into actual buyers. Merchandising aids are being supplied by wholesalers or manufacturers to assist in the process of display. These artefacts may include: "cartons designed to fold out into a self-contained display; 'shelf talkers,' which are printed cards designed to be positioned on the shelf under the product; and price signs, which might compare the pharmacy's special selling price with the pharmacy's normal retail price, the pharmacy's selling price with the manufacturer's suggested price" (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:217-217). In order to compare the literature with the interviewees' statements, the following section will consist of the various outcomes, beginning with the following interviewee, who remarked: "guidelines for marketing do not really exist, it should just look nice and decent."

Disputing the last-mentioned, the reporter indicated that: "there are guidelines available, for instance small packaging should be placed on the left hand side and bigger articles on the right.

Most people are right handed and have a tendency to take the bigger packaged articles. There are most definitely guidelines on how to do certain things, but it is by no means law. It is a mere suggestion. From time to time, the personnel and I go for refresher courses, sales courses presented by the supplier, or in-house training by the owner."

Another interviewee supports the above mentioned by declaring: "Yes, there are guidelines, it has to be decent, highly visible and realistic. Product selection is important. You're not allowed to put S2 and S3 products on the shelves, or in the front or with the cough syrups, where it is accessible to the public." Another interviewee added: "you have to comply with the rules and these are the only ones we use."

The pharmacy chain has a team available assisting with displaying the merchandise. The interviewee admitted that: "I would like if they will send out people to give us some advice, the reason being, we are not familiar with all these guidelines. For instance, the lady in the front shop does not know all that there is to know. There should be something like this in place…"

Another few interviewees echoed that: "we are allowed to make our own decisions." One interviewee further elaborated by stating: "within the organisation we have a standard that we follow with regard to gondola ends and shelves. We pride ourselves in how our shelves are being set out; we do get frequent feedback from experts in the field who visit us, saying: 'that is what a pharmacy should look like…' We are properly merchandised with the shelf talkers, price tags, and if it is a promotional item, there would be a flasher that would say save R30 or R40. Important is the maintenance of the gondola ends and the shelves, it should be changed on a frequent basis, making it look attractive, the shelf should say: 'buy me.' There should be the necessary shelf- and stock pressure, you cannot have a promotion with only three products on a shelf, the shelves must be well stocked, it must also look as if the product is popular and being sold. The balance should be around the image and the promotion activity and the stock turnover that has an influence on your net profit. Part of the latter explanation had also been underscored by the following interviewee as he revealed: "we do adapt – we have posters in the windows, we distribute pamphlets, we have certain shelves that we use for product display, and we price displayed products with stickers…"

5.11.5 Strategic management: Types of goals

To assess the future without taking the present situation into account will not allow for the successful development of plans and strategies. When taking the current situation into account, the following should be kept in mind: goals, financial situation, operating capabilities,

management and employee expertise, market position and marketing capabilities (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:83-87).

Past experiences are not always a good guide to draw conclusions from, as the business environment can be very volatile. The best is to evaluate how the past and the present coincide in order to determine what the following year will bring. The first step in this process is crucial as it forms the framework for the business plan and provides the opportunity for the manager to gain experience (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:79-84). Referring to the preceding, the next interviewee expressed: “we do not really have any strategic management goals,” while another concurred that: “strategic management goals have not been officially documented. A meeting in the near future is planned to discuss the road ahead, that is on the table, but I am unable to share the plans for 2018, or where the growth path is going to take us, or what do we want to accomplish? It is an annual meeting and from that the goals are being derived.”

With regard to goals, the one interviewee replied: “I think one should never say we are satisfied… rather say, we are happy at the moment, but we can always leave room for improvement.”

Financial goals are very hard to obtain, especially in light of the current economy. An interviewee further indicated: “Even the sales representatives that visited the pharmacy do admit that business all over in our town is very quiet. Therefore, at the end of the day, these goals should be within reach – it won’t be viable to set goals that are unobtainable.” The preceding interviewee vowed delightfully that: “It is a healthcare pharmacy, involved in offering the best pharmaceutical services to the public. The pharmacy offers excellent customer care, making us the best-preferred pharmacy in the province.” The previous interviewee’s enthusiasm is not shared by everyone, as the next interviewee informed: “we just want to survive. For example, a lot of things are being taken away from the one man businesses – the *big retail pharmacies* do get all the big contracts. Members of a certain medical fund may only obtain their medicines from specific pharmacies, while others should only utilise Direct Medicine – there are huge challenges that we face. We had an enormous clientele shift; we are serving more of our black community now. The majority of our white residence had moved away – not sure where they have gone to, or if they had retired. There are no mines left in operation around here...”

While other interviewees have to overcome huge challenges, others still have the possibility of lining up goals, as one interviewee informed: “décor wise we are going to stack different shelf placings, and stock traditional medicines to accommodate more cultures.”

To summarise, the pharmacy setting is most likely to be visited by those who are in need of medical services. Therefore, according to literature, pharmacies in most cases are the preferred

service of choice, and therefore, in order to be sustainable, pharmacies have to be managed accordingly, the topics most sought after, and which require close observation are: (a) human resources, (b) change management, (c) risk management, (d) marketing management, and (e) strategic management, as these contribute to the longevity of a small-scale pharmacy.

It became apparent that the pharmacy's stakeholders have an influence on the related operations. Therefore, when considering hiring staff, one should look at productive and motivated people, as they are linked to service delivery. Building on this notion, interviewees stated that the various methods applied in the recruitment process range from reviewing filed CVs, advertising in the local newspaper, referral, and word-of-mouth. In some instances, interviewees had serious doubts about newspaper advertising, as it would "start a storm", meaning it results in a huge number of prospective applicants, which not all can be accommodated. In smaller towns, it was argued that spreading the word by means of staff and customers is deemed to be fruitful.

Change and adjustments are in most cases inevitable, the vast majority of interviewees admit that no one really likes change. But another took a different approach in life by supporting the following motto: "change management is like an athlete, or sports person, you have to practise regularly to become fit, we are constantly busy with change, there is no specific intervention with regard to this, and it is a constant process..." Although change management brings adjustments about to the organisational environment, so does the effect of inherent business risks if not controlled. In conjunction with the latter, interviewees of the small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, all jointly concurred on the following: By covering standard risks, a risk-free environment relates to peace of mind. Interviewees revealed that insurance against malpractice is a method to throw caution to wind, as there has lately been a significant increase in medical malpractice claims.

