

**Senior Management's Influence on the Contextual  
Components of an Organisation that Affect  
Creativity: A Case Study of a New Zealand  
Manufacturing Company**

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## ABSTRACT

Organisations are under enormous pressure to become more innovative in all areas of their operations if they are going to continue to compete successfully (Leavy, 2003). The first stage of successful innovation is ensuring that creativity, the generation of novel ideas, is achieved (McFadzean, et al., 2004). With regards to an organisation's creative environment, theory has suggested that the basic orientation of a company's support for creativity comes directly from the behaviours of the highest levels of management (Amabile, 1996). Despite this proposed relationship, little empirical research has been conducted that examines the role that senior management of an organisation play in influencing a work environment that stimulates creativity.

A research model has been developed that illustrates the possible relationships between the functions of senior managers and the creative work environment of an organisation. Essentially this model is be utilised as a framework to examine *how do the management functions create the stimulants and impediments of an organisation's environment that affect creativity?* The method used to investigate this research question is a qualitative investigation of two manufacturing plants that operate in a larger New Zealand food processing Company. This entailed gathering information through semi-structured interviews with employees from the senior management to lower level employees. In addition, direct observations at the plants and archival data in the form of company reports, articles and prior studies were used to gather further information.

From this research, three key findings were established. (1) Amabile, et al's., (1996) theory that a number of variables stimulate creativity, while others impede it, was supported. (2) Trust was found to be the key intervening variable, the foundation, upon which a creative context can be built. (3) The Senior Manager, in the case of this research the Operations Manager and Production Centre Manager, played a crucial role in providing the contextual variables that facilitate creativity. As this research suggests, organisational creativity is complicated by the fact that it is affected by the social dynamics operating between key parties within an organisation. Consequently, it is characterised by informal relationships, freedom and resource allocation that ultimately requires that a level of trust exists between

key parties. It is senior management's responsibility to ensure that such a work environment is created. These managers are only able to build trust within their organisations by acting with benevolence, integrity and demonstrating that they are committed to employee creativity.

**Key words: Creativity, innovation, organisational environment, management functions and trust.**

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Today's organisations are faced with the relentless pressure of fierce domestic and international competition and rapidly changing technological, economic, regulatory, and market conditions (Tesluck, et al., 1997). To try and overcome these hurdles, they are under enormous pressure to become more creative, not just in marketing or new product development, but pretty much in everything that they do. Consequently, it is argued that creativity, the fundamental first step in the configuration of the innovation process, is a necessary requirement to ensure an organisation's survival, effectiveness and competitive advantage (Leavy, 2003). Organisations such as 3M and Microsoft, for example, profess that cultivating creativity within their employees has led to innovations that would otherwise not be possible (Messetti, 1996). Even organisations that are faced with relatively stable and predictable environments, reap direct benefits from creative ideas that have the potential to improve quality, employee safety, and satisfaction (Williams, 2004).

Early research on creativity has primarily centred on discovering and describing the nature of creative people (e.g. Barron, 1955; Jones, 1964; Meer & Morris, 1955). While research at this level has yielded significant findings, the nearly exclusive focus on the individual level of analysis has failed to develop more macro explanations of creativity (Deazin, et al., 1999). In order to fill this void, there has been a development in the literature that has seen a progression in the scope of creativity research from its origins at the individual level, to research at the group or social psychological level and then, to the organisational level (Amabile, et al., 1996). For the purposes of this research the focus of this study is to examine creativity at the organisational level; examining the influences of senior management and the internal contextual variables on individual creativity (Judge, et al., 1997; Tierney, et al., 1999; Woodman, et al., 1993).

In spite of the associated benefits of creativity, in reality it frightens managers because of its inevitable link to risk (K. A. Pervaiz, 1998). As a consequence many senior managers only pay lip service to its power and benefits, reluctant to make any aggressive investment or commitment that is demanded (K. A. Pervaiz, 1998). For the reason that senior management dictate, to a degree, the presence of key variables conducive to creativity within the work environment (Amabile, et al, 1996), they are identified in the literature as playing a critical role in determining creativity within an organisation (Amabile, 1997). Yet there is very little research that explores how these managers influence the elements of the work environment that facilitates creativity. The aim of this study is to shed light on this gap in the literature. This will be achieved by investigating the research question that was developed to lay the foundations for the entire research. This investigation will increase understanding of how Senior Managers, from a New Zealand manufacturing organisation, shape contextual elements of the work environment that influences employees' motivation to be creative.

## **1.2 Synopsis of the Thesis**

### **1.2.1 Literature Review**

Chapter Two is split into three core sections. The first section starts off by broadly distinguishing the difference between creativity and innovation. It then narrows down in scope by reviewing the literature on individual and organisational creativity drawn from a number of disciplines such as psychology, sociology, organisational behaviour and business management. From this, an understanding of the key organisational variables that facilitate and inhibit creativity will be provided. The second section reviews the literature on management behaviours and the influence that they have on creativity. From there, the functions of management, from the classical management discipline, are reviewed and the key components will proceed to be identified and discussed. The final section identifies the limitations in the existing creativity literature and a conceptual model of the theorised

relationships between the management functions, organisational environment and creativity will be presented.

## **1.2.2 Development of Research Model**

Chapter Three builds on from the basic research model that will be presented in Chapter Two. Based upon the relationships depicted in the model, a research question is presented for investigation. To adequately address this question, a number of research propositions are outlined showing the significant relationships that exist between senior management functions and the work environment of an organisation. Finally, a research model that depicts the relationships between the key contextual variables will be presented for investigation.

### **1.2.2.1 Research Methodology**

Chapter Four describes the methodology used to gather and analyse the evidence required to fulfil the scope of the research question. The chapter begins by providing definitions of the key variables under investigation and explaining the relationships that are depicted in the theoretical model. Following this, will be the acknowledgement and justification of the qualitative case study method, which has been selected as the primary data collection method. The weaknesses of this method are identified to ensure that they are minimised in this research. Semi-structured interviews, archival data and direct observation collection methods are reviewed and the reasoning behind their selection will be presented. Lastly, the research procedures and analytical techniques chosen to analyse the data will be discussed.

### **1.2.2.2 Overview of Results and Discussion**

Chapters Five and Six present the data gathered from the qualitative research that was conducted at Plant one and Plant two. Both chapters provide a background of the respective plants and outline elements of the work environment that were found to either stimulate or inhibit employees' perceptions of organisational creativity. In both case studies, trust or a lack of it, was the unexpected intervening variable found to be responsible for the work environments operating at both plants. Chapter Seven compared and discussed the findings presented in the previous two chapters with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. As a consequence of trust surfacing as an unanticipated variable not explored in Chapter Two, a literature review on the concept will be undertaken in this chapter. The final section of the chapter focuses on the development of a new theoretical model depicting the results of the research and providing an answer to the research question that was posed in Chapter Three.

### **1.2.2.3 Conclusions**

Chapter Eight begins by providing a brief overview of the chapters of the thesis. It then leads into a summary of the key findings of the study's findings. From there, the implications of the findings will be discussed in relation to the existing literature on organisational creativity. Finally, the limitations of the research are identified and future research opportunities will be presented.

## **1.3 Summary**

Chapter One has provided a brief overview of the importance of organisational creativity and the current gap in the literature that this study attends to address. It continues on to provide a brief synopsis of each of the chapters that are found within this thesis. The remainder of this thesis will be the presentation of these chapters in more detail. Chapter Two will proceed to carry out a comprehensive literature review on key concepts, from

which a theoretical model of the hypothesised relationships between management functions, organisational environment and creativity will be developed.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter One provided a brief overview of the importance of organisational creativity and the gap in the literature that this study attends to address. It then went on to provide a brief synopsis of each of the chapters that are found within the parameters of this thesis. The purpose of Chapter Two is to carry out a comprehensive literature review to explore how senior management influence the work environment that encourages creativity. The exploration that will be carried out will be achieved by firstly outlining the distinct differences between innovation and creativity, and providing a definition of organisational creativity that will be adopted for the research. Amabile's (1997) Componential Theory will then be utilised as a means to analyse and categorise the existing creativity research. From this analysis the relationships between senior management, the work environment and creativity will be identified and limitations in the literature will be presented. It will be from the exploration of key variables and the existing relationships between them, that a basic research model will be presented. This basic model will lay the foundations from which a comprehensive theoretical research model will follow. This will not only help in addressing the prevailing gaps in the literature, but the findings will be valuable to practitioners wishing to encourage creativity within their own organisations.

#### **2.2 Innovation and Creativity**

Creativity and innovation are two well-known concepts in the business and academic worlds; however there tends to be a level of misunderstanding surrounding their actual meanings. One argument holds that creativity and innovation are basically the same phenomenon, but they occur at different levels of analysis (Ford, 1996). Another argument stipulates that creativity is important, as it is a key input into the alternative generation phase of the innovation process (Ford, 1996). The most disturbing pattern that is surfacing

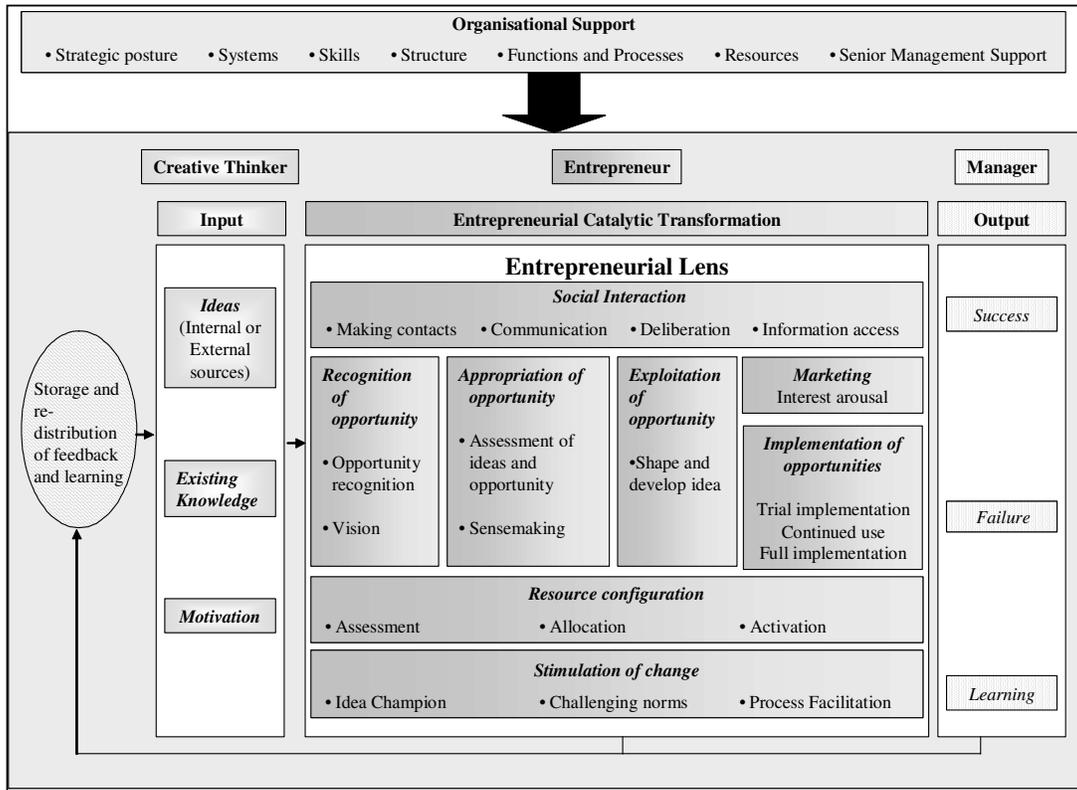
in the literature is the tendency of scores of managers and even academics to use the two terms interchangeably (Ford, 1996). In order to effectively progress forward, it is imperative that these misconceptions are cleared up right away. The following four points identified in Gurteen's (1998) research will be used to show just how different innovation and creativity are.

1. Creativity and innovation are located at different stages of thinking; creativity involves the process involved in generating ideas, whereas innovation is the sifting, refining and more importantly the implementation of those ideas.
2. Creativity and innovation are achieved through different manners of thinking; creativity needs divergent thinking to encourage the generation of creative ideas, while innovation needs convergent thinking to reach the synthesis of those ideas, solutions and operations.
3. Creativity and innovation lead to different results; creativity is solely concerned with the generation of ideas, while innovation aims at implementing those ideas.
4. Creativity and innovation offer different business relevance; creativity does not have to be linked with a businesses financial benefit, innovation, on the other hand, generates financial values for businesses.

All four of these statements provide key points that highlight stark differences between the two concepts. The key point taken from these differences is that creativity is a important precursor to innovation, the two terms are not synonymous (Cumming, 1998; Woodman, et al., 1993). This research is particularly interested in the conception that creativity is the fundamental first step in the configuration of the innovation process (Couger, 1995; K. A. Pervaiz, 1998; Shaw, et al., 2005). Shaw, et al's, (2005) research model (Figure 2.1) provides a framework of the innovation process; showing the importance creativity plays in initiating and supporting the innovation process that will follow (Harper & Becker, 2004; Shaw, et al., 2005). Due to the fact that this model is yet to be empirically tested, this study will concentrate on its front-end, by exploring creativity and the influence of organisational support on the variable.

**FIGURE 2.1**

**The Micro-Model of Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation** (Shaw, et al., 2005).



### 2.3 Organisational Creativity

It is necessary to begin with a definition of organisational creativity that will be used to lay the foundations for the organisational research that will follow. In the literature, creativity has been grouped into three primary categories: person, process or product (Fagan, 2004). The first two categories have seen researchers and theorists define and measure creativity based on either the characteristics of the person (Kirton, 1976) or the thought and behavioural processes that are associated with creativity (Basadur, et al., 2000). Although these definitions are widely accepted, these are not the most suitable methods in establishing if an organisation is a creative success or failure (Amabile, 1996). It is for this reason that this study has chosen to adopt the third category, the product definition of creativity. This classification of creativity focuses on the product of creative outcomes that are both novel and potentially useful to an organisation (Amabile, 1996; Chirumbolo, et al., 2005; McFadzean, et al., 2005; Zhou & Oldham, 2001).

The enhancement of novel outcomes from creativity is seen by organisational scholars and the business community as a key step in establishing a source of competitive advantage within the market place (Amabile, 1988; Politis, 2004; Shalley, 1995). The competitive advantage from creativity is the management of streams of creative actions that provide organisations with the ability to quickly respond to opportunities, successfully adapt, grow, and compete in the market place (Oldham & Cummings, 1996). However, the literature also states that harnessing and ultimately enhancing an organisation's creativity is not an easy task to accomplish. This is due to the large number of variables, from both an individual and organisational level that need to be identified and properly managed (Politis, 2004). To gain a better understanding of creativity, the individual and organisational levels found within the literature will be explored further.

## **2.4 Creativity at the Individual Level**

The primary focus of the existing creativity research has traditionally been at an individual level. There exists a substantial body of literature that identifies specific characteristics of individuals that play a critical role in creative performance (Ford, 1996; Lowe & Taylor, 1986; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Tierney, et al., 1999). The personal characteristics that have been examined range from personality factors (Jones, 1964; Kwang & Rodrigues, 2002; Lowe & Taylor, 1986; McCrae, 1987), through to the measurement of intelligence (Meer & Morris, 1955; Saeki, et al., 2001), traits (Barron & Harrington, 1981) and cognitive styles (Basadur, et al., 1982; Kirton, 1976). Although the research seems quite broad in scope it is suggested that there are three key components of individual creativity within any domain: expertise, creative thinking skills and intrinsic task motivation (Amabile, 1997).

Expertise is the component that lays the foundation for all creativity. This is because it is the knowledge, proficiencies and abilities of individuals that allows them to make the creative contributions to their respective fields (Amabile, 1997). Creative thinking skills include the appropriate cognitive strategies, divergent work-styles and the ability to generate novel ideas (Amabile, 1997). Task motivation, in particular that of the intrinsic nature, has been postulated by many researchers as another key element in creativity

(Amabile, 1997; Barron & Harrington, 1981). This variable refers to an individual's positive attitude that maybe influenced by a sense of interest, involvement, excitement or satisfaction from engaging in a creative task (Amabile, 1997). It is demonstrated in the literature that the more of each of these individual variables an individual possesses, the better their creative performance will be (Cooper, et al., 1999; Forbes & Domm, 2004; Ford, 1996; Koestner, et al., 1984; Moneta & Siu, 2002).

## **2.5 Creativity at the Organisational Level**

Researchers and theorists who examine creativity at the organisational level agree that the studies undertaken at the individual level have yielded some important findings about the abilities, personality traits and work styles of creative people (Amabile, 1997; Andrews, 1965). However, there is also an agreement amongst these same groups of people that these findings are limited and limiting. This is a consequence of a large portion of the research virtually ignoring the role of the work environment in creativity, and offering little to practitioners whose primary concern is helping employees to become more creative in their work (Amabile, 1997). In an effort to extend on from the short reach of the traditional approach, research at the organisational level views individual characteristics as part of a broader more complex framework. This framework incorporates the influences of contextual and environmental variables on individual and group creativity (Brazeal & Weaver, 1990; Eisenberger, et al., 1998; Judge, et al., 1997; Shalley, 1995; Sundgren, et al., 2005; Tierney, et al., 1999; Woodman, et al., 1993). The incorporation of the work environment as an influence on employee creativity is represented in three major organisational theories, the Interactionist Theory of Woodman, et al (1993), the Multiple Social Domains Theory of Ford (1996), and the Componential Theory of Amabile (1996).

Both the Interactionist (Woodman, et al., 1993) and Multiple Social Domain Theories (Ford, 1996) provide an understanding of creativity that goes well beyond a focus on individual actors. This is because these theories are seen to carefully examine the situational context within which the creative process takes place (Ford, 1996). The Interactionist Theory of creativity (Woodman, et al., 1993), that was based on earlier work by Woodman & Schoenfeldt (1990), describes creativity as a complex product of a

person's behaviour in a given situation. The situation is characterised in terms of the contextual and social influences that either facilitate or inhibit creativity at the individual, group and organisational levels (Woodman, et al., 1993). The Multiple Social Domains Theory (Ford, 1996) also adopts a comprehensive approach. It examines individual creative actions within organisational settings composed of intertwined group, organisational, institutional, and market domains. In essence this theory identifies multiple social domains that collectively represent the situation facing organisational actors as they choose between creative and routine actions (Ford, 1996).

These theories demonstrate that organisational creativity is a complex phenomenon where numerous variables at the individual, group, and organisational levels are linked with the act of creativity (Woodman, et al., 1993). The underlying premise from both theories is the belief that a failure to adopt a framework that encompasses multiple levels of influences, leads to an incomplete perspective on creativity (Woodman, et al., 1993). Both theories provide sound theoretical frameworks to work from; however this research is concerned about exploring the components of the work environment that influence creativity. As a consequence of this, it is Amabile's (1997) Componential Theory that will be adopted as the theoretical framework in this research. This theory is accepted as the most suitable, as it is the only one to focus exclusively on specific creativity features of the internal work environment that contribute to the existence of organisational creativity (Politis, 2004).

## **2.6 The Componential Theory of Creativity**

Like other contextual theories of creativity, the central prediction of Amabile's (1988) Componential Theory is that certain elements of the work environment have a direct impact on individual creativity. According to the specifics of this theory it is the psychological context of creativity, the perceptions of the work environment, that influence intrinsic motivation and ultimately the creative work that is carried out in organisations (Amabile, 1988; Amabile, et al., 1996). Amabile (1988) has identified eight features of the work environment that either act as stimulants or obstacles to an individual's perceptions of overall workplace creativity. As is shown in Table 2.1, there have been a number of studies that examine each of these components. These provide ample support for the

theory's philosophy that work load pressure and organisational impediments have a negative affect on creativity; while the other six components are shown to stimulate creativity in a more positive manner (Fagan, 2004; Taylor & Gyskieciz, 1993).

**TABLE 2.1**

**Conceptual Concepts of Work Environment Factors Hypothesised to Influence Creativity (Amabile, et al., 1996).**

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Organisational Encouragement (+) | (Amabile, 1979; Brazeal & Weaver, 1990; Seithi, Smith, & Park, 2001; Shalley, 1995; Sundgren, et al, 2005)     |
| Supervisory Encouragement (+)    | (Amabile, et al, 2004; George & Zhou, 2001; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Politis, 2004; Tierney, et al, 1999)      |
| Work Group Supports (+)          | (Gilson & Shalley, 2004; Miura & Hida, 2004; Moore, 2000; Tagger, 2002; Thornburg, 1991; Tiwana, 2005)         |
| Freedom (+)                      | (Amabile, 1988; Bailyn, 1985; Forbes & Domm, 2004; Lapierre & Giroux, 2003; Paper & Johnson, 1997; Zhou, 1998) |
| Resources (+)                    | (Amabile et al., 2002; Garfeild, Taylor, Dennis, & Satzinger, 2001; Sundgren & Styhre, 2003)                   |
| Challenging Work (+)             | (Amabile, 1988; Fagan, 2004)   |
| Workload Pressure (-)            | (Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta, & Kramer, 2004; Kelly & Karau, 1993; Ockar, 2005)                                  |
| Organisational Impediments (-)   | (Ekvall, 1997; Fagan, 2004; Kimberley & Evanisko, 1981)  |

### **2.6.1 Organisational Encouragement**

The first of the components to be examined is organisational encouragement of the generation and development of new ideas. This feature of the environment is made up of

four key factors that enhance an organisations ability to promote an environment that supports creativity (Amabile, et al., 1996). The first of these aspects is the encouragement of risk taking and idea generation. This variable is driven by the value that management place on creativity and innovation (Amabile, 1996; Cummings, 1965). Research examining this contextual influence has demonstrated that people are more likely to deviate from routine problem solving if an encouragement to take risks is supported in certain situations or by the explicit instructions of management (Amabile, 1988; Gilson & Shalley, 2004; Seithi, et al., 2001).

The provision of the fair and supportive evaluation of ideas is the second feature of organisational encouragement (Amabile, et al., 1996). It has been suggested in research that the expectation of external, highly critical evaluation of creative accomplishment can have negative consequences for creativity (Amabile, 1979, 1988; Woodman, et al., 1990). This is the result of these types of evaluations adversely affecting creative motivation, as employees are reluctant to take risks because they may be negatively evaluated (K. A. Pervaiz, 1998). Studies have shown that management need to provide supportive and informative evaluation that taps into the intrinsic motivation of people to positively influence their creative output (Sundgren, et al., 2005).

Reward and recognition of creativity is the third component of organisational encouragement. It has been shown in a number of empirical studies that engaging in an activity to gain only the contracted extrinsic rewards can potentially inhibit creativity from occurring (Amabile, 1988; Cooper, et al., 1999; Glucksberg, 1968). On the other hand, it has been found that creativity can be enhanced by providing intrinsic rewards that are perceived as a bonus, a confirmation of one's creative work and performance accomplishments, or a method of enabling an individual to engage in better more interesting work in the future (Anonymous, 2001; Eisenberger, et al., 1998; Eisenberger & Rhoades, 2001; Judge, et al., 1997; Kahai, Sosik, & Avolio, 2003). This theory of the influences of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards on creativity is reiterated in a study that found employees stating "It's the money that brings me to work, but it's not money that gets the best work out of me" (Morris, 2005, p. 36).

Collaborative idea flow across an organisation, participative management and decision making are the final aspects that are seen to have an impact on organisational creativity (Amabile, et al., 1996). Research evidence suggests that the ability of an organisation to exchange information within its environment is a important contextual variable (Damanpour, 1991; Paolillo & Brown, 1978). The underlying idea of this variable is that being exposed to potentially relevant ideas and information from across the organisation increases the probability that creativity will also increase (Amabile, et al., 1996; Woodman & Schoenfeldt, 1990).

### **2.6.2 Supervisory Encouragement**

Project managers or direct supervisors can positively drive organisational creativity by providing goal clarity, open interactions between supervisor and subordinates, and supervisory support of a team's work and ideas (Amabile, et al., 1996). Open supervisory interactions and perceived support are seen to operate largely through the same mechanisms that are associated with fair and supportive evaluation (Amabile, et al., 1996). Under this scenario there are certain actions and behaviours carried out by supervisors that promote employees' feelings of self-determination and personal initiative at work. Such actions include supervisors that are concerned about their employees' feelings and needs. They also encourage their employees' to voice their concerns, they provide positive informational feedback, and facilitate the development of their employees skills (Oldham & Cummings, 1996). This sort of encouragement has the potential to boost the levels of interest in work activities and enhance the creative environment. This is because employees are less likely to experience the fear of negative criticism that can have the potential to undermine the intrinsic motivation necessary for creativity (Amabile, 1979; Amabile, et al., 1996).

### **2.6.3 Work Group Support**

It has been suggested in the literature that a number of group composition, group characteristics, and group process factors are related to creative outcomes in work groups

and research teams (Ford, 1996). The majority of empirical studies on group creativity have employed brainstorming tasks that focus on the comparison between nominal groups and real groups (Thornburg, 1991). These have generally shown that nominal groups outperform groups where individuals brainstorm together (Lamm & Trommsdorff, 1973). In relation to the encouragement of creativity within work groups, the main focus is on the personal and social dimensions that facilitate group productivity. This includes such factors as heterogeneity and diversity (Graham, 1965; Miura & Hida, 2004; Thornburg, 1991), cohesiveness (Craig & Kelly, 1999), interaction patterns (Kylan & Shani, 2002; Paulus, 2000), shared goals (Gilson & Shalley, 2004), and commitment to the project (Amabile, et al., 1996).

The diversity of group members is shown to influence employee creativity by exposing them to a greater variety of heterogeneous perspectives for consideration. Such exposure has been demonstrated to positively impact on creative thinking (Amabile, et al., 1996; Miura & Hida, 2004). Group cohesiveness enhances creativity through the increased feeling of psychological safety and self-actualisation (Nystrom, 1979). Interaction patterns, shared goals and commitment within a project have been shown to yield specific increases in the intrinsic motivation of the group, which positively influences creativity (Amabile, et al., 1996). It is suggested that these drivers of employee creativity are a consequence of team members working more closely together, feeling more reliant upon one another and motivated to get things done so they do not let their team down (Gilson & Shalley, 2004).

#### **2.6.4 Freedom**

It has been identified that managers can positively stimulate creativity by allowing individuals and teams to believe that they have some level of control and ownership in the day-to-day operations of their work (Amabile, et al., 1996). This theory is similar to one of the primary conclusions reached in Glassman's (1986) study of 200 R&D scientists. He found that freedom to choose what to work on and how to accomplish goals was a primary driver of organisational creativity. This has been verified in a number of other studies that discovered that individuals who were encouraged to use their own initiative in work procedures, were less likely to be apprehensive about venturing outside the boundaries that

are likely to produce more creative work (Cummings, 1965; Glassman, 1986; Lapierre & Giroux, 2003; Zhou, 1998). There are other studies, however, that found that employees who were moderately controlled were most effective in organisational terms (Farries, 1973; Pelz & Andrews, 1976). Nevertheless there is enough empirical evidence to support the theory that individuals with more autonomy have more freedom to play around with ideas and expand the range of considerations and material from which a solution emerges (Shalley, 1991).

## **2.6.5 Resources**

To be successful in ensuring a work environment that stimulates creativity, individuals and teams must be provided with access to the appropriate resources including funds, time, materials, facilities and information (Amabile, 1997). An adequacy of resources prevents the obvious practical limitations occurring as a consequence of an insufficient amount of resources being allocated (Amabile et al., 2002). Glassman's (1986) study supports this as he found that the provision of time to be creative was a key driver of organisational creativity. Resource allocation has also been seen to influence creativity by tapping into an individual's perceptions and motivation. This influence of individual motivation to be creative is a consequence of a person perceiving that the more resources that are allocated to a task, the more importance that an organisation places on that particular task (Amabile, et al., 1996).

## **2.6.6 Pressure**

### **2.6.6.1 Challenging Work**

From the few studies that do examine the affect of pressure on creativity in organisations, the literature presents seemingly contradictory findings. The outcome of these findings has resulted in the conceptualisation of two distinctive forms of work environment pressures (Amabile, et al., 1996). The challenging work component is the first type of pressure that

has the potential to positively stimulate the creative work environment. Of the studies that examine this variable it was found that explorations of alternative solutions and time for that exploration directly correlates with the creativity of task outcomes (Amabile, 1996; Parnes, 1961). In particular, it is suggested that a degree of urgency may make people feel that their project is more important and therefore have a positive influence on creativity (Amabile, 1988; Amabile, et al., 1996; Andrews & Farris, 1972). In addition to the factor of time pressure, Oldham & Cumming's (1996) study found that intellectually challenging and complex problems can also positively influence an employee's creative outcome.

