Sharing information using Internal Communication and Business Intelligence: A Healthcare perspective

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ABSTRACT

Internal communication is the distribution of information between business units, sometimes different parts of an organisation (Grismely, 2015) to give staff information required to get their job done (Mazzei, 2014). Using internal communication and different communication channels like email, intranet and shared network drives and folders, a link has to be created to Business Intelligence tools for information users to receive information, specifically within the Hospital or healthcare environment. Current Business Intelligence frameworks outside of health exclude the communication channels except for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) which includes how customer's interaction via communication channels. This paper describes a research project where information users in the hospital environment will be surveyed on current communication methods and preferred methods, with a follow up of semi structured interviews to improve the proposed framework of Internal communication channels with Business Intelligence in Health.

Keywords: Internal communication, communication channels, Business Intelligence, Healthcare, Hospital, Customer Relationship Management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Selecting a communication channel is a choice a person has when sending information. There is some choice from the user side, how they would like to receive automated and ad-hoc information but generally information is sent via email. Other channels are available like an intranet page, portals to retrieve information and shared network drives, but these are not utilised to the same level as email. This research is relevant due to the lack of literature that address internal communication channels and Business Intelligence tools within health and in general. There is a vast amount of literature about internal communication but significantly less about internal communication channels or methods of sharing. This research proposes to bring together the research of internal communication channels and business intelligence tools that exists to create a generic framework for internal communication channels for use within the New Zealand hospital environment and possibly other sectors that use Business Intelligence.

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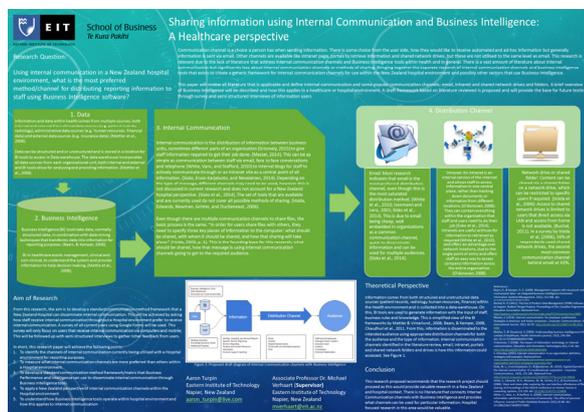
2. RESEARCH QUESTION

The overall question this research seeks to answer is; using internal communication in a New Zealand hospital environment, what is the most preferred method/channel for distributing reporting information to staff using Business Intelligence software?

From this research, the aim is to develop a standard communication framework that a New Zealand Hospital can use to disseminate internal communication.

3. THE EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Internal communication can be as simple as communication between staff via email, face to face conversations and telephone (White, Vanc, & Stafford, 2010) to internal blogs for staff to actively communicate through, or an intranet site as a central point of all information. (Sisko, Ensio Karjaluoto, & Nevalainen, 2014). Depending on the type of message, different channels may need to be used, however this is not discussed in current research and does not account for a New Zealand hospital perspective. (Sisko et al., 2014). "An organisation needs to send the right messages through the right distribution channels to the right audiences. To accomplish this, [the organisation] may need a variety of communication vehicles." (Isenmann & Lenz, 2001, p. 101).

Most research indicates that email is the most preferred distribution channel, even though this is the most saturated distribution method. (White et al., 2010; Isenmann & Lenz, 2001; Sisko et al., 2014). This is due to email being cheap, well embedded in organisations as a common communication channel, quick to disseminate information and can be used for multiple audiences. (Sisko et al., 2014). An intranet is an internal version of the internet and allows staff to access information in one central place, rather than tracking down

documents or information from different locations. (O'donovan, 1998).

Content can be shared via a shared folder on a network drive, which can be restricted to specific users if required. (Voida et al., 2006). Access to shared network drives is limited to users that direct access via LAN and access from home is not available. (Buchal, 2011).

Business Intelligence (BI) tools take data that is normally structured, in combination with data mining techniques that transforms data into information for reporting purposes. (Baars, & Kemper, 2008). BI in healthcare assists management, clinical and non-clinical, to understand the system and provide information to help decision making. ((Mettler & Vimarlund, 2008).

4. PROCESS

Information comes from both structured and unstructured data sources (patient records, radiology, human resources, finance) within the Health environment and is collected into a data warehouse. On this, BI tools are used to generate information with the input of staff, business rules and knowledge (Mettler & Vimarlund., 2008; Baars, & Kemper, 2008; Chaudhuri et al., 2011). From this, information is disseminated to the intended audience using appropriate distribution channels for both the audience and the type of information. Internal communication channels identified in the literature review, including email, intranet, portals and shared network folders and drives is how this information could be accessed and is illustrated in Figure 1.
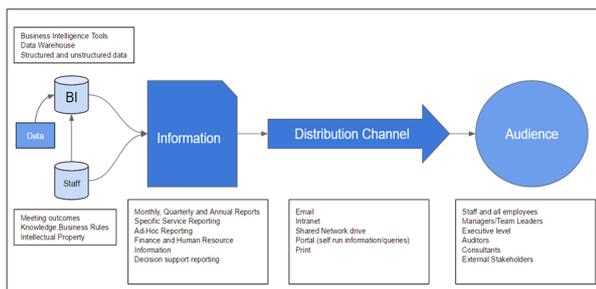

Figure 1: Proposed draft diagram of Internal Communication channels with Business Intelligence

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

A survey of employees that use internal communication channels for reporting purposes, will be used to collect information. These staff will be identified as hospital staff that receive reports, both automated and ad-hoc, irrespective of the distribution channel. An email will be sent to each employee with a link to the survey that contains open and closed questions. Semi structured interviews will be conducted using face to face either as a focus group or individual, depending on interviewee work commitments and will follow an interview guide with probes to collect information.

6. CONCLUSION

This research proposal recommends that the research project should proceed as this would provide valuable research in a New Zealand and hospital context. There is little literature that connects Internal Communication channels with Business Intelligence and provides what channels can be used for

particular information. Hospital focused research in this area would be valuable.

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