It became prevalent that most pharmacies base their merchandising actions on the intuitive notion of customers' needs, which are obtained from the practical experience derived from the environment in which the pharmacy operates. It also seems that the front shop holds the potential for generating profit as passers-by may become actual buyers. For a few interviewees who belong to a pharmacy group, there is an added advantage of being supplied by wholesalers or manufacturers to assist in the process of display. These artefacts may include: "cartons designed to fold out into a self-contained display; 'shelf talkers,' which are printed cards designed to be positioned on the shelf under the product; and price signs, which might compare the pharmacy's special selling price with the pharmacy's normal retail price, the pharmacy's selling price with the manufacturer's suggested price." For a few remaining interviewees, guidelines are available, and may be utilised to make their own choices. However, it was stated that: "the balance should be

around the image and the promotion activity, as the stock turnover has an influence on your net profit."

It became significantly clear that future predictions form part of some of the interviewees' strategic planning processes with regard to goals, financial situation, operating and marketing capabilities, management and employee expertise, and market positioning. Those interviewees who do not endeavour in setting strategic management goals are implicating the volatile business environment. It was stated that financial goals are very hard to obtain, especially in light of the current economy and the huge challenges that they face with regard to medical fund requirements.

While other interviewees have to overcome huge challenges, others still have the possibility of lining up goals, as one interviewee informed: "décor wise we are going to stack different shelf placings, and stock traditional medicines to accommodate more cultures." Without these goals, the pharmacy's sense of direction will be lost. It presents a chance to monitor day-to-day activities and evaluate the pharmacy's developments over a period of time.

5.12 Conclusions

This chapter started off with the findings that are associated with the research questions of the study, the objectives and specific theoretical statements, as outlined in the preceding sections. The study proceeded with the analyses of the internal environment, where the interviewee had indicated where the pharmacy sees itself in the future. The corresponding focus was based on the vision, beliefs and opinions that distinguish the pharmacy in a special way. How the pharmacy differs from its competitors and which circumstances are perfect for the pharmacy to thrive in were all revealed. With the mission in mind, the idea was to probe and reveal the pharmacy's function, and how the latter will assist in reaching the pharmacy's vision, with regard to the stakeholders the pharmacy serves.

Having a good grasp of who the strategic stakeholders are, which organisational risks are lurking, and what issues of the various stakeholders are still pending, the following section, *classification of strategic stakeholders and publics in the external and internal environment*, will shed further light. The aim of this section was to provide a detailed explanation of the opportunities and threats that reside within the different pharmacies and their environments. Questions focusing on the SWOT analysis provided invaluable information in this regard. The foregoing revealed answers to the various potential opportunities and threats, experienced among the small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. It was also necessary to pinpoint the issues that could be categorised as strengths and weaknesses. It was further stipulated which issues resort under the

heading of threats, revealing that some might even hold the key to potential opportunities, yet to be utilised by the pharmacies. Keeping the latter in mind, the array of small pharmacies' selling points was linked to their assets. After much deliberation, the interviewees' opinion on weaknesses and threats stated why some pharmacies seemingly just survive.

In the quest to understand which issues persist in the small pharmacies, a stakeholder- or *SWOT analysis* was disassembled and discussed in its various individual parts: (a) Strengths, (b) Weaknesses, (c) Opportunities and (d) Threats. It did not only identify the stakeholders that the pharmacy would want to have on their side, but also deployed the outlines of a stakeholder map, confirming the strategic stakeholders and publics, and also providing insight into who the pharmacies' most powerful stakeholders are, and how these stakeholders' buy-in may contribute favourably to the day-to-day activities of the pharmacy.

Furthermore, *identifying and describing key strategic issues in the macro-, task or internal environment*, informal and intuitive corporate communication strategies led to the identification of primary issues that the interviewees faced. In other words, it was revealed how the strategic stakeholders about towards a certain issue. The addressed issues took into account the effects thereof on corporate strategies. Closely related to the forgoing topic, a classification was conducted to differentiate between (a) internal- and (b) external strategic issues. Corresponding views on strategic issues such as organisational management, staffing or even the décor of the pharmacy were revealed. External issues were addressed, relating to the impact of government legislation and competitor advantage.

By Identifying key issues and providing solutions by means of *corporate communication strategy*, it became apparent how communication can solve these issues. The need to decide what should be communicated to the stakeholders arose, but special focus was given to improving pharmacy productivity and capitalising on the opportunities at hand, which found momentum in government legislation, regarding a product or service.

To support the intended stakeholder communication and to reflect the main purpose of this communication the *establishing of communication goals* were overseer. Stakeholders received certain information from the interviewees on a daily basis, the intended action is to bring change about in the stakeholder's attitude.

The communication goals were obtained from the key strategic issues, relating to the implications it had for the corporate communication strategy and its corresponding stakeholders. Setting the communication goals was the link between the communication strategy and the communication plan. It connected the corporate communication function with the mission. The small pharmacies

at this stage all kept in mind what the communication goals were, as it revealed the corporate goals and played a part in reaching corporate mission. The attention was directed to instances where the pharmacy had to convey information to the stakeholders with regard to a problem, product or a service. The interviewees found it necessary on different occasions to change the stakeholder's attitude regarding a problem, product or a service.

As the latter influences stakeholder engagement, the establishing of a communication policy seems at the order of the day. More than one person in the pharmacy is responsible for stakeholder communication. Following the path of (a) "**who** is allowed to communicate **what** with **whom,**" the same holds true for (b) crisis communication.

At this stage, the concept of budgeting was also brought to the attention of the interviewees, as a *draft to top management* steers towards the buy-in of management. The focus here was to indicate the rationale behind the strategy formulation, as well as reflecting how communication will solve any crucial organisational issues that exist. Management was made aware of how the communication function can aid in reaching organisational goals. Attempts were made to counteract any negative beliefs that the interviewees might have about the valuable contribution that communication makes to the 'bottom line'.

Once in check, an overall corporate communication media analysis was suggested, stating that when purposefully utilised, it provides a manner to gather communication information to assist in determining which media types to assign to the various stakeholders. During this phase, the communication style was the key focus, suiting the recipient's preferred style of communication. The most appropriate media mix was combined to adhere to each stakeholder's needs. Building on this notion, the different communication mediums and channels for each stakeholder were considered with regard to the communication process.

