Towards a New Employment Relationship Model:
Merging Changing Needs and Interests of Organisation and Individual

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this doctoral thesis to my parents, Bond and Suzanne Baker. To my father, I thank him for encouraging me from an early age to develop an enquiring mind. I thank my mother for instilling in me a love of reading through her example and love of books.
KEYWORDS

employment relationship, psychological contract, human resource development, organisational change, multi-source assessment, focus groups, flexible employment, customer-focus, focus on performance, project-based work, human spirit and work, loyalty and commitment, learning and development, open information
ABSTRACT

This research investigates the new psychological contract phenomenon in an organisational case study. The research question underpinning this study is – What are the core attributes of the new employment relationship? To investigate this research question, the researcher applied Noer’s (1997) new employment relationship model to a disproportionate stratified sample of 19 participants from three organisational perspectives in an Australian-based international travel retail organisation, Flight Centre Limited, which specialises in the sale of discount international airfares. Data from a survey instrument were analysed using a “Multi-source Assessment” instrument. The data analysis method was used to create a schema to guide and inform a series of focus groups. The research findings validated Noer’s five attributes of Flexible Employment, Customer-focus, Focus on Performance, Project-based Work and Human Spirit & Work. In addition, three other attributes of the new employment relationship emerged from the data, namely, Loyalty & Commitment, Learning & Development and Open Information. The research findings validate eight core attributes of the new employment relationship and therefore make a contribution to the expanding body of research in this field. The research approach also provides organisational practitioners with a unique consulting methodology to merge the changing needs and interests of individual and organisation.
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STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

4th of March, 2005
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CHAPTER 1 – RATIONALE

1.1 Introduction

This introductory chapter advances the case for Human Resource (HR) practitioners and researchers to embrace a different kind of relationship between management and labour from the traditional relationship that has existed for most of the industrial era. Although there are many pressures to hold on to the traditional relationship, the costs of retaining the “them and us” relationship between management and workers are too high in a climate of accelerated economic change and uncertainty. Not surprisingly, there has recently been an explosion of interest in the perceived changing relationship between employers and employees among academics (e.g., Hendry & Jenkins, 1997; Sims, 1994; Sparrow, 1996) and HR practitioners (e.g., Covey, 1996; Goman, 1997; Wilms, 1997). However, there has been until only the last few years a lack of applied research in organisations. Much of the previous research on the employment relationship has postulated what this new relationship should consist of without attempting to empirically examine what employees and employers actually expect nor the differences that might exist (Kissler, 1994; Shore & Tetrick, 1994; Sims, 1994). Moreover, the “New Work Order” (Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996) literature paints an overly optimistic picture of organisations which have embraced attributes of these new employment relationship mind-sets and practices. These superficial accounts need more empirical testing. In other words, more in-depth studies examining what is actually expected and desired in the employment relationship are needed.

The traditional employment relationship has been an important and successful centrepiece of industry since the Industrial Revolution. However the traditional relationship between management and labour has been under strain. The marketplace has changed dramatically in the last 25 years. The 1980s signaled widespread and extensive downsizing and outsourcing to decrease the number of permanent employees in the work force (Leans & Feldman, 1992). This altered the “psychological contract” (Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl & Solley, 1962; Schein, 1965) between workers and organisations. Prior to this, the marketplace was characterised by a relatively stable and predictable work
environment for 200 years, ideally suited to the traditional management-labour relationship. Since the downsizing movement of the later part of the twentieth century, the relatively secure and consistent marketplace has been replaced by rapid change, uncertainty, and global competition. The arrival of the global economy and the dramatically changing workplace has placed considerable pressure and tension on the traditional employment relationship.

Since the downsizing movement in the 1980s the needs and interests of organisations and workers and their expectations of each other have changed significantly. This has put considerable stress on the psychological contract between workers and organisations. The changing paradigm in the relationship between individual and organisation has been referred to in the management literature as “new worker-organization codependency” (Noer, 1997), “person-organisation relationship” (Coulson-Thomas, 1998; Herriot, 1992; Hosking & Andersen, 1992), “workplace community” (Fairholm, 1997), “corporate citizenship” (Grint, 1997), “new psychological contract” (Boswell, Moynihan, Roehling & Cavanaugh, 2001; De Meuse, Bergmann & Lester, 2001; Levinson et al., 1962; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Ne, 1999; Robinson, 1996; Rousseau, 1990, 1995; Schein, 1965), “new employment relationship” (Adamson, 1997; Albrow, 1997; Baker, 2000; Boswell et al., 2001; Bridges, 1994; Drucker, 1992; Eldridge, Cressey, & MacInnes, 1991; Gee et al., 1996; Grint, 1997; Handy, 1989; Noer, 1997; Roehling, Cavanaugh, Moynihan & Boswell, 2000) or “development culture” (Simonsen, 1997), all emphasising different aspects of the shifting relationship between the individual and the organisation. The researcher uses the terms "psychological contract" and "employment relationship" interchangeably throughout the text because they are the most prevalent descriptors in the literature of the changing paradigm between workers and organisations. More specifically, the term “psychological contract” is used to describe the field of study in the literature. The “employment relationship” is used in a more practical way to portray the relationship between employer and employee in an organisational context.

It is therefore timely for researchers and practitioners to develop and apply models of a new employment relationship based on new mind-sets about the management/labour relationship in organisational settings. Furthermore, it seems increasingly likely that until this new employment relationship is practiced in
organisational settings, the abundance of Human Resource Development (HRD) techniques in the new work order literature will fail, or be replaced by other traditional HRD strategies. These traditional HRD programmes, developed on assumptions underpinning the traditional employment relationship, will continue to be superficial and unsustainable attempts at addressing the perennial challenges of how to treat people at work in order to motivate them in pursuit of higher performance.

Much of the management literature enthusiastically advocates the conceptualisation of a new employment relationship (e.g., Adamson, 1997; Albrow, 1997; Baker, 2000; Bridges, 1994; Drucker, 1992; Eldridge et al., 1991; Gee et al., 1996; Grint, 1997; Handy, 1989; Noer, 1997) without providing practitioners with the necessary tools to change the mind-sets of employers and employees. What is needed are practical change management approaches that are grounded in the conceptualisation of the new psychological contract. Moreover, the prime purpose of these tools should be to merge changing organisational and individual needs and interests to assist both the employer and employee. This approach is a departure from most current HRD practices that either do not address the issue of conflict between management and labour, or assumes a commonality of interests between both parties. The impact of this fresh approach to HRD and organisational change is hopefully the amalgamation of some research theory and consulting practice.

The challenge is how to construct new paradigms about the employment relationship after 200 years of “them and us” thinking about management and labour borne out of the Industrial Revolution. On the other hand, the futility of popular HRD strategies will become more evident in an increasingly competitive environment where all the old employment conventions are being challenged.

Despite the need for a new conceptualisation of the employment relationship, there has been until recently a lack of credible research in applying new models of organisation in the workplace. Unfortunately, there is often a gap between the reality and rhetoric of the “high performance workplace” (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 1996). Furthermore, whilst the concept of a new employment relationship is not new, most approaches to change management in the literature are “top down models”, driven by organisational leaders without regard for the strategic involvement of
workers at all levels of the organisational structure. Noer’s (1997) “The New Worker-Organization Codependency” model is one of the few new employment relationship models cited in the literature that conceptualises some of the attributes of the psychological contract from the dual perspective of workers and management.

1.2 Defining the Traditional Employment Relationship

Before conceptualising this new working relationship, an attempt should be made to clarify the traditional employment relationship and its apparent shortcomings in the contemporary marketplace. This traditional employment relationship is a consequence of a form of work organisation commonly referred to as “Fordism” (Fuchs, 2002). Fuchs defines Fordism as having four features: 1) a rationalisation and mechanisation of production, 2) highly centralised, 3) minimal opportunity to advance from the shop floor, and 4) designated tasks were expected to be performed at an acceptable rate. “Fordism broke the total operations into simple, component parts or tasks and hired people with low but sufficient qualifications to do their respective tasks in a predefined ‘best way’” (Fuchs, p. 157). As a form of production, Fordism resulted in clearly defined roles and responsibilities between management and labour.

In exchange terms, the traditional employment relationship consists of the manager specifying the work requirements and in return for a willingness to comply, the worker receives a wage. This has been the conventional lynch pin of the relationship between manager and worker since the birth of industry. Any failure to heed a work instruction, or to pay the agreed wage, means that the contract collapses.

Historically, a mutual understanding existed between employees and employers. It was expected that employees would work hard, cause few problems, and generally do whatever the boss wanted. In return, it was expected that employers would provide “good jobs” with “good pay”, offer plenty of advancement opportunities, and virtually guarantee lifetime employment. It was a stable, predictable world; the employee would be loyal to the employer and, in return, the employer would provide job security for the employee. This belief in
an unwritten agreement between the employee and the organisation later came to
be referred to as the psychological contract (Levinson et al., 1962; Schein, 1965).

The traditional manager-worker relationship is easy to follow despite its
shortcomings. Moreover, Fordism as a model has proven to be particularly
successful for most of the previous century (Fuchs, 2002). However, traditional
organisations are increasingly regarded as being incapable of adapting to the
challenges of a globalised and increasingly interactive world (Fuchs). More
specifically, Fuchs states that, “the traditional organization has proved to be
largely incapable of defining, exploiting and operationalizing such knowledge-
incentive assets, but has nevertheless been able to retain these assets within the
firm boundaries” (p. 155). With regard to the traditional employment relationship,
Belbin (1997) rightly points out, “the essence of the crisis is that, while the
management model is simple, people are complicated” (p. 3). Managers being
managers are given responsibility and workers are given tasks. This creates a
dilemma. Workers who are not given responsibility tend to shirk responsibilities
and therefore never become responsible. The fewer the people who take on
responsibilities, the greater the burden of responsibility that falls on the shoulders
of the manager. In reality, managers can disappoint and those in subordinate roles
can surprise others by their initiative and enterprise. As Belbin puts it:

When people do not fit the managerial paradigm within which they are
meant to operate, anomalies give rise to disorder and set in motion a
second round of derivative anomalies as people attempt to find their way
around the problem (p. 4).

Against a backdrop of a far less predictable and stable marketplace, the obvious
answer would seem to be a less formal employment relationship where managers
provide workers with the freedom to be flexible and innovative in their approach
to problem solving.

However, these new approaches to the employment relationship,
advocated widely in new work order literature, open the door for workers to
manipulate the system. The overlapping areas, which are absent in the traditional
manager-worker relationship, open the way for political operators to seize the
opportunity and exercise their unwelcome skills. This often results in what Belbin
Managers may, and undoubtedly do, feel threatened and inclined to revert back to the simple demarcation of responsibilities in the traditional relationship despite the need for a fresh perspective on the relationship between individual and organisation.

The challenge is that researchers and practitioners have not been able to agree on a new mode of working relationship with the same degree of straightforwardness as the traditional employment relationship to escape the pitfalls of the traditional system. Under the traditional employment relationship mind-set, there is a considerable price to pay for developing a new model for the manager, worker and organisation. Under a new employment relationship, managers will not be able to give and supervise tasks to be completed by their subordinates to the same extent. Workers, on the other hand, are expected to take greater responsibility and be more accountable for their output. While any new system would emphasise negotiation between manager and worker in terms of crucial aspects of employment, agreement can not be presumed.

Nevertheless, there are enormous advantages, and arguably little choice, in breaking the bonds of this traditional mind-set for the worker and the organisation. The worker in the “new reality” (Noer, 1997) can choose to invest themselves in satisfying, meaningful work, engage in continuous learning, and reclaim their self-esteem, if lost under the traditional employee/employer relationship. The organisation payoff is equally positive: a work force filled with free independent employees working on tasks they find fulfilling - resulting in long-term competitive advantage in the global market place (Noer). Grint (1997) refers to this new association as corporate citizenship. Individuals have rights the organisation must honour. Workers also have responsibility to the organisation to be involved, committed, and supportive. Obligation, consent, and participation are elements of organisational citizenship (Fairholm, 1997). In other words, values become the adhesive of citizenship in the organisation. This new approach is still based on an exchange between the organisation and individual, but without the restrictions of the old industrial model of “them and us”.

This is not an easy process and requires new ways of thinking for both individuals and organisational leaders. The employee must choose to break free and claim the new freedom and the organisation must accommodate and facilitate
that choice. What is therefore required is a new employment relationship model, based on empirical research, incorporating the often conflicting needs, interests and feelings of both the worker and the organisation. It appears increasingly likely that the traditional employment relationship is no longer adequate in a climate of accelerated change and uncertainty.

Table 1 illustrates a traditional and contrasting mind-set to the one underpinning Noer’s (1997) new employment relationship model.

Table 1 The Traditional Employment Relationship Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worker</th>
<th>Aspects of the Relationship</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work in one organisation and specialise.</td>
<td>Specialised Employment</td>
<td>Encourage workers to specialise and remain in one organisational unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve the manager before the customer.</td>
<td>Internal-focus</td>
<td>Rigid policies and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on where you work.</td>
<td>Job-focus</td>
<td>Link rewards and benefits for organisational dependency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept and embrace yourself as a permanent employee.</td>
<td>Functional-based Work</td>
<td>Focus on organisational functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find and accept any work.</td>
<td>Human Dispirit &amp; Work</td>
<td>Provide work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1.3 Rationale for a New Employment Relationship

Many researchers have argued that shifting economic trends, competitive pressures, and organisational structures have led to a changing employment relationship in the workplace (e.g., Burack, 1993; Capelli, Bassi, Katz, Knoke, Osterman, & Useem, 1997; Kissler, 1994). On the other hand, there is
considerable debate on whether a fundamental transformation of the employment relations is underway (Fuchs, 2002). There is, however, little argument that relatively recent work practices such as downsizing, reengineering, restructuring, flexible contracts and outsourcing have fundamentally increased the intra-organisational mistrust among co-workers (Herriot, Hirsh & Reilly, 1998). Moreover, increased global competition has spurred organisations to develop new strategies focused on responsiveness to rapidly changing market conditions and innovation. The rise of technology has further sped up the pace of change in business. It has been argued that such changes in the economy and business environment have led to changes in what organisations and employees expect from each other in the employment relationship (e.g., Burack, 1993). It does not necessarily follow that these changes in expectation between the organisation and individual have created a new employment relationship.

There is no shortage of advice in the popular management literature on techniques and strategies to get workers to give of their best and to make organisations more manoeuvrable in the marketplace. However, Morgan (1993) points out that we can not hope to create new organisational forms with traditional thinking. “We have to get beyond tinkering with existing organizational structures. We have to imaginize and explore creative possibilities that can add new chapters to the history of how we organize and manage” (p. 10). Heightened competition fuelled by the move to a global economy has bought into sharper focus the need to abandon traditional thinking about the employment relationship.

For the past 25 years in particular, we have witnessed unprecedented changes in the way organisations conduct business. Companies have embraced new concepts, undertaken new initiatives for improvement, and in so doing have changed the way work is performed. As Neusch and Siebenaler (1998) put it, organisations in recent times have

done TQM and JIT. They’ve been Kaizened and QFDed, activity-base costed, reengineered, flattened and right-sized, moved from low gear to third gear in speed-to-market, and have focused mightily on customer satisfaction. They have asked employees to work in teams and to become involved, empowered, committed, and productive (p. xv).
As other writers acknowledge, these initiatives are a response to the demands on organisations to become more manoeuvrable in the marketplace (e.g., Kanter, 1983; Peters, 1992; Peters & Waterman, 1982). However the results have generally failed to gain sustainable commitment from employees. In other words, while most companies pay employees for a whole day’s work, they still fail to get the whole employee (Neusch & Siebenaler, 1998, p. xv).

1.4 The Changing Individual and Organisational Paradigm

1.4.1 Individual and Organisational Paradigms

From the perspective of the individual worker, the ever-changing economic circumstances have dramatically altered their vocational, learning and development needs. Qualities such as employability, continuous learning, flexibility and independence have replaced job security, qualifications, predictability and organisational dependence as important employee success, or even, survival traits. Table 2 illustrates the changing individual paradigm.

Table 2 The Changing Individual Paradigm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Paradigm</th>
<th>New Paradigm</th>
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The traditional workplace is unlikely to suit the needs of the worker with a new career mind-set. Just as it is in the interests of employees to change their mind-set about careers, development, and organisational involvement, so too
should the people who lead them. Employer-employee partnerships are likely to replace the boss-worker mind-set of the traditional workplace. Table 3 illustrates the changing organisational mind-set.

**Table 3  The Changing Organizational Paradigm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Paradigm</th>
<th>New Paradigm</th>
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1.4.2  The Challenges of Changing Paradigms

It is argued that individuals and organisations that are able to embrace these new paradigms in Simonsen’s (1997) models are well positioned to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing global marketplace. However, from the researcher’s anecdotal experience, many organisations are in limbo between the old, paternalistic culture that worked in a stable hierarchical environment and the new development culture needed to meet the challenges of the new economy. For instance, organisational leaders may expect workers to change, yet their management practices and systems are more often than not based on the traditional command and control mind-set. Likewise, workers may expect managers to exhibit modern management practices, yet they may continue to exhibit an organisation-dependency mind-set. There are many pressures to change these old paradigms and many challenges to shift to new mind-sets for both the individual and organisation.
For instance, despite the need for a change in thinking about the employment relationship, organisations are generally not viewed by workers as cooperative enterprises where “sharing of the cake” is negotiated on any principled basis. Worker/management conflict has been the dominant historical model, and not surprisingly this dichotomy has lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy: management beliefs about workers needing tight control mechanisms and specific roles have encouraged workers to adopt a narrow and detached view of their organisational role. Although there may be some evidence that this psychological contract is changing (e.g., Kickul, 2001), it is unlikely that this move towards a new psychological contract is keeping pace with the changing commercial environment.

The corporate restructuring and downsizing strategies of the 1980s and 1990s have bought into question the traditional employee/employer relationship. Some researchers have asserted that the workplace of today is one of increased workload and stress and decreased job security and commitment (e.g., Cascio, 1998; De Meuse, Bergmann, & Vanderheiden, 1997; Jaffe & Scott, 1998). Research suggests that the current work environment sends confusing signals that may lead to employee uncertainty, cynicism, fear, and anger (De Meuse & Tornow, 1990). On the one hand, initiatives such as total quality management, employee empowerment programmes, and Self-Directed Work Teams (SDWT) convey to employees that employers value them and that they are an integral corporate asset. On the other hand, employees are being exposed to strategies such as downsizing and re-engineering that seem to run contrary to the notion of the critical role that people play in organisational success (Pfeffer, 1998). Unfortunately, few empirical investigations have examined whether employee perceptions of the psychological contract have actually changed (De Meuse et al., 2001).

1.4.3 The Psychological Contract Literature

Underpinning the difference between the changing individual and organisation mind-set is a different psychological contract. Over the past decade or so, there has been a plethora of writing on the subject of the psychological contract, particularly in the past six years (e.g., Beaumont & Harris, 2002; Cassar, 2001; De Meuse et al., 2001; Guest & Conway, 2002; Hallier, 1998; Kessler,
Purcell, & Shapiro, 2000; Kickul, 2001; Llewellyn, 2001; McDonald & Makin, 2000; Maguire, 2002; Marks, 2000; Martin, Staines & Pate, 1998; Noe, 1999; Pate, Martin, Beaumont, & McGoldrick, 2000; Schalk, Campbell & Freese, 1998; Sparrow, 2000; Van Dyne & Ang, 1998). Pate and Malone (2000) define the psychological contract as an individual’s perceptions of the employment relationship. More specifically, Noe (1999, p. 290) states that “a psychological contract is the expectation that employers and employees have about each other”. According to Pate and Malone (2000), psychological contract breach occurs when employees believe that the organisation has failed to deliver its promises or obligations. Guest (1998) argues that the psychological contract was originally devised as a heuristic device and not as a serious analytical construct. Nevertheless, it can be interpreted that the burgeoning interest in the concept is an endorsement of its high face validity (Marks, 2000).

The existing literature distinguishes between two components of the psychological contract - transactional and relational (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). These two components emphasise different types of exchange relationships between the employee and employer. In a transactional exchange, organisations explicitly and/or implicitly promise to provide specific, monetary remuneration for certain services performed by the employee. Consequently, a short-term, almost contract-like agreement between the two parties results. In contrast, the relational component emphasises a socio-emotive interaction between the employee and employer. Relational elements revolve around trust, respect, and the development of loyalty. The relational component of the psychological contract is becoming a more complex issue for organisations as some are forced to downsize, while others face a tight labor market, making it difficult to find and retain qualified employees. In this competitive environment, an understanding of how to attract and retain critical talent is increasingly important.

Academic and practitioner literature on the psychological contract is emphasising that the relational aspect has changed (Cavanaugh & Noe, 1999). How employees in the Western World perceive the relational component of the psychological contract is likely to influence their future attitudes toward the organisation and their corresponding behaviours. While organisational members may bemoan the changes taking place in the employee/employer relationship, few studies have gathered empirical evidence that employees believe the traditional
psychological contract has been altered, that is, employees would be loyal to the employer and, in return, the employer would provide job security for the employee. A new employment relationship is based on the notion that the components of the psychological contract, particularly the relational aspect, need reviewing and updating.

1.4.4 Research Studies of the New Psychological Contract

Studies of the psychological contract have focused mostly on contract violations (Beaumont & Harris, 2002; Llewellyn, 2001; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Pate et al., 2000; Pate & Malone, 2000; Robinson, 1996; Robinson, Kraatz & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 1990, 1995). Other studies have examined the relationship between job security, career development and the psychological contract (Martin et al., 1998). Some studies have tested theoretical models of the psychological contract (Schalk et al., 1998); others have looked at marketplace changes and their impact on the psychological contract (Cassar, 2001). Most of the recent studies have focused on employee attitudes to the psychological contract (De Meuse et al., 2001; Kessler et al., 2000; Kickul, 2001; McDonald & Makin, 2000; Sparrow, 2000; Van Dyne & Ang, 1998). However, a few have attempted to redress the balance and researched managers’ perspective about the psychological contract (Guest & Conway, 2002; Hallier, 1998; Maguire, 2002). Examples of these research themes are outlined below.

Research on contract violations have been interested in their effects on employee attitudes and behaviours. For example, Pate and Malone (2000) explored the nature and durability of outcomes arising from a perceived violation of an individual's psychological contract. In particular, the research concentrated on a prior perceived violation of an employee’s psychological contract and the subsequent attitudes towards employers. Pate and Malone (2000) assessed the nature, transferability, and durability of outcomes arising from the perceived violations. The researchers draw on the perceptions of 20 employees from a range of employment settings who five years earlier shared a common experience with a previous employer. The evidence suggested that a negative experience with one employer led to negative perceptions of employers in terms of trust, loyalty, and commitment.
Martin et al.’s (1998) research explored the relationship between job security and training and career development in a longitudinal study of a Scottish-based textiles company. Using the framework of the new psychological contract, the study examined two popular theses on this topic. The first theme was labeled the employability thesis. The second idea was that the increase in demand for training has less to do with enlightened employers and more to do with employee-driven demand. Data provided support for the employee-driven demand thesis; the increased value placed on training and development appears to be associated with employees trying to adjust to a climate of increasing job insecurity by making themselves more employable. One of the main lessons from Martin et al.’s study was that employer rhetoric on training and employability, when unmatched by action, can lead to perceptions of contract violation and produce important counter-intentional results.

Schalk et al. (1998) tested a theoretical model, in which two mediating concepts were used: the psychological contract and employee job attitudes. In this study the relationship between perceived change implementation in an organisation was related to employee self-rated behaviour. The change implementation processes measured were communication, support and participation. The relationship between these processes and employee behavior was examined. The research was carried out in two main divisions of a large telecommunications firm on a sample of 220 employees. The theoretical model (perceived change implementation influencing the psychological contract, influencing employee attitudes, influencing employee behavior) had a better fit with the data, compared with alternative models.

The focus of Cassar’s (2001) case study conducted in one of Australia’s largest banking organisations was how change can impact upon the psychological contract. Cassar’s (2001) study tested the assumption that traditional loyalty to an organisation is becoming less important as organisations pursue more transactional relationships with their employees and as employees are encouraged to pursue more self-interested “protean” careers. The main conclusion from this research was that the maintenance of such contracts still makes an important contribution to organisational relationships but that organisations need to seek ways of adjusting the terms of the psychological contract to meet the needs of an increasingly mobile and protean workforce.
The majority of studies have focused on employees’ perspective of the psychological contract. For example, De Meuse et al. (2001) tested the extent to which employees’ views of the relational component of the psychological contract have changed during the past 50 years. Further, the study analyses whether generational differences or differences in employment status (full-time versus part-time) are related to perceptions of the psychological contract. Their findings strongly indicate that perceptions of the relational component of the psychological contract have decreased during the past five decades. This reinforces numerous anecdotal references made about the breakdown of the traditional psychological contract.

Research has predominantly focused on employees’ views and has largely neglected the organisational perspective and the management of the psychological contract (Guest & Conway, 2002). This disproportionate emphasis on surveying employees’ attitudes in the employment relationship has been remedied in recent years. For example, Guest and Conway’s (2002) research, based on a survey of 1,306 senior HR managers, explored the management of the psychological contract and in particular the role of organisational communication. Three distinct and relevant aspects of organisational communication were identified, concerned with initial entry, day-to-day work and more future-oriented top-down communication.

1.4.5 Attributes of the New Psychological Contract

A study by Boswell et al. (2001) investigated whether the beliefs and expectations underpinning the new employment relationship are reflected in job-seekers and recruiters. Boswell et al. (2001) identified several key attributes of the new psychological contract through a review of the literature. Results from Boswell et al.’s. (2001) study indicated that although assumptions regarding characteristics of the new employment relationship were generally upheld, key characteristics did not map directly onto respondents’ beliefs and significant group differences were found. Table 4 illustrates these characteristics and the shared responsibilities between management and workers.
### Table 4  Assumed New Employment Relationship Key Characteristics and Corresponding Employer and Employee Responsibility Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Characteristics</th>
<th>Employer Dimensions</th>
<th>Employee Dimensions</th>
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As indicated in Table 4, Boswell et al.'s (2001) new employment relationship assumptions are founded on increased employee participation and
involvement (within the organisation and for workers' own career development) and reduced emphasis on long-term job-security and stability. These “key” characteristics of the new employment relationship are supported by other research. For example, a study comparing academic and practitioner literature found that 89% of academic and 67% of practitioner articles cited increased employee empowerment and involvement in decision-making as part of the new employment relationship (Roehling, et al., 2000). The same study found that the majority (94% of academic, 79% of practitioner) of articles reviewed claimed that the employee must assume responsibility for developing and maintaining his/her skills, and over 40% stated that job security was not part of the new employment relationship. Although there appears to be some consensus regarding the new employment relationship in the literature, the extent to which these assumptions are widely shared among different groups of individuals remains unclear.

Moreover, related research and theory on psychological contracts suggests that contracts are dynamic; they may change over time within a given individual (e.g., Super, 1957). For example, a study investigating the possible changes in new employees’ psychological contract indicated that newcomers’ expectations of the organisation, in this case the British Army, increased over time (Thomas & Anderson, 1998). Specifically, eight weeks later, new organisational members had higher expectations regarding job security, leisure, effects on family, and accommodation. Another study found that over a two-year period, employee perceptions of employer obligations increased for certain dimensions (e.g., advancement) but decreased for training (Robinson et al., 1994). This same study found a general decrease in perceptions of employee obligations (e.g., minimum stay) over time. Nevertheless, Boswell et al.’s (2001) contribution is useful for identifying some of the generally accepted attributes of the new psychological contract from the literature.

1.4.6 New Management Challenges

Apart from defining attributes of the new psychological contract, one of the core challenges for researchers and practitioners is to generate new perspectives of the person-organisation relationship (Coulson-Thomas, 1998; Herriot, 1992; Hosking & Andersen, 1992). In most descriptions, the person and organisation are usually categorically distinguished and set apart from one
another. That is, relations between person and organisation are understood as “subject-object” relations. As Hosking and Andersen point out,

the subject-object perspective pays little attention to the processes by which realities are created. Instead, the focus is on objects of creation (structures, cultures, resistance to change, learning climate, etc.). Yet it is through these processes that the objects are understood. (p. 4)

Organisational leaders need to change their focus from organisational outcomes alone to understand and appreciate the changing processes in their relationship with workers. This involves a new management mind-set. Managers can no longer afford to assume a coincidence of interests between workers and the organisation.

Not only does this change in perspective require a new way of thinking, the different beliefs underpinning the traditional and new employment relationships contradict each other. Because of the magnitude of the mind-shifts, it is hardly surprising that these old beliefs are being maintained in modern organisations by traditional managers. Thompson (1995) points out that “managers treat their direct reports and co-workers in ways similar to how their mothers and fathers treated them. It is a family system. The same principles of punishment and reward are used to extract desired behaviours” (p. 89). Although the new work order literature would have us believe that these attitudes are changing, can these deeply entrenched patterns of thinking really be changed? There is much debate in the literature about whether people, who have patterns of thinking and habits of work that have been deeply ingrained for many years, are able to learn and change their approach to work (Chawla & Renesch, 1995).

The new work order literature fails to take into account - or underrates - the magnitude of changing managers’ patterns of thinking. The popular literature often prescribes adopting and applying a new set of management skills, without considering the thought processes underpinning new management practices.

1.4.7 Evolution of Work Challenges

The evolution of work creates its own challenges for workers and their mind-sets about work. Workers are often using outdated models used by workplace educators to develop new workplace skills. For instance, most of the
training and development models presume a predictable, certain, and straightforward working environment. In contrast, today’s work environments are characterised by accelerating change and greater uncertainty arising from multiple factors, increasing the likelihood that workers will face novel and ambiguous problems (Howard, 1995; Weick & Roberts, 1993). Therefore, some contemporary work roles require a significant amount of work activity that is contingent and hard to predict (Darrah, 1994). This places demands on workers that are difficult to specify and prepare for in advance (Barley & Orr, 1997; Mirvis & Hall, 1996). In addition, the expertise for work is increasingly distributed across members of work groups (Hutchins, 1991; Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Even the environments for work are becoming fluid, as communication technology enables productive work from almost anywhere (Apgar, 1998) and organisations are evolving into new, boundary-less forms (Handy, 1989). All of these developments lead to the conclusion that the design and implementation of new workplace learning models are overdue.

Developing the expertise needed for skilled performance in this environment has become a seamless and ongoing process. To ensure an adequate stock of work skills, workers are continuously adding, replacing, enhancing, and retrofitting their expertise, as changes in the marketplace, technology, and work processes gradually eliminate the need for old skills and necessitate the development of new ones (Adler, 1992; Carnevale, Gainer, & Shultz, 1990). In addition, there is evidence that the pace of this turnover of skills has quickened (Szafran, 1996). Efforts to develop and define models that are responsive to the requirements of the modern workplace need to expand the scope of learning and development interventions beyond instruction alone.

Present models for developing work skills originated in the military and have evolved into the widely used instructional systems design model (Campbell, 1984; Gagné, 1962). Modern skill development approaches are perhaps more comprehensive and systematic than in the past, yet they reflect a view of developing work expertise that is prescriptive and determinant. Although present models are useful for many types of employee development, their potential for developing the type of skilled performance needed in a contingent and dynamic work environment is questionable.
Another challenge for workers is to break free from the Taylorist concept of specialisation and segregation to a new approach of flexible and interdependent work. With the traditional emphasis on specialisation and clearly defined job roles, the challenge in redesigning organisational roles is one of instilling a set of attitudes recognising, emphasising, and reinforcing the importance of interdependence of the whole workforce of a company and the significance of each individual for the whole. For this to occur, there is a need for a new way of distinguishing work from jobs.

The concept of the job as we know it needs to be redesigned. Bridges (1994) advances a compelling argument for the “De-jobbed Organization”. Jobs with clearly defined roles, according to Bridges (1994), are ill-equipped to respond to rapid change due to their inherent inflexibility. Moreover, the knowledge worker of today spends more time manipulating information rather than undertaking specific tasks and this wielding of information often transcends the job role itself. Also, production and support activities are more likely to be project specific rather than functional and therefore the task is to forget jobs and move toward the work that needs doing.

Work itself is changing so fast that job descriptions are obsolete almost as quickly as they are written. It is not only job descriptions, but also the nature of jobs themselves that are becoming antiquated. As Bridges (1994) points out, work is not going away but jobs are. The possibility that an individual can be hired to do a specific job and nothing else is long gone. Farren and Kaye (1996) reminds us that that “jobs are actually the shortest-lived and least stable context for career planning” (p. 185). Apart from a move from specific job roles to flexible work roles, a shift from dependent to interdependent work relations provides another steep learning curve for workers in the new reality.

Functional boundaries are declining and organisations are increasingly accomplishing their work through cross-functional teams (Achrol, 1991; Day, 1997; George, Freeling & Court, 1994; Montgomery & Webster, 1997). The rise of teamwork and the decline of functional boundaries has been attributed to the need to create new knowledge within the organisation (Sinkula, 1994; Slater & Narver, 1995), to share information across functional boundaries (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Narver & Slater, 1990), and to respond more rapidly to changes in the market. Self-directed work teams (SDWT) are now the basic organisational
work unit. Furthermore, the individual worker no longer receives specific tasks to accomplish, but the team receives a task “bundle” that is to be accomplished by the team in a holistic fashion. In other words, the work team is responsible for the completion of these tasks as an entity (Wigand, Picot & Reichwald, 1997). Individuals working together doing whatever needs to be done to make the business a success seems to represent the new entrepreneurial model.

On the surface at least, the contemporary workplace signals losses for the organisation and the employee. On the one hand, employees have lost job security and the sense of long-term organisational identity. On the other hand, organisations have lost the predictability of managing a dependent and internally-orientated work force (Noer, 1997). What alternatives are available to traditional ways of dividing up work? According to Noer (1997),

organizations that will thrive in the new reality are those that will be filled with employees who have the option to leave, but choose to stay because of the work. Those that fail will be populated by employees who are only there because they are afraid to go elsewhere (p. 218).

For this to occur, new paradigms about the worker/organisation interface are necessary.

Much of the discord observable in workplaces today is the result of conflicting expectations workers and managers have of each other. In other words, more often than not, there is anecdotal evidence of conflicting employment relationship paradigms in the one organisation. For instance, managers want workers to take more responsibility for their work, and on the other hand, they have traditionally focused almost exclusively on organisational output, which is what they have been measured against, often at the expense of nurturing personal growth. From the workers' perspective, they want managers to provide them with more say in the day-to-day decision-making process but come with a traditional mind-set that managers are paid to make decisions and workers are paid to follow instructions. Today’s workplaces are filled with these paradoxes, indicators of a transition between the erosion of traditional thinking about the employment relationship and the development of a new employment paradigm.
The manager who understands and encourages this shift in thinking about the expectations managers and workers have of each other has a huge advantage in recruiting talent to a preferred workplace. Preferred workplaces are likely to attract the critical self-led workers needed for success. Moreover, the need for these workers and their availability has risen. Approximately 33% of individuals in the workplace in the United States (and possibly elsewhere) are “contingent and self-employed” (Cooper & Jackson, 1997, p.157). As this percentage increases, so too will the demand. The implications of managing an increasingly itinerant workforce on the one hand, and learning to be an itinerant worker on the other, go beyond the bounds of the traditional boss-worker mind-set. A new employment paradigm is the foundation for managers to help workers develop and master the portable career skills needed in the twenty-first century and workers, in return, need to commit to and embrace a spirit of competitive urgency and performance learning.

1.4.8 Shift from Technical to Human Capabilities

New productivity scholars (Carnall, 1997; Fairholm, 1997; Kanter, 1995; Thompson, 1995; Vecchio, Hearn & Southey, 1996; Wigand et al., 1997) claim there are strategic advantages for companies who bypass traditional HRD approaches. The strategic potential to achieve competitive advantage for companies is shifting away from the traditional factors such as production and process technology, economies of scale, financial resources or protected and regulated markets. The emphasis seems increasingly likely to be in the direction of adequate deployment and management of workers. Organisational leaders are compelled to view their employees as an investment needing careful attention, rather than a cost factor that needs reducing. Individuals in this context are being seen as “entrepreneurs within the enterprise” (Wigand, et al., 1997) and consequently find themselves as central to business success. Increasingly, qualifications, capacities, experiences and the creative potential of the worker are primary success factors in the current competitive times.

The idea that “the most important resource in this business is its people” may well be a cliché, but it is increasingly the case in the new organisation. If organisations depend more and more on fewer people and if the traditional concept of loyalty of workers can no longer be assumed, but rather must be earned
and retained, then clearly organisations must be concerned about how human beings are utilised, developed, resourced, and motivated (Carnall, 1997). Such factors force organisations to find new ways for a more effective deployment of human capital.

In the broader scheme of things, what constitutes workplace productivity has changed. The goals of corporate action have changed from profit alone to profit and individual worker development (Fairholm, 1997). According to Vecchio et al. (1996), commercially successful companies are those who seek to achieve competitive advantage not in terms of cost, but in the form of product quality and range, or the reliability of service. Organisations are becoming boundary-less and there is an increasing need to move away from treating organisations and their elements as fragmented objects towards an approach that values synthesisation. Jobs may be shaped more by the qualities of those performing them and the status and compensation may be attached to people, not positions. This in turn requires a workforce that is highly skilled, motivated, and adaptive. Furthermore, this requires a workforce that is not only allowed to give of its full creativity and talent, but also enabled, encouraged, and rewarded for doing so. Productivity is increasingly becoming a function more of the cerebral processes of knowledge workers than their physical capacities.

Consequently, the dominant competitive force now is more likely to be the organisational capacity derived from people. Making huge profits is an inadequate definition of productivity if, for instance, the company is embroiled in litigation. Similarly, a view that focuses only on extracting more performance from workers is also misguided. The interests of all stakeholders in the modern marketplace need to be considered. Kanter (1995) sums it up this way:

Study after study around the world shows that employees today are less loyal, less committed and more mobile than ever before. In industry after industry power is systematically shifting away from those who produce goods and services towards those who buy or consume goods and services. The customer, like the employee, is less loyal, more fickle and therefore demands a different kind of response from organizations: more flexibility, greater innovation, more attention to where the customer’s
needs are heading in the future, rather than expecting them to take today’s goods and services (p. 72).

A broader definition of organisational productivity needs to incorporate the changing requirements of customers and workers.

1.4.9 Learning, Speed & Flexibility

Learning is increasingly being recognised as a critical factor in the organisation’s ability to create ongoing economic value for its shareholders. Thompson (1995) points out that “the purpose of organizational learning and the acquisition of organizational knowledge is to provide the foundation for rapid, dramatic organizational change; increasingly the fundamental requirement for organizational success” (p. 85). However, instead of seeing knowledge as an “acquisition” of objective known truth, managers would be better off conceptualising it as a process founded on the capacity and potential of workers.

The organisation’s ability to learn and innovate is increasingly linked to the company’s capability to increase revenues, profits, and economic value. To launch new and superior products, to continually improve operating efficiencies, and to create more value for customers requires the ability to learn. Szabolowski (2000) claims that “true business success will be measured by that nebulous asset called ‘quality customer service’, also known as customer loyalty or customer value” (p. 11). On a larger scale, the penetration of new markets and the achievement of sustained market leadership depend on applied learning.

Applied learning enhances speed which is increasingly linked to productivity. Kanter (1995) emphasises speed as a fundamental measure of organisational efficiency. According to her, there are three kinds of speed that companies need today in order to be productive. The first is innovative speed; to be in the marketplace first with the goods and services that customers want; to be constantly innovating and experimenting with new features that give the customer what the customer desires, before a company runs the risk of losing the customer. Product life cycles are shortening and therefore first-mover advantages will become ever more important (Ulrich, 2000). “Agility means taking advantage of opportunities as they arise” (p. 17) The second kind of speed is speed at processing everything through the organisation. For instance, this could mean
shorter cycle times for designing training programmes, restructuring companies, and implementing new products or services. And the third type is recovery speed - the time it takes to respond to and fix problems. Speed is a fundamental yardstick by which modern organisational productivity can be measured.

Speed is dependent on a high degree of organisational flexibility. Organisations that are faster moving are also more flexible in how they utilise workers. They are much more likely to have broader rather than narrower definitions of jobs. In many occupations, versatility in dealing with varying demands and situations is more highly valued than work volume in some given activity. For instance, dealing thoughtfully and effectively with a customer complaint rather than chasing new business requires susceptibility and could be considered a better investment of time and consequently more profitable in the long term. Effective managers tend to treat every employee as a professional who knows and understands some disciplines. Accordingly, organisational leaders wanting to foster flexible work practices see their role as primarily one of providing workers with adequate tools and systems to solve problems and get results.

Cross functional work teams are another HRD process for creating quick decision-making in the workplace. Modern managers, in their quest for organisational flexibility, encourage, promote and build project teams that bridge functions and departments. Organisations that move faster, innovate more quickly, move things through the organisation more quickly, and solve problems more quickly, are much more likely to be organised around cross-functional teams than they are to be structured in old-fashioned hierarchical departments (Belbin, 1997). Today’s organisational structures are more likely to emphasise the horizontal dimension of the organisation - how they bring people together across departments to tackle something new or to solve a problem - than they are to emphasise the vertical dimension up and down the hierarchy.

The concepts of learning, speed, and flexibility underpin a new definition of productivity. Productivity is broader and more pervasive than the old concept of profitability, and is based on changing from a mind-set of accuracy and precision to one of innovation and risk taking (Greene, 2000). The traditional manager-worker relationship is ill-equipped to accommodate this new notion of productivity.
The changing individual and organisational paradigms, the evolution of work, and the shift from technical to human capacities has brought into question the relevance of the traditional employment relationship. Although it is clear and timely for new models of the employment relationship to be implemented in the workplace, the management literature is surprisingly short of applied research in this area. Moreover, there is an absence of sustained research in actual workplaces. This of course limits practitioners’ capacity to anticipate some potentially calamitous problems and to envisage an array of alternative future possibilities.

1.5 Absence of Applied Research

The social contract in employment, which consists of expectations of reciprocal obligations between employers and employees, is touted to have changed as a result of changes in the business environment (Capelli et al., 1997). Moreover, articles typically reflect an assumption that the new employment relationship is found across organisations and situations and that it is reflected in employer and employee beliefs regarding respective responsibilities or obligations (e.g., Kissler, 1994). However, no reported study specifically tests the extent to which the widely assumed new employment relationship, or social contract between organisations and employees, is actually reflected in the beliefs or expectations of different populations (Boswell et al., 2001).

1.5.1 New Work Order Literature

Without sustained research in organisational settings, the new work order literature has a tendency to paint a simplistic and overly optimistic picture of the “new” workplace (Gee et al., 1996; Coulson-Thomas, 1997). As Gee et al. point out, “the reality ‘on the ground’ is often much more complex than the theories in the books might imply” (p. 4). Often the substitute for sound workplace research in the popular management literature is arguments bolstered by anecdotes and uncritical accounts of particular corporations that have been transformed. For instance, Gee et al. make the following observation after viewing a team meeting in a company implementing SDWT:
On the one hand, self-directed work teams were supposed to be empowered to solve their own problems. However, on the other hand, managers and engineers appeared so compelled to measure and document quality and productivity, workers were left very little room in which to maneuver (pp. 122-123).

Observations like this caution practitioners to look closely at new work order accounts of successful workplace practices. There is more often than not a gap between the rhetoric of the new management literature and the reality in the workplace.

In their endeavour to address the rapid and constantly changing needs of today’s world, organisational leaders everywhere are striving to raise individual work effectiveness by using a variety of employee involvement strategies espoused by new work order writers. Studies from different countries confirm a rise in the proportion of organisations implementing approaches to worker involvement and participation. Other studies indicate a proliferation of multiple involvement practices, particularly those of a communicative nature, such as team briefings, suggestion schemes and staff appraisal (Hyman & Mason, 1995; Pickard, 1993). Whilst coverage of involvement is undoubtedly growing, research reveals that at least some approaches are applied informally and can be somewhat superficial in effect (Hyman & Mason, 1995). In most cases, these involvement techniques do not challenge the core conventions of the traditional employment relationship and are likely therefore to be unsustainable attempts at enhancing workplace productivity.

“Empowerment”, for instance, is a popular example of an involvement approach written about extensively in the popular management literature. Whilst the boundaries of empowerment seem rather fluid at present, its main feature appears to involve individual job ownership by employees “so that they can take personal interest in improving the performance of the organization” (Byham, 1988, p. viii). Research suggests that there are more often underlying motives and consequences associated with empowerment that reflect traditional employment practices.
The indications are that empowerment tends to be introduced in companies which have removed layers of supervisory management and is used to cover existing tasks with fewer staff, with no corresponding “reward” for the added responsibilities associated with the “empowered” jobs (Pickard, 1993). This makes individual employees vulnerable in at least two ways. First, added responsibility without adequate training invariably increases stress levels. Second, empowered employees are held responsible for efficiency in their work, but job boundary protection in the form of job descriptions and employee specifications become less evident. Any performance failures can then be easily attributed to the empowered employees rather than the poverty of managerial or organisational support. It can be argued that empowerment, used in this way, is a euphemism for work intensification.

The deployment of empowerment strategies creates a paradox. On the one hand, workers in the new reality are expected to be less dependent on the organisation and more self-reliant in terms of their career. On the other hand, workers are encouraged to be more reliant on group decision-making processes and increasingly being expected to work as a team member within the organisation. The concept of empowerment according to Frese (1997) “implies that organizations enhance self-reliance. However, people who show high self-reliance may be less dependent upon organizational empowerment than those who do not” (pp. 412-413). Consequently, the empowerment strategy can be confusing and send workers conflicting messages. On the surface, empowerment strategies and other involvement techniques appear to be a rational response to raising workplace productivity in a more competitive and uncertain marketplace. However, in practice, the complexity of issues, paradoxical nature and the true intent of these popular HRD strategies, can present a different picture and therefore warrant further investigation.

Moreover, the new work order literature tends to convey the impression that the high performance workplace is emerging through the implementation of specific HRD techniques. However, these one-off HRD events fail to address the core challenge of evolving the employment relationship beyond the management/labour dichotomy. The failure of these popular HRD techniques and strategies to gain sustainable commitment from workers is occurring at a time when the need for performance improvement is greater now than at any time in
the past. Corporations of all sizes and in all fields must now face up to issues of heightened dynamic competition, ever-accelerating technological demands, and the shortages of key technical and management skills, all in a pervading climate of economic uncertainty. The global economy is creating new market standards in productivity, quality, variety, customisation, convenience, and timeliness. Meeting these standards requires great changes in organisational structures, skill needs and jobs. Social and economic changes of this magnitude are having profound impact on the nature of the relationship between employer and employee.

The assumed new employment relationship described in popular management writing may not be as common as the literature espouses, and organisations should not simply assume that individuals hold similar expectations or that those expectations are consistent with that of the organisation. Likewise, workers should not assume that organisational leaders hold assumptions that are consistent with characteristics of the new employment relationship.

1.5.2 Lack of Applied New Employment Relationship Models

Despite the growing number of advocates for a new psychological contract, there is a shortage of application tools for practitioners emphasising the new employment relationship in the management literature. Rowden (2001) argues that the business environment of the early twenty-first century is too chaotic and organisational change too complex to establish firm objectives, fixed plans, and concrete programmes of change. Even so, without the guidelines and directions models bring, it is arguably more difficult to emphasise the appropriate HRD measures consistently. Organisational change should be viewed as continuous processes rather than just detached episodes (Pettigrew, Woodman, & Cameron, 2001). Models, founded on sound research, can assist organisational leaders to measure and monitor their organisation’s progress on a regular and continuous basis.

Although a relatively new area of study, the theories of change in the fields of management and organisation studies must face the double hurdle of scholarly quality and practical relevance (Pettigrew, 1997). The challenge of developing knowledge in the image of science while also contributing to practice and policy making has proven to be formidable (Pettigrew et al., 2001). Kahn
(1974) made this observation over a quarter of a century ago about the change management literature:

A few theoretical propositions repeated without additional data or development; a few bits of homely advice reiterated without proof or disproof; and a few sturdy empirical observations quoted with reverence but without refinement or explication (p. 487).

More recent scholars such as Macy and Izumi (1993) consider that Kahn’s observation remains dismayingly accurate 20 years later.