### **2.6.6.2 Workload Pressure**

The provision of workload pressures that are seen to be excessive are factors that managers are encouraged to avoid when endeavouring to support creativity (Amabile, et al., 1996). These include an inappropriate amount of time or resources to complete assigned tasks. If employees are faced with these types of barriers then there is less chance that they are likely to exhibit creative behaviours (Amabile, et al., 1996). Amabile, et al's, (2002) longitudinal study illustrates the negative influence on creativity as a result of time pressured employees. It found that despite time pressured people working faster, getting more done and doing better jobs on straight forward tasks, they were less likely to be thinking creatively in these tasks (Amabile et al., 2002).

### **2.6.7 Organisational Impediments**

Organisational impediments are the final environmental components identified in the Componential Theory. From the meagre evidence that examines this variable, it is suggested that such factors as internal strife and rigid formal management structures potentially obstruct an organisations creativity (Amabile, et al., 1996). This is a consequence of individuals perceiving these types of factors as controls that lead to increases in individuals extrinsic motivation and a corresponding decrease in the intrinsic motivation that is necessary for creativity (Amabile, 1988).

The eight components of the Componential Theory have been shown to have a significant influence on the inferences that employees draw about the work environment in which they reside, and the true priorities of the organisation (K. A. Pervaiz, 1998). It is from these conclusions developed by employees that not only guide their final decision to be creative, but determines the overall creativity of the organisation (K. A. Pervaiz, 1998). With the understanding that these variables play a crucial role in determining organisational creativity; it is equally important to identify that it is management that dictate, to a degree, the presence that each of the variables play within the work environment (Amabile, et al., 1996). Their influence is significant as they are able to give priority to creativity, as well as make efforts, in terms of freedom and rewards, that guards against complacency (K. A. Pervaiz, 1998). To fully understand the relationship that exists between management and an organisations work environment, the role they play will be explored further.

## **2.7 Management Behaviour and the Work Environment**

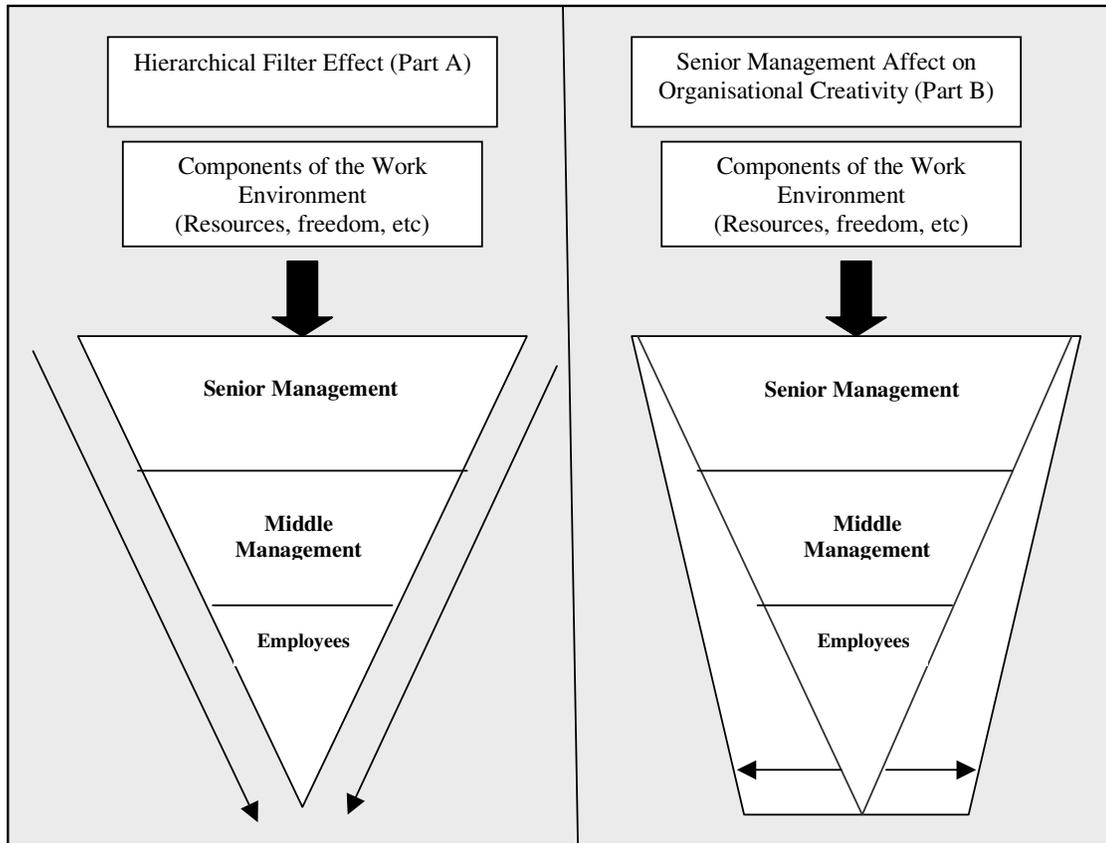
The crucial role managers from all levels play in shaping a work climate that supports and nurtures creativity, is not only from what is formally communicated to subordinates through rules, policies or regulations, it is also the result of features of their behaviours, practices and styles of leadership (Anonymous, 2001; Judge, et al., 1997; Seithi, et al., 2001). The Componential Theory proposes that it is the behaviours of managers', from an immediate to a higher level, that influence subordinates perceptions of the organisations support for creativity (Amabile, et al., 1996). More specifically the theory suggests that the basic orientation of an organisation towards innovation, as well as the supports for creativity, comes directly from the behaviours of the highest levels of management (Amabile, 1996; K. A. Pervaiz, 1998). This is because senior managers, who are seen to consistently introduce creative solutions and take personal risks, communicate the legitimacy of these types of behaviours to other employees (Ford, 1996). It is proposed that if these managers' are to successfully seed a climate that is conducive to creativity, their behaviours and practices must incorporate certain procedures that positively stimulate the components of the work environment that they directly control (Ahmed, 1998).

## 2.7.1 Senior-Level Management

Senior level managers normally comprise of the Chief Executive Officer, President or Vice-presidents. In terms of a factory environment, which is the focus of this research, this may also include the Plant Manager. These managers' are generally responsible for choosing and putting into place the processes, systems and methods that get people in the organisation to behave as the organisation wants (Robert, 1995). In terms of the components of the work environment, these managers are directly accountable for dictating how much freedom, resources, workload pressures, challenging work, organisational encouragement, and impediments are present within an organisation (Amabile, et al., 1996). In terms of supervisory and work group encouragement, senior managements influence would be considered to be of a more indirect nature. This is because these components are concerned more with the perceptions of employees that have been derived from the behaviours of their direct supervisors and other team members (Amabile, et al., 1996). As is shown in the literature, the influence that senior management hold over the components of the work environment is quite substantial. This influence over the creative components of the work environment has been developed into a theoretical model (see Figure 2.2). The theory depicted in this figure shows that senior management are in control of the key components that determine organisational creativity. Ultimately they determine what and how much resources, freedom, etc, will initially filter down to the lower levels of the organisation. As is shown, the components generally go into the organisation through the top and are filtered through the hierarchy depending on the actions and behaviours of the different levels of management. In the second part of the figure (Part B), an organisations level of creativity at the lower levels is dependant on how much of those components reach the bottom. As is depicted in Part B, the arrows move in an outward direction as the creative components of the work environment increase at the lower levels. As this is happening, the chance that lower-level employees' will be creative increases. This is because they are provided with the components of the work environment that is increasingly supporting creativity.

**FIGURE 2.2**

**Senior Managements Influence on the Environmental Components that Dictate Organisational Creativity**



Based on this theory, the research will examine how senior management influence creativity through the manipulation of the eight components of the work environment. In order to carry out this exploration, there is a need to firstly outline what it is that senior managers actually do in their roles that shapes the work environment of an organisation. This will be achieved by delving into the functions of the management theory to provide a suitable theoretical framework to lay the foundations for investigation.

## **2.8 Functions of Management**

Like creativity, the study of the functions of management has yet to produce a universally agreed upon definition of the concept (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). As a consequence three

major schools of management thought, quantitative, behavioural and management process represent starkly different viewpoints on what management is and how it is studied (Hodgetts, 1990). The quantitative school, often referred to as management science, consists of theories that view management as a body of quantitative tools and methodologies designed to aid managers' in making complex decisions related to operations and production (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). On the other hand, the behavioural school, which grew out of the efforts of people who recognised the importance of the individual and group processes, is largely concerned with human behaviour (Hodgetts, 1990). The literature shows that both schools present valid arguments that provide unique advantages when analysing the occupation of management. However, it is the process or classical school that provides a discrete method of classifying the thousands of different activities, functions and techniques that managers carry out, which is considered to be the most suitable theory for the current research (Carroll & Gillen, 1987).

### **2.8.1 Classical School of Management**

The underlying argument of the classical school is the idea that management is the process of such interrelated functions as planning, organising, directing and controlling organisational resources in the quest of achieving organisational goals (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). Managers from all levels are assigned the primary responsibility of carrying out these management functions in relation to their assigned roles (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). Criticism of the validity and usefulness of these functions in describing managerial work exists within the management literature (Mintzberg, 1971, 1973, 1975). However, the principles of the theory are supported by a number of empirical studies that found managers at all levels spent time on these classical management functions (Allen, 1981; Hemphill, 1959; Hughes & Singer, 1985; Mahoney, et al., 1965; Mahoney & Weitzel, 1969). For instance, in Mahoney, et al's (1965) study of 452 managers it was found that there appeared to be a minimum time spent on each of the functional responsibilities. Hughes and Singler (1985) found similar results amongst various functional areas of first line, second line and general marketing managers. Thus, despite the prevailing criticism, the current literature provides an acceptable body of evidence that supports the utilisation

of the functional process as a tool to examine managements' influence in work place creativity.

### **2.8.1.1 Planning**

Planning is the process by which managers of an organisation establish specific goals and define action statements by which these objectives will be attained (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). Plans may take the form of hierarchical plans, policies, rules, procedures, programs or projects. These plans have either a short, medium or long span of life depending on the circumstances (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). Although the exact future can seldom be predicted and factors beyond ones control may interfere with the best laid plan, without some form of planning events are left to chance (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1968). Plans therefore provide a rational approach that decides in advance what an organisation will do, how to do it, when to do it, and who will do it. Whether highly developed or only the visions and intentions of managers, these plans ultimately lay a foundation for the execution of other management functions (Dunham & Pierce, 1989).

### **2.8.1.2 Organising**

The function of organising is the establishment of the formal structure of authority through which internal work subdivisions are arranged, defined and coordinated to facilitate efficient attainment of organisational goals (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). This process covers an array of structural dimensions such as departmentalisation, specialisation and power. It is senior managements' development of the span of control and centralisation of authority within an organisation that is of particular interest to this study. The span of control, which is related to a firms hierarchy, refers to the number of people reporting to a given superior (Daft, 2001). When spans of control are narrow the organisational hierarchy tends to be tall; however, spans that are wide have hierarchies of authority that are shorter (Daft, 2001). These levels of control produce two distinctively different organisational charts; a taller vertical type of structure and a flatter more horizontal structure (Daft, 2001).

In the case of a tall organisational structure, typical of a classical bureaucratic structure; it allows the manager to exercise tight control. This is because the manager only has a few subordinates and can be aware of everything the subordinates are doing (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). The general characteristics of this type of structure that was designed for efficiency are: specialised tasks; strict hierarchy with many rules; vertical communicating and reporting systems; few teams, task forces or integrators, and centralised decision making (Daft, 2001). Conversely the horizontal, more organic type of structure, is characterised by: shared tasks, empowerment, a relaxed hierarchy with few rules, horizontal communication, many teams and task forces, and a decentralised decision making system (Daft, 2001). In terms of centralisation, it refers to the hierarchical level that has authority to make a decision. In the case of the structure that favours centralisation the decision making is kept at the top level. Decentralisation on the other hand delegates decision making to the lower levels of the organisation (Daft, 2001).

### **2.8.1.3 Directing**

Directing is the continuous task of telling people what to do and seeing that they do it to the best of their ability. This is achieved by making decisions and embodying them in specific and general orders and instruction and serving as the leader of their enterprise (Mintzberg, 1973). This function includes such activities as explaining procedures, seeing that mistakes are corrected and issuing orders (Hodgetts, 1990).

### **2.8.1.4 Controlling**

Controlling is defined as the process of monitoring and evaluating organisational effectiveness (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). A primary reason managers why exercise control is to make their organisation as effective as possible (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). The control of an undertaking consists of seeing that everything is being carried out in accordance with the plan that has been adopted, the orders that have been given, and the principles that have been laid down. Its main objective is to point out any mistakes so that they may be rectified and prevented from occurring again (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). Although there is a

continual and universal need for control in organisations, the importance, amount and type of control varies across the organisation and in different situations. Probably the most important influence on the nature of an organisation's control system is the amount of environmental change and complexity that exists (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). Organisations that have simple internal environments or operate with relatively stable external environments usually need to change very little. Managers are able to control such organisations using a set of routine procedures. In these situations the rigid bureaucratic systems are often put in place as an adequate control method and are used for a long time (Dunham & Pierce, 1989).

## **2.9 Limitations of the Creative Work Environment Research**

Even though it has been established through the Componential Theory that senior managers potentially play a critical role in creating a work environment that encourages creativity (Ahmed, 1998; Amabile, et al., 2004). A review of the literature that examines the role these managers play is sparse. From the limited studies that do examine the management-work environment relationship, there is a tendency to primarily focus on the immediate supervisors. These supervisors have been the main focus of research as they are perceived to have a more direct impact on teams and individual employees. For instance, researchers have investigated supervisor behaviours (Amabile, et al., 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Tierney, et al., 1999; Williams, 2004), leader-member relations (Scott & Bruce, 1994; Tierney, et al., 1999), and styles of leadership on the creative work environment (Ekvall & Ryhammer, 1998; Kahai, et al., 2003).

Of the studies that do examine senior level managers' influence on organisational creativity, it has been found that they are narrow in scope. This statement is supported by numerous studies that tend to only concentrate on the perceived practices or actions related to the roles senior managers play within an organisation. For instance, Seithi et al's (2001) study looked at the level of monitoring by senior management and new product innovativeness; Ekvall and Ryhammer (1998) examined perceived leadership style of heads of departments on creativity; another study examined leadership factors on senior

managements' influence on innovation (Elenkov & Maney, 2005); while Ford and Gioia's (2000) study concentrates explicitly on creativity in managerial decision making. In addition to this, instead of specifically identifying senior management in these investigations, other studies have tended to rely on the general perceptions of the organisation, its culture or management in general (Anonymous, 2001; Judge, et al., 1997). No clear attempt was found in the literature that directly singles out senior managements' influence on the environmental variables that are conducive to creativity. This presents the predicament where there is not enough hard empirical evidence available to determine the exact influence that exists between these managers and the components of the creative work environment.

The second limitation found in the current body of literature relates to the few empirical investigations that examine organisational creativity within a New Zealand context. Apart from a minute number of studies, such as Morris's (2005) study of organisational factors that enable creativity, the tendency of the New Zealand literature is to focus upon the concept of innovation rather than creativity. For instance, Gilbertson & Knight (1992) present an exploratory analysis of innovation and management in twenty-nine New Zealand case studies. They include creativity as one of their major focuses in a number of cases. However, the weakness of this analysis is the interchangeable use of the concepts of creativity and innovation when analysing the cases. Other New Zealand studies on innovation provides either similar definition flaws (Winsley, et al., 2001), or research that lacks any strong empirical investigation (Light, 2002; Skinner, 2002). As a result there are a considerable number articles circulating that acknowledge that New Zealand is brimming with creativity and innovation (Light, 2002; Skinner, 2002), a few going as far as recognising that rules and policies stifle organisational creativity within New Zealand firms (Tapsell, 1998). Yet these articles all seem to lack the empirical foundations that provide a definitive picture of the true situation of organisational creativity within New Zealand firms.

The final limitation that will be addressed is the tendency of researchers to adopt a psychological or sociological approach when identifying managements' influence on creativity. For instance, Politis (2004) examines specific transformational and transactional leadership behaviours; Jaussi & Dionne (2003) look at employee perceptions of

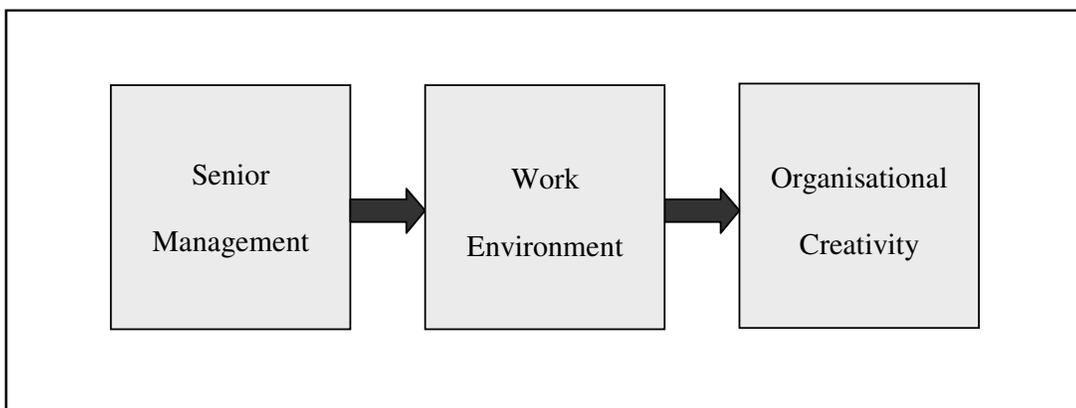
unconventional leadership and creativity; while Amabile, et al, (2004) examined the perceptions of leader support. No clear attempt has yet been made to take the organisational management functions approach and utilise it to examine the influence of senior management activities on the creative work environment.

## 2.10 Conceptual Model of Theorised Relationships

Up to this point Amabile's (1997) Componential Theory has been used as the framework to carry out a comprehensive literature review of organisational creativity. This involved identifying and carrying out an in-depth exploration of the work environment and management function variables. As the review of the literature progressed a key relationship was established that will be used to lay the foundations for the research that will follow. This relationship was senior managers' influence on creativity through manipulating the components of the work environment that they are theorised to directly control. This relationship has been presented in a simplified model (Figure 2.3) that will lay the foundations for the research that will follow.

**FIGURE 2.3**

**Senior Management's Influence on Environmental Variables that Determine Organisational Creativity**



## 2.11 Summary

Creativity has been dubbed by many as a critical element that will ensure the survival of organisations well into the future (Leavy, 2003). The definition that was used to explain the concept was the idea that it is the generation of new and novel ideas, processes, products and devices (Gleeson, et al., 1999). A review of the literature demonstrated that due to the complex nature of this concept, harnessing and ultimately reaping its benefits may not be an easy task for many managers to master (Tierney, et al., 1999). In fact, it was found that the expression of creativity is dependant upon the characteristics of creative people, as well as the environment in which they operated within (Gleeson, et al., 1999). In an effort to provide a better understanding of the consequences of management's activities within an organisations environment; Amabile's (1997) Componential Theory and the Classical Functions of Management were used to analyse workplace creativity. By utilising the two theories, it was found that senior management influence creativity through manipulating the components of the work environment that they are believed to directly control. A few studies have investigated these components and management's influences on organisational creativity, yet no studies there were found have gone as far as incorporating senior management functions and the components of the work environment that are linked to creativity. Chapter three will take the relationships that are depicted in the basic theoretical model (Figure 2.3), and develop a research question and propositions that will be used to develop a final model that illustrates the constructs of the key variables that will be investigated. The research model will ultimately act as a tool to explore how senior management in a New Zealand setting, influence the creative work environment of an organisation. This will not only provide answers to the research question, but it will also be used to address existing limitations identified in the literature.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH MODEL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

As was demonstrated in Chapter Two, this study intends to investigate the existing relationships between the senior management, environmental components, and the organisational creativity variables. In particular the uncovering of the components that constitute the work environment will be of greatest interest. This is because they have been shown to be the key elements that promote or inhibit organisational creativity. As a result, the information that is provided from this study will be of significant value to both academics and practitioners. However, to reach this point of enlightenment, Chapter Three will build on from the basic research model (Figure 2.3) that was presented at that end of Chapter Two. This will involve the development of a research question and a number of propositions that will be used to illustrate what will be investigated in the study and why. The outcome from this will be the presentation of the research model that depicts the scope of the research investigation that will follow.

#### **3.2 Research Question**

It was shown in the previous chapter that the management functions lay the foundation for how the work will be carried out within an organisation (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). This management theory has been taken and combined with Amabile's (1996) theoretical model that illustrates the relationships between the work environment and creative outcomes. The result of the amalgamation of these two theories was the presentation of the hypothesised relationship that senior management influence organisational creativity by manipulating key components of the work environment that either drive or inhibit creativity. This theory was then crystallised in the basic model (refer back to Figure 2.3). Based on the literature and the relationships that are shown in the model, the following research question is posed: *how do the management functions create the stimulants and impediments of an*

*organisation's environment that affect organisational creativity?* To be able to adequately address this question, research propositions will follow that show the relationships between the variables that will be investigated and why they are deemed to be important.

### **3.3 Research Propositions**

The interrelated set of management functions provides this research with a clear classification of various activities that managers potentially perform in relation to the achievement of creativity (Carroll & Gillen, 1987). This is helpful when examining and developing an understanding of what managers do to positively or negatively influence creativity within an organisation. For instance, one reason a manager may plan how resources will be allocated is to ensure that they are utilised efficiently when pursuing organisational goals (Thomson, 1989). This efficient allocation of resources may effectively achieve the organisation's goals, but as a result creativity may be compromised (Harper & Becker, 2004). By examining the affect of senior management functions in the work environment, it will provide a means to see how they operate within an organisation to influence specific components that affect creativity.

#### **3.3.1 The Planning Function and the Creative Work Environment**

Senior managers whose general concern is with long-range or strategic planning, debate and decide what business the organisation hopes to be in and how the organisation intends to make its vision a reality (Holden, et al., 1968). Although senior management involvement in this type of planning may vary from organisation to organisation, it is reasonable to assume that they play a significant role in determining the presence of creativity within an organisation. This is because the goals developed by these managers signal the need for creativity, while the plans implemented stipulate how the organisational components will be manipulated to achieve these goals. An example of this theory is demonstrated in Storey & Salaman's (2005) research that found senior managers who regarded the innovation process as dangerous and required control, set tight performance

goals. These goals resulted in the allocation of a large portion of resources on extrapolating and sustaining current portfolios, while not nearly enough resources were expended to encourage innovation within the organisation (Storey & Salaman, 2005). Goals and plans also have a similar effect on the level of freedom and organisational encouragement that will be accepted within the boundaries of an organisation (Davenport, 1993). With these factors in mind it is assumed that in order for creativity to thrive there must be some acknowledgement and value for creativity within the goals and plans that are developed. However, because there is no empirical evidence that supports the proposed relationship the following proposition has been presented:

Proposition 1: Organisational planning is a key variable that determines, through its influence on the elements of the work environment, the extent that creativity exists within a company.

As mentioned earlier, planning is a rational approach that decides in advance what an organisation will do, how to do it, when to do it, and who will do it (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). It is for this very reason that excessive planning could be seen as a constraining factor on the creative work environment. This is because creativity that is based on tight controls and clear objectives must still allow space for such unconventional activities as experimentation, discussions and what could be called non-linear thinking (Sundgren & Styhre, 2003). It has therefore been suggested that a level of flexibility in the planning of tasks and projects will create the necessary freedom to induce creativity (Sundgren & Styhre, 2003). For instance, in Sundgren & Styhre's (2003) qualitative study of two pharmaceutical companies, they found that one case organisation had project plans that were not only very brief, but the flexibility of the plans provided employees with an opportunity to have exploratory research within pharmaceutical development. This not only allowed the company's employees to solve current problems, but it actually prepared them for future problems that arouse (Sundgren & Styhre, 2003). Employees of this case study found the company to be a much more relaxed, very unstructured and pleasant place to work (Sundgren & Styhre, 2003). By correlating these findings with the components of the work environment that were identified earlier, it is hypothesised that a degree of flexibility in organisational plans results in increased freedom, challenging work and organisational encouragement that decreases such factors as workload pressure. This

logical linkage between the flexibility of organisational plans and the creative components of a work environment is presented in proposition 2:

Proposition 2: The flexibility of organisational plans, policies and rules contributes to a work environment that encourages creativity.

### **3.3.2 The Organising Function and the Creative Work Environment**

Given that the outcomes from the selection of the organisational structure potentially determines the accepted levels of collaborative idea flow, autonomy and organisational impediments across an organisation. It is assumed that senior management's organising activities also has a direct affect on the creative climate within an organisation. Senior managers that choose to adopt organic rather than mechanistic structures are more likely to enhance creativity within the organisation. This is because this type of structure creates the sort of climate where employees are provided with a level of control and ownership in the day-to-day operations of their work; information flows in both a downward and upward direction; there is a flexibility with respect to changing needs; and they are exposed to potentially relevant ideas (Amabile, 1997; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; K. A. Pervaiz, 1998). Storey and Salaman (2005) reiterate these findings as their research shows that senior managers who implemented a flat organic type of structure, provided the freedom and support that spawned a successfully innovative company climate. Conversely, the other case company that tried to control innovation, by enforcing a more ridged structural arrangement, created a work environment where the support, resources and freedom were not available to endorse radical innovation (Storey & Salaman, 2005). Once again there is no strong empirical research that supports a similar relationship between organisational structures and the stimulation of the creative components of the work environment. Therefore, the following statement to further investigate the proposed relationship is presented in proposition 3:

Proposition 3: An organisations formal structure is a key component that determines the creative work environment of an organisation.

### **3.3.3 The Directing Function and the Creative Work Environment**

In relation to creativity it is the directing activities by senior management that stimulates encouragement of risk taking, idea generation, and the reward and recognition aspects of the organisational encouragement variable. Research has demonstrated that people are more likely to deviate from routine problem solving if an encouragement to take risks is provided by the explicit instructions of management (Amabile, 1988; Gilson & Shalley, 2004; Seithi, et al., 2001). Additionally, to ensure that employees are creative to the best of their abilities, these managers have the power to provide an environment that supports the allocation of appropriate rewards as a confirmation of one's creative work and performance accomplishments, or as a method of enabling an individual to engage in better, more interesting work in the future (Anonymous, 2001; Eisenberger, et al., 1998; Eisenberger & Rhoades, 2001; Kahai, et al., 2003). It is therefore assumed that senior managements role in setting up the accepted policies and practices that instruct employees to be creative, as well as the rewards that they provide to increase their ability to achieve a desired level of creativity, has a direct influence on the creative work environment for creativity. To investigate this assumption the correlation between the key variables is presented in proposition 4:

Proposition 4: Senior managements' direction to be creative provides a work environment that is more likely to be creative.

### **3.3.4 The Controlling Function and the Creative Work Environment**

With greater levels of environmental change, controlling requires more continual attention from managers. Traditional routines and rigid control systems implemented by senior management are simply not adequate for the rapidly changing business conditions,

resulting from such things as organisational growth, diversification in product lines, or the encountering of a more heterogeneous task environment (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). Although it is argued that these types of complex occurrences require increased control to adequately deal with the changes. It is also claimed that an organisation requires a more open and organic control system that is capable of responding quickly and effectively to such incidences (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). Organisational creativity also requires such an open system that allows for substantial flexibility and freedom in choosing how goals will be met and creativity will be tackled (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). This is because creativity, which is a complicated process, is constrained by ridged rules and procedures that control how the task should be carried out (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). Therefore, as freedom and organisational encouragement are seen to decrease, work load pressure increases (Amabile, 1979, 1988). Consequently based upon the relationships between an organisations control systems and the work environment variables, such as work load pressure and freedom, the following proposition is presented:

Proposition 5: An organisations control systems are one function that will determine the creative environment of an organisation.