Once the different mediums were allocated, *developing a strategic communication plan* offers the opportunity whereby the interviewees indicated ***what*** the corporate communication function entailed, while ***how*** to communicate portrayed the strategic communication plan's intention. This component was stated to be indicative of the start of the planning phase. A clear indication of the intuitive strategic communication plan unfolded as the interviewees reported back on certain campaigns they were involved in. The interviewees utilised a schedule to ensure these campaigns and the coinciding timelines were kept on track. Planning is a necessary step, as pharmacies want to draw stakeholder support for the various campaigns. Public opinion was measured and used as a benchmark.

Subsequently, pharmacy management was explored, as it purposefully assisted the pharmacy to reach impeccable outcomes, by focusing on (a) human resources, (b) change management, (c) risk management, (d) marketing management, (e) and strategic management, as these contribute to the longevity of a small-scale pharmacy.

Interviewees selected prospective employees on the grounds of competency, proof of productivity and motivation, as these traits contribute favourably to the pharmacy's profitability. In order to attract the most favourable candidates, different methods of advertising were utilised by the interviewees of the small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. The latter forms part of the pharmacy's human resource processes.

In certain instances, organisational change is inevitable, and these are evident in adjustments in the organisational environment, technology or people. Interviewees had to deal with related issues, where resistance to change was evident of some employee behaviour.

The following step assessed risk management as a method to reduce business risks. The interviewees explained how to determine the insurance needs of the pharmacy.

Addressing criteria for display, marketing management is mainly used to convert the passers-by into actual buyers. Merchandising aids are being supplied by wholesalers or manufacturers to assist in the process of display. There are various types of artefacts used to draw the customers' attention to the promotional items. A clear indication was given that certain guidelines have to be complied with for product displays.

The interviewees of the small pharmacies situated in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District utilise some forms of strategic management to reach their pharmacy's goals. To assess the future without taking the present situation into account will not allow for the successful development of plans and strategies. Interviewees take the current situation into account by keeping the following in mind: goals, financial situation, management and market capabilities, employee expertise, and market position. On this point of discussion, the previous mentioned is not set in stone, as the interviewees revise the foregoing on a regular basis.

The next chapter will summarise the information and aim to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter answers the research questions: What are the guidelines for the development of a framework for strategic communication?, What are the basic tenets of pharmacy management with a specific focus on strategic communication by small sized pharmacies? What are the views of pharmacists (in small sized pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District) regarding issues pertaining to strategic communication management? Conclusions and recommendations are formulated; and the study's contribution and limitations are outlined, accordingly.

To diminish the possibility of repetition, the findings discussed in the previous chapters are summarised in Chapter 5, in order to point out lurking possible tendencies regarding strategic communication within the observed small pharmacies. Hinging on these tendencies, recommendations are suggested on how small pharmacies may apply strategic communication to their capabilities, within their particular environment, and how small pharmacies present communication practices, can be altered to comply with the communication model of Steyn and Puth (2000:62).

6.2 Theoretical conceptualisation

Specific research question 1 guided the theoretical framing of the study. [What are the guidelines for the development of a framework for strategic communication?].

The findings answering this question were discussed in Chapter 2. The main points are briefly highlighted here in order to provide an overview of the answer to this question. For a small sized pharmacy, the following questions are divided into main themes (Steyn & Puth, 2000:63):

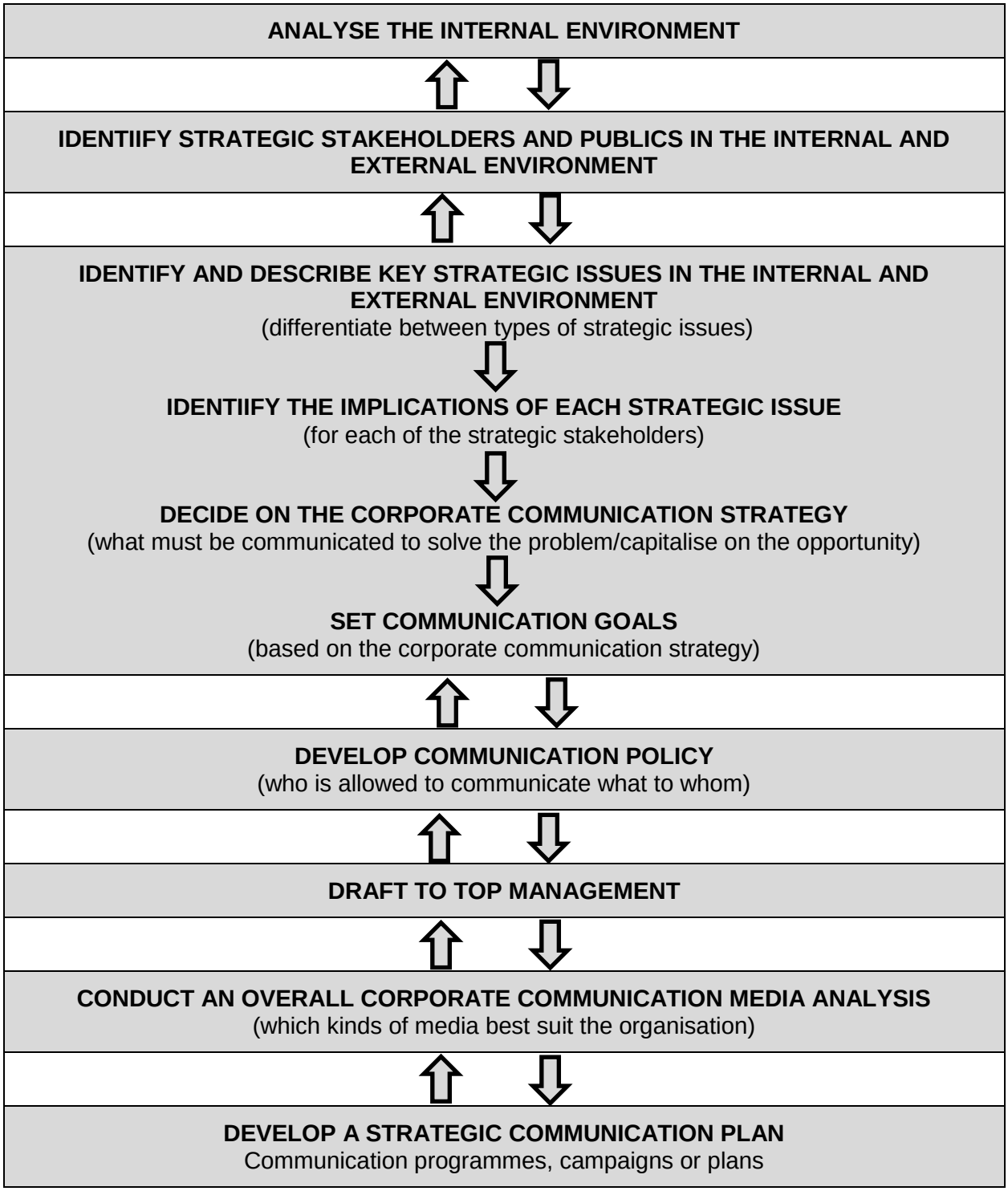

Figure 6-1: Guidelines to develop a corporate communication strategy (Steyn & Puth, 2000:62)