To match the growing literature on the development of a new psychological contract, it would be helpful for practitioners to have valid and reliable application tools in the workplace. It is acknowledged that generalisations about change are difficult to make across international, institutional, and cultural borders (Pettigrew et al., 2001). Despite this, practitioners would benefit from understanding the core issues associated with changing the psychological contract. Empirical studies of organisational change leading to new employment relationship models can assist practitioners from viewing HRD initiatives as processes rather than episodes in isolation.

Apart from a need to move from an event orientation to a process approach, many HRD approaches stress the actions of the organisational leaders and correspondingly de-emphasise the strategic involvement of the rest of the organisation. While it is acknowledged that the formal catalyst of organisational change usually begins at the top management level, the strategic involvement of organisational members needs to be considered and sought in the change process. A considerable amount of change management literature tends to emphasise strategies for overcoming employee resistance to change rather than focusing on strategies for involvement in the change management process by all organisational members.

Although the new work order literature tends to give inordinate attention to individual Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and their senior management teams and their role in the change process, researchers have recently stressed that strategic leadership requires the contributions of all organisational members. For instance, Denis, Lamothe, and Langley (2001) in their research on the dynamics
of collective leadership and strategic change in pluralistic organisations depart from this traditional “top down” approach to change management in several ways and emphasise the involvement in the change process beyond the top management level. They view strategic leadership as a collective phenomenon. In particular, any attempt to develop new thinking about the employment relationship must consider the dual involvement and impact of workers and organisational leaders.

Of the few models cited in the literature, most illustrate the characteristics of new psychological contract and how these features are formed from a socio-cultural perspective. For instance, Guest’s (1998) model emphasises some of the organisational factors required to create a new psychological contract. Kissler’s (1994) model makes the distinction between the characteristics of the “old” and “new” contracts. Sparrow’s (1996) model illustrates the relationship between culture and the formation of the psychological contract. While useful for understanding the cause and effect of this phenomenon, these models do not emphasise change from the two-fold perspective of individual worker and organisational leader.

On the other hand, Boswell’s et al. (2001) model (see Table 4) and Noer’s (1997) New Worker-Organization Co-dependency model (Table 5) provide the reader with a dual perspective of the two entities in the relationship. Boswell et al. and Noer’s models have three common features. First, both acknowledge that the individual and organisation having a significant role to play in evolving the employment relationship beyond the traditional employment relationship. Second, both models emphasise change as an ongoing process rather than an isolated HRD event. Third, each model consists of similar attributes. There is however a fundamental difference underpinning both models.

While Boswell et al. (2001) makes a distinction between employer and employee dimensions of the psychological contract, Noer (1997) considers the key characteristics of the psychological contract as an opportunity to merge the often conflicting needs and interests of both entities. While both models are based on the assumption that the new employment relationship requires input from both parties, Noer considers how employers and employees should think and act to mutually benefit from each key attribute. Boswell et al. on the other hand allocates the key attributes between employer and employee and consider the appropriate input from that entity. However, many of these dimensions in reality
have a shared obligation. For instance, Boswell et al.'s first key characteristic, the provision of *Training, education, and skill development opportunities* is classified as an employer’s responsibility. However, in reality the success of these training and development opportunities will depend to a large extent on employee’s seeking out and enthusiastically embracing these employer initiatives. It would be useful to consider the relational and transactional aspects of these new employment relationship characteristics.

It is for this reason that Noer’s (1997) model is considered by the researcher to be a more useful starting point in attempting to merge the changing needs and interests of organisations and individuals. However, without empirical research, Noer’s model is only a conceptual representation of the new employment relationship. It remains to be seen whether this model can be applied in an organisational setting.

### 1.6 Conclusion

Although there are many challenges confronting HR practitioners in changing the mind-sets of the psychological contract, it has been argued in this chapter that the costs of continuing to explicitly or implicitly embrace the traditional employment relationship is too high for both workers and organisations. The imperative for changing the psychological contract is a rapidly changing economic environment over the past quarter of a century. The dramatically altered marketplace is profoundly changing the needs employers and employees have of each other in the employment relationship. Contemporary organisations need to be more flexible and adaptable rather than stable and hierarchical and therefore want increased employee participation and involvement in decision-making. Modern workers, on the other hand, without job security, need to be continually employable and want organisations to provide them with opportunities to maintain and develop their skill sets. These external market forces have put unprecedented pressure on the traditional employment relationship.

Whilst the concept of a new psychological relationship is well documented in the literature, there has, until only recently, been an absence of applied research in organisational settings. The new work order literature on the other hand conveys the impression that organisations are embracing attributes of
the new employment relationship. With an absence of empirical data, practitioners are cautioned from accepting these accounts. Two models have been cited from the literature that illustrate the accountabilities of the new employment relationship from the dual perspective of the worker and organisation. Noer’s (1997) model reflects on some of the attributes that merge these changing needs and interests and is therefore considered a more suitable design for contributing to the slim body of empirical research in organisational settings of this presumed psychological phenomenon.
CHAPTER 2 – THE MODEL

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines Noer’s (1997) New Worker-Organization Codependency model. Noer identifies five key attributes of his new employment relationship model. The attributes are: Flexible Employment, Customer-focus, Focus on Performance, Project-based Work, and Human Spirit & Work (see Table 5). These attributes are diametrically opposed to corresponding characteristics of the traditional employment relationship, that is: Specialised Employment, Internal-focus, Job-focus, Functional-based Work, and Human Dispirit & Work (see Table 1). Each of these paradigm shifts are defined by the researcher using empirical research from the current literature. More specifically, the researcher aims to identify specific mind-sets and behaviours reflective of workers and organisational leaders for each attribute of Noer’s model. As a prerequisite to constructing a research design in Chapter 3, this chapter aims to pinpoint key indicators to determine whether elements of Noer’s model of the new employment relationship have application in a selected organisational setting.

The five paradigm shifts of the new employment relationship can be summarised as: a) the provision of a functionally flexible work force; b) breaking the barriers for customer focus; c) linking rewards and benefits with performance rather than organisational dependency; d) boundary managing the shift from function to project-based structures; and e) increasing the likelihood that workers will find their organisational work meaningful (Noer, 1997). The resolution of these five issues is arguably the dual responsibility of the individual and the organisation. Both entities should benefit through this new psychological contract.

The chapter concludes by outlining the rationale for the research study and its aims and objectives.
2.2 Noer’s (1997) New Worker-Organization Co-dependency Model

2.2.1 An Overview of the Model

Noer’s (1997) New Worker-Organization Co-dependency model is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5 The New Worker-Organization Co-dependency Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Aspect of the Relationship</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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Noer (1997) refers to this worker-organisation interaction as the “yin and yan freedom dance.” “In a yin-yan relationship, both halves are incomplete and need each other to achieve the unified whole” (p. 214). Noer specifies five aspects of individual-organisation relationship. Although these five attributes of the new employment paradigm are a useful starting point, the descriptor Noer uses to define this new psychological contract - *codependency* - is open to misinterpretation. Co-dependency has been defined in numerous ways and has predominantly been used in the psychological literature. For instance,
Co-dependency has been initially defined as “a behavioral syndrome typical of persons involved in a primary relationship with a substance abuser” (Morgan, 1991, p. 1). Co-dependency in relational terms is typified “by extreme reliance on relationships, particularly with exploitive individuals, as a means of personal fulfillment” (Burris, 1999, p. 1). The term has spread into the business literature. For independent retailers “feeling left out in the cold,” being co-dependent can mean cultivating cooperative relationships with other single-store and small-chain operators, even though some might be direct competitors (Wilson, 1999). The wide use of the term co-dependency, the potential for misinterpretation, and the generally negative connotations of the term, suggests that it is an inappropriate descriptor of a new psychological contract.

At any rate, Noer’s (1997) model recommends workers and organisational leaders respond to core relational issues diametrically opposite to the way they would engage in a traditional employment relationship. As discussed in Chapter 1, the marketplace has shifted from stable and constant to turbulent and uncertain in the space of some 25 years. Using Noer’s five attribute model, the juxtapositioning of the “old” and “new” employment relationship models is useful for clarifying the type and degree of mind-set changes needed by both workers and managers in the new reality. In short, by comparing and contrasting the traditional and new employment relationship paradigms, it puts the new psychological contract into perspective.

In a broader context, Noer’s (1997) five-fold model is a useful starting point in exploring some of the relational and transactional issues associated with the changing requirements of workers and organisations. Further, Noer’s model may provide practitioners with a conceptual framework for assessing their organisation’s transition from the traditional to new psychological mind-set about the person-organisation interface. Put together, the five attributes conceptualise and operationalise a framework for a new employment relationship. There may well be other attributes that could be included. Nonetheless, by operationalising these five paradigm shifts, practitioners have a potentially useful tool to consciously merge the changing needs and interests of individual and organisation for the benefit of all stakeholders (worker, organisational leader, and customer).

Noer’s (1997) model operates as a typical exchange process. In other words, the new psychological contract is formed jointly by fulfilling the needs and
interests of both entities in the employment relationship. As a first step in satisfying the wants of both parties, there needs to be a shared understanding of what these changing needs and interests are and how they can be applied in the new reality. On the other hand, organisations operating from a traditional mind-set and unfamiliar with the needs of the modern worker are unlikely to satisfy their needs. Reciprocally, workers who have a traditional employment relationship mind-set and are unfamiliar with the needs of the new workplace will not be able to fulfill its needs. To apply Noer’s (1997) attributes in an organisational setting, both entities have a particular set of responsibilities that need to be fulfilled. The challenge for the practitioner is to specify these accountabilities into an operational blueprint that can be applied in the workplace.

To operationalise Noer’s (1997) model, a more in-depth understanding of each attribute is requirement. Each of these five paradigm shifts are discussed below from the dual perspective of the worker and the organisation. There is a degree of overlap across all five paradigm shifts. However in the interests of clarity and definition, each attribute is treated as a separate unit while acknowledging wherever possible, the overlap. The five core attributes of Noer’s (1997) model are subjected to the same line of inquiry. Each attribute is discussed responding to the following questions: What does the attribute mean for workers and organisational leaders? What is the justification for the attribute's inclusion in the model? In what ways can the sources of tension and confusion resulting from the changing individual and organisation paradigms be arrested in the interests of both parties? What does the research, as distinct from the popular management literature, tell us about the reality of the attribute in organisation settings? What are the likely roadblocks and constants in applying the attribute in an organisational setting? How can these challenges be overcome in the interests of both organisational entities? The answers to these questions will provide a comprehensive understanding of some of the core elements of the new psychological contract.

2.2.2 Attribute - Flexible Employment

Casey, Keep, and Mayhew (1999) offer a fourfold definition of employment flexibility. They define flexible employment as functional, financial, temporal or numerical. Functional flexibility has the greatest capacity to serve the
changing mutual interests of the worker and organisation. New flexible work regimes require a concomitant “social flexibility” from human beings (Ciscel, Smith & Mendoza, 2003). Functional flexibility refers to the ability to transfer labour between tasks and break down job demarcations (Cook, 1998). Management techniques may include retraining, multi-skilling, and motivation and incentive schemes (Greene, 2000). Various forms of flexible employment offer managers a range of options in structuring and deploying the work force. An organisation’s commitment to functional flexible employment can be measured by the degree to which there is evidence of the commitment and application of these management initiatives.

There appears to be a relationship between the importance of flexible work practices and the type of modern organisation described in the industry research literature. This model posits a strategically adept, adaptable and responsive organisation, which minimises hierarchy, and encourages its highly-skilled work-force to engage in lifelong learning, problem solving and creative thinking. Investment in research and development and plant and equipment will be high. In terms of people management, the model is the “soft” developmental type of HRD, which aims for high levels of trust, commitment and motivation, and which relies on strong systems of communication, participation and involvement. Investment in the continuous upskilling of individual members of the work force will be high. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this is regarded as a high performance workplace (OECD, 1996). The European Union (European Commission, 1997) outlined its preferred model of the flexible organisation. This model stresses the need for flexible forms of the organisation of work in ways that fulfill “both the wishes of employees and the requirements of competition” (p. 1), arguing that the focus for such flexibility “is emphatically not on short-term cost cutting measures” (p. 1), and suggests that “the key issues for workers, management, the social partners and policy makers alike is to strike the right balance between flexibility and security” (p. 5). In other words, flexible employment work practices go a long way to meeting the criteria for the high performance workplace.

It can be argued that functional flexibility, as defined, enables the capacity for organisational change and the capacity to respond. Greene (2000) claims that “when rapid change occurs, organizations must master the capacities
of speed, agility, culture change, cycle time, and transformation flex - everything” (p. 17). It therefore follows that the most innovative organisations are those that are likely to have work forces that are flexible and multi-skilled. According to Carnoy (1998) the best firms are those that create the best environment for teaching, learning and interchanging information. It is knowledge and information that creates flexibility in the work - the capacity of organisations to improve product lines, production processes and marketing strategies, all with the same work force; and the capacity of workers to learn new processes as they change, to shift jobs several times in the course of a working life, to move geographically and, if necessary, to learn entirely new vocations.

The information economy places a premium on the worker’s ability to move from a job in one organisation to another. Specifically, this could mean learning new jobs in the same company, to do several different types of tasks in the same day or to adjust quickly to several different kinds of employment cultures and different group situations. Incentives for workers play a part in moving beyond the old functional model to develop a strong cross-functional organisation. Some evidence seems to indicate that organisations that promote and reward such examples of functional flexibility tend to be more successful than those who do not, creating yet greater demand for workers with these abilities (Carnoy, 1998). As Atkinson (2000) puts it, “the 'know more to get promoted' has to be rejected for a more flexible reward model based upon recognition for working outside your functional specialism” (p. 10). The flexible employee is a catalyst and product of the new age economy.

Moreover, there appears to be evidence of a link between adaptable workers and learning and development strategies. Although employers cannot predict which workers will be more flexible, flexibility has consistently been associated with higher levels of general education and general job training (Carnoy, 1998). Individual workers with more education are more able to adjust to new situations, learn new tasks and adopt new methods of performing old tasks. Organisations that provide relatively large amounts of general training tied to workers taking on multiple tasks and to wage incentives are more likely to show larger gains in productivity than organisations that follow traditional, more inflexible production methods (Carnoy, 1998). This complex interplay between more highly educated workers, prepared to learn more quickly, to take on new
tasks and to move from one job to another, and best practice firms, promoting increased multi-skilling through general training, multiple task jobs and employee decision-making, is at the core of high productivity work in the information age. It follows that flexible work organisations are necessarily learning organisations and new technologies, including the art of flexible organisation itself, make their maximum contribution to productivity when they are based on learning and teaching as an inherent part of the work place.

However, some research indicates that there is a weak relationship between flexible employment practices on the one hand and training and development of staff on the other. Workers employed in atypical contracts, particularly part-timers, tend in general to be severely disadvantaged in terms of skill development (Gallie, White, Cheng & Tomlinson, 1998; Tam, 1997). Arulampalam and Booth’s (1998) study of the relationship between flexible employment and training concluded that their “results suggest that there is a trade-off between expanding the more flexible forms of employment and expanding the proportion of the workforce getting work-related training” (p. 532). In other words, the growth in flexible employment in general terms can potentially undermine the objective of securing the upskilling of the work force.

That this could be the case is hardly surprising. If the principal motive of implementing flexible labour strategies is cost minimisation, then one of the costs that can be minimised is training. Under certain conditions of flexible employment, responsibility for upskilling comes to rest with the individual worker, or perhaps the state (Institute of Management & Manpower, 1996). Moreover, in many cases, managers have sought to employ flexible workers precisely in order to distance themselves and the employing organisation from the individual employees and to minimise the organisation’s obligations and commitments towards that worker. This is counter to the development of a high performance workplace. For, as Gallie et al. (1998) argue, the ideal type model of HRD and continuous upskilling demands “the development of a much closer relationship between managers and employees, and much more detailed information about individual circumstances than had been the case in the past” (p. 7). It is argued that a cost-minimisation mind-set should not be the right motive for implementing flexible work practices.
However, there is evidence this motive is prevalent across industry groups. Ackroyd and Proctor’s (1998) overview of British manufacturing organisations and their use of the flexible firm model found that in large United Kingdom (UK) manufacturing operations, there is little evidence of functional flexibility practices. Particularly sparse was the evidence of the emergence of the kind of high value added, high trust flexible firm model being advocated by the OECD and elsewhere. Ackroyd and Proctor (1998) conclude that:

British arrangements for manufacturing at plant level do not depend on high levels of skill or high levels of investment. Profitable manufacturing is not secured ... through the acquisition of a highly trained “core” workforce, nor, as others have claimed, by investment in new technology. Output is achieved in part by some reorganisation of machinery, but more significantly by a combination of a heavy dependency on the use of the flexible use of relatively unskilled labour and a willingness to utilise external sources of production. The basic arrangement for manufacture is the use of standard technology by teams of self-regulating and formally unskilled workers (p. 171).

What of highly skilled work forces? Research by Colling (1998) on the highly skilled flexible work forces, points to the dangers of a combination of cost based competition and flexible employment practices. Colling researched a group of “knowledge workers” providing a relatively complex product or service. These are lecturers and instructors working for a major UK Information Technology (IT) company that offers training to computer users. Despite operating in a fast-moving, high tech industry, the IT firm chose to position its competitive strategy at least in part around standardised products and cost leadership. As a conscious strategic decision to move to a core-periphery model, the IT firm sacked half of its 300-strong work force of lecturers and was now using self-employed “associates” and freelancers to staff up much of its operations. Training for staff had been cut back, employment insecurity was rife, formal personnel policies were being subverted by cost pressures, and employee morale was low.

There is widespread evidence across the spectrum of industries of a connection between flexible employment practices and cost cutting strategies.
This view postulates that changing employment structures benefits employers and that certain demographic groups carry the burden of the downside of job flexibility. On the other hand, another view expressed in the literature is that the growth of non-standard jobs is that of a mutually evolving need for flexibility in employment by workers as well as employers. (Wiens-Tuers & Hill, 2002). It is the mind-set underpinning this latter outlook which is in keeping with the philosophy of the new employment relationship.

It might be assumed that if knowledge resides in people, companies should strive to establish the firmest possible ties to this “intellectual capital.” Yet recent years have seen a loosening of the ties between organisations and these key resources. According to Casey et al. (1999), by far the most important point that emerges from the wealth of data on flexible employment patterns and practices is that in general its aim and effect seems to be to loosen the ties between employer and employee and to produce conditions that render the sophisticated, developmental people management systems the high performance model demands almost impossible to achieve. Many employers, including large national companies, appear to be using flexibility, coupled with a deregulated labour market, to introduce a significant worsening in the pay, benefits and employment security of their work forces.

Moreover, these issues have gone unchallenged by employees, fearful of losing their job as a consequence of complaining. Casey et al. (1999) claim there is evidence that the flexible work patterns are imposed on staff without consultation or negotiation and enforced through threat or dismissal. The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB) report (1997) suggests that “far from promoting a true partnership at work, with shared responsibility and prospects, the restrictive approach to flexibility adopted by some employers instead produces a highly vulnerable and insecure workforce” (pp. 7-8). It is suggested that these flexible employment strategies are being used in organisations whose culture is bound up in the traditional employment relationship mind-set.

However “enterprise flexibility” (Casey et al., 1999) or functional flexibility does not necessarily have to mean the same thing as deregulation or casualisation. The implementation of any given form of flexibility within a particular organisation or work setting is dependent upon a wide range of
variables. More specifically, how flexibility plays out in any given situation will be heavily contingent upon particular managerial policies and approaches to its use. Flexible forms of employment do not have to be used primarily as a cost-cutting device, despite research suggesting that in many organisations, flexibility is synonymous with deregulation and the opportunity to cut labour costs. It can be used as an important tool in fulfilling the changing needs of workers and organisations.

In sum, it has been argued that in the context of the attribute of *Flexible Employment*, functional flexibility promises the greatest capacity to serve the changing needs and interests of individual and organisation. Several elements of functional flexibility have been identified from the literature. These elements have the capacity to specify how the attribute of *Flexible Employment* can merge the changing needs and interests of individual and organisation. Elements of functional flexibility discussed include *retraining*, *multi-skilling*, and *motivation* and *incentive schemes*. Application of these elements from an organisational perspective involves the implementation of a number of HRD policies. These may include a programme to continually retrain and update employees’ knowledge and skills. Also, there is a need for a coordinated HRD policy to relocate and train personnel in work outside the scope of their normal position. Moreover, there needs to be a link between flexible work practices and an incentive scheme. From an individual perspective, evidence of flexible work practices may include several indicators. These indicators could include employees attending and seeking out opportunities to update knowledge and skills and willingly learning and taking on tasks outside their immediate work areas. Another indication of flexible work practices may include evidence of employees receiving incentives for flexible work practices. Evidence of the application of these elements from an individual and organisational perspective may suggest that the attribute of *Flexible Employment* can be applied in an organisational context. These elements and their corresponding individual and organisational accountabilities originating from the literature are summarised in Table 9 (see Section 3.5).
2.2.3 Attribute - Customer-focus

The perennial challenges of implementing customer-focused organisational structures, processes, and systems are more confronting now than ever before in a climate of intense competition and heightened customer expectations (Bathie & Sarkar, 2002; Sebastianelli & Nabil Tamimi, 2003; Wright, 2002). In particular, the implementation of reward and incentive systems, skill development and restrictive career paths for customer workers are ongoing issues for managers, workers, and practitioners. As companies continue to shift their focus to service orientation, managers have no choice but to confront these dilemmas. Similarly, customer workers, with their unique “boundary-spanning” (Adams, 1976) role, are often faced with conflicting expectations from their customers and their organisational leaders. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) requires a holistic approach that takes into account both people and systems. The customer/worker/organisation relationship is complex and increasingly significant to the success of a company with the inevitable shift away from product focus to customer focus.

Homburg, Workman and Jensen (2000) define a customer-focused organisation as having a structure that “uses groups of customers related by industry, application, usage situation, or some non-geographic similarity as the primary basis for structuring the organization” (p. 471). Narver and Slater (1990) view a customer-focused organisational structure as an antecedent to and as a facilitator of “market information acquisition and dissemination and the coordinated creation of customer value” (p. 21). Despite the fact that customer-focus is not a new concept, research seems to suggest that managers are still in the process of trying to implement organisational changes which will increase attention on customer needs (Homburg et al., 2000). Growing research in the area indicates that customer work poses special challenges for organisations and employees.

The shift from product-focused to customer-focused organisational structures is motivated by the need to come closer to the problems the customer is trying to solve (Homburg et al., 2000). There is widespread evidence that the implementation of organisational structures, processes, and systems that facilitate a focus on customers are still problematic (Homburg et al., 2000). Perhaps this is attributable to the fact that there has been relatively little discussion in the
literature of specific organisational changes required to achieve a customer-focus objective and little research on the challenges of implementing these changes.

Three of the main challenges of implementing customer-focused organisation strategies are the provision of reward systems, the development of new skills, and restrictive career paths for customer workers. The lack of customer focus in accounting systems directly translates into a problem of reward systems. Since most firms’ accounting systems do not allow tracking of profitability by customers or industry segments, profitability-based reward systems are difficult for many firms to implement as they move to customer-focused business units. Moreover, managing long-term relationships with major customer accounts requires skills well beyond personal selling and negotiating skills. An orientation towards customer-focus generates greater ambiguity, an emphasis on teamwork skills, more breadth of experience, greater empathy for goals and constraints of people in other functional areas, and more flexibility in being able to respond to changing business conditions (Homburg et al., 2000). Customer-focus is a mix of technical and human capabilities.

A number of managerial implications follow from these challenges. First, to make organisations more customer-oriented, structural changes are needed. Second, organisational accounting, information and reward systems must be changed to facilitate and encourage a focus on customer groups. Third, there are a number of human relations issues required to support the transition to a customer-focused structure that imply new recruitment practices, reevaluating training programs, and rethinking career paths. Finally, managers need to address the issue that some workers may have skills that are no longer relevant when firms move towards a greater customer focus (Homburg et al., 2000).

From the perspective of workers, these changes are no less daunting. One of the findings of Homburg et al.’s (2000) research was that one of the fundamental difficulties of implementing customer-focused strategies was social acceptance of a new way of working. For instance, workers may resist these new changes in work practices because of the threat of social isolation information technology systems bring and there can be significant resistance in internally sharing customer-based information (Atkinson, 2000). In terms of career paths, vertical career progression for customer workers (e.g., sales and marketing) are less common than in the past. Additionally, there still seems to be a general belief
that to advance to general management, people need experience in a variety of functional areas. While it is easy to say modern organisations should be more customer-focused, there are often very different interpretations of what it means to be customer-focused and little understanding of the changes in company structure that are needed.

As challenging as it is for workers and organisational leaders, the paradigm shift from internal to customer-focus is imperative. The radical change in the internal fabric and management style to service the now critical customer with heightened market awareness of the new economy needs a dramatic change of thinking. Atkinson (2000) points out that the failure to make this shift to customer-focus, will likely result in those organisations “occupying second tier positions ripe for acquisition or destined for further decline” (p. 8). Managers who have the new mind-set to deliver and implement these fundamental changes should be in high demand by companies.

Unfortunately there is a dearth of people with the capabilities and experience at a senior level who can successfully drive change. This core competency is missing from many businesses - they do not have the transformational leaders to see through the change from the top. These people will gain high premium and will be increasingly valued over those who possess only technical expertise. Holding on to these leaders will be a challenge for those companies who have invested in the cultural infrastructure, and rewards and performance management systems. The same can be said for middle managers. Atkinson (2000) argues that:

flexibility in the staff is what will be valued most - those who can act as team leaders and build teams, communicate with customers and understand business from both a strategic level yet operate at a local level will be of most value and are increasingly in scarce supply (p. 10).

Ready access, increased knowledge and rapid speed of decision-making are the drivers for customer wants and decisions.

Customer work (as distinct from customer-focus) can be a broadly used term to describe a range of occupations. In perhaps its most common usage, this term captures the relationship between an employee of an organisation and the
customer of an organisation after a sale has been made or a service has been rendered to the customer. Troyer, Mueller, and Osinsky (2000) conceptualise customer workers as “brokers” between the organisation and its customers. The key notion behind this definition of customer work is that it involves expectations for work that arise from both the organisation and the customers of the company.

The variety of workers involved in customer work is expanding. For instance, companies are increasingly recognising that sales work involves a component of customer work. Sales workers can therefore be considered as brokers between the organisation and the customer. Adams (1976) research on “boundary spanning roles” identifies two boundary roles: representatives and influencing agents. Representatives are responsible for obtaining social support and legitimization by managing the company’s impressions in the external environment. Influencing agents are responsible for bargaining with the external environment over differing preferences. A common approach to the promotion of a firm’s products or services that occurs in sales work involves an emphasis on meeting customers’ needs. Because of this distinct position in the transactions that tie organisations to customers, Troyer et al. (2000) contend that customer workers are open to experiencing role conflict because they are often confronted with competing demands from the two constituencies (i.e., the organisation and the customers). Therefore work involving interaction with both organisational constituencies and customer constituencies may generate role conflict. Role conflict has conceptual and practical implications for the worker, customer and organisation.

Theoretically, role conflict, a likely consequence of all forms of customer work, occurs for an actor when the actor perceives that the set of demands from two or more constituencies to which an actor is held accountable (a) are incompatible or inconsistent with one another in such that both sets cannot be met and (b) are simultaneously pressed on the actor (Heiss, 1990; Katz & Khan, 1966; Merton, 1968). In other words, customer work places employees in the unique position of answering to two bosses, the organisation and the customer. Although not formally designated as a superior, the customer nonetheless represents an additional set of interests and demands to which the customer worker must respond.
In practice, role conflict can be played out in various ways. For example, consider the situation in which a customer worker is asked by a customer to provide technical support for a product that is not covered by the customer’s purchase contract with the company. In many cases such a demand by the customer could be met by resistance on the part of the firm (i.e., considered an inappropriate diversion of the organisation’s resources). As an agent of the organisation, the customer worker might be required to turn down the customer’s request. In doing so, the worker fails to meet the needs of the customer. Likewise, the customer worker may have “cut a few corners” to satisfy the customer to the displeasure of their boss. If success is defined in terms of meeting both the company’s and the customer’s expectations, then both employees in this example have failed. The first employee is internally-focused. That is, one who has a preference for pleasing his or her manager over meeting the needs of the customer. The second employee is customer-focused, that is, one who favours the customer’s needs over pleasing his or her boss. Managing this role conflict can be quite complex.

In general terms, it appears that representative and influencing roles require different approaches to reduce the potential for role conflict. On the one hand, autonomy may be crucial to representative roles, because impression management is important to these roles, and autonomy affords the role incumbent the opportunity to role make. On the other hand, resource adequacy and role clarity may be critical for individuals in positions that involve an influence role. This is because in this role, meeting demands of both the customers and the company is likely to be a resource-costly venture and understanding one’s responsibility to each constituency might provide a better template for action. These distinctive approaches serve as a useful generalised starting point in understanding the pressures associated with conducting and managing customer work. More specific analysis of boundary spanning roles is needed.

For instance, within the realms of influencing and representing roles there needs to be an appreciation of the distinctions under each role type and the occupational implications for merging the needs of the customer worker with the firm’s requirements. Friedman and Podolmy’s (1992) extension of Adams’s research on boundary spanning roles suggests a third way that role conflict might be mediated - through role differentiation. Further analysis of particular
occupational roles using a role-theoretic perspective may provide insight into the conditions under which the different mechanisms (autonomy, role clarity, resource adequacy, and role differentiation) come into play in reducing role conflict. Their studies suggest that a role-theoretic perspective may be a useful framework for understanding and applying strategies to overcome role conflict in customer-focused roles, whether they are sales-orientated or customer service-orientated.

Other factors apart from role conflict can and often do run contrary to developing customer-focus in an organisational setting. Heiss (1990) summarising a large body of theory and research related to social roles, notes that difficulty arises not only from competing expectations (i.e., role conflict) but also from (among other factors) lack of adequate resources to enact the role (a situation he refers to as “role overload”). This insight is important in terms of understanding the implications of customer-focus for the customer/employee/organisation relationship. It implies that the enactment of any customer role requires adequate time, material resources (e.g., instruments and technology), and social resources (e.g., authority, knowledge, and cooperation).

Another issue for customer workers involves lack of role clarity. Heiss (1990) notes that adequately playing a role requires an understanding of the expectations associated with the position. Such understanding can arise through observation in a variety of ways such as role modelling (e.g., Bandura, 1977) and formal training (e.g., Goffman, 1961; Rosow, 1974; Zurcher, 1967). Irrespective of how a worker learns the company’s expectation of the position, the greater their sense of role clarity the potentially more successful they may be at avoiding role conflict. As Secord and Backman (1974) put it, “any system inevitably has many conflicting expectations, but where clear priorities are established, the actor has little difficulty in deciding on the appropriate behavior” (p. 40). It might therefore be expected that more well-defined work expectations (i.e., role clarity) will result in the reduction of role conflict for customer workers. However, the relationship between the concepts of role clarity and role conflict implications requires more research.

For instance, customer workers’ perceptions of role ambiguity vary dramatically with variations in organisational factors (Chebat & Kollias, 2000). Although it may be difficult to completely eliminate ambiguity in customer roles,
it is certainly feasible for practitioners, backed by additional research, to design jobs so as to help customer workers cope with role ambiguity. This designing involves provision of consideration, feedback, and autonomy (Singh, 1993). Managers will no doubt find it rewarding, or at least less frustrating, to put their efforts behind programmes that reduce and/or help customer workers cope with ambiguity in specific facets of their role. Workers, too, will gain from a clear role description. Customers, of course, are less likely to suffer from poor service encounters.

On the other hand, the literature on customer service says little about the role of the internal service provider and undervalues internal customer service. An important and often neglected dimension in the discussion of customer workers is an analysis and theoretic framework of non-customer service workers and their relationship to boundary spanning roles. Equally, it could be argued that employees in general are customers too - the customer of the corporate leader. Like the loyal customer and business exchange, managers (business) who can accurately identify and meet their workers’ (customers) needs, are likely to be rewarded in the same way that a business is by a satisfied customer. That is, workers and teams no doubt feel obliged to reciprocate with commitment to corporate goals. The notion of the manager treating their workers as customers should begin at the recruitment process. As Secretan (2000) puts it, “the organisation needs to woo potential employees with the same finesse and marketing techniques and skills as are perfected to woo customers” (p. 25). This is what he refers to as “new marketing” (Secretan). Atkinson (2000) supports this view claiming that the relationship between a company and its customers is a mirror reflection of how it manages its human relations. Instead of a largely piecemeal approach, what is needed is a comprehensive customer service framework, incorporating direct and indirect aspects of customer relations.

CRM takes a holistic approach to customer relations (Blodgett, 2000; Brighton, 2000). Blodgett (2000) defines CRM as a business strategy “that helps a company integrate itself and forge a tight connection with the customer” (p. 92). Research suggests a great deal has been invested and expectations remain high. But in their haste to implement CRM systems, many companies are discovering that something with such a simple premise can be extremely difficult and expensive to implement successfully (Brighton, 2000; Nancarrow, Rees, & Stone,
Success requires more than simply buying new software and installing it in the sales centres. “CRM, a business strategy intended to gain market share and competitive advantage through improving customer loyalty, has been discredited because of over-reliance on technology” (Rogers, 2003). Blodgett claims that the successful implementation of a CRM strategy involves scrutinising an organisation’s customer focus, operations, systems, and culture. CRM, therefore, requires a mix of technical and human capabilities, and requires internal and external organisational attention.

Internally, CRM requires companies to quickly integrate all the internal information that they have on a particular customer. Externally, businesses need to recognise and treat customers consistently and knowledgeably across channels - whether they reach you via a call centre, web site, catalogue or retail outlet. This critical enterprise-wide single view of the customer has been an expensive stumbling block for most businesses trying to manage their information in a multi-channel environment (Brighton, 2000; Piccoli, O’Connor, Capaccioli, & Alvarez, 2003).

Technically, CRM merges information with workers. Many companies have discovered that 20% of customers account for 80% of business performance. The focus on target customers has led to a definition of success as the “share of target customer” (Ulrich, 2000, p. 18). Creating focused customer connections may come from databases that identify and track customer’s preferences, from dedicated account teams that build long-term relationships with targeted accounts, and from involving customers in staffing, training, compensation, and communication practices (Ulrich). In order to maximise customer insight, a company must have the capacity to link all customer repositories to be available to managers and customer workers. This involves developing a new set of focused technical capabilities. Atkinson (2000) predicts that globalisation will continue to put pressure on organisational resources. He states that “those who people these lean machines [future organisations] will have to focus upon service delivery and at the same time have more to do with less resources and time!” (p. 9). On top of this, the “Internet economy” (Brocklebank, 2000) promises more challenges in creating and managing focused customer connections in an ever-expanding scope of information to be managed and analysed.
In terms of reward structures, these need to align with customer-focused behaviour. The alignment of reward structures with flexible responses to varying customer demands reinforces the paradigm shift from internal- to customer-focus. Conversely, role incongruity for customer workers can occur when there is nonalignment between organisational incentives and the particular needs of the customer. For example, role incongruity would occur in a situation whereby management rewards customer workers on the basis of how many customers they processed, whereas the environmental context may require customer workers to spend more time and attention to each particular customer’s needs. Accordingly, one of the factors influencing the degree of consistency between management commitment to quality service and the customer’s perception of quality service is the implementation and promotion of an incentive system based on rewarding the adaptability of the customer worker to the varying demands of customers.

Unfortunately, this is not so easy to implement. For instance, how do you measure and reward the “people factor” (Berry, Parasuraman, & Zeithaml, 1988). A customer worker’s skill in the service sector may be reflected in knowledge, courtesy, competence, and communication abilities which, in turn, represent aspects of service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). The various dimensions of a customer worker’s service performance are most crucial in service encounters that rely on high levels of personal contact with the customer. In such situations, there exists the opportunity to create a competitive advantage through the performance of service employees. However, these human capabilities - the people factor, while largely undisputed as characteristics of quality service, and perhaps even features significant in attaining an advantage over competitors - are difficult to measure in any objective way by managers.

Given incentives, skills and growth opportunities by organisational leaders, and despite these technical and human challenges, workers are helping themselves and their company by serving and fulfilling customer’s needs. On the other hand, pleasing the boss and playing organisational politics in the interests of their career is an unhealthy artifact of the old reality. As Noer (1997) puts it, “being clear about who your customer is and spending your time providing value-added service is a much less energy draining and more personally affirming use of (employee’s) time than wallowing in the internal ambiguity of a dying bureaucracy” (p. 215). From the organisation’s perspective, it is better served by
insisting on workers identifying and measuring their own value-added contribution to servicing the needs of their customers. Managers need, therefore, to provide the necessary means by which their workers can focus and assess their contribution to satisfying the customer’s needs. The more time and effort spent focusing internally by the manager or the worker, will detract from a customer-focus mind-set.

In sum, several elements of the attribute of Customer-focus have been identified from the literature. These elements have the capacity to specify how the attribute of Customer-focus can merge the changing needs and interests of individual and organisation. Elements discussed include the provision of reward systems, development of new skills, overcoming role conflict, provision of adequate resources (role overload), and the implementation of a CRM system. Application of these elements from an organisational perspective comprise the implementation of incentive schemes that are linked to customer focus, the provision of customer service training, organisational policies to overcome role conflict, the provision of adequate resource allocation for customer worker, and the implementation of a CRM system. From an individual perspective, evidence of the application of these elements may include willing attendance at available training programmes to enhance customer service skills, the clarity customer workers have of their role (role clarity), and the utilisation of adequate customer support resources, including CRM systems to improve customer focus. Evidence of the application of these elements from an individual and organisational perspective may suggest that the attribute of Customer-focus can be applied in an organisational context. These elements and their corresponding individual and organisational accountabilities originating from the literature are summarised in Table 9 (see Section 3.5).

2.2.4 Attribute - Focus on Performance

Systems of remuneration favouring performance over job-related behaviours are likely to be in the long-term interests of individuals and organisations (Sturman, Trevor, Boudreau & Gerhart, 2003). As discussed earlier, a paradigm shift from entitlement to adding value is one of the drivers of individual success in the new reality. In other words, workers who contribute beyond the narrow confines of their job description are likely to be valued by
organisations. On the other hand, organisations that can establish criteria to identify and reward value-added behaviours in the workplace can more closely link performance with reward.

It is only relatively recently that researchers have altered their view of what constitutes individual performance in organisational settings, despite significant and sustained competitive pressures to do so (Welbourne, Johnson & Erez, 1998). For the last 20 years, job performance has been one of the most widely studied criterion variable in the organisational behaviour and human resource management literature (Bommer, Johnson, Rich, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 1995). Therefore, most performance measurement systems are limited in that they ignore dimensions of work behaviour that lie beyond what has been traditionally included in the scope of a specific job itself. For instance, job analysis by design, ignores non-job-related behaviours such as suggestion making, organisational citizenship, or even extraordinary customer service (Welbourne, et al.). A broader interpretation of performance is needed that goes beyond job-related behaviours as a basis for understanding and reinforcing workplace accomplishment. There is however some evidence that organisations are progressing toward linking pay more strongly to performance (Sturman et al., 2003).

Although there is a trend towards competency models, which focus on the skills people need to be effective in their current and future jobs, they continue to be defined by job attributes. Mansfield (1996) defines a competency model as “a detailed, behaviorally specific description of the skills and traits that employees need to be effective in a job” (p. 7). This continued job orientation in performance may result from the need to create a legally defensible performance appraisal system requiring a formal job analysis (Welbourne et al., 1998).

Despite these apparent legal constraints, Austin and Villanova (1992) have called attention to the importance of non-job components of performance. These scholars and others have suggested that work performance is two-dimensional, composed both of work required by an organisation and by discretionary employee work behaviours (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Developing this two-dimensional model, Motowidlo and colleagues recognise the importance of non-task performance, which they call contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Motowidlo, Borman & Schmit, 1997; Motowidlo
& Van Scotter, 1994). These authors suggest that contextual performance itself consists of multiple “sub-dimensions” such as teamwork, allegiance, and determination.

Although multidimensional models of performance that include job and non-job dimensions have been introduced, they lack a unifying theoretical framework (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). Without a theoretical underpinning, there is little guidance for choosing which dimensions of performance (job or non-job) to include or exclude from the model. Accordingly, practitioners and organisational leaders tend to use customised performance measures, a practice that results in using measures that do not typically allow for comparison among jobs or across companies. Researchers have noted that this lack of generalisability of the performance criterion hinders the validity of many predictors of performance (Austin & Villanova, 1992).

Welbourne et al. (1998) use role theory and identity theory to develop a theory-based, generalisable measure of performance. Role theory provides an explanation for why work performance should be multidimensional, and identity theory suggests how to determine which dimensions to include in a model of work performance. The amalgamation of both theories by Welbourne et al. (1998) broadens the concept of performance to incorporate four additional roles other than jobholder.

According to role theory, individuals’ role expectations are influenced by both their personal attributes and the context in which they exist. Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate (2000) define a role as consisting of core or central features and peripheral features. “Following hedonistic or reinforcement principles, individuals are likely to gravitate towards and value roles at which they are adept, they are extrinsically rewarded, and that are experienced as intrinsically satisfying” (p. 485). The greater the role identification, the more one seeks opportunities to express the role identity as a valued portion of the self-concept (Stryker, 1980). Role theory combines a psychological (individual contribution) and a sociological (organisational framework) perspective.

In previous attempts to theoretically explain performance, researchers sought individual predictors, neglecting to recognise that both perspectives can contribute simultaneously. Despite this recognition of the importance of roles and the fact that employees choose to enact multiple roles in their organisations,
research has continued to measure employee performance as if only one role - jobholder - exists (Welbourne et al., 1998). Consequently, performance systems that rely on evaluating only those work behaviours defined by an organisation as related to a specific job, may exhibit deficiency error. Role theory suggests that, to correct for this measurement error, performance management systems need to account for multiple roles at work.

However, role theory only suggests roles as a way of conceptualising multiple behaviours at work; it does not provide a way to define which dimensions of performance (or roles) should be included or excluded in a multidimensional measure of performance. The number of potential roles employees may take on at work is limitless. Welbourne et al. (1998) claim that identity theory may help in understanding which roles should be measured in the context of the workplace.

According to identity theory, it is not the existence of roles, but their saliency, that affects behaviour (Burke, 1991; Thoits, 1992). Identity theory suggests a process by which people use an internal control system to filter information. In other words, the roles that are most prominent to people provide the strongest meaning or purpose. In turn, the more meaning that is derived from the role, the greater the behavioural guidance that ultimately leads to the enactment of behaviours associated with that role. Organisations influence work-related role saliency in many different ways, including rewarding behaviours, requiring behaviours, formally and informally recognising behaviours, and even punishing employees when behaviours are not enacted (Welbourne et al., 1998). Since different firms have different expectations of their employees, role saliency is most likely to be different across organisations. Because organisations differ on the roles considered important for individual success, it has been difficult to create a generalisable performance measure applicable to all firms.

All of the ways by which organisations influence role saliency should be explored to determine which roles are most appropriate. Welbourne’s et al. (1998) research identified five prominent roles: job, organisation, team, career, and innovator. They employed two criteria to identify this multidimensional definition of performance in an organisational setting. First, they reviewed several compensation systems in different organisations and the roles they were designed to elicit. Second, they chose roles that had been emphasised in the literature as
important for organisational success. In sum, they suggested that employees enact multiple roles beyond that of jobholder (role theory) and, employing identity theory, they suggested that those roles that are considered important from an organisational perspective should be measured through a comprehensive assessment of employee performance.

Apart from job and organisation roles, the team role workers play is becoming increasingly important. Teamwork has been a critical component of organisational performance. However, recognition of the importance of the team role as well as the use of teams in organisations has only increased over the last decade. The compensation literature clearly provides evidence of the increasing reliance on teams in organisations. Gain sharing plans and team-based incentives both support behaviours associated with being a team member. These pay systems can also encourage cooperation among team members and between teams (Welbourne & Gomez-Mejia, 1995). Consequently, many of the new performance models have included teamwork as an important component (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). However, the predominant basis for pay-for-performance continues to be individual performance (Sturman et al., 2003).

The career role should be considered in any comprehensive performance model. Evidence in organisations of career role performance systems is individuals being rewarded for career accomplishment (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright, 1994). Employers can emphasise the importance of career roles either directly, through compensation plans, or by providing career development opportunities for employees. This may take the form of rewards and incentives linked to training. For instance, another pay system that emphasises the career role is skill-based pay (Ledford, 1991). These pay programmes provide employees with increases in their base pay when they participate in training and acquire new skills. Most organisations can no longer offer job security and promotional opportunities. Under the new employment paradigm, a broad based performance model emphasising learning and career development replaces a narrow work performance model stressing job security and an organisationally-based career path.

Innovation is another important dimension in work performance. Over twenty years ago, Schein (1980) argued that if firms intend to remain competitive in a complex and changing environment, they must have employees who are
creative on behalf of an entire organisation, not just creative in their job. Including innovation in a work performance model implies that employees need to behave in innovative ways, not just applying their creative skills to their specific jobs, but also contributing to the effectiveness and adaptability of their organisation as a whole. An increasing number of companies are providing compensation incentives, such as gain sharing and cash rewards for suggestions, for original and entrepreneurial contributions. Perhaps the only thing that has changed in two decades since Schein advocated employee innovation a vital part of work performance, is a greater relevance and appreciation of the innovator role in work performance.

Employees can and do enact many potential roles while at work. Welbourne et al. (1998) suggest that there may be, and probably are, other relevant roles that should be considered in performance. Nonetheless, Welbourne et al.’s model provides a useful starting point in viewing performance as a multidimensional concept. These roles are distinct from each other and identify components of performance that cannot necessarily be measured via a firm’s traditional approach to performance appraisal systems.

Applying role and identity theories to performance measures offers one approach to expanding prior research on performance measurement. The idea that roles are important for understanding employee behaviours is not a new concept. However, Welbourne et al. (1998) are the first to consider its theoretical implications for performance measurement and its link with identity theory. Clearly, many of the ideas are not new in the field of organisational behaviour and human resource management. Nevertheless, in putting these fairly well-established pieces of theory together, Welbourne et al.’s model provides an original contribution to solving an important piece of the performance measurement puzzle. The results of Welbourne et al.’s study provide initial evidence that a role-based measurement of performance is a promising tool for both researchers and practitioners.

Although limited to five roles, Welbourne et al.’s (1998) model addresses several weaknesses in traditional approaches to performance measurement. First and most importantly, unlike typical techniques, their model has a theoretical underpinning. Second, their performance measurement tool is multidimensional rather than one-dimensional, accounting for multiple roles workers may take on in
the workplace. Third, because Welbourne et al.’s model accounts for multiple roles, it reduces some of the deficiency error associated with typical performance measures that only focus on the job role. Fourth, the model has a broader, more generalisable application than traditional techniques, which have been - and still are, in most cases - job- or organisation-specific. Finally, what should be of interest to researchers is that this model provides the potential for comparative studies among jobs and organisations.

The contemporary worker, embracing a new mind-set about their work performance, should acknowledge that who you are is not where you work, but what you do. In other words, workers’ sense of identity, self-esteem, and purpose should not necessarily be contingent on their organisational affiliation. When a worker allows their identity to reside in their workplace, they become organisationally dependent. In the new reality, this places workers in a permanent “victim relationship” (Noer, 1997), perpetually subservient to the organisation. On the other hand, workers are better served by viewing their skills and self-esteem as portable and not dependent on a particular organisational setting. It is also in the interests of organisations in the new reality to foster independent relationships with their work force. Benefits, status symbols, and policies that favour tenure over performance and internal pleasing over customer service are nonfunctional artifacts of the old reality. If the organisation’s focus on performance is contingent on anything other than doing quality work in the service of customers, the system is toxic to long-term organisational survival. Independent and task-focused employees who look outward toward their customers will increasingly be in greater demand by companies and undoubtedly one of the keys to a robust commercial future.

