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**THE USE OF THE FISH PHILOSOPHY METAPHOR IN A CHANGING
ORGANIZATION**

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Communication

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Hilda K. Byabato

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College,
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Master of Arts Degree
University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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Elimu haina mwisho - Education has no end

THE USE OF THE FISH PHILOSOPHY METAPHOR IN A CHANGING ORGANIZATION

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University of Nebraska, 2003

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines existing research and theory on metaphors, organizational culture and organizational change. It focuses on the application of the "Fish Philosophy" metaphor in a changing culture of an organization to determine how, when and why this metaphor is used. The analysis of discourse observed in meetings, office cubes, cafeteria as well as the content analysis of documents (newsletters, email messages, photographs, videotapes) were among the methods used to conduct this study.

Metaphors and metaphoric discourse play an important role in developing and maintaining shared meanings among organizational members while shaping and reshaping an organization's culture and communication process. The study contributes to existing theory and research in organizational communication and organizational change by analyzing the functions of metaphors and metaphoric discourse and how they are used in organizations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	2
Abstract.....	3
I. Introduction & Literature Review	5
II. Methodology	19
III. Results/Discussion.....	29
IV. Conclusion.....	46
V. Critique and Future Research Direction	49
References	54
Appendixes	58

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

“Choose your attitude! Be present! Play! Make their day!”

The “Fish Philosophy principles” have been used by many organizations as catalysts for organizational change. Leading organizations such as AT&T, Target, Motorola, Ford Motor, and Southwest Airlines have used the Fish Philosophy to transform their organization’s culture.

Jones (1996) states that symbolic forms such as metaphors validate culture, educate members of a group about values and behavioral norms and ensure conformity by applying social pressure and exerting social control. Morgan (1986, p.4), states that metaphors are a “way of thinking and a way of seeing.” Specifically metaphors are used as guiding and constraining tools for organizational members to provide stability during changing times, to justify appropriate behavior, to motivate employees, to reward employees who display what is considered acceptable behavior, to punish unacceptable behavior and to provide a framework and guidelines of how day-to-day functions in an organization’s activities will be undertaken.

The strategic use of metaphors has proven to be successful in organizations. As change agents, metaphors are tools that managers and leaders of organizations can use to obtain buy-in from their members and channel their thinking toward a common goal during and after an organization’s

transition. Sypher (1990) states that effective change campaigns will find many vehicles united by an underlying philosophy to spread the change, including ones that will affect business directly.

Barrett & Coopenrider (1990) support this view. Organizations, they state, study symbolic behavior as a way to understand how to achieve desired behavior. Metaphors provide opportunities to apply hypotheses to solve practical problems faced by organizations and their members. Metaphors are part of an organization's culture and communication process. Schein (1992) supports this view. Concepts such as metaphors relate to an organization's culture and/or reflect the organization's culture in that they deal with things that group members have in common, but none of them are "the culture" of an organization or group.

Defining culture and organizational culture

To understand how organizations develop shared meanings it is important that we begin by defining what common shared meanings organizational members apply to the culture of the organization, and how such meanings are interpreted and implemented by organizational members to form what is known as organizational culture. Cultural theorists have defined culture in a variety of ways, based on what stance they take about culture in their individual studies. According to Smircich (1985) usually the term culture describes an "attribute or quality internal to a group" (p.58). Beyer & Trice, (1987) characterize culture as a collection of accepted meanings which operate for a group at a particular time. Culture, from this perspective, is seen as a changing

phenomenon because as the environment changes with time, so does the culture of an organization and its members in order to assimilate into the changing environment.

Culture has also been studied from a collectivist point of view. This view implies that human behavior is partially prescribed by a collectively created and sustained way of life that cannot be individualized because different individuals share it.

Culture is formally defined as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.” (Schein, 1992, p.12)

This definition carries a fundamental message about culture because whether organizations are adapting to change, operating in a new environment or developing meaning about their organizational settings and organizational members, it becomes a way of doing things within that organization; hence, a new culture.

Organizational culture can also be defined in terms of how the organization changes to adapt to crisis situations. Crisis situations may force members of an organization to change the way they operate and adapt new ways of operating in the organization in order to survive. The new ways of operating become the culture of that organization. Schein (1985) defines the concept of culture as a pattern of basic assumptions developed as the group or organization learns to cope with its environment.

From an organizational perspective, organizational culture can be defined as a subset of culture. Thus, organizational culture is the dynamic product of collective sense-making where individuals communicate and agree on common explanations for work-related events in an effort to understand, predict and control their environment (Reichers & Schneider, 1990; Rousseau, 1990).

Theorists have also studied culture as a paradigm for understanding organizations. Thus, culture becomes a concept of understanding organizations. A survey conducted by Communication World (1996) revealed that culture was viewed by organizational members as "the ethos of a company," or the principles that underlie the company's actions. It is important to note that culture is an evolving phenomenon because of its changing nature.

Metaphors: A Historical Perspective

Research on the use of metaphors in organizations is continuously developing but it is not a new concept. Morgan (1997) found evidence of Herbert Spencer's application of a biological metaphor to the term "organization" as early as 1873. The state of being organized in a biological sense was the basis of the metaphor for arranging or coordinating in a general sense. The use of the metaphor "organizations as machines" (Fayol, 1949; Taylor, 1911; Weber, 1946) is another metaphor that originated earlier in history. Metaphors also trace back to other schools of thought in organizational research; for instance, the "Hawthorne studies" (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939). These studies were

primarily concerned with the relationship that exists between fatigue and boredom among employees. The research progressed to include studies in other areas of organizational culture, including the use of metaphoric discourse.

Defining Metaphors

Simply stated, metaphors are symbols in which “one image is used to describe another one” (Conrad & Marshall, 2002, p. 106). A metaphor is “a word, phrase or a combination of phrases to describe an object or concept it does not literally denote in order to suggest comparison with another object or concept” (Ott, 1989, p. 29). Metaphors represent that which needs to be communicated in symbolic yet simplistic form. Metaphors help articulate subjects about which we do not have specific language and, in so doing, they allow expression of what could otherwise be inexpressible. In some instances the value and importance of metaphors have been downplayed. Morgan (1997) states that metaphors have been regarded as devices for embellishing discourse but their significance is much greater than this. The use of metaphors reinforces understanding of organizational members about the environment and culture of the organization.

Researchers have studied metaphors from a cognitive approach. In this approach metaphors are categorized by “type,” using hierarchical or non-hierarchical typologies. Hierarchical-type metaphors are identified and grouped based on their importance and level of meanings or their level of strength (Schon, 1993; Stenberg et al., 1993; Alvesson, 1993). On the other hand, non-hierarchical metaphors are characterized by how they are used, in what

circumstances, where they are used and whether or not they are effective. For instance, a metaphor that is effective can be characterized as being “alive” whereas an ineffective metaphor (i.e., one that cannot in itself contribute to the study of a phenomenon such as training & development, leadership and motivation) is characterized as “dead” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Fraser, 1993; Tsoukas, 1991). In this case a live metaphor will need to be substituted for a dead one.