6.2.1 Classify strategic stakeholders and publics in the external and internal environment (SWOT)

Formative research (analyse the situation, organisation and publics), according to Smith (2008:10), is necessary to portray the details that will be encapsulated in the problem statements. These details may also be referred to as a situation analysis. It provides a detailed explanation of the opportunities and threats that reside within the organisation and its environment. A SWOT analysis will provide invaluable information in this regard. This analysis has the advantage that the communication team may formulate a notion about possible solutions for the problem (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001:27). In order to support the aforesaid, the concept *SWOT analysis* will be disassembled and discussed in its various individual parts, namely (a) strengths, (b) weaknesses, (c) opportunities and (d) treats.

6.2.2 Identify and describe key strategic issues in the macro-, task or internal environment

Steyn and Puth (2000:69) mentioned that the importance in this step will be to identify the primary issues that strategic stakeholders must face when developing a corporate communication strategy. In other words, they determine how the strategic stakeholders might feel towards a certain issue. It must be kept in mind that not all issues need to be classified as strategic (Steyn & Puth, 2000:67). Closely related is the matter of differentiating between (a) internal and (b) external strategic issues. The interviewees were questioned on these differences, because the importance thereof lies in the fact that internal strategic issues have the possibility to adjust the organisation's performance if neglected, for example, where productivity may be hampered by aspects such as organisational management, staffing or even the décor of the pharmacy, all of which the interviewee has control over. Aspects over which the interviewee has no control emanate from outside the organisation's boundaries. These are referred to as external strategic issues and normally may result in catastrophe as the impact of government legislation and competitor advantage may seriously harm the pharmacy if there is an absence of compliance (Steyn & Puth, 2000:68).

6.2.3 Decide on a corporate communication strategy

The corporate communication strategy, in short, is built on the organisation's mission, vision and values. Beforehand, it has to be stated that top management is concerned about the key issues and not so readily about the communication problems. The link between communication and the pending issues that top management perceive may be blurred at that stage. This holds true especially when measuring these issues not on the levels of their communication, but rather on

reaching organisational goals. Identifying key issues and providing solutions by means of corporate communication strategy indicate how communication can solve these issues (Steyn & Puth, 2000:68). According to the literature, if the communication process is being undertaken without keeping the latent issues in mind, inappropriate solutions might be suggested to the problem. When a corporate communication strategy supports business strategy, the organisation would be in a position to compete more effectively. First, a decision needs to be made on what should be communicated to the stakeholders to alleviate problems such as (a) improving productivity and (b) capitalising on the opportunities at hand. In the case of government legislation about a product or service, if this information is communicated to stakeholders, the organisation has successfully capitalised on an opportunity (Steyn & Puth, 2000:84).

6.2.4 Establish communication goals

The main purpose of the organisation is to reflect what the outcome would be with the intended communication. In other words, is the aim to disperse information, or change attitude or behaviour? In numerous instances, if the conduct of the stakeholders needs to be changed, it is important to (a) supply the necessary information on the issue to them first, and then aim to (b) change their attitude. Normally, the communication goals are obtained from the key strategic issues, relating to the implications it has on the corporate communication strategy and its stakeholders.

The step of setting communication goals is the link between the communication strategy and the communication plan. Another advantage of goal setting is that it connects the corporate communication function with the mission. Important to keep in mind is that the communication goals reveal the corporate goals and therefore play a part in reaching the corporate mission (Steyn & Puth, 2000:70-71).

6.2.5 Establish a communication policy

The communication policy's function is to coordinate stakeholder engagement. To clarify, more than one person might be responsible to communicate with an individual stakeholder or maybe a group of stakeholders concerning different topics. However, according to Steyn and Puth (2000:71), it should be stated more clearly (a) "who is allowed to communicate what with whom." Another point for questioning was with regard to (b) crisis communication. The reason being that, according to Grunig *et al.* (1992), a successful performance under a crisis situation can only be traced back to an organisation that has the following in place: open organisational structure, good communication system, and organisational culture warranting democratic participation and the opinion offered has been able to successfully perform crisis management.

6.2.6 Draft to top management

This section is concerned with obtaining management approval and acknowledgement for every step of which the corporate communication strategy consists. The focus should be on the rationale behind the strategy formulation, as well as reflecting how communication will solve any crucial organisational issues that exist. If, by any means, research results are available, it should be included. If management can more clearly understand how the communication function can aid in reaching organisational goals, gaining funds for strategy implementation will be effortless, counteracting any negative beliefs that top management might have about the valuable contribution communication has on the 'bottom line' (Steyn & Puth, 2000:72-73).

6.2.7 Conduct an overall corporate communication media analysis

The purpose of a corporate media analysis is to gather communication information that will assist in determining which media types to assign to the various stakeholders (Steyn & Puth, 2000:73). The communication style is crucial; it has been advised that it is important to become familiar with the recipient's preferred style of communication, otherwise the message will be unnoticed. The aforementioned plays an important role in the intended media selection (thoughtLEADERS, 2017). Note of advice: If the media should be more specific, take time to plan, this will be an advantageous step by which the most suitable media mix can be combined (Steyn & Puth, 2000:91). Good external communication has been stated as the forerunner for good internal communication (Media & Writers Firm, 2014).

6.2.7.1 Internal organisational media (Internal communication)

Excellent communication is conducive to competitiveness. For example, when a customer or an employee enjoys a favourable relationship with an organisation, it is most likely that the person will display the same behaviour pattern again. For the organisation, it will lead to more sales and additionally boost the organisation's image (Media & Writers Firm, 2014).

Print communication media: house journals, bulletins, newsletters, news tabloids, magazines, annual reports, speciality publications, bulletin boards, electronic publications.