In sum, several elements of the attribute of Focus on Performance have been identified from the literature. These elements have the capacity to specify how the attribute of Focus on Performance can merge the changing needs and interests of the individual and the organisation. Elements discussed include extending the conceptualisation of work performance beyond the traditional bounds of workers’ job and organisation task roles to include their team, career, and innovator roles. Application of these elements from an organisational perspective comprise the linking of rewards and benefits with desirable team-based behaviours, the learning of new skills, and original and entrepreneurial
contributions by workers. From an individual perspective, evidence of team-based behaviours, skills enhancement, and innovative contributions would indicate a readiness from employees to extend their traditional organisational role to make other recognised contributions to workplace performance. Evidence of the application of these elements from an individual and organisational perspective may suggest that the attribute of Focus on Performance can be applied in an organisational context. These elements and their corresponding individual and organisational accountabilities originating from the literature are summarised in Table 9 (see Section 3.5).

2.2.5 Attribute – Project based Work

In response to an increasingly global and competitive environment, the flexibility to adapt to changing market needs and develop innovative cross-functional processes is quintessential to success for the contemporary organisation and individual (Zhang & Cao, 2002). Two characteristics that emerge from the literature in an effort to classify teams are product type (Hackman, 1968; McGrath, 1984; Steiner, 1972) and temporal duration (McGrath, 1991; McGrath & O’Connor, 1996; Morgan, Glickman, Woodard, Blaiwes, & Salas, 1986). With regard to product type, an important distinction can be made between project tasks that revolve around processing information (i.e., planning, creating, choosing, deciding) and production tasks that involve some degree of hands-on physical activity (Devine, Clayton, Philips, Dunford, & Melner, 1999). When crossed, the two dimensions yield a simple yet comprehensive taxonomy of organisational teams consisting of four types: (a) ad hoc project teams; (b) ongoing project teams (c) ad hoc production teams; and (d) ongoing production teams. Project teams solve problems, make plans or decisions, or interact with clients or customers. Ad hoc project teams exist for a finite period of time and ongoing project teams are standing teams with relatively stable membership (Devine et al.). The use of project teams, both short- and long-term, wherever possible, as distinct from functional work groups, provide organisations with adaptable and flexible structures.

The extensive use of cross-functional teams, particularly project teams, is characteristic of the post-bureaucratic form of organisation referred to in the literature as the “network organization” (Baker, 1992). A network organisation
can flexibly construct a tailored set of internal and external linkages for each unique project. Unlike a bureaucracy, which is a fixed set of relationships for processing all problems, the network organisation moulds itself to each problem. Moreover, it adapts itself not by top-management fiat but by the interactions of problems, people and resources; within the broad confines of corporate strategy, organisational members autonomously work out relationships. As Baker puts it, the post-bureaucratic organisation “is a social network that is integrated across formal boundaries. Interpersonal ties of any type are formed without respect to formal groups or categories” (p. 398). The structure of a network organisation changes from a hierarchical to a flat form and management goals change from being functional to global. From the individual perspective, work changes from being fragmented to team-oriented (Zhang & Cao, 2002). However, the transformation from a bureaucratic organisational structure to a network organisation is not as prevalent as the new work order literature would have us believe. Many organisations have struggled to implement a cross-functional team culture and have invested considerable resources in attempting to gain some advantage (Davison & Hyland, 2002).

Moreover, it is a common assertion in the popular management literature that functions are becoming less important, and that we are now witnessing the rise of cross-functional skills and project-based organisations. Despite this, Ruigrok, Pettigrew, Peck and Whittington (1999), in their extensive four-year empirical research study of corporations in Europe up to the mid 1990s, found that functions still play a very important role in European firms. Ruigrok et al. claim that these new organisational forms supplement rather than supplant the multi-divisional organisational structure. More specifically, they contend that as companies grow, there is a tendency to add layers of hierarchy, strategic decision-making is still primarily centralised, and companies reported a higher increase of vertical rather than horizontal networking. Although companies are making more use of project-based forms of organising and investing in cross-functional management skills, these forms appear to be extensions to organisational functions and divisions. Perhaps the prevalence of the network organisation cited in the new work order literature is not as widespread as we are led to believe, and that many organisations are in reality a combination of functional hierarchies and network organisations.
Furthermore, project teams are viewed in much of the popular management literature as a static technique, rather than a process of interaction. In other words, managers are encouraged to emphasise employee participation from a programmatic perspective, that is, an end in itself. Even research studies in the realm of the post-bureaucratic organisation, use a case study approach, particularly in relation to observing team behaviour. A case study approach, investigating a particular team in an organisational setting, is often used as a basis upon which generalisations about participative and decision-making processes throughout the organisation are made. It is argued that successful employee participation, regardless of the technique, relates not so much to the uncomplicated implementation of a programme, but rather to a fundamental shift in thinking about the way decisions are made in a company.

Despite the superficial nature of some anecdotal and case study accounts about the so called post-bureaucratic organisation and the plethora of titles and labels used to describe organisational transformation, the network organisation is generally seen to be a response to the same drivers for change: globalisation, the move to an information economy, rapid environmental change, and a service (customer) orientation. As Sheridan (1996) points out:

Today’s business environment is notable because companies are doing more with less: Revenues are increasing as sizes of organizations are decreasing. Leading companies are developing organizations that are improving quality and adding greater value while reducing cycle time. One of the key elements of these corporate transformations has been the manner in which people who work in organizations are utilized (p. 17).

In particular, one of the tasks of the new organisation is to exploit the “intellectual capital” (Stewart, 1994) of individuals effectively to achieve some advantage over competitors. Combining this notion of valuing the individual input of workers with that of increased cross-functional communication, the post-bureaucratic concept is potentially envisaged as an integration of valued aspects of both individualism and connectivity (Symon, 2000). The shift from functional to project-based organisational communication presents difficulties for workers as well as organisations.
Just as organisations are re-engineering themselves to be more flexible and adaptive, individuals are expected to be open to continual change and lifelong learning. Workers will increasingly be expected to diagnose their abilities, know where to get appropriate training in deficient skills, know how to network, be able to market themselves to organisations professionally, and tolerate ambiguity and insecurity (Cooper, 1999). Higher levels of education for workers in the information age do more than just provide more trainable employees for the workplace.

One of the most profound transformations of the information age workplace is its increased opportunities for self-employment, especially for people with concrete, high-level service skills. Relatively stable, employed, full-time work has characterised the labour process for only the past 100 years or so. A gradual return to self-employment is potentially a natural outcome of greater work flexibility, the shift to the service economy, the availability of very low-cost information technology and increasing levels of education and knowledge in the labour force (Carnoy, 1998). The possibilities for workers to gain skills working as employees in the post-bureaucratic organisation may also enhance their ability to move out of organisational-employment into self-employment.

Aside from the potential for self-employment, it is arguably in the best interest of employees to accept and embrace themselves as temporary employees in the new reality. Accepting oneself as both a short-term and valued agent can be a liberating revelation for workers. With the mind-set that organisational members are temporary contractors, individuals may be free to put their energy and their identity into their work and vocation. It is also potentially in the interests of twenty-first century companies to embrace self-led employees, free from the internal constraints of the old bureaucracy, as a source of competitive advantage.

As more employees embrace new mind-sets about the employment relationship and organisational leaders cultivate flexible work forces and employment practices, there are likely to be an increasing number of workers selling their services to organisations on a freelance or short-term contract basis. Cooper’s (1999) research in the UK indicates that “the number of men in part-time jobs has nearly doubled in the past decade, while the number of people employed by firms of more than 500 employees has slumped to just over one-third of the employed population” (p. 116). There is little reason to doubt that
these trends are occurring in other countries. Cooper suggests that these figures indicate a shift towards a “contingent workforce” that transcends all occupations, vocations and professions. Whether this overall trend is in the best interests of workers and organisations is debated widely in the literature. Nonetheless, the inevitability of these trends suggests that it is in the best interests of individuals and organisations to prepare for this new reality.

The old psychological contract espousing “reasonably permanent employment for work well done” is truly being undermined, as more and more employees no longer regard their employment as secure and many more are engaged in part-time working. In an ISR (1995) survey of 400 companies in 17 countries employing over eight million workers throughout Europe, the employment security of workers significantly declined between 1985 and 1995: UK, from 70% in 1985 to 48% in 1995; Germany, from 83% to 55%; France, from 64% to 50%; the Netherlands, from 73% to 61%; Belgium, from 60% to 54%; and Italy from 62% to 57%. There is no reason to believe these trends have changed since the publication of the survey results. This shift from permanent to part-time and contract work raises important questions for researchers and practitioners about the future employee-employer interface: Can human beings cope with permanent job insecurity, without the safety and security of organisational structures, which in the past provided training, development and careers? And from the perspective of organisations, are managers in a position to continue demanding commitment from employees they do not, or cannot, commit too?

In light of these rapid changes and increasing uncertainty, the emphasis on project-based work as distinct from functional servitude is in the best interests of workers and the organisation. One of the ways in which organisations are able to increase both internal system efficiency and responsiveness to the external environment is through the processing of information horizontally via ad hoc and ongoing project teams rather than vertical functional silos. Workers, with an increasing need to embrace themselves as temporary employees, are able to gain cross-functional experience, knowledge and skills from project-based teams that may be applied in other employment settings or as preparedness for self-employment opportunities. How then are practitioners able to measure the extent
to which they have adopted and embraced the network model and left behind the bureaucratic structure?

The evaporation of functional boundaries and the corresponding construction of cross-functional boundaries hold the key to assessing a shift from a bureaucratic to a post-bureaucratic organisational model. According to the popular management literature, traditional boundaries within an organisation are supposed to be made substantially more permeable in the post-bureaucratic model. However, strong functional identities of individuals in organisations give rise to inter-functional biases and stereotypes, which, in turn, hinder effective joint working between members of various functional areas (Sethi, 2000). If cross-functional teams are, amongst other things, supposed to promote optimal allocation of capital, human resources, information and knowledge through the establishment of company-internal linkages, then how are these linkages created and functional identities overcome?

According to research in the social identity area, the adverse effect of these functional identities can be overcome in a team of individuals from diverse functional areas by creating a new team-based identity or “superordinate identity” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Mackie & Goethals, 1987; Tajfel, 1982). In the context of cross-functional teams, superordinate identity refers to the extent to which members identify with the team (rather than merely with their functional areas) and perceive a stake in the success of the team. The superordinate identity construct captures the cognitive aspects of a member’s relationship with the team and is different from social cohesion, which represents the affective component of the team-member relationship (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Previous research on organisational behaviour has focused primarily on boundaries at the organisational level. According to Cross, Yan, and Louis (2000), “boundary activities are those in which the focal organizational entity engages to create and maintain its boundaries and to manage interactions across those boundaries” (p. 842). In contrast, studies on work units up until recently have generally ignored researching evidence of intra-organisational boundaries. As the first to conceptualise boundary activities at the work unit level, Yan and Louis’s (1999) empirical research investigated the presence of three types of boundary activities in a large organisation undergoing transformation from a functionally dominant firm to a cross-functional structure. These three generic boundary
activities are: “buffering”, “spanning”, and “bring up boundaries”. From their research findings, Yan and Louis argue that boundary activities migrate downward from the organisational level to the work unit level as core work processes are redesigned, work force diversity increases, team-based structures are adopted, or sophisticated information technologies are employed. How exactly do these boundary activities manifest themselves to protect the new identity of the team?

Buffering, as a system’s self-protection strategy, is undertaken in response to (or in anticipation of) disruptive forces in the environment that would intrude on the system. This strategy emphasises the need to close the system off from exposure to environmental uncertainties and disturbances in order to enhance the possibility of rational action within the system (Cross et al., 2000). Strategies by which buffering may be carried out include forecasting, stockpiling, and leveling (Scott, 1992). Fundamentally, evidence of buffering at the work unit level includes the advent of formal strategies and procedures and/or informal codes of deflecting, managing, protecting against external demands on members and other types of outside pressures and interference (Cross et al., 2000).

Boundary spanning entails reaching out to critical constituencies in the environment. Spanning may be viewed as a response to an interdependent system or as a proactive stance towards managing interdependencies. Organisations are often involved in activities such as bargaining and negotiation, contracting and cooperation, and alliance and coalition building, evidencing various boundary spanning strategies (Scott, 1992).

Yan and Louis (1999) assert that contemporary work environments necessitate a third type of activity, namely, bringing up boundaries at the work unit level. Boundary work consists of two principal functions: creating and maintaining a compelling image of a common task, and creating and maintaining a shared sense of the climate of the group. The task is to distinguish the focal work unit from other units competing for the time and energies of its members, and to sharpen its identity in the minds of its members. In contrast to buffering, in which energy largely goes into keeping out external initiatives that might interrupt and distract the work unit, bringing up boundaries is focused on attracting the energies of work unit members to the unit’s task by keeping in resources available within the work unit. In contrast to spanning where the effort is to import the
critical resources from the external environment, bringing up boundaries entails shaping and applying internal resources to the task at hand (Cross et al., 2000).

A central tenet of Yan and Louis’s (1999) research findings is that organisational transformation, such as restructuring and process design, occasions changes in the locus of need and responsibility for boundary management. Yan and Louis maintain that the need for boundary activities will not be eliminated as a result of organisational changes such as implementing cross-functional project teams; rather, boundary activities may be transferred to other organisational levels. Previously, organisational functions with clearly defined roles helped sort and divert extraneous demands, and managers served as ultimate arbiters of priorities. Where functional hierarchies give way to cross-functional teams and managerial ranks are reduced, these bureaucracy-based buffers are removed; the new work unit is left to improvise means of buffering environmental forces.

The activities of spanning, buffering, and bringing up boundaries and their migration observed in the case study of Yan and Louis (1999) provide evidence to support their deductively developed theoretical framework. Moreover, the empirical data enriched Yan and Louis’s theory by identifying differences in importance of the three types of boundary work in the context of organisational reform. Spanning and bringing up systems’ boundaries are more prevalent than boundary buffering. More importantly, changes in boundary work include, but go beyond, a simple model of transfer or migration. The research findings substantiate Hirschhorn and Gilmore’s (1992) earlier precaution that “managers are right to break down the boundaries that make organizations rigid and unresponsive. But they are wrong if they think that doing so eliminates the need for boundaries altogether” (pp. 104-105). Many new boundary-related activities emerge during system transformations and warrant management attention. This research advances our empirical understanding of the implementation of a team-based organisational structure and its impact on boundary-related activities at both the inter- and intra-organisational levels, and provides a useful framework for observing the development of superordinate identity in other organisational settings. With an awareness of these new boundary protection activities at the team level, practitioners have provided organisational leaders with a useful framework for observing the development of superordinate identity in other organisational settings.
In sum, three elements of the attribute of *Project-based Work* have been identified from the literature. These elements have the capacity to specify how the attribute of *Project-based Work* can merge the changing needs and interests of individual and organisation. The three elements discussed are indicators of team-based behaviours within an organisational setting. These elements have been described as *buffering*, *spanning*, and *bringing up boundaries*. Application of these elements from an organisational perspective may include evidence of encouraging forecasting, stockpiling, and leveling strategies at the work unit level, policies and procedures for managing the interdependence of work units, and organisational support to work units to facilitate teams to differentiate themselves from other units. From an individual perspective, evidence at the work unit level of deflecting, managing, and protecting itself against outside pressures and interference, evidence of activities such as bargaining and negotiation, contracting and cooperation, and alliance and coalition building between work units, and evidence of team members shaping and applying their skills in the interest of their work group. Evidence of the application of these elements from an individual and organisational perspective may suggest that the attribute of *Project-based Work* can be applied in an organisational context. These elements and their corresponding individual and organisational accountabilities originating from the literature are summarised in Table 9 (see Section 3.5).

2.2.6 Attribute - Human Spirit & Work

The quest for meaningful work is not new. The human relations movement, for instance, emphasises job satisfaction and employee happiness, although many might argue that belief in the assumptions of the human relations movement disappeared from the workplace with the downsizing and employee layoffs of the 1980s and 1990s. Other scholars question if those values were ever really there in the first place (Terkel, 1995). Terkel’s research for instance indicated that many workers described their work as an unhappy and dissatisfying experience and told how work had wounded their spirits. Contemporary changes in the nature and conditions of work have brought the notion of meaningful work into sharper focus.

Some writers argue that visible notions of “corporate spirituality” may well shape the organisation of the new millennium (Wheatley, 1992; Zohar,
It is important to clarify that spirituality at work, despite religious imagery, is not about religion or conversion, or about getting people to accept a basic belief system. It is about employees who understand themselves as spiritual beings whose spirit needs nourishment at work. Moreover, it is about workers experiencing a sense of purpose and meaning in their work beyond the kind of meaning found for example in the job design literature, which emphasises finding meaning in the performance of tasks (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). This notion has been referred to relatively recently as “organization-based self-esteem” (Tang, Furnham, & Davis, 2003). The spirituality at work movement is concerned with the connection between the human spirit and work. Spirituality in this context is also about people experiencing a sense of connectedness to one another and to their workplace community.

The spirituality at work movement is getting the attention of business leaders because of the recognition that nourishing an individual’s spirit at work may be good for business (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). This growing interest in spirituality at work can be understood in relation to several trends in society. First, many believe that downsizing, reengineering, and layoffs of the relatively recent past have turned the workplace into an environment where workers are demoralised (Brandt, 1996; Hamel & Prahalad, 1994) and where there is a growing inequality in wages (Beyer, 1999). Second, the workplace is being seen more often as a primary source of community for many people because of the decline in Western society of neighborhoods, churches, civic groups, and extended families as principal places for feeling connected (Conger, 1994). For many, the workplace provides the only consistent link to other people and to the human needs of connection and contribution. A third factor is curiosity about Eastern philosophies (Brandt, 1996). Philosophies such as Zen Buddhism and Confucianism, which encourage meditation and stress values such as loyalty to one’s groups and discovering one’s spiritual centre in any activity, are finding acceptance (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Fourth, some have even suggested that as aging baby boomers move closer to life’s greatest certainty - death - there is a growing interest in contemplating life’s meaning (Brandt, 1996; Conger, 1994). Finally, the pressure of global competition has lead organisational leaders to recognise that employees’ creative energies need a fuller expression at work as a
way of combining “head and heart” as a potential competitive advantage. Many workers want nourishment from their work as well.

From the workers' perspective, work defines their self-concept and connection to others (Bertram & Sharpe, 2000). Yet as contemporary capitalism alters the conditions of work, individuals' connection to the workplace is becoming more tenuous. Sennett (1998) points out that “new capitalism” is turning work from something that was once considered stable and predictable into a source of profound insecurity. As the work force becomes increasingly contingent and people change jobs more frequently, employees are told there is “no long term”. If meaning in work concerns the reasons individuals have for working, what he or her seeks to accomplish by working, and the continuity he or she experiences at work (Isaksen, 2000, p.87), then the changing role of work has implications for workers and organisations and their pursuit of seeking and providing meaningful work.

For instance, workers have a greater expectation of the role work plays in their lives. For an increasing number of people, work is no longer simply a source of income but also an important factor in generating and maintaining personal growth and a source of well-being. The essence is that a job that provides only income, but not recognition, not learning, not compatibility with the rest of the social environment, is a job that cannot do much to enhance the well-being of the worker (Burton & Fairris, 1999). According to Burton and Fairris, general well-being in work is associated with three broad issues: First, the foundation for the quality of working conditions is efficiency and justice in the allocation of resources. For instance, employees' perception of their immediate manager’s trust in them can affect their job satisfaction (Lester & Brower, 2003). Second, the role of the workplace, and the workers’ role in production in particular, in generating productivity and its growth has a bearing on welfare. Third, the way that work fits in with and serves other social activities contributes to meaning beyond financial rewards. Heightened expectations of work and the changing nature of the role work plays in people’s lives make it incumbent on researchers to further investigate the specific conditions necessary for the maintenance of working conditions that are safe and pleasant, and for the creation of jobs that contribute to individual and social well-being.
However, in practice the worker and the organisation have a joint responsibility for bringing to the workplace the notion of meaningful work. Meaningfulness of work, according to Isaksen (2000) makes a distinction between three levels. The first level concerns the abstract meaning of work. A general evaluation of the meaningfulness of work is concerned with the question: what is the meaning of work? The second level concerns the general meaning in a specific type of work. For instance, what is the meaning of being a nurse? The third level is the personal meaning associated with work. For example, do you find your work as a nurse meaningful? The general and personal meanings in work in the second and third level do not necessarily have the same content or the same depth. The nurse may find the nursing profession meaningful as such (level two), and at the same time find their own job as a nurse (level three) absolutely meaningless because the demands of the job tax his or her own capacity for working. Therefore in broad terms workers bring to an organisation a general meaning about their vocation and through their interaction with a work environment develop a personal meaning about their day-to-day work.

Based on Isaksen’s (2000) meaningful work construct, the provision of adequate working conditions in an organisational setting cannot guarantee that workers will find their work significant. Isaksen researched workers performing highly repetitive work in a catering company, using three criteria: first, meaning through attachment to the workplace and its procedures; second, meaning through engagement in the social relations; and third, meaning through regarding work as a necessary part of a larger meaningful context. One of Isaksen’s findings suggests that meaning or meaningless are not simple effects of some specific working conditions. Isaksen found that the construction of meaning was the result of workers’ spontaneous and continuous effort and will create meaning regardless of the kinds of workplace conditions they had to endure. All 28 employees in Isaksen’s sample faced the same hindrances in their work as they had more or less the same type of repetitive work. Despite these obstacles, some still experienced work as meaningful overall, whereas others did not. Does this imply therefore that organisations should not bother making their environments more conducive to stimulating and meaningful work? That workers will generate their own meaning independent of the working conditions?
There is little evidence to support the direct relationship between satisfactory working conditions and the construct of stimulating and meaningful work, although organisational rigidity in the options for creating meaning could increase the level of frustration and lower the number of people who actually experience meaning in their work. In other words, workers who have few and very narrow interests when they start a job in an organisation that makes little or no effort to construct a meaningful work environment are more likely to become disenchanted in their personal efforts to create meaning. Poor working conditions may therefore limit the potential for workers to develop meaning through their specific job. If individuals have low expectations of the likelihood of constructing meaning in any job beforehand, workers will tend to experience even greater difficulty obtaining it in a working environment that is rigid and lacks stimulation. The degree of fit between individual and organisation depends not only on what type of aspirations for meaning the worker brings to the job, but also the proposed degree of facilitation/hindrance for the construction of meaning in work (Isaksen, 2000). In this way, meaning in work is derived from the interactional processes of worker and their work. Meaningfulness is not an inherent characteristic of a specific type of work; it is an individual state of mind that occurs when a worker regards the relationship between him- or herself and his or her context as satisfactory in some individually important way.

The interactional process of constructing meaning in work can best be understood by framing it in the person-environment model of French, Caplan, and Harrison (1984). Both the conditions of the workplace and personal characteristics of the worker have to be considered to understand why some people construct meaning, whereas others do not. Some people have personality traits that predispose them towards easily constructing meaning, whereas other people have personal characteristics that make it difficult for them to construct meaning in some or all types of work. Correspondingly, some workplaces offer optimal working conditions that facilitate creation of meaning, whereas other workplaces offer poor working conditions that hinder the development of meaning.

There are several specific factors that have the potential to inhibit a meaningful work mind-set in the workplace. Lack of meaning can be restrained as a result of either (a) poor working conditions; (b) a poor fit between worker’ interests and job opportunities; or (c) a lack of belief in one’s own attempts to
construct meaning (Isaksen, 2000). It may be possible therefore to strategically intervene on all three levels as a basis for enhancing the prospects that workers could be more likely to construct meaning, or at least, not to be deterred from finding meaning in their work.

Can a workplace, operating out of the traditional employment relationship mind-set, misuse this sum of knowledge about the value of meaningful work to exploit workers? In other words, just give the workers a sense of meaningfulness and then organisational leaders can cut costs on working conditions or salaries or simply make the employees work harder. Isaksen (2000) states that this is unlikely. Workers sense exploitation quickly and this leads to a negative perception of the working environment which results in a poor fit between person and environment and consequently a lower sense of meaning in work. On the other hand, a workplace operating out of the quest for a new working relationship can invest in improving working conditions in a way that supports some workers’ will to construct meaning in work and get at least some of this investment back in terms of a higher level of job satisfaction (Isaksen, 2000).

On the other hand, a working environment which induces searching and learning as a routine part of working could be an indicator that workers are deriving genuine meaning from their work. “The frame of mind which is associated with asking ‘how can this task be performed better?’ is fundamentally different from the frame of mind which is associated with asking ‘how am I supposed to perform this task?’” (Stiglitz, 1987, p. 6). In this way, a cultivation of a meaningful mind-set in the workplace is synonymous with a learning culture. Consequently, regularly focusing on how a task can be improved, a characteristic of work that is meaningful, is a catalyst for continuous improvement in the workplace and is arguably in the interests of both the individual and organisation.

In conclusion, workers have a responsibility to find work that is stimulating. Noer (1997) reminds us, “there is power, excitement, and amazing productivity when our work is congruent with our personal mission and values.” (p. 217). Organisations also have an obligation to provide workers with the opportunities to participate in meaningful, stimulating tasks and projects whereever possible.
If organizations can provide the spark that ignites [employees’] reservoir of human spirit and allow [them] to apply it to work that [they] perceive as meaningful, [the organisation has] unleashed a powerful competitive weapon of creative energy (p. 217).

An important characteristic of a new employment paradigm is evidence of flexibility, optimism, and creativity in matching organisational work to the individual’s needs and interests.

To summarise the discussion on the attribute of *Human Spirit & Work*, three elements have been identified from the literature. These elements have the capacity to specify how the attribute of *Human Spirit & Work* can merge the changing needs and interests of individual and organisation. The three elements discussed include *working conditions*, *matching work interests and job opportunities*, and *belief in one’s own attempts to construct meaning*. Application of these elements from an organisational perspective may include evidence of the provision of good working conditions, HRD policy and procedures that match worker’ interests and job opportunities, and the organisation’s attempt to provide opportunities for workers to construct meaning from their daily work. From an individual perspective, evidence of individuals enjoying good working conditions, a match between worker’ interests and job opportunities, and individual attempting to construct meaning from their daily work would suggest the application of this attribute in an organisational setting. Evidence of the application of these elements from an individual and organisational perspective may suggest that the attribute of *Human Spirit & Work* can be applied in an organisational context. These elements and their corresponding individual and organisational accountabilities originating from the literature are summarised in Table 9 (see Section 3.5).

2.2.7 Summary

Noer’s (1997) five attributes have been discussed thematically in this chapter. Treating each attribute as an explicit theme has been done in an attempt to address the research question discussed in Chapter 3. Moreover, the elements underpinning each attribute provide the researcher with some indicators to investigate whether each of the five attributes can be applied in an organisational
setting. If these theoretical constructs can be applied in an organisational setting by using these elements as indicators, it may be possible to infer that one or more of the features of Noer’s (1997) model are core attributes of the new employment relationship.

However, the researcher acknowledges that there are theoretical interdependencies between each of the five attributes in Noer’s (1997) model. For instance, the application of the attribute of Flexible Employment is dependent on elements of the attributes of Focus on Performance and Human Spirit & Work. More specifically, performance-based incentives are fundamental to encouraging workers to work in a variety of job roles (Atkinson, 2000; Greene, 2000). The matching of worker interests and job opportunities (Burton & Fairris, 1999; Isaksen, 2000; Stiglitz, 1987), an element of Human Spirit & Work, is also fundamental to applying the attribute of Flexible Employment. Customer-focus is also dependent on elements of the attributes of Focus on Performance and Flexible Employment. For example, the provision of reward systems (Berry et. al., 1988; Parasuraman et. al., 1985) and retraining (Carnoy, 1998; Greene, 2000) have been identified as important elements of Customer-focus. A Focus on Performance requires elements of the attribute of Project-based Work. For example, a recognition of teamwork (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Motowidlo et al., 1997; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Welbourne & Gomez-Mejia, 1995; Welbourne et al., 1998) is considered an important part of organisational performance. The application of Project-based Teams requires elements of the attribute of Human Spirit & Work. Specifically, autonomous working conditions (Burton & Fairris, 1999; Isaksen, 2000) provide a basis for developing teamwork. Alternatively, the attribute of Human Spirit & Work requires elements of the attribute of Project-based Work. For example, team members who shape and apply their skills in the interest of their work group (Cross et al., 2000; Yan & Louis, 1999) are likely to lead to a more harmonious working environment. These examples illustrate some of the interdependent relationships between the five attributes of Noer’s (1997) model. The research will explore these and other interdependencies in the context of an organisational setting.
2.3 Rationale for the Research Study

2.3.1 The Current Situation

The perception gained from the proliferation of new work order literature is that a high performance workplace, with the attributes of the new employment relationship defined above, is more widespread than empirical research would suggest. Moreover, there is no shortage of HRD tools and strategies designed to make organisations more flexible, customer-focused, less functionally structured, increase worker productivity, and capture the “hearts and minds” of workers - all core attributes in Noer’s (1997) new employment relationship model. Unfortunately these HRD tools are more often than not predicated on the traditional employment relationship mind-set and therefore bypass the core issues of challenging the traditional individual-organisation association. Consequently most of these HRD approaches are ill-equipped to deal with the changing individual and organisational paradigms. These traditional intervention strategies are unlikely to do what they set out to do, namely, to sustain productivity at a time of great change and uncertainty.

The intensification of competition and globalisation creating a climate of accelerated change and uncertainty has stimulated practitioners to review, perhaps on an ongoing basis, organisational structures. Regrettably, a lot of these HRD approaches evade the core tension in contemporary organisations, specifically, the evolving psychological contract. This is hardly surprising when the traditional employment relationship mind-set has been part of organisational culture for some 200 years. Moreover, this traditional psychological contract has been successful for most of that time due in part to the general alignment of organisation and worker needs and interests. However, as discussed, the traditional relationship is unraveling. A turbulent and volatile marketplace is forcing workers and organisations to take a fresh look at how they relate to each other. As challenging as this is, workers and organisational leaders have a lot to gain by embracing fresh paradigms about the way they relate to each other. On the other hand, they have potentially a lot to lose by holding on to traditional thinking about their association.

The needs and wants of employees and employers have changed relatively quickly and dramatically. Beginning with the downsizing movement of
the latter part of the twentieth century, organisations have needed to be responsive and manoeuvrable in an increasingly unpredictable and fast changing climate. Prior to this tumultuous period, organisations needed to be stable and predictable. The insecurity these global changes are bringing, has altered workers’ needs substantially too. Workers are realising that organisational dependence must give way to lifetime employability.

Furthermore, managers and workers operating from a traditional mind-set about their working relationship, are likely to be confused about the signals they are receiving from each other in this new reality. For instance, an organisationally-dependent worker is less likely to be flexible with customer requests, particularly if they interfere with company policy. The traditional worker, confusing the act with a gesture of organisational loyalty, is unlikely to please a customer-focused boss. Likewise, a modern thinking worker will find proactive behaviour detrimental to their employment in a traditional bureaucratically run organisation. These paradigm shifts, and the tension they bring to the modern workplace, provide practitioners with the catalyst to lay the groundwork for the development of a different schema of the employment relationship.

Table 6 illustrates and summarises the dramatic mind-set shift from the traditional to the new employment relationship as conceptualised by Noer (1997).

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<th>The Changing Employment Relationships Paradigm</th>
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<td><strong>New Paradigm</strong></td>
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There is a need for more empirical research in organisational settings to consider the issues and challenges facing organisational members and leaders in the application of new mind-sets about their working relationship.
2.3.2 Research Question and Objectives

The primary question informing this research study is: What are the core attributes of the new employment relationship? To answer this research question, Noer’s (1997) model will be applied to an organisational case. Therefore, to determine the core attributes of the new employment relationship, the researcher has three research objectives:

- To apply Noer’s (1997) model in a commercial organisation;
- To investigate the interrelationship between the five attributes of Noer’s (1997) model; and
- To extend, modify, or reject Noer’s (1997) model as a valid schema of the new employment relationship.

2.4 Conclusion

The application of Noer’s (1997) five attributes in a work setting could provide practitioners with a valid model of the new employment relationship. Moreover, this model could furnish practitioners with a schema for appraising the psychological contract in an organisational context. A systematic diagnosis of the psychological contract in a workplace setting may lead to HRD interventions aimed at developing new mind-sets in organisational members and leaders. These new mind-sets, based on key attributes of the new psychological contract, amalgamate the changing individual and organisational paradigms in the new reality. This may validate some of the core attributes in the new employment relationship raised in the new work order literature.

At the very least it is hoped that this research study will serve as a catalyst for further discussion and a progression of thinking towards the conceptualisation of a new employment relationship between employees and employers. The application of Noer’s (1997) model is intended to provide an original contribution to the HRD literature. Additional insight and ultimately the successful resolution of these transactional and relational issues between employees and employers are likely to be in the interests of all stakeholders in the new millennium marketplace.
CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes in detail the paradigmatic foundation, research methodology, and the research design, methods and procedure for this study. The research approach adopts Guba and Lincoln’s (1998) “constructivist paradigm” for informing and guiding the qualitative nature of this inquiry. Constructivism is advanced as the paradigm of choice based on ontological, epistemological and methodological grounds. Case study methodology is justified and explicated as the research design. As part of the case study design, a mix of data gathering methods were applied. First, a survey instrument generated from the literature and based on Noer’s (1997) five attribute theoretical model was formulated. From a disproportionate stratified sample (Singleton, Straits, & Straits, 1993), the data from the survey instrument were analysed using a “Multi-source Assessment” (MSA) (Heisler, 1996) method. The MSA method assisted the researcher to determine the degree of congruence between the three perspectives of workforce (Workers), middle management (MidMgt), and top management (TopMgt) from the organisational case. Second, an analysis using MSA of acute examples of congruence and incongruence between two or more organisational perspectives assisted the researcher to prepare a schema to guide and inform a series of structured focus groups. These focus groups comprised representation from Workers, MidMgt, and TopMgt. Third, the transcripts were analysed using explicit content analysis strategies. In keeping with constructivism, it was the intention of the researcher to develop a more informed and sophisticated reconstruction of Noer’s original model, based on consensus (Guba & Lincoln, 1998) between individual and organisational perspectives.

3.2 Paradigmatic Foundation and Philosophical Orientation

3.2.1 Constructivism

Paradigms such as constructivist, constructivism, interpretivist, and interpretivism are terms that routinely appear in the lexicon of social science methodologists and philosophers (Schwandt, 1998). The meaning of each
paradigm is shaped by the intent of the researcher. As general descriptors for a loosely coupled family of methodological and philosophical persuasions, they steer the interested reader in a general research direction. They merely suggest the directions along which to look rather than provide descriptions of what to see (Stake, 1991).

Constructivism, at least in the social sciences, is of more recent vintage than interpretivist thinking, although its roots reach back to the earliest philosophical arguments over a rational foundation of knowledge. Constructivists are preoccupied with related but somewhat different concerns from those of the interpretivists who were concerned with objectifying social research so as to develop a natural science of social settings. Interpretivist thinking’s foil was largely logical empiricist methodology and the bid to apply that framework to human inquiry (Schwandt, 1998). Constructivists share this position, and they resonate with the interpretivists’ emphasis on the world of experience as it is lived, felt, and undergone by social actors. They reject the notions of objectivism, empirical realism, objective truth, and essentialism. Knorr-Cetina (1981) explains that “to be objectivist, the world is composed of facts and the goal of knowledge is to provide a literal account of what the world is like” (p. 1). Gergen (1991) adds that “modernism was deeply committed to the view that the facts of the world are essentially there for study. However, they exist independently of us as observers, and if we are rational we will come to know the facts as they are” (p. 91). Constructivists are deeply committed to the alternative view that what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of interpretation.

In other words, knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by the mind. Constructivists emphasise the “pluralistic” and “plastic” nature of reality - pluralistic in the sense that reality is expressible in a variety of symbolic and language systems; plastic in the sense that reality is stretched and shaped to fit purposeful acts of intentional human agents (Schwandt, 1998, p. 236) as is the case with many management theories. They endorse the claim that, “contrary to common-sense, there is no unique ‘real world’ that preexists and is independent of human mental activity and human symbolic language” (Brumer, 1986, p. 95). In place of a realistic view of theories and knowledge, constructivists emphasise the instrumental and practical function of theory construction and knowing. Moreover, constructivists are anti-essentialists. They assume that what we take to
be self-evident kinds (e.g., man, woman, truth, self) are actually the product of complicated discursive practices.

Constructions are not more or less “true”, in any absolute sense, but simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). The researcher adopts a position that supports the exploration of an existing model to bring about a more sophisticated understanding. Constructions can therefore be alterable, as are their associated “realities”. Constructivist philosophy is idealist; that is, it is assumed that what is real is a construction in the minds of the individuals (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

It is also pluralistic and relativist. There are multiple, often conflicting constructions, and all (at least potentially) are meaningful. For Guba and Lincoln, the question of which or whether constructions are more “true” is socio-historically relative. This makes it necessary for theoretical models of the past to be reassessed. Meaningfulness is a matter of the best-informed and most sophisticated construction on which there is consensus at a given time (Schwandt, 1998). It is within this philosophical framework that the researcher attempted to develop new knowledge of the phenomenon of a psychological contract.

3.2.2 Development of Knowledge

Knowledge consists of those constructions about which there is relative consensus (or at least some movement towards consensus) amongst those competent to interpret the substance of the construction (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Multiple “knowledges” can coexist when equally competent (or trusted) interpreters disagree, and/or depending on social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors that differentiate the interpreters (Guba & Lincoln, p. 212). These constructions are subject to continuous revision, with changes most likely to occur when relatively different constructions are brought into juxtaposition in a dialectical context. The methodology in this study juxtaposes the traditional and new employment relationship constructs as a basis for developing new knowledge by reviewing and building upon these existing concepts.

Guba and Lincoln’s (1998) constructivist paradigm is a wide-ranging eclectic framework. The aim of constructivist inquiry is understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that people (including the inquirer) initially
hold, aiming towards consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve. The criterion for progress is that over time, everyone formulates more informed and sophisticated constructions and becomes more aware of the content and meaning of competing constructions (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Development of knowledge in this study was based on understanding the insights organisational members had of the application of a theoretical model of the new employment relationship in their workplace. Moreover, by comparing and contrasting the evolution of different organisational constructions, the researcher was able to develop a more refined appreciation of this phenomenon.

The constructivist paradigm is a replacement for what Guba and Lincoln (1998) label the conventional, scientific, or positivist paradigm of inquiry, and they have spelled out in detail the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions, and criteria of their approach. Each of their beliefs are considered in light of this research study.

3.2.3 Ontological Assumptions

Ontology is concerned with the question of the form and nature of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). In other words, what is there that can be known about reality? From a constructivist’s perspective, realities are comprehensible in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature. Elements are often shared among many individual persons or groups holding the constructions as in the case of this study where it is three organisational perspectives. Constructions are attempts to make sense of or to interpret experience, and most are self-sustaining and self-renewing. However, it is acknowledged that these constructions are situationally-based and therefore particular to the time and place of the study.

From an ontological viewpoint, this research investigated multiple perspectives of organisational members’ and leaders’ constructions of elements of the new psychological contract using Noer’s (1997) model as a reference point. The researcher investigated the degree of consensus between organisational leaders and organisational members to make inferences about the application of Noer’s model in a single organisational case. The research design sought to obtain
a more knowledgeable and refined construction of the new psychological contract by investigating the application of Noer’s theoretical constructs.

3.2.4 Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemology is concerned with the question of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Constructivists assume that the investigator and the object of investigation are interactively linked so that the “findings” are literally created as the investigation proceeds. Further, the outcomes of an inquiry are themselves a literal creation or construction of the inquiry process. Guba and Lincoln (1989) assume that the observer cannot (should not) be neatly disentangled from the observed in the activity of inquiring into constructions.

The process begins with the participants' perspectives and unfolds through critical inquiry and discussion, leading eventually to a joint construction between the researcher and participants of a case (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The researcher’s voice is that of the “passionate participant”, actively engaged in facilitating the “multivoice” reconstructions of his or her own construction as well as those of all other participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 215). “Constructions are extensively shared, and some of those shared are ‘disciplined constructions,’ that is, collectively and systematic attempts to come to common agreements about a state of affairs” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 71). Change is facilitated as reconstructions are formed and individuals are stimulated to act on them (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). In this way the researcher is inextricably linked with the researched.

Informed from the current literature, the researcher engaged a cross-sectional sample of organisational members in a process of inquiry to develop joint constructions about the transactional and relational aspects of the new employment relationship. These joint constructions were evaluated on the basis of three questions. First, do the constructions match Noer’s (1997) theoretical model and the specific elements it encompasses? Second, do the constructions provide a credible level of evidence of elements of a new psychological contract beyond Noer’s (1997) model? Third, can the constructions be used to reform Noer’s (1997) model? Broadly speaking, the researcher brought to this case his own knowledge and through the inquiry process created an opportunity to reconstruct
his understanding by merging his perspectives with those of the participants in the research case.

3.2.5 Inquiry Criteria

Lincoln and Guba (1985), critical of attempts by qualitative methodologists such as LeCompte and Goetz (1982) who wish to sustain a commitment to conventional inquiry criteria, propose their four-point comparative criteria for naturalistic inquirers. Table 7 illustrates the contrast between conventional and naturalistic inquiry and the subsequent discussion elaborates on each of these criteria.

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<td>Conventional Inquiry</td>
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First, credibility replaces truth value. Through prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation and triangulation exercises, and exposure of the research report to criticism by a disinterested peer reviewer, and a search for negative instances that challenge emerging hypotheses and demand reformation, credibility is built up (Seale, 1999). A number of these strategies were adopted by the researcher. For example, data were triangulated using two research methods: survey and focus group; sufficient time was spent within the organisational environment to ascertain insights and critique of the research design and outcomes by two supervisors and a peer with sufficient knowledge of transactional and relational aspects of the employment relationship was solicited. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the most crucial technique for establishing credibility is through “member checks” (p. 314). This process can involve showing materials such as interview transcripts and research reports to the research participants, so that they can indicate their agreement or disagreement with the way in which the
researcher has represented them. Participants in this study were given the opportunity to scrutinise the transcripts and categories developed by the researcher to inform a series of focus groups. This aspect of the research design was the main strategy the researcher used as a substitute for internal validity.

Second, transferability should replace applicability or external validity. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this is achieved by providing a detailed, rich description of the setting studied, so that readers are given sufficient information to be able to judge the applicability of findings to other settings which they know. A comprehensive overview of the organisation studied has been provided from several references to Flight Centre Limited (FCL) in the discussion on the selection of the case (see Blake, 2001). This is further discussed when describing the case parameters.

To replace consistency, or reliability as conventionally conceived, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose dependability, which can be achieved by the procedures they call “auditing”. In broad terms, this involves examining an “audit trail” for adequacy. In the context of this study it consisted of the researcher’s documentation of data, methods and decisions made during a project, as well as its end product. Auditing is also useful for establishing confirmability, which is Lincoln and Guba’s fourth criteria. It is designed to replace the conventional criterion of neutrality or objectivity. A partial auditing trail was undertaken in this study by inviting several colleagues to review the survey statements before being administered.

Constructivists’ belief in “multiple constructed realities” rather than “single tangible realities” is the basis for a contradictory philosophical position (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 294-295). As Seale (1999) points out, “relativism does not sit well with attempts to establish truth, even if the term is placed in inverted commas” (p. 46). Acknowledging this criticism in later work, Guba and Lincoln (1989) give an account of a fifth criterion, “authenticity”, which they believe is consistent with the relativist view that research accounts do no more than represent a sophisticated but temporary consensus of views about what it is to be true. Authenticity is demonstrated if researchers can show that they have represented a range of different realities (“fairness”) (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Research should also help members to develop more sophisticated understandings of the phenomenon being studied (“ontological authenticity”); to be shown to
have helped members appreciate the viewpoints of people other than themselves ("educative authenticity"); to have stimulated some form of action ("catalytic authenticity"); and to have empowered members to act ("tactical authenticity") (p. 114). Of course, the view that fairness, sophistication, mutual understanding and empowerment are generally desirable is a value-laden position and open to criticism from deconstructionists. Nevertheless, Guba and Lincoln’s inquiry criteria are an adequate response to critics of constructionism. Authenticity, and its dimensions, was addressed in the following ways: the provision for three organisational perspectives to have similar input into the research (fairness); focus group discussions provided participants with an opportunity to understand and appreciate the diversity of viewpoints about elements of the employment relationship (ontological and educative authenticity); management was interested in acting on the research results and were given the data to do so (catalytic and tactical authenticity).

3.3 Case Study Design: The Methodological Approach Applied in this Study

3.3.1 Overview

The research employed a case study design using a multi-method approach. A case study is an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not yet evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 13). The phenomenon underpinning Noer’s (1997) theoretical model and one that forms the central question of this study is the assumed new psychological contract between individual and organisation and the context which is the case under investigation. Case study design can be employed in research when the objective is to deliberately include the contextual conditions of the phenomenon of interest, using more than one source of data, and when the research is informed by a theoretical position.

Case study copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 1994, p. 13).
The uses of multiple sources of evidence in case study design allowed the researcher to address a broad range of historical, attitudinal and behavioural issues within the organisation. Moreover, the most important advantage of using multiple sources of evidence was the development of converging lines of inquiry resulting in conclusions that are more likely to be convincing and accurate than if based on a single source of information (Yin, 1994). Accordingly, the research design incorporated two sources of evidence: an MSA report and transcripts from a series of focus groups.

3.3.2 Defining the Case Study Design

The case studies reported in the literature range over a variety of settings, focus on many different research themes and employ a diverse range of methods for data collection and data analysis. Yin (1989) states that the case study “allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (p. 14). Despite the widespread use of the case study in research, some confusion remains about the precise nature of this methodology.

Some of the confusion regarding the case study approach comes from terminology. For instance, some writers refer to case studies in terms of the process of conducting research while others refer to cases studies as the unit of study (see Merriam, 1992). The term “case study” is considered by some as ambiguous (e.g., Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994) because it refers to both a research design and a reporting genre: “a case study is both the process of learning about the case and the product of our learning” (Stake, 1995, p. 237). Some implicitly support the existence of case study design by their discussions of the specificity of case study design, and the definition of the case study design and case study report (e.g., Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1994). However, others reject the existence of case study design (e.g., Le Compte, Millroy, & Preissle, 1992). Scholars who argue for the nonexistence of case study design fail to distinguish between the case study as a design and as a reporting genre (e.g., LeCompte et al., 1992). Further, Yin (1994) argues that this lack of distinction has resulted in a misrepresentation of case study design. Stake (1995) suggests that this confusion over terminology is a plausible explanation for the stereotypical view of the “case study” as a reporting genre. In this research, case refers principally to the process rather than the research findings.
Links between the purposes of this study and the characteristics of case study as a research design are: firstly, the purpose of the research is to interpret a social phenomenon, namely, perceived changes in the psychological contract in a bounded environment. Investigating the impact of a specific event or phenomenon is what distinguishes case study design from other human and social science research designs, such as ethnography and phenomenology (Creswell, 1994). Secondly, the study is underpinned by a theoretical framework. Noer’s (1997) theoretical construction considers and outlines several attributes of the new psychological contract, subsequently providing an opportunity for integrating a combination of theoretical perspectives in one organisational case. In other words, the study adopts an integrated perspective on the new psychological contract. Existing research literature generally treats the relational and transaction aspects of the psychological contract between management and labour as separate entities rather than collectively as treated in this study. Case study design is a more suitable vehicle for gaining insight into the complexity of understanding causal linkages of this perceived psychological phenomenon in real-life situations than other experimental strategies (Yin, 1994). Thirdly, case study design provides a basis for theory reconstruction and test. The case in this study provided a source for assessing Noer’s theoretical model and exploring options for further development.

3.3.3 Exploratory Case Study Design

Yin (1994) categorises case studies as either explanatory, descriptive or exploratory. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has adopted an exploratory case study design. Two characteristics that are integral to exploratory case study design are: (a) the boundaries of the case (Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995) and (b) the use of theory (Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 1998). The boundaries of the case enable the investigation of the complexity of elements pertinent to a phenomenon under investigation by demarcating the activity and the time period (Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). The use of theory in exploratory case study design has two design implications. First, theory in a case study design needs to accommodate the boundaries of the case (Merriam, 1998). Second, the use of theory needs to be consistent with an exploratory case study design (Creswell, 1994). In a theory, relationships are proposed between elements,
data are used to investigate these elements and therefore explore the verity of these relationships. This process identifies inconsistencies between a preliminary theory and the evidence and exploratory case study design can therefore accommodate a review of the preliminary theory (Yin, 1994). This approach is consistent with the constructivists’ view that knowledge is open to continuous revision.