Van Maanen & Barley (1985) take a different approach in defining characteristics of metaphors. According to their perspective, metaphors are “generative,” in that they allow one to reframe phenomena to apprehend the familiar from an unfamiliar and perhaps productive vantage point.

Researchers have studied metaphors by analogizing organizations to organisms. The organismic metaphor perspective views organizations as belonging to animal species where the image of that species leads members of the organization to a unique perspective of understanding how their culture grows, develops and how they can adapt to changing circumstances (Morgan, 1997). The organismic metaphor perspective has allowed researchers to extend organizational research to the study of organizations as open systems, organizational life cycles, different species of organizations, and the relations between species and their ecology. The organismic perspective emphasizes one of the contingency theory approaches of adapting an organization to its

environment as described by Morgan (1997), where different types of species of organizations are needed in different types of environments.

As new metaphors are acculturated in organizations, they tend to shadow existing ones. Research shows that organizations develop new metaphors when existing ones cease to function in their intended purpose, or if there is a specific need for new metaphors. Morgan (1997, p.4) illustrates how this phenomenon works below by providing the metaphor of a lion as it relates to individual effectiveness. "In drawing attention to the lion-like bravery, strength and the ferocity of a person, the strength of the metaphor glosses over the fact that that same person may well also be a pig, a devil, a saint, a bore or a recluse."

Metaphors are inherently paradoxical (Morgan, 1997) in that they can create powerful insight that may also distort the communication process, such that the initial thought process becomes a distorted thought process. Metaphors can be misleading and, in the process, can distort the key message in the communication process. Consider, for instance, the Fish Philosophy metaphor of "play" (Lundin & Christensen, 2000). This metaphor's thought process is to encourage relaxation at work, to relieve stress, but it can be distorted because it fails to provide guidelines of what "play" really means and how "play" should be applied. For instance, can playing a computer game at work be considered "play"? How does the "play" metaphor relate to policies about the use of office equipment and what implications does it have about work effectiveness?

Research has shown that metaphors can exist in symbolic form.

According to Smircich (1985) symbols are objects, acts, concepts, or linguistic formations that stand ambiguously for a multiplicity of disparate meanings, evoke sentiments and emotions and impel people to action. Organizations have used symbols to view their organization and make sense of the social world through symbolic forms (Cohen, 1976; Geertz, 1973).

Metaphoric discourse takes many forms that may stand ambiguously for a multiplicity of meanings and may be interpreted differently by members of the same organization (Smircich, 1985). One way that organizations use metaphors ambiguously is in the company's vision and mission statement. The vision and mission statements are metaphoric in that the language can be ambiguous. Conrad & Marshall (2002) support this view by stating that some organizational situations call for ambiguous communication. Ambiguity, they state, may be helpful in some situations because it allows people to interpret the same message in different ways, helping to maintain a diversity of viewpoints within an organization. When organizations face problems that are new or particularly difficult, or when major organizational changes occur, the diversity in interpretation can lead to innovative solutions because the ambiguity allows organizational members to seek creative solutions to organizational problems.

Metaphors can be obligatory in that they obligate organizational members to those they serve. While a metaphor may seem simple in its literal form, it

carries a complicated and stronger message about obligations that organizational members have toward their organization.

Metaphors and Organizational change

Cushman & King (1995) discuss factors that need to be taken into consideration when an organization wants to bring about change and transformation. The driving force for organizational change usually begins with the support from top management. The leader of the organization must possess certain skills, which include skill in creating a learning environment that will guide employees on a journey of organizational renewal, which defines assumptions and underpins the management and measures of performance, work and the organization itself. Metaphors can assist members of an organization in the guided journey of transformation. Environments create both problems and opportunities for organizations. Thus, organizations must align themselves to cope with changes, notwithstanding unexpected competition. For this reason, organizations must employ strategies to ensure the company remains competitive with the environmental forces and parallel competitive markets. Organizations must promptly change in order to perform at the speed of change. They must prepare their employees to visualize what change they want to achieve by strategically conveying the change.

Studies on metaphors and their functions have focused on their use as catalysts for business change. Krefting & Frost (1985) view use of metaphors as a mechanism to change a current organizational culture that is perceived to be

ss than optimal. Metaphors in this case serve as tools for organizational change and are established to ensure common goals are reinforced.

rganizational changes affect the structure of the organization. As the rganization works to rebuild its structure, key elements of that structure must be emphasized in order to maintain the focus of its members. Metaphors function to structure complex situations by naming key elements and framing relevant issues (Schon, 1993), and in the process, they highlight certain elements of the topic (the ground and the tension) and mask others.

Metaphors reinforce organizational values in periods of organizational transition. As organizations strive to remain competitive in their respective markets they are faced with decisions to merge, introduce new technologies, layoffs and controlled hiring. When dealing with such turbulent circumstances it is important to sustain the stability of the organization and its members. Metaphors can facilitate the sustenance of the organization, organizational members and organizational values and image, both internally and externally. The metaphors used by organizations reflect the way organizational members experience and understand the organization and influence how they engage and are engaged in the change process.

Researchers have studied metaphors from a cognitive approach. In this approach the concept of a “root metaphor” is described as a symbolic form existing within a metaphor. “Root metaphors” are defined as Ideas, images and feelings that groups develop to characterize themselves that may or may not be

appreciated consciously, but that become embodied in buildings, office layouts and other material artifacts of the group. Metaphors in this regard “surface in the cognitive level and reflect the emotional and aesthetic responses of individuals toward their environment” (Schein, 1992, p. 10). Through the use of root metaphors organizational members share values that unite them in their thinking, focus their behavior and channel their day-to-day responsibilities toward long-term unified goals (Pettigrew, 1979; Conrad & Marshall, 2002).

Researchers who have studied root metaphors (Pacanowski & O'Donnell, 1983; Smith & Eisenberg, 1987) perceive their use as effective since they are more than just a passing phenomenon. They suggest that analysis of a metaphor is critical in discovering root metaphors. By understanding root metaphors researchers look at organizations as subjective experiences as they investigate the patterns that make organized action possible.

Grant & Osrick (1996) take a different perspective on the cognitive approach by stating that cognitive metaphors are difficult to change. When organizations are going through a transition that requires eliminating a root metaphor it becomes difficult for the organization to let go of that metaphor. The more basic a conceptual metaphor is, the more it will be systematically connected to other metaphors and the more implications it will have for the way we think.

The Fish Philosophy at First Data

The Fish Philosophy was introduced at First Data in early May, 2001 as a grass-roots movement initiated by employees. A task force was formed to obtain executive buy-in. The Fish Philosophy was introduced when the organization began changing the architecture of its processing system from a mainframe system to a more flexible, expandable and secure system that would position the organization for revenue growth opportunities and allow it to remain competitive in both domestic and international markets.

As stated earlier, metaphors play an important role in facilitating cultural change in environments. Metaphors are used as catalysts during organizational change and they are used to provide solutions devised by a group of people in order to meet specific problems posed by the situations they face in common (Van Maanen & Barley, 1985). In an attempt to cope with change, organizations devise and employ strategies through the use of metaphors that are shared by members of an organization. These strategies contribute to defining the culture in which the organization operates.