6.2.7.2 Mass communication media (external communication)

The practitioner can select between the following mass communication media:

- Extra-personal communication media: WhatsApp, Word-of-mouth, small group meetings, interviews, briefings, speeches, presentations or chance conversations;
- Broadcast media: films or videos for television, talk shows or special programmes on the radio;

- The press: media conferences or releases to newspapers, feature articles in magazines, letters to the editor, captioned photographs.

6.2.8 Develop a strategic communication plan

The communication strategy aims to indicate *what* the corporate communication function should entail, while *how* to communicate is what strategic communication planning strives towards (Steyn & Puth, 2000:52). This component is not part of the corporate communication strategy stage, but rather indicates the start of the planning phase. It is included to provide clarity with regard to the strategic communication plan (and the subdivision thereof: plans, campaigns and programmes). The strategic communication plan provides the framework where communication programmes (repeated communication stakeholders), communication campaigns (once-off or periodical) and communication plans (created to reach certain communication goals) slot in (Steyn, 2000b).

6.3 Applying theory to the pharmaceutical environment

Specific research question 2 guided the focus on pharmacy management. [What are the basic tenets of pharmacy management with a specific focus on strategic communication by small sized pharmacies?].

The findings answering this question were discussed in Chapter 3. The main points are briefly highlighted here in order to provide an overview of the answer to this question.

6.3.1 Human resources and relations management

The type of people the pharmacy attracts will also have an influence on the pharmacy's operations. In other words, competent, productive and motivated people will contribute more to the pharmacy's profitability than the other way around. Therefore, hiring the right people is of utmost importance. The role of human resources is enormous given that they are directly linked to the input- and output transformation. Building on all of the information above, human resources greatly affect operations management (Desselle & Zgarrick, 2009:73). Taking the latter into consideration, the respondent was pulsed on the procedures deployed by the pharmacy, by enquiring the following: "Explain the process that the pharmacy utilises in order to recruit new personnel?"

6.3.2 Change management

Change means the adjustment of the organisational environment, structure, technology or people. Organisational design issues would have been solved due to an uncertainty-free environment. Change is inevitable, as it is the reality of any organisation. It forms part of the manager's job

description. What a manager might be able to change lies in these three categories: altering structure, technology or people. (Robbins, 2015:194). Relating to the preceding, the following question was introduced to the interviewee: “How do you deal with resistance to change?”

6.3.3 Risk management – insurance

With a bit of extra care, the inherent business risks can be controlled. Purchasing insurance is one way of reducing the threat. Insurance allows for the reduction of uncertain costs for approximately the same amount. Some managers believe that insurance buys them a risk-free environment, although not all together true. Certain policies, on the other hand, include deductible clauses and limitations on coverage. Full and comprehensive insurance is only warranted in very special circumstances, but is very expensive. Therefore, most pharmacy managers use insurance to ensure a risk-free environment, covering the standard risks (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:102). With regard to risk management, the interviewee was queried by means of the following question: “Please explain the pharmacy’s insurance needs.”

6.3.4 Marketing management

Most pharmacies have a merchandising programme. The programme will be built on the customers’ needs in the marketplace. For the pharmacy manager, it entails: “a combination of techniques for positioning, arranging, and promoting a product within a store so that the consumer is motivated to buy it as he or she shops.” The objective, in other words, is to convert the passers-by into actual buyers. Merchandising aids are being supplied by wholesalers or manufacturers to assist in the process of display. These artefacts may include: “cartons designed to fold out into a self-contained display; ‘shelf talkers,’ which are printed cards designed to be positioned on the shelf under the product; and price signs, which might compare the pharmacy’s special selling price with the pharmacy’s normal retail price, the pharmacy’s selling price with the manufacturer’s suggested price” (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:217-217). The question best suited to compare the respondent statement to the literature was: “Do you employ certain guidelines whereby the pharmacy has to comply to, in order to displaying the products?”

6.3.5 Strategic management

To assess the future without taking the present situation into account will not allow for the successful development of plans and strategies. When taking the current situation into account, the following should be kept in mind: goals, financial situation, operating capabilities, management and employee expertise, market position and marketing capabilities (Tootelian *et al.,* 2012:83-87). In order to pinpoint the pharmacy’s future predictions, the next question was proposed: “Are there any other types of goals that the pharmacy might have?”

6.4 Reporting the view of pharmacists

Specific research question 3 focused on collecting empirical views from pharmacists. [What are the views of pharmacists (in small sized pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District) regarding issues pertaining to strategic communication management?].

The findings answering this question were discussed in Chapter 5. The main points are briefly highlighted here in order to provide an overview of the answer to this question.

The study explored the views of pharmacists regarding their internal environment. The exploration was based on the vision, beliefs and opinions that distinguish the pharmacy in a special way; how the pharmacy differs from its competitors and which circumstances are perfect for the pharmacy to thrive in. The interviewees' opinion on weaknesses and threats stated why some pharmacies seemingly just survive. Informal and intuitive corporate communication strategies led to the identification of primary issues that the interviewees faced. Corresponding views on strategic issues such as organisational management, staffing or even the décor of the pharmacy were articulated. External issues were addressed, relating to the impact of government legislation and competitor advantage.

The communication goals were obtained from the key strategic issues, relating to the implications it had for the corporate communication strategy and its corresponding stakeholders. Setting the communication goals was the link between the communication strategy and the communication plan. It connected the corporate communication function with the mission. The small pharmacies all kept in mind what the communication goals were, as it revealed the corporate goals and played a part in reaching corporate mission. The attention was directed to instances where the pharmacy had to convey information to the stakeholders with regard to a problem, product or a service. The interviewees found it necessary on different occasions to change the stakeholder's attitude regarding a problem, product or a service. The establishing of a communication policy seems at the order of the day.

An overall corporate communication media analysis was suggested, stating that when purposefully utilised, it provides a manner to gather communication information to assist in determining which media types to assign to the various stakeholders. During this phase, the communication style was the key focus, suiting the recipient's preferred style of communication. The most appropriate media mix was combined to adhere to each stakeholder's needs. Building on this notion, the different communication mediums and channels for each stakeholder were considered with regard to the communication process.

A clear indication of the intuitive strategic communication plan unfolded as the interviewees reported back on certain campaigns they were involved in. The interviewees utilised a schedule to ensure these campaigns and the coinciding timelines were kept on track.

Subsequently, pharmacy management was explored, as it purposefully assists the pharmacy to reach impeccable outcomes, by focusing on (a) human resources, (b) change management, (c) risk management, (d) marketing management, and (e) strategic management, as these contribute to the longevity of a small scale pharmacy.