### **3.3.5 Management Functions, Organisational Environment and Creativity**

As was established earlier through the Componential Theory, the stimulants of the environment generally tend to increase organisational creativity, whilst the impediments had the opposite influence (Amabile, et al., 1996). There was no empirical research that was found that shows how the management functions fit into this scenario. To explore the nature of the relationship between an organisations management functions and the work environment on creative performance, the final proposition is presented for further investigation:

Proposition 6: A work environment that possesses more organisational stimulants than organisational impediments will encourage a more creative

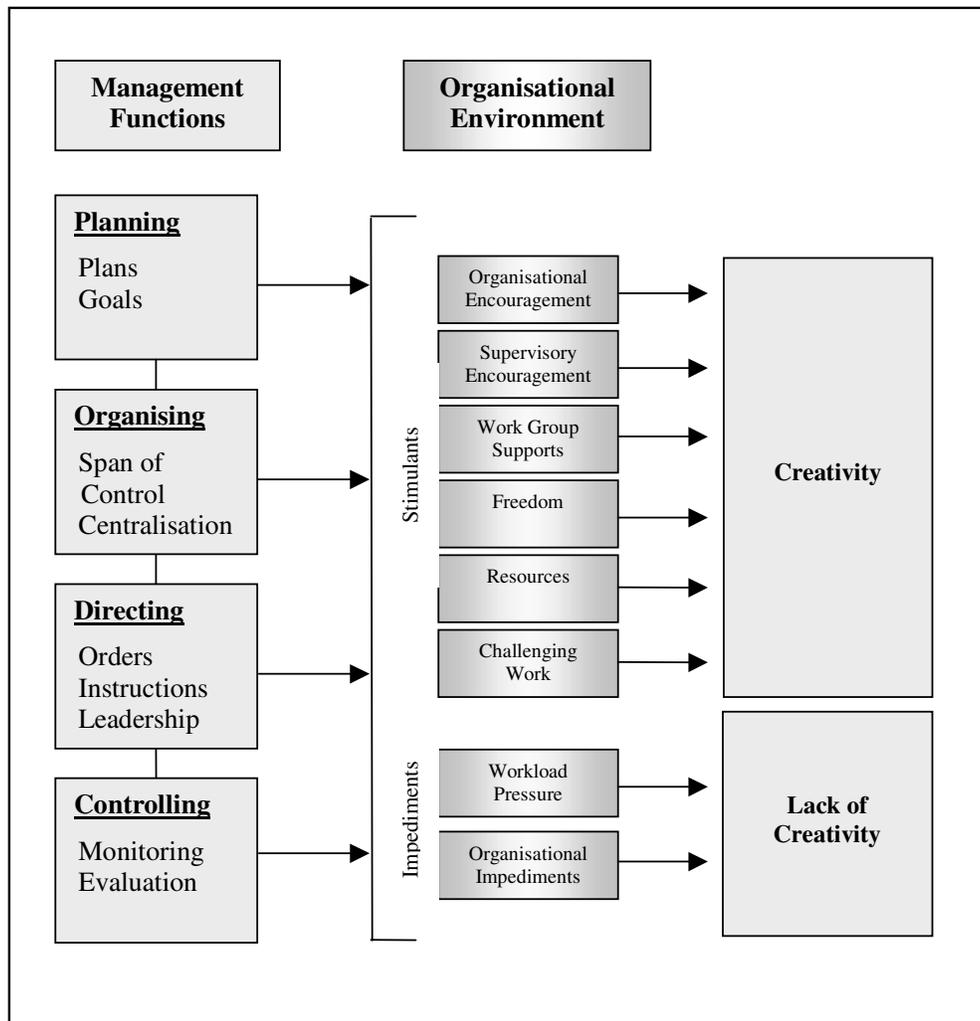
work environment, than one that possesses more organisational impediments than stimulants.

### **3.4 Research Model**

From the propositions presented, they show the significant relationships that exist between senior management functions and the work environment of an organisation. These relationships have been presented in the research model below (see Figure 3.1). As is shown, the management functions directly influence key stimulants and inhibitors of the work environment that dictate organisational creativity. To explore the relationships depicted in the model, a qualitative investigation will follow. However, because the work environment and management functions variables are so similarly related, the research will be primarily concerned with exploring the work environment variables and how these affect creativity. Consequently, an in-depth investigation of the management function variables will not proceed past the analysis of the literature that has just taken place. Although this will be the case, it is still important to show how the management functions influence the work environment. This is because this research is concerned about understanding how senior management influence creativity within their work environment. To gain an understanding of this phenomenon, senior managers will be asked about the type of work environment they provide within their organisation. To provide the complete picture of the work environment that they help to create, employees from lower levels of the organisation will be asked to present their views on the organisational environment that they operate within. From this investigation a good picture of the elements of the work environment that are provided by these managers will be drawn, and the research question will be fulfilled.

**FIGURE 3.1**

**The Influence of the Functions of Management and Work Environment on Organisational Creativity**



### 3.5 Summary

In summary, the research question and model that were presented provide an understanding of what will be investigated in this study and why. By working from the basic research model that was presented in the previous chapter, a research question was developed that would set the scene for the entire research: *how do the management functions create the stimulants and impediments of an organisation's environment that*

*affect creativity?* In order to be able to adequately address this question, research propositions were proposed that provided an understanding of the scope of the research. The outcome from these propositions was the presentation of the research model that clearly depicted the key constructs and relationships that would be investigated. Although senior management are depicted in the model as a key variable, it was noted that because this variable is closely related with the work environment construct, this research would be concerned with exploring the environmental variables of an organisation. The outcome of this research will be to not only provide an answer to this research question, but test if the proposed research model explains what is actually occurring within New Zealand organisations. These findings from this research will not only benefit the existing body of creative literature by addressing one of a number of gaps that currently exists in the literature. But the research will also be helpful to practitioners who are interested in positively facilitating employee creativity within their organisations.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

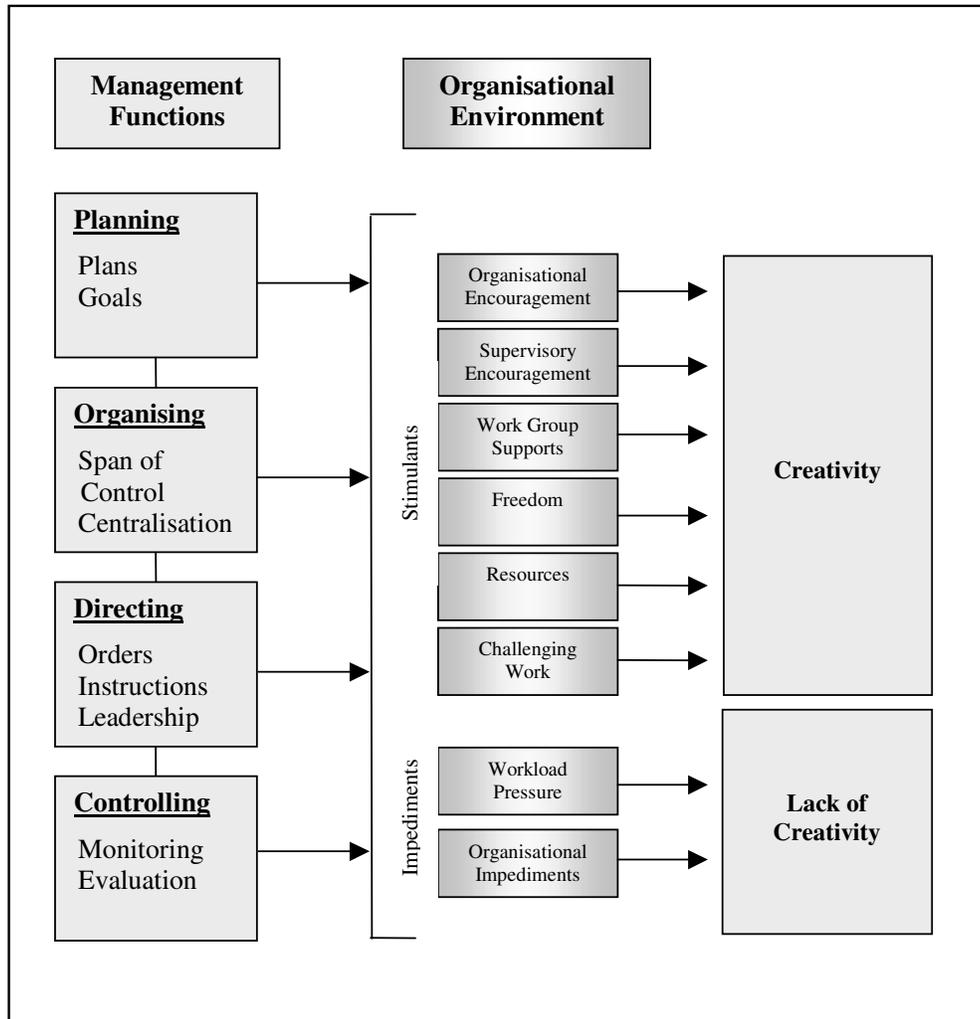
The key outcome from Chapter Three was the presentation of the research model that clearly depicted the vital constructs and proposed relationships that would be investigated. Chapter Four continues on from this by outlining the components of the research model and explaining how it works. This will be followed by the acknowledgement and justification of the qualitative case study method that has been selected as the primary method of data collection for this study. The weaknesses of this method will be presented in an effort to ensure that they have been identified and minimised in this research. Semi-structured interviews, archival data and direct observational data collection methods will be discussed and the reasoning behind their adoption will be presented. Finally, the research procedures and analytical techniques that have been chosen to analyse the data collected will be discussed.

#### **4.2 Theoretical Model**

The methodological design of this study will be structured around the framework of the research model (see Figure 4.1), which investigates the conceivable inter-relationships between management functions and the organisational environment, and their influence on organisational creativity. These variables were identified in the literature as having a significant influence on the overall creative performance of an organisation (Amabile, et al., 1996). However, due to the lack of empirical research investigating the relationships between these variables, it is not wholly understood how they interact with one another and what the actual effect that these interactions have on the creative performance of an organisation. What will follow is the provision of definitions for each of the key constructs depicted in Figure 4.1. This will then lead to the explanation of the mechanics of the research model.

**FIGURE 4.1**

**The Influence of the Functions of Management and Work Environment on Organisational Creativity**



### 4.3 Management Functions

As was mentioned in Chapter Three, the investigation of the management functions variable was not to proceed past the analysis of the literature that had taken place. Although this is the case, it is still important to identify the role that senior management play and how the management functions influence the work environment. This is because the research is concerned about understanding how senior management influence creativity

within their work environment. Their influence was to be examined using the classical school's theory of management functions, which categorising managers work, at all levels, as a process of interrelated functions of planning, organising, directing and controlling as derived from the current literature (Dunham & Pierce, 1989).

It is managers from all levels of the organisation that are assigned the primary responsibility of carrying out these management functions in relation to their assigned roles (Dunham & Pierce, 1989). The primary focus of this study is on the highest level of management within an organisation, and how they carry out the management functions that shapes an organisations work environment and ultimately the level of creativity that will occur (Amabile, et al., 1996). In this case, the highest levels of management at both plants that will be investigated will be the Plant Managers'. They were chosen as previous evidence had suggested that the basic orientation of an organisation towards innovation, as well as the supports for creativity comes directly from the behaviours of the highest level of management (Amabile, 1996). These managers who are seen to consistently introduce creative solutions and take personal risks communicate the legitimacy of these types of behaviours to the rest of the organisation (Ford, 1996). Therefore, it is proposed that if these managers are to successfully seed a climate that is conducive to creativity, their behaviours and practices must incorporate the procedures that have been shown to positively stimulate the components of the work environment that they are perceived to directly control (Ahmed, 1998).

## **4.4 Organisational Environment**

Amabile's (1998) eight contextual variables (See Figure 3.1) have been identified as the key elements that will be used to measure an organisations work environment (Amabile, 1988). The following definitions have been provided for each variable:

1. The definition of *organisational encouragement* adopted for this study, is the idea that senior managers influence the generation and development of new ideas by providing a work environment that: encourages risk taking and idea generation, offers fair and supportive evaluation, reward and recognition of creativity and allows for a

collaborative idea flow across an organisation, participative management and decision making (Amabile, 1988; Cummings, 1965; Gilson & Shalley, 2004; Seithi, et al., 2001).

2. *Supervisory encouragement* of creativity is the role that supervisors play in supporting creativity. This could be the result of a supervisor who serves as a good work model, sets goals appropriately, supports the work group, values individuals contributions, and shows confidence in the work group (Amabile, 1996).
3. The *work group support* variable is made up of such things as having a diversely skilled work group where people communicate well, are open to new ideas, constructively challenge each other's work, trust and help each other, and feel committed to the work that they are doing (Amabile, 1996).
4. *Freedom* has been identified as the level of control and ownership in the day-to-day operations of their work that an individual employee may experience in their jobs (Amabile, et al., 1996). The idea is that individuals with increased autonomy are theorised to have more freedom to play with ideas and expand the range of considerations and material than those individuals with a low level of autonomy (Shalley, 1991).
5. The understanding of the *resources* variable used for this study, is employees' perceptions of the level of access that they have to the appropriate resources including funds, time, materials, facilities and information (Amabile, 1997). This is important as an adequacy of resources has been also shown in studies to positively influence creativity (Amabile, et al., 1996).
6. The *challenging work* component of the contextual environment will also be examined as it has the potential to positively stimulate the creative work environment (Amabile, et al., 1996). This variable includes such factors as time pressure, intellectual challenge and complex problems of employees. Although certain pressures have been shown to positively influence creativity, once they reach an intolerable level they have the potential to negatively stimulate the creative environment (Andrews & Farris, 1972).
7. *Excessive workload pressure* is the other type of pressure that managers must try and avoid when endeavouring to encourage (Amabile, et al., 1996). The underlying argument of this component is that without the appropriate amount of time or resources

to complete assigned tasks, employees are less likely to exhibit creative behaviours (Amabile, et al., 1996).

8. *Organisational impediments*, such as internal strife and rigid formal management structures that obstruct an organisation's creativity, will make up the final component of the work environment construct (Amabile, et al., 1996).

## 4.5 Organisational Creativity

As was established in the literature review, the diverse use of the term creativity has been grouped into three primary categories; person, process or product (Fagan, 2004). Within the first of these two approaches, researchers and theorists define and measure creativity based on either the characteristics of the person (Kirton, 1976) or the thought and behavioural processes (Basadur, Runco, & Vega, 2000) that are associated with creativity. Although these definitions are widely accepted, they may not be the most suitable methods for establishing the creative success of an organisation (Amabile, 1996). This organisational study has adopted the product definition of creativity that focuses on creative products or processes, which are both novel and potentially useful to the organisation (Amabile, 1996; Chirumbolo, et al., 2005; McFadzean, et al., 2005; Zhou & Oldham, 2001). This categorisation of creativity will be used to explain to candidates what the term means, decreasing the likelihood that there will a misunderstanding.

No empirical examination will be carried out to measure an organisations output level of creativity. There are output measures of creativity, such as the amount of R&D spending and the number of creative ideas generated within an organisation that can be used to measure organisational creativity; these will not be utilised in this instance. This is because utilising the number of creative ideas generated for this study was not suitable as both cases did not officially or unofficially record the ideas that were generated by their employees. In terms of R&D spending, the particular organisation under investigation did not have a R&D department within either of the plants. Instead, they had product development departments in place; however, the majority of products that originated out of both the frozen and dry foods sections of the departments were driven predominantly by

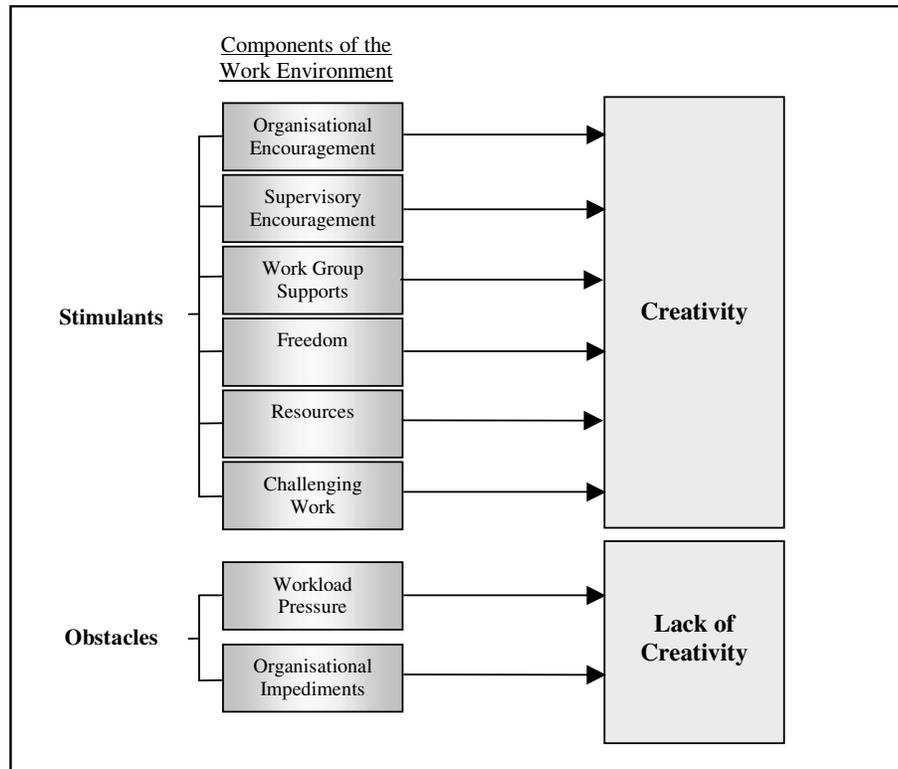
marketing, rather than pure research. This again makes this output measure of the level of creativity within this organisation incompatible with this research. Therefore, to determine an organisation's level of creativity, employees' perceptions of the overall workplace environment, which is influenced by the eight variables of the work environment, will be collected and analysed in terms of the frequency that employees refer to their organisation as being creative, or not (Amabile, 1988). If it is found that most of the subjects that are interviewed are directly saying or providing examples that shows that their organisation is creative, then it will be interpreted that the organisation environment does encourage creativity and vis versa.

## **4.6 Mechanisms of the Theoretical Model**

The research model developed for this study (see Figure 4.1) has been based around Amabile's (1988) Componential theory. Consequently, the mechanics of this model parallel with the theory's central prediction that certain contextual elements of the work environment have a direct impact on employees' perception of the overall workplace creativity. Previous research supports the theory's philosophy that work load pressure and organisational impediments have a negative affect producing a lack of creativity. While the other six components have generally been shown to stimulate creativity in a more positive manner (Fagan, 2004; Taylor & Gryskeciz, 1993), the proposed research model extends upon this theory by arguing that the eight factors of the work environment (see Figure 3.1), are initially the result management's decisions relating to planning, organising, directing and controlling the organisation. This theory is depicted in the model by the arrows leading from the four functions of management to the work environment construct. However, because the management functions and work environment variables are tightly intertwined, for instance organising determines the level of control, whilst planning determines how many resources will be available to employees. The examination of these management functions has been limited to a review of the current literature carried out in Chapter Three. Consequently, the research that will be carried out in this study will focus upon the eight components of the work environment and their effect on organisational creativity (see Figure 4.2). This then can later be related back to determining senior management's role in creating the organisation's creative environment.

**FIGURE 4.2**

**The Influence of the Organisational Environment on Creativity**



## 4.7 Research Methodology

### 4.7.1 An Exploratory Examination of Organisational Creativity

It was established through the literature that senior managers potentially play a critical role in creating a work environment that encourages creativity (Ahmed, 1998; Amabile, et al., 2004). However, a review of the literature that examines the role that these managers play in organisational creativity is sparse. Thus an exploratory study is required to gain an understanding of the phenomena and how it is interacting with the work environment and organisational creativity (Sekaran, 2003). This type of research is undertaken when not much is known about the situation at hand, or no information is available on how similar problems or research issues have been solved in the past (Sekaran, 2003). In such cases,

exploratory studies are undertaken to better comprehend the nature of the problem since very few studies might have been conducted in a particular area (Sekaran, 2003). The major advantage of this technique is its usefulness when some facts are known, but more information is required for developing a viable theoretical framework, which is similar to this case (Sekaran, 2003). In sum, exploratory studies are the ideal method for obtaining a good grasp of the complexity of creativity and advancing knowledge through subsequent theory building and hypothesis testing (Hubberman & Miles, 2002).

#### **4.7.2 Qualitative Research Design**

*Quantitative* research places greater value upon information that can be numerically manipulated in a meaningful way; it is considered as the traditional scientific approach to conducting research (Page & Meyer, 2000). Although this is the case, it has been decided that a *qualitative* research approach would be the most appropriate method in collecting the primary information that would adequately fulfil the exploratory nature of the proposed research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

*Qualitative research* involves the study and collection of a variety of empirical materials such as case studies, personal experiences, interviews and observational or historical texts (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). These describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individual's lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The reasoning behind the decision to utilise this approach was primarily based upon the lack of empirical studies that examine the affect management functions have on the creative work environment. Thus, this research method is seen as a way of gaining detailed and rich knowledge of this phenomenon (Page & Meyer, 2000). This is because it is a method utilised to make sense of or interpret the variables in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Once the relationships are established, then future quantitative studies may be used to examine the phenomena more exactly so that theories or models can be tested and developed (Page & Meyer, 2000).

When selecting a qualitative research strategy that would best suit this study, three conditions from Table 4.1 have been applied. These are: the type of research question posed, the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events (Yin, 2003). These questions ensure a gross misfit does not occur. This is when one has planned to use one type of strategy, but really another is more advantageous (Yin, 2003). Taking these conditions and comparing them with the current study's research question, demonstrates that a qualitative case study method is the ideal research strategy in this particular situation. This is because the study provides a *how* type of research question, that focuses on a contemporary organisational occurrence, where no control over the behavioural events of senior management is necessary (Yin, 2003).

**TABLE 4.1**  
**Relevant Situations for Different Research Strategies**  
**(COSMOS Corporation, cited in Yin, 2003).**

| <b>Strategy</b>          | <b>Form of Research Question</b>      | <b>Requires Control of Behavioural Events?</b> | <b>Focuses on Contemporary Events</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Experiment</b>        | How, why?                             | Yes  | Yes                                   |
| <b>Survey</b>            | Who, what, where, how many, how much? | No   | Yes                                   |
| <b>Archival Analysis</b> | Who, what, where, how many, how much? | No   | Yes/No                                |
| <b>History</b>           | How, why?                             | No   | No                                    |
| <b>Case study</b>        | <b>How, why?</b>                      | <b>No</b>                                      | <b>Yes</b>                            |

## 4.8 The Case Study Strategy

A case study is an exploratory strategy that consists of an in-depth investigation that focuses on understanding the dynamics that are present within single settings (Huberman & Miles, 2002). This often results in the collection of data over a period of time, within its natural context (Cassell & Symon, 2004). In this particular situation the phenomenon is not isolated from its context like in other research strategies. This is because the aim is to

understand how behaviours and or processes are influenced by and influence the context (Cassell & Symon, 2004). The end result provides a detailed analysis of the context and processes, which clarifies the theoretical issues being studied (Cassell & Symon, 2004). In this research a prior specification of constructs has helped to shape the initial design of theory-building research. Although this type of specification is not common in theory-building studies, it has been used in this research as it permits researchers to measure constructs more accurately (Huberman & Miles, 2002). If these constructs prove important as the study progresses then researchers will have firmer empirical grounding for the emergent theory (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

The major advantage of this type of research strategy is its suitability for learning more about the poorly understood situation of senior managements' influence over organisational creativity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This is a consequence of the rich data collected from the context that is provided. This data is particularly suited to research questions that require detailed understanding of organisational processes (Cassell & Symon, 2004). Another important advantage of a case study method is its ability to provide researchers with the option of using a variety of data sources and research methods, such as documents, interviews and observations (Denscombe, 1998). In spite of these desirable attributes, it must be acknowledged that case studies provide little basis for scientific generalisation (Sekaran, 2003), rather they are a method that is employed for expanding and generalising theories, then enumerating frequencies (Yin, 2003).

#### **4.8.1 Validity and Reliability Issues**

Although the case study method has been shown to be the most appropriate research method in this situation, Yin (2003) highlights validity and reliability weaknesses that are associated with this method that need to be acknowledged and also addressed in this research. Perhaps the greatest concern surrounding the case study approach is the lack of rigour that allows researcher's biased views to influence the direction of the results and conclusions (Yin, 2003). An example of this relates to a researcher's failure to develop a sufficiently operational set of measures resulting in subjective judgements being used to collect data (Yin, 2003). This weakness may also extend to the broader problem of making inferences,

as an investigator will infer that a particular event resulted from some earlier occurrence that is derived from an interview that is collected (Yin, 2003). However, unless all the rival explanations and possibilities are considered the researcher can not be one-hundred percent certain that the inference is correct. Another common concern that arises when utilising case studies is that they provide little basis for scientific generalisation (Yin, 2003). Although the external validity problem is a major barrier of case studies, this limitation is less of a concern as this study is concerned more with generalising the results to a broader theory, rather than a larger population. Finally, in order to minimise the errors and biases in this case study, the researcher will endeavour to record every step of the research down so that it may be easily replicated (Yin, 2003).

#### **4.8.2 Case Study Organisation**

The case studies that have been selected for this research are two plants that operate under a larger New Zealand food processing company. This organisation has been selected for a number of key reasons. The first of these reasons is that the company considers itself to be innovative and creative and therefore it makes sense to choose cases in which the process of interest is transparently observable, as it is more likely to extend upon the emergent theory (Huberman & Miles, 2002). No multiple-case analysis between companies will be made due to the time and resource restraining this research. However, this research will investigate two plants from the same organisation. The results from this investigation will be analysed and compared against each other. This cross-analysis between the two plants will allow for an in-depth analysis of the company that is necessary to build upon the existing theory of creativity. The other advantage of the utilisation of this case study organisation is that a prior arrangement with the Company has been established, allowing for easy access to into both plants and to their employees.

#### **4.8.3 Participants**

Like the intentional non-random selection of the case organisation that is to be studied, the sampling of participants will be selected in relation to the appropriateness in helping

develop the theory of the process in question (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). In an effort to gain the information that is required to adequately address the research question, the aim of this research is to interview managers from a senior level, as well as middle managers' and employees who work at an operational level. The input from senior managers has two functions. Firstly, it demonstrates how these managers shape the management functions within the organisation. Secondly, it provides valuable insight into their perceptions of the creative work environment of the organisation. This information should fulfil the requirements of this research by addressing the research question. However, because the perceptions of senior management may vary from lower level employees, it is necessary to also interview lower level employees to see if any discrepancy in perceptions exists between the two groups. Therefore, middle managers and employees from the operational level will be interviewed in relation to their perceptions of the organisation's creative work environment.

To gain access to the perceptions of an array of managers and employees, this research proposes to conduct 20 interviews at each of the organisation's plants'. This number was chosen to allow access to a sufficient number of senior managers from a range of functions, while also leaving sufficient scope for the interviewing of other middle managers and employees from various operational levels (Storey & Salaman, 2005). This number of interviews is not only sufficient to saturate the categories of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 1998), but the sample also represents important distinctions within the organisational population, while gaining validity from the increases in the number of different viewpoints that are collected (Cassell & Symon, 2004).

Although it would have been desirable to provide a random sample of managers and employees at both plants investigated, this option was not available. Due to employees working shift work, employees on leave and because of production demands, the forty employees interviewed from both plants were selected by the senior managers who were the point of contact with the researcher. This was a condition set by the case study organisation. It was assured by these managers that the sample would represent the entire population, but there was no guarantee of this. To try and eliminate the bias of having management select the candidates that would partake in the interviews, multiple sources of

evidence will also be used, which should eliminate the problem of construct validity (Yin, 2003).

## **4.9 Data Collection Methods**

### **4.9.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Due to the exploratory nature of this research a semi-structured interview method of data collection will be adopted as the primary source of data collection. In a semi-structured interview the researcher has a list of key themes and questions to be covered, although these can vary from interview to interview (Saunders, et al., 2003). This means that one is able to omit some questions in particular interviews, given the specific organisational context that is encouraged in relation to the research topic (Saunders, et al., 2003). The data collected from these interviews will be written down and also recorded on a tape recorder. The information will then be entered into a computerised word document until it is required in the analysis process. There are a number of weakness associated with this type of interview method, such as it being a time consuming process, respondents may be worried about confidentiality of information given and there is a risk of respondents terminating the interview at any time (Sekaran, 2003). However, this method is seen as a valuable way of understanding the relationships between variables where a lack of empirical research currently exists (Saunders, et al., 2003).