The Fish Philosophy functions to energize and focus employees into a new vision and mission that is aligned with the future direction of the organization. Krefting & Frost (1983) view use of metaphors as a mechanism to change a current organizational culture. Metaphors in this case serve as tools to redirect organizational members toward a common goal and to reinforce the cultural norms of the organization. The Fish Philosophy principles serve as the

vehicle for First Data to drive the cultural aspects of change. As First Data began changing the architecture of its processing system from a mainframe system to a more flexible, expandable and secure system, a concept that First Data metaphorically termed “system re-architecture” was developed. The re-architecture effort required employees to cognitively shift their thinking in order to abandon an old processing system and learn a “new system” in support of the re-architecture effort.

About the book FISH! And the Authors

Written by Lundin & Christensen (2000) FISH! is an engaging story about a famous Pike Place fish market in Seattle, Washington. The authors use metaphors (dead fish) along with principles to explain the concepts of how the development of a right attitude, enthusiasm and a playful work environment can bring positive results in the workplace. The book centers around four key principles - “choose your attitude,” “be present,” “play” and “make their day.” According to the authors, it centers on the belief that when members of an organization choose to love the work they do, they can reach their goals of working for happiness, meaning and fulfillment everyday. In describing how the idea of the book FISH! was born, one author takes us on an evolving journey of the Fish Philosophy:

It all started in Seattle when I heard a crowd laughing and screaming. Suddenly the crowd parted and I came face to face with the source of the commotion. **It was a fish market**– world famous Pike Place to be exact. The fishmongers were firing large, slippery fish at each other, making spectacular catches and inviting delighted customers to try their luck. The

market was crowded and noisy, but when one of the fishmongers focused on a customer, it was like they were the only two people in the place.

Everyone was smiling! And the cash registers were ringing like crazy. I was amazed. Why couldn't my workplace pulse with this kind of **energy** and **passion** and **wholeheartedness**? When I took a closer look at what makes Pike Place Fish so special, I became even more intrigued. A bunch of fishmongers had already found—and were living every day—what corporations spend millions of dollars each year searching for.... (Lundin & Christensen, 2000, p. 4)

This study takes a look at how First Data uses the Fish Philosophy metaphor and associated principles as guides for culture change. The following research questions facilitate the exploration of this study:

- R1: How, when and why are metaphors typically communicated at First Data Corporation?
- R2: How, when and why are the four principles associated with the Fish Philosophy metaphor communicated at First Data Corporation? The Fish Philosophy Principles are “choose your attitude, be present, play, make their day.”

CHAPTER II:

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used to conduct this study by providing a brief overview of ethnographic research and later describing how research methods of participant observation, content analysis and elite interviews were applied in this study.

Ethnography can be defined as the art and science of describing a group or culture. Ethnographic research stems from the notion that it is a method for “grasping the native’s point of view” (Malinowski, 1922 in Schwartzman, 1993, p.1). The research method has roots in the school of anthropology where numerous studies using fieldwork techniques were conducted. Historically ethnographic research methods were popularized in the 1920s and 1930s when they were used to conduct the Hawthorne studies. Prevailing ethnographic research continues to be conducted in organizations to investigate corporations and occupations (Britain and Cohen, 1980; Schwartzman, 1989; Briody & Baba, 1991). Studies of traditional industries such as railroads as well as more high tech industries, occupations and communities such as in Silicon Valley (Schwartzman, 1993) signal the return and prevalence of ethnography as a research method to study organizational culture.

The main characteristic of ethnography research is that it takes place in the environment that is researched. Shaffir et al. (1991) state that the requisite to any research project is obtaining access to both the setting where the research

will be conducted and the data that the researcher will use to conduct the study. In some cases access comes naturally, such as research conducted in a classroom by faculty members within the same classroom. In other cases the researcher is not a member of the organization. Ethnographers go into that environment instead of researching about it externally. Ethnographers become part of the setting by “living” in the field in order to fully understand the culture. Hammersly & Atkinson (1983) describe the role of an ethnographer as a participant in the daily lives of the group that he/she is studying in order to collect data available that will answer questions of the researcher.

Ethnography researchers can be faced with challenges related to gaining access into the organization, regardless of whether they are part of the organization or they are entering the organization for the first time as researchers. It may seem from the outside that when one is a member of that organization they may already have the advantage of conducting research because they are familiar with the culture of the organization. While there may be some advantages to the researcher who is also a member of the organization, there are also challenges related to how an individual separates his/her own opinion of the culture of the organization in order to be fully engaged in the research process. Additionally, ethical issues relevant to confidentiality have to be taken into consideration.

Schwartzmann (1993) discusses the term “access issues” as the process of gaining access in an organization and seeking permission and approval for

research. According to Schwartzmann, “access issues” provide researchers with a rich source of data because they provide first hand knowledge of the ethnographer’s culture and the culture of the organization that is researched. It is important to take note of “access issues” as they occur because they assist in revealing the interpretation of differences about the researcher and the culture that is being researched.

Procedures

I have been an employee at First Data since 1988 and already had access to the organization. I gained interest in this study after attending a presentation that was held by the Human Resources department at First Data about the Fish Philosophy in May, 2001. In this meeting, which celebrated the inception of the Fish Philosophy at First Data, employees were asked to watch videos about the Fish Philosophy and later participated in creative activities to explore how the Fish Philosophy could be integrated into the organization. Employees were asked to draw pictures on card stock paper using crayons, stickers and fish snacks that displayed the Fish Philosophy principles. Since I was among the employees, I heard opinions about the session, which ranged from comments such as “I guess we’re back in kindergarten,” “this is kind’ a fun,” “I have so much to do at my desk, this is ridiculous.” There was also a “fish throwing” activity where fish trinkets and fish balloons were thrown to individuals

who provided ideas on how the Fish Philosophy could be incorporated in their individual departments.

The following week I contacted the Human Resources director who was in charge of implementing the program via telephone to discuss my interest in conducting a study. After explaining the procedures I would be using to conduct the study, he granted me permission to proceed. In addition, I also contacted my immediate manager to make him aware of the fact that I was conducting the study. The methods I used to conduct the study were mainly: 1) content analysis of written documents, 2) viewing of the Fish Philosophy videotapes, 3) an elite interview with the Vice-President of Organizational Change & Preparedness; 4) symbolic display of artifacts, and 5) personal impressions as a participant.

Content Analysis

To analyze content requires having content to analyze. Content analysis is “unobtrusive” in that it does not require face-to-face communication but requires intensive examination and analysis of communication documents. Written documents come in many forms such as brochures, magazines, newsletters, pamphlets, speeches, letters, or email messages. According to Babbie (1998, p. 309), content analysis is well suited to the study of communication and to answering questions of communication research of “who says what, to whom, how and with what effect.” Content analysis involves the

examination of data, the analysis of data and goes beyond the description of data to find patterns and thematic interpretation of the data gathered.

First Data communicates to organizational members in many written forms. In this study I examined a total of 30 documents that included company brochures, intradepartmental and corporate newsletters, email messages, flyers, flipcharts and “fish cards.” I examined key words and slogans used in these documents in conjunction with the Fish Philosophy principles to communicate organizational goals. This allowed me to identify and analyze themes and how they were organized to produce shared meanings among organization members.