Therefore case study design is valuable for its capacity to explore the relationship between theory and evidence. In other words, case studies provide analytic generalisability. According to Yin (1994):

> case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a “sample”, and the investigator’s goal is to expand and generalize theories [analytic generalization] and not to enumerate frequencies [statistical generalization]. (p. 10)

Evidence from the one organisational case investigated in this study may be generalisable to attributes of Noer’s (1997) theoretical model but may not be generalisable in other organisational settings.

### 3.4 Data Collection Methods

Two data collection methods were used as part of the case study design. These methods were multi-source assessment (MSA) and focus group interviews. MSA was used in a novel way to collect data to create a schema to structure a series of focus group discussions. One of the strengths of the MSA method is its capacity to compare data from two or three sources. As part of the case study design, three organisational perspectives were compared and included: top management \( (TopMgt) \), middle management \( (MidMgt) \) and workforce \( (Workers) \). By contrasting these three organisational perspectives, the researcher was able to prioritise a set of issues for further investigation using the focus group method. Focus groups were used to triangulate the data from the MSA method and to develop a more in-depth insight into the application of elements of Noer’s (1997)
model in this organisational case. These two data collection methods reflect the researcher’s philosophical orientation that there are often multiple constructions and that these constructions need to be compared and contrasted as a means of developing new understandings. The following discussion justifies and explicates the use of MSA as a data analysis instrument and focus groups as an accompanying research method.

3.4.1 Multi-Source Assessment (MSA)

Description

MSA, three-hundred-and-sixty-degree feedback (Edwards, 1996), multi-source intelligence (Edwards, 1996; Heisler, 1996), or multi-rater feedback (McCauley & Moxley, 1996) are terms used for assessing information from multiple sources. The researcher prefers the term multi-source assessment as it best reflects the use of multiple data sources, the hallmark of this method. The multiple sources of data MSA provides is consistent with the constructivist’s view that there are multiple sources of reality. This form of assessment provides a multidimensional perspective, and arguably a more comprehensive view of the social phenomenon being studied. Moreover, this approach improves the credibility of information by using more than one source of data is not new. Such a process is known as triangulation and it has been documented as early as the 1930s that assessment from multiple sources is more reliable than single source information (Edwards, 1996).

Application of MSA in Organisational Research

The value of MSA is evident in that 20% of major business organisations in the early 1990s, used this approach, in one form or another (Heisler, 1996). Over 90% of Fortune 1000 firms in the USA, including Allied Signal, Du Pont, Tenneco, Motorola, TRW, Florida Power and Light and Federal Express have used some form of multi-source assessment (Edwards & Ewen, 1996). Common uses include management development, performance appraisal and succession planning.

When applied rigorously, MSA studies have provided useful insight to strengths and weaknesses of organisations. Such information from multi-source assessment strategies has led to positive impacts on employee and management behaviour modifications and satisfaction levels, particularly in the areas of
performance management and customer satisfaction (Edwards & Ewen, 1996). Given the wide acceptance and usage of this instrument, failure of this tool can no doubt be attributable to poor design and execution rather than the method itself.

The main rationale for using MSA in this study is its application in comparing multiple perspectives. This focus of the research was interested in investigating and comparing the perspectives of management and workers within a bounded organisational environment. The investigation was guided by Noer’s (1997) five aspects of the employment relationship that existed in this particular organisational case. Therefore, to add rigour, the researcher needed to gather data from the several organisational perspectives.

Apart from the organisational perspectives of top management (TopMgt) and workers (Workers), the researcher sought feedback from a third perspective comprising middle management (MidMgt). Congruence between the three organisational perspectives in response to elements of Noer’s (1997) model was used to make generalisations about whether the model could be applied in the organisational setting under investigation. The MSA method illustrates the degree of congruence between the three organisational groups. Congruence between the three organisational perspectives may provide preliminary evidence that a particular element of Noer’s (1997) new employment relationship model is present in the particular workplace under investigation. On the other hand, incongruence indicates that a particular aspect of the relationship may not be applied in the organisational case. A mixed result (i.e., neither congruent nor incongruent) may provide conflicting views about an element’s application in the particular case. The MSA method used in this study illustrated these relationships between three perspectives and was followed-up and triangulated with a more in-depth analysis in the form of a series of focus groups.

3.4.2 Focus Group Method

Description

“Focus Group” was the second major data collection method used in the case study design. This method provided the researcher with a useful way to probe deeper into the possible reasons for congruence or incongruence from the MSA method. Focus Group is the name popularly given to the technique of recruiting an assembly of unacquainted members who share characteristics or experiences
relevant to the research questions and exposing them to a common stimulus and studying their interactions (Coreil, 1995; Kitzinger, 1995; Morgan, 1992). Rather than being oriented towards reaching a group consensus, focus groups capitalise on the communication among participants in order to uncover a range of attitudes and perceptions related to a broadly defined subject (Coreil, 1995; Kitzinger, 1995). It therefore provides an opportunity for the researcher to observe focus group participants talking, arguing, and joking with one another. In addition to interacting with the researcher, it offers rare insight into subcultural values or group norms (Kitzinger, 1995).

There are many definitions of what constitutes a focus group process (see Morgan, 1988, 1998; Powell & Single, 1996; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Essentially, a focus group is “an interview style designed for small groups” (Berg, 1998, p. 100), discussing and commenting on particular topics or concepts under the guidance of a researcher. A key distinguishing feature of the focus group approach is the ability of individuals from a similar community to interact. Moreover, Morgan (1988) states that “the hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group” (p. 12).

Focus groups can be relatively structured, with specific questions asked of each group member, or very unstructured, depending on the research purpose (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Therefore, a salient primary decision for the researcher designing a focus group study is concerned with how much structure the groups should have (Morgan, 1992). A thoughtful decision about structure is required because the amount of control the moderator exerts on each group will shape the collective dialogue, which in turn affects the quality and quantity of the data (Morgan). There are advantages and disadvantages in using a structured approach. On the one hand, a structured approach can facilitate more productive sessions and therefore result in few group sessions for data collection. On the other hand, if the research aims are to learn new perspectives on the research topics, and/or to gain insight into the population by observing their spontaneous interactions around a particular discussion, a tightly structured interaction would obstruct these objectives (Morgan). Consequently, the question of structure may be understood as somewhat of a trade off.
The flexibility of the focus groups means they can be used as a stand-alone technique, or an integral part of a more complicated design in which they precede, supplement, or triangulate results from other methods (Denzin, 1989). Focus group discussions were used in this study to triangulate data from the MSA report. They may provide the primary source of data as a means of shedding light on the experiences of a group of people whose voices are often not heard (Kitzinger, 1995). Alternatively, they can supplement a quantitative study by capturing insight about the experiences of the participants (Morgan, 1992, 1997; Powell & Single, 1996) and elucidating the meaning of the findings. Focus groups were also employed in this study to gain multiple perspectives and insights on the relevance of a theoretical model in an organisational setting. Focus groups are particularly useful for learning about participants' conceptualisations of particular phenomena and the language they use to describe them (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Focus group discussions provided a useful research method for members of the organisation under investigation to explain their conceptualisation of the psychological contract within their organisational context.

In this study, focus groups were used as a means of interrogating the MSA survey results. In line with constructivist thinking, focus groups can provide additional information, confirmation or refutation of beliefs and perspectives heard during the group sessions that may shape participants’ thinking. What results is often a collective understand about issues discussed during the group session (Berg, 1995). It is through this process that focus groups were used to develop a more in-depth understanding of the MSA report.

Focus Groups in Business Research

Despite a relatively low number of published studies in business and entrepreneurship research using focus groups, there are some very powerful examples that have successfully employed this research technique (Blackburn & Stokes, 2000). For example, in a study of how government could establish and improve direct consultation with UK small businesses, MacMillan, Curran, Downing, and Turner (1988) used panel discussions (a form of focus group) following individual interviews with 50 business owners. Curran and Blackburn (1994) reported using focus group discussions to explore the reasons behind an overall low level of local networking amongst business owners. They were concerned particularly in variations in networking levels based on location. This
study involved 350 small business owners. More recently, Vyakarnam, Bailey, Myers, and Burnett (1997) reported on a study of ethical behaviour in small firms using focus groups. Although they recognised the advantages of the approach and suggest some theorisation, they qualify their results by describing them as “exploratory”, requiring a larger research programme before generalisability can be attained. In this case, focus groups were used as a prelude to further research. Tikkanen, Lahn, Withnall, Ward, and Lyng (2002) completed a three-year study which sought to examine how older workers (45+) cope in a business environment undergoing constant change. This study was a multidisciplinary action research project carried out in 27 small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in industry, service and office-work sectors in the UK, Finland and Norway. Data were collected through questionnaires and focus group interviews with management and employees. These are some examples of significant published studies in SMEs across several countries.

Furthermore, focus groups have also been used in entrepreneurship research and again their use is not widespread but in some cases, significant, usually as an adjunct or supplement, to further research. For example, Sullivan, Halbrandt, Oingbin, and Scannell (1997) explored the potential of entrepreneurial activities in transitional rural females from poverty toward economic self-sufficiency. Focus groups were used in this case to provide a basis for hypothesis generation. Focus groups have been used in an action learning setting where entrepreneurs assist each other in discussing and solving problems (Hutt, 1979). In this study, Hutt argued that group interviews generate spontaneous discussion and views with greater levels of openness than other research methods.

Increasingly, social scientists from diverse disciplines are incorporating group interview techniques into their modus operandi of qualitative research methods (Coreil, 1995; Kitzinger, 1995; Morgan, 1997). Focus groups are an evolving methodology for business despite some challenges such as: a lack of understanding of what rigorously conducted focus groups can achieve; a view that focus groups are a method of market research (despite origins in sociology); a perception that recruitment of entrepreneurs to attend groups away from their business premises is more difficult than interviewing them in situ; or a lack of experienced moderators of focus groups amongst small business researchers. Nevertheless, as these techniques continue to become more acceptable and
widespread, innovative business researchers are likely to construct focus groups to satisfy an array of research agendas.

3.5 Research Design & Procedure

Figure 1 illustrates the key steps in the operationalisation of the research procedure. Steps one to seven are discussed in this chapter and Chapter 5 is devoted to discussing steps eight and nine. Key decisions in each step are discussed in terms of their theoretical foundations and implications.
3.5.1 Selection of Case

Since the research question is concerned with the application of a theoretical model within an organisational context, the concern here is analytic
generalisability rather than statistical generalisability between organisations. Therefore the criteria for selecting a case involve the internal characteristics of the organisation, particularly its capacity to answer the research question. Selection of the organisational case was based on the criteria that: the case studied should be a commercial organisation with a reputation as a high performance workplace (OECD, 1996) as noted in the “new work order” (Gee et al., 1996) literature. As noted in Chapter 1, there can be a discrepancy between the case reports expressed in the popular management literature and the truth on the ground in many of these so called high performing workplaces. These overly positive workplace accounts have been criticised for not having comprehensive empirical research to validate the claims. Therefore it was the intent of the researcher to select a case written up in the popular management literature as possessing characteristics of the presumed new psychological contract.

The selection of this type of example is referred to in the research literature as a “reputational case” (Burns, 1996). A reputational case according to Burns is one chosen on recommendations from other sources. Eisenhardt (1999) and Glaser and Strauss (1967) refers to this as “theoretical sampling”, that is, cases are selected for theoretical, not statistical reasons. “The cases may be chosen to replicate previous cases or extend emergent theory, or they may be chosen to fill theoretical categories and provide examples of polar types” (Eisenhardt, 1999, p. 141). Apart from determining the application of a theoretical model in an organisational setting, a reputational case may provide some evidence to support or refute the overly optimistic claims made in the popular management literature about Flight Centre Limited (FCL). Gee et. al. (1996) and Coulson-Thomas (1998) seem to suggest that the new work order literature presents an all too optimistic and favourable impression of the reality of organisational performance. Therefore, this study intends to test this assertion.

Of the few organisations written up as high performing workplaces, the researcher approached the management of FCL who accepted the proposal to conduct the research study within this organisation. FCL is an Australian-based international travel retailer, specialising in the sale of discount international airfares, holiday packages and domestic travel operating in the United States, Great Britain, South Africa, Canada and New Zealand. It is an example of a reputational case. Originally founded in the United Kingdom as “Top Deck
Travel”, the FCL discount retail travel group was first established in Australia in 1980. Unified under the one name in 1987, FCL outlets can now be found in five countries. The company was listed on the Australian Stock Exchange in 1995. FCL now positions itself in the marketplace as a travel retailer catering for the cost conscious traveler and specialises in the discount retailing of international and domestic airfares. The company also offers a full travel service including car hire, accommodation and travel insurance (For details see http://au.biz.yahoo.com/p/f/flt.ax.html).

FCL has four layers in its organisational structure. The majority of the workforce make up the “shop team”. The shop team consists of a team leader and a minimum of three and maximum of seven team members. Four to 10 shops are overseen by a regional coordinator. Several regions come together to form a “country”, supported by the “country business leadership team” comprising operational and technical support personnel. The countries are in turn supported by the “national leadership team” comprising managers who oversee the national operation. Finally, the “global leadership team” manages the international aspects of the business. The philosophy underpinning this organisational structure will be juxtaposed with the interpretation and discussion of the research results in Chapter 5.

In comprehensively reviewing the company, Blake (2001) asserts that FCL is the “world’s most productive workplace” (p. ix). According to Blake (2001), the organisation is the fastest growing travel company in the world. He states that one new retail outlet opens every 72 hours with an increase in profit over the past eight years after tax of 45%. Moreover, the business claims to be more than simply an outstanding financial success story:

Flight Centre has created a community instead of just a company. It has recognised that the business is a living system, and that the key is in liberating the best in people – letting them grow and discover themselves through their vocation (Blake, 2001, p. 7).

The above quotation seems to suggest a different type of relationship between the employer and employee.
In 2001, FCL won a title as “Best Employer to Work for in Australia”. Hewitt, an international management consulting and outsourcing firm, in conjunction with the Australian Graduate School of Management conducted the study to measure the effectiveness of companies at engaging their staff in the business and creating a motivated workforce. Some 165 Australian companies from 11 different industry groups took part in the survey, and information was collected from more than 25,000 employees. Key criteria distinguishing winners of the award include such characteristics as:

- Organisational leaders are trusted, communicate frequently and are enthusiastic about the development of their employees;
- Offer employees a stimulating work environment;
- Invest significant resources in learning and development for employees;
- The business is performance and results focus driven by an emphasis on fun and celebration; and
- Recognition and performance management systems have been put in place. (http://www.hewittasia.com/hewitt/ap/resource/newsroom/pressre/2002/january.htm)

These criteria also suggest that FCL is a high performance workplace.

From an internal perspective, FCL’s national HR manager states that the organisation places strong emphasis on fostering leadership skills and identifying future leaders.

Our philosophy of cultivating personal and career development means we give a strong degree of empowerment and trust to our people, providing them with a productive environment and an opportunity to develop and demonstrate their abilities (http://www.hewittasia.com/hewitt/ap/resource/newsroom/pressre/2002/january.htm)

It is on the basis of the above discussion and the convenience of the head office being situated in Brisbane which makes access more convenient that this company represented an ideal case for this research project.

From the perspective of FCL, their motivation to participate in this research project was largely due to the timing of the researcher’s approach. At the
time of the researcher’s approach, the organisation was embarking on a “staff retention drive”. Management was concerned about the costs incurred by the business as a result of what they perceived as a high staff turnover, particularly “customer workers” located at the shop fronts referred to as “travel consultants”. According to FCL’s *Global Peopleworks Handbook* (Flight Centre Limited [FCL], 2002) across the entire group, the company’s staff turnover (including management and retail employees) for the financial year 2001-2002 was 32%. Year to date figures for the financial year 2002-2003 indicate a turnover rate globally of 35%. Consequently, this research proposal was viewed by FCL management as an opportunity to gain further insight into some of the reasons for this perceived high turnover and some ideas that may assist to reduce the costs associated with replacing staff. Although FCL personnel were made aware of the research question and the rationale underpinning the study, organisational leaders accepted the proposal on the basis that they may gain some understanding of the issues affecting staff retention from the viewpoint of the employment relationship. After several communications with key personnel, FCL officially accepted this research proposal on 18 November, 2002 (see Appendix 1).

3.5.2 Sample Design

The researcher used disproportionate stratified sampling as the sampling design. It is the relational and transactional elements of the relationship between organisational leaders and organisational members that is of interest in this research project. Therefore, the perspectives of both organisational leaders and organisational members are critical in determining the applicability of the attributes of Noer’s (1997) theoretical model. Furthermore, this study is concerned with determining the level of congruence or incongruence between organisational and individual perspectives as a means of making generalisations of whether elements of Noer’s model have application in the selected case. Stratified sampling design provides the opportunity to make stronger inferences about the extent and nature of agreement between organisational leaders and organisational members than a random selection of research participants. As Berg (1995) explains:
A stratified sample is used whenever researchers need to ensure that a certain segment of the identified population under examination is represented in the sample. The population is divided into subgroups (strata), and independent samples of each stratum are selected (p. 179).

To establish the existence or otherwise of the attributes of Noer’s (1997) model, the researcher needs to give each organisational sub-group the same opportunity to share their perspectives. Disproportionate stratified sampling design therefore allows the proportion of cases in each strata of the sample to not reflect the proportion in the population (Singleton et al., 1993). Proportionate stratified sampling design, on the other hand, ensures that all groups in the population are represented in the sample in the same proportions as they are in the population (Burns, 1996). In other words, a proportionate stratified sample would inevitably include a significantly larger sample from organisational members than organisational leaders. Delahaye (2000) claims that disproportionate stratified sampling can be one of the most efficient approaches to provide the stratifications are meaningful and appropriate to the research objective.

In addition to separating organisational leaders and organisational members, the sample design incorporated a third stratification – middle management. The reason for including middle management as a separate stratum in this study is because middle managers, as defined by the researcher, often are included as part of either the organisational leaders or organisational member’s strata or even excluded from the sampling design entirely. Middle management has been considered as a separate sample layer in this study for two reasons. First, it is debatable whether middle managers should be considered a component of organisational leaders or organisational members. For instance, a senior accountant in an organisation may have some supervisory responsibility across the workplace for overseeing accounting practices, budgeting, and production planning without having any direct reports, yet spend the majority of their time completing tasks as a worker. Therefore, it is difficult to classify such a position as either work force or management. The second reason why middle managers were constituted as a separate stratum in this sample design is their direct or indirect communication link between top management and work force. In other words, middle managers are in an organisational position of potentially
appreciating (and possibly sharing) the dual perspectives of top management and workers. A middle management perspective may provide the opportunity to make some more informed inferences about the extent and nature of congruence and/or incongruence between organisation and individual in relation to the research question. Disproportionate stratified sampling, with three organisational perspectives, provides the researcher with an effective design for gaining insight and understanding of the phenomenon of the new psychological contract between organisation and individual.

Table 8 illustrates the three organisational strata and their corresponding elements from FCL.

**Table 8  Stratified Sample Design for Flight Centre Limited**

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<th>Stratified Sample Design</th>
<th>Corresponding Flight Centre Structure</th>
<th>Component Groups and Corresponding Sample Numbers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Top Management (TopMgt)</td>
<td>Global Leadership Team National Leadership Team</td>
<td>International perspective (1) National perspective (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Management (MidMgt)</td>
<td>Country Business Leadership Team</td>
<td>Management Support (Country Manager and Regional Coordinator) (2) Technical Support (Accountancy &amp; HR) (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce (Workers)</td>
<td>Shop Teams</td>
<td>Team Leaders (3) Team Members (8)</td>
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The initial point of contact was made by the researcher with a member of the Global Leadership Team with FCL, who subsequently referred the researcher to one of the Country Business Leadership Teams called “QNN” encompassing Queensland, Northern Territories, and Northern New South Wales. The QNN Manager referred the researcher to the Coordinator of “Soul City”, one of the geographical regions in South East Queensland. These three managers facilitated access to the participants for data collection.

Further stratification of the sample was based on three types of shops: one performing below budget, one performing to budget, and one exceeding
budget. Although it is acknowledged that there could be a range of complex factors contributing to financial performance levels, this sampling criterion covered a representative range of business performance outcomes within the organisation. Three retail outlets satisfying the budget criteria were selected. The total workforce sample included 11 employees, including the three team leaders from each shop.

With regard to organisational leaders in the global and national leadership teams, an electronic mail invitation was sent to 12 managers. The researcher received four positive responses which included one global manager and three national managers.

Similarly, an electronic mail invitation was sent to 10 middle managers. Four positive responses were received by the researcher, including the country manager and the regional coordinator and two technical support professionals.

The total sample of 19 participants was involved in the entire research process. The breakdown of the sample into strata included four members of TopMgt (21%), four for MidMgt (21%), and 11 Workers (58%). Of the overall sample, 15 (79%) were female and four (21%) male. 14 (74%) participants were between the ages of 25 and 45 years, one (5%) was between the ages of 45 and 65 years, and four (21%) between the ages of 18 and 25 years. In terms of service to the company, 11 (58%) had less than five years of service, five (26%) had more than five years of service, and three (16%) had less than one year of service to FCL.

3.53 Survey Design

Table 9 is an “Evidence Guide” which summarises the key elements for each of Noer’s (1997) five attributes and the corresponding workplace characteristics from the dual perspectives of the individual and organisation. This “Evidence Guide” has been derived from the review of the literature in Chapter 2. The elements and characteristics contained within the “Evidence Guide” address and describe in more specific terms how Noer’s model can be applied in an organisational setting. The “Evidence Guide” was the foundation for the design of the qualitative survey instrument.
### Table 9 Evidence Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Evidence</th>
<th>Aspect and Elements of the Relationship</th>
<th>Organisational Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work in more than one organisational setting</strong></td>
<td>Flexible Employment</td>
<td>Encourage workers to work in other organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of attending &amp; seeking out opportunities to update knowledge &amp; skills</td>
<td>Retraining (Carnoy, 1998; Greene, 2000)</td>
<td>Evidence of HRD policies to continually retrain &amp; update knowledge &amp; skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of being able to learn &amp; take on tasks outside their immediate work areas</td>
<td>Multiskilling (Greene, 2000)</td>
<td>Evidence of a coordinated HRD policy to relocate &amp; train personnel in work outside their normal position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of individuals who have received incentives for flexible work practices</td>
<td>Motivation &amp; incentives (Atkinson, 2000; Greene, 2000)</td>
<td>Evidence of an incentive scheme linked to flexible work practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Serve the customer not your manager</strong></td>
<td>Customer-focus</td>
<td>Insist on an external focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of individuals who have received incentives for customer focus</td>
<td>Provision of reward systems (Berry et. al., 1988; Parasuraman et. al., 1985)</td>
<td>Evidence of an incentive scheme linked to customer focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of attendance at courses to enhance customer service skills</td>
<td>Development of new skills (Homburg et. al., 2000)</td>
<td>Evidence of the provision of customer service training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of role clarity</td>
<td>Overcoming role conflict (Adams, 1976; Bandura, 1977; Chebat &amp; Kollias, 2000; Friedman &amp; Podolny, 1992; Goffman, 1961; Heiss, 1990; Katz &amp; Khan, 1966; Merton, 1968; Rosow, 1974; Secord &amp; Backman, 1974; Singh, 1993; Troyer et. al., 2000; Zurcher, 1967)</td>
<td>Evidence of policies to overcome role conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of the use of adequate resources</td>
<td>Provision of adequate resources (role overload)</td>
<td>Evidence of the provision of adequate resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of utilising CRM system to enhance customer focus</td>
<td>Focus on what you do, not where you work</td>
<td>Focus on Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of team based behaviours</td>
<td>Evidence of team based behaviours</td>
<td>Evidence of team based incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of skill enhancement</td>
<td>Evidence of skill enhancement</td>
<td>Evidence of skill based incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of original and entrepreneurial contributions</td>
<td>Evidence of original and entrepreneurial contributions</td>
<td>Evidence of the provision of compensation incentives for original and entrepreneurial contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept and embrace yourself as a temporary employee</td>
<td>Project-based Work</td>
<td>Focus is short-term and project related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence at the work unit level of deflecting, managing, and protecting against outside pressures and interference</td>
<td>Evidence of activities such as bargaining and negotiation, contracting and cooperation, and alliance and coalition building between work units</td>
<td>Evidence of forecasting, stockpiling, and leveling strategies at the work unit level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of team</td>
<td>Evidence of team</td>
<td>Evidence of work units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Heiss, 1990)  
CRM systems (Blodgett, 2000; Brighton, 2000; Brocklebank, 2000; Ulrich, 2000)  
Team role (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Motowidlo et al., 1997; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Welbourne & Gomez-Mejia, 1995; Welbourne et al., 1998)  
Career (Ledford, 1991; Noe et al., 1994; Welbourne et al., 1998)  
Innovator (Schein, 1980; Welbourne et al., 1998)  
Buffering (Cross et al., 2000; Scott, 1992)  
Spanning (Scott, 1992; Yan & Louis, 1999)  
Bringing up boundaries  
Link rewards and benefits with performance rather than organisational dependency

Accept and embrace yourself as a temporary employee: Evidence at the work unit level of deflecting, managing, and protecting against outside pressures and interference. Evidence of activities such as bargaining and negotiation, contracting and cooperation, and alliance and coalition building between work units. Evidence of team.

Focus on Performance: Evidence of team based behaviours. Evidence of skill enhancement. Evidence of original and entrepreneurial contributions.

Focus is short-term and project related: Evidence of forecasting, stockpiling, and leveling strategies at the work unit level. Evidence of policies and procedures for managing the interdependence of work units. Evidence of work units.
members shaping and applying their skills in the interest of their work group as opposed to the organisation at large (Cross et al., 2000; Yan & Louis, 1999) distinguishing themselves from other units and sharpening its identity in the minds of its members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Find work that is stimulating</th>
<th>Human Spirit and Work</th>
<th>Provide work that is stimulating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence that individuals enjoy good working conditions</td>
<td>Working conditions (Burton &amp; Fairris, 1999; Isaksen, 2000)</td>
<td>Evidence of the provision of good working conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of matching worker interests and job opportunities</td>
<td>Matching worker interests and job opportunities (Burton &amp; Fairris, 1999; Isaksen, 2000; Stiglitz, 1987)</td>
<td>Evidence of HRD policy and procedures that match worker interests and job opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of individual’s attempting to construct meaning from their daily work</td>
<td>Belief in one’s own attempts to construct meaning (Burton &amp; Fairris, 1999; French et. al., 1984; Isaksen, 2000)</td>
<td>Evidence of organisation’s attempt to provide opportunities for workers to construct meaning from their daily work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two survey statements were drafted, one reflecting the accountability of the organisation and one relevant to the individual worker. For example, the first element in the Evidence Guide is *retraining*. From the individual viewpoint, the survey statement sought “evidence of attending and seeking out opportunities to update knowledge and skills”. As a result, the survey statement formulated was: *Employees seek out opportunities to upgrade their job skills*. On the other hand, the statement expressing the element of *retraining* from an organisational responsibility should seek “evidence of HRD policies to continually retrain and update knowledge and skills”. Therefore, the survey statement was expressed as: *The organisation has policies and procedures in place to continually upgrade the job skills of employees*. This survey formed the basis for the MSA analysis.

Once the survey was designed, and before using it to gather data, the researcher conducted several vailidity trials. Two types of pre-tests were applied to enhance the research instruments validity. Validity in this context refers to whether the survey items are actually measuring what they are supposed to measure (Burns, 1996). The survey was exposed to two of the most important pre-tests: content and face validity (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001). Content
validity is concerned with whether the content of the survey statements are representative of the theoretical constructs supporting their usage. To do this, the researcher “reports the origins or pedigree of each of the items, often based on the literature search” (Cavana et. al., 2001, p. 238). The researcher summarised the core elements of each of Noer’s (1997) attributes from the literature review in Chapter 2 in a paragraph and listed the corresponding survey items (see Appendix 2). An electronic copy of this document was then sent to six senior research staff of the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Faculty of Education who had either taken an active interest in the research project or who were considered to be content experts. Three staff responded to the request to peruse each of the statements and their relationship to the related definition. On receiving the feedback, the survey instrument was amended accordingly. The amended survey instrument was then piloted with a group of seven employees of the Gold Coast Arts Centre. The link with this organisation and its reputation in the marketplace as a high performing workplace was considered to be similar to the organisation involved in the research. This group comprised a mix of organisational leaders and organisational members. The participants were requested to read each of the items in the survey and asked to indicate any of the statements that they did not understand and therefore would have trouble answering.

Face validity addresses the concern of whether the items in the survey appear to measure the concepts being investigated (Delahaye, 2000). “Of particular interest is whether the respondents will find the wording of the items clear and understandable” (Delahaye, 2000, p. 208). For example, during the testing, the term cross functional was identified by three of the seven individuals as a term not readily understood. Subsequent amendments to the instrument were made. Other similar feedback was also taken on board and the statements were adjusted accordingly. Finally, the researcher sent an electronic copy of the items to the coordinator of "Soul City" region and the manager of "QNN" at FCL who were invited to check each of the statements and make suggestions on using terminology that would more accurately reflect the organisational culture of FCL. The face validity of the instrument was further enhanced by replacing terms such as management team and customer workers with leadership support team and consultants. Appendix 3 is a copy of the amended 37-item survey instrument following the above mentioned validity checks.
The items were clustered according to the attributes they measured as indicated in Appendix 3. The survey design for collecting MSA data was based on a five-point Likert rating scale (e.g., strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree). There are two basic techniques for MSA rating scales: a multiple-point Likert scale or a paired comparison scale (e.g., a forced choice that behaviour “A” is more/less descriptive of the assesseee’s performance than behaviour “B”) (Guinn, 1996). The Likert scale was initially chosen in this survey design because most researchers rely on some version of the more efficient Likert scaling procedure to measure attitudes (Burns, 1996). Moreover, a Likert survey rating scale provides the researcher with a richer source of data than a paired comparison scale. The results were later aggregated into a three-point scale (i.e., agree, neither, disagree) to suit the constraints of the particular MSA instrument used in this study.

As indicated, a copy of the survey instrument with all five sections can be seen in Appendix 3. The first section is a consent form (QUT, 2001) inviting participants to give their approval to participate in the research project. Section two is a demographic data form to provide the researcher with additional statistical data of the sample. The third section is a brief explanation of the rationale and objectives of the research project in accordance with QUT research guidelines (QUT, 2001). Section four is an instruction sheet on how to complete the survey, and the final section is the survey instrument.

3.5.4 Administering of Survey

The researcher was able to administer the survey personally to all 19 participants. There were distinct advantages in being able to provide the survey to participants personally (Bell, 1987). Such an opportunity allows the researcher to explain the purpose of the survey face-to-face and respond directly and readily to questions, and ensures that the surveys are completed immediately. Consequently, it guaranteed a high percentage of completion since a personal appeal received a more cooperative response than may have been the case with a more impersonal approach (Bell, 1987).

The survey was administered and completed by the Workers at their three shop locations in the morning before the start of the business day. Similarly, the four members of the MidMgt sample met with the researcher at the completion of
one of their operational team meetings to complete the survey. The researcher pre-arranged one-on-one time slots with the four members of the TopMgt sample due to the difficulty of organising a meeting because of the constraints of time.

Once the surveys had been completed by the participants, the researcher entered the data manually via keyboard into the MSA programme. Data was entered for each survey item as Agree, Neither and Disagree. The MSA programme produced a report (see Appendix 5) from which a focus group schema was developed.

3.5.5 MSA Data Analysis

This section explains the particular MSA instrument used and how it can be analysed.

The instrument used in this study provides both graphical and descriptive statistical representation of the degree of congruence between the three organisational perspectives. The descriptive aspect of statistics allows researchers to summarise large quantities of data using measures that are easily understood by an observer. “Descriptive statistics consist of graphical and numerical techniques for summarising data, i.e., reducing a large mass of data to simpler, more understandable terms” (Burns, 1996, p. 42). MSA reporting is a useful vehicle for creating descriptive statistics.

The MSA data analysis method used in this study was the Holistic Imaging Profiling System (HIPSYS) created by Christie (2002). Profiles from the HIPSYS do not explain the reason for congruencies between three perspectives; they merely show the degree of congruence and incongruence. Figure 2 shows the potential outcomes of a HIPSYS profile.
As Figure 2 illustrates, there are seven potential outcomes for each survey item. A represents a view shared exclusively by TopMgt. B represents a view shared exclusively by MidMgt. C represents a view shared exclusively by Workers. D represents a view shared by TopMgt and MidMgt but not Workers. E represents a view shared by MidMgt and Workers but not TopMgt. F represents a view shared by Workers and TopMgt but not MidMgt. G represents a view shared by all three perspectives. It is this congruence (or incongruence) between the three perspectives that served as the focus for developing the schema for the subsequent focus group discussions.

Figure 3 illustrates positive and negative congruence represented by a plus sign (+) for positive and a minus sign (-) for negative. (o) symbolises a polarised response, that is, there is an equivalent number of positive and negative responses to a particular statement.
Within the seven potential outcomes for each survey item, a response can be positive, negative or polarised. In A, B, or C, a positive (+) or negative (-) response indicates that the aggregate reaction of this perspective to a survey item was positive or negative and that this view was not shared by either or both of the other perspectives. More specifically, positive congruence, represented by a plus sign (+), indicates that a majority of respondents agreed with the survey item. Aggregate positive responses in the HIPSYS report signify that the aggregate positive response is more than 25% greater than the aggregate negative response. Negative congruence, represented by a minus sign (-), indicates that the aggregate response was negative, that is, they collectively disagreed with the corresponding survey statement. Aggregate negative responses are recorded in the HIPSYS report where the aggregate negative response is more than 25% greater than the aggregate positive response. While the HIPSYS method identifies where the congruence and incongruence may take place, it does not explain the basis for this accord or discord.

Polarised responses, shown by zeros (o) in Figure 3, are recorded where at least 30% of respondents agreed with a survey statement and at least 30% disagree and the difference between them is less than 25%. A zero (o) in A, B, or C signifies a divergence of opinion exclusive to one perspective, that is, there was a polarising between positive and negative responses and therefore no clear aggregate positive or negative preference. In D, E, and F a positive, negative or
polarised reply was shared by two perspectives. \(G\) represents opinions held by the majority of respondents in all three perspectives.

A \textit{Neither} response is recorded in the HIPSYS report where there is no clear majority between \textit{Agree} and \textit{Disagree} responses to a survey item and insufficient difference to be polarised. \textit{Neither} responses reduce the size of the circle representing that particular perspective. Figure 4 illustrates the effect of \textit{Neither} responses on the radius of the circle representing the \textit{Workers’} perspective (blue circle).

\textbf{Figure 4 \ Effect of Neither Responses}

![Figure 4: Effect of Neither Responses](image)

Figure 4 shows the radius of the \textit{Workers’} (blue circle) is smaller by comparison with the yellow and red circles. Each aggregate \textit{Neither} response reduces the radius of the circle representing that perspective by 10% (Christie, 2002). The HIPSYS report (see Appendix 4) consists of five separate sections matching the five attributes of Noer’s (1997) model. Each section of the report consists of three exhibits which further illustrates the relationship between the three organisational perspectives. These exhibits include a Venn diagram, histogram, and statistical display (Christie, 2002). The first attribute featuring in
the report is *Flexible Employment* and will be used to briefly illustrate the three displays in Figures 5 and 6 and Table 10.

**Figure 5  Illustration of the HIPSYS Venn Diagram**

The Venn diagram in Figure 5 illustrates the degree of congruence between the three perspectives.
In the histogram representation in Figure 6, the blue bar represents the percentage of aggregate *Agree* responses for each perspective. The red bar represents the aggregate *Disagree* responses. *Polarised* are represented as white spaces.
Table 10  Illustration of the HIPSYS Statistical Display

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Flight Centre employees regularly seek out opportunities to complete work assignments outside the scope of the boundaries of their job.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TopMgt</td>
<td><strong>Agree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td><strong>Agree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td><strong>Polarized</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidMgt</td>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeadS</td>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TechS</td>
<td><strong>Polarized</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td><strong>Polarized</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td><strong>Polarized</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Neutral</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Disagree</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistical mode in Table 10 displays the percentage responses for each perspective and the component groups for a particular statement in the survey.

3.5.6  Focus Group Schema

This HIPSYS report formed the basis for the selection of a series of issues to develop a schema for the focus group discussions.

In assembling the schema the researcher was mindful of providing an even-handed depiction of evidence from the HIPSYS report. Therefore, two survey items, one congruent and the other incongruent were selected from each attribute. The congruent items in the schema have the highest positive congruence between TopMgt, MidMgt and Workers. For instance, Table 11 illustrates data with the highest positive congruence under Flexible Employment.
Table 11 Example of High Positive Congruence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q6 Flight Centre employees are generally motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TopMgt</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MidMgt</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three arrows above in Table 11 point to the aggregate responses for the corresponding survey item. Table 11 indicates that 75% of *TopMgt*, 75% of *MidMgt*, and 91% of *Workers* agreed with the corresponding statement. This signifies a high level of positive congruence. The congruent examples selected for discussion in the focus groups were identified by comparing the aggregate results for the three perspectives. Using a comparative analysis, the survey item associated with each attribute resulting in the highest positive congruence (measured by percentage) was selected for the schema. These five items (one selected from each of the five attributes) may indicate preliminary evidence of the applicability of these elements in the case and therefore warrants further investigation.

To counterbalance these five congruent examples in the schema, the researcher selected one incongruent example for each attribute for discussion in the focus group schema. Since the equilibrium between individual and organisational accountabilities is one of the features of Noer’s (1997) model, the researcher wanted to reflect this trait throughout the research design. Accordingly in the survey design, approximately the same number of statements representing each attribute replicated both individual and organisational accountabilities.
Therefore, in terms of selecting issues for the focus group schema, if the congruent example was an individual accountability, the organisational accountability was reflected in the incongruent example. On the other hand, if the congruent example was an organisational accountability, the researcher looked for a matching individual responsibility amongst the incongruent results.

As an illustration, Table 12 displays the incongruent example selected for the attribute of Flexible Employment.

Table 12  Example of Incongruence Between the Three Organisational Perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q7</th>
<th>Flight Centre employees have opportunity to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TopMgt</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidMgt</td>
<td>Polarised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeadS</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TechS</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers: Polarised</td>
<td>Agree : 45% (5/11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>Polarised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Polarised</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 shows that the aggregate result of three perspectives are mixed (TopMgt: Agree: 50%, MidMgt and Workers: Polarised). Apart from illustrating incongruence between the three organisational perspectives, the statement implies an organisational accountability. This organisational accountability juxtaposes the individual accountability implicit in Table 12.

In summary, 10 items were selected from the MSA data for discussion in the focus groups, consisting of two issues per attribute. This design provided equilibrium between attributes, congruence and accountability (see 4.3 Focus Group Schema for further explanation).
3.5.7 Designing & Conducting Focus Groups

The focus group schema (see Table 9) provided the researcher with a framework to discuss each of the five attributes in some detail within the time constraints imposed by meeting with participants during work hours. This schema provided the researcher with an opportunity to probe deeper and understand how the three different groups in the sample perceived Noer’s (1997) attributes and how they may be operationalised in FCL.

In terms of focus group design, the conventional wisdom in the literature about the frequency, composition and size of focus groups suggests a need to balance practical considerations in the field. Scholars stress that the number of sessions should be governed by the aims of the research project and the resources available (Kitzinger, 1995; Morgan, 1992; 1997; Powell & Single, 1996). However, beyond endeavouring to run the number of sessions compatible with the goals of the research, the ideal number of groups will also be governed by the information learned in each session (Morgan, 1997). However in practice, constraints of time, budget, and availability of participants affects the frequency of sessions. To balance the ideal of rational design with the practical contemplation, Morgan (1997) suggests planning for a logical number of groups when formulating the study and trying to build in some room for flexibility if more meetings are needed. Four focus group sessions were planned and carried out which provided the researcher with sufficient data to make inferences about the nature of congruence between the three organisational perspectives on several employment relationship issues.

The size of the focus groups conducted ranged from eight (team members) to three (team leaders). There are conflicting views in the focus group literature on the ideal size for a focus group. For instance, Morgan (1992) and Powell and Single (1996) advocate the best range to be between six and 10 participants. Jennings (1997) on the other hand identifies the optimal size as between four and 12. The more significant matter for this research project in this regard was the difficulty of recruiting available and willing participants. This consideration therefore had the biggest influence on the ultimate size of the focus group meetings. The group size for this study was mostly within the range prescribed by Powell and Single (1996) and Jennings (1997) and also met the practical considerations of recruiting participants.

In terms of composition, a widely accepted guideline for focus groups is that
participants are ideally “homogeneous strangers” (Morgan, 1992, p. 186; Powell & Single, 1996; Stevens, 1996). The rationale for homogeneity follows from the idea that members will feel most comfortable with others whom they perceive to be like themselves (Morgan, 1992; Powell & Single, 1996). Further, researchers have posited that if members share common traits, it is more likely that the views expressed in the group are a purer expression of the beliefs of the members of a particular subgroup (Morgan).

In keeping with this design principle, the researcher met separately with the TopMgt, MidMgt, and Workers groups. Moreover, the researcher decided to break up the Workers’ sample into two separate focus groups. Team members formed one sub-group and team leaders met with the researcher in another focus group discussion. This homogeneous design consideration made it easier for team members to discuss the issues without the presence of their team leaders. Similarly, a separate meeting of team leaders provided them with the freedom to express themselves in the absence of their team members.

This study adopted a structured approach in the interviews. The researcher asking a series of preset questions based on the focus group schema and inviting all participants to respond. This decision of using a structured approach was based on the research objective, the practical limitations of organising numerous focus group sessions and the literature on focus group research methodology. Since the objective required evidence of congruent perspectives from three organisational strata, it was important to maintain a structured and consistent approach for each focus group discussion. To do this, the researcher used the same schema for each group, allocating equal time to each of the 10 issues. Extensive discussion generated during the focus group sessions provided a rich source of data and consequently did not warrant the need for additional sessions beyond those planned.

The process of orienting focus group participants followed a specific format. Research subjects were invited to take part in a one hour meeting. The researcher provided a friendly introductory environment over tea and coffee. Here, participants were encouraged to mingle informally to create a favourable atmosphere. Participants were then called around a table in a private room by the researcher who also acted as the moderator. Appreciation was extended to all participants for attending and the purpose of the meeting was explained once more. A set of guiding principles was
outlined by the researcher. Reassurances about guarantees of confidentiality were reiterated in accordance with QUT’s research ethics considerations (QUT, 2001). Each participant was given a number and asked to announce that number before making a contribution as a way of protecting their confidentiality. Any initial anxieties or questions about the proceedings were invited and discussed to resolve them. The researcher provided all the meeting members with an agenda which was the focus group schema (see Table 16, Chapter 4) and explained the meaning of the column headings.

To facilitate a free flowing discussion between the researcher and participants for each agenda item, the researcher asked open-ended questions to and between participants. Open-ended questions provided the participants with a free range and scope of possible answers despite the possibility that the recipient of the question may have only one point to make (Delahaye, 2000). Delahaye (2000) advocates the use of what he terms “stem-plus-query design” as a way of providing the subject of the investigation early in the question followed by the open-ended question. “This allows the interviewee to start focusing his or her attention on the topic” (p. 170). This requires a high level of facilitation skill which the researcher had developed through his 20 years of experience facilitating group processes.

Special care was taken to avoid three potential problems typically experienced when working with groups: First, the possible domination of the group by one person or a small coalition of participants; secondly, the reluctance of some individuals to speak at all; and thirdly, the need to ensure that the entire group has an opportunity to air their views without overly restricting the discussion to a preconceived agenda (Merton, Fiske & Kendall, 1956). The researcher addressed these potential challenges by establishing a set of guiding principles to cover contributions in the focus groups. The guiding principles are more likely to be accepted by the participants, and therefore adhered to, if they come from the participants themselves. At the outset of each meeting, the researcher facilitated a process whereby participants were encouraged to consider and volunteer a series of guiding discussion principles for managing and facilitating the focus group sessions. The principles were similar for each session and included such values as “respecting others’ opinions”, “feeling free to speak your mind”, and “giving everyone a chance to express an opinion”. This procedure took a few minutes and these ground rules were recorded on chart paper
and in full view of all participants throughout the session. The guiding principles raised by participants complemented the structured interview protocol by reinforcing values such as equality of opportunity, involvement, and freedom of expression. These values assisted the researcher in overcoming the challenges raised by Merton et al (1956). While not completely eliminating the tribulations of focus group interviews, the set of guiding principles assisted the researcher to improve the quality and flow of information in each meeting.

During the course of the focus group interviews, the discussion typically is tape recorded (Berg, 1995). Each group was asked by the researcher for their permission to record the proceedings in accordance with QUT’s guidelines on protecting research participants’ confidentiality and privacy. No objections were raised. Therefore each session was tape recorded on separate cassettes for transcription. The transcriptions provided the data set for analysis of the focus group sessions.

3.5.8 Focus Group Content Analysis

Once the tape recordings of the focus groups were transcribed, the analysis was carried out with the assistance of NUD*IST Vivo software. The researcher used content analysis strategies to analyse the transcripts from the focus group sessions. At its most fundamental level, content analysis is the process of identifying, coding and categorising the primary patterns in the data (Patton, 1990). Content analysis is used to make inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages (Holsti, 1969). Inclusion or exclusion of content is done according to an applied criterion of selection; this requirement eliminates analysis in which only material supporting the researcher’s hypotheses are examined (Berg, 1995). It is a suitable and widely used research method for analysing the transcripts from the focus group interviews. Singleton et al. (1993) outline a process for carrying out content analysis of textual data: first, selection and definition of content categories; second, defining the unit of analysis; third, deciding on a system of enumeration; and finally, carrying out the analysis. The data analysis of the focus group interviews draws on Singleton et al.’s. (1993) four step process.

In qualitative studies, the categories researchers use can be determined deductively, inductively, or by some combination of both (Strauss, 1987). In
keeping with the above research design and the philosophy of constructivism, the researcher adopted a combined approach of deductive and inductive analysis. In a deductive approach, researchers use some categorical scheme suggested by a theoretical perspective, and the transcripts provide a means for assessing the hypothesis (Berg, 1995). The selection of deductive content categories was based on the five attributes of Noer’s (1997) model and analysed from the dual perspective of individual and organisation. Abrahamson (1983) indicates that an inductive approach begins with the researchers “immersing” themselves in the transcripts (i.e., the various messages) in order to identify the dimensions or themes that seem meaningful to the producers of each message (p. 286). The researcher read the transcripts of each focus group several times looking for similar concepts. For example, “linkage between learning and development activities and job skills” was a subject raised several times when discussing the attribute of Flexible Employment.

The selection and definition of deductive content categories applied to the transcripts came from issues related to the attributes of Flexible Employment, Customer-focus, Focus on Performance, Project-based Work and Human Spirit & Work. As Singleton et al., (1993) point out, the reliability and overall value of the content analysis depends on the clear formulation of content categories and of definitions or rules for assigning units to categories. The strict adherence to the schema in all the focus group sessions provided a sequential structure to match data from the transcripts to the attributes of Noer’s (1997) model.

As well as analysing the transcripts using structured theoretical categories, emerging themes were also investigated. As Miles and Huberman (1983) state, “coding is not something one does to get data ready for analysis, but something that drives ongoing data collection. It is, in short, a form of continuous analysis” (p. 63). The search for emerging themes from the data was to gain further insight into the psychological contract and its application in an organisational setting. Moreover, since the research objective is concerned with identifying the core attributes of the new employment relationship, the data may reveal other attributes not explicit in Noer’s (1997) model. Inductive categories may be formulated from the researcher’s extensive experience in the area and exposure to the social phenomenon under investigation. More specifically, emerging themes were explored drawing on the researcher’s personal experience,
scholarly experience (having read about it), and previous research undertakings. Researchers draw on these experiences in order to propose tentative comparisons that assist in creating various deductions (Berg, 1995). Using this approach, supported by Berg (1995), Glaser and Strauss (1967), and Merton (1968), the researcher attempted on the one hand to apply a theoretical model to the data analysis and on the other hand, to refine the theoretical model from insights and inferences gained from the data itself.