Interviewees selected prospective employees on the grounds of competency, proof of productivity and motivation, as these traits contribute favourably to the pharmacy's profitability. In order to attract the most favourable candidates, different methods of advertising were utilised by the interviewees of the small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. The latter forms part of the pharmacy's' human resource processes.

In certain instances, organisational change is inevitable; these are evident in adjustments in the organisational environment, technology or people. Interviewees had to deal with relating issues, where resistance to change was evident of some employee behaviour.

The following step assessed risk management as a method to reduce business risks. The interviewees explained how to determine the insurance needs of the pharmacy.

Addressing criteria for display, marketing management is mainly used to convert the passers-by into actual buyers. Merchandising aids are being supplied by wholesalers or manufacturers to assist in the process of display. There are various types of artefacts used to draw the customers' attention to the promotional items. A clear indication was given that certain guidelines have to be complied with, for product displays.

The interviewees of the small pharmacies situated in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District utilise some forms of strategic management to reach their pharmacy's goals. To assess the future without taking the present situation into account will not allow for the successful development of plans and strategies. Interviewees take the current situation into account by keeping the following in mind: goals, financial situation, management and market capabilities, employee expertise, and market position. On this point of discussion, the previous mentioned is not set in stone, as the interviewees revise the foregoing on a regular basis.

6.5 Answering the general research question

The general research question of this study is:

What should a framework for strategic communication in small sized pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District consist of?

Of significant concern is the lack of strategic discourse, or the depth thereof, in small sized pharmacies with the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District. For example, some of the respondents indicated that their vision and mission are one and the same thing. The solution here will be to explain the difference between the two concepts, stating that the mission statement reflects the organisation's reason for existence.

(i) Mission (the *what* and *why* of organisational planning)

The mission statement portrays the organisation's intended plan by answering the "what and the why" of an organisation's intent. The mission statements are much similar to the vision statement; however, it is more conclusive and pragmatic. General guiding rules towards the mission include it to be (Kokemuller, 2017; Nagy & Fawcett, 2017a; Steyn & Puth, 2000):

- Concise: Although not so briefly worded as the vision statement, a one sentence phrase will convey the message sufficiently;
- Outcome-oriented: The mission statement formulates the primary outcome;
- Inclusive: Mission statements should not be limited to the strategies of the community that will be involved, and instead should include more detailed context.

It is also an indicator of what the organisation does and what the overall aim is. Although the mission is supportive of the vision, employees and other stakeholders should be informed of its purpose and direction. It is important to state that the mission is changeable, to portray the organisation's concerns and means to accomplish the vision. To purposefully fulfil its mission, Drucker (1954:64-65) described it as an indication of an organisation's positioning for the future, deciding what should be done rather than how it should be done. The vision is what the organisation believes is the perfect circumstances in which it will thrive. The organisation will thrive when the vision is (Fernandes, 2017; Nagy & Fawcett, 2017d; Steyn & Puth, 2000):

- clear and supported by the community members;
- flexible enough to include an array of local perspectives;
- encouraging, inspiring and uplifting to all involved;
- briefly worded so that the slogan can easily be remembered.

In terms of the vision, one should make it clear that a vision statement's sole purpose is to explain how the organisation would appear e.g. when in a successful state, in the near future. While compiling the vision statement, the organisation could try and answer the following question: "What would the organisation be like when we have accomplished all our strategic goals.?" The vision statement helps create a mental picture of the successful future the organisation wants obtain; in other words, it sets an aspiration. It should also be inspirational to the employees of the organisation.

In conjunction with existing theory regarding frameworks for strategic communication, the following should be integrated when a framework for strategic communication in small sized pharmacies within the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District is compiled:

Guidelines: Corporate Communication Strategy	**Context specific considerations regarding strategic communication**	**Context specific considerations regarding basic tenets of pharmacy management**
Analyse the internal environment	The unique context of specific small sized pharmacies need to be incorporated in strategic discourse, especially with regard to resource availability.	Pharmacy staff need to be more exposed to strategic management issues. On top of general concerns, staff also need to become more competent in the principles of effective management.
Identify strategic stakeholders and publics in the internal and external environment	Small sized pharmacies do have an idea of who their stakeholders are, but they do need to prioritise their stakeholders by utilising a stakeholder map. Use a matrix to link the responsible communicators according to stakeholder and circumstances, document the information, and place it in a spot visible to all pharmacy staff.	External control, which falls outside of the normal internal pharmacy's control, stipulates laws to which should be adhere to. Respondents indicated that these laws have to be obeyed at all times as they are enforced by government, the pharmacy board, or the medicine control council. Various medical funds may at times also pose additional guidelines. For instance, stating which medicine types are allowed on which medical fund, how and where patients should obtain their prescriptions, and when do co-payments kick in. On top of these laws and legislations, the interviewees indicated that external factors have the ability to change price structures, such as the

		proposed Nation Health Service (NHS).
Identify and describe key strategic issues in the internal and external environment		The business environment can be very volatile at times, and that poses an influence on the strategic management goals of most of the small pharmacies. This became clear, when interviewees stated that financial goals are hard to come by and others just merely wish to survive. Productivity was hampered by aspects such as organisational management, or staffing of the pharmacy, all of which the pharmacist has control over.
Identify the implications of each strategic issue		It was mentioned that the population does not have the money to pay for clinic fees; the patients would all much rather visit the local clinic that is situated in the street across from the pharmacy.
Decide on the corporate communication strategy	Face-to-face communication tends to be the best form of communication.	
Set communication goals		Develop strategic management goals. Without these goals, the pharmacy's sense of direction is found lacking. The development of strategic management goals presents a chance to monitor day-to-day activities and evaluate the pharmacy's developments.
Develop communication policy		
Draft to top management		
Conduct an overall corporate communication media analysis	Some of the pharmacies have clearly stated that the economy poses a huge threat. Therefore, their options might be to look at inexpensive means to communicate to the public. In order to be more structured in the approach of	Use a pilot group and test the implementation first to see how it works.

	media analysis, a media matrix below is a good consideration. More work is needed on the pharmacy's front of shop (area in pharmacy that is concerned with gifts, toiletries etc.), as it is an area where there is a great deal of competition in the market. A stronger focus here will allow the pharmacy to better compete with the market in general. Try and arrange for consultation sessions with the pharmacy, or an information session that is more suited for larger groups of people, by utilising a school hall or any other local institution that has this facility available. A proposed addition to the word-of-mouth method might also be to update the pharmacy's Facebook page with this information. Students utilise social media extensively, and therefore a quick message will increase reach.	
Develop a strategic communication plan	Most of the small pharmacies have guidelines that they follow in order to comply with their marketing programme. Certain factors influence the extensiveness of this endeavour, based on money, belonging to a pharmacy chain or not, and a lack of expertise.	Monitor the process, see if the outcome has met the planned objectives; communicate it to staff and also mention when ideas need more work.