Videotapes

The use of videotapes is essential for the study of human behavior as they capture information as it happens. The moving of an image qualifies the character of human behavior. To support this view Collier & Collier (1986) compare the use of videotapes to photographs stating that refinements of interpersonal behavior are suggested in still photographs, but conclusions must still rest on often-projective impressions that “fill in” what the photograph does not contain. Because videotapes depict continuous events as they take place, they provide the researcher the opportunity to observe reactions and behaviors as they occur as well as symbols used to reinforce the intended message.

I observed two Fish Philosophy videotapes. The first videotape titled FISH! is a 17-minute videotape that depicts employees of Seattle’s Pike Place fish

market working hard and spending long hours at work yet displaying passion, playfulness, commitment and a positive attitude. The employees sell fish and describe how they interpret their daily interactions with customers through the use of the Fish Philosophy principles. The video incorporates instances where an employee is shown interacting with a customer. Then at the end of that interaction the employee describes how the interaction relates to a specific Fish Philosophy principle.

The second 17-minute video titled FISH! TALES depicted how organizations that seem to have little in common with Pike Place Fish apply the Fish Philosophy in ways that meet the unique needs of their organization. The video depicted “flying fish” and “fish sticks” used by employees to display a playful environment at work.

During inception of the of the Fish Philosophy at First Data, the Fish Philosophy videotapes were shown in the main cafeteria from 11:30AM-1: 00PM during lunchtime for a period of one month. After that, managers were encouraged to show the video during their team meetings with employees. The videos were also shown during new employee orientation sessions. Employees were also able to check out the videos and view them when it was convenient with their schedules. I viewed the two videos numerous times. Immediately after viewing the videos I took notes of main points and messages that were used and the thematic organization of the messages.

Elite Interview

Marshall & Rossman (1995) describe elite interviews as a specialized case of interviewing that focuses on a particular type of interviewee who is considered influential and informed about a specific area relevant to research. The position such individuals hold in the organization can be advantageous to the researcher in that they have an opportunity to gain valuable information about the organization. Elites are more likely to provide information about the future of the company, the selection of specific strategies and why they are used to implement change in an organization.

There are some disadvantages to elite interviews as individuals in prominent positions are usually difficult to reach and operate in highly demanding schedules, causing the interviewer to sometimes rely on limited and specific schedules in trying to obtain an interview. An elite interview may also require the interviewer to adapt to a structured interview based on the wishes of the elite. Elites respond positively to interviews about broad subjects that allow for the freedom of using their knowledge and imagination.

I conducted an elite interview with the Vice-President of Organizational Change and Preparedness. I chose to have an interview with her because she leads a division within the organization that manages and directs change efforts as well as strategies used to implement organizational change, from the inception of change to implementation. During the course of this study she participated in a mentoring program sponsored by the organization. The purpose

of the program is to provide experienced leaders with the opportunity to share their expertise and lessons learned with aspiring employees who are seeking professional and career guidance in their respective fields.

The Vice-President of Organizational Change and Preparedness at FDR was my assigned mentor. We met regularly once every month to discuss career development topics specific to change management and organizational preparedness. In one of the meetings I requested to conduct a 20-minute informal interview about the organization's use of metaphors, specifically the Fish Philosophy. The format of the interview was unstructured, with open-ended questions about metaphors and the Fish Philosophy. I took notes on specific interview responses as well as discussions that took place during the interview. This information allowed me to gain knowledge of how organizational leaders initiate change or support change programs initiated by employees, from preparation to effective assimilation of change processes. I was able to identify how senior members of the organization convey key messages.

Personal impressions as participant

The approach I took is akin to "participant observation." Observation is especially "well suited to the dramaturgical perspective because it enables researchers to capture the range of facts, from the mini-movements to the grand gestures, of people they study" (Adler & Adler, 1994, p.38).

Conducting meetings is a common way of communicating at First Data. Staff meetings consist of members of specific teams and are held to

communicate general information about the company as well as specific information about a team. These meetings also include members who are part of the team but reside in remote locations. As a First Data employee, I attended a total of 50 meetings where I had the opportunity to observe the verbal and non-verbal interaction among team members. I took notes on instances where the Fish Philosophy principles and metaphors in general were referred to or implied in the communication process. These meetings allowed me to observe how metaphors were used and how members reacted to metaphoric discourse. I was able to examine later in my study communication implications associated with metaphors, how members of the organization interpreted metaphors and how they contributed to the culture of the organization.

In my study I observed behaviors that took place in learning environments within the organization. One of the observations involved a game that was initiated by an instructor who was tasked with managing a software application conversion process. During the learning process, the instructor included an activity called "balance the fish", where employees were asked to place a blown up fish between their legs and hop around their office cube areas. The employee that came around to the starting point without dropping the blown fish was given a fish reward. I took notes of non-verbal behaviors of employees who participated in the game and those who were observing around the area. This information allowed me to identify verbal and non-verbal behavioral patterns and how they were interpreted.

Symbolic display of artifacts

The organization's use of artifacts and symbols is perhaps the most evident way to identify the culture of the organization. The symbolic display of artifacts provides a lot of insight about what the organization communicates and reinforces the fact that there are sound explanations as to why the artifacts are displayed in certain areas. The display of symbols and artifacts also serves as a supporting guide to action. It also assists organizational members to reach a common understanding about the culture of their organization.

During the induction of the Fish Philosophy there were displays of fish paraphernalia throughout the different buildings around First Data. Large hanging flipcharts and posters, fish balloons, murals and pin ball games were displayed around the most frequented areas such as hallways, cafeterias, restroom entry doors, managers' and executive doors, office lounge areas, water fountains, meeting conference rooms and classrooms.

I was able to take still photographs of these images to analyze their meaning in relation to location of display.

CHAPTER III:

RESULTS/ DISCUSSION

Every organization has a way of carrying daily operations and First Data is no exception. These operations when repeated become the culture of the organization. In analyzing the data collected through the previously identified methodologies there seems to be a pattern or theme in the way metaphors are communicated at First Data. Metaphors are typically communicated in conjunction with the following concepts and/or activities:

1) initiation of a new project, 2) an organizational change or transition, 3) new organizational vision, 4) accomplishment of specific projects, 5) celebration of successful results, 6) rewards and recognition programs.

The metaphoric discourse related to the above activities typically includes concepts such as teamwork, playing to win, and success. In some instances, the timing of the communication process is scheduled to coincide with specific events impacting the bankcard / credit card industry. There is also a pattern to the location where the launching and marketing of such activities takes place. This chapter will analyze how metaphors and metaphoric discourse are used at First Data in a variety of communication undertakings.

The Use of Metaphors at First Data

Celebrations and gatherings

Celebrations and gatherings at First Data are typical rituals that take place when the organization commences a new project or celebrates the successful completion of a project or event. The gatherings are typically thematic with the use of a specific metaphor. The type of metaphor used becomes integrated in a variety of visual objects and other paraphernalia.