### **4.9.2 Archival Data**

The second source of data collection method that will be utilised in this research is the gathering of secondary data, in particular archive data. Archive data refers to any records and documentation held by companies that may or may not be available to the public (Page & Meyer, 2000). The archival data utilised in this research will be company reports and articles and prior studies that have been conducted on the Organisation. The advantages of using archival data sources is that it is usually easy to access, cost effective, generally has a

broad coverage over a long time period, unobtrusive, and provides the study with precise and quantitative data as the information is recorded in principle, so that people and institutions can be held accountable for their actions (Denscombe, 1998).

### **4.9.3 Direct Observations**

Direct observations on a casual basis will also be used to collect data from the organisation. This will be done throughout the duration that the researcher is on site at both plants. The data that is collected from these observations will be recorded down and also put onto a computerised word document. This method of data collection is useful in providing additional information and adds new dimensions for understanding of the context being studied (Yin, 2003).

## **4.10 Procedures**

In light of a prior arrangement made with the company to complete this case study research within their organisation, an email will be sent to the senior management of the organisation outlining the objectives of this research (see Appendix 1).

### **4.10.1 Pilot Test**

A pilot test of the interview questions will be undertaken to ensure that there is no ambiguity in the questions that have been prepared and that there are no problems with the wording or measurement (Sekaran, 2003). The pre-testing will involve conducting interviews using the research questions developed on two post-graduate students. The interviews are planned to take no longer than thirty minutes. This will help rectify any inadequacies in the questions before the administration of the instrument through semi-structured interviews (Sekaran, 2003). Once the pilot testing is complete, a debrief of the results of the pre-test will be provided to the sample, allowing time for additional

information to be gathered from the group on their general reactions to the interview questions and how they felt about completing the instrument (Sekaran, 2003). This additional information may be useful when making amendments to the final interview questions.

From the pilot test, a revised set of interview questions, one set for managers and the other set for other employees, will be administered at the South Island Plant. This site will be chosen first, as it is in close proximity to the researcher, allowing for easy access. Once the interviews at this plant are completed, the employees of the company's North Island plant will be interviewed. The time allocated for this process is expected to be over a three month period. This length of time will allow the senior managers, who are organising the participants, total flexibility in deciding the time and dates of the interviews.

Two weeks before the proposed interviews are to take place; each interviewee will receive an information document of the objectives of the research, definitions of key concepts and what is expected of them in the interview process. By providing the interview themes before the actual interview, this should assure the interviewee that the interview only seeks information relevant to the stated objectives of the research project. In addition, this should promote validity and reliability by enabling the interviewee to consider the information being requested and allowing them the opportunity to assemble supporting organisational documentation where appropriate (Saunders, et al., 2003).

A consent form will also be sent out to participants with the information document. Participants will be asked to sign and return these, indicating their acceptance or rejection to partake in the study. This will also ensure the subject that the information collected will only be used for the purposes of this research. It will highlight to the interviewee that they retain the right to withdraw from the study at any point up to the publication of the study. In addition, the form will state that the recording of interviews would take place via a tape recorder. The allocated time for each interview is one half hours, but could easily exceed this. Therefore, there will be further consultation with the senior management of each plant as to how much of there employees time they are willing to devote to such activities (Saunders, et al., 2003).

### **4.10.2 Case Study Database**

In regards to organising and documenting the data collected from the case study, notes and tabular materials will be stored on computer files (Yin, 2003). These materials collected from the site will mainly include the interview data, but notes on the archival documentation and direct observations will also be made available on the research files. This formal, presentable database is important as it increases markedly the reliability of the entire case study (Yin, 2003). This greater rigour in the data collection method of this case study will increase the reliability of the research (Saunders, et al., 2003).

### **4.10.3 Ethical Requirements**

When carrying out this research all of the ethical issues that may arise will be taken into consideration. David and Tolich (2000) provide a checklist that will be followed throughout the data collecting and analysis stages of this research project. The elements of their checklist that relate to this research include;

1. Preserve the confidentiality requirements of the company and their data
2. Avoid deceit; and
3. Analyse and report data faithfully (David & Tolich, 2000).

The elements of this checklist will be an important component of the research and will be followed throughout the duration of the study. These guidelines will ensure that the legal rights of the company and employees are not violated in any way, form or manner and this also protects the researcher from any legal prosecution (David & Tolich, 2000).

## 4.11 Data Analysis

### 4.11.1 Explanation Building

Explanation building is the analytical procedure that will be utilised in the data analysis section of the current research. This technique involves an attempt to build explanations while collecting data and analysing them, rather than testing a predicted explanation (Saunders, et al., 2003). The goal of this approach is to analyse the case study by building an explanation about the case (Yin, 2003). This research will be designed to follow the procedures that Yin (2003) has set out:

1. Devising theoretically based propositions, which will be tested;
2. Undertaking data collection through an initial case study in order to be able to compare the findings from this in relation to the theoretically based propositions;
3. Where necessary, amending this theoretically based proposition in the light of the findings from the initial case study;
4. Undertaking a further round of data collection in order to compare the findings from this in relation to the revised proposition
5. Where necessary, further amendment the revised proposition in the light of the findings from the second round of interviews
6. Undertaking further iterations of this process until a satisfactory explanation is derived (Saunders, et al., 2003).

A desirable outcome of this analytical technique is that it is one method during the data analysis process that deals with the overall problem of making inferences and causal claims and therefore adequately addresses the specific problem of internal validity (Yin, 2003). This is a consequence of establishing a causal relationship whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships (Yin, 2003).

## 4.11.2 Analytical Strategy

The data that will be stored on computer files will be entered and analysed on the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software package NVivo. This software tool will be utilised as it will make the analysis of the qualitative data easier, more accurate, more reliable and more transparent (Gibbs, 2002). Despite these benefits, it must be highlighted that the interpretation of any qualitative data that is analysed using software like NVivo, is still dependant on the interpretation of the researcher. This is because qualitative data is distinguished by its mindfulness, and hence interpretation is a key of qualitative data. Therefore, good qualitative analysis still relies on the good analytical work by a careful human researcher (Gibbs, 2002).

### 4.11.2.1 NVivo

NVivo does two things: it supports the storing and manipulation of text or documents; and it supports the creation and manipulation of codes, known as nodes (Gibbs, 2002). Based around these two basic functions the program provides tools for creating and examining new ideas about the data and report results (Gibbs, 2002). These will be the two main strategies that will be utilised in NVivo to analyse the data:

- 1) *Establishing nodes*: Nodes are names or labels for a concept or idea about your data (Gibbs, 2002). In the case of this research, the majority of nodes used will be derived from the contextual variables that are presented in the existing creativity literature e.g. sufficient resources, autonomy, etc. Another method where nodes may be created in this research is from discovering significant ideas while reading the text and creating nodes from them (Gibbs, 2002)..
- 2) *Coding text* is the process of identifying and recording one or more discrete passages of text that are about the same thing or indicate similar ideas, concepts, actions and descriptions.(Gibbs, 2002). In short, coding will be carried out by connecting each of the passages from the data to a node. Recognising relationships and developing nodes according to data will be utilised to continue the search for key themes and patterns in the rearranged data.

#### **4.11.2.2 Pattern Matching**

Pattern matching will be the form of analysis that will be utilised to analyse the data presented in NVivo. This process involves taking the pattern of results that are found from the coding process and comparing these with the patterns predicted in Amabile, et al's (1996) Componential theory and also the research propositions developed in this research. The idea of this theory is to establish casual connections between the circumstances investigated and a predicted outcome (Gibbs, 2002). For instance, does the organisations stimulants identified by Amabile, et al (1996) lead to creativity? If the pattern of circumstances and the outcome coincide with the outcome that is predicted, which in this case is Amabile, et al's (1996) Componential theory, then this will lead the research to move towards the development of valid and well-groomed conclusions (Saunders, et al., 2003). Thus the validity of the final conclusions will be verified by their ability to withstand alternative explanations (Saunders, et al., 2003).

### **4.12 Summary**

In concluding, this chapter has outlined the key components of the research model, shown how it works and established the research methods that will be employed during the data collection and analysis parts of the research. In all it has introduced, explained and justified the adoption of the qualitative case study approach, the selection of the case company and participants, semi-structured and archival data, research procedures and analytical techniques that will be adopted. The benefits of these methods with regards to such concepts as reliability and validity have also been taken into consideration and where appropriate the methods have incorporated these concepts in an effort to increase the robustness of the current research.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PLANT 1

#### 5.1 Background

Established in 1970, Plant 1, which will be referred to as Frozen/Dry Vegetables in this research, is the company's only processing facility that is still operating within the South Island of New Zealand. The original site was built from the ground up and was initially designed to process 8000 tonnes of frozen peas per year. It had the advantage of being located in a premium growing area with an average distance from farm to factory of only 40 km. Prior to 1980 many other goods were produced there, from jam to asparagus and from brussels sprouts to french fries. Today the plant is a dedicated commodity frozen and dehydrated vegetable processor that employs 150 permanent and 160 seasonal staff from November to August. The factory produces a large volume of product, predominantly within its peak season; about 26,000 tonnes of frozen and 1,200 tonnes of dehydrated product per year. From these outputs seventy-five percent of the frozen and ninety percent of the dehydrated products are exported to overseas markets. Frozen/Dry Vegetables is very good at what it does, but the current Operations Manager recognised that there was a great need to change the Plant's current culture. There was a drive to try and move away from traditional approaches currently in place, and encourage a work environment that was capable of embracing change and creativity. This was seen as a means to ensure the success of the business well into the future.

A traditional style of management had been ingrained into the culture of Frozen/Dry Vegetables by managers who have adhered closely to practices spanning as far back as 30 years. These practices were not isolated to Frozen/Dry Vegetables, as it was found that they originated from the traditional culture of the larger organisation. This traditional culture was described as a top-down management approach where decision-making was a

centralised task, with an emphasis on reporting and control, and the primary focus was on achieving output results. Managers who operated in this manner favoured doing things the way they had always done them. They were not interested in adopting new management styles or initiatives, such as promoting creativity, as such activities were perceived to be a waste of time. This has created quite a closed-minded work environment where employee involvement and idea generation was neither supported nor encouraged.

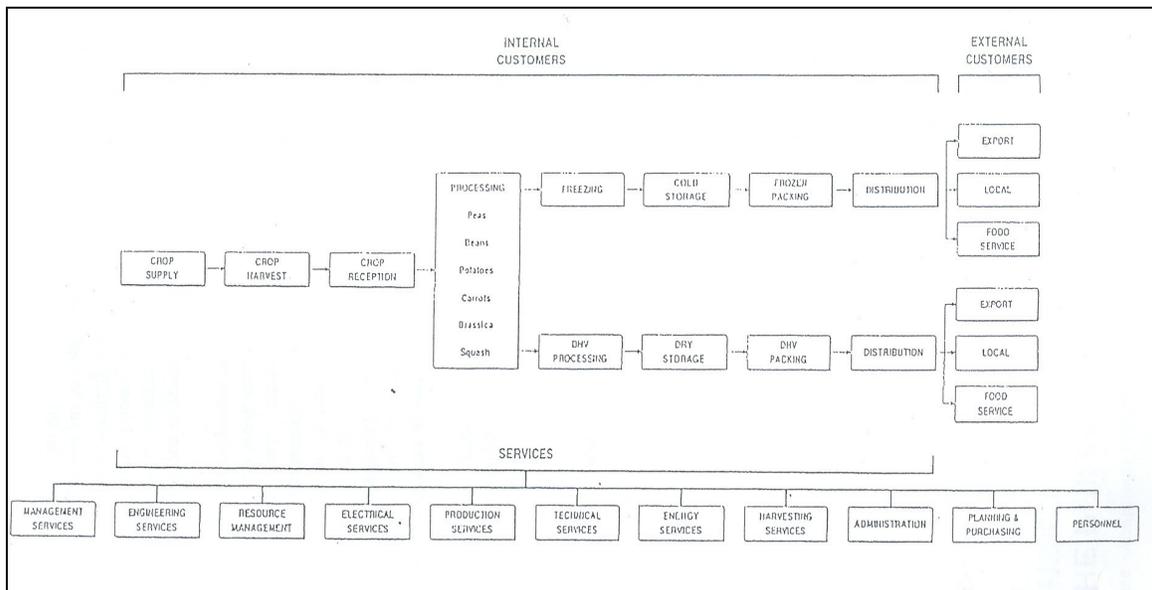
In 1986 the larger organisation faced the prospect of a significant financial loss. In an effort to recover from this, they took up a bold strategic strategy to try and change the traditional culture of the company (Web Research, 1995). The change envisioned by management was to transform the traditional culture of top-down control, to one that encouraged bottom-up empowerment (Web Research, 1995). The initiative that was planned to achieve this was known as Work Centre Management. This was supposed to increase trust, provide increased responsibility and real delegation, increase emphasis on improvement, reduce control, increase information availability, and remove traditional trappings within the Plant (Web Research, 1995). Despite being introduced in 1986, Frozen/Dry Vegetables did not successfully make the transformation to the Work Centre Management strategy until a new plant manager was shifted there in 1991.

Work Centre Management involved breaking down the processing plant's operations into semi-autonomous units based on stages in the process. Each work centre reflected the logical flow of a product that went through the factory (Figure 5.1 depicts the Frozen/Dry Vegetables Plant's Work Centre Structure). The Work Centres operating at Frozen/Dry Vegetables varied in size, from the frozen processing with over 100 personnel, down to a number of departments that contained six or so people. The production work centres were then further divided into shift teams. Each work centre operated as a mini-business unit, and in theory there was no overlap of responsibility between centres. Although work centres at Frozen/Dry Vegetables were self managing, they certainly were not removed from hierarchies. There were a number of managerial levels where managers, supervisors

and charge hands operated in each team. Employees up to supervisor level were hourly workers, with Work Centre Managers and above in salaried positions (Web Research, 1995).

**FIGURE 5.1**

**The Frozen/Dry Vegetables Plant's Organisational Structure by Work Centre**



Several programmes that were a part of the Work Centre initiative provided a focus for improvement efforts. The two that were of interest to this research were the Improvement Management Performance and Customer Satisfaction (IMPACS) initiative, and the Product Development Initiative. Both schemes looked to make innovation and change active aspects of employees' way of approaching their work. IMPACS was a project based improvement programme that encouraged employees to devise and implement projects that improved the performance of the company (Web Research, 1995).

Employees or teams of employees, who conceptualise innovations, remained involved in the development and implementation process throughout. It looked to create a culture in which employees were actively reappraising their work environment with a view of devising improvements, even though things may appear to be already running smoothly

(Web Research, 1995). The Product Development initiative was the other programme in place encouraging anybody working for the company to suggest a new product or market idea. When a person made such a suggestion, they automatically become part of the process which evaluates and maybe develops the idea through a four stage process: Conceptualisation – feasibility – development – commercialisation (Web Research, 1995).

A comprehensive report on Frozen/Dry Vegetables, carried out by Web Research in 1994, presented data that showed that the Work Centre Management initiative had transformed the plant's traditional culture of top-down control, to one that encouraged bottom-up empowerment (Web Research, 1995). At the time of the study the research found that there was a strong sense of autonomy, trust, cohesion amongst branch employees, a culture allowing people to make mistakes and supporting them through the learning process, and a high level of awareness that change and creativity were encouraged (Web Research, 1995). Despite these advantages there were a number of weaknesses of the Work Centre Initiative that were also found.

The Work Centre Initiative was supposed to automatically develop cross-functional teams that worked together to achieve the goals of the wider organisation. However, because Work Centre Managers were focused on achieving the goals of their own centres, the idea of working towards the company's overall goals was lost. One manager at Frozen/Dry Vegetables illustrated this point by making the comment that sometimes the Work Centre approach "made it hard for some Centre Managers to look outside the square and take into account what was best for the business, as opposed to what is best for that particular area". Weaknesses from Work Centre Managers solely concentrating on their own department included an apparent desire to try and pass costs on to the next work centre, rather than deal with the issue within the originating work centre. There was also poor communication and a lack of cooperation between work centres and departments. This was most prevalent between the Frozen and Dehydration departments.

The problems discovered in that report were not addressed by management and are still problems at the plant today.

As is depicted in figure 5.1, there are two main processing departments operating at Frozen/Dry Vegetables: The Frozen Department and the Dehydration Department. Physically the departments were located side by side; there were no walls or levels that separated the two. You could actually see both departments as you walked through the factory doors. Despite their close proximity, day to day they operated as if each other did not exist. This way of functioning was fine, as both departments were processing vegetables using completely different methods. However an “us and them” relationship particularly at the middle to lower levels, had developed that negatively affected employee perceptions of their work environment. One supervisor who had worked for both departments made this observation:

“I’m sure there’s a line that runs through that factory, it’s a dotted one that nobody can see. On the left-hand side is the frozen business and on the right-hand side is the dry business... It’s unbelievable that we are actually working on the same site.”

It was felt by employees that there was a bit of discrimination towards dry foods based on the notion that “...frozen is the big boy and dry foods is a pain in the ass.” One dry foods supervisor acknowledged that their department has “... realised that [they] are the poor cousin and [they] have had to just accept this position”. This had created animosity between the two departments, and as a result the two departments only interacted with each other on a need-to-basis. As another dehydration supervisor put it:

“As long as there is the basic communication of when we’re going to be stopping, if they’re stopping, or if there’s going to be changes; this is all the interaction that is required between our two departments.”

Conflict between the two departments was identified as one example where the Work Centre initiative had fallen short. This is because the initiative, in theory, was expected to

not only create functional teams between work centres but was also meant to create and sustain a work environment where everyone worked as “one canoe” (Web Research, 1995, p. 14). Yet, instead of working together to ensure the overall success of the plant, the lack of a shared vision, mutual respect, support and team work between the two departments still existed even after the Work Centre initiative had been implemented. In fact, the initiative seemed to exacerbate the separation between the departments, as they were being encouraged to focus solely on the operations of their centre. This separation was identified as serious problem by a few of the managers. They felt strongly that there were more benefits gained from the departments supporting each others activities. For instance, one manager made the point that although they operated different processes; benefits could be gained from such things as increases in communication and information sharing. He provided the example that a good idea that is developed in the frozen department could be just as useful in the dehydration department. But because there is practically no communication between the departments, the idea will never get heard by managers of the other department.

A past Dehydration Production Manager recognised the seriousness of the conflict between the two departments and tried to resolve it. The perceived root of the problem was narrowed down to a few managers that undervalued the importance of the Dehydration Department’s operations. This was not management at the highest level, but key middle managers that had embedded these views into their staff. Although employees from both departments felt that the “us and them” attitude was a bit of a company joke; there was the underlying feeling that this had become ingrained in the company’s culture. Therefore, in spite of the work carried out to change mind-sets, this particular Production Manager found that “it may not be impossible to change this culture, but it bloody near is”. Even after the implementation of the Work Centre initiative, it was believed that these negative ways of thinking had remained in place because the traditional culture had never been completely removed from the organisation. As a result, it reignited after the Operations Manager at the time, who was primarily responsible for the implementation of the Work Centre initiative, left the plant.

From 1991 to 1996 the culture at Frozen/Dry Vegetables transformed from a traditional top-down controlled style, to one that provided autonomy; cohesion; trust; support and learning; and the encouragement of change and creativity. However, when the Operations Manager of the time was promoted out of the Plant due to the success of the Work Centre initiative, the Plant ended up reverting back to the management styles associated with the traditional culture of the past. There were a number of reasons why the old culture was allowed to come to the fore again. One factor was that the two managers that preceded the Operations Manager in 1996 did not continue the drive to encourage and support the initiative. Instead, they practiced the traditional style of management that many of the lower levelled managers' preferred to use. Another factor was that the push by the larger organisation to encourage and support the initiative seemed to be fading away. The company was still operating their plants using Work Centres, but such programmes as IMPACS tended to just die away. For instance, they stopped running the IMPAC's field days where different plants would come together every year and present ideas that had been developed as a result of the initiative. Finally, it was believed that the key reason that the Plant failed to maintain the Work Centre culture, was because the traditional culture had not been completely removed. Instead, the Work Centre initiatives had just been laid over the top of the traditional ways of doing things. Therefore when everything was perceived to be running smoothly, managers did not see the need to support the Work Centre culture any longer as they believed it was all too much work.

In 1996 the Operations Manager was promoted to the Company's main site in the North Island of New Zealand and was replaced by another manager who remained in the position for two years. In 1998, that manager left and the role was taken over by an individual who is still the current Operations Manager at Frozen/Dry Vegetables. It was not known when the transition happened, but once the original Operations Manager left in 1996, the Plant slowly slipped back to operating under the traditional culture of the past. The current Operations Manager was recognised by his managers as having a management style associated with this traditional culture. Although he was aware that the

traditional style of management was negatively affecting the Plant's work environment, he only began to seriously set goals to modify this culture in 2005. At that time, he had adopted a style of management from his predecessor that was to create a work environment that encouraged creativity and innovation, developed employees' skills and involvement, and would embrace change. To be able to achieve this, a two year plan had been initiated by the current Operations Manager. One of the first things that had been done was to force middle managers to take up this new culture that he was cultivating. This action resulted in some key managers departing the company. Respondents attributed the departures to the fact that a number were nearing retirement age and saw this as a good opportunity to exit the company. On the other hand, others believed that these managers did not like the change that was being forced upon them and left. Whatever the reason for their departures, it was evident that this was the only way that the current Operations Manager could begin to change the culture at Frozen/Dry Vegetables.

Despite the efforts made by current Operations Manager to transform the traditional culture of the plant, it was believed that this was a futile effort. This is because it was perceived that he was still be operating in a traditional manner, which did not align with the new culture that he was trying to create. This frustrated a few managers who were keen to get involved and encourage such things as employee involvement and creativity. They found that the elements of the work environment did not provide the required support to allow these sorts of initiatives to take place. For instance, some managers were not provided with the autonomy in their positions to look outside the square. Other managers' found that the ideas that they came up with were negatively evaluated by the current Operations Manager.

## 5.2 Organisational Environment

In spite of the traditional nature of the work environment that enforced top-down control, by and large employees were happy working at Frozen/Dry Vegetables. A number of key factors were seen to directly contribute to employees' satisfaction with their work environment. The first was the fact that the jobs, particularly at the lower levels, were simple, repetitive tasks but people were paid very well to carry these out. There were opportunities for both seasonal and permanent employees to make substantial incomes, particularly if they worked during the busy season when frozen processing operated seven days a week. Employees were paid time-and-a-half or double-time for working overtime and the weekends when required. This saw some employees obtaining weekly incomes that were just as good, if not better, than some managers above them. Another factor was the perception that the Company looked after employees well and provided them with good facilities. The final element that was identified as of significant value to employees was the people factor. Like most factory environments there were a few awkward characters, bitchiness and gossip, but in general people were seen to be very friendly and approachable. One supervisor summed up the importance that people played in this work environment:

“Most of the people are really good to work with, you have a few laughs. Without the people and being able to have a good laugh, it would be a terrible place to work in.”

As long as these key factors of the work environment remained in place, employees were generally happy to keep their heads down, not go against the grain of the traditional culture, and carry out the tasks that they were paid to do. One employee illustrated this point by stating that “If you just do what you're employed to do, you're pretty much safe.” For the majority of employees who shared in this way of thinking, there was no motivation to get more involved or present new ideas that may benefit them or the plant. This worked well for some people, but a number of employees wanted to get more involved in their jobs and present ideas. In spite of their willingness to contribute,

specific elements of the work environment deterred these employees from actually engaging in the generation and development of creative (i.e. novel and useful) ideas.

### **5.3 Elements of the Organisational Environment Constraining Creativity**

Table 5.1 compares the elements of the Plant's past and present work environment, which were found to significantly influence employees' perceptions of organisational creativity. From the study conducted by Web Research (1995), it was found that the Plant's past work environment facilitated innovative workplace learning and the encouragement of change and creativity. The positive elements, depicted in Figure 5.2, were identified as the key contributing factors to the creation of this type of work environment. A change in the style of management that operated at the plant resulted in a shift from the past environment that possessed more positive elements, to the current work environment where the influences of negative elements dominated over the positive ones. The predominance of negative elements has had a damaging affect on employees' motivation, as there is now the widespread perception that the current work environment blocks creativity from occurring.

The remainder of this chapter has been arranged into two distinct types of variables that illustrate key factors that obstruct individual creativity from occurring within this work environment. The first type are the content variables that include an overemphasis of the status quo, lack of autonomy, lack of rewards and recognition, and poor communication mechanisms in place. The lack of trust is the second type, which is classed as a process variable. Trust, or in this case distrust, was an unexpected variable that arose after the research was conducted in the field. It has been identified as the key concept contributing to a work environment that does not support creativity. Each of the variables identified will be individually taken and illustrated in more detail. However, it is important to realise that many of the components of the work environment are not discrete. Rather

they overlap and work together to create the work environment that is currently blocking employee motivation and creative work within the organisation. These elements have been analysed separately to keep it simple and avoid excessive repetition from occurring.

## **5.4 Content Variables Contributing to the Work Environment**

### **5.4.1 Overemphasis on the Status Quo**

A key factor impeding organisational creativity at Frozen/Dry Vegetables was the large number of long serving employees who overemphasised the status quo. These employees, who had worked at the Plant for more than ten, twenty and even thirty years, were seen to behave with the mindset that “what they’re doing is already the best way of doing something”, and introducing new initiatives was just unnecessary work. With a large proportion of these long serving employees nearing retirement, it was thought that they were only coming to work just for the sake of it. They were perceived by their peers as having been around too long, of being too old and just unwilling to be bothered anymore. Employees who fell under this umbrella were found at all levels of the organisation, from line employees to higher level managers. It was, however, a number of middle managers that were identified by the current Operations Manager and other managers, as a significant hindrance in successfully changing the current culture of the Plant. One Manager made the point that:

“If you look at some of the managers we’ve got, in another ten years they’d be retired, so they don’t really care. I get the feeling that sometimes they’re just coasting along. They’re punching their cards everyday just to get paid.”

**TABLE 5.1**

**Comparison between the Elements of the Work Centre Culture and the Traditional Culture**

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Past Work Environment</b><br/><b>(Work Centre Management Culture)</b></p>   |  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Present Work Environment</b><br/><b>(Traditional Culture)</b></p>   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b><u>Positive Elements</u></b></p>  |   | <p><b><u>Positive Elements</u></b></p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Autonomy (+)</b><br/>Strong sense of autonomy at actual operational work centre level.</li> <li>• <b>Cohesion (+)</b><br/>Strong sense of cohesion amongst branch employees.</li> <li>• <b>Support (+)</b><br/>Culture that allows people to make mistakes and supporting them through the learning process.</li> <li>• <b>Fairness (+)</b><br/>Workplace seen as a fair and equitable.</li> <li>• <b>Organisational Encouragement (+)</b><br/>High level of awareness that change and creativity are encouraged</li> </ul> |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Autonomy (+)</b><br/>Employees felt that they had a sense of control over their work.</li> <li>• <b>Communication (+)</b><br/>Open door policy.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employees felt that they could freely approach their manager’s and supervisors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Health and Safety Meetings               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided an employees with a good way to get health and safety issues addressed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <p><b><u>Negative Elements</u></b></p>  |   | <p><b><u>Negative Elements</u></b></p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Poor Communication (-)</b><br/>Inadequate communication of information which lead to different sectors of the workforce misunderstanding and losing respect for others.</li> <li>• <b>Lack of Cooperation (-)</b><br/>Lack of co-operation between work centres</li> <li>• <b>Lack of Recognition (-)</b><br/>Positive feedback for good performance is patchy and intermittent.</li> </ul>   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Over-emphasis on the Status-quo (-)</b><br/>Strong focus on following traditional processes and procedures to operate the business. The main focus is achieving results. There is little support for change and creativity initiative.</li> <li>• <b>Discrepancy in Autonomy (-)</b><br/>Discrepancy in autonomy given to managers. Some managers were given a considerable amount, while others were micro-managed.<br/><br/>Too much freedom: Managers, who focused on achieving results, allowed some employees to act in an unacceptable manner without being disciplined for their actions.</li> <li>• <b>Poor Communication (-)</b><br/>Poor communication mechanisms in place that did not support idea generation.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of feedback from ideas presented</li> <li>- Little information provided to employees, especially at the lower levels.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Lack of Rewards and Recognition (-)</b><br/>Lack of positive recognition or rewards for performance or ideas presented.</li> </ul> |

The current Operations Manager identified that some key middle managers, managers who were directly under him, operated in this manner as they had reached a level in their careers where they were comfortable. Not interested in career advancement, these managers were not keen to develop their skills and management techniques further or introduce change. They were not enthusiastic about adopting new management practices or initiatives as it was perceived to be additional work. Instead they were believed to be solely focused on output achieved. Just as long as projected targets were met and the plant continued to produce a successful result, that was all that seemed to matter to them.