The analytical method for discovering emerging themes in the transcripts was based on using a “constant comparative analysis” (as described by Morse & Field, 1996) between the organisational (TopMgt) and individual (Workers) perspectives. The researcher read through the transcripts looking for work-based illustrations of elements of Noer’s (1997) model and compared these examples across perspectives. These themes could show a possible link between Noer’s concepts and their application in the case. Once these workplace illustrations supporting or rejecting the application of Noer’s model were identified, the researcher looked for similar viewpoints in the transcripts from other perspectives.

Using this approach, three comparative analytical outcomes were possible from transcript data: 1) congruence, that is, evidence shared by both the organisational and individual perspectives that a theoretical element may or may not have practical application in the case; 2) incongruence, that is, conflicting perspectives between these two organisational entities about the application of an element in the case; and 3) no supporting evidence from one of the perspectives to validate the element in the case. The role of the third perspective (MidMgt) was used to reconcile the individual (Worker) and organisational perspectives (TopMgt). In other words, the MidMgt perspective was used as an additional source of verification in each of the three analytical scenarios. Emerging themes were formed from the transcripts by comparing data from the individual and organisational perspectives and using the MidMgt perspective as additional evidence.

The system of enumeration used in this analysis was frequency counts. In content analysis, frequency quantification is the most used system of enumeration for quantifying the data. Singleton et al. (1993) points out that frequency measures are based on two crucial assumptions. First, it is assumed that the frequency of a contribution is a valid indicator of its importance, value, or intensity. Second, it is
assumed that each individual count is of equal importance, value, or intensity. Since the aim of the content analysis is to identify workplace illustrations to support or reject a theoretical model, the number of times an applicable workplace example is recorded from both an individual and organisational perspective, the more likely it is significant to the analysis. Whilst each contribution in isolation may not be of equal worth, the source of the contribution needs to be considered in assessing its value. Therefore, in conjunction with the above two assumptions, the comparative analysis between the individual and organisational perspectives is crucial in answering the research objective. Regularity and consistency of viewpoints may provide evidence of the relevance of deductive themes and their application to the case. Similarly, the criterion of frequency was applied to the analysis of inductive themes.

3.5.9 Ethical Considerations

Before conducting the field research, approval from the University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC) was obtained. The researcher submitted a request for ethical clearance in accordance with QUT’s guidelines to the UHREC for consideration. Confirmation that this research project was exempt from full ethical clearance was granted by the UHREC on 4 December, 2002 (see Appendix 5).

Since the process started with participants’ existing interpretations and works toward increased information and sophistication in their constructions as well as in the researcher’s construction, ethical considerations are intrinsic (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Despite the exemption granted from UHREC, the close personal interactions required by the choice of methodology may produce challenging problems of confidentiality and anonymity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Therefore the study sought informed consent of participants and particular attention was paid to the ethical treatment of participants and all data collected, particularly regarding the threat of invasion of privacy.

The researcher observed QUT’s guidelines for conducting research, particularly with regard for considerations of confidentiality (QUT, 2001). This was achieved by the researcher taking several specific steps. For example, in analysing and displaying data results, the researcher ensured anonymity of participants by coding their work. However, in reality the participants were
known to the researcher by sight and name. Therefore, anonymity in the literal sense, that is, participants remaining nameless, was not possible. To compensate for this, it is important to provide subjects with a high degree of trust and confidentiality (Berg, 1995). “The major safeguard to place against the invasion of privacy is the assurance of confidentiality” (Punch, 1998, p. 175). Confidentiality involves a clear understanding between the researcher and participants concerning the use to be made of the data provided (Burns, 1996). Moreover, “confidentiality is an active attempt to remove from the research records any elements that might indicate the subjects’ identities” (Berg, 1995, p. 213). The researcher therefore built into the design a number of strategies to guarantee confidentiality of participant responses.

As previously discussed, QUT guidelines were followed rigorously to protect confidentiality by having research participants sign a consent form to take part in the study and not requiring them to submit their name with the survey they each completed. In addition, it was explained by the researcher to participants, prior to the beginning of each focus group session, that audio taping is a convenient way to accurately remember what they had to say. Participants were then asked individually to give oral permission to be audio-taped. The transcripts from the focus group sessions were recorded using a coding system. Consequently, any written and oral responses in this research project were recorded anonymously and were retained exclusively by the researcher.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the important considerations and issues associated with the methodological approach and analysis of data practices for this study have been identified and discussed. Using a constructivist approach, the researcher adopted a case study design in response to the research questions. As part of the case study design, MSA and focus group interviews were justified as appropriate data collection methods. A stratified sample design incorporated 19 research participants from three organisational perspectives – TopMgt, MidMgt and Workforce from FCL, an Australian-based international travel retailer. Data from the qualitative survey instrument was analysed using the HIPSYS, a MSA instrument. The HIPSYS was applied to the survey data to identify the degree of
congruence between the three organisational perspectives. These patterns of congruence provided the researcher with a useful schema to inform a series of focus group meetings. The focus groups, structured to replicate the three organisational perspectives, were intended to provide a more comprehensive insight into the basis of congruence or incongruence between the multi-source perspectives. Congruence between the individual and organisational perspective would suggest that elements of Noer's (1997) model may have application in the organisational case. Transcripts from the focus group meetings were subject to content analysis strategies and the results are thematically organised in structured and emerging content categories in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the research findings from the case study. The research findings are presented in three sequential sections that link with three steps in the research design and procedure (see Figure 1). These corresponding sections include: MSA Data Analysis (4.2), Focus Group Schema (4.3), and Focus Group Content Analysis (4.4). In Section 4.2, data from the HIPSYS report is presented in histogram, Venn diagram and aggregate statistical representations. In Section 4.3, the focus group schema formulated from the HIPSYS data are exhibited and explained. In Section 4.4, a précis of the focus group transcripts is organised around the five attributes of Noer’s (1997) model. The explicit themes of Flexible Employment; Customer-focus; Focus on Performance; Project-based Work; and Human Spirit & Work provide the primary structure for analysing the content from the transcripts. Summaries of the transcripts for each of these explicit themes were broken into several implicit themes. These implicit themes were formulated by comparing concepts from two or more organisational perspectives. The summary of the research findings in Section 4.4 are presented by comparing organisational perspectives for each of these implicit themes. A comparative analysis may shed further light on the relevance of Noer’s attributes in this organisational case. In addition to these explicit and implicit themes, three emerging themes that transcend Noer’s (1997) five attributes are cited and discussed at the conclusion of this chapter. These emerging themes may provide some evidence of other core attributes of the new employment relationship not addressed in Noer’s original model and are discussed in more detail in the Chapter 5.

4.2 MSA Data Analysis

This first section of the research findings presents four displays of summarised data from the full HIPSYS report which can be found in Appendix 4. Figure 7 is a histogram representation of the MSA data. Figure 8 is the Venn diagram representation of the MSA data. Table 13 is the aggregate statistical
representation of the examples chosen for the focus group schema. Table 14 shows the individual and organisational accountabilities contained in the examples chosen for the focus group schema. The purpose and relevance of each table is discussed.

Figure 7 displays in histogram form the percentage of Agree, Disagree, Neither, and Polarised responses for each of the five attributes along with a summary of all five attributes.
Figure 7  Histogram Representations

Flexible Employment

Customer Focus

Focus on Performance

Project-based Work

Human Spirit and Work

SUMMARY

Legend: Disagree  Polarized  Agree  Neither
The six histograms in Figure 7 illustrate the aggregate percentage of \textit{Agree} (blue bars), \textit{Disagree} (red bars) and \textit{Neither} (black bar) responses for each attribute by the three organisational perspectives. Each of the histograms is constructed on the basis of the aggregate result for each attribute. The summary histogram (bottom right-hand corner) shows the overall results of the survey incorporating all attributes by the three organisational perspectives. These histograms are useful for two reasons. Firstly, they provide an illustrative overview of \textit{Agree}/\textit{Disagree} ratio for each attribute. For instance, more \textit{Agree} responses were recorded for all three organisational perspectives in all attributes. Secondly, the displays illustrate the degree of congruence between the three organisational perspectives for each attribute. For instance, the display illustrates the least congruent response were recorded in attributes of \textit{Focus on Performance} and \textit{Project-based Work}. This figure serves as a useful starting point in summarising the MSA data. Moreover, it provides the researcher with an overview of the degree of congruence between the three perspectives across the five attributes.

Figure 8 is the Venn diagram representations of the five attributes and summary illustrating congruence between the three perspectives.
**Figure 8  Venn Diagram Representations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flexible Employment</th>
<th>Customer-focus</th>
<th>Focus on Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: TopMgt, MidMgt, Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project-based Work</th>
<th>Human Spirit and Work</th>
<th>SUMMARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: TopMgt, MidMgt, Workers
The display in Figure 8 further illustrates the high positive congruence between the three organisational perspectives. For instance, the survey summary display (bottom right-hand corner) demonstrates that of the 37 items in the survey, there was aggregate agreement on 19 items (51 percent) from the three perspectives as shown by the plus (+) signs in the intersecting space between the three perspectives (white area). More specifically, Flexible Employment is the attribute that recorded the highest positive congruence. Five of the seven survey responses (71 percent) in this attribute were recorded as plus (+) signs in the intersecting area of the three perspectives. On the other hand, the least congruent attributes were Focus on Performance and Project-based Work as illustrated in the histogram representation (Figure 7). The Venn diagram representations for these two attributes more specifically illustrate this incongruence. For instance, there are more Agree (+) and Disagree (-) responses contained within the red (TopMgt) and yellow (MidMgt) spaces than in the intersecting white spaces. Symbols confined to the red, yellow and blue spaces indicate responses not shared by the other two perspectives. The Venn diagram representation illustrates the specific nature of congruence between the three organisational perspectives.

Table 13 presents the 10 items selected for further investigation through the focus groups. These 10 items formed the schema for the focus group interviews. The aggregate percentage of responses for each of the three organisational perspectives is noted against the item of the schema.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Aggregate Congruent Responses</th>
<th>Aggregate Incongruence Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flexible Employment</strong></td>
<td>Q6 Flight Centre employees are generally motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills.</td>
<td>Q7 Flight Centre employees have opportunities to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                               | *TopMgt: Agree: 75%*  
*MidMgt: Agree: 75%*  
*Workers: Agree: 100%* | *TopMgt: Agree: 50%*  
*MidMgt: Polarisised*  
*Workers: Polarisised* |
| **Customer-focus**            | Q17 Sales consultants use available customer and product information to service the needs of their customers. | Q15 All the support teams provide the shop teams with guidelines to avoid conflict between meeting customer wants and what Flight Centre can provide. |
|                               | *TopMgt: Agree: 75%*  
*MidMgt: Agree: 75%*  
*Workers: Agree: 100%* | **TopMgt: Disagree: 75%*  
*MidMgt: Agree: 50%*  
*Workers: Agree: 55%* |
| **Focus on Performance**      | Q21 Flight Centre employees recognise that good teamwork is common practice in this organisation. | Q24 Flight Centre employees are rewarded for suggesting new and improved ways for the business to be more efficient and effective |
|                               | *TopMgt: Agree: 100%*  
*MidMgt: Agree: 100%*  
*Workers: Agree: 91%* | **TopMgt: Agree: 75%*  
*MidMgt: Disagree: 50%*  
*Workers: Neither* |
| **Project-based Work**        | Q29 All support teams encourage the shop teams to seek out advice and resources on a needs basis. | Q26 The shop teams are self-sufficient in forecasting new business and managing their own technical and human resources. |
|                               | *TopMgt: Agree: 100%*  
*MidMgt: Agree: 75%*  
*Workers: Agree: 100%* | **TopMgt: Agree: 75%*  
*MidMgt: Disagree: 50%*  
*Workers: Neither* |
| **Human Spirit & Work**       | Q36 Most Flight Centre employees find their work meaningful.                                      | Q33 All the support teams make it a priority to provide Flight Centre employees with good working conditions. |
|                               | *TopMgt: Agree: 75%*  
*MidMgt: Agree: 100%*  
*Workers: Agree: 100%* | **TopMgt: Neither**  
*MidMgt: Agree: 100%*  
*Workers: Agree: 82%* |
The display in Table 13 shows that the selection of items for the focus group schema was based on balancing congruent and incongruent survey results. For instance, the responses to the five items on the left (Q 6, 17, 21, 29 and 36) display the highest positive congruence in percentage terms for their respective attributes. In contrast, the five items on the right (Q 7, 15, 24, 26, and 33) are illustrative of incongruent responses for the corresponding attribute. The items were selected based on the criteria outlined in Section 3.5.6.

Table 14, the final MSA display, categorises the 10 items in Table 13 according to whether they are individual or organisational accountabilities. The items on the left are primarily representative of individual accountabilities and the items on the right are primarily representative of organisational accountabilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Individual Accountabilities</th>
<th>Organisational Accountabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible Employment</td>
<td>Q6 Flight Centre employees are generally motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills.</td>
<td>Q7 Flight Centre employees have opportunities to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q17 Sales consultants use available customer and product information to service the needs of their customers.</td>
<td>Q15 All the support teams provide the shop teams with guidelines to avoid conflict between meeting customer wants and what Flight Centre can provide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer-focus</td>
<td>Q21 Flight Centre employees recognise that good teamwork is common practice in this organisation.</td>
<td>Q24 Flight Centre employees are rewarded for suggesting new and improved ways for the business to be more efficient and effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Performance</td>
<td>Q26 The shop teams are self-sufficient in forecasting new business and managing their own technical and human resources.</td>
<td>Q29 All support teams encourage the shop teams to seek out advice and resources on a needs basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project-based Work</td>
<td>Q36 Most Flight Centre employees find their work meaningful.</td>
<td>Q33 All the support teams make it a priority to provide Flight Centre employees with good working conditions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The display in Table 14 shows that for each attribute there is a matching accountability contained in each survey item for individual and organisation. This display demonstrates that apart from an even distribution of items for each attribute and a balance between congruent and incongruent responses, there is symmetry between the individual and organisational accountabilities for the schema.

4.3 Focus Group Schema

This section presents the focus group schema used to guide the focus group discussions. Table 15 is the schema used for the focus group interviews. Each column of the schema is discussed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue No</th>
<th>Survey Item No</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Congruence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td><em>Flexible Employment</em></td>
<td>The motivational levels of employees to upgrade and expand their job skills.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Congruent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>The opportunity for employees to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills.</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Incongruent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td><em>Customer-focus</em></td>
<td>The support for customer workers to managing conflict between customer expectations and organisational capacity.</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Incongruent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>The use by customer workers of available customer and product information to service the needs of their customers.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Congruent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td><em>Focus on Performance</em></td>
<td>The recognition by employees that good teamwork is common practice.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Congruent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>The implementation of a reward system for employees who contribute new and innovative ways to make the organisation more effective and efficient.</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Incongruent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td><em>Project-based Work</em></td>
<td>The self-sufficiency of work teams to forecast new business and manage their technical and human resources.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Incongruent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>The encouragement to teams to seek out advice and resources on a needs basis.</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Congruent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td><em>Human Spirit &amp; Work</em></td>
<td>The commitment to provide good working conditions for employees</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Incongruent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td>The employees find meaning in their work.</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Congruent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Issue Number column indicates the order in which the discussions in the focus groups were structured and the order in which these issues are discussed in the content analysis. Survey Item Number refers to the issue’s corresponding item number in the HIPSYS report. Each of Noer’s (1997) attributes is represented under the Attribute column. The Issue column reflected the subject matter couched in the corresponding survey item. For example, the first issue in the schema linked to the Flexible Employment attribute: The motivational levels of employees to upgrade and expand their job skills, was reflective of Q6 from the survey: Flight Centre employees are generally motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills. Accountability refers to the organisational entity primarily responsible for ensuring the corresponding issue is applied in the organisational setting while Congruence refers to the relative degree of similarity between the three organisational perspectives from the MSA analysis. This schema provided an appropriate mix of structure and balance to the focus group discussions.

The third and final part of this chapter summarises the transcripts derived from this focus group schema.

4.4 Focus Group Content Analysis

The principal organising structure for the following transcript précis was based on the categories reflecting the five explicit themes of Noer’s (1997) model. Under each attribute, the two corresponding issues are identified and each issue item is subsequently broken into several implicit themes. Following the naming of each implicit theme are samples from the transcripts exemplifying, in most cases, at least two organisational perspectives about that issue. Direct quotes from the transcripts of all three perspectives cite the participant number, for example (P.2), and their respective focus group session. Transcripts from TopMgt comprise the organisational perspective, signified in the following analysis as (O). The individual perspective (I) comprise the Worker perspective, inclusive of the team leader and team member focus groups. As previously discussed, transcripts from the MidMgt focus group will be included where appropriate as a separate viewpoint to provide some moderation between the individual (I) and organisational (O) perspectives.
4.4.1 Attribute - Flexible Employment

**Issue 1 - The motivational levels of employees to upgrade and expand their job skills.**

Five predominant themes emerged from the discussion about this issue of the motivational levels of employees to upgrade their job skills. These themes included: 1) a recruitment and selection process; 2) strong learning and development culture; 3) the nature of the work; and 4) linkage between learning and development activities and job skills. Some participants made the 5) distinction between upgrading and expanding job skills which was considered as the fifth theme.

1) *Recruitment and Selection Process*

There was some agreement between (I) and *(MidMgt)* perspectives that one of the factors contributing to perceived high motivational levels amongst employees to upgrade and expand their job skills was attributable to the organisation’s recruitment and selection process.

A participant from the team member focus group stated that:

*There’s a strong culture in Flight Centre in terms of who they employ. I think that this cultural focus is a very big motivational level among the employees* (P.2).

*(MidMgt)* One participant supported this perception, pointing out that

*I think we employ people who are motivated to expand their skills and certainly to progress* (P. 2).

(O) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

2) *Strong Learning and Development Culture*

There was a perception from both (I) and *(MidMgt)* perspectives that FCL has a strong learning and development culture.

(I) For example, a participant from the team leader focus group stated that

*We have our monthly meetings, team leader meetings and then we go and do training sessions, information sharing so it’s just part of the culture* (P. 3).

*(MidMgt)* Another participant stated:

*I think that the culture is one of looking for promotion and we encourage brightness of future, which means that they [workers] are wanting to move into more challenging roles which means they have to work at upgrading their level of, their skill level* (P. 1).
3) The Nature of the Work

There was a perception that high motivational levels were also due to the constant need to upgrade skill levels in the travel industry from both the (O) and (I) perspectives.

(O) One participant explained this imperative:

*I think that one of the reasons that everyone is highly motivated to get further skilled is the job’s demand that they continue to grow, to survive or to make a good or better income they need to keep their skills up* (P. 2).

(I) A team member explicated that the motivational levels to upgrade and expand their job skills was largely due to the multi-faceted nature of the work in the retail environment:

*I think that we’re not just doing the one job role, it’s not just consulting whereas we’re sort of about ownership of a business role, so it is such a diverse range of things that we do so we’re definitely expanding, I mean we’re not just sort of selling holidays or whatever, it’s that whole accounting side of, it sort of the entire business* (P. 5).

(MidMgt) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

4) Linkage Between Learning and Development Activities and Job Skill.

Another factor contributing to the perceived high motivational skills amongst FCL employees was the direct relationship between learning and development activities and necessary job skills. This view was shared by the (O) and (I) perspectives.

(O) One participant explained the direct linkage between upgrading and expanding job skills and job performance:

*In my team I make part of their KPI’s [Key Performance Indicators] that they must keep their skills up or improve their skills. It’s their [workers] own responsibility to track down the courses they need to do and it’s the part of a KPI on a monthly basis to report back as to what skills they think they need and what they’ve done about improving them* (P. 2).

(I) One team member pointed out the connection between upgrading and expanding job skills with earning potential as a basis for motivation.

*The nature of our job is always changing and there’s always new things coming out and at the end of the day we’re all in it for money, and if we don’t keep on top*
of things and learn we’re not going to make the money, so, I think because of this it is one of the main reasons that we strive to, keep upgrading (P. 3).

(MidMgt) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

5) The Distinction between Upgrading and Expanding Job Skills

While there was a perceived high motivation level to upgrade job skills, expanding individual skills beyond their current role was considered by some participants to be a different issue.

(O) For instance, one manager pointed out that, *for me upgrade is something which they [workers] would be doing within their own job environment now, [on the other hand] expanding their job skills would be something that would [occur] outside their current job sphere, that is, some sort of leadership program or personal development course to further expand their horizons. So I saw it in a double edge sort of scenario* (P. 2).

(I & MidMgt) This distinction was not mentioned by the other organisational perspectives.

**Issue 2 - The opportunity for employees to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills**

Three predominant themes from the transcripts illustrate some of the conflicting perceptions of whether individuals have the opportunity to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills. These included: 1) rotation and sampling of different jobs occurred in the shop environment; 2) limited scope to rotate and sample job roles beyond the shop environment; and 3) the mutual benefits of rotating and sampling job roles for the organisation and the individual.

1) *Rotation and Sampling of Job Tasks at the Store Level*

At the retail store level, individuals are given the opportunity and expected to rotate and sample all the tasks and responsibilities involved in running the business.

(I) From the individual perspective, a team leader pointed out that within store, *I think there’s lots of opportunities [to rotate and sample job roles] right from day one, the consultants do all the different jobs, learn all the different things that need to be done so that eventually they get trained up to team leader level. So they learn about the auditing side, they learn about the selling side and they learn back office systems, everything* (P.3).
There was agreement from the MidMgt that the store level workers were expected to rotate and sample all the different facets of running the business. For instance, one participant summed up this view:

*When you’re in a store you do every aspect of that job, you’re not really rotating to a different job but if you look at positions we’re all in we never move around [the company]. We stay in that same role* (P.1).

This comment suggests that beyond the store level there is little encouragement to rotate and sample different organisational roles.

(O) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

2) Limited Scope to Rotate and Sample Job Roles Beyond the Shop Environment

There was congruence between organisational and individual perspectives that the organisation did not encourage, and even discouraged migration beyond the store level of the business.

(I) For instance, one team member told of their experience in wanting to sample jobs in other parts of the organisation:

*I think there’s a lot of talk and very little action. I’ve actually asked to do this [rotate and sample jobs in other parts of the business] because I may not necessarily want to be a consultant I think that [lack of job rotation] has a lot to do with the high turnover. A lot of people come to the company, they consult but it’s not for them but they don’t have the opportunity to see what else the company has to offer and they leave rather than maybe going and experience [sic] a different area of the company and finding that’s the area for them and staying within the company, so I mean, there’s talk but no action* (P.3).

This observation implies there may be a causal relationship between the opportunities for job rotation and employee turnover.

From the organisational perspective, there are structural constraints that discourage workers from rotating and sampling different jobs within the organisation. FCL imposes a transfer fee on workers wanting to move from stores, regions or divisions within the company. Many of the research participants commented on this transfer fee being a primary reason for the lack of flexibility in rotating and sampling new roles within the organisation. Moreover, this transfer fee discourages employees from applying for jobs in other parts of the organisation.

(O) For instance, one senior manager commented that,
I had somebody from my team wanting to move into a different role and we were told if we weren’t to charge [a transfer fee] that she wouldn’t get the job so if we had a transfer fee they wouldn’t take her even though she was the best person for the job (P.1).

Although this fee can be negotiated between teams it appears to be an impediment to flexible employment practices. The same TopMgt participant illustrated the difficulty of working around this transfer fee:

I’ve paid it once in the last twelve months and I really can’t afford to pay it as a team the second time. And I have to say, my answer [to the barrier of the transfer fee] is go back to your area or team leader and if you can negotiate no fee or little fee then we will look at you, other than that I can’t really afford to.

(I) From the individual perspective, one team leader summed up this dilemma:

If you considered moving to a different area, you’re treated almost like [the organisation is] not as interested in that because they want you, they want the benefit of you, not for the whole company (P.1).

(MidMgt) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

3) The Mutual Benefits of Rotating and Sampling Job Roles for the Organisation and the Individual

All the same, several participants from the individual perspective acknowledged the value in rotating and sampling job roles beyond the store environment.

(I) For instance, one team member pointed out the worth of broadening the perspective of individuals:

obviously not everyone would want to [rotate and sample job roles beyond the store environment] but it would be valuable if we were able to have a bit of a look at what’s going on, even in different stores or a different brand of the business (P. 4).

Similarly, another team member commented:

I think that would be very valuable so that we could understand exactly how all of that stuff works whether it’s, spend a day, or spend an hour with payroll or an hour with finance or whoever, or even in a support [role] (P. 2).

These comments suggest that some workers see some value in FCL overcoming the constraints of rotating and sampling jobs outside the store environment.
Moreover, from the individual perspective, some workers remarked on mutual benefits for the organisation and individual in learning and familiarising themselves with roles outside the store setting. As one team member participant pointed out, an organisational process that provides opportunities to rotate and sample jobs beyond the store environment should be implemented not necessarily just for the people who are looking to go into area leader roles or managerial roles, but even from the grass roots type stuff (P. 4). There were mixed signals to individuals about the issue of rotating and sampling jobs within the organisation. On the one hand, individuals are encouraged and supported to develop and expand their job skills within the store environment. However, on the other hand, workers are impeded from moving around the organisation and sampling a variety of different jobs. (O) As a senior manager explained, from an organisational perspective, if you want to move on [take another position within the organisation] that’s great but we would love to keep you [in your current role] so I think that it might be out there that you can’t really move [sample and rotate] too much (P.1). (MidMgt) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

In summary, there was congruence between the organisational and individual perspectives that employees are generally motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills. A number of factors contribute to this perceived high level of motivation. However, despite the fact that workers rotate and sample job roles within the store environment there are organisational impediments restricting the opportunity for workers to move to positions outside the store environment.

4.4.2 Attribute - Customer-focus

Issue 3 - The support for customer workers to manage conflict between customer expectations and organisational capacity.

There were several factors underpinning the incongruence between the three organisational perspectives on the issue of whether the organisation provides adequate support for workers to manage conflict between customer expectations and company capacities. These factors included: 1) FCL support measures to manage conflict; 2) conflicting priorities for customer workers; 3) external challenges for customer workers; 4) customer-focussed support conceptualises as
a two-way communication process; and 5) support conceptualised as emotional as well as systemic.

1) **FCL Support Measures to Manage Conflict**

Participants cited several organisational support measures to overcome discord between customer hopes and organisational capacity. Those identified from the transcripts included organisational processes and procedures, airfare coordinators, buddy systems, and team communication meetings. Yet some participants mentioned a range of internal and external factors that mitigated against these organisational support initiatives. More specifically, there was some that indicated the discord between the availability and ease of use of organisational support measures.

*(MidMgt)* According to one participant, there’s a set procedure that they [travel consultants] follow before they’re supposed to promise anything to the client (P. 4).

FCL does provide customer workers with training to access customer information. *(I)* For instance, from the individual perspective, one team leader stated that there [are] certain ways to find [customer information] and I think, that’s a big part of our training at the beginning for new consultants (P. 1).

Despite this, a team member complained that support procedures were not necessarily readily accessible in our own computers which can make a little bit of extra work for us (P. 4).

*(O)* No comments were recorded from this perspective.

2) **Conflicting Priorities for Customer Workers**

There was some evidence to indicate that there were differing perceptions about whether the customer or the organisation should be given priority in certain situations.

*(MidMgt)* For instance, one participant’s perception was that customer workers always choose the side of the customer (P.1).

This participant claimed that it was management’s responsibility to support workers in maintaining customer-focus, that is, our goal here is to keep them as a customer so we will do what we need to do there.

*(I)* However, a team member gave a different account of customer work:
we can’t just constantly be giving, because we’re not going to get any other bookings which of course lose money for the company even more (P. 7).

These extracts from the transcripts illustrate some evidence of conflicting priorities for customer workers.

Moreover, there was some evidence of dissonance between the organisation’s stated commitments to customer service on the one hand and performance incentive structures on the other.

Another team member illustrated this dilemma:

*It can take half an hour to explain something that’s beyond your control. And when you’re motivated to make targets and make money and your time is money and you know you’re only making five dollars on this booking to start off with; this can lead to a lot of stress and frustration in the office (P. 2).*

(O) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

This would suggest that customer workers could be torn between devoting time to customers on the one hand and dealing with as many customers as possible in the shortest possible time.

3) External Challenges for Customer Workers

Beyond the boundaries of the organisation, several participants commented on the dynamic nature of the travel industry and the difficulties this created for customer interface, notwithstanding organisational support structures.

(I) For instance, customers often do not understand the way pricing of airline tickets operate.

*Customers expect to be given a price and be able to come back and book that same price* [at a later date] (P. 2), pointed out a team leader.

*Airlines might give out twenty seats at one hundred dollars to Sydney and then the next hundred seats at one hundred and ten and then the next hundred seats at over hundred and seventy. People don’t understand that and often expect that we’ll be able to basically honour the price that we gave them. That can be a cause for complaints because they’re say we’re quoting them a price that doesn’t exist* explained the same team leader.

Even though FCL supports their customer workers by pointing out to customers that prices are subject to fluctuations until the ticket has been paid in full, according to another team leader, people find price changes
very difficult to deal with and very challenging because they think if I’ve paid a deposit for a booking why should it change (P. 3).

(O and MidMgt) No comments were recorded from these perspectives.

4) Customer-focussed Support Conceptualised as a Two-way Process

At the store level, a team leader illustrated that an important organisational support structure commonly used was team meetings. These team meetings are designed to resolve customer service queries and dilemmas.

(I) These meetings are only effective if customer workers take the responsibility and the opportunity to

stick up their hand and say, help (P. 3).

This comment implies that customer-focussed support can be conceptualised as a two-way communication process between the organisation support structures such as team meetings and the individual customer workers.

(O & MidMgt) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

5) Organisational Support Conceptualised as Emotional as Well as Systemic

Apart from organisational support systems and the willingness of customer workers to communicate their concerns, some participants pointed to experience as an important factor when dealing effectively in a customer interface role.

(I) For example, one team leader emphasised the value of experience this way:

I think an experienced consultant has developed a thick skin over time and has seen it all before and are able to cope. It’s more the new people that will take it personally and get stressed about it and you have to be able to be aware of that and teach them to deal calmly with it (P. 1).

Organisational support in this context can be conceptualised to include emotional as well as systemic support.

(O and MidMgt) No comments were recorded from these perspectives.

Issue 4 - The use by customer workers of available customer and product information to service the needs of their customers.

On the issue of customer workers using available customer and product information to service the needs of their customers, three themes explained the congruence between the perspectives. These included: 1) the regular use of organisational support structures; 2) quality of organisational support is dependent
on the customer worker communicating their support needs; and 3) the need for the organisation to inform where and how information may be accessed.

1) The Regular Use of Organisational Support Structures

Airfare coordinators were the most frequently mentioned organisational support structure that is regularly used by customer workers. (MidMgt) As one participant explained, airfare coordinators service the stores completely but if the stores have a difficult airfare inquiry, they’ll ring this person and ask for help. So that’s the most used tool I think that we provide for the stores and it’s a well used tool from what I see (P. 1). A reflection of their use by customer workers is the fact that FCL employs several across Australia.

(O and I) No comments were recorded from these perspectives.

2) Quality of Organisational Support is Dependent on the Customer Workers Communicating their Support Needs

From the organisational perspective, the quality of FCL support structures is dependent on providing customer workers with the resources to assist their customers. (O) For example, one manager stated:

I can see at times where we probably have too much information for our own people to then pass on, however if you don’t have enough then there can also be the issue of are [we] satisfying the customers’ needs, so it can be over kill. However I think in this instance we’ve given the right tools to our people to be able to get their hands on things to be able to give to clients (P. 2).

However, a number of workers from the individual perspective commented that the quality of organisational support was dependent on the customer worker communicating their support needs to the organisation. (I) As an illustration, a team leader commented that you can have a consultant that’s sitting there in the corner struggling to find out some information about something. If they’d only had said in the morning or just turned around and said to someone, I have no idea, how do I find a cruise to Vladivostok, then the other consultant might say, well have you looked in the travel triangle, or have you asked a more experienced consultant who’s been around longer (P. 3).
This illustration suggests that the level of support available to customer workers is not just dependent upon the availability of organisational resources; it’s a question of communication as well (P. 3).

In other words, the willingness, motivation and awareness of customer workers to seek out and use customer and product information are a vital dimension of the quality of organisational support structures.

Other workers indicated that initiative was important when it came to seeking customer support information. One team leader commented:

*I think that there is a lot of available customer product information and it just comes down to how you want to use it and that it’s all there at your finger tips. There is always someone sitting next to you that have been somewhere you haven’t been, there is always someone who’ll know more than what you know. It’s just a matter of whether you’re prepared to be motivated enough to look where you have to, to get what you need* (P. 2).

In other words, if the information is available, the responsibility is with the customer worker to find it within the organisation.

However, the enterprise of the customer worker to seek out information support systems may depend upon the worker’s perception of the worth of that particular customer. A team leader explained this:

*trying to find the motivation and the bigger picture to deal with that client and spend time with that client when they may never travel again or if they do it’s only going to be a another five dollar commission cheque or whatever for you, that’s the challenge to understand the bigger picture and that person may be in the future a round the world ticket or may tell their brother whose going to Bali to come back and that’s the harder thing* (P. 3).

This insight would tend to suggest the motivation levels of customer workers to seek out information may be based on their view of the customer’s current and future travel requirements.

(midMgt) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

3) The Need for the Organisation to Inform Where and How Information May be Accessed

Another dimension raised by participants from the individual perspective on the effective use by customer workers of information systems is dependent on
the organisation letting workers know of the availability of those support structures.

(I) A team member commented on the need for the organisation to be accountable for informing customer workers of where and how information can be found: *There are an awful lot of resources out there but someone needs to let us know of them I guess it’s not that we necessarily know where to go in all the cases and there might be an easier way of finding* (P. 1).

One team leader commented on the challenge of ensuring that all customer workers are informed of organisational support structures and sources of information:

*There’s a lot of resources out there and if you’ve got the motivation, you can find it, but there’s probably a lot of things out there that I don’t know and a lot of things that a lot of people do know that I don’t and how is that going to be communicated on a larger scale, I don’t know* (P. 1).

From this standpoint, it would therefore be misleading for management to assume that customer workers have a sound and up-to-date knowledge base of information systems.

(O and MidMgt) No comments were recorded from these perspectives.

In summary, the transcripts indicate that there are a variety of internal and external factors that convey mixed signals to customer workers affecting their capacity to overcome conflict between customer expectations and organisational constraints. There was evidence via illustrations that customer support measures were used extensively by customer workers on a regular basis. However, the effective use of these customer service support measures came down to the level of motivation of the customer worker to source the information and the degree of awareness of the availability of these information sources.

4.4.3 Attribute - Focus on Performance

**Issue 5 - The recognition by employees that good teamwork is common practice.**

There were several factors underpinning the congruence between the three perspectives on the recognition by employees that good teamwork is common practice. These included: 1) performance incentives favour individual
achievement; 2) individual-based incentives mitigated against teamwork; 3) the
impact of personality on teamwork; and 4) the importance of unity and harmony.

1) **Performance Incentives Favour Individual Achievement**

There was general agreement from both the individual and organisational
perspectives that the FCL performance bonus structure favoured individual
performance over good teamwork.

(O) For example, a senior manager asserted that
the reward structure within Flight Centre is heavily geared towards the individual
who at times can be to the detriment to the team. Whilst there are some team
based incentives there, the majority of the rewards structure is based on
individual performance so at times you can be in conflict with people that you
work with based on your team versus your individual goals and I think we need to
show a shift towards, a little bit more emphasis towards team based goals (P. 2).
Striking the right balance between incentives for individual and team performance
is seemingly an on-going challenge for FCL.

I don’t want to take away from the individual performance but I also want them to
see that there is a higher degree of an impact they can make as a team when they
do function together (P. 2),
remarked a TopMgt participant.

(MidMgt) Another participant also reflected on the challenge of balancing the
individual and team performance incentive scheme:
we do reward team as well as individual. Maybe they’ve [the organisation] seen
that the individual is worth more (P. 2).

(I) From the individual perspective, a team leader claimed that workers generally
value good teamwork
but it doesn’t always happen for the reason that the way the company wage
structure works, it’s all based on individual performance really (P.1).

However, one team member claimed the balance between individual and team
incentives was appropriate:
I’m fairly new to the company but I really appreciate the teamwork thing. I mean
we all have our own targets but there’s also sort of at the end of the day a team
target with that (P. 5).

2) **Individual-based Incentives Mitigated Against Teamwork**
Of greater concern than sending mixed signals to workers, was a view shared amongst TopMgt participants that the emphasis on individual over team performance did diminish teamwork throughout the organisation. Moreover, beyond the work team, there was some unease that the bonus structure adversely affected teamwork between stores, regions and divisions within the company.

(O) For example, people [workers] don’t understand that they do actually belong to this nation [division] and every effort they make within that nation actually contributes to the entire nation and then beyond that to Flight Centre Limited because of who we work for and that’s the broader picture. I think our focus is too individualistic (P. 1).

Similarly, another TopMgt participant shared this view:
We need to get the team working together out through all of those [organisational] levels and it seems to stop at a team level often (P. 2).

Other organisational perspectives did not comment on teamwork beyond the work team level.

(O and MidMgt) No comments were recorded from these perspectives.

3) The Impact of Personality on Teamwork

Compared with the Worker perspective, MidMgt was less optimistic about individuals acknowledging the importance of good teamwork. More specifically, MidMgt regard team leaders as primarily accountable for developing good quality teamwork at the store level.

(MidMgt) For example, we certainly have some leaders who don’t get it and don’t recognise [teamwork] as being the key to making it all work and I would say we have a lot of stores that don’t (P. 1).

The sense of frustration implicit in these observations was shared by team leaders themselves, although team leaders felt that quality teamwork resulted from the attitudes of team members towards performance incentives.

(I) One team leader gave an illustration of the challenges facing them in building teamwork:
I’ve got one consultant who’s extremely focussed, extremely figures driven but very much motivated for themselves. It is a constant battle to get them to stop
doing what they’re doing and give some of their time to help a new person or whatever (P. 3).

Furthermore, this team leader suggested that the bonus incentive scheme had a lot to do with promoting this individualistic behaviour: *they’ll forget* [about good teamwork] *because they’re just so driven to be a very high performer.*

Another team leader backed up this insight by adding that *definitely there are a lot of individuals out there who are just so focussed [on individual performance] that they don’t see that good teamwork is common practice* (P. 2).

Implicit from these observations is that individual and team performance are perceived to be separate and unrelated sets of behaviours.

(O) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

4) The Importance of Unity and Harmony

Workers spoke of the importance of good teamwork from the viewpoint of maintaining a pleasant working environment.

(I) For example, a team member compared FCL favourably to other similar organisations:

*I’ve worked in another company which was structured quite similarly but it wasn’t as supportive and it wasn’t like a major sort of team type of situation that Flight Centre is* (P. 4).

Several workers valued a harmonious working environment as important and in some cases more significant than team-based performance incentives. One team member explained the value of working in a friendly work setting:

*It also comes down to the reward of knowing that you’ve done a good job, you try to focus on that more than actually physical reward. As much as you strive for whatever you’re given it also comes down to, I really had a good day today because we worked as a team or because we did really well together* (P. 7).

This observation was supported by another team member who claimed that *if you’ve had a good day at work and the team worked well together you’re going home happy as opposed to having a bad day at work with the team who hasn’t worked together and going home, pissed off* (P. 3).

The intrinsic worth of cooperation was emphasised to a greater extent in the individual perspective than any of the other organisational perspectives.
(O and MidMgt) No comments were recorded from these perspectives.

**Issue 6 - The implementation of a reward system for employees who contribute new and innovative ways to make the organisation more effective and efficient.**

Three themes underpinned the incongruent result on the issue of implementing a reward system for employees who contribute new and innovative ways to make the organisation more effective and efficient. These were: 1) lack of formal recognition for innovation throughout the organisation; 2) innovation in the stores; and 3) a culture of resisting change.

1) **Lack of Formal Recognition for Innovation Throughout the Organisation**

Despite the commonly held view that FCL is fairly entrepreneurial as an organisation, paradoxically there was no evidence that good ideas are communicated and rewarded by the organisation.

(O) From an organisational perspective, a TopMgt participant stated that FCL promotes a fair degree of entrepreneurialism. Whether that then flows back to the wider group and is communicated is the issue (P. 2).

(I) From an individual perspective, a team member commented that ideas are shared by other stores despite there not being a formalised reward system in place each shop has its own systems and they are picked up by [other] shops and there’s no real recognition, there’s no reward (P. 3).

(MidMgt) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

2) **Innovation in the Stores**

There was evidence from the individual perspective that innovation occurred within the stores.

(I) For instance, a team member claimed that at a shop level obviously everyone suggests things and if it’s going to work better then we do it, it might be discussed, we think we can do it this way and then we just implement it and it’s no problem (P. 3).

This observation suggests that innovation occurs regularly in the store environments on an informal basis but there is a lack of agreement as to whether innovative ideas are effectively communicated and acknowledged across the organisation.
Beyond the shop level, there were indications that the organisation has attempted to enhance the communication between the stores by organising “focus days” as one team member described it to pool ideas:

*They might grab one consultant from each shop or something like that and get together and discuss issues that are important* (P. 3).

This same worker described their perception of what happened following a focus day:

*I was at one of those ‘focus days’ and a lot of good stuff were discussed but afterwards they followed up and sent out information but I haven’t seen any change. I know with a large company, it does take a long time to implement change but even some of the smaller things that were being discussed could have been changed [at] the shop level immediately but nothing was changed.*

This was despite *most people there saying, yes this needs to be done and this is how we feel this should be done*.

This worker concluded that the *support structure wasn’t there* to recognise and promote these innovations.

Despite generating some good ideas, some of the participants from the individual perspective indicated that FCL had not made good use of these ideas. One team member offered a personal perspective:

*I know when I’ve made suggestions it’s just been shot down in flames so it’s why bother suggesting something that’s going to make an improvement in the company as a whole and do things to help improve the shop.*

They conclude by saying *no one’s going to listen to you anyway* (P. 7).

(O) From the organisational perspective, a TopMgt participant observed that *it’s interesting sitting in meetings with area leaders from the same nation [region] and I know that they do things differently in their own countries [division] but they do it really well there but they don’t share that information [across company divisions]* (P. 4).

Another TopMgt participant had a similar perspective by stating that stores do have their own innovative ideas but are *a bit parochial about it* (P. 3).
(MidMgt) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

3) A Culture of Resisting Change

Whilst management generally agreed that there was a lack of innovation across organisational structures, some organisational leaders attributed this more to a general culture of resisting change rather than organisational incentives.

(O) For instance, one participant’s perception was that there was a general resistance to change amongst workers:

some people don’t like change, New South Wales were always the last to do anything, they just sit back and watch and see, wait for Queensland to fall over and well we don’t want to do that then, wait and see if it works or not (P. 4).

From another point of view, a participant considered organisational incentives (or lack of them) as a key catalyst for creating an innovative work culture. According to this long serving senior manager, FCL in its formative days did have a reward system for employees who contribute new and innovative ways to make the organisation more effective and efficient and that recently incentives have been removed. The workplace attitude characteristic in these early years was yeah that’s a great idea, everyone picked up on it and ran with it (P. 2).

Another TopMgt participant supporting this viewpoint conveyed a response from a worker reflecting this change in approach to supporting and encouraging innovation:

Now it’s, okay, it’s your idea, you make it work, if it fails, it’s out, we don’t want to know about it, if it does succeed, we’ll think about whether or not we’re going to do it but we’re not going to touch it, we’re not going to help you out in any way, you’ve got to drive it, you’ve got to make it work (P. 1).

When encouraged by the researcher, this manager elaborated on the changing organisational mindset:

in the old days we were rewarded in our State, down in New South Wales on any new idea that was put into our profit guide and that was great because we did get a lot of ideas and now we just get the profit guide and if you can find a better way to do this let us know and we’ll do it that way but I don’t know if anybody ever comes up with a better way to do it.

(MidMgt) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

In summary, whilst there was some acknowledgment that most workers recognise and appreciate the importance of teamwork, performance incentives
favour individual achievement. Moreover, there was a clear perception that performance incentives are balanced in favour of individual contributions over team-based rewards. Some organisational leaders went so far as to suggest that individual-based incentives mitigated against teamwork. There was evidence from the individual perspective that personality was a more important determinant to adopting a positive attitude towards teamwork than incentives. Workers appreciated the inherent importance of teamwork. Moreover, they believed that the unity and enjoyment that came from good teamwork was more important than formal incentives. Although there is some evidence that innovation is encouraged in the stores, the general consensus of organisational leaders and organisational members was that innovation is not encouraged and rewarded throughout the organisation.

4.4.4 Attribute - Project-based Work

Issue 7 - The self-sufficiency of work teams to forecast new business and manage their technical and human resources.

Three themes from the transcripts emphasised the incongruent result on the issue of the self-sufficiency of work teams to forecast new business and manage their technical and human resources. These topics are 1) sufficient autonomy, 2) insufficient autonomy and 3) a balance between freedom and control.

1) Sufficient Autonomy

The organisational perspective was the most optimistic about the store teams being self-sufficient in their decision-making processes. (O) For example, one participant claimed that store teams are very much in control of their growth, they’re in control of their technical and human resources to the extent that if they need those things they can make them happen (P. 2).

When invited to elaborate, this senior manager was more specific in illustrating this perception of self-sufficiency by claiming teams have every opportunity to go out and do that themselves by their own local store marketing, by their own promotional activities, by coming together with other
retailers in the centre they’re in and conducting joint promotions. By attracting their own customer base, they’re in control of those themselves.

Another participant from the same focus group took the view that FCL adopted a support function to teams if they need extra resource and computers and technical support then the organisation is on tap to provide that for them (P. 3).

According to this senior manager, we [management] don’t push those things down on top of them.

(I) There was some support for this view from the individual perspective, with a team leader claiming:
I feel relatively self-sufficient as a team leader to forecast future business (P. 1).

There was no clear evidence from the TopMgt perspective that the store teams were self-sufficient in calculating new business and administer their technical and human resources. The results for item 26 in the survey (see Appendix 2) shows 75% of TopMgt agreed that the store teams did have sufficient autonomy, and only 27% of Workers thought this to be the case.

(MidMgt) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

2) Insufficient Autonomy

(I) From the individual perspective, a typical example of a comment illustrating the prevailing view that the store teams had insufficient autonomy to make decisions about their projected technical and human resource needs came from a team member:

We’re not self-sufficient because we are constantly [being told by management that] this is what you need and we [the store team] know what we need and there’s still that sort of external thing, head office is in our shop. We do know what we want and what we need but we’re not necessarily trusted to make that decision (P. 4).

To illustrate this perception of insufficient autonomy from the individual perspective, a team leader gave this example:

When we got our [store] refurbishment done I wanted to get the flat screen monitors so that they don’t take [up too much space]; to be able to reduce your monitor to that size wasn’t permitted. All the stores had to be the same (P. 3).

(O) On the other hand, from the organisational perspective, the general view was that FCL had an effective business formula and that the stores should utilise these
organisational processes and procedures to be successful. One participant summed up this perspective:

*we [FCL management] know what works so if you [the store teams] keep going in another direction you’re [management] never going to get the best out of your business* (P. 1).

3) A Balance Between Freedom and Control

Several participants from all three perspectives spoke of the need to strike a balance between organisational control and individual team autonomy in forecasting new business and administering technical and human resources.

**(O)** For example, a participant from the organisational perspective, stated that, *I still have got the opinion that they [the store teams] have the individual accountability to be able to make those decisions for themselves and support will be there to offer the services, either HR or technical support to provide them whatever it is that they need* (P. 2).

**(I)** Similarly, from the individual perspective, a team leader stated that, *we’ve got the systems to work within, we work within them and then we sort of accommodate those systems to work within our individual teams* (P. 3).

**(MidMgt)** A participant articulated the dilemma of finding the appropriate level of equilibrium between individual self-sufficiency and organisational direction by posing the question: *How do we [middle management] make them [store teams] believe it’s their own business whilst we have so many restrictions?* (P. 1).