It is common for events to be launched during specific sporting events, for instance local baseball games. One example of this is the events that happened in conjunction with the Omaha Royals local baseball team in Omaha, Nebraska. When communication of a change in organizational structure took place in 1999, the metaphor of a baseball was used to communicate the change. The communication campaign and the activities surrounding this event coincided with the Omaha Royals' scheduled sports events. The organization used the metaphor "play to win" as the theme for the organizational change. This, in essence, reinforced the characteristic of winning as an important quality for the success of a specific organizational undertaking.

When the structural changes within the organization were successfully completed, organizational members were offered free tickets to attend the Omaha Royals scheduled baseball games. Additionally, organizational members were given time off with pay to attend the games that were scheduled during work hours. This, in essence, was the organization's way of celebrating the

success of the project and showing its affiliation with the winning concept in sports.

Consequently, First Data associated the use of concepts in baseball with the launching of the event. Teamwork is critical for a sports team such as the Omaha Royals to win a game. Similarly, organizational members must work as a team to accomplish a specific project in order to win. During the organizational restructure, First Data placed emphasis on the importance of teamwork and rewarded employees who were "team players." Awards and recognition programs also bore names such as T.E.A.M (Together Everyone Achieves More) where employees were awarded certain rewards when a positive and recognizable contribution to the launch and completion of the project was apparent.

In the year 2000 First Data purchased a portion of the Aksarben horse racetrack in Omaha Nebraska, a historic landmark known for its recreational activities and horse racing. First Data purchased a portion of the land in order to build a state of the art business and technology campus. The metaphor for the groundbreaking event for this new facility was horse racing and rodeos. The theme was that of a "western cowboy," with rodeo-type events. During the launch of the groundbreaking event, employees were encouraged to wear cowboy-like attire, such as hats and boots, and events surrounding the celebration activities were based on a western theme, with the cowboy as the metaphor. Competitions for the employee with the best western cowboy look

were held. The food served and music played were all related to this theme. In addition to the cowboy metaphor new classrooms were built for in-house training purposes. The classrooms were named after famous horses (Aqueduct, Belmont, Champion, Derby, Equestrian, and Furlong) that previously participated in horse racing events held at the Aksarben racetrack. Here again we see the metaphor of a horse used in conjunction with the celebration of a successful acquisition of a new facility.

During a leadership meeting to introduce FDR's vision for 2002, the theme that was adapted for this event was "playing to win." The leadership meetings began with a gathering of the First Data leadership team at the Harvey's casino where the company's vision was officially communicated. At the end of the leadership meeting, organizational members had the opportunity to participate in a variety of games provided by Harvey's casino. Here again we see the organization strategically planning events at a specific location that promotes the concepts of "playing" and "winning."

Use of media (printed form):

As stated in the methodology, the use of communication tools in printed form (such as newsletters, pamphlets, email messages) is part of how First Data communicates to organizational members. First Data has monthly and quarterly newsletters that are distributed via interoffice mail and directly to employees' residences. Such publications are characterized by colorful headlines and always contain information related to accomplishments made by employees and teams

within the organization. These accomplishments are thematic with the use of specific metaphors. For instance, in a newsletter that was published in March of 2002, a senior member of the organization was featured carrying the Olympic torch in conjunction with the Olympic torch run in Omaha. Here again we see this symbolic display of a sports theme that reinforces the organization's beliefs about the "playing to win" metaphor.

Email is another common way of communicating at First Data and a communication process that is shared among organizational members. Part of my analysis involved observing and analyzing email messages. I found out that during the launch of a project or event, email messages reflected the support of that endeavor or project by the inclusion of emblems or graphics bearing specific metaphors related to the specific endeavor or project. For instance, during the launch of the Fish Philosophy metaphor, email messages that communicated accomplishment of specific projects, or announced celebrations of successful results contained fish graphics embedded on the signatures and headings of email messages. This reinforces the fact that the organization shares common beliefs and such beliefs are enforced and reinforced throughout the varied communication messages that are sent via email. There were also emails with attachments of Dilbert cartoons that were related to the Fish Philosophy, many messages with fish-related jokes and a variety of graphics with swimming fish. There were also email "thank you" notes with fish emblems and themes related to fish.

First data also communicates through the use of post cards. These post cards are distributed internally to members of the organization and they mainly communicate steps to complete specific tasks related to specific projects. The post cards bear symbols and graphics of metaphors used and are normally sent as reminders for members of the organization to accomplish specific tasks related to specific projects. This becomes a continuation of a communication process that promotes a specific theme that is used to remind organizational members of the interrelatedness that exists between the specific projects and the metaphors used to communicate the projects.

Use of symbolic objects (Paraphernalia):

The use of paraphernalia is a common way of communicating at First Data. These come in the form of decorations such as balloons, plaques, large poster boards; office supplies such as pens, pencils, erasers, bookmarks, business cards, writing pads; sports paraphernalia such as baseball gloves, footballs, baseballs; imprinted metaphors on clothing such as jackets, t-shirts, caps ; stress releasers such as squeeze balls, softballs and utensils such as coffee mugs. Such paraphernalia can be as simple as a squeeze ball, or as elaborate as game equipment such as pinball machines. In one of the documents analyzed for the Fish Philosophy, an employee commented on the use of décor related to the Fish Philosophy as follows: " We are constantly busy with project

after project but when things are hectic, we look at the décor and things lighten up, even if only for a moment.” The use of paraphernalia serves as a reminder that the organization values the specific message and the metaphors remind organizational members of the importance of what is communicated through the use of paraphernalia.

As stated earlier, one of the functions of metaphors at First Data is to communicate change to employees, for instance, change related to the operations of the organization. A metaphor becomes a catalyst to assist organizational members in adapting to the change process.

In late September of 2001, changes were made in First Data’s Training and Development organization. The changes involved adapting a new instructional methodology to both outside clients and employees within the organization. This meant that the development and design of training materials and the way the training was conducted had to be revamped to adapt to a “blended learning approach.” where training took place virtually (online), giving the clients and employees the autonomy in their education process. Instead of only using the traditional method of facilitating a course, where an instructor stands in front of a classroom, participants engage in self-paced, virtual sessions. These include the use of tools such as web based training (WBT’s) and net-meeting, where employees are teleconferenced via audio and are able to view the instructor’s presentation on their personal computer monitors.

To launch the new instructional methodology, the training and development team adapted the “school bus” metaphor, where everyone within the training organization was encouraged to “get on the bus” or be left behind. The bus in this case was the metaphor that transported the Training and Development organization to this new transition. Roles such as the conductor, the driver and the passengers were given to the team members based on their hierarchy within the Training and Development organization, starting with the Director of Training as the driver. A toy bus was then permanently placed close to the Director's office to officially induct the metaphor.

Usually, FDR employees travel to remote client locations to conduct product and process training. The induction of the new instructional methodologies was strategically planned to coincide with a major catastrophe (September 11) and there were restrictions involved with traveling during this period. We can draw inferences between the September 11 catastrophe and the selection of the “get on the bus” metaphor. The bus is a mode of transportation and travel, and the events surrounding September 11 were also related to traveling. The “get on the bus” metaphor encourages teamwork among the Training and Development department to be willing to travel together through this journey of change within the organization. Consequently, it also subsides some of the fears surrounding the September 11 events. With the use of new training methodologies previously required travel to customer locations has been reduced significantly since there is less reliance on the traditional mode of instruction.