Middle managers' disinterest in new initiatives was illustrated when the Operations Manager announced, at a management meeting, that this creativity research would take place at the factory. There was a mixed reaction amongst middle managers that were present. Creativity and innovation were seen as something new and associated with risk, so a number of the long serving managers' were not keen to partake in the research, as they perceived it to be a complete waste of time. Others, who tended to be newer to their roles, were more accepting of the idea. Due to the mixed opinions, the Operations Manager suggested that it may not be a good idea to interview the unsupportive managers as they may be uncooperative. As a result, he selected the managers that would be interviewed. The two that were interviewed were both supportive of creativity and innovative initiatives. To try and get an interview with a manager that held a different opinion on the initiatives, the Operations Manager was re-approached and asked if another interview could be done with a manager that was less supportive. The result of this effort was an interview with one more manager who also showed support for the initiatives.

Another example of the lack of drive, witnessed by the Operations Manager, was when he staged a water crisis emergency back in 2005. He told his managers that the factory was using too much water, the paddocks were becoming flooded, and production would have to stop if solutions were not found. Although the emergency situation was not really

a critical issue at that time, he wanted to see if they would be able to develop new ways to reduce the problem if it was to occur in the future. When the Operations Manager presented this scenario to his management team in 2005, they were pushed to encourage employees to present ideas that would solve the problem. There was a noticeable reduction in water consumption from these actions. However, from the number of ideas brought up, none were noted to be very innovative. For instance, the ideas presented included such things as not leaving taps running and using brooms to clear peas off the ground, rather than water from hoses. In the following season the problem was deemed to still be a critical issue, but the Operations Manager left the drive to get ideas from employees, in the hands of his managers. He was interested to see how his managers' would handle the issue without his enforcement. In the end, the task of encouraging employees to present their ideas on the issue was put aside by a number of managers. Although the task had not been completely dismissed, it was no longer a top priority for many managers.

The Operations Manager stated that a plan was in place to change the traditional top-down culture, to one that embraced change, encouraged creativity and innovation, and developed employees' skills and involvement. Despite this, it was believed by a number of respondents that this may be a fruitless effort. They believed that a vital change was required at the top for any new initiative to be able to filter down the hierarchy, as other managers' behaviours were shaped from the highest levels. The change that was required was a modification in the Operations Manager's management style to better align with the initiatives that he was trying to drive through the Plant. One respondent made the point that:

“The guys in the factory think that [the current Operations Manager] is a God-like being, he is boss. Yet they see him operating in ways on occasions that they don't perceive the boss should be acting. That has eroded the culture of the Plant a little bit.”

Not only was a change in his own style of management imperative, he needed to make sure that other managers behaved in a manner that aligned with the new culture that he

was endeavouring to create. Based upon past behaviours, there was a considerable amount of doubt that he would be able or willing to change his current approach. One respondent made the following comment: “Does [he] want to do it? I just think he doesn’t, because if he did he would have done it by now.”

In sum, the over emphasis on following traditional management practices to meet production targets has made it hard for new initiatives or practices to take shape within Frozen/Dry Vegetables. Key middle managers, who were primarily results orientated, were not interested in embracing new initiatives that they considered to be a waste of time. With no hope that the Operations Manager would be capable of changing his own set practices and behaviours, these were seen as on-going problems that would continue to create problems for the Plant well into the future.

#### **5.4.2 Rewards and Recognition**

The inconsistency in rewarding and recognising employees’ ideas was another facet in the work environment that negatively influenced employees’ motivation to present their ideas. At the management level, ideas were seen to be recognised by their boss, the Operations Manager. But at the lower levels, the majority of employees believed that rewards and recognition for their ideas depended upon the manager that they worked under. Managers that supported the idea of employee involvement and creativity were found to provide rewards and recognition for these initiatives. On the other hand, managers that were more results orientated and not concerned about employee involvement were less likely to do this.

It was established that managers’ ideas and the work that they did, was being recognised and awarded accordingly. In terms of intrinsic recognition, these managers’ would either receive a thank you at a one-to-one level or in management meetings, where their peers would be informed about the good work that they had done. Managers interviewed

appreciated this recognition by the Operations Manager, acknowledging that it did have an influence on their motivation to keep presenting their ideas. One manager made the point that: “It’s always nice to get positive feedback from the boss. I guess it contributes to me wanting to do more”. However, because the factory was predominantly results orientated, a lot of the recognition and positive feedback that management and supervisors received were focused on the results that were achieved, rather than ideas presented. In fact, a number of managers and supervisors were provided with financial incentives for achieving results in terms of outputs.

Some managers and supervisors in the production area were on contracts where they would be paid bonuses for achieving better quality products or outputs. These types of extrinsic reward systems, that recognised the achievement of results, seemed to be the norm throughout the organisation. This was a problem as the managers and supervisors who were results orientated, were perceived by employees to not be interested in employee involvement, new ideas and creativity. They were more concerned about achieving results, then doing any extra work involving the follow through and recognition of their employees’ ideas. Therefore, in this situation employees were not being recognised or rewarded for the ideas that they presented to these managers.

There were a few managers that were found to recognise and reward the efforts of their workers. These managers were identified as supporting and encouraging employee involvement initiatives as they saw the benefits that were associated. A manager who had been in charge of a service department, then got moved to a management position that was production focused, was a prime example of this. In her previous position she was found to thank her staff for getting things done and the effort that they had put into their work. One of her employees had this to say about the effect that the positive feedback had on them. “The pat on the back makes a huge difference. It seems silly doesn’t it? But it makes you want to try harder, keep doing your best and continually look for other areas to improve things.” This manager was not only found to motivate her direct team, but one employee from a different department mentioned how this manager rewarded one of his

co-workers for making a simple suggestion to improve a process within his department. His co-worker was thanked for his idea and was presented with a small box of sauces. The recognition and reward for the idea towards the employee was unexpected, yet he was very appreciative of this manager's actions. Although other employees joked about the box of sauces that he received, they were very impressed with the gesture that this particular manager had made, as they knew it was definitely a break from the norm.

In general most employees acknowledged that at the very least it would be nice to receive a thank you from their bosses for work that they did. Whether the positive recognition was done at a personal or group level, employees felt that it would demonstrate that managers valued their ideas, and they were not doing the extra work for nothing. They believed that it would not only encourage employees to keep bringing forward their ideas, but it may inspire others to present their ideas as well. In spite of the lack of recognition, some employees stated that they would be happy with the self satisfaction that they would receive from seeing their ideas implemented. In one case where a supervisor's idea was being implemented, he stated that the thank you that he received from getting his idea implemented was not from his manager but from his workers for making their jobs easier. He was very satisfied with the result, but was disappointed at the lack of recognition that his manager showed towards him and his idea. This contributed to his lack of respect for this particular manager.

Overall there were no consistent reward or recognition systems that were in place within the Plant that acknowledged the ideas of most employees. Instead, the most common system rewarded particular employees for achieving production results. This had a detrimental affect on creativity, as employee input was not seen as important to the achievement of results. Therefore they were not being encouraged to present their ideas, and when they did, their ideas were not being acknowledged. A few managers were exceptions to this, as they endeavoured to create an environment where employees' ideas were recognised and rewarded accordingly. However, their efforts seemed to be overshadowed by the majority of managers and supervisors who were not concerned about

carrying this out. A number of employees were dismayed by the situation as they felt that management did not really care about the efforts that they were making.

### **5.4.3 Autonomy**

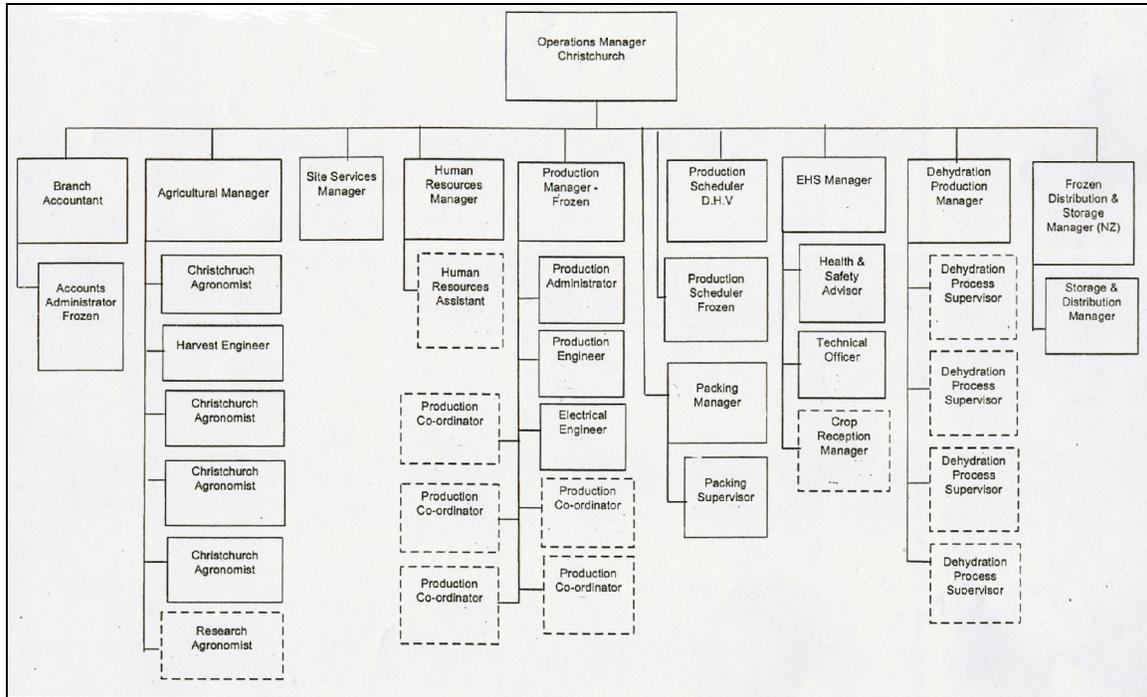
The creativity literature tells us that the freedom in one's job significantly contributes to the encouragement of employee creativity. At Frozen/Dry Vegetables the level of autonomy observed at the middle management level varied from manager to manager. It was dependent on their ability to be able to effectively interact with the management approaches and behaviours of the Operations Manager. Many managers found this a near impossible task to achieve and were left feeling that they had little autonomy in their jobs. In spite of this, the majority of employees that were interviewed felt that they had a considerable sense of control over their work. In fact it was felt that some employees were provided with too much freedom. This was the result of managers operating in a laissez-faire manner where some employees were allowed to get away with unacceptable actions, just as long as output was maintained.

When discussing the matter of Frozen/Dry Vegetables organisational structure, the Operations Manager described it as being relatively flat with not too many levels of management. He believed that this provided managers with the opportunity to openly and freely come to him with ideas, it gave them more autonomy in their roles, and allowed decisions to be made more quickly in comparison to the Company's other Plant. The Work Centre Management scheme was supposed to provide managers with a considerable amount of autonomy within the department that they were in charge of. It was advantageous that managers were provided with this level of autonomy as the Operations Manager knew that he could not physically be involved in everything that happened in the company. The only identified weakness from the flat structure was that the Operations Manager had a lot more people reporting to him (See organisational chart

Figure 5.2). He did not mind this as he wanted to be more involved in different areas of the organisation.

**FIGURE 5.2**

**Organisational Chart of the Frozen/Dry Vegetables Plant**



In reality, the Operation Manager’s perception of the level of freedom allocated to managers did not align with what was actually occurring at Frozen/Dry Vegetables. It was perceived by members of the management team that he operated a very hierarchical structure where he very much resided at the pinnacle. Described on several occasions as a micro-manager, he was seen to have had a lot more involvement and input into some of his managers’ roles than was thought to be necessary. It was believed that if the Operations Manager rated an individual as a performer, they would be provided with a substantial amount of leeway in their roles. But if there were any doubts at all, he was known to get completely involved in that manager’s area of responsibility. The following comment from one of the middle managers illustrates the situation:

“[The Operations Manager] tends to poke his nose into people’s business. Some managers are left alone, I certainly get left alone to a large extent, but others aren’t left alone too much. They feel he has too much of an overview of their area and therefore it stifles their initiative.”

One manager illustrates the serious effect that this situation was having on the morale of staff, by describing a conversation he sat in on with a couple of top middle managers at smoko. He found them saying that “They have had enough. They keep on getting things thrown back at them, they’re not doing a good enough job, and their ideas are considered to be crap”. The managers that were present firmly believed that they had tried and tried but no matter what they decided on, if the current Operations Manager did not agree with it, it would not happen and it would be done his way in the end. Another manager did not agree with this. He felt that the Operations Manager did listen, but these managers just had to firstly battle through the initial noise. Once one overcame this, there was the need to argue their case until the Operations Manager was persuaded to follow through on it. An example of this approach was illustrated by this manager:

“I’d go and say no [the Operations Manager] you’re wrong, this is what we’ve got to do. He’d have a counter argument and then we might leave it there for the day. The next day I’d go back and say no I still want to do this, I thought about what you said, but we should be doing this for these reasons.”

This manager knew that it was hard for some of the Plant’s managers, which did not relate well to this management style, to operate this way. This is because these managers believed that when the Operations Manager was saying “no” to their initiatives, they perceived it as him sticking his nose into their area. The outcome of the Operation Manager’s actions is that several top middle managers just could not be bothered anymore. They would just do the bare minimum as they felt that if the Operations Manager was going to do it his way anyway, he should just do the entire job himself.

The unwillingness of some managers to positively contribute in their roles was seen to have a negative affect on other employees' motivation down the hierarchy. This was because managers, who experienced a lack of autonomy in their positions, were behaving in the same manner as the Operations Manager. They were receiving unfair and destructive feedback for the initiatives that they developed for their departments, so they demonstrated the same unsupportive behaviours towards their own employees' initiatives. One manager uses an example to illustrate this scenario:

“[The Packing Manager] has an idea to do something in the packing room. He might take that to [the Operations Manager] but the OM has to know all of the details behind it and it all turns to custard. [The Packing Manager] can't be bothered anymore, and when his supervisors take things to him, he won't do it either. Employees will take things to their supervisors and they can't be bothered doing it. That sort of thing filters right through the departments here, but it's different in different areas.”

In spite of the discrepancy in the autonomy given to managers', most employees felt that they had a considerable sense of control over their work. However, managements' laissez-faire style of management that let people get away with unacceptable actions, as long as the output was maintained, was having a detrimental affect on the creative work environment. In particular, numerous respondents identified that the disciplinary practices by management were appalling. When an employee was absent, did not meet the required performance standards in their jobs or their behaviour got out of line; instead of addressing and resolving these types of problems a number of managers ignored them in the hope that they would just go away. One employee made the comment that:

“It's pretty relaxed here. If someone's not doing their job properly sometimes management won't even go through the correct warning processes. They seem to just let it go or brush it off; they don't want to know about it.”

One supervisor mentioned an employee who was consistently turning up late, absent on numerous occasions and had been known to turn up under the influence. It took the

company four months to address this problem employee. Although the employee demonstrated bad work habits his supervisor believed that he would be re-employed next season just because they could not get enough workers.

Supervisors whose job it was to manage these disciplinary matters acknowledged that they had been doing a poor job in this area. This was illustrated by one departmental supervisor who stated: “No, we don’t always follow set procedures, we should follow it but we forget to follow it sometimes”. Another supervisor put the poor performance in this area down to the drawn out disciplinary procedures that they have had to follow. He made the point that “In the old days it was like good day, we don’t want you anymore. Nowadays you’ve got to talk to them about it, you’ve got to give them a warning, talk a bit more and see if there’s anything you can do for them”. Some employees felt that this was occurring because it was easier for supervisors to allow these matters to slide, rather than dealing with them straight away. This seemed to be the case when it came to seasonal workers who were only employed for a couple of months of the year. By the time a supervisor went through the correct disciplinary processes with a seasonal staff member, they were nearing the end of their contract. So it was perceived that supervisors turned a blind eye in some cases, as these employees would not be around for too long anyway. From experience one employee voiced her annoyance over the matter:

“Absenteeism by the same person day after day after day and the person is still here. Yet one other person might only take two or three days off and they get warnings! Why? The difference between them is one employee could be a seasonal and one employee could be permanent that has been here for many years. But that’s not the issue, they’re both abusing the system, they both need to be treated the same.”

The feeble effort of some supervisors, in terms of disciplinary matters, was attributed to a lack of pressure to address these types of problems from their own bosses. Instead, a number of supervisors were urged by their managers and the bonus schemes in place, to concentrate their efforts on ensuring that production processes ran smoothly and results were achieved.

As was previously mentioned, employees were generally happy working at the plant, as they were paid well, the company looked after them and the people were perceived to be good to work with. As long as these factors of the work environment remained in place, employees were generally happy to keep their heads down and not voice their frustrations about the way that the factory is run. As a result employees' were happy to work at the Plant because of the benefits that it provided them with, but this did not disguise the fact that employees were wound up about the poor and inconsistent management practices displayed by their supervisors and managers. This fuelled discontent and disharmony amongst employees. Employees were annoyed with their peers that were abusing the systems, as they had to pick up the slack. However it angered them even more that supervisors were not doing their jobs properly to remedy these problems. Several respondents who had approached supervisors regarding problem employees, found themselves being made out to be the bad guy. There were several cases that were mentioned illustrating this occurrence. One example was an employee who had complained to supervisors about a fellow employee who was continually neglecting to clean up his work area before he left for the day. Nothing was being done about the issue and after a period of time this employee finally flew off the handle at his supervisors. This resulted in this employee receiving a warning for his actions, he was made to feel like the one in the wrong, and the initial problem still remained unresolved.

Instances like the one identified above have seen employees lose a considerable amount of respect and trust for some supervisors and managers. It was made clear that not all supervisors and managers acted in this manner, but a considerable number did. This had a negative effect on the morale of employees as they just could not be bothered with the internal politics anymore. They were sick of people being trodden on or condemned for doing something that they did not believe was wrong or inappropriate, while others were left to their own devices. Employees did admit that they still tried to do the best job that they could do under the circumstances, however a number went on to say that they were not prepared to put themselves out there by doing anything extra for the company. It was believed that because nothing seemed to ever get done, it was easier to just keep quiet and do your job. If an employee did not agree with the actions and behaviours of their

supervisors, many believed it was better for them in the long run to just change departments.

The levels of autonomy received by some employees at Frozen/Dry Vegetables were poles apart. At one end of the scale you had some managers that felt that they were being micro-managed by the Operation Manager. These managers had reached a point where they just could not be bothered to put in that little extra, or encourage their own staff to present ideas and suggestions. At the other end of the scale, you had employees that had too much freedom which saw them getting away with unacceptable actions. This engendered an atmosphere of mistrust and lack of respect amongst employees towards certain supervisors and members of the management team. People were unwilling to engage in disputes with their supervisors as it was felt that it was not only a waste of time, but they may also come out looking like the bad guy at the end of it. In both cases the lack of and over-abundance of autonomy contributed to the creation of an environment that discouraged idea presentation and employee involvement.

#### **5.4.4 Poor Communication Mechanisms**

This section focuses on the inadequate communication mechanisms that are in place for employees to present ideas. There are a few formal and informal methods available to employees that wish to present ideas or suggestions. However the effectiveness of these methods was being stifled by a number of factors that are the result of unsupportive and disinterested managers.

Directly approaching a supervisor or manager with an idea was identified as the most effective mechanism to push ideas forward at Frozen/Dry Vegetables. It was a convenient method utilised by employees to address mainly minor ideas and issues that surfaced within their departments. This informal technique was facilitated by managers and supervisors at the plant who were identified as being very approachable and friendly.

Employees felt that they were provided with an open door policy where they could freely go and see any of the managers with their problems or ideas. In most cases, however, employees would just pass on their ideas and suggestions straight to their direct supervisors to deal with. In the words of one supervisor:

“I’ve got a good relationship with [my manager]. It’s easier talking to him than trying to string two words together and talking to someone like the Operations Manager, who I know is a busy man and has probably got a lot of things on his plate.”

One of the major benefits of this direct approach was that people could not ignore someone that was standing in front of them. This was illustrated by one employee who stated that “you’ve got them cornered; they’ve got to look you in the eye and say yay or nay”. Although this method was utilised by the majority of workers, it did not work in all situations where other more formal methods were seen to be more suitable.

Health and Safety meetings and improvement forms were noted as two alternative mechanisms for employees to present their ideas. Meetings that were held once a month provided management with a way to communicate mainly Health and Safety matters, but other information such as production outputs were also covered. The meetings provided employees with a forum to present their ideas on Health and Safety issues. At the end of the meetings employees were given the opportunity to bring up any other ideas that fell outside this topic. Minutes of the meetings were recorded by the manager of each department, and an effort was made to try and follow up any ideas by the next meeting. Employees identified this as a good way to get primarily health and safety problems dealt with around the factory. In these meetings it was found that if their peers were experiencing the same problems, then they would be very supportive of other employees’ ideas in the meetings. By receiving the support from others, it was believed that one would have a better case in getting an idea implemented, than if they were to act alone.

Improvement forms were made available in every department, and it was a means to bring up any ideas and suggestions that an employee may have. From experience a few employees found this method to be the only way that their ideas were seriously taken into consideration. This was because once the form made its way into the paper process it had to be addressed by management, whether they accepted the idea or not. The forms could be placed under office doors or passed directly to supervisors or managers. No name was required on the forms making it a discreet way for employees who did not want to be associated with the ideas that they presented. This method was generally required when an employee's idea was complicated or could not be addressed on the spot. It was seen as the ideal method to use in an environment where a majority of employees were reluctant to present their ideas. This was usually because they were too intimidated by their peers or managers to speak up and ask for something to be done.

The three communication mechanisms described above provided employees with several different ways that their ideas could be put forward. However, due to the poor communication, practices and behaviours displayed by management, a lot of the time employees were discouraged from generating ideas utilising any of the methods that were available. The general impression of most employees was that the communication methods were there just for show; managers were not really there to encourage employees' ideas. One employee made the point that:

“In general, management is good with presenting written procedures and systems: “this is the way it should be”. But it never really happens in the way it should do. It's all talk, there's no real action behind it and that is why I do not present my ideas. It's just management bullshit as far as I'm concerned.”

One management practice that tainted all three mechanisms was the lack of feedback that employees received from the presentation of their ideas. In most cases, whether an employee went to see a supervisor or filled out an improvement form, they found that they rarely received any information on what was happening with their ideas. They seemed to be brushed aside and in many cases no explanation was provided. When an

explanation was provided, the same things were repeated to employees over and over again. They were told that the matter would be looked into, that it maybe done in the off season or it was not achievable at that stage. One supervisor describes his experience with the process:

“Three weeks ago I asked [a production co-ordinator] about getting an extra person, he looked into it and nothing’s happened. I went and seen him again and he said “well I’ll put another person on the afternoon shift and they’ll pick up the extra work load”, that never happened. Then I asked him again yesterday about putting someone else on and he was like “oh yeah you know it might happen.” But I don’t think it will, which is really quite depressing.”

The majority of employees understood that managers were constrained by budgets and how much something was going to cost the company was the primary reason why a lot of things did not get implemented. In many cases employees were happy working that little bit harder, as long as they knew that the company was working just as hard to improve things around the factory. However, a number of employees felt that management did not work very hard to fix problems that would make their jobs easier. They believed that if a problem, like bucketing ingredients into machines all day, is not considered by management as a major issue then they just fobbed it off for a later date. In these situations the majority of managers did not have the courtesy to provide feedback when problems, like the bucketing of ingredients, would be fixed. Instead, managers were seen to either ignore the requests of employees or come up with excuses as to why the problem had not yet been addressed. This has created a situation where some people felt that the company did not care about them. This is because they did not really know why they would not spend the money to fix the problems that were making their jobs difficult. As a result these employees felt that they would not do the company favour by presenting their ideas that could provide them with benefits, if their own requests were not being acted upon.

The weaknesses in the communication methods were heightened by a lack of information flowing throughout the hierarchy. There were graphical charts in the hallway of the factory that displayed certain outputs for the factory, such as water usage and production outputs. The plant also printed a newsletter that was issued every Friday and they had notice boards displaying a wide variety of company as well as employee information. However, unless people presented their ideas in Health and Safety meetings or employees were informed by their peers of the ideas that they had presented to management, people were not aware of ideas that were presented by others. There were no notice boards or news letters that conveyed this information. This discouraged employee involvement and teamwork as they were not provided with the necessary information that allowed them to help improve upon other people's ideas. One employee pointed out her concern over the issue:

"Has anybody put any ideas forward, I don't know? They're all into their Friday Flashes or the Pea Express or whatever it's called now. To me they're more concerned about putting jokes in that newsletter than they are about telling people what's going on. They should be putting in things like "oh yes we are looking at implementing a carrot line that is going to do this". Someone will look and think hell that's a good idea and may have suggestions to improve on it. But they don't do that and it's like life just goes on day by day, then all of a sudden you think oh they've done that."

A few managers were perceived to believe that their people were not interested in making a difference, so there was no need to feed them any information. One manager identified her peers as thinking that their employees just wanted to come in, earn their money and go home. Another employee identified that the problem with management was that half of them thought that the average Joe Bloggs on the bottom level was stupid. As this employee put it:

"They don't stop to think that half of those people have got a brain up here. They think that because they work sorting peas, beans, carrots or whatever, they must be stupid. They're not stupid and management treat

them like they are. That's not how you should be treating them because they've all got brains and they've all got ideas. Because of this a lot of them are intimidated to put their ideas forward, they're too frightened."

Managers and supervisors that shared this negative attitude were perceived as not really being interested in employee ideas. So although they provided the tools for employees to present their ideas, they did not provide the support that was required for employees to feel safe when presenting their ideas. This added to the lack of trust and respect that was brewing between management and their employees. This hostile environment discouraged employees from fully utilising the methods of communication that were being promoted by the company. For instance, many employees saw the Health and Safety meetings as a company formality that had to carry out on a monthly basis. In these situations employees did not feel encouraged to openly bring up issues that they thought management would disagree with. Instead the majority of employees would go to these meetings to sign the attendance slip that circulated. For the rest of the time they just switched off and would say nothing in case they were made a fool of, or were criticised by management.

The repercussions faced by employees whose ideas or opinions did not fit with management's way of thinking, was the major factor deterring idea presentation. It was felt that if an employee stood up and presented ideas that did not conform to management expectations, recrimination would be visited upon them at a later stage. This stopped many employees from presenting their ideas or suggestions at meetings because they did not want to get shot down in front of their peers. For these people, who already felt extremely powerless, they were more likely to keep their mouths shut because they were too scared to speak up in fear that it may affect their reputations amongst peers and management. As one line employee put it:

"I've been here a long time and I've interacted with management, various managers and they're all the same. They are nice to your face but when push comes to shove you'll be down the road. They don't like people

standing up and saying “I told you this two weeks ago, why the hell hasn’t been done?” You can’t have a free exchange of views without them sort of pencilling in their little note book as a trouble maker.”

A lack of feedback and information, negative repercussions and unsupportive managers contributed to lowered employee motivation to present their ideas. Although they were offered three methods that gave them the power to present their ideas, the general consensus was that they were just for show; management was not really interested in listening to employee ideas. This has generated a considerable amount of mistrust and disrespect amongst lower level employees towards management.

## **5.5 Process Variable Contributing to the Work Environment**

### **5.5.1 Lack of Trust**

A number of managers, supervisors and employees were found to act in a manner that made other employees feel unsafe, intimidated and also ignored when they tried to present their creative (i.e. novel or useful) ideas. This situation has produced a lack of trust amongst employees at Frozen/Dry Vegetables. Trust, or in this case a lack of trust, was not initially identified in this studies research model as one of the key concepts influencing organisational creativity. Yet once this research was conducted, it was soon discovered that the concept was an underlying component contributing to this organisations inability to provide an environment supportive of employee creativity. Since trust is not explained in the literature review, what will follow is the presentation of the definition of the concept used for this research. Ekvall’s (1996) measure of trust, within his own research tool, will then be briefly explained and shown how key points were taken to analyse respondent interviews. The result of this analysis will be the

presentation of a table that shows that there were a higher number of negative than positive statements that referred to trust. Examples will be taken from this table to elaborate on the lack of trust that exists within the Plant. Ultimately this analysis will provide some support that a lack of trust does exist between levels within Frozen/Dry Vegetables.

Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman (1995, p. 712) proposed that trust is an “willingness of a party (trustor) to be vulnerable to the actions of another party (trustee) based on the expectations that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party.” In Ekvall’s (1996) Creative Climate Questionnaire (CCQ), he identified trust as one of a set of content variables that are required for creativity to be supported within a work environment. Emotional safety was acknowledged as a significant facet of his trust dimension, at both the team and organisational level. This was incorporated into his measure of trust: “When there is a level of trust, individuals can be genuinely open and frank with one another. People can count on each other for personal support. People have a sincere respect for one another. Where trust is missing, people are suspicious of each other, and therefore they closely guard themselves and their ideas” (Isaksen, 2007, p. 6). By using Mayer, et al, (1995) and Isakson’s (2007) understandings of the concept to analyse Frozen/Dry Vegetables, it was found that a lack of trust existed between the relationships of employees, supervisors and managers within Frozen/Dry Vegetables. A number of managers did not trust certain supervisors or employees; a number of supervisors did not trust certain managers or employees; and a number of employees’ did not trust particular managers, supervisors and even their peers.

To provide evidence that a low level of trust was present within this organisation, a simple table (see Appendix 2) was developed that brought together respondents comments pertaining to the concept. There were a total of ninety-three statements made about trust. Of these, sixty-six talked about the negative actions of people that generated a lack of trust amongst people, while only twenty-seven commented on the positive actions

that created trust. Table 5.2 provides examples of the statements made by respondents found in Appendix 2. As is shown, the statements have been grouped into five distinctive categories: trust, or a lack of trust, between peers; between employees and supervisors; between employees and managers; between supervisors and managers; and between managers. In all of the five categories, there were more negative statements made about trust relationships, then positive ones. There was no quantitative analysis conducted to verify the level of trust that existed within the work environment. However, the substantial number of comments that were made that related to distrust, 71 % of the total number of comments made, provides some indication that a low level of trust does exist amongst and between different levels of employees at Frozen/Dry Vegetables.

A good place to start when trying to understand how this lack of trust has come about is by looking at what is happening at the top. It was found that the current Operations Manager demonstrated a discrepancy in the level of trust that he had for his management team. It was established that when the Operations Manager believed that another manager is capable of carrying out their roles, he leaves them to do their jobs with minimal interference. On the other hand, when the Operations Manager does not think that a manager is able to effectively carry out their job, he is known to not take such a risk, and would get engrossed in their work. One manager illustrates this point by commenting that “The Operations Manager has got a management style where if he rates you as a performer, he will let you do whatever you want. If he has any doubt he will get completely involved”.

The lack of trust demonstrated by the current Operations Manager, towards particular members of management, was seen to be stifling their initiatives. A number of top managers were saying that they had enough, they kept getting things thrown back at them, they were being told that they were not doing a good enough job and their ideas were of no use. This has resulted in those managers feeling that they are not shown any respect or support in their roles, which has reciprocated the same lack of trust back towards the Operations Manager. One respondent made the point that the managers that

**TABLE 5.2**

**Examples of Trust Statements Made Within the Frozen/Dry Vegetables Plant**

| Positive Statements Made (27 Statements made in total)   | Negative Statements Made (66 Statements made in total)  |
|--|---|
| <p><u>Trust Between Peers (1/2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think the safety meetings do provide a safe environment to present your ideas. The best thing is that in those meeting there is usually a lot of people that will support you. They usually will say, “Oh jeez that would make a big difference.”</li> </ul>  | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Peers (1/7)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some people are not just intimidated by their managers, but even by their own peers. They’re intimidated by them because verbally they abuse people.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Trust Between Employees and Supervisors (1/2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think that we have a very good relationship with all our staff and we’re very open and approachable. I know that if or staff feel that there’s any way that things could be done better they will ask us</li> <li>We’ve got two charge-hands and a manager and they’re all approachable.</li> </ul>   | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Employees and Supervisors (1/10)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One aspect I dislike about my job is the bosses. Sometimes I find that they don’t know when to draw the line, whether it’s work or personal. It’s just the way that they talk and some of the things that they say. They will talk about other staff and it makes you think when you walk away, do they say the same about me? It makes you question whether you are doing your job right. They need to be put on a leash a bit.</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Trust Between Employees and Managers (1/18)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My manager recognises the ideas that I put forward. It just makes you feel really good in terms of “yes, I’m not doing this for nothing.” It’s good to see that you got what you wanted and everyone’s happy.</li> </ul>  | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Employees and Managers (1/35)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I don’t think there is any manager that isn’t approachable here, but whether it will go in one ear and out the other, that’s the other question.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Trust Between Supervisors and Managers (1/2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I designed a wee machine just to make things easier for kneeling down. I went and presented that to my manager. He’s quite good about stuff like that. I find my manager very good to get along with, he’s quite easy just to go in and sit down and talk to.</li> </ul>   | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Supervisors and Managers (1/6)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They’re all pretty much willing to listen to new ideas I think that this is the kind of culture that they are trying to foster. But whether they take it on board or not that is a different story.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Trust Between Managers (1/3)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a manager I really like the work environment. Although [the Production Manager] pokes his nose into things, if you do a good job he will leave you alone and you have a lot of autonomy. So if you take things to him and say “this is how it should be and this is my case and this is why I think that,” he will go with that. So personally it works very well for me as a manager.</li> </ul> | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Managers (1/8)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Operations Manager tends to poke his nose into everybody’s business. So although they have got responsibility for their own area some are left alone, I certainly got left alone to a large extent. But some of the other’s aren’t left alone too much and they feel he has too much of an overview of their area and therefore it stifles their initiative I suppose.</li> </ul>   |

were not being trusted to do their jobs, were no longer willing to present their ideas anymore, “they just do the bare minimum, the basics”. They would prefer to keep quiet and just do their jobs the way that he wants them to do it. The level of trust that managers showed towards lower levels of employees was also found to vary. A number of supervisors and employees felt that they could openly present their ideas to most of the middle and top managers, and they would be listened to. However, whether or not anything was done with their idea depended on the manager that was approached. Some managers had the attitude that the majority of lower level employees were not interested or capable of making a difference; they just wanted to come earn their money and go home. These managers were disinterested in what their employees had to say. They believed that there was no need to provide them with the necessary tools, e.g. information or autonomy, to encourage them to get more involved. A number of supervisors were also found to have adopted this same attitude that their employees are not interested or capable of making a worthwhile contribution. One supervisor is an example of this, as he openly said that he would be selective with the people that he would encourage to present ideas. This is because he did not think that “a lot of workers are up to presenting ideas at the moment”. Not all managers and supervisors within the plant had this same attitude, in fact one manager thought that was “just bullshit. There might be one or two that are like that, but most people want to do a good job”. Yet, it was the behaviours of the disinterested managers and supervisors who were not showing support or respect towards others, that were having a significant influence on the levels of trust within the plant.

It was the belief of one employee, that the key reason that these managers were not interested in their ideas is that they “think that the average Joe Blogg on the bottom rung is stupid. They’re not stupid, but half of management treat them like they’re stupid”. Another supervisor supported this argument by saying that “If I was an average Joe working down the back and I went and presented an idea to some managers, I don’t think it would be fairly evaluated... it would be fobbed off”. Not only did a number of employees feel that they were being ignored, but they also felt that they had to be careful of what they said to some managers and supervisors. The consensus amongst a number of employees was that management loathed people standing up and saying things that did

not align with their way of thinking or goals. Employees that did present ideas which did not conform to managements ideals, were seen to either get shot down on the spot or would pay for it later down the track. This is supported by an employee that stated: “I can present my ideas here, but it has cost me in the past and it continues to cost me now, so I won’t do it anymore.”

Another problem that was identified is that certain managers and supervisors were found to be nice to employees’ faces, but when they turn their backs on them it was a different story. Consequently, employees had to deal with the bitching that occurred between their peers, but to make matters worse they found that sometimes it is their bosses that were talking about them behind their backs. One employee illustrates this by stating that “Sometimes I find that [my supervisors] don’t know when to draw the line, whether it’s work or personal. It’s just the way that they talk and some of the things that they say. They will talk about other staff and it makes you think, when I walk away do they say the same about me?” This was identified by another employee as a serious problem that really needed to be addressed if the company is to move forward. This particular employee stated that the only thing that would drive him to ever present his ideas is if management provided an environment where “you are respected or your opinions are respected. You have to have that communication going back and forth where you’re not stabbed in the back”. At present this open avenue of communication where employees and their ideas were supported and respected is not in place. As a result, many lower level employees were found to be too intimidated by management and their supervisors to say anything. Again, they too would rather just say nothing and do the job they were employed to do, as they feel safer doing this.

A lack of trust between some employees and their peers was also prevalent. It was mentioned that employees and their ideas were supported by their peers in safety meetings, but this only occurred when their peers agreed with the ideas that they were presenting. In most situations, it was felt that there is a lack of support and respect by employees that have been here too long, are trying to guard their jobs, or have got to the

stage where they are a little bit bitter towards other people. So no matter what someone does, a lot of the time these types of employees will not think it is good enough and will verbally attack them or their ideas. This is illustrated by the statement made by one employee: “Some people are not just intimidated by their managers, but even by their own peers. They’re intimidated by them because verbally they abuse people”. This lack of support from their peers is another factor contributing to employees’ unwillingness to step up when they have got an idea or comment to make.

In most of the interactions between key parties within this organisation there was a low level of trust present. Key managers were found to not believe that other managers, supervisors and employees were capable or able to be creative, and therefore their behaviours reflected their unwillingness to support creativity in these situations. A few supervisors and employees also behaved in a similar manner, showing their lack of trust towards others. Overall this was having a detrimental affect on ones likelihood that they were going to support someone to act creatively and it also determined whether an employee felt safe enough to present their ideas.

## **5.6 Summary**

Frozen/Dry Vegetables specialised in the manufacturing of commodity frozen and dehydrated vegetables. The plant operated pretty much as an independent company and the Operations Manager had a substantial amount of autonomy to decide how and what happened within this branch. He was keen to move away from the well established traditional management approach and create a work environment that supports the encouragement of creativity and innovation, the development of employees’ skills and involvement, and would embrace change where required. The current Operations Manager had started taking steps to achieve these goals; however, personnel at Frozen/Dry Vegetables were very pessimistic that any real change would occur. It was thought that it would be near impossible for the Operations Manager to change his own

set practices and behaviours. Without the required change that was needed at the top, it was believed that the work environment would continue to possess an overemphasis of the status quo; poor communication and a lack of rewards, recognition and autonomy. These factors were identified as the content variables that were creating an unsupportive work environment. However, it was the lack of trust that was found to be the key factor that determined that this organisation would not be able support employee creativity. This is because management were unwilling to support creativity and as a result of their behaviours employees' were unwilling to present their ideas.

## CHAPTER SIX

### PLANT 2

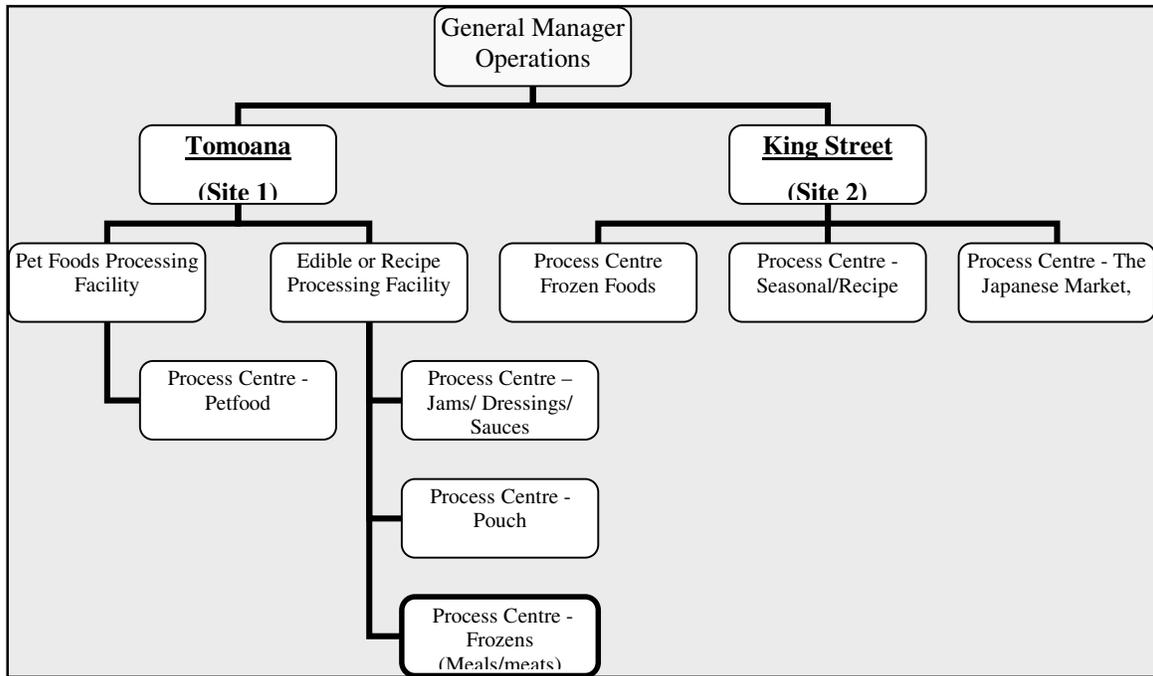
#### 6.1 Background

Plant 2, which will be referred to as Frozen Meals in this study, was a small division specialising in the production of ready to eat frozen meals that employed between 44 to 60 people over three shifts depending on demand. It operated from a site (Tomoana) that had once been the old freezing works processing plant situated on the outskirts of a city in the North Island of New Zealand. Tomoana housed two stand alone processing buildings; these buildings housed four separate divisions. These divisions had been individually established over time through a number of developments and acquisitions by the larger Company. Three of the divisions, including Frozen Meals, worked out of the Edible or Recipe Processing Facility, whilst the other worked out of the Pet Foods Processing Facility (See figure 6.1). Although three of the divisions operated within the same building, they all functioned as separate business units with their own management and line teams. This style of managing the divisions was based on the organisation's Work Centre Management strategy that the company as a whole embarked on in 1986 (Web Research, 1995).

The Work Centre Management approach involved the break up of the larger company's operations into logical units based on stages in the process. Each work centre manager was responsible for their outputs, and it was organised in such a manner that there were no overlaps or other areas of ambiguous responsibility for specific parts of the process (Web Research, 1995). Like the other two divisions working out of the Edible or Recipe Processing Facility, Frozen Meals was a small division that was counted as one work centre. This meant that the Process Centre Manager for the division was responsible for the entire process of making, packing and the freezing of the frozen meals produced. The

**FIGURE 6.1**

**The Processing Divisions Operating at Tomoana and King Street.**



distribution of product was handled by another division at the plant.

The Work Centre Management approach provided Frozen Meals with a number of advantages. They enjoyed a sizeable degree of autonomy from the larger organisation, as they were essentially managing the division as an independent unit. This had allowed the division to make quick decisions, implement a style of management that was different to the company's traditional style, and create a work environment that was continually trying to encourage creativity amongst its employees. However, one manager stated that there were a number of drawbacks from this management strategy:

“...it [Work Centre Management] has created a situation where departments are more concerned with just the process that they are involved in, rather than the total process of the organisation.”

As a result this contributed to a lack of shared vision, inadequate communication channels and information sharing, and a minimal amount of team work between different departments across the organisation. These flaws in the system were not only found to be occurring between divisions at Tomoana, but it was also happening between the organisation's other plants. For instance, the company's main Plant (King Street) was only a five minute drive away from Tomoana, but there was a limited amount of communication exchanged between the two. One manager illustrated the point that he was not made aware of ideas that had been implemented by other departments to improve things like efficiency. He thought that some ideas that were implemented by other departments may be of value to his line, and vice-versa. This was a major weakness for the Company as everyone was losing out in the long run.

King Street was the location of the organisation's first operations in 1934. Operations started in a four room cottage, where they began the fruit pulp and canning business. Today the site is the largest of the company's three plants functioning within New Zealand. It is made up of three major divisions (See Figure 6.1). Within these lines there is a range of food products that are produced at high speeds, with large volumes, and very modern production lines. To give one an idea of the huge volumes of goods passing through the Plant, the total production output across the divisions for 2004/2005, was just less than 144,000 tonnes. To achieve these figures divisions either operated 16 hours a day on two shifts, five days a week; or 24 hours a day for five to six days a week. In total the site employed 725 permanent staff and 150 to 800 seasonal workers in the peak season. Due to the site's sheer size and capacity, it was considered by all employees within the organisation to be the power house, the major money maker of the company. In the words of one employee he saw that King Street "has always been the beast", they are the "big wigs" of the company.

Tomoana was the Company's newest processing additions, opening its doors in 1996. In comparison to King Street, the site's operations were substantially smaller. They employed 400 permanent staff and up to 200 temporary or casuals; and the total output

across the product lines were 53,000 tonnes for the 2004/2005 year. Due to the lower profits generated at Tomoana, it was stereo-typed by employees from both plants as the “poor cousin”. It was felt that employees from King Street frowned upon Tomoana as they were perceived to be just burning up all the money that the larger plant was making. This was not to say that the company as a whole did not support the operations of Tomoana. But a culture existed where employees from King Street were known to show minimal support towards the smaller Tomoana and its operations. One supervisor, who had transferred from King Street to Tomoana, supported this by pointing out specific comments he received from work colleagues at King Street on his departure:

“You’re not going to the dark side are you?” “You’re going to work at [Tomoana]? There must be something wrong with you.”

Interviewees and other employees at both sites did comment that this negative attitude towards Tomoana was only a long standing company joke. However, because Tomoana was not seen to be a big money maker, there was the strong impression that the joke’s negative undertone had been ingrained into the fabric of the culture of both plants.

Managers from Frozen Meals were confronted with high level managers from King Street that they perceived showed little interest in any of the operations at Tomoana. It was felt by a few employees that the lack of interest was illustrated by the division’s poor physical attributes. Firstly, they were operating from an old freezing works building that had been converted from processing meat, to edible food products, such as frozen meals. Although it served its purpose, there were no significant changes made to the building to make it a more pleasant place to work in. It was described as old, cold, dreary and an eye sore that was a nasty building to work in. In fact, the only window in the entire three-story facility was found in the cafeteria. One manager made the following comment:

“It’s a horrendous building. Personally my biggest complaint is the building.”

The processing equipment that is in place was seen as another area that demonstrated a lack of real commitment by the organisation. Instead of having the state-of-the-art processing lines that were found at other factories within the organisation; they have had to make do with second-hand processing equipment that either originated from a plant in the United States, or a machinery and equipment graveyard. Although the line did do the job, it was noted that substantial improvements in the line could be made by an investment in technology. The overall lack of resource commitment led a number of the managers and employees to question the importance that higher level managers placed on the division achieving its goals. Rather than dwelling on the limitations bestowed upon the division, the managers that were interviewed saw this as a challenge. As a result, employees were envisioned to be the key factor in the success of the division, not the technology per se. Focusing on employees, as a means to improve the division's operations, did not take shape until the original Production Centre Manager relinquished the position in 2006.

The first Production Centre Manager was brought in to run Frozen Meals when the line first began operating in 2004. Like a few of the managers under him, he had been employed within the larger organisation for a number of years before taking up this role. It was believed that his previous service with the company was the key reason why he exercised the traditional style of management that was embedded into the culture of the organisation. This was described as an old style "us and them" approach where decision making was a centralised task and achieving production targets the primary focus. One of the newer managers described the Company's style at the time as: "do as I say, when I say, how I say and don't argue with me." Concerned about output, efficiencies and results, this manager was known to spend a lot of time in his office number crunching and reporting to people higher up. Although he made time to interact and talk with staff, he was not known to actively encourage them to get involved or present their ideas. This traditional culture had a significant influence on the work environment as it hindered employees' motivation to get involved.

The original Production Centre Manager's boss was the Site Manager for the all the divisions at Tomoana. The Site Manager had a very open and forward thinking style of management, which differed substantially from the original Production Centre Manager's own style. The Site Manager, who was appointed in 2004, had been sourced from outside the larger organisation. He brought with him a fresh approach and openly talked about innovative blue sky scenarios with managers, encouraged managers to look at ways to improve what they were doing, and granted them with a substantial amount of autonomy in their roles. He was known by one supervisor at Frozen Meals to always be open to good new ideas, to take on board things people say and to write them down. It was believed by this supervisor that if his managers did not act on good ideas he had, the Site Manager would. This style of management did not rub off on the original Production Centre Manager, who continued to run Frozen Meals under the traditional top-down controlled regime.

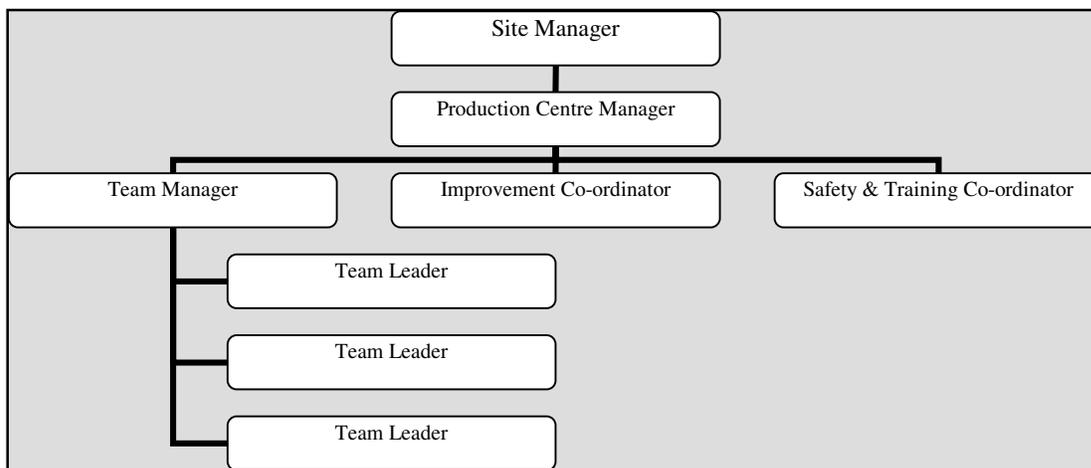
At the end of 2005 two new managers were appointed to the division. One took over the role of the Team Manager, who organised production and staff issues for the two frozen lines at Tomoana. The other person, who was initially appointed as a team leader, later took up the newly created role of Improvement Co-ordinator in the middle of 2006. This role involved formulating a Quality Plan that identified areas where quality, efficiency and production issues could be improved within the division. This information was reported to senior management every month. Sourced from external companies, both managers were used to operating in open and team orientated work environments where employee involvement was encouraged a lot more. They were taken aback by the lack of team work that existed within Frozen Meals.

As is depicted in the organisational chart (Figure 6.2), the Team Manager and Improvement Co-ordinator reported to the Production Centre Manager, who reported to the Site Manager. Although the organisational chart is relatively flat, the original Production Centre Manager's traditional approach blocked any of the Site Manager's employee involvement and innovation initiatives from filtering down the hierarchy. This

was a huge barrier for the Team Manager and Improvement Co-ordinator who related well to the Site Managers approach, and were keen to implement similar types of practices. They found that when they attempted to try and encourage team work and involvement within the division, their initiatives were stifled by the traditional approach that was practiced by the original Production Centre Manager.

**FIGURE 6.2**

**Organisational Chart of the Frozen Meals Plant**



At the beginning of 2006, a new person was appointed to take over the position from the original Production Centre Manager. Sourced from outside the organisation the new manager brought a fresh approach to running the division. This was the development of a relatively decentralised work environment that encouraged and supported team work and employee involvement. Part of employee involvement entailed giving all his staff the opportunity to be able to put their ideas forward. He placed a considerable amount of value on employee contribution, as it was seen as a method to generate positive attitudes and ultimately better results for division. By working with the likes of the Team Manager and Improvement Co-ordinator who shared in this vision, they have been able to make dramatic changes to the culture of the plant. It has gone from a traditional us and them culture, primarily focused on production outputs, to one that is becoming more people and team orientated.

At present, elements of the team based culture have been identified as contributing factors that have seen production expectations being exceeded and sound profits being achieved within the division. Consequently, their current success has forced higher level managers from within the larger organisation to stand up and pay attention to what they were doing. As one manager put it: “We are proving ourselves and they can see that we are making the money...they come over a lot more now to see how the meal line is going.” The current Production Centre Manager was the driving force behind the change in culture that achieved these results. However, it was made clear that this could not have been achieved without the presence of like-minded managers’ working alongside him.

## **6.2 Organisational Environment**

Of the two case studies, Frozen Meals was the only one to provide a work environment where employees perceived that they were positively encouraged to engage in organisational creativity. This was achieved by the establishment of elements in the work environment that created an open, supportive and friendly team environment, where idea generation was encouraged, valued, evaluated fairly and rewarded. Employees also took pride in their work and the division they worked in, enjoyed the company of their peers, and were satisfied with the current managers and their style of management.

The friendliness and openness of people within the division was witnessed on many occasions when walking through the corridors of the plant. Employees that you walked past would smile or say hello. In the cafeteria, employees were found to openly strike up a conversation with the researcher on a number of occasions. One employee explained why he liked working at Frozen Meals: “It is just the people. The people around here are just awesome. That is everyone, not just my peers but everyone.” Although employees had the odd bicker now and then, overall they had a considerable amount of respect for each other. This work environment has seen employees trust, help and support each other and their ideas. A number of staff went to the extent of saying that the work environment

was like being a part of one big family. This was based on the notion that they worked in an environment where they were not only supported by their peers; but managers and supervisors were supportive; approachable; and were genuinely interested in employees' work and their personal lives. As a result of these management practices, employees were beginning to share in the vision of continual improvement of the division through team work, involvement and idea generation.

Even though employees believed that this work environment did encourage them to produce creative ideas; not many of their ideas presented were deemed as being that novel. For instance, getting new jackets to keep people working in the freezers warm is not considered to be a new idea. However, employees' ideas were still deemed to be of value, as they were considered to provide benefits to employees or the division. This could be making an employee's job easier, safer, or improving the efficiency of the production line. The incremental changes resulting from useful ideas worked well in this manufacturing based environment, where not much novel work or projects are called for from employees whose work is generally dictated by the machinery they work on.

### **6.3 Elements of the Organisational Environment Facilitating Creativity**

Table 6.1 compares elements of the Plant's past and present work environment that were found to significantly influence employees' perceptions of the organisations ability to encourage (or discourage) creativity. As is depicted, both work environments possess very similar variables. For example, they each encompass some sort of communication, rewards and autonomy. The only thing that differentiates the two is that one work environment is shaped by a dominating set of positive factors, while the other is influenced by the negative elements of the work environment. It was the work environment of the past that was found to have negative elements that significantly influenced employees' perceptions that the work environment had previously

discouraged creativity. A change in the style of management that operated at the plant, resulted in a significant shift from the past environment that possessed negative elements, to the current work environment where the influences of positive elements dominated over the negative ones. The predominance of positive elements has encouraged employees' to present their ideas, as there is now a widespread perception that the current work environment facilitates employees to be creative.

The remainder of this chapter has been arranged into two distinct types of variables, content and process, which illustrate the key factors that facilitate creativity. The content variables that were found to be operating include the presence of good communication; things getting done; rewards and recognition; and autonomy. Trust was an unexpected variable that arose after the research was conducted in the field. In this research this concept was characterised as a process variable. Trust has been identified as the key concept contributing to this Plant's ability to provide a work environment that supports and encourages creativity. Each of the variables identified will be individually taken and illustrated in more detail. However it is important to realise that many of the components of the work environment are not discrete. Rather they overlap and work together to create the work environment that is currently facilitating employee motivation and creative work within the organisation. These elements have been analysed separately to keep it simple, and avoid excessive repetition from occurring.