**Issue 8 - The encouragement to teams to seek out advice and resources on a needs basis.**

Three themes supported the congruent result on the issue on whether there is encouragement to teams to seek out advice and resources on a needs basis. The issues included: 1) store teams pay fees for support and advice; 2) accessibility of support; and 3) management support linked to performance.

1) **Store Teams Pay Fees for Support and Advice**

FCL stores are required to pay fees to management for support and advice. This has been identified as one of the factors contributing to the expectation that teams will seek out advice.

**(MidMgt)** For instance, a participant pointed out:
We [middle management] constantly say to them [store teams], [you are] paying all these different areas, fees and whatever, they’re there for you to use. So make sure you get the expertise from them whatever it may be. So I think we encourage that a fair bit (P. 1).

(O and I) No comments were recorded from these perspectives.

2) Accessibility of Support

One of the best examples of encouragement to seek out support came from the organisational perspective.

(O) A participant pointed out that the managing director of FCL regularly acts as a support function:

*I went to him [managing director] personally because I had to get something resolved in another country [region] and it wasn’t happening, that was my last resort and I’m going to go straight to the top and half an hour it was done, it was sorted out, it’s so good* (P. 4).

Another TopMgt participant suggested that the accessibility of support personnel in the organisation was one of the strengths of FCL:

*I think that [support] is reflected in the organisation in that they [workers] do have access to everyone and anybody and I like to think that people do react to their needs and concerns. At times it may need escalation certainly however it does happen, it certainly happens. And it’s a good thing about the organisation as well that it can happen* (P. 2).

(I and MidMgt) No comments were recorded from these perspectives.

3) Management Support Linked to Performance

Perhaps one of the reasons for the encouragement and accessibility of support personnel within FCL is the direct linkage of management support to company performance.

(O) A TopMgt participant pointed out that their support to the stores is open to competition in the marketplace:

*we have to live everyday with our client being based in stores, [store teams] may not want to utilise our services and are free to take them external if they so desire, so in that regard if we are not providing the level of service and product information that they need, they can take their business elsewhere* (P. 2).

Workers are therefore actively encouraged to use the internal support services of FCL.
A team leader provided an insight into this support:

*I think that definitely they [organisational support personnel] encourage you to seek it [support] out when you need it and the reason why that is there are individual profits and if they don’t have their customers, they are not operating profitably. So certainly you know they would encourage us to go off to training courses because they make money, that’s how they make their revenue, they’re accountable for their business performance so definitely they encourage* (P. 2).

*(MidMgt)* A participant summed up the high level of congruence from the HIPSYS report on this issue:

*the entire company is set up to support you [store teams], the support is there for when you do need things, when you do need to, to check something legally or rules of an airfare or employment issues or whatever, there’s always someone there that you can phone or you can email and ask, the resources are definitely there to help us get what, basically get what we need* (P. 3).

In summary, there are differences of opinion across organisational perspectives about the extent to which store teams have sufficient autonomy to make their own decisions. One view is that there is sufficient scope and freedom for stores to make team decisions about the operation of their business. Another view supports the notion that teams have too many organisational constraints imposed on them. A third view is that there is an appropriate balance between organisation constraints and freedom and autonomy. There was a high level of congruence on the issue of FCL encouraging teams to seek out advice and resources on a needs basis. This was largely attributable to organisational support structures being linked directly to performance, with store teams paying the organisation fees for appropriate advice and support.

### 4.4.5  Attribute - Human Spirit & Work

#### Issue 9 - The commitment to provide good working conditions for employees.

Three themes emerged from the transcripts providing some evidence to validate the incongruence from the HIPSYS report on the issue of commitment to providing good working conditions for employees. They were 1) work/home balance, 2) physical and technical working conditions and 3) emotional support.

1) *Work/home Balance*
(I) Several workers commented on the long hours as a travel consultant and the demands FCL puts on employees to attend meetings and functions outside regular working hours and the strain this put on workers’ home life. One team member described this tension this way:

*we worked out that there is some sort of social event usually every three weeks throughout the year, there’s something that you’ve got to do for the company, now as much as that is beneficial in that you get all these awards and things like that, that’s a lot of your time taken up and having been with the company close to two years, it’s now getting boring going that often. It drives me nuts now (P. 7).*

Another example from a team member exemplified the perceived burden FCL puts on employees:

*we must take all our holidays every six months we’re not allowed to carry them for more than five days. If you don’t take them you lose them (P. 3).*

(O and MidMgt) However, no participant from either the TopMgt or MidMgt perspectives commented on balancing work and home life as an element of working conditions.

2) Physical and Technical Working Conditions

The organisational perspective was the most unenthusiastic of all the perspectives when it came to the provision of physical and technical working conditions.

(O) For instance, a participant stated:

*I think our work areas are badly planned, they’re very tight, there’s no consideration given to the type of work they do, everybody is given literally the same floor plan to work from, it doesn’t matter whether you need to have twenty files or one file, you get the same amount of space to have it in. So there’s no consideration given to our physical needs on a daily basis of coming into an area and feeling comfortable (P. 1).*

As this TopMgt participant acknowledges, this is offset by health and financial benefits available to all staff:

*We have the mechanism in place to take care of our health and our wealth which is fantastic, you know from the fruit to money wise to health wise, all there and all very available to us and either free or very inexpensively, which is great but on the other side our working conditions are not so good.*
There are also concerns over the quality of technical resources as exemplified by another TopMgt participant:

*We use old technology; we’re just very slow in picking up our level of technology* (P. 2).

(I and MidMgt) No comments were recorded from these perspectives.

3) Emotional Support

Several participants from the individual perspective spoke of the importance and relevance of emotional support as a fundamental part of the provision of good working conditions.

(I) For instance, a team leader commented that

*for the working conditions to be good, you’ve got to be able to feel comfortable at work, you’ve got to be able to feel that your team leader is approachable, the rest of the team’s approachable and I think that we have that* (P. 1)

(O and MidMgt) This was a typical contribution from the individual perspective. No one from the other two perspectives remarked on the issue of conceptualising working conditions as emotional support.

**Issue 10 - The employees find meaning in their work.**

Four concepts emerged from the transcripts providing some evidence of congruence on the issue of employees finding their work meaningful. Themes in the transcripts included: 1) “selling people’s dreams”; 2) growing and developing as a person; 3) employee benefits; and 4) respect from other people.

1) “Selling People’s Dreams”

Several participants from the individual perspective indicated that meaning in their work was based on the satisfaction of assisting their customers.

(I) For example, a team member put it this way:

*Sending someone on their holiday, their honeymoon, it’s all a good feeling* (P. 2).

Another team member expanded on this “good feeling”:

you are giving the people their dreams, they may only do one or two big trips away in their life and whether that be to go as far as Sydney for the first time or getting on a plane for the first time, or doing that grand tour of Europe or Africa, you’re giving the people their dreams and at the end of the day it comes down to what you do has a direct influence on how they are going to enjoy their holiday (P. 3).
One participant reinforced this message:

*We do say that they’re selling people’s dreams; you know they’re out there helping people live their dream and open the world to people so* (P. 3).

(I) No comments was recorded from this perspective.

2) **Growing and Developing as a Person**

Some participants across perspectives talked about attaining meaning from their own growth and development.

(MidMgt) For instance, a participant explained that when one of their colleagues started at FCL, they knew

*nothing about business and that when they do leave FCL as they may, they have developed and grown as a person and we’ve given them a lot more skills to go out into the world then what they walked in with* (P. 1).

(I) A team leader remarked that meaning can be associated with progress within FCL:

*there are people who enjoy what they are doing and especially as they go up the ladder you get to enjoy it more because you’re got more control over what you’re doing and where you going* (P. 2).

(O) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

3) **Employee Benefits**

Other participants commented on the several favourable employee benefits of working for FCL.

(I) A team member identified some of these fringe benefits:

*If you are really, really good you can make some decent money but I think it’s more the other benefits of the role, the opportunity to travel, the company is very good in the fact that it gives you the opportunity to purchase shares, they have areas that can help you get healthy, or unhealthy. They have financial advisers; they have people that can help you get home loans* (P. 5).

(O and MidMgt) No comments were recorded from these perspectives.

4) **Respect From Other People**

There was some evidence that individuals found meaning in their work from the respect they received internally from their colleagues and externally from their friends.

(I) For instance, a team leader stated that
FCL has created a real community in the sense of you’re always interested in how other people are performing and people do generally find a meaning in their work and that the longer someone stays the more meaning they find in what they’re doing and especially when they feel a sense of accomplishment that they’ve achieved something (P. 2).

Apart from admiration from colleagues internally, another team leader conceptualised meaning in their work as social status: meaning for me is respect from colleagues, respect for myself for what I do and also respect for just going out socially and meeting people and saying this is what I do (P. 1).

Another team leader emphasised the value they placed on social status by giving the following example: if you’re at a party and someone says what do you do and you say, I’m a branch manager of a travel agency it just doesn’t gel with anyone, I guess travel doesn’t really have the same respect. (P. 2).

(O and MidMgt) No comments were recorded from these perspectives.

In summary, there was incongruence on whether FCL was devoted to providing organisational members with good working conditions. This discord of viewpoint was largely due to the diversity of opinion on what “good working conditions” meant to participants and the value they placed on the related concepts. The organisational perspective conceptualised working conditions as physical and technical. On the other hand, the individual perspective conceptualised working conditions as both balancing work and home or emotional support from peers. There was positive congruence on the issue of whether employees found meaning in their work. Once again, meaningful work was conceptualised in a variety of ways. Finding meaning in their work came from the satisfaction of assisting customers, personal growth, employee benefits, and the esteem from colleagues and friends.

4.5 Emerging Themes

Three new attributes emerged from the data that transcend Noer’s (1997) five attribute model. The emerging attributes include 1) Loyalty and Commitment, 2) Learning and Development and 3) Open Information. These attributes have
been included in this data summary for two reasons. Firstly, although not in Noer’s (1997) original model, they have been cited in Boswell’s et al. (2001) model and elsewhere as attributes of the new employment relationship literature. Moreover, these attributes have been discussed in Chapter 1 as part of the emerging trends in the individual-organisation interface. Secondly, characteristics of these attributes have been identified in these transcripts across the five explicit attributes. By doing several searches of the transcript content, the researcher was able to identify examples of these attributes. These emerging attributes are introduced below and discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

1) Loyalty & Commitment

The extensive use of downsizing and outsourcing to decrease the number of permanent employees in the work force in the last 25 years of the twentieth century has raised questions about employee commitment and organisational loyalty (Leans & Feldman, 1992). Consequently, the concept of employee commitment has received growing attention from work and organisational psychology. This popularity can be explained through its effects on (critical) employee behaviour such as performance (Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996) and a greater capacity to innovate (Walton, 1985). Furthermore, commitment seems to be a better predictor of behaviour than, for example, job satisfaction (e.g., Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). These changes have transformed the expectations employers and employees have of each other. Issues relating to organisational commitment were raised throughout the focus group discussions.

The organisational perspective generally embraced the view that organisational commitment was closely linked to promotional opportunities within the organisation. In other words, organisational leaders linked staff retention with opportunities to the staff to be promoted within FCL.

(MidMgt) Typical of this mind-set was a view expressed by a middle manager: 
*I think that the culture [of FCL] is one of where you’re looking for promotion and we encourage brightness of future, which means that they [workers] are wanting to move into more challenging roles which means they have to work at upgrading their level of skill level* (P. 1).

(O) One top manager asserted that the perceived motivation for skills development was directly linked to career paths:
[Workers] are responding to the infrastructure. They want to get skilled because the next skill level gives them the opportunity to step up to the next level (P. 4).

However, from the individual perspective, company sponsored skills development is not always linked to enhanced job opportunities within the organisation. (I) For instance, one worker gave an insight into what they perceived to be a lack of opportunity within FCL to utilise their skills, a lot of people, they come to the company, they consult but it’s not for them that they don’t have that opportunity to see what else the company has to offer and they leave rather than maybe going and experience [sic] a different area of the company and finding that’s the area for them and staying within the company (P. 3).

Moreover, one team leader did not see the attraction in promotion, claiming the further you go up the organisational ladder the more you unfortunately sell your soul to the organisation (P. 2).

Beyond skill development, several workers commented on other issues such as work/home balance and the intrinsic value of working in the industry as more important elements to organisational commitment than promotion. One worker commented on the frustration of balancing the expectations of home and work: they’re [children] desperate for their mother, father to be at home which of course causes arguments because they’ve had to spend a late night finishing off something for a client or go to a buzz night or whatever actually occurs (P. 7).

One worker claimed that most people are in this job because they have some sort of love of travel and the more travel you do, the more you love it (P. 4).

These views expressed by workers suggest that organisational commitment and loyalty is a more complex issue than the provision of opportunities for promotion.

2) Learning & Development

Evidence from the transcripts suggests that FCL predominantly focuses their learning and development strategies on the production-centred approach (Kuchinke, 1999; Maitland, 1994; Rummler & Brache, 1990; Stryker & Statham, 1985) rather than the person-centred approach (Aktouf, 1992; Barrie & Pace, 1999; Berger & Luckman, 1966; Elliott, 2000; Fisher & Torbert, 1995; Nader,

(MidMgt) For instance, a participant explained how FCL was different to other organisations:

[In other organisations] it might be you only do training if you’ve got a problem, if you’re behind the eight ball. We don’t really have that (P. 3).

Furthermore, this middle manager indicated that motivation levels from workers to undertake learning and development programmes were related to enhancing their job skills to improve their prospects for earning more income.

Flight Tech, one of our IT is an example which we’ve come up against lately [low motivation levels] and it’s because they [workers] can’t see the direct benefit of it, it’s not going to make me more money or get me a position that I’m wanting.

From the individual perspective, several participants also talk about learning and development initiatives from the performance perspective.

(I) For instance, a team member defined learning and development as job skills, it’s to make yourself better in your job. And if you participate [in training programmes] then usually you take that back to the office to try obviously to help everyone else in their job (P. 7).

(TopMgt) No comments were recorded from this perspective.

The focus on learning and development strategies is an integral theme underpinning Noer’s (1997) model.

3) Open Information

Participants from all perspectives commented favourably on the Open Information channels within the organisation which accompanied individual participation in decision-making. Campbell’s (2000) resolution of the “initiative paradox” model identifies four situational methods of communicating and sharing information between managers and workers. Organisations have always had to wrestle with the questions of whether and how to constrain employees’ independent judgment and initiative. This balancing act is what Campbell (2000) refers to as the “initiative paradox”. The examples given by participants in the research suggest that appropriate balance between individual initiative and personal judgment and organisationally-imposed constrains on decision-making had been struck.
For example, a participant stated that
when you have ownership in stores or you know people buying into a business
then you have motivation; they [workers] want a group of people around them
they know can do the job (P. 2).

A team leader backed this up from the individual perspective:
I think that the success that the company has had is because they’ve
[organisational leaders] been able to create ownership at a team leader level
which has certainly given team leaders the incentive to make sure teams are all on
board (P. 2).

No comments were recorded from this perspective.

Open communication appears to be an important factor in striking a
balance between organisational control and individual initiative.

These three emerging themes warrant further investigation although this
is not to suggest that there are not other issues deserving of consideration as core
attributes of the new employment relationship.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided a summary of the research findings. A focus group
schema consisting of 10 items was formulated from the MSA data. This plan
provided the researcher with a structural framework for the conduct of four focus
group sessions. Moreover, this schema was constructed to provide the researcher
with an opportunity to explore the individual and organisational perspectives of
the employment relationship in a balanced way. The organisational perspective
comprised TopMgt and the individual perspective included team members and
team leaders. MidMgt, the third perspective, was used to counterbalance the
individual and organisational perspectives. A summary of the transcripts was
thematically arranged under each of the five explicit attributes of Noer’s (1997)
model, reflecting the viewpoints of individual and organisational perspectives.
Several topics emerged from the transcripts for each explicit theme. Three
emerging themes going beyond Noer’s (1997) five attributes were briefly
introduced and will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Table 16 contains a summary of the structured and emerging themes
reported in this chapter.
Table 16  Summary of Structured and Emerging Themes

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<th>Attribute – Flexible Employment</th>
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<td><strong>Issue</strong></td>
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| Issue | **The opportunity for employees to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills** |
| 2 | 1) Rotation and Sampling of Job Tasks at the Store Level |
| 2 | 2) Limited Scope to Rotate and Sample Job Roles Beyond the Shop Environment |
| 3 | 3) The Mutual Benefits of Rotating and Sampling Job Roles for the Organisation and the Individual |

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<th>Attribute – Customer-focus</th>
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| Issue | **The use by customer workers of available customer and product information to service the needs of their customers** |
| 4 | 1) The Regular Use of Organisational Support Structures |
| 2 | 2) Quality of Organisational Support is Dependent on the Customer |
| 3 | 3) Workers Communicating their Support Needs |
| 4 | 4) The Need for the Organisation to Inform Where and How Information May be Accessed |

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<th>Attribute – Focus on Performance</th>
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| Issue | **The implementation of a reward system for employees who contribute new and innovative ways to make the organisation more effective and efficient** |
| 6 | 1) Lack of Formal Recognition for Innovation Throughout the Organisation |
| 2 | 2) Innovation in the Stores |
| 3 | 3) A Culture of Resisting Change |
### Attribute – Project-based Work

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<th>Issue</th>
<th>The self-sufficiency of work teams to forecast new business and manage their technical and human resources</th>
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<td>Sufficient Autonomy</td>
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<td>Store Teams Pay Fees for Support and Advice</td>
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<td>1)</td>
<td>Accessibility of Support</td>
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<td>3)</td>
<td>Management Support Linked to Performance</td>
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### Attribute – Human Spirit & Work

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<td>Work/home Balance</td>
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<td>2)</td>
<td>Physical and Technical Working Conditions</td>
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<td>3)</td>
<td>Emotional Support</td>
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<td>“Selling People’s Dreams”</td>
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<td>Growing and Developing as a Person</td>
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<td>Employee Benefits</td>
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<td>Respect From Other People</td>
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#### Emerging Themes

1) Loyalty & Commitment
2) Learning & Development
3) Open Information

Table 16 illustrates the five structured themes from Noer’s (1997) model. Under each of the 10 issues represented in the focus group schema are the implicit themes from the data in sequential order of reporting. The three emerging themes are listed at the end of the table. Table 16 serves as a springboard into the discussion of these research findings contained in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the research findings from the Flight Centre Limited case study and draws some possible patterns that may have significance to current and future practices. These discussions and patterns are structured around the explicit and implicit themes that emerged from the findings. The discussion focuses on an examination of the value of Noer’s (1997) model in understanding the psychological contract in the selected organisational case. Apart from discussing the relevance of the explicit and implicit themes, data from the three emerging themes of Loyalty & Commitment, Learning & Development, and Open Information are also considered in the context of their relevance as core attributes of the new employment relationship.

Through a rigorous and comprehensive analysis of the research findings and juxtaposing that against the related literature, the research question is revisited. The extent to which the application of Noer’s (1997) model in the organisational case can be ascertained assists the researcher to answer the research question: What are the core attributes of the new employment relationship?

Consistent with a constructivist paradigm, the application of attributes of Noer’s model is based on the multiple perspectives of TopMgt, MidMgt and Workers. Therefore the data supporting or refuting each theme is discussed within the context of congruence between the three organisational perspectives. A more in-depth analysis of the themes draws upon other available studies in the area. The discussion in Chapter 5 will lay the basis for a revisiting of the research question in Chapter 6.

The following discussion involves three interrelated components. What does the literature have to say about the explicit and implicit research themes? What were the key findings from the research? What does the literature in concert with the findings suggest about the future trends? This discussion provides some additional observations about the future of organisations and specifically, the new psychological contract.
5.2 Focus Group Content Analysis

5.2.1 Attribute - Flexible Employment

Issue 1 - The motivational levels of employees to upgrade and expand their job skills.

There was evidence to suggest that one element of the attribute of Flexible Employment was applicable in the organisational case. There are several indicators from the transcripts that workers were motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills. Four themes supported this claim. Firstly, FCL’s recruitment and selection policy focused on employing individuals who are motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills. Secondly, there was a perception that a strong learning and development culture existed within FCL. Thirdly, the nature of work in the travel industry meant that employees constantly needed to upgrade their job skill levels. Fourthly, there was a perception that a link between the provision of learning and development activities at FCL and essential on-the-job skills was evident, and that this link was considered a motivating factor. These implicit themes bear out the congruent results from the MSA survey. Finally, a distinction between the terms “upgrade” and “expand” were discussed and were clarified in the context of the organisational case.

1) Recruitment and Selection Process

The literature on functional flexibility in the workplace does not make a direct reference to recruiting and selecting. Functional flexibility is defined as the capacity to move job skills between tasks as a means of reducing job demarcation (Cook, 1998). However, the motivation and willingness of workers to multi-skill is an important factor in the success of flexible work practices (Greene, 2000). The research findings indicated that there was a strong perception that FCL’s recruitment and selection processes were a major contributing factor in creating a workplace culture where employees were motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills. In other words there was a perception that as part of their recruitment and selection criteria, FCL employed workers who are motivated to expand their job skills.

One of the selection criteria at FCL is that individuals have a university degree. There is evidence that a causal relationship exists between high levels of education and the ability to adjust to new situations (Carnoy, 1998). In an
organisational context, this translates to learning new tasks and adopting new methods of performing old tasks. The implications for the future would tend to suggest that apart from functional capacity, recruitment and selection processes based on educational standards are an important precursor to creating a functionally flexible work culture.

2) **Strong Learning and Development Culture**

According to Carnoy (1998), a strong learning and development culture is created through a combination of highly educated workers and organisations promoting multi-skilling through general training, multiple task jobs and the freedom for workers to make decisions (see p. 45). The research findings from this study suggest that training, information sharing, and a degree of autonomy in decision making is evident in the retail outlets (see p.139). However, it would be a generalisation to suggest that these characteristics exist beyond the stores. A strong learning and development environment requires a complex interplay between several factors. Therefore organisations that do not deal with all these factors are unlikely to create a flexible work environment. Whilst there is some evidence of this happening in FCL, there is a need for further development of this at all level of the organisation.

3) **The Nature of the Work**

The multi-faceted nature of work in the travel industry was one of the factors the participants claimed contributed to high motivational needs to constantly upgrade skill levels. One optimistic view of the move towards flexible employment practices across industries is that upgrading and expanding job skills favour both the employer and employee in particular industries (Wiens-Tuers & Hill, 2002). In other words, flexible employment practices benefit the contemporary worker by assisting them to become more employable and the organisation also benefits by becoming more manoeuvrable in the marketplace. It could therefore be argued that the expanding and evolving nature of the travel industry is well suited to the dual benefits of flexible employment practices. Participants in the study with long term experience indicated that there is a greater variety of requests from the travelling public now than previously and organisations need to keep up with these new and varied customer demands. This would suggest that the nature of the work in the travel industry, particularly at the customer interface, does lend itself to functional flexibility.
4) **Linkage Between Learning and Development Activities and Job Skills**

The learning and development opportunities available within FCL are perceived by research participants as closely linked to the functional duties of workers. Moreover, there was evidence that workers are encouraged to plan their own learning and development programme based on their individual needs and to be accountable for the outcomes of their learning activities. This match between learning and development activities and job skills seems to go against the grain of research in other settings. For instance, Arulampalam and Booth’s (1998) study of the relationship between flexible employment and training concluded that there is often an inverse relationship between flexible work practices and reduced training and development opportunities. This inverse relationship occurs when cost cutting becomes the principal motive behind multi-skilling (Gallie et al., 1997). While a flexible worker can potentially cover several roles and responsibilities within an organisation, the minimisation of training further reduces employment-related costs. The extent of functional training opportunities available to workers in FCL would tend to suggest that their skills development programmes are of mutual benefit to the individual and organisation. Accounts by research participants suggest that while there is a steep learning curve in adapting to the multi-faceted role of team members within the retail stores, these jobs are well supported with skill-based training programmes.

5) **Distinction Between Upgrading and Expanding Job Skills**

Some research participants made the distinction between upgrading and expanding job skills. Moreover, the general perception was that FCL provided employees with opportunities to upgrade their current job skills but little opportunity to expand them. In other words, there was an emphasis on providing workers with the opportunity to advance their skills within the confines of their current role at FCL. However, outside the bounds of their current role, employees were not given learning and development opportunities to increase their role beyond the bounds of the retail store environment. Based on Cook’s (1998) and Ciscel et al.’s (2003) definition of functional flexibility or social flexibility, FCL does not encourage and perhaps even discourages cross-organisational skill development. Flexible employment practices should assist workers to upgrade and expand their skills. FCL’s supports workers to upgrade but not expand their skills.
Issue 2 - The opportunity for employees to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills

On the other hand, there was a mixed response on the issue of whether FCL provided employees with opportunities to rotate and sample a variety of jobs to acquire new skills. Incongruent perspectives suggest that this element of Flexible Employment may not be valid in this organisational case. The incongruent MSA findings on this element were supported by excerpts from the transcripts. Organisational constraints emerged as the dominant theme from the transcripts to support the ambivalent MSA data. Although there appeared to be scope for employees to rotate and sample job tasks at the store level, there was limited opportunity to do this beyond the shop environment. Several organisational constraints directly and indirectly discouraged workers from rotating and sampling jobs beyond the store environment. Despite the organisational constraints imposed by organisational leaders, individuals did acknowledge the value and benefits of rotating and sampling job roles beyond the store environment. Moreover, there was a connotation that there may be a causal relationship between the opportunities for job rotation beyond the store structure and high levels of employee turnover.

1) Rotation and Sampling of Job Tasks at the Store Level

There was ample evidence that workers at the retail store level were able to rotate and sample job tasks within their team. For example, individuals were expected to learn and apply their skills in the auditing, selling, back office systems and so on. In other words, workers in the retail stores were expected to be able to carry out all duties pertaining to the running of the store. Since the opportunity for employees to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills was an organisational accountability, according to Noer’s (1997) criteria, FCL was not encouraging workers to work in other organisational units within the same company.

2) Limited Scope to Rotate and Sample Job Roles Beyond the Shop Environment

Moreover, some research participants believed the organisation discouraged individuals from migrating to other organisational units. For instance, FCL imposed a structural constraint in the form of a transfer fee on workers wanting to transfer from a store, region or division within the company. This transfer fee deterred rotation of employees beyond the store environment.
Some participants commented that a causal relationship existed between this inflexible work practice and the perceived high turnover. Documentation from FCL indicated that the company overall was experiencing a 30% turnover of staff over a 12 month period prior to this research study (FCL, 2002). Research by Hay (2002) suggests a link between employee turnover and career development. Hay argues that employees who felt trapped in a narrow job function with no scope for development tended to leave this job. Moreover, employees were more likely to leave when their skills or talents are not properly developed or when their managers failed to take an interest in their career development by providing them with new job assignments.

These research findings have implications for the future. One of the strategies to nurture high achieving workers is to provide them with a job that stretches their talents beyond the confines of their current position description. In the context of FCL, this would include cross-functional moves within the organisation.

3) The Mutual Benefits of Rotating and Sampling Job Roles for the Organisation and the Individual

Research participants commented on the mutual benefits for the organisation and individual in developing a programme for workers to rotate and sample jobs beyond the bounds of the stores. The principal benefits of cross-functional moves within the organisation for the individual were cited as gaining a broader understanding of the business by expanding workers’ perspectives of FCL and career development. The main organisational advantage mentioned in the research was a reduction in employee turnover (Hay, 2002). In broad terms, employee turnover has increased by 25% in the last five years and one-third of individuals in current employment plan to leave their current job within the next two years (Hay, 2002). Workers are increasingly adopting the philosophy that their job security resides not in employment, but employability (Simonsen, 1997). Flexible work practices could therefore be one HRD strategy for organisations and individuals to merge their needs for employee retention on the one hand, and employability on the other.

In sum, there was congruence on the issue of whether employees were motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills (Issue 1). Several factors emerged from the findings that indicated workers were keen to pursue job skill
development opportunities; for instance, FCL’s recruitment and selection policy focuses on employing individuals who are motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills. It was generally agreed that FCL had a dedicated learning and development culture which is conducive to job skill development. Also, workers recognised that the fast-changing travel industry necessitates constant skills upgrading. This evidence suggests that workers have the necessary motivation, with support from the organisation, to upgrade and expand their job skills. This implies that the successful implementation of flexible employment practices in an organisation does require, to a degree, employees to be motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills. However, there was an incongruent response on the issue of whether employees had the opportunity to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills (Issue 2). Workers in the retail store are constantly multi-skilling within their teams. However, beyond the team, there was no evidence of a programme to assist workers to rotate and sample jobs in other parts of the organisation. Although participants were keen to upgrade and expand their skills, there was little scope to do so beyond the retail store environment. This implies that Noer’s (1997) individual accountability, namely, the desire to work in more than one organisational setting, could be applied in this case. On the other hand, there was no evidence that the organisational accountability of encouraging workers to work in other organisations or organisational units within the same company could be applied. These results suggest that HR practitioners need to have motivated employees on the one hand, and a rotational jobs programme on the other, in order to create the conditions under which flexible employment practices can take place.

5.2.2 Attribute - Customer-focus

**Issue 3 - The support for customer workers to manage conflict between customer expectations and organisational capacity.**

Several issues emanating from the findings illustrated the incongruence between organisational strata on the issue of organisational support mechanisms being in place for customer workers for managing conflict between customer expectations and organisational capacity. Five implicit themes were identified from the findings. First, a number of support measures and structures were cited to manage differing expectations between FCL and the customer. Second, in
conflicting situations between customer requests and organisational policies and procedures, participants were not always clear of how to deal with these situations. Third, the ever-changing nature of the travel industry presents challenges for the customer interface beyond the capacity of organisational support systems. Fourth, customer-focused support measures were conceptualised as two-way communication between the individual requiring the support and the organisational capacity to provide this support. Fifth, organisational support was also conceptualised as either emotional or structural assistance. The data suggest that more could be done by FCL to enhance the quality of customer-focus by managing the inevitable tensions between customer and the organisation.

1) **FCL Support Measures to Manage Conflict**

Customer workers are often put in a difficult situation where they are in conflict between the customers’ needs and the constraints placed on the customer worker by the organisation (Adams, 1976; Troyer et al., 2000). Customer-focused support measures require a combination of time, resources, and knowledge (Heiss, 1990). The research findings indicated that of these support measures, time constraints limited customer workers’ capacity to manage their boundary spanning role. Time constraints put on customer workers in the customer interface restricted the range of support measures that may be used effectively. For instance, an “airfare coordinator” is a specialised source of knowledge and is available to the customer worker when there is a dispute with the customer about the cost of an airfare. However, if an airfare coordinator is not accessible at a particular time, the customer worker is put at a disadvantage in the sense that they may have to find another airfare coordinator, or wait for their coordinator to respond to their request for assistance. This example illustrates that to be effective; the organisational support system needs to be both available and accessible.

2) **Conflicting Priorities for Customer Workers**

There was evidence of some confusion about the priorities of customer workers. For instance, participants commented on the dilemma of spending time with one customer who may only want travel information instead of spending time with a paying customer. In other words, to spend time with someone who may not want to purchase an airfare can, in the short term, cost the individual and the organisation. The performance bonus system at FCL favours sales interaction
over travel information contact. The predicament in this instance is whether that
customer wanting travel information will ultimately buy a ticket. Should the
customer worker spend time with that customer providing them with information
with no guarantee of sale or should they adhere to the organisational objectives of
making sales? It is these dilemmas that require clarity by organisational leaders to
ensure that the customer worker is not confused between serving the customer or
the organisation.

3) External Challenges for Customer Workers

The findings suggested that there are challenging circumstances in the
travel industry that confront the customer worker on a regular basis. For example,
until an airfare is paid by a customer, the price of the ticket is subject to market
fluctuation. When a customer books a ticket, the price quoted at the time of
booking may increase by the time the customer pays for the ticket. This can result
in complaints from customers who do not understand the system. FCL does,
however, have support structures in place to manage these situations. Often airfare
coordinators are called upon to support the customer worker by explaining to the
customer airfare price fluctuations. However, it is acknowledged by participants
that managing the negative perceptions of the customer is not always easy in these
situations. These perennial challenges confronting the customer worker are likely
to be more confronting in the future due to increasing customer expectations and
more intense competition (Bathie & Sarkar, 2002; Sebastianelli & Nabil Tamimi,
2003; Wright, 2002).

4) Customer-focussed Support Conceptualised as a Two-way Process

Team meetings are used regularly in the retail stores to resolve customer
service queries and dilemmas. Participants indicated that this human support
mechanism can only be effective to the degree that the customer worker is
prepared to raise customer service problems. Therefore team meetings as a
support structure can be conceptualised as a two-way communication process
between the organisation support system and the individual customer workers.
Atkinson (2000) points out that there can be significant resistance in internally
sharing customer-based information. This resistance may inhibit customer
workers from raising issues in these team meetings. Therefore these team systems
structures can only be effective in resolving customer service dilemmas to the
extent that customer workers are willing to raise issues in team meetings.
Apart from structural support mechanisms, research participants discussed the importance and value of emotional support. Emotional support was conceptualised by participants as helping customer workers cope with the stress of dealing with customer demands. This kind of support was perceived as particularly important for new customer workers in a high-pressured sales environment. More experienced customer workers on the other hand were perceived to be more capable in dealing with the pressures of customer demands. Several researchers such as Atkinson (2000), Blodgett (2000), Heiss (1990), Rogers (2003), Singh (1993) and Troyer et al. (2000) have commented on the relevance of emotional support for customer workers and its impact on the quality of service to customers. The research findings reinforce the importance of the emotional support needs of customer workers. Organisational support systems can be conceptualised as a mix of technical and human support (Blodgett). However there has been an over reliance on the technical aspect of support systems in many organisations (Rogers). In the context of a highly competitive industry such as travel, emotional support for customer workers is critical and needs to be emphasised and reinforced.

There is a need for more research of these issues underpinning support for customer workers to manage conflict between customer expectations and organisational capacity with a continuing demand for customer workers. Studies by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (1998) suggest that the demand for customer workers (e.g., salespeople, telemarketers, installers, and customer service agents) will increase more rapidly than other company positions in the short term. As we continue to move from an era in which the manufacture of material goods has dominated the economy to one in which the delivery of information and service becomes pre-eminent, service work is likely to grow in importance.

Therefore, research identifying the factors that positively and negatively affect the job experience of customer workers is important. The likelihood of losing workers is greater if their job experiences are negative, and the costs of turnover in a market in which the demands for the workers is high can be particularly great (Troyer et al., 2000). This research would have implications for recruitment, selection, induction, and learning and development programmes. From the manager’s perspective it would have implications for leading,
resourcing, coaching, counselling, and mentoring workers. Workers would also benefit from a more in-depth understanding of their role.

**Issue 4 - The use by customer workers of available customer and product information to service the needs of their customers.**

Whereas Issue 3 was categorised as an organisational accountability, Issue 4 focuses on the individual accountability associated with the *Customer Focus* attribute. The findings reported in Chapter 4 indicate that customer workers generally did utilise available customer and product information to service the needs of customers. Three themes surfaced from the findings. First, there was evidence that customer workers regularly used organisational support systems to service the needs of customers. Second, apart from the availability of customer and product information, the quality of organisational support structures was dependent on two-way communication between the customer worker and the organisation. In other words, there was a view expressed that customer workers were responsible for informing the organisation of their customer and product information needs in order to facilitate the appropriate support. Third, the effective use of these information systems is also dependent on the organisation letting workers know of their availability. The findings for Issue 3 indicated that organisational support systems could be enhanced to assist customer workers manage conflict between customer expectations and organisational capacity. However, the findings for Issue 4 suggest that customer workers were prepared to use organisational support mechanisms to service the needs of customers.

1) **The Regular Use of Organisational Support Structures**

Despite organisational shortcomings, there was evidence of regular use by customer workers of customer support structures. For instance, airfare coordinators, although they are not always immediately reachable, were acknowledged in the findings as well utilised by the stores when they have challenging airfare inquiries from customers. By utilising the expertise of these airfare coordinators, customer workers exhibited a commitment to using available organisational support structures. However, it was not clear from the findings whether the primary motivation of customer workers for frequently using the support of airfare coordinators was to serve the customer’s needs or comply with FCL’s regulatory airfare requirements. In other words, is the predominant reason
for seeking out the airfare coordinator to resolve an airfare inquiry to provide quality serve for a customer? This rationale is consistent with Noer’s (1997) descriptor for the appropriate individual response to the Customer Focus attribute in his model. Or is the motive to obtain organisational backup for what may be perceived by the customer worker as a difficult customer request? This motive would imply that the customer worker is inclined to serve the organisation’s concerns ahead of the customer’s, the antithesis of Noer’s new employment relationship model.

2) Quality of Organisational Support is Dependent on the Customer Workers Communicating their Support Needs

Despite the research findings suggesting that customer workers are regularly using customer support measures, participants also indicated that the quality of organisational support was dependent on the customer worker communicating their needs. There was a perception that adequate information sources were available, if not always accessible, and that a certain amount of responsibility to use these sources rested with customer worker initiative (see p. 148). Globalisation will continue to put pressure on organisational support structures for customer workers (Bathie & Sarkar, 2002; Sebastianelli & Nabil Tamimi, 2003; Wright, 2002). This continuing pressure is likely to place more onus of responsibility on customer workers to communicate their customer dilemmas so that the organisation may be able to respond with the appropriate support. In other words, the ability of an organisation to be customer-focused is likely to be increasingly dependent on customer workers being accountable for communicating their support needs.

3) The Need for the Organisation to Inform Where and How Information May be Accessed

Having developed a good support system is not sufficient for it to be effectively utilised. The findings concerned with the above theme underline the need for organisational leaders to continually inform customer workers of where and how customer support measures can be accessed and used to provide superior service. Participants perceived that organisational leaders had an obligation to keep customer workers updated on where and how customer support information can be accessed. These perceptions came from experienced as well as inexperienced workers. This is particularly important in an organisation like FCL
where staff turnover is high. A customer worker may not have enough time to discover the processes for accessing customer service information systems themselves without management support. Apart from limited time to be familiarised with information systems, customer workers may be resistant to using technical resources for a variety of reasons (Homburg et al., 2000). These findings suggest that organisational leaders should not be complacent about customer workers being up-to-date with customer service information systems. Moreover, these findings indicate a need to have a perpetual programme in place to reduce any gap between available customer resource systems and the awareness and knowledge of their utilisation by customer workers.

In sum, there was incongruence on the issue of whether the organisation provided support to customer workers to manage potential conflict between the demands of their customers and organisational constraints (Issue 3). The findings suggested some confusion existed among customer workers of what their customer priorities were. Several issues contributed to this confusion: The performance bonus system favoured sales over customer service, the nature of the travel industry placed demands and challenges on customer workers necessitating the need for emotional as well as systemic support, and the notion that these support measures were only as effective as the willingness of customer workers to communicate their needs to organisational members. These findings would suggest that the organisation was not applying Noer’s (1997) criteria of providing *information and incentives for external focus* as effectively as it could. However, there was congruence on the issue of customer workers utilising available customer and product information systems (Issue 4). This suggests that Noer’s individual accountability, namely, *serving the customer rather than their manager*, could be applied in this case. On the one hand, these finding reinforce the literature that the provision of a customer-focus is a complex and challenging interplay of factors that need constant attention by organisational leaders. On the other hand, there is a need for customer workers to be prepared and willing to focus on improving their customer role.
5.2.3 Attribute - Focus on Performance

**Issue 5 - The recognition by employees that good teamwork is common practice.**

There was some evidence to suggest that one of the two elements linked to the attribute of *Focus on Performance* was applicable in this organisational case. Both the individual and organisational perspectives perceived that good teamwork was common practice within FCL. However, some organisational constraints were identified as mitigating against the development of teamwork. For instance, FCL’s performance incentives favour individual achievement over teamwork. Moreover, there was evidence to imply that FCL’s individually-based incentives undermined teamwork. Apart from individually-based performance incentives and their perceived negative impact on teamwork, the impact of personality on teamwork was raised as a dimension impacting on teamwork. Conflicting views of whether team leaders or team members had the greatest influence on generating good teamwork were also raised. Nevertheless, a consistent view prevailed that teamwork was recognised as an important factor in maintaining a pleasant and harmonious working environment. Despite the general view from the findings that good teamwork was widespread, there were conflicting opinions expressed about some of the dimensions of teamwork.

1) *Performance Incentives Favour Individual Achievement*

There was congruence from the individual and organisational perspectives that FCL overwhelmingly favoured individual achievement over teamwork even though there were some incentives for team-based behaviour. While team-based incentives are generally becoming more commonplace in the workplace (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997), the main criterion for pay-for-performance continues to be individual performance (Sturman et al., 2003). Organisational leaders are placing an increasing value and importance on teamwork as an integral performance indicator (Borman & Motowidlo). Teamwork has been identified in the literature as an important dimension of contextual work performance (Borman & Motowidlo; Campbell, 2000; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). These pay systems can encourage inter- and intra-team cooperation (Welbourne & Gomez-Mejia, 1995). It is therefore likely that organisations are being challenged to amend this imbalance of individual over
team performance in their pay and incentive systems. There was agreement between the individual and organisational perspectives in the findings that there was a need for FCL to place greater emphasis on the value of teamwork through their work performance and incentives programmes. Although there was a perception that teamwork was recognised as common practice in FCL, a greater emphasis on team-based performance incentives may legitimise and increase productive team-based behaviours in the workplace.

2) Individual-based Incentives Mitigated Against Teamwork

Individual performance bonuses are unlikely to promote and may even devalue teamwork. Evidence from this study indicated that individual performance overrode teamwork in certain circumstances. Several participants across the three organisational perspectives indicated that teamwork could be improved in certain situations. This margin for improvement was linked to performance incentives being too focused on individual performance. There was however some evidence that teamwork was more likely to be exhibited in the stores. In particular, the value of cross-functional cooperation is likely to be more relevant with the pressure to generate new knowledge within the organisation (Sinkula, 1994; Slater & Narver, 1995); to share information (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Narver & Slater, 1990); and to be more market responsive (Achrol, 1991). On the other hand, the costs of not focusing on organisational behaviour that generates, shares, and responds to new knowledge across functional boundaries are likely to be increasingly high for organisations that reinforce individual performance over team performance.

3) The Impact of Personality on Teamwork

TopMgt participants were generally of the view that the development of good teamwork was the ultimate responsibility of the team leader, and that the personality of the team leader had a significant impact on team behaviours. Moreover, participants perceived that the team leaders in general did not appreciate their role in fostering good teamwork. For example, one participant described an experienced team leader who was so focused on his/her own individual sales performance that he/she neglected his/her leadership role of mentoring, coaching and supporting new, less experienced team members. On the other hand, team participants from the individual perspective underrated their personal influence on creating teamwork. For example, a team leader stressed that
the performance bonus system that promoted high individual performance would work against teamwork and that this had a greater bearing on team-based behaviour than their own influence. Perhaps these findings indicate that an alignment between organisational performance incentives that emphasise teamwork and team leadership behaviour that encourages teamwork may increase the potential for team-based behaviours.

4) The Importance of Unity and Harmony

One of the important consequences of good teamwork emphasised in the findings from the individual perspective was working in a "pleasant and harmonious working environment". For instance, one worker spoke of having a good day because we worked as a team or because we did really well together. The value placed on unity and harmony in the workplace was prevalent in the individual rather than organisational perspective. Most of the literature on teams espouses the virtues of teamwork from an organisational perspective (see Achrol, 1991; Day, 1997; George et al., 1994; Montgomery & Webster, 1997). Few organisation development scholars discuss teamwork from the perspective of how it benefits workers. The findings highlight one of the often missing values of teamwork, namely, a "pleasant and harmonious work environment". This intangible quality of teamwork, whilst benefiting the individual, is also likely to positively impact on organisational outcomes. If team members are generally working harmoniously together, they are less likely to be distracted from their organisational work by interpersonal conflict. Interpersonal conflict is likely to detract attention from achieving organisational outcomes. Although measuring the intrinsic worth of unity and harmony is problematic, its positive impact on performance can be reasonably assumed and may well have an affirmative influence on the job satisfaction of workers.

Issue 6 - The implementation of a reward system for employees who contribute new and innovative ways to make the organisation more effective and efficient.

There was no evidence to indicate that FCL has a performance incentives system in place to reward employees who contribute new and innovative ways to make the organisation more efficient and effective. However, there was evidence that innovative activity did occur quite frequently in the retail stores. These
innovative changes generated in the retail stores were evidently not being communicated throughout the organisation, including other retail stores. This lack of cross-functional communication is likely to mitigate against the need to create new knowledge within the organisation (Sinkula, 1994; Slater & Narver, 1995), to share information across functional boundaries (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Narver & Slater, 1990), and to respond more rapidly to changes in the market. Several participants went so far as to suggest that FCL perpetuated a culture of resisting change. Some participants cited the conservative organisational culture as being more detrimental to encouraging continuous innovation than the absence of formal rewards and incentives. These findings suggest that there was not a causal link between innovative work practices and performance recognition. Therefore this element of the Focus on Performance attribute could not be applied in this case.

1) **Lack of Formal Recognition for Innovation Throughout the Organisation**

The “new work order” literature claims FCL to be an innovative work environment (see Blake, 2001). However, the findings from this study show that innovative practices were restricted to certain parts of the organisation. This would indicate that the sharing of innovative work practices was not being fully utilised throughout the organisation. Workplace innovation has been recognised as an important dimension in work performance. For instance, the recognition of innovative work practices is a dimension of Welbourne et al.'s (1998) performance model. Although Welbourne et al. argue that there is a link between innovation and work performance; the findings suggest that there was a lack of formal recognition for innovation throughout FCL. The modern organisation’s ability to learn and innovate is increasingly linked to the company’s capability to increase revenues, profits, and economic value (Szabolowski, 2000). It is therefore advisable for FCL to put in place a performance incentives system to reward workers for innovative work practices.

2) **Innovation in the Stores**

The retail stores were the only part of the organisation where there was evidence of continuous innovation. There was a perception that workers in the retail stores made suggestions to their work colleagues to improve store efficiency and effectiveness on a regular basis but without any formal recognition. For instance, after team discussions in the stores, ideas were often implemented in the
store environment but were not linked to the performance and incentive system. Moreover, FCL lacked a formal system to communicate and share the knowledge from these ideas across the organisation. FCL does not have a Research and Development (R & D) facility to build and communicate R & D capacities throughout the organisation. At the very least, it is suggested that FCL build R & D capacities within individuals. Either way, it is suggested that a review of organisational support structures that capture, codify, distribute and reward useful ideas for improvement be implemented by organisational leaders to sustain FCL’s productivity. Innovation behaviour is now considered a greater determinant of productivity than accuracy and precision (Greene, 2000) and this value needs to be instilled across the organisation.

From the individual perspective, there was some evidence that participants were discouraged from sharing ideas. Ironically, participants from the organisational perspective claimed that individuals were criticised by managers for not sharing innovative work practices beyond their store environment. Continuous innovation is unlikely to occur without a sustainable support process and reward structure through individual or organisational R & D capacities.

3) A Culture of Resisting Change

Apart from a perception of a lack of innovation across the organisation, the general observation of TopMgt was that the culture of FCL was resistant to change. One participant representing the organisational perspective described FCL as an innovation sharing culture in its early years of formation. According to this participant, as FCL’s business formula became successful in the marketplace, the organisational culture became resistant to workplace improvements that were contrary to FCL’s blueprint. For instance, one long term senior manager reported that there was a link between innovative ideas and performance bonuses in the early days of the business but this is no longer the case. Another TopMgt participant perceived the current culture of FCL as a discouraging and unsupportive work environment for innovation. For example, individuals were observed to be held accountable for the actual implementation of the new idea by management with little or no organisational support. Ultimately the innovator would be held accountable should the idea not be successfully implemented. If continuous innovation is a key to assisting organisations gain and maintain an
edge over their competitors in the marketplace (Greene, 2000), then organisations would be wise to incorporate the dimension of innovation in their Focus on Performance beyond the completion of routine work tasks. Welbourne et al.’s (1998) five-fold work performance model, the first to consider the theoretical implications for performance measurement, includes innovation as one of its dimensions. One of the key challenges for organisations in developing a Focus on Performance is to design, develop and incorporate a process that rewards workers for contributing useful and sustainable organisational improvement proposals.