Table 6-1: Answering the general research question

6.6 Recommendations stemming from this study

The regulating body, South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC), should take note of the strategic framework for the small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District as the research conclusions led to establish recommendations for small pharmacies to apply strategic

communication management and produce a means in which the Steyn and Puth (2000) model for strategic communication management can be modified to be more relevant to small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District.

Pharmacists fulfil managerial roles in the organisation they are employed; the managerial role is not limited to the pharmacy manager, but has relevance to every individual working in the pharmacy, and for this reason the topic of pharmacy management was included in this study, to act as a vehicle for assistance in attaining the pharmacy's goals. In retrospect, with reference to pharmacists, as noted on the website of SAPC (2016a), "all persons registered in terms of section 14 of the Act are required by Council to record their (Continuing Professional Development) CPD activities on line. The recorded CPD should be relevant to the practice of the registered person or be concerned with or, encourage and enhance career development", the strategic framework and the supporting communication theory may be included in the programme that assists their career development.

In conjunction with the latter, prospective Pharmacy students may also benefit from utilising the strategic communication plan framework in the university module Strategic Pharmacy Management. It could be suggested to the subject lecturers of the various South African universities, as an added chapter to the course content. Knowledge hereof will steer the aspiring pharmacist to a deeper-seated understanding of how the previous mentioned would be able to assist them holistically in their profession as a registered pharmacist.

6.7 Limitations of the study

In this investigative study with a qualitative nature, a deficiency would be the small sample of the pharmacies that participated in the study. It was not possible to generalise the findings and link the small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District to all the small pharmacies in the broader South Africa. An additional factor was that it was a challenge to find small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District who did not belong to a pharmacy chain.

It would have been fitting to make a longitudinal, in-depth study of each small pharmacy, in order to become more knowledgeable regarding the implications of the function of strategic communication management in obtaining organisational goals for relationship building with stakeholders. A longitudinal study would allow an analysis of the strategic communication function within each small pharmacy, providing more information than what was indicative of this study. The pertaining timeline, however, did unfortunately not allow for an elaborative research design.

In retrospect, a quantitative approach could have been considered for this study, as it would provide the opportunity for clear documentation regarding the content and application of the

survey instruments, enabling other researchers to assess the validity of the results. In contrast, qualitative research, as performed in this study, utilises small respondent numbers, and will result in academic researchers to perceive the study as less serious.

Small pharmacies have difficulty in managing their communication strategically. The notion is that a deteriorating community leading to a lack of funding is the most crucial factor, obstructing them to manage communication more strategically. In hindsight, the small pharmacies under discussion are uniform about strategic communication management, due to little exposure to or a void in communication training, resulting in oblivion; missing a chance to fully understand the value strategic communication management can deliver. The small pharmacies underestimate the power of mutually beneficial stakeholder relationships, which on the long run leads to the achieving of organisational goals. On the flip side of the coin, the small pharmacies do practise forms of strategic communication, but mainly on a hunch, and in some instances even undertake corporate social responsibility initiatives. It can therefore be stated that the majority of the small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District pose an abundant opportunity in the long term for the construction and application of strategic communication management objectives.

With regard to pharmacy management, human management is being undertaken in the different small pharmacies, but the vehicle to accomplish the outcomes differs immensely. Some sources are not being utilised due to money constraints. Other mediums pose more of a threat than an advantage, as too many unqualified candidates apply.

Contributively to this study would have been an investigation into the perspectives of the small pharmacies' strategic stakeholders, such as medical representatives, pharmacy staff, doctors, and South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC), about each small pharmacy's communication. Establishing the communication and relationship edifices of small pharmacies' strategic stakeholders would supply small pharmacies the means to adapt their communication practices to their stakeholders' demands. This is a beneficial addition, on the other hand, to the modification of the Steyn and Puth (2000) model for small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District.

6.8 Suggestions for future research

Upon completion of this study, and as a result of its corresponding limitations, the subsequent suggestions can be explored for future research:

- A similar study can be performed with a larger sample size, enabling the use of diverse geographic information of pharmacy owners when comparing the results, especially, the differences between medium and large pharmacies can be investigated.

- Similar studies can be conducted by exploring a wider spectrum of healthcare practitioner and patient communication, or by concentrating on communication specifically aimed at creating sound relations, for instance doctor-patient or dentist-patient communications.

- A quantitative study can be undertaken to capture suggestive information concealed in quantitative data about the motivations that underlie behaviours.

- A study comparing the healthcare professionals' perceptions and the perceptions of their patients can be conducted.

6.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the focus was on answering the research questions. With regard to strategic communication and pharmacy management, the overall interview questions were kept in mind, and indicated that the interviewees have in some intuitive instances established their strategic stakeholders' needs and issues. Suggestions towards the resulting impact on communication and relationship management were advised upon. Consequent recommendations include the prioritisation of stakeholders, key strategic issues, identification of *whom* and *what* in order to utilise communication, as well as the focus on relationship building given the time limitations and financial constraints.

The interviewees may focus on issues, even on communication campaigns, stakeholder prioritisation, or management areas such as marketing- and strategic management in order for the small pharmacies in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District to apply their sparse resources carefully and with the utmost long-lasting effect. We looked at possible recommendations in order to present possible solutions, which interviewees may exploit to its fullest. If some pre-conditions are necessary, it was also stated in that section. Limitations that exist in this study point to suggested possibilities for further research; in other words, pose an opportunity for other researchers to venture into the unknown in order to seek solutions, yet to be discovered.

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ANNEXURE A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

ANALYSE THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT
1. Vision • What does the pharmacy stand for and what does it want to achieve? • What makes the pharmacy special? • How are you different from the other pharmacies in town? **2. Mission** • What is the pharmacy's goal?
IDENTIFY STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS AND PUBLICS IN THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT
Are there any issues with regard to your external environment? **1. Strengths** • What advantage can you use as a selling point? • Do you focus on client service? • Is it true that bigger chain pharmacies do not provide as much attention to the customers? • Do you think chain pharmacies are more self-service driven? **2. Weaknesses** • Are there any negative issues that you had to overcome in terms of: • reputation issues • staff problems • management problems **3. Opportunity** • Which opportunities are available that you can apply to your advantage? • Is there, for instance, a segment that you have discovered in the market that you can utilise? • Vaccination that only your pharmacy does? • Clinic facilities? **4. Threats** • What blocks the pharmacy's success: • New competition? • Changing regulations? • Changes in medical funds that pose a negative result?