**TABLE 6.1**

**Comparison between the Elements of the Traditional Culture and the New Culture.**

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Past Work Environment<br/>(Traditional Culture)</b></p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Present Work Environment<br/>(Team Culture)</b></p>   |
|--|---|
| <p><b><u>Negative Elements</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Over-emphasis on the Status-quo (-)</b><br/>Strong focus on following traditional processes and procedures to operate the business. The main focus is achieving results. There is little support for change and creativity initiative.</li> <li>• <b>Poor Communication (-)</b><br/>Poor communication mechanisms in place that did not support idea presentation.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of feedback from ideas presented</li> <li>- Little information provided to employees, especially at the lower levels.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Things Not Getting Done (-)</b></li> <li>• <b>Lack of Rewards and Recognition (-)</b><br/>Lack of positive recognition or rewards for performance or ideas presented.</li> <li>• <b>Lack of Autonomy (-)</b><br/>Centralised style of management that gave little freedom to employees.</li> </ul> | <p><b><u>Positive Elements</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communication (+)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supportive mechanisms in place where employees can present their ideas. Ideas are fairly and constructively evaluated in these situations.</li> <li>- Increase of information sharing between levels of the hierarchy</li> <li>- Positive feedback provided on ideas presented.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Things Getting Done (+)</b><br/>Management were seen to walk the talk. Employee ideas were being implemented and projects around the plant were getting done. They were followed procedures and policies that saw employees being treated fairly and equally.</li> <li>• <b>Rewards and Recognition (+)</b><br/>Employee ideas were being rewarded and recognised.</li> <li>• <b>Autonomy (+)</b><br/>Employees felt that they had some level of control in the day-to-day operations of their work.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b><u>Positive Elements</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although no positive elements were mentioned by candidates, this does not mean that none existed.</li> </ul>   | <p><b><u>Negative Elements</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Poor Communication (-)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Giving and receiving information to employees on the shop floor was a problem.</li> <li>- Poor communication between managers and team leaders.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Lack of Autonomy</b><br/>Team leaders felt that they were not provided with enough autonomy in their roles.</li> <li>• <b>Things Not Getting Done (-)</b><br/>Ideas can take a long time to be implemented.</li> </ul>   |

## **6.4 Content Variables Contributing to the Work Environment**

### **6.4.1 Formal and Informal Communication Mechanisms**

The improvement in communication within the division was a significant contributor to employee involvement and creativity. This was the result of the provision of formal and informal communication mechanisms that encouraged staff to present their ideas and suggestions. These mechanisms have allowed information and ideas to move more freely throughout the hierarchy; both in an upward, downward and sideward direction. Managements', supervisors' and other employees' supportive behaviours towards employee idea generation and presentation were the key factors contributing to the active flow of ideas that was occurring at the Plant.

One way that management encouraged employee involvement and creativity was through the monthly Health and Safety meetings. These somewhat formal meetings provided management with an avenue to let employees know what is happening, where they are going and how they plan to get there. Although the meetings were run to cover mainly Health and Safety issues; in many cases production type information, that was not directly related to line employees' jobs, would be brought up. By informing employees about wider-scale problems, such as customer complaints or quality issues it was seen to boost staff morale, as they felt that they were being included more by management. For instance, employees had been told that a certain product could not be sold which affected the financial performance of the division. They were given this information with the reassurance that it was not their fault, it was out of their control, and they had done the best in their part of the process.

These meetings were used as a forum where management were seen to regularly preach the need to create a team environment where employees got more involved. As a result,

people were given the opportunity to present ideas in a supportive environment at the end of the meetings. This was not only with regards to Health and Safety issues, but any area where an improvement could be made. An example of this occurred when the division experienced a problem with high levels of downtime from machinery break downs. Management informed staff about the problem and asked for their thoughts on what they believed to be the main issues or drivers of the problem. From this exercise half a dozen ideas came out of the discussions which lead to decreases in down time.

The meetings also provided a supportive avenue for employees to present their ideas, and many people were found to use them for this purpose. However, one manager made the point that “Most people would say something in the meetings, but a quiet person would probably just hold back.” He believed that there were a few people that are scared of what their peers may say and therefore were less likely to bring their ideas up in this forum. Most of the employees interviewed said that they did not have a problem bringing up their ideas, but also said that a quiet person would probably not do it. This could be one reason why informally communicating information and ideas directly to supervisors or management, tended to be utilised frequently within this division.

Supervisors were generally employees’ first point of contact when presenting ideas. Employees had no problems with presenting their ideas straight to their supervisors as they were found to be very approachable and would listen. For ideas that could not be addressed by supervisors they were seen by employees as a safe and reliable means to transmit ideas up the hierarchy. In most situations employees found that they would take their ideas directly to a higher authority, and they would be told what the outcome was. One employee illustrates this by confidently saying that: “Our supervisor will tell us to write it down and give it to him. The next day he’ll say I told so and so and this is what they had to say.” This was a good method for employees that did not want to be identified in the presentation of their ideas. In spite of supervisors being the first point of contact to get an idea heard, in terms of getting things done straight away, employees were going directly to the managers who had the power to get things moving. This is not because

they did not trust that their supervisors would not get things done. It was because management had created an environment where employees felt welcome to come straight to them with their ideas.

The informal method of direct communication flourished in a work environment where managers provided an open door policy to all employees. The division's small size and few levels of management was a great help in allowing this to take place. In itself the division's flat structure allowed people to more readily access their shift leaders and managers, if they had any ideas or suggestions to put forward. Although this was the case, it was managements' high level of openness and approachability that was the key factor allowing effective informal communication to take place. Several managers and team leaders at Frozen Meals went to the extent of knowing most employees' names; the names of their family members; and showing a sincere interest in their personal problems. Management's openness has seen employees being equally open with them. One employee noted how her manager showed an interest in family problems that she had experienced.

“If you're willing to let them know about stuff that happens outside work they will listen. For instance my mum was sick in hospital in another city and they took the time to talk to me about this, eventually giving me time off to visit her.”

In addition to taking an interest in employees' personal lives, the division had held social get-togethers for all employees at the local RSA. At these events employees were able to get to know managers outside of work and as a result they were less intimidated by their positions. One employee summed up their experience by saying “When we got on the drinks with the managers, it was all good after that. We discovered that they are normal people.” These types of management practices have broken down the traditional “us and them” culture and created a unique family culture within the division. One Team Leader illustrates this by stating that “There is that line where I am boss man, but now they also see me as their friend.” As a result of the family culture that exists, employees demonstrate a high degree of trust and respect for management and their initiatives.

The open door policy coupled with the employees' trust and respect for management, has significantly broken down some of the communication barriers that existed in the past. It has allowed employees, supervisors and some managers to confidently by-pass people in the ladder, and informally put forward their ideas to the person that could deal with the problem. Other employees felt that management, the Team Manager in particular, were getting more knocks on their doors concerning a wide range of matters than team leaders and supervisors. This is because employees were no longer intimidated by management and therefore had no need to use their supervisors to pass on their ideas up the chain. In the words of one employee:

“Our previous managers' were hard to approach and talk to, they were quite reserved. Now with the new Production Centre and Team Managers' we can just go up to them and put forward our ideas.”

The open door policy of management was illustrated during the interviewing of a few of the managers. On a number of occasions employees came and knocked on their doors to present ideas or bring up an issue that they may have. Most of the time the managers being interviewed, would ask these employees to come back later, and they seemed happy to do this. On one occasion, however, the Improvement Co-ordinator took a break out of the interview to attend to an employee who came down from the production line. This particular employee was voicing his concerns about the way that the line had been set up for the day. He told the manager what the problem on the line was, and presented him with a better way to carry out the work. The manager listened to his ideas and then they bounced ideas back and forth. Realising that the employee had brought up valid points, he allowed him to implement his method for setting up the line. The employee was asked if he could come back to him later in the day to see how it all went. Even before this employee came down to see him, this manager made the following comment regarding the change in culture that has occurred at the division:

“Even though I'm not directly involved with staff, there are usually people waiting outside my door with ideas... They'd say “Oh I've got a good idea of how I could...” and I would say wonderful come in and sit down. You

would have never seen this happen this time last year. The performance of the line has just gone up from this.”

An increase in the communication of information between management and employees, has contributed to a strong and trusting relationship being formed between the two groups. One employee made the comment that “Everyone has kind of got that feeling that we are all equals now.” Employees now feel that they are not only being kept informed about issues that arise; they feel that they are now a valued member of the team. For instance, when the division over-produced, in relation to what the marketers had anticipated, a shift had to be put off. It was announced at a meeting what had happened. They were told how far off it would be before they got back on track, and when they would all be able to come back to their jobs. It was not just cut and dry, there was discussion about it that involved the whole division. In addition to the meeting, all the employees were involved in one-to-one interviews where they had the options put to them by management. They would be found work on another line, or they could take time off. The result of this approach was that the staff could see the positive side of the problem; there was no negativity and they did not feel rejected and useless. One manager commented on how well the management team tackled this problem:

“In my ten years that I’ve worked here, I’ve seen departments drop whole shifts off just like that because of production down turns and those sorts of issues. This was handled well. I think it was just the way that it was handled, it was a very smooth transition.”

Management utilised both formal and informal methods of communication to reinforce to employees the need to create a team environment where employees got more involved. The message that was being conveyed by managers in these situations was that “any idea is a good idea; there are no stupid ideas.” They wanted to create an environment where staff felt that their ideas were valuable and would be fairly and constructively evaluated. As a result, management were seen to never say no to new ideas that were presented; instead they told employees that they would investigate each idea accordingly. This

investigation involved managers taking the idea, working out the feasibility of implementing it, and providing informative feedback behind why the idea would or would not be utilised. This feedback would usually be presented directly to the employee who presented the idea or in the monthly meetings. This method of evaluation built up employee confidence to put forward ideas, as they knew that they would be treated fairly and would not be faced with critical evaluations. One employee made the following comment that illustrated her experience when presenting an idea:

“The Team Manager will tell you if it wasn’t a good idea, but he won’t put you down or anything. He might say maybe it is better this way.”

Management tried to provide employees with positive feedback that was received in a timely manner. The Team Manager highlighted the significance of this point in stimulating creativity:

“You can’t be too negative because if you are, you are not going to get employees presenting their ideas again.”

The positive feedback that employees were receiving was illustrated by one employee who had an idea for how the sauce comes over to the production line. She presented her idea straight to the Improvement Co-ordinator and the Team Manager. They told her that they had already looked at that idea, and found that it was not going to work in that situation. Instead of leaving it there, the managers went on to tell her of the other idea that they were looking at implementing. Although this employee’s idea was not taken any further, she was happy with the feedback that they provided her with. She felt that she was included in the discussions of the problem and was not just brushed off.

Another example of the feedback that employees were provided with was carried out by the Health and Safety department. This department did a couple of evaluations every year of how the safety side worked. What this involved was giving employees a questionnaire, taking that information and evaluating it, and then giving the results back to them. The results were graphed and presented on

the notice boards and in the monthly meetings. The information showed employees that their ideas were actually taken into consideration and not just thrown to one side as a tick box exercise.

Examples like these have had a positive impact on employee motivation, as there is the realisation by employees that ideas are now being taken seriously. One employee made the point that: “If there are any problems then we are listened to. This makes us more involved in the job.” This has lifted the morale of employees who are happy that managers are actually taking ideas from everyone, evaluating them fairly and providing feedback on their ideas.

From time to time a few discrepancies would arise between employee and management perceptions of what constituted a good idea. One manager commented that “there are the odd few that get a bit pissed off because they think that they have a good idea and it should be actioned straight away.” It was made clear that decisions to implement an idea would generally be determined by its appropriateness, how much it would cost, and whether the benefits were enough to justify spending the money. The majority of employees understood that management operated under the tight constraints of department budgets, which limited what the management team could and could not do. The influence of things not getting done, because of resource limitations, had been lessened by the provision of the constructive feedback of information in a timely manner. It made employees feel more included as they were given the opportunity to gain an understanding of the factors that influenced the decision to implement ideas. One employee sums up this understanding by making the following statement:

“You’ve got to remember that they’ve got capital and budget constraints that determine what they can and can’t do. The good thing about them is that they are pretty open about these sorts of matters when it comes to our ideas. They provide us with feedback on our ideas and they don’t hide anything.”

Formal and informal mechanisms have seen the communication between departments also improve considerably. A prime example of this was between the engineering and production departments at the division. In the past, the extent of communication that existed between the two was production asking maintenance why the plant was breaking down. One manager made the comment that: “Production sat on one side of the fence, maintenance sat on the other side, and the two argued about whose fault it was that the machine broke down.” To stop downtime the engineering department started feeding information through the Production Centre Manager and they began to work as a team. The key benefit of the increase in communication between the two departments was that machine operators gained the confidence to talk with fitters. If they had an issue with their machine that they could not fix, they called a fitter and worked along side them to fix the problem.

Although communication within the division has improved considerably, there are areas that still need improvement. One of the problems that management face is the giving and receiving information to employees’ who are working on the production line.

Management believe that it is hard for employees that come up with an idea while they are working, to share their ideas due to the high noise levels, strict hygiene constraints and the continuously operating process line they work within. They can’t just jump off the line and come down stairs as soon as they get an idea. They have to wait until their smoko, or at the end of the shift to share their ideas with supervisors or managers. It was believed that some ideas maybe lost because employees forget about presenting their ideas as they are distracted by their work at hand. This has been identified as a major issue by the Improvement Co-ordinator. They are currently trying to develop ways to overcome these barriers in an effort to allow information and ideas to circulate more freely.

Communication between team leaders and management is another area that needs to be addressed. On a number of occasions, things would be carried out within the department but no one told team leaders that it was going to happen. For instance there was a spate of

instances where contractors and engineers would come in and change things on the line and not tell them. When team leaders would come in on the Monday morning, things had changed and they were expected to try and work around these changes. Because there was no consultation with the Team Leaders, there were many occasions when the change did not work logically when running a line. Although it is felt that it is not done on purpose, it was affecting them as they felt left out of the loop. An example of this brought up by a Team Leader was when Projects is doing something in conjunction with the Team Manager. He commented that they would bring the team leader in when they are finally ready to implement the project, or they might happen to be in a meeting and they say “hey this is what is happening...”, and that is the first knowledge that they might have of what’s going on. Not only were team leaders often feeling left in the dark, there was a lack of trust coming from the workers towards them. One supervisor illustrates his frustrations.

“We might only have fifty percent or a third of the information, whereas the workers think that we know it all but we don’t. Then the workers blame us for things happening and us not knowing about it. We are the first in line that get come at by the employees and we don’t know what’s going on ourselves. A lot of them aim all their frustrations at us, yet we have our own frustrations with our managers because we don’t know what’s going on either.”

Despite these problems, in comparison to the past, the levels of information and ideas circulating within the division have significantly increased. It was expected that the circulation of information within the plant would only get better as management endeavoured to find better methods to improve the information sharing and involvement of their staff.

Management encouraged employee involvement and idea presentation through the provision of supportive formal and informal methods of communication. These mechanisms have allowed information and ideas to move more freely throughout the hierarchy. This has kept employees’ informed about divisional issues and made them feel

like a valued member of the team. The feedback of information has had a positive impact on employee motivation as there is the realisation that ideas are now being taken seriously. It was however, the trust and respect for management, as a result of their support, openness, approachability and compassion for staff, which seemed to ultimately give employees the confidence and willingness to utilise the mechanisms available.

### **6.4.2 Things Getting Done**

The practice of getting things done or ‘walking the talk’ was the second facet of the work environment that encouraged employees to get involved and present their ideas. There were two factors of this element that were positively influencing employees’ willingness to get involved. The first factor that positively influenced employees’ morale was seeing their ideas getting implemented. The second element was managements’ commitment to follow the rules and procedures that were in place. In both instances, it contributed to employees’ trust in their management team, as they felt that management were addressing problems that had been neglected in the past.

When the Production Centre Manager first arrived in 2006 he saw a significant problem in the old style of management. What he found was that the previous manager had told staff that certain things around the factory would get done, but those promises were rarely followed through. This had a negative effect on employees’ attitude towards management and also their willingness to get more involved by presenting their ideas. The feeling amongst a number of staff was that there was no point presenting ideas or suggestions to this manager, because promises may be made but nothing would ever eventuate from it.

The current Production Centre Manager operated in a completely different way that had a positive affect on employee attitudes. As he described it:

“The way that I approach things is that if you say that you’re going to do it, you do it. This is important because employees can see that you are trying to move things forward, and they all know the goals and jump on board.”

By practicing what he preached, employees’ have seen their ideas being implemented, and what had been said would happen, did happen. One employee made the comment that “The Production Centre Manager is firm but fair. He doesn’t beat around the bush like the other manager did. The Team Manager is the same, they get things done.” This simple practice of following through on promises has instilled a significant level of trust and respect for these managers. This was demonstrated when employees had nominated their manager for the Safety Employee of the Month. They were acknowledging the work that he had done around the factory. The manager who looks after this award was very surprised with this nomination and had this to say:

“This is the first time in ten years that I have seen it where the team decided that the manager should get the safety conscious award. I did the certificate for them, they took it away, and when I presented it to him in the team brief it had been signed all over by every employee. That’s pretty unusual so it gives you an idea of the management within our department.”

Another way that management have been perceived as getting things done, was adhering to the rules and procedures that they set for the division. In the past, it was mentioned that the old management team were a little bit lenient when carrying out disciplinary procedures with staff. However, the present team of managers have provided employees with the confidence that these matters would be dealt with according to organisational requirements. This ensured that all employees were treated equally and fairly and there was no room for favouritism. Managements’ commitment to follow disciplinary procedures is illustrated by one employee who noticed that this management team were serious about following the rules that were in place. “In the past people were rarely sacked for falling out of line. Since the new managers started there have been a few

sackings.” Employees were content that management had toughened up on these matters, as they found that in the past they had to pick up the slack of other unreliable employees. One employee made the following point:

“It is important that management keep on top of this. It’s not fair on those of us who come to work every day and do our job to the best of our abilities when we’ve got people taking days off all the time, sleeping in the locker room or just not pulling their weight.”

In terms of disciplinary actions both management and supervisors were not seen to be cut and dry. They would not enforce disciplinary actions straight away, but would first find out why an employee was behaving in that manner. For instance an employee may not want to carry out a task because it is unsafe, or they may be coming to work late because of family problems that are out of their control. If an employee’s reasons for flaws in their behaviours are valid, management showed compassion and would find alternative ways to remedy the root of the problem, rather than taking them through disciplinary procedure. Employees commended management for taking this firm but fair approach, as it showed that they were genuinely concerned about the well-being of their employees.

Despite things getting done within the work environment, some things were still taking a long time to get installed. One employee voiced his frustrations about this issue: “I keep telling my shift leader about it but things take ages to get fixed. Sometimes it takes months to get something basic fixed.” Like many of the other departments, Frozen Meals is restrained by their budget and can only allocate so much of its resources towards new projects or ideas. For a division that is still relatively new this is a major problem as there are many issues that still need addressing, but a limited amount of resources available. This has created a situation where ideas tend to be prioritised. The more important things were put on the top of the to-do-list, while less important tasks were usually placed somewhere near the bottom.

Management acknowledge that the lack of resources was a problem in being able to get things done. However they have tried to decrease employees' frustrations by utilising a number of approaches. One thing that has been done was implementing simple ideas or suggestions that involved minimal resource commitment straight away. By doing this, management were seen to be at least doing something, that tended to keep employees happy. Managers and supervisors would carry out these minor tasks themselves, but on a number of occasions the employee who suggested the idea was allowed to implement it. For instance, one employee made the suggestion that they needed a walk-over bridge in their work area. He found one sitting around, but it was not quite the right shape or size, but he wanted to give a go. His manager allowed him to implement this idea himself to see if it worked.

Another practice management utilised to lessen employee frustration, was to continually provide them with information on the progress of ideas and projects. This was either done in meetings or directly to the person, or people, that were waiting for the idea to be implemented. For instance a manager explained that people would present really good ideas of putting new pipes in or taking out walls to make the process easier. But those sorts of things could not be done at the click of their fingers. Therefore in these situations the provision of informative feedback made employees more aware of how far off the project was before it would be completed. Although a project may take a considerable amount of time to finally get implemented, they knew that the idea has not been fobbed off and would eventuate in due course.

The final example of how management tried to minimise employees' frustrations, was by stopping employees from carrying out a task until the problem was remedied. An example that illustrates this involved a group of employees bringing up their concerns about lugging heavy containers up stairs everyday. The idea was to develop a pulley mechanism to lift the containers to the required level. These employees that were involved in carrying out this task had banded together to get this idea implemented. Management acknowledged their concerns, but it was known that this could not be

implemented straight away. Instead of making employees continue to carry the containers up the stairs, one employee said that they discontinued processing the product that required that task until the pulley mechanism was in place. Employees were appreciative that they were not required to carry out this task until the problem was fixed. It was felt by a number of these employees that the management team were genuinely concerned about their well-being, and valued them as important members of the team. The outcome of this action was that it decreased their annoyance over the amount of time it took to actually get the machine up and running.

The practice of getting things done was an extremely important factor supporting managements' initiative to encourage employee involvement and idea presentation. Following set disciplinary procedures demonstrated managements' commitment to abide by the rules that were in place, while the implementation of the ideas presented by employees reinforced the notion that management truly did value their contributions. The Plant was constrained by resource limitations that affected how long things would take to finally get implemented. To try and decrease employee frustrations, management were seen to implement the things that they could do straight away, while they provided continuous feedback on projects that took more time. This demonstrated to employees that management were serious about providing the necessary factors that encouraged employee involvement and idea generation. Whether it is implementing employee ideas or following set disciplinary procedures, employees were more willing to get involved. This is because employees could see that the results from managements' actions were providing benefits for themselves, their peers and the entire division.

### **6.4.3 Rewards and Recognition**

Rewards and recognition received from direct supervisors and higher level managers was another facet of the work environment that supported idea generation. With the change in management there was a significant emphasis placed on acknowledging contributions

that were made by employees. One supervisor, who had worked at King Street for five years, was amazed at the lengths that the management team at Frozen Meals went to, to acknowledge the work and ideas of individuals as well as the team effort as a whole. He believed that people were more willing to contribute their ideas because “over here you go out of your way to get things done and it is noticed. It is picked up on and you are rewarded for it. You just feel appreciated for what you’ve done here.” These practices were rarely found at the lower levels at King Street, nor were they a prevalent practice of the previous Production Centre Manager. At Frozen Meals both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards were used to encourage employees to put their ideas forward. Of the two types, rewards of the intrinsic nature were used the most. These were received by employees in both formal and informal situations.

The main form of reward that was given to employees who presented an idea was intrinsic in nature. These included recognising employees’ efforts in team briefs or safety meetings, and the personal acknowledgement of an individual’s or team’s effort by management on a one-to-one level. The Production Centre Manager was one of the managers seen to approach employees and congratulate them on the work that they had done. Employees acknowledged that this made them feel good because they knew that he was a busy man, but he had taken the time out his schedule to see them. Another approach used by one supervisor, was to call a little meeting on a Friday and thank everybody for their work during the week. This “pat on the back” for ideas and work carried out by employees was common practice within this division. For many of the candidates that were interviewed, this thank you by their managers was all they needed in return for their ideas. This is illustrated by a comment made by one employee that sums up the general feeling from employees

“A pat on the back from managers is an appropriate reward and I think many people are happy with it. I suppose it is just the recognition, people around here seem to appreciate the acknowledgement being personal in that respect.”

It can not be denied that these intrinsic rewards were not enough to motivate a few employees to present their ideas. Some employees stated that they required more extrinsic rewards to be in place if they were going to get involved. The Plant did provide extrinsic rewards, but only in limited ways. One was the formal reward system set up to acknowledge ideas that were presented on Health and Safety issues. It was known as Safety Employee of the Month, and involved employees nominating people that they believed had come up with a good idea or acted in a manner that made their work place safer. People who received this reward were acknowledged for their actions in monthly team briefs and received a certificate, chocolates or a gift voucher. Most employees were aware that this reward system existed, and were generally happy that people were getting recognised for the efforts that they were making. However, this reward system only recognised ideas that deal with Health and Safety issues. There are no formal reward systems in place that recognised employees' efforts in other areas.

One informal extrinsic reward system that acknowledged efforts outside the Health and Safety area was the practice of managers and supervisors providing extrinsic rewards from their own pockets. The Production Centre Manager tended to use extrinsic rewards to recognise the efforts of the whole team, rather than the individual. The types of things that he provided his staff with were small gestures along the lines of shouting them morning tea or a function. On one occasion the division had got together at the local RSA and he turned up and shouted \$100 of his own money at the bar. The Reliability Maintenance Manager also recognised his team's efforts for the whole year by giving each of his staff members a Christmas hamper that he paid for himself. At the smaller end of the scale, one supervisor rewarded members of his staff that went that extra mile by handing out chocolate bars at the end of the week. On all three occasions the reward systems did not directly acknowledge the creative efforts of employees. Rather the rewards were used by managers and supervisors to show their appreciation for the entire job that they or the team had done.

There was one instance where a Team Leader provided a financial reward for creative ideas that he received for one of his projects. In a team brief he made a presentation to staff asking them to present any ideas that could improve a project that he was heading. From the ideas that were put forward, one was taken and implemented. The benefit gained from this idea was a saving of about \$1500 a day for the division. To acknowledge this employee's valuable idea the manager provided a reward that came out of his own pocket. However, this employee was not aware of the reward that they would receive for their idea beforehand. Instead it was given to the employee as a bonus, an acknowledgement of the extra effort that she had made. Other employees were aware of similar examples happening within the division that recognised similar efforts.

Despite the provision of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, one or two employees did not accept these as being sufficient enough to get them involved. In exchange for their ideas, these employees wanted such things as money, goods, a promotion, or a portion of the savings that may result from the idea that they present. In general, most employees did not think like this, however one Team Leader found that a quite a few of the employees were unappreciative of the rewards that were currently provided. One example he used to illustrate this point was when an unplanned morning tea shout was provided for staff. Instead of thanking management for the unexpected gesture, a few employees were unimpressed and made comments that were along the lines of "is this all that we get?" This Team Leader identified this as a major problem in trying to get a number of employees to step up and present their ideas. He stated:

"We encourage them, we do encourage them. But a lot of them find that they don't get the reward they want if they do the work or come up with the ideas. Without being callous, a pleasant thank you isn't enough; they want money or something that they can have to say hey, I did that."

The problem with some employees not getting involved can not be solely boiled down to the lack of sufficient reward systems in place. The few employees that did identify this as a problem also mentioned bad experiences that they had had with the old management

team. As was previously mentioned, the original Production Centre Manager did not support employee involvement, nor was he seen to get things done. It was taking a long time to change the amount of negativity that some employees' still held from the past. As a result there are a small percentage of employees who were reluctant to put their ideas forward. They had reached a point where they just could not be bothered anymore. One employee made the following comment: "I remember when they handed out a sheet and they asked us for improvements on the line. But because they didn't listen before, why do they want this now? Because of this I didn't do anything." This demonstrates that there is still a considerable amount of work to do to change the negative perceptions of some employees that were developed under the traditional management approach that did not support, recognise or reward employee efforts.

The rewards and recognition that were received at this Plant were definitely a step up from what was provided in the past. Although a few employees believed that they deserved more extrinsic rewards, such as money incentives. The general population of the division were extremely happy with the public and private one-to-one recognition that they received from the management team. It lifted the morale of employees as they felt that their ideas were valued and management were appreciative of the contributions that they were making.

#### **6.4.4 Autonomy**

Employees' from all levels of the organisation felt that they had some level of control in the day-to-day operations of their work. This perception was the result of the Production Centre Manager's open style of management, and pushing responsibility downwards. There was some level of bureaucracy within the division's structure, as everyone's roles and responsibilities were clearly defined and it was reasonably clear what they were expected to do, but the Production Centre Manager avoided exercising hierarchical

control at the site, which created quite a flat organisational structure. A Team Leader illustrated this point:

“The structure of this division is very flat. Employees have the freedom to come to me with their questions. If I can’t answer it they can go to the team manager, if he can’t answer it they can go to the PCM, so it works very well.”

The practice of decentralising control has provided his direct reports with a considerable amount of autonomy in the way they carry out their jobs. They do partake in general meetings, but this is a means to allow the managers to inform each other on what they are doing. One manager illustrated the amount of freedom that was bestowed upon him: “I report to the Production Centre Manager who, unless he has got something specific that he wants me to look at, will leave me to it. The last thing you want is to have someone telling you how to do your job.” This level of autonomy instilled into the management team, by the Production Centre Manager, has filtered down throughout the division.

In order to give employees more control in their roles, managers encouraged staff to take more ownership in their jobs. This point was illustrated by a manager that said: “... we want to give a form of leadership to every person. This will enable them to make their own decisions on the line. Giving them the feeling that they are in control will make the line run a bit better.” As a result of this, supervisors within the division felt that they were trusted to carry out their jobs with little interference from their bosses. One supervisor believed that he was provided with a considerable amount of autonomy in his role which made him look for things that needed improvement. An example he provided was when he was first went into a supervisory role. He had the idea of rotating the key machine operators who, in the past, only knew how to run one machine. He found that the person above him liked the idea and just said “go for it”. He was allowed to follow this idea right through till it was implemented.