In sum, there was congruence on the issue of whether employees recognised that good teamwork is common practice in FCL (Issue 5). However, it appears a widely held perception among participants that FCL’s performance focus favours individual achievement over teamwork. Moreover, FCL’s emphasis on individually-based performance incentives was acknowledged as mitigating against good teamwork in the store teams. This over-emphasis on individual performance undermines Noer’s (1997) individual accountability for the attribute of Focus on Performance, namely, to focus on what you do, not where you work. In other words, workers were likely to concentrate their work efforts on their organisational sales performance role over their team role in the stores. Since teamwork has been identified as increasingly linked to organisational productivity, these results stress a need to strike an appropriate balance between individual and team-based performance incentives. The findings for Issue 6 indicate that there was no evidence of performance incentives in place to reward employees who contribute new and innovative ways to make the organisation more effective and efficient. Although there was evidence of innovation occurring in the retail stores, these ideas were not formally recognised and promoted to other stores by organisational leaders. This incongruent finding suggests that Noer’s organisational accountability of linking rewards and benefits with performance rather than organisational dependency is not being applied in FCL. There was a strong belief in FCL’s business formula and an expectation from organisational leaders that workers should follow this proven business blueprint. This trust in and reliance on FCL business methods seemed to stifle innovation beyond the team level, encouraging workers to be organisationally dependent. Like teamwork, innovation has been identified in the literature as increasingly linked to an organisation's productivity. These findings therefore
point to organisations such as FCL taking steps to emphasise the value of teamwork and innovation by incorporating these dimensions in their pay-for-performance schemes wherever possible.

5.2.4 Attribute - Project-based Work

**Issue 7 - The self-sufficiency of work teams to forecast new business and manage their technical and human resources.**

Data from the findings were inconclusive on the issue of whether store teams were self-sufficient in forecasting new business and managing their technical and human resources. The organisational perspective was more positive than the individual perspective about the self-sufficiency of the store teams to make their own decisions. *TopMgt* expressed a view that the retail stores had sufficient freedom to market, promote and attract their own customer base. Some workers expressed a counter view that the stores were not always trusted by managers to make autonomous decisions in areas they perceived to be their domain. However, there was congruence between the individual and organisational perspectives on the need to manage the balance between organisational control and individual team autonomy within the realm of forecasting new business and administering resources.

Forecasting new business and managing technical and human resources are characteristics of one of three dimensions of Yan and Louis’s (1999) boundary activity model. The first of two dimensions investigated in this case was “buffering” (Yan & Louis). Strategies by which buffering may be carried out include forecasting, stockpiling, and levelling (Scott, 1992). In the context of the store teams this may include such activities as developing marketing plans and maintaining their own supply of promotional material, designed to shield the team from outside influences. Therefore the issue of whether work teams were self-sufficient in forecasting new business and managing their technical and human resources was designed to apply the buffering dimension of Yan and Louis boundary activity model.

1) **Sufficient Autonomy**

The majority of the *TopMgt* sample perceived the store teams as having sufficient autonomy to make decisions within the realm of forecasting new
business and administering technical and human resources. These participants cited examples of ways that the store teams could go about exercising autonomy in these areas. For instance, one TopMgt participant indicated that the store teams were free to collaborate with their shopping centre management to advertise and market their FCL store services. Another TopMgt participant conceptualised management’s role as one of providing the stores with the necessary support to permit these teams to exercise autonomy. For example, if a store team made a decision that they needed extra computers, then the organisation was in a position to provide and support the store team. In other words, from the perspective of the organisation, the store teams were autonomous to the extent that FCL could respond to the retail store’s needs by supplying relevant information and resources. This perception however, was not shared by the individual perspective.

2) Insufficient Autonomy

In contrast, there was minimal support from the individual perspective for the notion that the store teams had sufficient autonomy to make their own decisions. The prevailing view of the individual perspective was that the store teams had insufficient autonomy to make decisions about their projected technical and human resource needs. For example, a team leader recounted a time when he needed to refurbish their store. The team in the store decided on purchasing flat screen monitors to maximise space. However, the store was over-ruled by management who indicated to the team leader that the reason their request was denied was the desire to have all the stores looking identical. Although branding and imaging are an important part of marketing, this example created a perception amongst workers in the store teams that they are overly dependent on organisational leaders to make decisions on their behalf.

These contradictory perspectives make it impossible to determine whether the store teams have the necessary autonomy to forecast and manage their resources without further investigation. Nevertheless this polarisation indicates there is some tension between the individual and organisational perspectives in balancing organisational control mechanisms and team autonomy. There was congruence however between the individual and organisational perspectives on the need to find common ground on where organisational control ends and individual store team autonomy begins.

3) A Balance Between Freedom and Control
The dilemma of balancing autonomy and control was best summed up by a MidMgt participant who asked the question: How can the organisation bring the store teams around to the realisation that the store is their own business while management places so many restrictions on the decision-making autonomy of the store teams? On the one hand, organisational leaders at FCL and elsewhere are striving to increase workers’ productivity through autonomous strategies often referred to in the new work order literature as "empowerment". For a large company, FCL prides itself on having an organisational structure with a maximum of three to four horizontal layers (Blake, 2001). However, it is arguably a myth to suggest that FCL employees "own the retail store business". A FCL retail store is part of the larger FCL business system. Employee involvement strategies are often superficially applied and therefore can be ineffective (Hyman & Mason, 1995).

On the other hand, restrictive management practices have become common place in organisations over the past few years. Corporate collapses such as Arthur Andersen, HIH and Enron have resulted in an over-compliance approach to managing. Business schools are now teaching “transaction cost economics” (Goshal, 2003). In essence transactional cost economics argues that the primary reason companies exist is because their managers can exercise authority to ensure that all employees do what they are told. Managers are taught in these courses that staff need to be tightly monitored and controlled. The courses describe this as the exercise of “fiat”, while creating sharp, individual-level performance incentives (Goshal, 2003). Apart from these external moves towards over-compliance, organisational leaders within FCL have a strong belief in FCL’s processes, procedures and systems. There was a view expressed in the findings by organisational leaders that it is in the best interests of the teams to follow FCL’s business formula. This blueprint is highly prescriptive. For instance, in relating the company’s basis for success, Blake (2001) states that FCL “knows there is only one best way to operate, and everyone is expected to operate that way” (p. 189). If this outlook was prevalent throughout the organisation then it is likely this belief will impinge on the store teams’ capacity to make business decisions. In other words, if organisational leaders have a strong belief in their organisation’s processes, procedures and systems, it is likely they will favour organisationally-sponsored solutions over store team self-sufficiency.
Consequently, the issue of balancing these two competing concepts of autonomy and control is challenging. This would suggest that it is crucial for organisational leaders to work with the store teams to clarify, articulate and reinforce the boundaries between organisational control and employee autonomy.

The data did not have the flexibility to determine whether the store teams were using buffering activities to protect and maintain their team-based identity, referred in the literature as “superordinate identity” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Mackie & Goethals, 1987; Tajfel, 1982). By not identifying ample evidence of buffering activities, it was not possible to apply the first of the dimensions of Yan and Louis’s (1999) model. Evidence of buffering at the store team level could suggest some indication of the development of a team-based identity.

**Issue 8 - The encouragement to teams to seek out advice and resources on a needs basis.**

The data from the individual and organisational perspectives were congruent on the issue of organisational leaders encouraging store teams to seek out advice and resources on a needs basis. Three themes explicated this congruent outcome. First, the store teams are required to pay a fee-for-service to management for organisational support and business advice. This fee-for-service arrangement between the store teams and the organisation ensures that FCL’s support services are held accountable for their service to staff. Second, this encouragement to use FCL’s support services translated into a perception of accessibility for the stores to utilise these support services. Third, because there is no obligation to use FCL’s support services, stores are free to seek out that advice and support from the wider marketplace. This competitive arrangement and the fee-for-service approach meant that FCL management advocated their support services to the teams and encouraged them to utilise these services on a needs basis.

The findings suggest that “boundary spanning,” the second dimension of Yan and Louis’s (1999) model, may have application in the case. As distinct from Yan and Louis’s first dimension, boundary spanning is an externally-focused set of behaviours. In other words, the group seeks support outside the team environment to sustain and enhance their progress. There was evidence that FCL actively promoted specialist advice and resources to the stores through this fee-
for-service arrangement. This encouragement was reciprocated by the store teams with instances of boundary spanning behaviours. These instances involved such behaviours as outlined by Scott (1992) including bargaining and negotiation for resources, contracting and cooperation with various business units, and alliance and coalition building with other sections of the business.

1) *Store Teams Pay Fees for Support and Advice*

The most notable evidence impacting on organisational encouragement is the fact that store teams pay fees for support and advice from the organisation. It is mandatory for the store teams to pay a series of fees to the organisation in exchange for support services. This was widely perceived as a mechanism to encourage store teams to utilise these organisational support services or develop local capacity through involvement in human capital. Participants from the MidMgt perspective indicated that they were constantly encouraging the store teams to get value for these compulsory fees. This support fee arrangement facilitated boundary spanning behaviours from the store teams. Examples of boundary spanning activity from the data included negotiating with airfare coordinators, contracting out training and development to FCL, and building alliances with other regionally-based stores. The service fee FCL imposes on the store teams was the single largest contributing factor to encouraging boundary spanning behaviour.

2) *Accessibility of Support*

Several examples from the data suggested that organisational support was not only encouraged but also accessible. One TopMgt participant cited an occasion when he got a positive response to his query from the managing director within 30 minutes. Another participant from the individual perspective indicated that *access to everyone and anybody* was one of the hallmarks of FCL. The accessibility of organisational support measures further encourages the store teams to continually utilise these services and consequently, demonstrate boundary spanning behaviour.

3) *Management Support Linked to Performance*

Yet another compelling factor strengthening *Project-based Work* within the store teams was the link between organisational support and management performance. Performance bonuses are paid to managers on the basis of how often support services such as legal advice, airfare pricing, and employment
recruitment services are utilised by the store teams. As one TopMgt participant put it, *we have to live everyday with our client being in the stores.* Moreover, store teams are free to access those services outside FCL if they choose. Through these competitive arrangements between FCL and the store teams, organisational leaders are held accountable for the provision of quality services. There was agreement that this connection between internal support and performance bonuses was a significant factor in the provision of high quality and easily reached management support services. This in turn led to evidence of boundary spanning activity on the part of the teams.

Evidence of dimensions of Yan and Louis’s (1999) boundary activity model at the team level may signify that the culture of an organisation favours team-based over functionally-based work. Moreover, Yan and Louis’s model may be a useful way of determining the extent to which boundary activities have migrated from functional boundaries to team boundaries. Since boundary activities are a natural phenomenon of all workplaces (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992), their migration from functionalities to teams may illustrate whether Noer’s (1997) attribute of *Project-based Work* can be applied in the organisational case. Noer’s model emphasises the need to focus on *Project-based Work.* *Project-based Work* permits the organisation to be more flexible and adaptable in the marketplace. Individuals also benefit by having more freedom and autonomy to make decisions without the hindrance of functional structures.

In sum, there was an incongruent response on the issue of whether the store teams were self-sufficient to forecast new business and manage their technical and human resources (Issue 7). This ambiguous finding reflects a tension between the self-sufficiency of the stores to make their own business decisions and the imposition of organisational control measures that may suppress team-based autonomy. Consequently, this finding did not reflect Noer’s (1997) individual accountability for the attribute of *Project-based Work,* namely, to focus on what you do, not where you work. Insufficient team autonomy at the store level may reflect an over-reliance on the organisation that may inhibit the development of team-based behaviours. This dependence on FCL’s functionalities is likely to inhibit teamwork at the store level. On the other hand, there was congruence on the issue of FCL encouraging teams to seek out organisational support and advice on a needs basis (Issue 8). FCL promotes their organisational
support mechanisms to the teams at the store level largely because the teams theoretically have the freedom to seek this assistance from outside the organisation. This finding does signify that Noer’s organisational accountability of focusing on projects rather than organisational functions may be applied in this case. Through the fee-for-service arrangement at FCL, the store teams can exercise some degree of autonomy in how and when they use organisational support mechanisms to assist them to achieve their work. These findings tend to suggest some evidence of team-based behaviours using Yan and Louis’s (1999) boundary activity model. Although overall, the conflicting evidence may indicate that FCL is in flux between a functionally-based culture and a team-based culture.

5.2.5 Attribute - Human Spirit & Work

Issue 9 - The commitment to provide good working conditions for employees.

The data provided three different points of view of how “good working conditions” were interpreted by participants. Incongruence between the individual and organisational perspectives on this issue was largely due to the differing interpretations both perspectives had on what constituted "good working conditions". It is acknowledged that the notion of "good working conditions" is a subjective concept and therefore likely to be interpreted in different ways by participants. Working conditions were conceptualised in three different ways by participants. First, balancing work and home duties and responsibilities was conceptualised by several participants as providing good working conditions. For instance, workers were required to attend organisationally-sponsored meetings and functions outside regular working hours and this was perceived by some individuals as putting a strain on workers’ home lives. Second, working conditions were conceptualised by the organisational perspective as the physical and technical conditions of the workplace. The organisational perspective was particularly critical of what they perceived to be a lack of planning in linking people with physical resources. Third, some participants from the individual perspective conceptualised good working conditions as the provision of emotional support. Emotional support was a psychological construct associated with the quality of interpersonal relationships. While the organisation was concerned about the tangible resources available at FCL, the individual perspective conceptualised
working conditions to be the intangible issues associated with work-life balance and emotional support within the workplace.

1) Work/home Balance

Balancing work and home duties and responsibilities was one way participants from the individual perspective conceptualised the quality of their working conditions. In particular, workers cited long working hours in the travel industry and the attendance at compulsory evening meetings, known as “Buzz Nights”. These "Buzz Nights" are planned to "reward" the performance of workers who achieve sales targets. However workers interviewed perceived them as an imposition on their "own" time. Workers therefore generally viewed these functions outside regular working conditions as a factor that lessened the quality of their working conditions. Research in work-life balance provides lots of compelling evidence of how workers across all occupations are suffering both personally and in their family life from working too long hours (Shorthose, 2004). For example, Hochschild’s (1997) research highlights the importance of relational work performed during early mornings or late evenings with tired children often resistant to their parent’s scheduled use of time. Workers indicated the importance of this relational work in the context of pressures it caused their families in having to attend these evening meetings. The capitalist nature of the organisation of work, and the consequent compulsion that most workers experience, suggests the need to reduce work time rather than a re-balance within the organisational setting (Beck, 2000; Gorz, 1999; Hayden, 1999). Work-life balance rhetoric in the “New Work Order” literature often suggests that job redesign programmes, job enrichments and caring policies are a "win-win" solution to the ills of modern work. This self-limiting rationality culminates in a view whose focus is very much about what is good for the organisation. The suggestion that work-life initiatives are a "win-win" situation whereby the interests of the individual workers and the organisation can so easily coincide provides clear evidence of the underlying managerialism within work-life balance initiatives. The managerialism of work-life balance initiatives as they currently stand deal with productivity and financial performance, absenteeism, the retention of key trained staff, and the quality of the firms’ product or service as their central concerns (Shorthose, 2004). Organisations need to take into account the needs and interests of individuals in
their work-life balance policies and initiatives. In so doing, it should be acknowledged that individuals’ needs and interests may not necessarily always coincide with the needs and interests of organisations. This was reinforced by the findings indicating that some organisationally-imposed constraints were perceived to negatively impact on the ability of workers to handle their dual responsibilities of work and home.

2) Physical and Technical Working Conditions

Another way that working conditions were conceptualised by participants was through the physical and technical work conditions. There was incongruence between the individual and organisational perspectives on the quality of these working conditions. While participants from the individual perspective were not critical, the organisational perspective was disparaging of these physical and technical resources. Organisational leaders raised the lack of physical planning, including minimal shortage of work space, the use of out-of-date technology, and no consideration of the relationship between the allocation of work space and the type of work done by workers. However, Isaksen’s (2000) research suggests that upgrading and enhancing the physical and technical resources of an organisation may not necessarily improve the significance workers gained from their work. On the other hand, according to Isaksen (2000), neglecting physical work conditions may adversely affect the meaning workers gain from their work. Notwithstanding the connection between work meaning and the material working conditions, participants from the individual perspective did not raise this as a concern in the discussion on the commitment of the organisation to provide good working conditions. This is despite workers using these resources on a daily basis. This may suggest that other aspects of working conditions were considered more important to workers. Nevertheless, Isaksen’s (2000) research suggests that organisations that neglecting the physical and technical working conditions may contribute to the incapacity of individuals to derive meaning from their work.

3) Emotional Support

A third way working conditions were conceptualised was through emotional support. Participants from the individual perspective raised the relevance of emotional support as an important element in the provision of good working conditions. More specifically, emotional support incorporated the feeling of comfort in coming to work, the approachability of team leaders and the
compatibility of colleagues. This finding suggests that working conditions can be interpreted as the psychological well-being of workers in their interactions with others they work in close contact with. What this finding suggests is that the significance of the intangible concept of emotional support should not be underestimated as a factor in how individuals formulate meaning from their work. In other words, if workers have poor working relationships with their colleagues and organisational leaders, other factors associated with the provision of quality working conditions are likely to negate their emotional well-being in the workplace.

These research findings demonstrate that there are a variety of ways workers conceptualise their working conditions. Organisational leaders should therefore be mindful and aware of the multiple ways employees view working conditions. Moreover, it is doubtful whether attempts by the organisation to enhance the quality of working conditions are likely to be valued by workers unless there is an alignment of values between the individual and the organisation. On the other hand, by neglecting the notion of providing valued working conditions, organisational leaders could be adversely affecting the extent to which workers find their daily work stimulating and meaningful (Isaksen, 2000). As the findings illustrated, sometimes managers may need to accept that alignment between the needs and interests of the individual and the organisation may not always be possible, for example, shortening working hours. Participants interpreted good working conditions in this study as the provision of work/home balance, up-to-date physical and technical resources, and emotional support. Of the three conceptions of working conditions, the only one workers were critical of was work/home balance.

**Issue 10 - The employees find meaning in their work.**

In contrast to Issue 9, there was a high degree of congruence between the individual and organisational perspectives on the issue of whether employees did find meaning in their organisational work. Four themes were implicit from the findings. First, meaning from work for some workers was achieved by “selling people’s dreams”. In other words, meaning in their daily work was established from the satisfaction workers felt from providing customers with a positive, meaningful experience, usually in the form of a holiday. Second, other
participants claim that growing and developing as a person provided them with meaning in their work. There was an acknowledgment that FCL provided workers with skills and opportunities to assist them to be more employable. Third, some workers saw the employee benefits of working for an organisation like FCL as a benefit that connects them to their workplace. For example, the opportunity to travel, purchase FCL shares, participate in health programmes, engage financial advice, and access competitive home loans were some of the fringe benefits of working for FCL. Fourth, there was evidence that some participants found meaning from their work from the respect they received from their colleagues inside the organisation and friends outside the business. According to the findings, a combination of these factors contributed to the widely held acceptance that workers at FCL found their work meaningful.

The individual and the organisation have a dual role in creating a meaningful work construct (Isaksen, 2000). Using Isaksen’s (2000) meaningful work construct, the four themes outlined above and explained in more detail below are illustrations of how workers and FCL have jointly created a meaningful work environment. At the first level of Isaksen’s (2000) model, individuals are concerned with the fundamental question: What is the meaning of work? It is at this basic level that individuals develop their own view of what work in general means to them. The second level of Isaksen’s (2000) model is concerned with the meaning individuals associate with a specific type of work. Participants acknowledged that they were attracted to the travel industry because they have a love of travel. Isaksen’s (2000) third level is associated with the actual work an individual does. In other words, this is the meaning individuals derive from working in their job at FCL. It is at this third level that the organisation can impact on the meaning worker’s gain from their jobs. For example, by providing workers with opportunities to travel, FCL is providing work-related experiences that match the individual’s attraction to working in the travel industry in level two. Alternatively, if FCL did not provide these travel opportunities, there would be a mismatch between the workers conception of working in the travel industry and the work conditions. This could reduce the meaning workers gained from their job. On the other hand, the provision of meaningful working conditions by an organisation (level three) is not likely to be appreciated by workers unless individuals share their significance (levels one and two) (Isaksen, 2000). These
three levels combine to help explain whether a worker derives meaning from their work. Using Isaksen’s (2000) meaningful work construct, it is inferred that the four factors identified from the findings align individual preferences for meaningful work with workplace opportunities to express that meaning.

1) “Selling People’s Dreams”

The first interpretation from the findings of meaningful work from the individual perspective was the satisfaction derived from providing good service to customers. For instance, several participants spoke of their personal experiences in dealing with satisfied customers and how this positively effected their own perception of their organisational work. Some participants described what they referred to as a “good feeling” gained from providing good customer service. One participant described customer service as “selling people’s dreams” and “open the world to people” and the meaning this work provides. This example illustrates a link between the application of an element of Noer’s (1997) attribute of *Human Spirit & Work* and Isaksen’s (2000) meaningful work construct model. The individual accountability for the attribute of *Human Spirit & Work* is to find work that is meaningful. On the one hand, by bringing to FCL an interest in travel, these workers are finding work that matches their preferences. This example fulfils the individual accountability described by Noer for *Human Spirit & Work*. It also exemplifies the second level of Isaksen’s model whereby these individuals were drawn to this organisational work because they had a favourable impression of the specific type of work associated with the travel industry. On the other hand, by providing work that is meaningful, FCL is meeting the organisational accountability for this attribute. In other words, FCL, being in the travel industry, provides retail sales’ roles that fulfil these workers’ interests. This also fulfils Isaksen’s third level of his meaningful work construct through the work experience that gives expression to these individuals’ concept of meaningful work.

Isaksen’s (2000) meaningful work construct is a useful schema for explaining how workers find (or do not find) meaning from their organisational work. However, it has limited application in resolving the perennial challenges of matching people’s needs and interests with their organisational work. For instance, as Isaksen’s (2000) first level of work meaning implies, if individuals generally view work as drudgery, it can be problematic for HR practitioners to
provide stimulating work under these circumstances. If, on the other hand, organisations do not provide stimulating work wherever possible, it can limit individuals’ capacity to find their organisational work meaningful. Nevertheless, if HR practitioners can match individuals’ work preferences with organisational work through rigorous recruitment and selection processes and other HR practices, it can be mutually beneficial for the individual and organisation. The first theme of these findings bears this out.

2) Growing and Developing as a Person

The second theme emerging from the findings that contributed to meaningful work was growing and developing as a person. FCL’s learning and development programme was appreciated from how it benefited both the individual learning and organisational performance viewpoints. For instance, one MidMgt participant made the observation that workers at FCL learn skills that build their personal capacities and potential as an employee. The development of these personal capacities is likely to help the worker become more employable in the wider marketplace. In other words, should they leave FCL; individuals may be in a better position to get work in other organisations through their employment at FCL. This was acknowledged in the findings and inevitably contributed to the meaning individuals gained from employment at FCL. Since the changing individual paradigm over past 25 years favours employability over job security (Simonsen, 1997), the learning of these job and personal skills are likely to be highly valued by the contemporary worker. In reinforcing the value of FCL’s learning and development programme, a team leader observed that growth and development can lead to taking on leadership roles within the organisation. These two observations suggest that FCL’s learning and development programme promotes both individual learning (see Aktouf, 1992; Barrie & Pace, 1999; Berger & Luckman, 1966; Elliott, 2000; Fisher & Torbert, 1995; Nadler, 1984) and organisational performance enhancement (see Kuchinke, 1999; Maitland, 1994; Rummler & Brache, 1990; Stryker & Statham, 1985). The implications of these findings suggest that the meaning individuals gain from participation in relevant learning and development programmes can contribute to personal and work related meaning.
3) Employee Benefits

The third theme emerging from the findings contributing to the creation of a meaningful work construct was the range of employee benefits workers had access to at FCL. Employee benefits have been recognised in the literature as an important dimension in enhancing the well-being of workers (Burton & Fairris, 1999). Specifically, participants refer to the chance to travel, the opportunity to purchase shares, and access to health and financial advisors as peripheral work benefits. The diverse range of employee benefits at FCL is well documented in the "New Work Order" literature (e.g., Blake, 2001). While a preoccupation with salary levels will no doubt exist for all time, more and more workers are seeking benefits that will contribute not only to security, but also to overall quality of life (Garacci & Kleiner, 2003). One worker in the study even suggested that these employee benefits were more important than their salary. Employee benefit programmes can have direct effects on the productivity of worker (Schmidt & Duenas, 2002). Therefore they can help organisations promote company competitiveness in the marketplace. For organisations to maintain their competitiveness, employee benefit programmes must provide not only traditional benefits, but also unconventional benefits. By providing assistance in securing dependent care, creating flexible working conditions, and/or providing on-site care facilities, employers, can and have, improved the productive capacity of their employees (Schmidt & Duenas, 2002). From an individual's perspective, relevant benefits such as those cited in the findings by participants are likely to improve the meaning of employees’ organisational work and contribute to their well-being.

4) Respect From Other People

A fourth way workers found meaning in their work emerging from the findings was from the respect they received from work colleagues and the wider community. For example, within the bounds of the organisation, one participant described FCL as a “real community” in the sense that colleagues were always interested in how you were performing. A long serving worker observed that the longer an individual was employed with FCL, the more meaning they found from their work through the respect they gained from work colleagues. Social status within an organisation may also be an important factor in formulating work meaning. For instance, individuals who hold or seek positions of status within an organisation may be motivated by the respect their colleagues have for their
leadership role. Consequently, this may shape the extent of meaning leaders derive from their organisational work. In other words, positional status may be an important determinant of the ability of some organisational members to construct meaning from their work. The findings also highlighted a causal relationship between the importance of respect beyond the bounds of the organisation and the construction of meaning from organisational work. For example, the three team leaders in the sample commented on the frustrations they felt from what they perceived as a lack of respect for their position from the community-at-large. It is not realistic for a branch manager of a retail store in the travel industry to hold the same respect from the public as a general practitioner for instance. However, it does highlight the importance some organisational members place on the respect of the public. Isaksen (2000) claims that a lack of belief in one’s own attempts to construct meaning as an important factor in inhibiting a meaningful work mindset. The findings suggest that this lack of belief, that may be attributable to the value members of the public place on the work an organisational member does, may have an impact on their own view of the meaning of their work. In other words, the way other people viewed organisational work can be a factor in helping or hindering individuals to finding their work meaningful. Apart from other factors, it is therefore important for HR practitioners not to underestimate the significance of respect from other people in creating meaning from organisational work.

In sum, the data provides evidence of a variety of ways workers conceptualise good working conditions (Issue 9). Incongruence between the individual and organisational perspectives was attributable to the different understandings both perspectives had about the concept of what constitutes "good working conditions". The diversity on how participants conceptualised working conditions illustrates the challenges associated with applying Noer’s (1997) organisational accountability of providing work (wherever possible) that is meaningful. The complexity of how workers develop meaningful work constructs indicate that HR practitioners need to consider these issues (and perhaps others) when attempting to create a meaningful work environment. However, there were several ways workers found meaning from their organisational work (Issue 10). This would suggest that workers did find their organisational work meaningful for a variety of reasons. Congruence on this issue suggests that Noer’s individual
Participants brought to the organisation their own favourable conception of working in the travel industry. FCL, by being able to fulfil these individual expectations of working in the travel industry, vindicated the workers' choice of vocation. Despite these positive individual views expressed in the findings, there were some organisational issues discussed such as work/home balance that potentially inhibits FCL from fully tapping into an individual’s human spirit. If companies can release individuals’ human spirit in their organisational work, it can let loose their creative energy to achieve organisational outcomes (Noer). This is likely to be in the best interests of the individual and the organisation.

5.3 Emerging Themes

As shown in Chapter 4, three more attributes of the new psychological contract additional to the five that underpin Noer’s (1997) model emerged from the findings. The dominant emerging themes were: 1) Loyalty & Commitment, 2) Learning & Development and 3) Open Information. These extra attributes have been cross-referenced with recent literature to seek some face validity. Reviews of the psychological contract literature indicated that these three themes have been cited as significant attributes of the new employment relationship (see Boswell et al., 2001). Moreover, evidence of some application of these three attributes in this study reinforces Boswell et al.'s (2001) claim for including these attributes in their model of the new psychological contract. These three extra attributes of the new psychological contract have been included in an extended version of Noer’s model. Table 17 (see p. 219) illustrates the expanded model. Each attribute has a descriptor of the corresponding individual and organisational accountabilities in line with Noer’s illustrations for his five attributes. The implications for HR practitioners to merge the individual and organisations’ needs and interests for these emerging attributes are discussed below.

1) Loyalty & Commitment

The new psychological contract has challenged traditional notions of employee loyalty and organisational commitment. In broad terms, loyalty and commitment are often conceptualised as a “Two-way Street”. Specifically, the psychological contract has been conceptualised as a two-way street, that is, an
organisation willing to advance the needs and interests of workers in exchange for a commitment from workers to achieving the company’s outcomes (e.g., Levinson et al., 1962; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Noe, 1999; Pate & Malone, 2000; Schein, 1965). In other words, an acceptable framework for visualising “loyalty” behaviours is to view them as components of a fair exchange between employer and employee (Powers, 2000). Research suggests that when employees perceive support from their employer, they are likely to feel an obligation to the organisation and demonstrate their own commitment by working to achieve organisational outcomes (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-La Mastro, 1990; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997). The changing individual and organisational paradigms suggest that concepts such as employability, continuous learning, flexibility and independence are now more relevant to modern workers than job security, qualifications, predictability and organisational dependence (see Simonsen, 1997, p. 16). These paradigm shifts imply that the notion of organisational loyalty and employee commitment has changed significantly in a relatively short period of time. Characterised in exchange terms, the challenge for generating a new understanding of employee loyalty and organisational commitment is to appreciate the changing individual and organisational paradigms (Simonsen) and identify what both entities now need and want from each other in the new reality.

The literature suggests that the opportunity to be more employable (Feldman, 2000) and to have flexible work practices to assist in balancing work and home responsibilities (Stephens & Feldman, 1997) are two areas that can impact on generating organisational commitment from workers. There was an incongruent result from the findings as to whether FCL’s career development programme helps or hinders organisational commitment. On the one hand, participants from the organisational perspective perceived organisationally-sponsored skills development as a way of fostering commitment from workers to achieve FCL’s business goals. In other words, by linking FCL’s career skills development programme with opportunities to advance within FCL, organisational leaders were of the view that this encourages workers to commit to developing their skill-base. However, participants from the individual perspective disputed the link between opportunities for career skills development and the chance for advancement within FCL. One worker suggested that a lack of a clear
career path within FCL resulted in individuals leaving FCL to work elsewhere. Moreover, a team leader suggested that promotion within the organisation was not attractive to all workers. This participant described moving up the ladder of responsibility at FCL as *selling your soul to the organisation*. These observations may indicate that FCL’s career skills programme is not as effective at stimulating commitment from workers as organisational leaders may perceive. Moreover, career skills programmes can be counterproductive in their attempt to instill employee commitment. Organisational leaders need to appreciate that career development is increasingly being viewed by workers as an individual responsibility. As Feldman puts it, “if there is a single indicator in how employees view their careers, it is the decided shift from working one’s way up an organisation to working one’s way out” (p. 1287). In line with the changing needs and interests of workers, HR practitioners ought, wherever possible, to recognise that the focus of a career development programme should be a balance between assisting individuals develop their employability and to specifically develop employees’ skills for organisational advancement. As the findings show, it should be acknowledged by HR practitioners that not all employees want an organisationally-based career or that not all organisations are capable of providing an impressive career path. However, all employees need to grow and develop their skill base to survive in the competitive employment market. By providing a career skills’ development programme in large organisations that may assist in preparing individuals to get other jobs in other organisations, the company may paradoxically preserve these workers enhanced services for longer than otherwise may be the case.

Apart from the issue of career development, several workers raised what they perceived to be concerns about the lack of consideration for assisting individuals balance work and home responsibilities. Various researchers foresee organisations implementing strategies to overcome conflict between work and home as a means of retaining their core employees (e.g., Capelli, 2000; Hochschild, 1997; Stephens & Feldman, 1997). Although career scholars have long been writing that career success cannot be measured simply in terms of advancement (Schein, 1978), it is only relatively recently that a significant number of employees are beginning to define career success in terms of work/home balance rather than hierarchical rank (Stephens & Feldman, 1997).
Some organisations are notable for their efforts in providing flexible scheduling, child care facilities and other support services but, by and large, most organisations have not developed an overall policy for dealing with the changing nature of employees’ time demands (Hochschild, 1997). Future-orientated organisations are likely therefore to develop comprehensive programmes to assist employees to manage work/home conflicts, rather than cobble together ad hoc experimental initiatives. This shift is in keeping with the current realities of a market-driven workforce and the need to attract and keep top performers (Capelli, 2000). In light of the findings, FCL’s management could afford the time to investigate the broad range of issues associated with balancing work and home responsibilities for most employees. This could lead to the implementation of some flexible and sustainable conditions and practices thereby creating the organisational environment to enhance workers’ commitment to achieve organisational outcomes.

In sum, there is a need for HR practitioners to re-conceptualise employee loyalty and organisational commitment based on the changing individual and organisational paradigms. The purpose and values underpinning career development programmes and comprehensive work/home balance policies and practices are two issues emerging from the data that are recognised elements of the recognised attribute of Loyalty & Commitment. It has been suggested that organisations accept the changing individual paradigm of a need to be employable and work in an organisation that takes into account the issue of balancing work and home responsibilities. These kinds of employee loyalty behaviours may possibly exchange for a commitment on behalf of the worker to achieving the organisation’s business goals. Table 17 (see p. 219) reflects the individual and organisational accountability for the additional attribute of Loyalty & Commitment. The individual accountability is commitment to achieving organisational outcomes. On the other hand, the organisational accountability is loyalty to enhancing employees’ personal objectives.

2) Learning & Development

The research findings demonstrate that learning and development initiatives transcend all five attributes of Noer’s (1997) model. These findings are consistent with the psychological contract literature. Although the discussion on the five core attributes of Noer’s model incorporated operation-related learning
and development issues, the overall philosophy and aims of HRD have not been discussed yet. A company’s approach to HRD can explicate the assumptions organisational members have about human nature. An insight into the assumptions organisational members embrace about people can shed light on the nature of the existing psychological contract. It is for this reason that *Learning & Development* has been added as a separate attribute to Noer’s original model. The focus on this attribute is on the organisation’s philosophical approach to learning and development.

As discussed briefly in Chapter 4, there are three predominant philosophical approaches to HRD in the literature which will inform this discussion. The method commonly adopted in most organisations is the “production-centred approach” (see Kuchinke, 1999; Maitland, 1994; Rummler & Brache, 1990; Stryker & Statham, 1985). A production-centred approach emphasises the performance perspective for organisationally-sponsored learning and development programmes. This approach has been embraced and argued passionately by theorists and practitioners (see Kuchinke; Maitland; Rummler & Brache; Stryker & Statham). FCL’s learning and development philosophy is overwhelmingly characteristic of this production-centred approach. In other words, FCL’s HRD stresses a direct link between training focused on enhancing current job skills and organisational performance. One *MidMgt* participant suggested that the perceived relevance of training and development opportunities are evaluated on the basis of whether training would immediately translate into a more productive output. Moreover, several workers from the individual perspective viewed FCL learning and development programmes as predominantly assisting them to complete their organisational task more efficiently or effectively.

A second philosophical perspective on learning and development is the “person-centred approach” (Aktouf, 1992; Barrie & Pace, 1999; Berger & Luckman, 1966; Elliott, 2000; Fisher & Torbert, 1995; Nader, 1984). The emphasis of this approach is on the development of self (Kuchinke). The third school of HRD thinking is referred to as the “principled problem solving approach” (Anderson, 1995; Argyris, 1964; Bandura, 1997; Kincheloe, 1995; Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972; Lawler, 1992; Lawler et al., 1995; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). This approach stresses the integration and synthesis of internal and external demands (Kuchinke). It is argued that the most effective approach in terms of merging the
needs and interests of the individual and organisation is an eclectic approach that bringing to light the strengths of each HRD philosophy.

An eclectic approach that emphasises the dimensions of the three approaches, namely, individual, organisation and situation is likely to benefit both entities in the employment relationship. A multi-dimensional approach to learning and development is more likely to meet the growth needs of workers and also assist in contributing to organisational goals. This eclectic framework is likely to enhance the legitimacy of the corporate HRD function within an organisation by broadening its capacity to influence the workplace culture. Apart from emphasising the strengths of each dimension, an eclectic approach can also minimise the weaknesses inherent in each HRD approach. For instance, both the production-centred and person-centred approaches to HRD can subordinate the individual’s needs and interests to the charter of the organisation. In the production-centred literature, with its foundations based largely in role theory (Stryker & Statham, 1985), individuals can be viewed as abstract and anonymous job-holders or performers who passively react to stimuli in the organisational environment. Notwithstanding the rhetoric of the person-centred approach, in reality this approach can also subordinate the individual to organisational needs and interests. For example, the worker, attending training, is often placed in a position where he/she is required to follow an organisationally-sponsored trainer and curriculum. As Kuchinke (1999) puts it, “the trainee simply follows what the trainer says, there being no logical requirement to engage in independent thinking … the trained person acts simply on the basis of orders from the trainer or on the contents of a manual” (p. 47). Procedural knowledge gained this way is a necessity for some job tasks. However, too much emphasis on procedural knowledge training has the potential to undercut the capacity for the personal development of the individual. Therefore in certain circumstances, the person-centred approach can undermine an individual’s fundamental and inherent agency and self-determination. In practice, both of these approaches to HRD can reinforce traditional mind-sets that consider the organisation’s needs and interests above those of the individual.

It is for these reasons that the principled problem-solving approach needs to be jointly considered with the person- and production-centred perspectives. Understanding the premise of each approach can lead HR professionals to be
more informed about their learning and development choices. For example, an HR professional who is faced with the challenge of overturning lagging work performance might approach this issue from any one or collection of the three theoretical perspectives. From the person-centred perspective, names of top performers could be posted on the luncheon bulletin board and monthly award ceremonies for these employees could be held to instil pride in individual performance. From a production-centred perspective, pay-for-performance systems with the support of organisationally-sponsored skill-based training programmes may provide incentives and skills needed to enhance productivity. Viewed from a principled problem-solving perspective, a management strategy could be proposed to investigate the causes of poor performance, including problem-solving and brainstorming meetings with and between workers. A practitioner who can select from a number of different perspectives to solve HRD challenges has a potentially wider array of possible solutions than one who is only applying one philosophical approach to solving learning and development issues. Furthermore, being aware and knowledgeable of the different HRD perspectives and approaches will assist an organisation to develop a company-based set of guiding philosophies, values, strategies and practices. In terms of managing the HRD multi-dimensional approach, it is therefore suggested that approximately one third of the HRD budget could be devoted to the self-development of workers (person-centred approach), a third for specific training to carry out organisation roles with skill and competence (production-centred approach), and a third to developing problem-solving capabilities (principle problem solving approach). An eclectic approach to learning and development can reinforce the legitimacy of HRD, contribute significantly to balancing the learning and development needs of individual and organisation, and provide HR practitioners with a broader learning and development framework for solving organisational issues.

In sum, it has been argued that an eclectic approach to learning and development, emphasising the dimensions of the individual, organisation and situation is likely to merge the needs and interests of both entities in the employment relationship. Although operational aspects of learning and development impact on all the attributes in the model, the strategic approach to HRD has implications for the psychological contact. *Learning & Development* is therefore considered as a distinct attribute in the new employment relationship.
model. This attribute focuses on the philosophical orientation of an organisation’s learning and development programmes. It is important for HR practitioners to consider their philosophical perspective toward HRD. An organisation's philosophical orientation to HRD is likely to highlight whether the individual, organisation or situation is the predominant concern of its learning and development programmes. The findings indicate that FCL overwhelmingly adopts a production-centred approach to corporate HRD. Table 17 (see p. 219) reflects the individual and organisational accountability for the additional attribute of Learning & Developing. The individual accountability is learning and growing on the job. On the other hand, the organisational accountability is to enter into a partnership for employee development.

3) Open Information

There are three reasons for including the attribute of Open Information in the revised version of Noer’s (1997) model. First, the literatures of the psychological contract (Boswell et al., 2001) and organisational change (Simonsen, 1997) discuss and illustrate the importance and relevance of opening the informational channels within organisations to the psychological contract. Second, apart from the potential commercial advantages of resolving the “initiative paradox” (Campbell, 2000) and having a flexible, adaptable and responsive organisational structure, there has been renewed interest in participative values, cultures, and everyday practices of organisations as they operate in an increasingly competitive global market (Cheney, 1999). Third, evidence from the findings suggests that worker initiative and participation in decision-making is being challenged at FCL. The application of Campbell’s model supports the claim that elements of the attribute of Open Information can be applied in this case. These three reasons substantiate Open Information as an additional attribute of Noer’s (1997) model.

With the spread of employee participation programmes, the challenge of resolving the initiative paradox involves greater numbers of workers and organisational leaders across more and more industry groups. The initiative paradox is defined as managing the extents and limits of worker participation in decision-making contexts. It is therefore concerned with the flow and quality of information that will provide a responsive environment to enable appropriate participation by workers in organisational decision-making. Organisational
development scholars have argued that if organisations are to flourish in the volatile global environment and meet the challenges of the geographical dispersion, electronic collaboration, and cultural diversity (Stohl, 2001), they must have open information systems. These communication systems promise to assist organisational members to become more knowledge intensive, radically decentralised, participative, adaptive, flexible, efficient, and responsive to rapid change (see Hastings, 1993; Kozmynski & Cushman, 1993; Miles & Snow, 1986; Monge & Fulk, 1999; Nohira & Berkley, 1994; Taylor & Van Every, 1993). More specifically, the value of having employees participate in implementing projects and programmes has been emphasised in settings such as information systems (Jarvenpaa & Ives, 1991), manufacturing (Baker, McKay, Morden, Dunning, & Schuster, 1997; Satizadeh, 1991), total quality (Blest, Hunt, & Shadle, 1992), and small groups (Carroll, 1997), as well as internationally (Cahuc & Kramarz, 1997). The growing literature in this area would suggest that managing worker initiative is an ongoing concern for all organisations.

Incongruent perspectives from the findings suggest that the initiative paradox is not always resolved within FCL. For instance, from a positive perspective, several participants used the word “ownership” to describe how they felt about their involvement in the organisation. On the other hand, as previously discussed (see p. 169), other evidence (pertaining particularly to the attribute of Project-based Work) suggested a tension between the autonomy of the store teams and the control the organisation imposed on the teams. These conflicting perspectives about how well initiative is managed suggest that a more systematic investigation is needed using Campbell’s (2000) framework.

Campbell’s (2000) model is designed to manage most contexts of workplace initiative. It contains four potential resolution strategies. These include: Goal alignment, Communication of boundaries, Emphasis on information sharing, and Dynamic accountability. The model outlines the limitations and specific recommendations for the usage of each approach. There are some examples from the findings that two of the approaches, namely Communication of boundaries and Emphasis on information sharing, are evident in the case. Research participants from the individual perspective indicated that they understood the extent and limits of their authority and under what circumstances they could be resourceful. These examples indicate that boundaries are to some
extent communicated by organisational leaders to workers. The fact that information sharing is linked to the performance bonus system suggests that a second approach of Campbell’s can be applied, emphasising information sharing. On the other hand, issues arising from work/home balance discussed earlier in this chapter suggest that there was a need for some realignment to be done between individual and organisational goals. Other evidence indicated that workers were made accountable for the failure of not being able to implement innovative ideas. This example fits Campbell’s *Dynamic accountability* descriptor. Although it is evidence of *Dynamic accountability*, it is argued that this is the wrong circumstance to implement this approach since it is likely to mitigate against continuous innovation. Organisations would do well to examine their own participation programmes and use Campbell’s framework to enhance the information channels between the organisation and individual.

In sum, it has been argued that the attribute of *Open Information* be incorporated in the modified new employment relationship model. Apart from references in the psychological literature, there has been a renewed interest in participative values in organisational settings and the findings suggest that elements of this attribute are applicable. Campbell’s (2000) “Initiative Paradox” model has been discussed as a useful framework for organisations to manage most contexts of workplace initiative. In applying Campbell’s model to the findings, there was some confusion about when it is considered desirable to display initiative. By applying Campbell’s model, organisational leaders have a useful framework for guiding workers’ initiative. Table 17 (see p. 219) reflects the individual and organisational accountability for the additional attribute of *Open Information*. The individual accountability is contributing to decision-making processes. On the other hand, the organisational accountability is to providing employees with access to information about company goals, needs, and HR systems.

The above discussion on the eight attributes of the new employment relationship through the application of elements of each attribute has implications for individuals, organisations and HR practitioners. For HR practitioners, the first implication relates to the advantages of providing a flexible employment environment (*Flexible Employment*). More specifically, there are advantages for organisations and individuals to have a programme in place for workers to rotate
and sample a variety of job tasks within the organisation. This kind of flexible employment programme translates into manoeuvrability in the fast-changing marketplace. The findings also confirmed that individuals understood the benefits of such a programme in expanding their job role. Of most benefit to fulfilling the needs of individuals was to expand their array of job skills to maintain their employability. The second implication is that to create an organisation that is customer-focused is a difficult and complex assignment (*Customer-focus*). That in-charge of an organisation’s customer support systems need to be in constant two-way communication with customer workers to ensure that these systems are being utilised to their full capability. The third implication is to concentrate on developing a more diverse and performance-focused incentive scheme, wherever possible (*Focus on Performance*). A multi-dimensional performance incentive scheme can encourage appropriate workplace performance and minimise debilitating behaviours. The fourth implication is that the development of team-based culture can be measured in terms of the extent to which these teams are encouraged to display boundary spanning behaviours (*Project-based Work*). Evidence of boundary spanning behaviours at the team level is likely to correlate with the degree of autonomy the team displays in making business-related decisions. The fifth implication is that the potential value of a workplace that is conducive to tapping into an individual’s human spirit requires a lot of investigation to identify the array of factors workers associate with good working conditions (*Human Spirit & Work*). Once this investigation has been completed, strategies such as solutions to help workers cope with managing the work/home balance are likely to benefit both the individual and organisation. This may have a positive impact on the meaning workers associate with their organisational work. These organisational improvements handled appropriately and correctly, are likely to fill the organisation with workers who find more meaning in their work. This is likely to translate into gains in productive output for the company. These implications stemming from the research findings can assist HR practitioners to create the right workplace conditions for developing a new psychological contract between individual and organisation. The final chapter discusses the possibilities these findings have for future research.

Apart from the implications derived from the structured themes, inferences could also be drawn from the three emerging attributes. For instance,
organisations that exhibit appropriate loyalty behaviours to their employees may attract committed workers who may stay employed by the organisation for longer than would otherwise be the case (Loyalty & Commitment). There were a variety of strategies to reflect loyalty behaviours from employees. For example, the design of a career development programme that focuses on the needs of the individual to become more employable in the wider marketplace. Another strategy is to put in place flexible working arrangements to assist workers to manage their home and work responsibilities more comfortably. From the second emerging attribute, the implication was the importance of implementing a philosophical learning and development framework to co-ordinate corporate programmes. This approach should be multi-dimensional and reflect the importance of the individual, situation, and organisation. This eclectic framework is likely therefore to benefit both the individual and organisation. Finally, it is important to develop a methodical approach to managing worker participation programmes (Open Information). Open information systems are likely to contribute to resolving the “Initiative Paradox” and provide workers with a framework for displaying enterprising behaviours. These implications further assist HR practitioners to merge the needs and interests of organisation and individual.