IDENTIFY AND DESCRIBE KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES IN THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT
(differentiate between types of strategic issues)

- Do you use a stakeholder map?
- Do you determine whether there are people that are influenced by the decisions the pharmacy makes? For instance:
- Patients?
- Competitors?
- Doctors?
- Suppliers?
- Local residents?
- The media?
- Stakeholders?
- Do you utilise the stakeholder map to, determine…
- The critically important group for whom you have to provide in their needs?
- Key groups?
- Lower priority?
- And a certain group that you should keep informed?
- If not, do you use something similar?

IDENTIIFY THE IMPLICATIONS OF EACH STRATEGIC ISSUE
(for each of the strategic stakeholders)

Issues in this category contribute to the pharmacy not reaching its proposed goals.

1. Internal control (inside the pharmacy, which the interviewee has control over)

- Please inform me if there are any internal strategic issues on the following:
- Organisational management?
- Staffing?
- Décor
- Hindering the pharmacy's productivity?

2. External control (Outside the pharmacy, which the interviewee has no control over)

- How do the following external issues influence the pharmacy?
- Government legislation
- Competition

DECIDE ON THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
(what must be communicated to solve the problem/capitalise on the opportunity)

- What must be done to solve a problem for instance to…
- Improve productivity?
- Please state if such an issue ever crossed your path?
- How did you overcome the situation?
- Have you ever capitalised on an opportunity?
- If legislation about a product has been instated, do you communicate it to your stakeholders?
- Have you ever experienced a situation like this?
- What was your experience with regard to this?

SET COMMUNICATION GOALS
(based on the corporate communication strategy)

Scenario: If there is, for instance, an issue / problem, then goals will be set in order to show what the pharmacy wants to accomplish with their communication regarding a certain situation/product/service.

Question:

- Please describe whether the pharmacy has ever been in such a position with regard to the (situation/product/service)?
- And that you had to distribute the latter information to your stakeholders (doctors, patients, suppliers, staff, clients, clinics, hospitals, assistant pharmacists)?
- Can you supply me with an example (if possible) of where you had to change the stakeholders' attitude regarding a (situation/product/service)?

DEVELOP COMMUNICATION POLICY
(who is allowed to communicate what to whom)

Who in the pharmacy is responsible to communicate what with whom? Maybe your prerogative is to be honest, trustworthy and transparent…

Scenario: With regard to a (situation/product/service?), who has to do the following?

- Please state whether there is a specific person responsible to communicate with the pharmacy's stakeholders (doctors, patients, suppliers, staff, clients, clinics, hospitals, assistant pharmacists?)
- Taking the preceding (situation/product/service?) into account, may there be circumstances under which certain information may not be revealed?
- If a crisis or emergency arises in the pharmacy, do you have a certain policy of what should be communicated?
- If not, and the situation does arise, how would you handle it?

DRAFT TO TOP MANAGEMENT
If you are or are not the manager of the pharmacy, and you have to recap on the questions so far….. • Would you say funds have been set aside for communication purposes, in other words to convey information via: • Marketing? • Advertising?
CONDUCT AN OVERALL CORPORATE COMMUNICATION MEDIA ANALYSIS (which kinds of media best suit the organisation)
• Taken into account your various stakeholders (doctors, patients, suppliers, staff, clients, clinics, hospitals, assistant pharmacists), if you have to recall, suppose you have to communicate with these different ones, do you… • Use different communication media for each? • Which group do you communicate with face-to-face? • Which individuals do you communicate with face-to-face? • Do you make use of meetings? • With which group do you preferably meet? • Do you use electronic communication media: • Do you use Facebook? • Do you use Twitter? • Do you use printed media (pamphlets, posters, brochures): • At which group is printed media aimed? • Do you make use of displays? • At which group are displays aimed? • Or do you use displays only to introduce a new product?

DEVELOP A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN
Communication programmes, campaigns or plans

The strategic communication plan is a framework based on what is planned for communication, therefore:

- Have you ever planned a communication programme? (in other words, using a programme to continually communicate to keep your stakeholders informed)
- If so, please elaborate?
- Have you ever made use of communication campaigns (in other words the advertising of flu vaccinations?)
- Can you state the frequency hereof:
- Monthly?
- Quarterly?
- Half yearly?
- Please elaborate on your choice.
- Can you give me an example of your advertising campaigns?
- Which mediums did you utilise…
- Displays?
- Pamphlets?
- Newspaper advertising?
- Other?
- Have you ever had it in mind to reach certain communication goals with regard to…?
- Renovation?
- Or maybe to accommodate your clients?
- Make your choice and elaborate accordingly?
- If so, do you use different communication messages for each of your stakeholder groups?
- Are time and money the deciding factors in the execution of the above?
- Do you utilise different mediums to disperse these different messages?
- Do you use email?
- Do you use social media?
- Do you use pamphlets?
- Do you use any other?

Figure 6-2: Guidelines to develop a corporate communication strategy (Steyn & Puth, 2000:62).

(a) Image

- Do you use communication to portray a positive image to your stakeholders?
- Do you use different types of media for external communication, taken the abovementioned into account?
- How do you monitor public opinion in order to alternate your strategy?

(b) Planning

- Do you have sponsors that support your communication campaigns?
- Do you use a schedule to plan your campaigns?
- Do you evaluate your campaigns afterward?
- How do you measure the successes of the pharmacy?
- Do you think a communication plan would be able to reflect the pharmacy's reputation more favourably?

ANNEXURE B: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE & TECHNICAL EDITOR

To whom it may concern

Cecile van Zyl
Language editing and translation
Cell: 072 389 3450
Email: Cecile.vanZyl@nwu.ac.za

21 November 2017

Dear Mr / Ms

Re: Language editing of dissertation: (A framework for strategic communication management in small sized pharmacies in the Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District)

I hereby declare that I language edited the above-mentioned dissertation by Ms Geraldine Gerhardi (12407496).

Please feel free to contact me should you have any enquiries.

Kind regards

Cecile van Zyl

Language practitioner

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