During my elite interview with the Vice President of Organizational Change and Preparedness she cited how metaphors were part of the organization's campaign for change. Metaphors, she stated, are "important because they allow employees to relate to something that is similar with a unified goal throughout the organization." In her perspective, though, metaphors should be used as a way to thank employees for a job well done.

Location of display

In communicating metaphors within First Data location is always key. Metaphors and metaphoric messages are usually displayed in areas that are regularly frequented by employees or that contain a large gathering of employees. There are areas such as the cafeteria, the classrooms, men's and women's restrooms, conference rooms, walls facing water fountains, entry doorways, printing, copying and fax machine locations and reception/ lobby areas. These most frequented areas are usually locations of relaxation, or places where a large gathering of employees takes place. Metaphoric discourse is also commonly posted on Human Resources representatives' office doors. The display of metaphoric discourse in these locations is strategic in that it allows exposure to large audiences. The choice of location of displays is a way to communicate to clients and others who visit the organization about the culture and beliefs of the organization.

Given the above information on metaphors and metaphoric discourse we can safely draw conclusions that metaphors are communicated at First Data to serve specific purposes: 1) gain consensus, 2) obtain buy-in from members of the organization, 3) provide awareness about a change transition, 4) simplify information that is cumbersome, sensitive or difficult to communicate. Using metaphors can facilitate understanding of an organizational message, which in turn allows organizational members to assimilate to the change, goal or objective that the organization is initiating. By using metaphors individuals are able to better relate to an idea, a symbol in its simplified version, making it easy to understand the change initiative. When the members of the organization understand an initiative, they feel better about making a contribution to change. They become productive in their individual activities and the organization in turn successfully meets its goals and objectives. When members are part of enforcing the change, they feel responsible for ensuring a successful transition because they have a higher stake in the initiative by having a sense of ownership. They become committed to work as a team in order to achieve the organizational undertaking. When their assistance is sought to accomplish a specific task, they are motivated to do so because they understand why the change is important to them personally and to the organization as a whole.

The Fish Philosophy Metaphor

The Fish Philosophy was introduced at First data in 2001 when the organization was undergoing the induction of a new re-architecture system. Additionally, the organization had faced a difficult year in the previous year, 2000, when the company cut more than 600 jobs. This was an effort to not only rekindle employee commitment and loyalty, but also change the culture of the organization which was experiencing bad press within the community and had employees who were unsure about the future of their jobs. The company needed something that would inspire the employees and revive the values that the company aspires to: happy workers, satisfied clients and profit. The change in the system architecture was crucial to the success of the organization and was new to the organizational members who, up until then, worked in a mainframe architecture environment. This change not only required the commitment of employees but also required a change in the mindset of how employees would approach their work given the new system architecture.

Introducing the Fish Philosophy during this time was critical because the company was in transition to a new vision and mission and needed to pair that vision and mission with a positive changing campaign. In a quote that was published in the Omaha World Herald (September, 2001), the vice president of the organization said, "the fish idea works perfectly with the company's new re-imagined vision, mission and values, which are to transform First Data's work environment." Another vice president of the company said, "my job is to

revitalize our company's culture; when workers are happy they make the clients happy and that's what we're about. People who enjoy being at work are productive workers who want to stay and want to do a good job" (Omaha World Herald, September, 2001).

My exposure to the Fish Philosophy began when members of the Training and Development team (of which I am part) attended a meeting that was hosted by a Human Resources representative within our department. In the meeting, which lasted approximately two hours, the HR representative discussed the Fish Philosophy's main purpose, followed by a viewing of the Fish Philosophy videotapes. Members of the training team were then asked to participate in a fish activity to reinforce the understanding of the Fish Philosophy. We were provided with art tools (crayons, fish stickers, card boards) and asked to create drawings, detailing how we envision the application of the Fish Philosophy in our office environment using one of the Fish Philosophy principles – choose your attitude, play, be present, make their day.

Along with the fish videotapes that depicted how other companies have applied the Fish Philosophy in their organizations, managers were given a variety of fish paraphernalia, such as large fish balloons, erasers, pens, pencils, fish stress balls and a copy of the book FISH! to take back to their respective departments. Managers were expected to be champions of the Fish Philosophy within their individual teams and were also asked to provide the book FISH! to employees who were interested in reading it. Managers were not provided with

specific guidelines on how to implement the Fish Philosophy within their individual teams. However, they were encouraged to come up with activities that were inspirational, motivational and that embraced the Fish Philosophy principles.

One common theme that was displayed in the frequented areas of the organization was the display of fish décor. There were hanging fish in hallways, reception areas, the cafeteria and large posters detailing the Fish Philosophy principles. Individual office cubes were decorated with large blown-up fish and rubber-like fish on employees' desks. During breaks employees threw fish balloons at each other, mimicking a volleyball game between the office aisles that divided the cubes. Snacks also took a different turn at First Data. Fish snacks, such as fish crackers, became a new and popular snack during the introductory stages of the Fish Philosophy metaphor.

During my elite interview with the Vice-President of Change and Preparedness, she revealed that the rollout of any organizational undertaking is critical to ensure success of the implementation. Reflecting on the Fish Philosophy, she stated that there was an imbalance of support between members of the organization, causing some areas of the organization to be unaware of the Fish Philosophy. Some segments of the organization had no idea what the Fish Philosophy was about and in others there were displays of fish paraphernalia such as giant inflated fish balloons, large posters detailing the Fish Philosophy, as well as murals with sea and beach themes. Rewards and

recognition programs varied from department to department. Some departments gave awards to employees with the most “fishy” attitude while others did not administer an awards program. Some departments carried out the Fish Philosophy using different reward programs whereas other departments did not have any programs at all.

In my research, one of the managers within the Training department introduced a rewards and recognition program where employees within his department nominated coworkers (within the same department) that displayed the most “fishy” attitude. A fishy attitude was evident when the Fish Philosophy principles - choose your attitude, play, be present and make their day - were emulated. One employee (among the nominated employees) was selected on a weekly basis to receive the Fish Award, which comprised two hours off with pay. One of the employees, for instance, nominated a co-worker who assisted her in completing a project. In the nomination form she wrote, "Cindy displayed a make their day attitude by making my day. She assisted me with making 20 copies of client manuals that had to be revamped due to a last- minute procedural change that was to be communicated to a client. This allowed me to provide clients with up-to-date information in a timely manner and for that I nominate her for the Fish Award."

The Training department also incorporated a fish game in their training program. After completion of one-week of intensive training on a software program, employees were asked to participate in a fish game. This game

involved placing a blown up fish between their legs and hopping around a designated area of office cubes. The individual who was first to come back to the starting point without dropping the blown up fish was given an award. Some of the employees who participated in this exercise seemed disinterested at first and felt it was a "childish" activity. One of the participants commented to the instructor by saying, "Are you serious that we have to do this?" Others seemed disenchanted with the activity. At the end of the activity, however, everyone seemed relaxed and there was an atmosphere of cheer as each participant hopped around the designated office cubes, which changed the intensity of the training atmosphere into a somewhat playful and relaxed atmosphere. This activity reinforced the company's belief about the Fish Philosophy; that it is important to encourage a relaxed atmosphere at work.