Table 17 illustrates the extensions to Noer’s (1997) model with the three additional attributes. The appropriate individual and organisation responses are also included.
Table 17  Modified Employment Relationship Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Aspects of the Relationship</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work in more than one organisational setting.</td>
<td>Flexible Employment</td>
<td>Encourage workers to work in other organisations or organisational units within the same company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve the customer not your manager.</td>
<td>Customer-focus</td>
<td>Information and incentives for external focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on what you do, not where you work.</td>
<td>Focus on Performance</td>
<td>Link rewards and benefits with performance rather than organisational dependency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept and embrace yourself as a temporary employee.</td>
<td>Project-based Work</td>
<td>Focus on projects rather than organisational functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find work that is meaningful.</td>
<td>Human Spirit &amp; Work</td>
<td>Provide work (wherever possible) that is meaningful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to achieving organisational outcomes.</td>
<td>Loyalty &amp; Commitment</td>
<td>Loyalty to enhancing employees’ personal objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning and growing on the job.</td>
<td>Learning &amp; Development</td>
<td>A partnership for employee development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to decision-making processes.</td>
<td>Open Information</td>
<td>Providing employees with access to information about company goals, needs, and HR systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4  Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the application of Noer’s (1997) model to the organisational case. It should be restated that these results are not generalise to other parts of the company or, indeed, other organisational settings. The application of Noer’s (1997) model was done by firstly linking the research findings to the relevant literature on the psychological contract. Congruence between the individual and organisation perspective suggested a
similar perspective between organisational leaders and workers. This indicates that an element underpinning one of Noer’s attributes could be applied at FCL. Incongruent findings, on the other hand, meant that there was a conflicting view between the two organisational entities. Incongruent findings therefore made it doubtful whether an element was being practiced in the case. Using this criteria, the findings did indicate that at least one element of each of the five attributes was being practiced at FCL. Apart from the structured themes, three emerging themes were discussed including Loyalty & Commitment, Learning & Development, and Open Information. These emerging themes were validated through supporting literature. Researchers in these fields provided a number of useful work-based models and theoretical constructs to consider when analysing the data. These theoretical frameworks could be linked to data from the findings and elements of these attributes were being practised in FCL. These findings did have practical implications for HR practitioners. These implications are not only predominantly useful for HR practitioners and organisational leaders but also provide guidance to workers of their accountabilities in the new employment relationship.

This empirically researched model, which needs to be validated in other contexts, can serve a number of useful purposes for researchers and practitioners. First, the model serves as a benchmark for organisations wanting to change the psychological contract by illustrating the individual and organisational accountabilities for each of the eight attributes. Second, the model provides the foundation for assisting organisations to strategically focus on some of the core issues affecting the psychological contract. Third, it validates a research approach for assessing and developing strategies to move towards a new employment relationship. The benefit in developing a new employment relationship is the merging of the needs and interests of individual and organisation. Fourth, it provides a rigorous and unique research instrument for researchers to research other organisations and industries and to further strengthen the model. It is to be hope that researchers and practitioners will be able to utilise this extended new employment model in a variety of ways.
CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The purposes of this final chapter are four-fold. The first is to re-visit the research question and briefly discuss it in relation to the research findings. The findings confirmed the attributes of Flexible Employment, Customer-focus, Focus on Performance, Project-based Work, Human Spirit & Work, Loyalty & Commitment, Learning & Development, and Open Information as core attributes of the new employment relationship. Secondly, this chapter outlines how the study contributes to the literature in the field. Since this is one of the few case studies cited in the psychological literature, it does potentially make a useful contribution to the literature. Noer’s (1997) empirically tested model may be used in other organisational settings. The third intention is to identify some of the limitations of the research. In particular, the sample size and design, including the use of MSA data analysis to inform the focus group interviews and the structure and frequency of the focus groups are some of the issues discussed. Finally, this chapter concludes with some potential opportunities for future research and practice. In particular, it is suggested that this model can be used for cross-industry and cross-cultural research. Cross-industry and cross-cultural research may provide researchers with the prospects of making some generalisations about the socio-political influences on the psychological contract within the context of the organisational setting. These four issues are addressed to conclude this study.

6.2 Addressing the Research Question

The findings from this study have addressed the research question: What are the core attributes of the new employment relationship? This research question was answered by addressing three underpinning research objectives. The first objective was to apply Noer’s (1997) model in a commercial organisation. As discussed in Chapter 5, it was possible to apply certain elements of all five attributes of Noer’s model to the organisational case using the research approach outlined in chapter three. More specifically, and using the criteria of a congruence
between the individual and organisational perspective, there was evidence that employees were motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills under the attribute of Flexible Employment. In terms of Customer-focus, there was evidence that customer workers were using available customer and product information to service the needs of customers. Under the attribute of Focus on Performance, there was evidence to support the proposition that employees recognised that good teamwork was common practice at FCL. In terms of Project-based Work, there was evidence that the organisational leaders encouraged teams to seek out advice and resources on a needs basis. Under Human Spirit & Work, there was evidence that employees were generally perceived to find meaning in their work. These research findings suggest that Noer’s (1997) model does have some application in a commercial organisation.

To give a balanced view, there was incongruence between the individual and organisational perspectives in one of the issues linked to all five attributes. Therefore, some elements of Noer’s (1997) model were not clearly practised in the organisational case. For instance, under the attribute of Flexible Employment, there was an incongruent response as to whether employees had the opportunity to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills. It was unclear whether the organisation provided adequate support for customer workers to manage the inevitable conflict between customer expectations and organisational constraints under Customer-focus. In terms of the attribute of Focus on Performance, there was no evidence that the organisation had implemented a reward system for employees who contributed new and innovative ways to make the organisation more effective and efficient. Under Project-based Work, there were contrasting perceptions on the issue of whether work teams were self-sufficient to forecast new business and manage their technical and human resources. In terms of Human Spirit & Work, there was also conflicting perceptions about the organisation’s commitment to provide good working conditions for employees. The mixed perceptions about these issues make it difficult for the researcher to infer that these elements were present in the organisational case.

The second research objective was to investigate the interrelationship between the five attributes of Noer’s (1997) model. Although the findings were analysed and discussed thematically in Chapters 4 and 5, three emerging attributes of the new employment relationship traversed the five structured themes. More
specifically, elements of the additional attribute of *Loyalty & Commitment* correlated with the attribute of *Project-based Work*. Elements of *Learning & Development* could be cross-referenced with elements of the attributes of *Flexible Employment, Customer-focus* and *Human Spirit & Work*. The additional attribute of *Open Information* corresponded with elements of all five of Noer’s (1997) attributes. This would suggest there were demonstrable correlations in each attribute of the model.

Finally, the third research objective of this study was to extend, modify, or reject Noer’s (1997) model as a valid schema of the new employment relationship. Through the content data analysis process described in Chapter 3, Noer’s (1997) model was extended to incorporate the attributes of *Loyalty & Commitment, Learning & Development* and *Open Information*. These new attributes were validated with reference to the psychological literature. By answering each of these research objectives, it confirms the attributes of *Flexible Employment, Customer-focus, Focus on Performance, Project-based Work*, and *Human Spirit & Work* as core attributes of the new employment relationship. In addition, the attributes of *Loyalty & Commitment, Learning & Development*, and *Open Information* can also be validated from the literature. The extended version of Noer’s model has achieved the final research objective and identified eight attributes of the new employment relationship.

### 6.3 Contribution to the Literature

There are several ways that this research study contributes to the current psychological contract literature. First, from an extensive survey of the literature, this study is one of the few research studies undertaken to date that have attempted to apply a model of the new employment relationship in an organisational case. As such, this study provides a case study account of how the core attributes of the new employment relationship can be applied in an organisational setting. The second contribution this study makes to the literature is by making available a working model of the new employment relationship. This model can therefore be utilised by HR practitioners and researchers as a useful framework for investigating the psychological contract in other organisational settings. The third contribution this research makes to the literature is to advance
the knowledge about the new psychological contract phenomenon by considering implications for the individual and the organisation within an organisational setting. In practice, by having a more detailed understanding of the individual and organisational responsibilities in the new psychological contract, researchers can cross-reference these findings with similar studies in other organisational settings. These are some of the ways that this research study can significantly add to the expanding literature on the psychological contract.

6.4 Limitations of the Research

Some issues that may be considered limitations in this research study are the overall size of the sample, the capacity of the research design to make generalisations within and outside the organisational case, the use of MSA data analysis to create a focus group schema, and the structure and frequency of the focus groups. These issues are discussed below.

A sample size of 19 research participants is proportionately a very small representation for an organisational case with hundreds of thousands of employees worldwide. However it is argued that the stratified design of the research sample provides a reasonable cross-section of the organisation for the relatively small sample size. Stratified sampling design does provide the opportunity to make stronger inferences about different organisational perspectives (Berg, 1995), when the sample is representative of those strata. Consequently, the organisational case was divided into three strata, namely, TopMgt, MidMgt and Workers and the 19 research participants originated from these three strata. Naturally, the number of participants representing each stratum was even smaller than the total sample of 19. Nevertheless, participants from each stratum were encouraged by the researcher to look at the issues presented in the focus groups from their organisational perspective. Therefore it was possible to make inferences about the congruence or incongruence between the individual and organisational perspectives. Since the focus of the study was on the capacity to make inferences about the application of Noer’s (1997) theoretical model, a stratified sample design was central to achieving this objective, not withstanding the relatively small size of the overall sample. In other words the quality of the sample was central to supporting the objectives of this study than the quantity of participants.
While a stratified sample design can assist in making tentative inferences between organisational perspectives, a case study design prevents these inferences from being generalisable to other populations within the organisation and in other organisations. However, an exploratory case study design can be generalisable to theoretical propositions (Yin, 1994). Case study design was therefore selected as the appropriate research design to make generalisation about the application of elements of Noer’s (1997) model to the case. Although not directly generalisable to other populations, the theoretical generalisability does raise questions and identifies potential issues that may require further investigation within and outside the case studied.

The unusual methodology of using a MSA data analysis technique to create a focus group schema may be considered as having shortcomings. Central to appreciating the suitability of this approach is to understand the justification behind the methodology. The rationale of using a MSA data analysis strategy was to identify the level of congruence between three organisational perspectives on elements of the five attributes of Noer’s (1997) model. HIPSYS, a MSA instrument, was used to analyse the data from the survey. The HIPSYS report (see Appendix 4) illustrates the degree of congruence between TopMgt, MidMgt and Worker perspectives in a variety of ways. An analysis of the survey data using HIPSYS provided the researcher with acute examples of congruence between organisational perspectives for further investigation in the focus group interviews. Consequently, of the 37 issues that made up the survey instrument, 10 were selected as the focus group schema. By using MSA in this way, it assisted the researcher to prioritise issues for future discussion in the focus groups.

Due to ongoing debate in the literature, the size (Jennings, 1997; Morgan, 1992; Powell & Single, 1996) and frequency (Kitzinger, 1995; Morgan, 1992, 1997; Powell & Single, 1996) of the focus groups used in this study will inevitably come under scrutiny. The size of the groups in this study ranged from three to nine participants. Although these participant numbers are in the range prescribed in the literature, the overriding consideration was the recruitment of available and willing participants. It is acknowledged however, that the challenging task of recruiting accessible and agreeable participants limited the size of each focus group. In terms of frequency, the literature suggests that the ideal number of sessions should be dependent on the quality of information
generated from the groups (Morgan, 1997). Although in practice, issues such as
time constraints, budget, and participant availability had a significant impact on
the number of groups conducted in this study. Morgan (1997) suggests that one
way of balancing design ideals with practical issues is to plan for a rational
number of groups and remain flexible on the basis of the quality of data. This
principle was adopted in this study. Four focus groups were planned and executed
and provided sufficient information to make reasonable inferences about the
application of Noer’s (1997) model without the need to conduct subsequent
sessions.

These are some of the major research issues shaping the research and
may be perceived as limiting the potential outcomes. There may well be other
aspects of the research process that may be challenged, although every effort has
been made by the researcher to explicate and justify the approach described in the
research study.

6.5 Opportunities for Future Research

This study opens up possibilities for other researchers to conduct future
research in a number of areas discussed below. Since the start of this study there
has been an increase in the number of studies of the psychological contract. The
majority of the published studies have been on psychological contract breach
(Beaumont & Harris, 2002; Llewellyn, 2001; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Pate
& Malone, 2000; Pate et al., 2000; Robinson, 1996; Robinson et al., 1994;
Rousseau, 1990, 1995). More recently, studies have focused on the mind-set
employees have of the psychological contract (De Meuse et al., 2001; Kickul,
2000; McDonald & Makin, 2000; Sparrow, 2000). Few published studies to-date
have tested theoretical models of the psychological contract (see Schalk et al.,
1998). This study is a worthy addition to the literature, in particular on the
application of a new employment relationship model in a selected organisational
case. It is to be hoped that this study provides interested researchers with an
opportunity to apply the modified new employment relationship model originating
from Noer’s (1997) conceptual work in other contexts.

Since generalisations from the case study findings cannot be applied
directly to other settings, the opportunity to test this model in a variety of
contexts, including other parts of FCL, is an appropriate avenue for further research. For instance, it would be useful to discover whether this new employment relationship model can be applied across regions of FCL, other industry groups, including the public sector. Future studies within FCL and across industry groups may provide researchers and HR practitioners with an understanding of how different business groups and organisations are affected by the new psychological contract phenomenon. Conclusions drawn from cross-regional and cross-industry studies should assist HRD professionals to make assumptions about managing an organisation’s transition from the traditional to the new employment relationship.

Apart from cross-regional and cross-industry research possibilities, cross-cultural studies may permit researchers to make generalisations or distinctions about the socio-political influences on the psychological contract. For instance, certain customs, traditions and values could influence the way particular elements of the model are interpreted and applied in organisations. Moreover, cross-cultural studies may indicate that it is not permissible to oversimplify this model’s application in other cultural settings. It should be noted that this new employment relationship model is heavily influenced by modern Western thinking and the assumptions underpinning the model may need to be questioned in the context of their application in other cultural settings. Research across cultural groups promises to test the underlying assumptions of this model.

Future research may extend this model to include other attributes of the new employment relationship not discussed in this study. Moreover, the three emerging attributes of Loyalty & Commitment, Learning & Development and Open Information need further verification. Corroboration of these three new attributes and the addition of other attributes will contribute to a more in-depth understanding and clearer definition of the phenomenon of the new psychological contract. This should provide HR practitioners with a broader range of strategies to identify and develop appropriate mind-sets for the employment relationship for the twenty-first century. It has been argued that this is in the best interests of the individual and organisation.
6.6 Opportunities for Practitioners

The rationale for this research study has been the need for HR practitioners to embrace the attributes of the new employment relationship as a means of merging the needs and interests of both entities of the employment relationship. This reflects the changing individual and organisational paradigms. However, with 200 years of conditioning, the challenges of changing the mind-sets that support the traditional employment relationship should not be underestimated. Despite these challenges, it has been argued that there is a need to alter these traditional mind-sets where ever they may exist. The costs to both the organisation and individual are too great to continue with a “them and us” employment relationship mentality characteristic of the traditional employment relationship. Moreover, the “New Work Order” literature would have us believe that this transition in the psychological contract is well and truly under way. However, the reality in most workplaces is contrary to the rhetoric of the popular management literature. For instance, FCL has been written up as a “High Performance Workplace” in the new work order literature. However, the findings indicate that FCL (and possibly other organisations written up as high performing workplaces in the popular management literature) are still struggling to make the transition to a new psychological contract.

In practice, the research methodology provides HR practitioners with a unique and rigorous consulting methodology that can identify the elements of eight core attributes of the new employment relationship in an organisational setting. Further, this approach can assist in identifying the transactional and relational aspects of the employment relationship that may require additional resources to enhance an organisation’s capacity to merge the needs and interests of both entities in the employment relationship. This consulting approach may provide a creditable substitute for many outdated HRD strategies. These traditional HRD strategies often fail to take into account the changing individual and organisational paradigms over the past 25 years. The traditional approach to change management is likely to continue to be unsustainable in bringing about sustained changes in workplace mind-sets and subsequent behaviour. This consulting approach should be viewed as a paradigmatic foundation upon which selected and carefully targeted HRD strategies will have a role to play in changing
mind-sets of the employer and employee. The end result is hopefully a new approach on a phenomenon that is increasingly written about in the literature.

6.7 Conclusion

This study was concerned with responding to the research question: *What are the core attributes of the new employment relationship?* in one organisation. This chapter has been concerned with the broader issues associate this study. In particular the study was concerned with answering the research question and identifying the core attributes of the new employment relationship. To do so, the researcher attempted to apply Noer’s (1997) new employment relationship model to an organisational case written up in the new work order literature as a “High Performance Workplace”. It was therefore possible to validate *Flexible Employment, Customer-focus, Focus on Performance, Project-based Work* and *Human Spirit & Work* as core attributes of the new employment relationship. Apart from these five attributes, evidence of three new attributes of the new employment relationship emerged from the research findings. These emerging attributes have been labelled: *Loyalty & Commitment, Learning & Development* and *Open Information*. This research was therefore able to extend Noer’s (1997) model to include eight core attributes of the new employment relationship.

As discussed, much of the new work order literature makes sweeping claims about the high performance workplace with little or no empirical research. Moreover, many of these studies only focus on a single attribute such as team building or empowerment which is too simplistic in an environment that is interrelated and complex. This study, on the other hand, examines several attributes of the presumed new psychological contract and looks for causal links between these features in a workplace with a reputation as being one of high performance. It may therefore be possible to make more credible assertions and generalisations about the prevalence of the so called *high performance workplace*. On the other hand, it would be inappropriate to apply any conclusions from this study to other organisations without additional research. However, it is to be hoped that this study may provide the impetus for future comparative studies and in-depth research across industries and workplace cultures.
Appendix 1 - Official Letter of Permission from FCL
This is to confirm that Tim Baker a doctoral student from QUT has been asked by FCL to survey some of QLD Flight Centre teams over the next couple of months as part of his EdD research. If you have any further queries regarding this please don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards
Joell Ogilvie.

Joell Ogilvie
National Leader
QLD/NT/NSW
0412 242 986

"LOWEST AIRFARES GUARANTEED"
Appendix 2 - Summary of Core Elements of Noer’s (1997) Model
Flexible Employment

Casey, Keep, and Mayhew (1999) offer a fourfold definition of employment flexibility. Flexible Employment (Noer, 1997) is defined as either functional, financial, temporal or numerical. Functional flexibility has the greatest capacity to serve the changing mutual interests of the worker and organisation. Functional flexibility refers to the ability to transfer labour between tasks and break down job demarcations (Cook, 1998). Elements may include retraining, multi-skilling, and motivation and incentive schemes (Greene, 2000). On the one hand, an organisation’s commitment to functional flexible employment can be determined by the degree to which there is evidence of the commitment and application of these management initiatives. On the other hand, evidence of employee’s commitment to retraining and multi-skilling, and their receptiveness to flexible employment incentive schemes also need to be determined.

Survey statements that reflect this definition of Flexible Employment.

- The organisation has policies and procedures in place to continually upgrade the job skills of employees.
- Employees seek out opportunities to upgrade their job skills.
- There is a programme in place in this organisation to assist employees to become multi-skilled.
- Employees seek out opportunities to complete work assignments outside the scope of the boundaries of their job.
- There is an incentive scheme in this organisation for employees to upgrade and expand their job skills.
- Employees are generally motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills.
- Employees have opportunity to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills.

Customer-focus

Developing an organisation’s Customer-focus (Noer, 1997) depends on the implementation and acceptance of reward and incentive systems, a skill development programme and strategies in place to overcome restrictive career paths for customer workers. Additionally, customer workers need
assistance and a willingness to **overcome conflicting expectations from their customers and their organisational leaders**, with their unique “boundary-spanning” (Adams, 1976) role. Customer workers need **adequate resources** to service the customer’s needs. **Customer Relationship Management** (CRM) systems that take into account both people and systems are required. Evidence of these elements from the perspective of employees and organisational leaders would be required to determine the extent to which the organisation can be said to have a customer-focus.

**Survey statements that reflect this definition of Customer-focus.**

- Management has an incentive scheme in place to reward quality customer service.
- Employees are motivated to provide quality customer service.
- The organisation has a comprehensive, on-going customer service training programme.
- Employees willingly participate in training programmes to develop their customer service skills.
- The organisation has in place a career path for their customer workers.
- Customer workers have scope to develop a career path in the organisation.
- Customer workers understand the extent and limit of their role when servicing the needs of their customers.
- The organisation provides customer workers with clear guidelines to avoid conflict between meeting what the customer wants and what the organisation can provide.
- Customer workers are provided with all the necessary customer and product information to service the needs of its customers.
- Customer workers use available customer and product information to service the needs of their customers.
- The organisation has up-to-date processes and systems in place to track the history of customers.
- Customer workers understand how to use customer information systems.
Focus on Performance

*Focus on Performance* (Noer, 1997) in the workplace has been conceptualised as encompassing both job and non-job roles (Welbourne, Johnson, & Erez, 1998). Competency-based performance systems normally focus on a narrow definition of performance to only include job and organisational roles (Mansfield, 1996). Welbourne et al.’s. (1998) research identifies three additional roles: **team**, **career**, **innovation**. Gain sharing plans and team-based incentives both support behaviours associated with being a team member. These pay systems can also encourage cooperation among team members and between teams (Welbourne & Gomez-Mejia, 1995). Evidence in organisations of career role performance systems is individuals being rewarded for career accomplishment (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright, 1994). Employers can emphasise the importance of career roles either directly, through compensation plans, or by providing career development opportunities for employees. This may take the form of rewards and incentives linked to training. For instance, another pay system that emphasises the career role is skill-based. Including innovation in a work performance model, implies that employees need to behave in innovative ways, not just applying their creative skills to their specific jobs, but also contributing to the effectiveness and adaptability of their organisation as a whole. An increasing number of companies are providing compensation incentives, such as gain sharing and cash rewards for suggestions, for original and entrepreneurial contributions.

The **Survey statements that reflect this definition of Focus on Performance.**

- The organisation has rewards and incentives in place for good team work.
- Employees recognise that good team work is common practice in this organisation
- Employees are encouraged through incentives to learn new career enhancement skills.
- Employees are rewarded by the organisation for learning new skills to enhance their careers.
- Employees are rewarded for suggesting new or improved ways for the organisation to be more efficient or effective.
Employees regularly come up with innovative ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the business.

**Project-based Work**

Yan and Louis’s (1999) empirical research investigated the presence of three types of boundary activities in evidence in large organisation undergoing transformation from a functionally dominant firm to a cross-functional structure. These three generic boundary activities are: “buffering”, “spanning”, and “bring up boundaries”. Buffering, as a system’s self-protection strategy, is undertaken in response to (or in anticipation of) disruptive forces in the environment that would intrude on the system. This strategy emphasises the need to close the system off from exposure to environmental uncertainties and disturbances in order to enhance the possibility of rational action within the system (Cross et al., 2000). Strategies by which buffering may be carried out include forecasting, stockpiling, and leveling (Scott, 1992). Fundamentally, evidence of buffering at the work unit level includes the advent of formal strategies and procedures and/or informal codes of deflecting, managing, protecting against external demands on members and other types of outside pressures and interference (Cross et al., 2000). Boundary spanning entails reaching out to critical constituencies in the environment. Spanning may be viewed as a response to an interdependent system or as a proactive stance towards managing interdependencies. Organisations are often involved in activities such as bargaining and negotiation, contracting and cooperation, and alliance and coalition building, evidencing various boundary spanning strategies (Scott, 1992). In contrast to buffering, in which energy largely goes into keeping out external initiatives that might interrupt and distract the work unit, bringing up boundaries is focused on attracting the energies of work unit members to the unit’s task by keeping in resources available within the work unit. In contrast to spanning where the effort is to import the critical resources from the external environment, bringing up boundaries entails shaping and applying internal resources to the task at hand (Cross et al., 2000).

*Survey statements that reflect this definition of Project-based Work.*

- Employees are self-sufficient in forecasting new business and managing their own technical and human resources.
• The employer encourages teams to be self-sufficient in running their own business.
• Teams proactively seek out advice and resources from head office.
• The organisation encourages teams to seek out advice and resources from head office on a needs basis.
• Teams are protective of their own human and technical resources.
• The organisation encourages teams to be self-directed.

**Human Spirit and Work**

There are several specific factors that have the potential to inhibit a meaningful work mind-set in the workplace. Lack of meaning can be restrained as a result of either (a) **poor working conditions**, (b) **a poor fit between worker interests and job opportunities**, or (c) **a lack of belief in one’s own attempts to construct meaning** (Isaksen, 2000). It may be possible therefore to strategically intervene on all three levels as a basis for enhancing the prospects that workers could be more likely to construct meaning, or at least, not to be deterred from finding meaning in their work.

*Survey statements that reflect this definition of Human Spirit and Work.*

• Employees are generally satisfied with their working conditions.
• Management makes it a priority to provide employees with good working conditions.
• Employees are given opportunities to match their work interests with organisational tasks.
• Employees’ interests are considered when allocating work tasks.
• Most employees find their work meaningful.
• The organisation encourages their employees to find meaning in their work.
Appendix 3 - Survey Instrument
Research Project Title:
Towards a New Employment Relationship Model: Merging the Changing Needs and Interests of Individual and Organisation

This project is being conducted as part of the researcher’s Doctor of Education degree studies at Queensland University of Technology

Researcher:
Tim Baker
Principal Researcher
School of Professional Studies & Learning
Faculty of Education
Queensland University of Technology
Phone: 33991198
E-mail: winnersatwork@bigpond.com

Project Description:
The purpose of this research project is to establish whether or not Flight Centre Limited exhibits some of the characteristics of the “new employment relationship” as described by Noer (1997). This study presents and proposes to apply a model of the new employment relationship in the organisational setting of Flight Centre Limited. The researcher has argued that a new employment relationship is timely during the current period of accelerated change and uncertainty. A new employment relationship or new psychological contract is widely canvassed in the management literature. However there is very little empirical research in organisational contexts to determine its viability. Noer’s (1997) New Worker-Organisational Codependency model is the only one the researcher has found in the literature that considers the attributes of the new employment relationship from the dual perspectives of the organisational and individual. This research project intends to answer the question: Can Noer’s (1997) model is applied in an organizational setting. By applying this model to Flight Centre Limited it may be possible for the researcher to identify some of the key attributes of this relationship.
The project will require you to complete this survey and be involved in a focus group consisting of a total of six participants. The survey should take you no more than 15 minutes to complete and the focus group will take 1.5 hours.

The results will form an integral part of the principal researcher’s Doctor of Education thesis. These research findings will be published in a prominent international human resource development journal.

All members of Flight Centre Limited in Brisbane have been invited to participate in this project. The first six respondents in the following organisational stratum of top management, middle management and work force have been accepted to participate.

Once these data are collected from the survey, they are collated to produce a Multi-source Assessment report. This report will assist the researcher to formulate a series of open-ended questions for the focus group that you shall partake in. Your confidentiality will be assured. The researcher would ask that you do not put your name to this survey. Although we cannot guarantee your anonymity, i.e., we know you have participated in the research project, a link between your specific responses and the results cannot be established.

The focus groups will be audio recorded. A coding system will be used to link your responses from the audiotape. Once the researcher has transcribed the audiotapes, they will be destroyed. And until they are destroyed they will remain the property of the researcher.

If you have any questions regarding your participation in the research please contact the Researcher or contact the Secretary of the University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3864 290.
Research Participation Consent Form

Please read the following information carefully and sign this form and return it to the researcher if you give your consent to participate in this research project.

Research Project Title:
Towards a New Employment Relationship Model: Merging the Changing Needs and Interests of Individual and Organisation

This project is being conducted as part of the researcher’s Doctor of Education degree studies at Queensland University of Technology

Researcher:
Tim Baker
Principal Researcher
School of Professional Studies & Learning
Faculty of Education
Queensland University of Technology
Phone: 33991198
E-mail: winnersatwork@bigpond.com

Statement of consent

- I have read and understand the rationale for the research project;
- I have had questions about the project and my involvement answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand that if I have further questions I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time for this project, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Secretary of the University Human Ethics Committee on 07 3864 2902; and
- I agree to participate in the project.
NAME: __________________________

SIGNATURE: _________________________

DATE: ___________________________

This form can be returned via fax or post to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tim Baker</th>
<th>Tim Baker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: 33991195</td>
<td>C/: 105 Hawthorne Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hawthorne Qld 4171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructions for the completion of this survey form

• Please read each of the 37 items and indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, neither, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement.

• It is very important that you respond to each statement.

• Please answer each statement from your perspective in the workplace by marking a cross.

For example:

- Strongly disagree
- Agree
- Neither
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Thank-you for your feedback and support.

Tim Baker
Research Data

Please respond to the following questions by circling the most appropriate answer:

1) Are you male or female?
   - Female
   - Male

2) Please indicate which age group you belong to by circling one of the following bands:
   - 45 – 65 years
   - 25 – 45 years
   - 18 – 24 years

3) Years of service at Flight Centre
   - less than one year
   - less than five years
   - more than five years

4) If you are answering this survey from the leadership perspective, indicate by circling, whether you are:
   - global leadership
   - national leadership
If you are answering this survey from the **country** perspective, indicate by circling, whether you are:

- management
- technical support

If you are answering this survey from the **shop** perspective, indicate by circling, whether you are:

- team leader
- team member
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All support teams have policies and procedures in place to continually upgrade the job skills of Flight Centre employees.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flight Centre employees seek out opportunities to upgrade their job skills.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>There are programmes in place in Flight Centre to assist employees to become multi-skilled.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flight Centre employees regularly seek out opportunities to complete work assignments outside the scope of the boundaries of their job.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is an incentive scheme in Flight Centre for employees to upgrade and expand their job skills.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flight Centre employees are generally motivated to upgrade and expand their job skills.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flight Centre employees have opportunity to rotate and sample different jobs to acquire new skills.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All the support teams have incentive scheme in place to reward exceptional customer service.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The shop teams are motivated to provide quality customer service.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flight Centre has a comprehensive, on-going customer service training programme.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flight Centre employees willingly participate in training programmes to develop their customer service skills.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Flight Centre has a career path for their sales consultants.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sales consultants have scope to develop a career path in Flight Centre.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sales consultants understand the extent and limit of their role when servicing the needs of their customers.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>• All the support teams provide the shop teams with clear guidelines to avoid conflict between meeting what the customer wants and what Flight Centre can provide.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The shop teams are provided with all the necessary customer and product information to service the needs of its customers.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sales consultants use available customer and product information to service the needs of their customers.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flight Centre has up-to-date processes and systems in place to track the history of customers.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sales consultants understand how to use customer information systems.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Flight Centre has rewards and incentives in place for good team work.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flight Centre employees recognise that good teamwork is common practice</td>
<td>strongly</td>
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<td>in this organisation.</td>
<td>agree</td>
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<td>disagree</td>
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<td>Flight Centre employees are encouraged through incentives to learn new</td>
<td>strongly</td>
<td>agree</td>
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<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly</td>
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<td>career enhancement skills.</td>
<td>agree</td>
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<td>disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flight Centre employees are rewarded by all the support teams for</td>
<td>strongly</td>
<td>agree</td>
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<td>disagree</td>
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<td>learning new skills to enhance their careers.</td>
<td>agree</td>
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<td></td>
<td>disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight Centre employees are rewarded for suggesting new or improved</td>
<td>strongly</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ways for the business to be more efficient or effective.</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The shop teams regularly come up with innovative ways to improve the</td>
<td>strongly</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly</td>
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<tr>
<td>efficiency and effectiveness of the business.</td>
<td>agree</td>
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<td>disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The shop teams are self-sufficient in forecasting new business and</td>
<td>strongly</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managing their own technical and human resources.</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>All the support teams encourage shop teams to be self-sufficient in running their own business.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight Centre employees are rewarded by all the support teams for learning new skills to enhance their careers.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the support teams encourage the shop teams to seek out advice and resources on a needs basis.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The shop teams are protective of their own human and technical resources.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight Centre encourages all teams to be self-directed.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight Centre employees are rewarded by all the support teams for learning new skills to enhance their careers.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the support teams make it a priority to provide Flight Centre employees with good working conditions.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight Centre employees are given opportunities to match their work interests with business tasks.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight Centre employees’ interests are considered when allocating work tasks.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Flight Centre employees find their work meaningful.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the support teams encourage their employees to find meaning in their work.</td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>neither</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4 - HIPSYS Report
Q1 All support teams have policies and procedures in place to continually upgrade the job skills of Flight Centre employees.

TopMgt: Agree
  Agree: 75% (3/4)
  Neither: 25% (1/4)
  Disagree: 0% (0/4)

Lead: Neither
  Agree: 100% (3/3)
  Neither: 0% (0/3)
  Disagree: 0% (0/3)

MidMgt: Agree
  Agree: 75% (3/4)
  Neither: 25% (1/4)
  Disagree: 0% (0/4)

Tech: Agree
  Agree: 100% (2/2)
  Neither: 0% (0/2)
  Disagree: 0% (0/2)

Polarised
  Agree: 50% (1/2)
  Neither: 0% (0/2)
  Disagree: 0% (0/2)

Workers: Agree
  Agree: 75% (11/14)
  Neither: 0% (0/14)
  Disagree: 0% (0/14)

TL: Agree
  Agree: 100% (3/3)
  Neither: 0% (0/3)
  Disagree: 0% (0/3)

TM: Agree
  Agree: 100% (3/3)
  Neither: 0% (0/3)
  Disagree: 0% (0/3)

Q2 Flight Centre employees seek out opportunities to upgrade their job skills.

TopMgt: Agree
  Agree: 100% (4/4)
  Neither: 0% (0/4)
  Disagree: 0% (0/4)

Lead: Agree
  Agree: 100% (3/3)
  Neither: 0% (0/3)
  Disagree: 0% (0/3)

MidMgt: Agree
  Agree: 100% (3/3)
  Neither: 0% (0/3)
  Disagree: 0% (0/3)

Tech: Agree
  Agree: 100% (2/2)
  Neither: 0% (0/2)
  Disagree: 0% (0/2)

Polarised
  Agree: 50% (1/2)
  Neither: 0% (0/2)
  Disagree: 0% (0/2)

Workers: Agree
  Agree: 100% (11/11)
  Neither: 0% (0/11)
  Disagree: 0% (0/11)

TL: Agree
  Agree: 100% (3/3)
  Neither: 0% (0/3)
  Disagree: 0% (0/3)

TM: Agree
  Agree: 100% (3/3)
  Neither: 0% (0/3)
  Disagree: 0% (0/3)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>There are programmes in place in Flight Centre to assist employees to become multi-skilled.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| TopMgt : Agree | Agree : 75% (3/4)  
Nei ther : 0% (0/4)  
Disagree : 0% (0/4) |
| Lead : Neither | Agree : 100% (3/3)  
Neither : 0% (0/3)  
Disagree : 0% (0/3) |
| Tech : Agree | Agree : 100% (3/3)  
Neither : 0% (0/3)  
Disagree : 0% (0/3) |
| MidMgt : Agree | Agree : 100% (4/4)  
Neither : 0% (0/4)  
Disagree : 0% (0/4) |
| LeadS : Agree | Agree : 100% (2/2)  
Neither : 0% (0/2)  
Disagree : 0% (0/2) |
| TechS : Agree | Agree : 100% (2/2)  
Neither : 0% (0/2)  
Disagree : 0% (0/2) |
| Workers : Agree | Agree : 73% (8/11)  
Neither : 18% (2/11)  
Disagree : 0% (0/11) |
| TL : Agree | Agree : 100% (3/3)  
Neither : 0% (0/3)  
Disagree : 0% (0/3) |
| TM : Agree | Agree : 63% (5/8)  
Neither : 24% (2/8)  
Disagree : 13% (1/8) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q5</th>
<th>There is an incentive scheme in Flight Centre for employees to upgrade and expand their job skills.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| TopMgt : Agree | Agree : 100% (4/4)  
Neither : 0% (0/4)  
Disagree : 0% (0/4) |
| Lead : Agree | Agree : 100% (3/3)  
Neither : 0% (0/3)  
Disagree : 0% (0/3) |
| Tech : Agree | Agree : 100% (3/3)  
Neither : 0% (0/3)  
Disagree : 0% (0/3) |
| MidMgt : Agree | Agree : 95% (2/4)  
Neither : 25% (1/4)  
Disagree : 0% (0/4) |
| LeadS : Agree | Agree : 100% (2/2)  
Neither : 0% (0/2)  
Disagree : 0% (0/2) |
| TechS : Agree | Agree : 58% (1/2)  
Neither : 42% (0/2)  
Disagree : 0% (0/2) |
| Workers : Agree | Agree : 82% (9/11)  
Neither : 9% (1/11)  
Disagree : 9% (1/11) |
| TL : Agree | Agree : 67% (2/3)  
Neither : 33% (0/3)  
Disagree : 0% (0/3) |
| TM : Agree | Agree : 88% (7/8)  
Neither : 12% (1/8)  
Disagree : 0% (0/8) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q6</th>
<th>Flight Centre employees are generally motivated to upgrade and expand the scope of their job.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| TopMgt : Agree | Agree : 75% (3/4)  
Neither : 25% (1/4)  
Disagree : 0% (0/4) |
| Lead : Agree | Agree : 67% (2/3)  
Neither : 33% (1/3)  
Disagree : 0% (0/3) |
| Tech : Agree | Agree : 75% (3/4)  
Neither : 25% (1/4)  
Disagree : 0% (0/4) |
| MidMgt : Agree | Agree : 100% (3/3)  
Neither : 0% (0/3)  
Disagree : 0% (0/3) |
| LeadS : Agree | Agree : 100% (2/2)  
Neither : 0% (0/2)  
Disagree : 0% (0/2) |
| TechS : Agree | Agree : 100% (2/2)  
Neither : 0% (0/2)  
Disagree : 0% (0/2) |
| Workers : Agree | Agree : 91% (10/11)  
Neither : 9% (1/11)  
Disagree : 0% (0/11) |
| TL : Agree | Agree : 67% (2/3)  
Neither : 33% (1/3)  
Disagree : 0% (0/3) |
| TM : Agree | Agree : 100% (8/8)  
Neither : 0% (0/8)  
Disagree : 0% (0/8) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top Mgt</td>
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<td>55%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Mgt</td>
<td>Polarised</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leads</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workes</td>
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<td>45%</td>
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<td>44%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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</table>
Q8 All support teams have incentive schemes in place to reward exceptional customer service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TopMgt: Agree</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead: Agree</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech : Agree</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidMgmt: Agree</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leads : Disagree</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech : Agree</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers: Agree</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL : Agree</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM : Agree</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q9 The shop teams are motivated to provide quality customer service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TopMgt: Agree</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead: Agree</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech : Agree</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidMgmt: Agree</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leads : Disagree</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech : Agree</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers: Agree</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL : Agree</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM : Agree</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Q10
Flight Centre has a comprehensive, on-going customer service training programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TopMgt</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50% (2-4)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>67% (2-3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidMgt: Polarised</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50% (2-4)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeadS: Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0-2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TechS: Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (2-2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers: Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>64% (7-11)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL : Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>67% (2-3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM : Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>63% (5-8)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q11
Flight Centre employees willingly participate in training programmes to develop their customer service skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TopMgt: Polarised</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50% (2-4)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>23% (1-3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>67% (2-3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidMgt: Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (2-2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeadS: Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (2-2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TechS: Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>64% (7-11)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers: Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>67% (2-3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL : Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>63% (5-8)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q12
Flight Centre has a career path for their sales consultants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TopMgt</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>78% (3-4)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>67% (2-3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>78% (3-4)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidMgt: Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (2-2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeadS: Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0-2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TechS: Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (2-2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers: Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>82% (9-11)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL : Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>67% (2-3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM : Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>88% (7-8)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
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</table>

### Q13
Sales consultants have scope to develop a career path in Flight Centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TopMgt</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>78% (3-4)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>67% (2-3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>78% (3-4)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidMgt: Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (2-2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeadS: Agree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0-2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TechS: Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (2-2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers: Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>82% (9-11)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL : Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>67% (2-3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM : Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>88% (7-8)</td>
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</table>
Q14 Sales consultants understand the extent and limit of their role when servicing the needs of their customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Mgt</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead S</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech S</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Q15 All the support teams provide the shop teams with clear guidelines to avoid conflict between meeting the customer wants and what Flight Centre can provide.

<table>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
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<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Mgt</td>
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<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead S</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech S</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q16 The shop teams are provided with all the necessary customer and product information to service the needs of their customers.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Mgt</td>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead S</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech S</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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Q17 Sales consultants use available customer and product information to service the needs of their customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top Mgt</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mid Mgt</td>
<td>66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead S</td>
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<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech S</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
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### Q18 Flight Centre has up-to-date processes and systems in place to track the history of customers.

<table>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>Tech : Neither</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>14%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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### Q19 Sales consultants understand how to use customer information systems.

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<td>13%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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<td>88%</td>
</tr>
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<td>9%</td>
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<td>23%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TM : Agree</td>
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Q20 Flight Centre has rewards and incentives in place for good team work.

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<td>0% (0)</td>
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<td>0% (0)</td>
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<td>0% (0)</td>
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<td>0% (0)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8% (1)</td>
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<td>6% (0)</td>
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<tr>
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Q21 Flight Centre employees recognise that good team work is common practice in this organisation.

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<td>0% (0)</td>
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<td>0% (0)</td>
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<td>0% (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q22</td>
<td>Flight Centre employees are encouraged through incentives to learn new career enhancement skills.</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Neither</td>
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<td>Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>LeadS</td>
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<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Agree</td>
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<tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>18% (2/11)</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>TM</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>0% (0/2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TechS</td>
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<td>50% (2/4)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q25</th>
<th>The shop teams regularly come up with innovative ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the business.</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
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<td>0% (0/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TechS</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50% (2/4)</td>
</tr>
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<td>75% (3/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>67% (2/3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>TM</td>
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<th>Q23</th>
<th>Flight Centre employees are rewarded by all the support teams for learning new skills to enhance their careers.</th>
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<th>Q24</th>
<th>Flight Centre employees are rewarded for suggesting new and improved ways for the business to be more efficient and effective.</th>
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<tr>
<td>TM</td>
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<th>Q25</th>
<th>The shop teams regularly come up with innovative ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the business.</th>
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Q26 The shop teams are self-sufficient in forecasting new business and managing their own technical and human resources.

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<td>67%</td>
<td>2/3</td>
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<td>0/3</td>
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Q27 All the support teams encourage shop teams to be self-sufficient in running their own business.

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<td>0/4</td>
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<td>4/4</td>
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<td>9/11</td>
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<td>1/11</td>
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<td>TM</td>
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<td>75%</td>
<td>6/8</td>
</tr>
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<td>Neither</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0/8</td>
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<td>Disagree</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2/8</td>
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</table>
Q28 | Flight Centre employees are rewarded by all the support teams for learning new skills to enhance their career.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TopMgt</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>33% (1/3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>67% (2/3)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidMgt</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>25% (1/4)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>25% (1/4)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>50% (2/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeadS</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>100% (2/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TechS</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50% (1/2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>50% (1/2)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>67% (2/3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>67% (2/3)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>33% (1/3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>38% (3/8)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>37% (3/8)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>25% (2/8)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q29 | All support teams encourage the shop teams to seek out advice and resources as needed.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TopMgt</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>100% (4/4)</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>0% (0/4)</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>0% (0/4)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (3/3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0% (0/3)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidMgt</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>75% (5/4)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>25% (1/4)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeadS</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50% (1/2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>50% (1/2)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TechS</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (2/2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (1/1)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0% (0/1)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (3/3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0% (0/3)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (0/8)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0% (0/8)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/8)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Q30 | The shop teams are protective of their own human and technical resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TopMgt</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>25% (1/4)</th>
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<th>0% (0/4)</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>75% (3/4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>33% (1/3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0% (0/3)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>67% (2/3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidMgt</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50% (2/4)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>50% (2/4)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeadS</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>80% (1/2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>80% (1/2)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TechS</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50% (1/2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>50% (1/2)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>82% (9/11)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>18% (2/11)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (2/2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>75% (6/8)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>25% (2/8)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
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Q31 | Flight Centre encourages all teams to be self-directed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TopMgt</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>50% (3/4)</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>25% (1/4)</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>0% (0/4)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>67% (2/3)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>33% (1/3)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MidMgt</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>75% (3/4)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>25% (1/4)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeadS</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (2/2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TechS</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50% (1/2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>50% (1/2)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>91% (10/11)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0% (0/11)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100% (2/2)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>85% (7/8)</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0% (0/8)</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>12% (1/8)</td>
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</table>
Q32  Flight Centre employees are rewarded by all the support teams for learning new skills to enhance their career.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
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<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Mgt</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead S</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech S</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worktrn</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</table>

Note: The numbers in parentheses indicate the sample size.
Q33 All the support teams make it a priority to provide Flight Centre employees with a good working environment.

- **Top Mgt.**
  - Agree: 25% (14)
  - Neither: 35% (24)
  - Disagree: 35% (24)

- **Lead.**
  - Agree: 83% (75)
  - Neither: 12% (18)
  - Disagree: 5% (6)

- **Tech.**
  - Agree: 67% (23)
  - Neither: 33% (11)
  - Disagree: 0% (0)

- **Mid Mgt.**
  - Agree: 100% (44)
  - Neither: 0% (0)
  - Disagree: 0% (0)

- **LeadS.**
  - Agree: 100% (22)
  - Neither: 0% (0)
  - Disagree: 0% (0)

- **TechS.**
  - Agree: 100% (22)
  - Neither: 0% (0)
  - Disagree: 0% (0)

- **Workers.**
  - Agree: 82% (911)
  - Neither: 18% (211)
  - Disagree: 0% (0)

Q34 Flight Centre employees are given opportunities to match their work interests with business tasks.

- **Top Mgt.**
  - Agree: 75% (34)
  - Neither: 25% (14)
  - Disagree: 0% (0)

- **Lead.**
  - Agree: 67% (23)
  - Neither: 33% (12)
  - Disagree: 0% (0)

- **Tech.**
  - Agree: 50% (12)
  - Neither: 50% (12)
  - Disagree: 0% (0)

- **Mid Mgt.**
  - Agree: 75% (34)
  - Neither: 25% (12)
  - Disagree: 0% (0)

- **LeadS.**
  - Agree: 100% (22)
  - Neither: 0% (0)
  - Disagree: 0% (0)

- **TechS.**
  - Agree: 100% (22)
  - Neither: 0% (0)
  - Disagree: 0% (0)

- **Workers.**
  - Agree: 64% (711)
  - Neither: 36% (411)
  - Disagree: 0% (0)
<table>
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<th>Question</th>
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<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
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<td>Flight Centre employees' interests are considered when allocating work tasks.</td>
<td>TopMgmt</td>
<td>Agree : 75% (2/4) Disagree : 0% (0/4)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Tech</td>
<td>Agree : 67% (2/3) Disagree : 0% (0/2)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>MidMgmt</td>
<td>Agree : 50% (2/4) Disagree : 0% (0/4)</td>
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<td>TechS</td>
<td>Agree : 0% (0/2) Disagree : 0% (0/2)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Workers</td>
<td>Agree : 73% (6/11) Disagree : 13% (1/8)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Q37</td>
<td>All the support teams encourage their employees to find meaning in their work.</td>
<td>TopMgmt</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>MidMgmt</td>
<td>Agree : 100% (4/4) Disagree : 0% (0/4)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LeadS</td>
<td>Agree : 100% (2/2) Disagree : 0% (0/2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TechS</td>
<td>Agree : 100% (2/2) Disagree : 0% (0/2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>Agree : 85% (7/8) Disagree : 0% (0/8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TL</td>
<td>Agree : 67% (2/3) Disagree : 0% (0/3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>Agree : 75% (2/4) Disagree : 0% (0/4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5 - Official Letter from QUT Granting Full Ethical Clearance
To: winnerstask@bigpond.com
From: Wendy Heffeman <w.heffeman@qut.edu.au>
Subject: Confirmation of Exemption - 2876H
Cc: h.pillary@qut.edu.au
Bcc:
Attached:

Dear Tim,

I write further to the Checklist for Researchers you submitted for your project, "Towards a new employment relationship model: Merging the Changing Needs and Interests of Organisation and Individual" (QUT Ref No 2876H).

The Deputy Chairperson of the University Human Research Ethics Committee has considered your Checklist and asked that I contact you on his behalf. The Deputy Chairperson has confirmed that your project is in fact exempt from full ethical clearance, subject to:

* a copy of the approval from Flight Centre Limited for the conduct of this project.

Consequently, you are authorised to commence this project immediately, but you must provide a copy of the requested approval as soon as possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries in relation to this matter.

Regards
Wendy

Wendy Heffeman
Committee Officer
Secretariat
Tel: 3864 2892
Fax: 3864 1818
email: w.heffeman@qut.edu.au
REFERENCES