First Data conducts an orientation program for new employees, which acclimatizes them to First Data's work environment. The program agenda was modified to incorporate a segment where the new employees were introduced to the Fish Philosophy. The new employees had the opportunity to view the Fish Philosophy videotapes during orientation. One of the orientation activities required that employees break into groups of four and provide a brief presentation of what they learned on their first day of orientation. Employees were asked to select and discuss anything within the program that was presented on that first day. Interestingly enough, all of the employees included the Fish Philosophy as the main part of their presentations by describing the Fish

Philosophy principles, what they learned about the principles and how they plan to use them in their respective positions.

Morgan (1997) states that the significance of a metaphor is much greater than a device for embellishing discourse. The use of metaphors reinforces understanding of organizational members about the environment and culture of the organization. This is especially critical for new employees as they receive firsthand useful information about the culture of the organization.

Documents that introduced the Fish Philosophy made reference to the fact that its success depended on every employee. Providing employees the power and ownership of this philosophy made them feel like they had ownership of their workplace environment by making it a better place to work. One such document that was published in the company's website was a statement that read: "In order for Fish to work, it needs the support of employees at every level as we go about our daily business. The principle guidelines of Fish can help us transform FDR into the company that we want it to be. Changing the culture requires the effort and commitment of every employee. Together, we can inspire passion in our colleagues and empower them to make change happen."

Some employees' commented positively about the Fish Philosophy: "I think the fish theme is great!! We are constantly busy with project after project but when things are hectic, we look at the fish décor and things lighten up, even if only for a moment. You never know what will happen the next day, so you oughta be happy you have a job. Not like the over 600 that lost their jobs last year."

Another employee wrote: "I think the fish attitude is great! I've been telling upper management for 11 years that we need to have fun at work. Yes, most of us here do the same thing every day, year after year. The problem is that we have an abundance of people in my department that would be out looking for a job if they acted the way they do at another company. Maybe they could go work somewhere else and then we could get some fresh 'fish' and let them see how good we have it here. Lighten up. Enjoy the fact that you can have fun while you're at work. Or think about going somewhere else."

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

As I conclude my research it is the year 2002. There are a few inflated fish balloons suspended in some areas and a few office cubicles and office spaces decorated with balloons and other fish paraphernalia. Training programs that embraced the philosophy as part of their new employee orientation no longer include the Fish Philosophy in the class agenda. The fish reward and recognition program is slowly fading and was not included as part of the company's permanent rewards and recognition program. But there are still visible metaphors and key concepts that continue to linger as we see the disappearance of this philosophy. There are still pinball machines in break rooms, a few posters detailing the Fish Philosophy principles and fish erasers.

And if there is one Fish Philosophy principle that was adapted at First Data, it is the principle of "play," one concept that has been part of the company's rewards and recognition program for over 10 years. Messages that embrace the Fish Philosophy are still evident in some of the presentations provided by leaders of the organization. We still hear words such as "choosing a right attitude" when working on different projects and "be present" by making yourself available to the customer when you are needed. While the Fish Philosophy may not be as visible as it was during the induction of the program in 2001, the concepts and principles related to the philosophy are still engrained in the company's communication newsletters, email messages, as well as

presentation materials used for different communication purposes.

Organizational members understand and relate to the Fish Philosophy principles when they are quoted in the different communication media.

Measurement is critical in organizational transition. With the Fish Philosophy there was no measurement component in place to ensure its success. With the exception of the feedback obtained from the Omaha World Herald, no feedback was encouraged or solicited from employees as to how they felt about the Fish Philosophy metaphor. Barrett & Coopenrider (1990) state that studying symbolic behavior as a way to understand how to achieve desired behavior is important in organizations. Measuring the success and/or failure of a metaphor could provide important information and feedback for the organization. Feedback is very important because it allows the organization to identify what works for employees and in turn to gear the future choice of metaphors and metaphoric discourse to metaphors and symbols that employees can relate to.

Barley & Van Maanen (1985) define characteristics of metaphors as "generative" because they allow one to reframe phenomena to apprehend the familiar from an unfamiliar and perhaps productive vantage point. It can be concluded that the Fish Philosophy principle of "play" apprehends the familiar use of the word play by the induction of the concept in the rewards and recognition programs as well as its use in the varied communication media at First Data. It allows organizational members to relate to this familiar concept and productively apply it to their respective jobs.

Krefting & Frost (1983) view use of metaphors as a mechanism to change a current organizational culture that is perceived to be less than optimal. The company introduced the Fish Philosophy metaphor during a time of transition after suffering a layoff of 600 employees. The Fish Philosophy served as a tool for organizational change, and the principles reinforced and reminded employees of the common goals that organizational members share. Organizational changes do affect the structure of the organization and as the organization worked to rebuild its structure, it was necessary to emphasize key elements of that structure in order to maintain the focus of its members.

CHAPTER V: CRITIQUE AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

There are some disadvantages to how metaphors are communicated within First Data. A leader within the organization, a committee, or a task force consisting of organizational members can select a metaphor based on a specific initiative that the organization wishes to communicate. After the initial activities related to launching the event (such as celebrations) take place, it is usually left up to the head of each organization to carry the message through to the rest of the employees and teams within the organization. On some occasions the Human Resources departments are central to the communication campaign. However, this is not always the case. Overall, there are no specific enforced guidelines or procedures on how metaphors are communicated.

According to Morgan (1997), metaphors are inherently paradoxical in that they can create powerful insight that may also distort the communication process such that the initial thought process becomes distorted. Metaphors can be misleading and, in the process, can distort the key message in the communication process. Message distortion can also occur when only some of the organizational members are aware of a specific initiative. At First Data typically managers or supervisors within specific structures of the organization are in charge of transmitting a message. If they do not totally embrace a specific metaphor they are not held accountable to ensure it is successfully inducted

within their specific groups. There is no enforced follow-up method to always ensure that everyone within the organization is familiar with a specific initiative associated with a metaphor. This results in some areas of the organization being exposed to a metaphor and others having no exposure at all, causing communication misinterpretations regarding a metaphor or initiative. In response to a message about the communication of the Fish Philosophy, an employee commented on the issue of exposure to the metaphor that illustrates the lack of universal company guidelines in the communication process, saying:

Perhaps your area is embracing the whole fish thing more than some other areas. Mine just put up some blow-up fish and gave us the book to read. I have yet to see any playing going on. You could say I am the happy fisherman in the toxic waste dump. FDC needs to be more consistent in the roll out of the philosophy to ensure all business units are of like mind and attitude. (Omaha World Herald, September, 2001)

One way that First Data communicates is through the use of email and through internal web publications. Because not every employee uses a computer in their daily work, not everyone in the organization is able to receive messages. For instance, not all employees who work in production facilities use computers. This makes it difficult for such employees to receive information and news on a regular and timely basis. Therefore, while metaphors can be communicated to imply uniformity throughout the organization, there may very well be a large segment of organizational members who may not have heard about the metaphor.

Consequently, those who are exposed to a metaphor may not fully support it if a leader or manager of the organization does not fully support its implementation. This makes the metaphor less effective within that specific group of organizational members.

Metaphors that remain in the organization for a long period become integrated into other Human Resources programs, such as rewards and recognition, and continue to be used to reinforce the organization's belief about concepts such as teamwork, playing to win and success. One concept that continues to prevail at First Data is the concept of play. This concept has been integrated into the reward and recognition program and an award called the "Key Player Award" is consistently used to recognize positive employee contributions. This award is designed to recognize members of the organization with exceptional contributions and accomplishments regarding key company initiatives. The Key Player Award recipients receive a sticker that can be redeemed for a variety of numbered prizes. Key Players are also entered in an annual grand prize drawing for the Annual Key Player Award winner. The Key Player Award has been part of First Data for more than 10 years. There have been other metaphoric objects that incorporate the play theme, synchronized with sports and a variety of games that encourage a winning spirit and attitude. Concepts such as play to win, the investment on pinball machines in office galleys, the distribution of baseballs and footballs as metaphoric objects

are all examples of how the play metaphor continues to be perpetuated within First Data.

This study provides evidence that inconsistencies in the use and implementation of metaphors can have differing implications among organizational members. It is therefore important to ensure that the rollout of any organizational campaign touches every organizational member in order for the implementation to be successful. Future research can focus on identifying how large organizations can integrate communication processes and communication channels that encompass the entire organization in order to ensure that all organizational members are included and informed about metaphors and/or other initiatives in a timely manner.

Further studies can also look at how to identify and incorporate appropriate measurement components that can be administered during the rollout of metaphors. Measurement components can be put in place to ensure metaphors are successfully used for their intended purpose.

Further studies can also explore how to design metaphors that address issues specific to an organization's culture and how such metaphors can produce successful interventions in specific organizational initiatives. Rather than relying heavily on what is currently popular and being used by other organizations, can organizations create or select metaphors that are suitable for their own culture?

Further research can also explore the integration of metaphors into other organizational programs such as rewards and recognition. This will ensure that the initial introduction and implementation of a metaphor is not viewed as a short-term phenomenon but, rather, the induction of a long-term organizational initiative that will in turn shape the culture of the organization.

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APPENDIXES

- I. Elite Interview with Vice President of Organizational Change and Preparedness
- II. Institutional Review Board Certificate
- III. ChartHouse Learning Copyright

Appendix I

Elite Interview with Vice President of Organizational Change and Preparedness

July 12, 2002, 10:00am

The interview took place at First Data Resources, in Omaha, Nebraska.

Hilda: I would like to get your insight regarding the use of metaphors here at First Data, specifically the Fish Philosophy metaphor, the success of metaphor use, how decisions are made in the selection of metaphors the implementation process and measurement of the program to determine what steps to take next after implementation.

Vice President: Historically, First Data has communicated well using of metaphors. When an initiative is introduced, my organization is brought into the picture to facilitate the rollout process, prepare and identify the different areas of the organization that will be impacted by the initiative. My organization then sets a preliminary meeting to review the initiative with the key players, such as Project Owners and together we create a timeline of how the projects will be carried through. During this meeting (not always) we decide on a theme or metaphor that will guide us through implementation of the initiative.

Hilda: In your opinion, how important is the rollout of the metaphor:

Vice President: In my opinion, roll out is critical. For the Fish philosophy some areas got the news and some did not. There was also a lack of balance between supporters and non-supporters. I think improvements could be made with the implementation of a metaphor. We need to take the bankcard industry perspective, the 'say what you mean' approach. If we launch a program or philosophy that should involve the entire organization, we need to make sure it does. In the selection of metaphors we try to use a specific character, for example Dilbert. Basically we try to use metaphors that relate to how one thing could be interpreted similarly across different organizations. The Fish Philosophy as you are aware was one of those types of metaphors that cut across different organizations.

Hilda: What are your thoughts on placing measurement processes in place at the beginning?

Vice President: Measurement is very critical, which is one component that lacked with the Fish Philosophy and in other metaphors that have been used in the past. In some ways this causes the philosophy or metaphor to be viewed as a passing phenomenon, a 'flavor of the month' so to speak.

Hilda: What role do you think upper management can play to impact the success of a metaphor?

Vice President: It is important to have management support. The executive team must be supportive and active in the process of implementing a metaphor and seeing it to fruition; they must have a one-company philosophy.

Hilda: Any other thoughts about metaphors in general and how they can be effectively used within our organization?

Vice President: I think metaphors can be used in many ways, including thanking employees for a job well done, not always just to motivate employees as they have historically been used for. We can find different ways of using metaphors that can develop our organization.

Awareness is very critical! As you can see, some areas of the organization were decorated with Fish and other areas had nothing. The assumption is that everyone will get the word, and that everyone has access to certain tools and equipment (such as computers) but this isn't the case with our organization. There is a large group of employees that isn't online so the awareness campaign is not all inclusive. We can make a difference if we improve the awareness process. Uniformity in rollout is important because it allow employees to relate to something that is similar with a unified goal throughout the organization

Hilda: Thank you for your time.

Vice President: Thank you.

Appendix II



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)
Eppley Science Hall 3018
986810 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE 68198-6810
Phone: (402) 559-6463 Fax: (402) 559-7845
E-mail: irbora@unmc.edu
<http://www.unmc.edu/irb>

Certification of Completion of Training Program

This is to certify that the undersigned completed the CITI Web- based Training in Protection of Human Research Subjects required by the University of Nebraska Institutional Review Board, as of the date stated below. The undersigned further certifies that he/she understands the obligation of individuals involved in the conduct of research to fully protect the rights and welfare of human subjects of research.

Signature Hilda Byabato

Printed Name HILDA K. BYABATO

Campus University of Nebraska, Omaha.

Date of Completion 11/05/02

Appendix III

Hilda Byabato
Hbyabato@yahoo.com

To: ChartHouse Learning
221 River Ridge Circle
Burnsville MN 55337

August 2, 2002

RE: Question Regarding Copyright

To ChartHouse Learning:

My name is Hilda Byabato. I am a graduate student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Nebraska. I am writing my graduate thesis on the subject of metaphors and I would like to use the Fish Philosophy principles to illustrate how they have been used in my organization.

Who do I need to contact and how do I go about obtaining permission to use the Fish Philosophy in my Thesis. Please advise.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Hilda Byabato.

PJ Webster (007) Education Coordinator
Charthouse Learning
221 River Ridge Circle
Burnsville MN 55337

To: Hilda Byabato
Hbyabato@yahoo.com

August 3, 2002

RE: Question Regarding Copyright

You can use them as long as you give acknowledgement that Charchouse Learning Corp holds the copyright.

800-811-5214 Direct number
952-890-0505

Check out our new book Fish! Tales and our Fish! Adventure on our website
www.charthouse.com

Have an absolutely Fishy Day - PJ