As part of the job rotation idea, the supervisor got these machine operators to engage in rotational training where the more experienced people would be exchanging information with the people getting trained. One machine operator made the comment that “It has actually made me a better person. I have come out of my shell a little bit because I have had to tell people you got to do this or that. In the past I use to just stand back.” Another machine operator made a similar comment about how this process developed them as a person. “It brought out things that I never thought I could do. Before I had to train people I was really shy and didn’t like talking to people. This was a big step for me, training someone else and telling them what to do.” This not only built up employee confidence, but it gave these people the flexibility to work on different machines, and a sense of responsibility and ownership in their jobs.

Employees that worked on the line were generally controlled by procedures that they had to follow when carrying out their jobs or working on certain machines. In this situation they did not have any freedom to change things, as it was pretty much a fixed process. For instance, you put a bowl under the machine, the machine fills it up, and then you move it along and get another bowl. Despite this, most employees believed that they had a considerable amount of control in their roles. One employee made the following comment: “My team leader just comes up at the beginning of the shift to make sure that we have the right packaging and things like that. Then he pretty much leaves us to it. If we have problems that we can’t solve ourself, we just call him.” Many employees felt that if there was a problem that they could fix, which did not have a negative affect on anything else, they were allowed to do this. For instance, machine operators were allowed to fix minor problems on their machines that they were capable of doing. If the problem could not be fixed by them, they had the power to call up a fitter to come and address the problem. They would work along side the fitter, so when the problem happened again they might be able to fix it without any help. In general employees were taking up more ownership in their jobs, as they are given the responsibility and opportunity to look for new ways to do it.

In spite of the majority of employees feeling that they have a sense of control over their work, some Team Leaders felt they were not provided with enough autonomy. One Team Leader made the point that they did have a considerable amount of control in their roles to make decisions, but would have liked a little bit more say in how things happen in the departments that they supervise. A problem that was identified was that a lot of the decisions were made without their knowledge, or they are brought in at the last minute once the decision making had been done. An example of this provided by a Team Leader was that “Projects might be doing a job in conjunction with the PCM or the team manager. When they are finally ready with it they will bring the shift leader in; or they might happen to be in a meeting and they would say “hey this is what is happening”. That is the first knowledge that we might have of what’s going on.” This had a detrimental affect on the morale of these Team Leaders who were left out of the loop, which made them feel as if they were losing control in their roles.

Despite the lack of autonomy that these Team Leaders feel that they were receiving, the situation was perceived to be getting a lot better. The division was described as a learning structure that was improving upon the problems that employees such as the Team Leaders faced. Employees’ from all levels of the organisation felt that they had some level of control in the day-to-day operations of their work. It has allowed staff to use their own initiatives and try new things within reason. This has had a significant influence on employees’ morale and made them more willing to present their ideas.

## **6.5 Process Variable Contributing to the Creative Work Environment**

### **6.5.1 Trust**

The present management team, lead by the current Production Centre Manager, saw the direct benefits of creativity and believed that their own employees were capable of producing useful ideas. Consequently they have taken a risk by providing employees with the content variables that were identified as encouraging a creative work environment. Managements' actions have resulted in employees holding a strong belief in them and perceiving that they are safe when they present their ideas. A high level of trust, demonstrated within and between management and employees at Frozen Meals, has been identified as the primary variable responsible for a work environment that supports creativity.

To provide evidence that a high level of trust was present, a simple table (see Appendix 3) was produced that brought together respondents comments pertaining to the concept. By using Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman (1995) and Isakson's (2007) understandings of trust to analyse the interviews conducted at Frozen Meals; a total of eighty-three statements were found to be made that related to the concept. Of these, sixty-three mentioned the positive actions of people that generated a degree of trust amongst people; while only twenty commented on the negative actions that created a lack of trust. Table 6.2 provides examples of the statements made by respondents found in Appendix 3. As is shown, the statements have been grouped into five distinctive categories: trust, or a lack of trust between peers; between employees and supervisors; between employees and managers; between supervisors and managers; and between managers. In all of the five categories, there were more positive statements made about trust relationships, then negative ones. No quantitative analysis was conducted to verify the level of trust that existed within the work environment. However, the substantial number of comments

**TABLE 6.2**

**Examples of Trust Statements Made Within the Frozen Meals Plant**

| Positive Statements (63)   | Negative Statements (20)   |
|--|--|
| <p><u>Trust Between Peers (1/5)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What encourages me to come up with new ideas I guess is just working with other people. You have other people helping you on the line and people just come up with little ideas and you go “oh that’s a good idea.”</li> </ul>  | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Peers (1/5)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That is probably the main issue I find when people who are trying to be creative, get knocked for their ideas by their peers. That’s why I think a lot of people are afraid to speak up.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><u>Trust Between Employees and Supervisors (1/6)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our shift leader’s pretty cool, we can tell him anything. He’ll be like yes write it down, give it to me and the next day he’ll say “I told blah, blah” and what not.</li> </ul>  | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Employees and Supervisors (1/6)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes someone will put something forward to a team leader and it doesn’t necessarily go all the way through the channel if the team leader doesn’t believe it is a good idea. It does happen, as to the percentage of time I’m not too sure.</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Trust Between Employees and Managers (1/49)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think our managers are really good, they are easy to approach and talk to. We had some before which I didn’t particularly like. Our managers before they were hard to approach and talk to, they were sort of reserved. Now with the Production Centre and Team Managers’ we can just go up to those guys.</li> </ul> | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Employees and Managers (1/7)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They do provide feedback in the meetings, but it is normally about what they want to do. It is not about what you want, you know.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><u>Trust Between Supervisors and Managers (1/1)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I actually think with the current managerial structure where I’m at the moment, and the people that we have in place, it’s the best management team that I’ve worked with within [this Company].</li> </ul>  | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Supervisors and Managers (1/2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You get angry and sometimes feel like what’s the point when you have got people that are higher then you and they should really be taking responsibility.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><u>Trust Between Managers (1/2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The management team at the top are all new. We are all like minded, so it makes it easy because I don’t have to go and fight with the boss because he always agrees with me, he thinks the same way.</li> </ul>  | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Managers</u></p>   |

relating to trust, 76 % of the total number of comments provides some indication that a considerable level of trust exists amongst and between different levels of employees at Frozen Meals.

The current Production Centre Manager has been identified as the root-cause of the trust that exists within Frozen Meals. He created an environment where not only his own management team, but most employees felt safe to present their ideas to him. He promoted a clear and simple vision within the division: to provide a team environment that gave “employees the opportunity to put their ideas forward.” This was envisaged to create a win-win scenario for both management and employees. Employees, who were mainly involved in mundane highly repetitive jobs, would become more involved and it was seen to lift their morale and confidence. As the Production Centre Manager described it, it changed employees’ outlook on their jobs by giving them a sense of worth: “the feeling of having to wake up in the morning and wanting to come to work, rather than thinking that they’ve got to come to work because they need the money.” One manager pointed out the sentiment that people at the plant had for the Production Manager as a consequence of the respect and support that he showed them: “I think that there is a feeling of sincerity for this guy. He is just how it is and he’s been seen to make changes to the line... In fact, it is the first time I have ever seen it, we have a safety conscious employee of the month award, and this is the very first time in ten years where the team decided that the manager should get the safety conscious award.”

A considerable amount of trust also existed between the current Production Centre Manager and his management team. The Team Manager points out that: “We [management team] are all like-minded, so it makes it easy. I don’t have to go and fight with the boss because he always agrees with me; he thinks the same way I do.” Sharing a similar way of thinking, managers also had a considerable amount of respect for and confidence in each other. There was, however, a problem that was concerning a number of these managers. This was the scenario that due to external pressures from the Company, one of the key managers may revert to running the division using the

traditional management approach. Although this is not a current problem, it was identified as possible problem in the future. The Team Manager raised this as a major concern that he could see jeopardising the open system that they, the management team, have created. He said: “The only thing that worries me heading forward is that either the Improvement Co-ordinator, the Production Centre Manager or myself, fall into the [Company] way.” Other managers and supervisors held similar concerns, as they too had seen it occur in other divisions. It was felt that a similar problem could also happen if one of the key managers were to leave and be replaced with a manager from the larger company. This is illustrated by one manager: “I think that if the [current] Production Centre Manager was to leave and another [Company] manager was to come in it could be different. That depends on how much that person is willing to change.” This shows how dependent these managers are on not only the Production Centre Manager, but other managers around them being able to maintain a high level of trust in each other that is required to support the open system that they have developed.

Trust between employees and the management team was also found to be present. Managers created an open environment where employees were encouraged to present their ideas and get more involved. As a result of this, employees have pointed out that they are not afraid to take up this opportunity, as they feel that they have the support to do so. One employee points this out: “Our managers are good, you can easily go in and talk to them about anything and they are prepared to sit there and listen.” Although employees believed, to a large extent, that they were being encouraged and supported to present their ideas. It was noted that it was up to the individual to decide whether they were going to take up this opportunity. It was discovered that in some cases employees’ willingness to put ideas forward was still being affected by the past actions of the former management team, run by the original Production Centre Manager. He did not ask for employee involvement or their ideas. A number of employees had the attitude that the past managers never listened to their ideas before, so why should they put their ideas forward now. Confronted with demons from the traditional culture, the current management team still have a considerable amount of work to do to change the negative mindsets that are prevalent amongst some employees. In spite of this, they perceive that

they have already made in-roads at changing the division's culture, and are confident that if they are able to maintain the current momentum, they will be able to change these mind-sets.

Finally, trust, support, approachability and the respect that employees and the management team have for each other, was also found to be occurring amongst employees. From the candidates interviewed, a number felt that they do receive a lot of support from their peers for ideas that they present. One employee explained this point by saying that "You have other people helping you on the line and people just come up with little ideas and you go, oh that's a good idea." Employees identified their peers as one of the key aspects of their jobs that they liked. There were, however, a number of employees that still do not have the confidence and courage to stand in front of their peers and present their ideas, as they are afraid that they will be judged. This was identified by management as a serious problem, and they were looking for ways, such as job rotation and getting people to run meetings, to build up employee confidence so that they do not feel like they would be oppressed by their peers.

Trust has been identified as the key variable positively affecting managements' decision to support someone to act creativity; and determining whether or not an employee felt safe enough to present their ideas. In this case, most of the interactions between key parties within this organisation showed that a high level of trust was present. The relationship between senior managers' and employees was found to be having the most affect on the work environment of the plant. Senior managers, who shared a similar way of thinking, were found to believe that their peers and employees were capable of being creative, and therefore their behaviours reflected their willingness to encourage and support employee creativity. This has shaped an environment where employees believe that they can present their ideas safely without the fear of being exploited or ignored.

## 6.6 Summary

Frozen Meals was a small division specialising in the production of frozen meals. Although it operated within a larger organisation it functioned as separate business unit with its own management and line team. Management enjoyed a high degree of autonomy from the larger organisation, as they were essentially managing the unit as an independent company. When the division was run by the original Production Centre Manager, who adopted the larger organisation's traditional style of management, things were just ticking along. It was not until the arrival of the current Production Centre Manager that there was a major change and things were actually getting done and the division was seen to be surging forward. The new Production Centre Manager, together with key managers, was able to turn the work environment around considerably, transforming it from an "us and them" environment to one that supported team work and the encouragement of employee involvement. This was not an easy task for the new management team to achieve, as they were and are still confronted with many hurdles. Trust was identified as the key factor responsible for positively activating the content variables of the work environment. The outcome created a combination of communication mechanisms, things getting done, rewards and recognition and autonomy, which supported employee creativity. Although they are still moving through a process of change, there are definite signs that things can only get better for the division if management remain committed to continue along this path.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **COMPARISON OF THE PLANTS**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

Chapters Five and Six presented data gathered from the qualitative research that was conducted at Frozen/Dry Vegetables and Frozen Meals. At Frozen/Dry Vegetables the work environment was found to possess negative contextual variables that lead to a work environment that inhibited creativity. At Frozen Meals the opposite result was found as the work environment possessed variables that were more positive in nature, creating a work environment that was perceived to facilitate creativity. In both cases, trust or a lack thereof, was unexpectedly found to be the key intervening variable responsible for the work environments that were operating. The purpose of Chapter Seven is to compare and discuss the findings presented in the previous two chapters with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. This analysis will be utilised to support the findings of this research and the theoretical model that is presented.

#### **7.2 The Organisational Environment and Creativity**

The componential theory of creativity, through the KEYS instrument, presented a prescription, a list of eight key contextual variables that were identified as either facilitating or blocking an individual's perception of organisational creativity (Amabile, et al., 1996). Organisational encouragement, supervisory encouragement, work group supports, sufficient resources, challenging work, and freedom were believed to encourage organisational creativity. Organisational impediments and workload pressure were identified as inhibiting it (Amabile, et al., 1996). Although this study did not produce exactly the same set of variables as the preceding research, most of the contextual

elements that were found in this study (see Table 7.1) were characteristic of the variables presented by Amabile (1988). For instance, an over-emphasis of the status quo was an attribute of the organisational impediments variable (Amabile, et al, 1996). The communication variable that was present at Frozen Meals encompassed the fair and constructive judgement of ideas, mechanisms for developing new ideas and an active flow of ideas, which were aspects of Amabile, et al's, (1996) organisational encouragement variable. With this in mind, the results that were collected from the analysis of the two plants (see Table 7.1) provide support for Amabile, et al's, (1996) theory that a number of variables stimulate creativity, while others impede it.

The cross-analysis of the two plants shown in Table 7.1., found that the same contextual variables were more or less present within both plants, but the nature of the variables and their effect on the work environment were poles apart. At one end of the scale sat Frozen/Dry Vegetables, which possessed a range of variables that were predominantly negative: over-emphasis on the status quo, lack of autonomy, lack of sufficient rewards and recognition and poor communication. At the other end of the scale, Frozen Meals was characterised by more positive variables: good communication, things getting done, adequate rewards and recognition and autonomy. These findings align with Amabile, et al's, (1996) research, as this study found that Frozen Meals possessed positive variables, similar to the ones identified in the Componential Theory, which contributed to employees' perceptions that their work environment supported and encouraged employee creativity. When Amabile, et al's, (1996) contextual variables, such as autonomy and encouragement, were negatively characterised, i.e. lack of encouragement and a lack of autonomy, it is logical to expect that employees would perceive this as a negative context and a hindrance on creativity. This is what was found to be occurring at Frozen/Dry Vegetables, as employees were not provided with adequate information, feedback, encouragement to be creative, and autonomy in their jobs to motivate them to present new and useful ideas.

TABLE 7.1

Comparison between the Environmental Components of Frozen/Dry Vegetables & Frozen Meals

| <u>FROZEN/DRY VEGETABLES (Plant 1)</u><br>Unsupportive Work Environment   | <u>FROZEN MEALS (Plant 2)</u><br>Supportive Work Environment   |
|---|--|
| <u>Negative Elements</u>  | <u>Positive Elements</u>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Over-emphasis on the Status-quo (-)</b><br/>Strong focus on following traditional processes and procedures to operate the business. The main focus is achieving results. There is little support for change and creativity initiative</li> <li>• <b>Lack of Autonomy (-)</b><br/>Discrepancy in autonomy given to managers. Some managers were given a considerable amount of freedom, while others were micro-managed.<br/>Too much freedom: Managers, who focused on achieving results, allowed some employees to act in an unacceptable manner without being disciplined for their actions.</li> <li>• <b>Poor Communication (-)</b><br/>Poor communication mechanisms in place that did not support idea generation.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of feedback from ideas presented</li> <li>- Little information provided to employees, especially at the lower levels.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Lack of Rewards and Recognition (-)</b><br/>Lack of positive recognition or rewards for performance or ideas presented.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communication (+)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supportive mechanisms in place where employees can present their ideas. Ideas are fairly and constructively evaluated in these situations.</li> <li>- Increase of information sharing between levels of the hierarchy</li> <li>- Positive feedback provided on ideas presented.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Things Getting Done (+)</b><br/>Management were seen to walk the talk. Employee ideas were being implemented and projects around the plant were getting done. They were followed procedures and policies that saw employees being treated fairly and equally.</li> <li>• <b>Rewards and Recognition (+)</b><br/>Employee ideas were being rewarded and recognised.</li> <li>• <b>Autonomy (+)</b><br/>Employees felt that they had some level of control in the day-to-day operations of their work.</li> </ul> |
| <u>Positive Elements</u>  | <u>Negative Elements</u>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Autonomy (+)</b><br/>Employees felt that they had a sense of control over their work</li> <li>• <b>Communication (+)</b><br/>Open door policy.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Employees felt that they could freely approach their manager's and supervisors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Health and Safety Meetings               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provided an employees with a good way to get health and safety issues addressed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Poor Communication (-)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Giving and receiving information to employees on the shop floor was a problem.</li> <li>- Poor communication between managers and team leaders.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Lack of Autonomy</b><br/>Team leaders felt that they were not provided with enough autonomy in their roles.</li> <li>• <b>Things Not Getting Done (-)</b><br/>Ideas can take a long time to be implemented.</li> </ul>   |

The findings from this analysis also provide a degree of support for proposition 6 that was presented in Chapter Three:

“A work environment that possesses more organisational stimulants than organisational impediments will encourage a more creative work environment than one that possesses more organisational impediments than stimulants.”

Proposition six was developed from the Componential Theory, as it looks at the effects of the organisational stimulants and impediments of the work environment on creativity. The proposition identified that both the positive and negative contextual variables can be present at the same time, but the overall perception of organisational creativity is determined by the type and strength of variable that is more dominant within the work environment. The proposed relationship between the nature of the contextual variables and creativity is illustrated in the findings presented in Figure 7.1. This figure shows that Frozen/Dry Vegetables, which does not support creativity, is plagued by a number of negative contextual elements that out number and over-power the few positive elements operating within the work environment. Therefore, although the majority of employees believed that they had a significant amount of control over the way that they carried out their jobs and the methods of communication to present their ideas; this was not enough to motivate them to act in a creative manner. This is because these potentially positive variables were over-shadowed by the fact that employees felt that if they did present an idea it would be disregarded, unfairly evaluated or they could be punished for speaking up later on down the track.

The opposite result was discovered at Frozen Meals, which found the strong presence of positive variables seemed to decrease the affect of the few negative variables that were present. For instance, it was felt that Team Leaders did not receive enough autonomy in their roles and they were not being consulted about decisions that directly affected the departments that they ran. Although this annoyed these employees, it did not deter them from presenting their ideas. This is because they had seen the positive changes to the work environment that the current management team were making, i.e. things getting

done, feedback and recognition for ideas, and believed that it would only be a matter of time before this problem would be addressed. Another example of a negative factor discovered was the considerable amount of time that it took to implement ideas that were presented. This was a major concern for employees who, in the past, would present their ideas and nothing would be done with them or it would take management a considerable amount of time to implement them. Now that the current management team are seen to provide continual feedback on the progress of ideas, this problem is no longer having such a significant influence on their decision to present their ideas. Instead, employees have accepted that getting things done does take time and it is just one of those things that management can not always control because they are limited by time and budget constraints.

Like the Componential Theory (Amabile, et al., 1996) and a number of other studies (Ford, 1996; Woodman, et al, 1993), this research has produced a list of contextual variables that have been shown to either have a positive or negative affect on organisational creativity. In one plant, the nature of the constructs was predominately positive, while in the other plant they were mainly negative. What differentiates this research from the other studies, however, is that it found that implementing a list of positive contextual variables is not enough to facilitate creativity. Management can not expect that providing their staff with a combination of such things as resources, autonomy and encouragement will automatically lead to employees being more creative. Rather, this research suggests that in order to operationalise variables that are identified as encouraging creativity, it is essential that initially trust is present.

### **7.3 The Missing Piece to the Creativity Puzzle**

The exploratory nature of this research was intended to see how Amabile's (1988) contextual variables create an environment conducive to creativity. This research method was also used to observe if any other elements of the work environment affected

employees' perceptions of organisational creativity. From the data collected in this research, it was discovered that the concept of trust also played a crucial role in organisational creativity. This intervening variable was over-looked in the initial literature review and research model in Chapter Two. Chapters Five and Six have used definitions of trust to be able to analyse the results. It is important to show where these definitions originated from and why they were used. What will follow is an overview of the literature on trust, narrowing it down to the definition that was utilised to analyse the data that was collected. From there, an examination of the creativity literature will be conducted to investigate the extent of research examining the relationship between trust and organisational creativity. This will illustrate shortcomings in the existing literature. The findings of this research will then be discussed and a new theoretical model will be presented. This model depicts the importance that trust plays in creating and maintaining organisational creativity.

### **7.3.1 Trust**

Trust is a complex concept that is relevant at both the individual and organisational levels. At the individual level, researchers have examined trust by looking at such things as individual expectations, beliefs and feelings. Research at the organisational level focuses on such things as compatible organisational culture and values, organised systems and structures (Hurmelina, et al., 2005). Researchers and practitioners from multiple disciplines acknowledge that the concept of trust is an important component of an effective organisation and plays a central part in the coordination of social actors' expectations and interactions (Cox, et al., 2006). Trust has been alluded to by many scholars as a fundamental ingredient or lubricant; an unavoidable dimension of social interaction (Gambetta, 1988). Without a certain degree of trust it is believed that it is almost impossible to establish or maintain successful organisational relations over extensive periods of time (Lane & Bachmann, 1998). The prolonged existence of trust relations is therefore important for the sustainability of positive social relations and continuous improvement within organisations (Cox, et al., 2006). In spite of its

importance, it is a multi-disciplinary concept that lacks a concise and universally accepted definition (Ashleigh & Stanton, 2001; Gallivan, 2001; Hosmer, 1995; Mayer, et al., 1995).

Hosmer's (1995) review of the literature on trust was utilised to develop a definition that was used to examine the two case studies. Hosmer's (1995) article reviews a wide variety of definitions of trust across multiple disciplines and categorises them into the contexts of: individual expectations, interpersonal relationships, economic exchanges, social structures, and ethical principles. This was useful as Hosmer (1995, p. 391) found that no matter the discipline that examined trust, most definitions reached a number of similar conclusions:

- Trust is generally expressed as an optimistic expectation on the part of an individual about the outcome of an event or the behaviour of a person. It remains an optimistic expectation when viewed in positive rather than negative terms.
- Trust generally occurs under the conditions of vulnerability to the interests of the individual and dependence upon the behaviour of other people.
- Trust is generally associated with willing, not forced, cooperation and with the benefits resulting from that cooperation.
- Trust is generally difficult to enforce.
- Trust is generally accompanied by an assumption of an acknowledged or accepted duty to protect the rights and interests of others.

Although these points are all important facets of trust, the central component of any definition of the concept is the condition of vulnerability (Gallivan, 2001; Zahra, et al., 2006). Being vulnerable implies that there is a significant potential for loss to exist for an individual (Mayer, et al., 1995). As a consequence, trust is closely related to risk and therefore without vulnerability to the risk of opportunism, there is no need for trust (Gallivan, 2001). A number of theorists defined this understanding of trust as a “psychological state comprising of the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another” (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt,

& Camerer, 1998, p. 395). Mayer, et al, (1995, p. 712) incorporate the idea of vulnerability into their definition of trust by stating that it is a “willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectations that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party.”

Mayer, et al, (1995) went further than a definition of trust to propose a model based upon the existing literature (See Figure 7.1), which identifies three key characteristics of the trustee: integrity, benevolence and ability. These factors work together to build the foundations for the development of trust or a lack there of it. The relationship between trust and the risk taking in relationship component depicted in the model, is the notion that whether or not a specific risk is taken by the trustor e.g. providing autonomy or additional resources, is influenced by the amount of trust for the trustee and the perception of risk inherent in the behaviour (Mayer, et al., 1995). Whether or not one is willing to take such a risk depends on the perceived level of risk and the context in which the action takes place in. Finally, Mayer, et al's, (1995) model incorporates a feedback loop which demonstrates that trust is not static, it is a dynamic phenomenon moving along a continuum; an ongoing process between two parties based on attitudes, expectations and behaviours (Ashleigh & Stanton, 2001). The model proposes that trust will increase or decrease along a continuum depending on the actions of the parties involved and the effects of their actions on their perceptions in the three critical areas (Addison, 1998). It was due to the dynamic nature of trust that it was defined as a process variable in Chapters Five and Six.

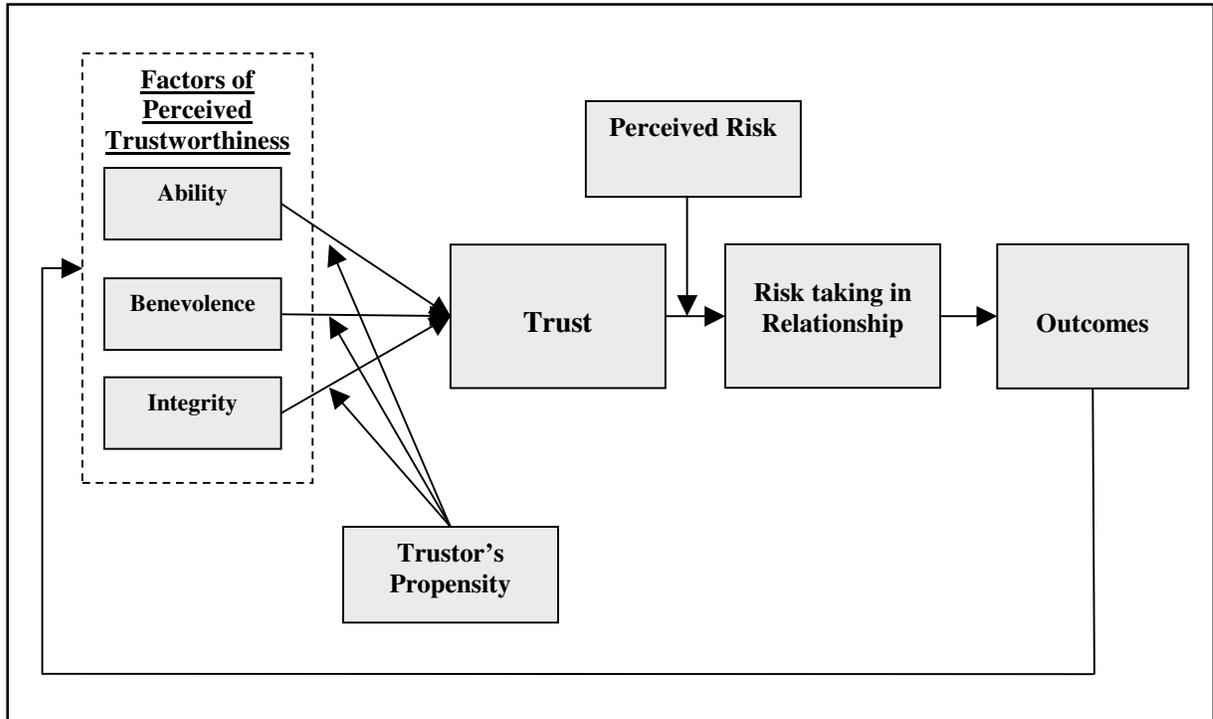
### **7.3.2 Trust and Creativity**

An examination of the creativity literature reveals that the concept of trust has been identified by a few academics as one of the key facets of an organisation's climate from which creativity may arise (Ahmed, 1998; Leavy, 2003; West, 2002). For example, Ford

(1996) identified trust, knowledge, communication skills and capabilities as the important factors of organisational creativity. Tan (1998) believed that there must be trust, respect for individual differences and open communication to support creativity. Leavy (2003) identified trust, openness and community across the organisation, as one of four key

**FIGURE 7.1**

**Proposed Model of Trust (Mayer, et al., 1995).**



climate-setting factors that developed an internal creative climate. West (2002) argued that it is a combination of good communication between team members, trust and group cohesiveness that are the key to team creativity and innovation. Although there are many authors that mention the importance of trust, there are very few studies that actually examine its role in the creation of a context conducive to creativity.

The creativity research that does mention trust, either focuses on investigating it as part of team dynamics (Amabile, et al., 1996; Isaksen, 2007) or on its effect on organisational

climate and the way that it contributes to creating higher or lower creativity (Ekvall, 1996; Isaksen, 2007; Scott & Bruce, 1994). Amabile, et al's (1996) work is an example of the literature that examines the influence that trust has on a team's ability to be creative. This study identified that creative work groups should incorporate a diversity of skills and consist of individuals who trust and communicate well with each other, challenge each other's ideas in constructive ways and are mutually supportive. Trust in this research was not examined separately; instead it was identified as one, of a set of important elements that made up their work group support variable. Isaksen & Lauer (2002) took a different approach as they utilised nine dimensions of the climate, known as the Situational Outlook Questionnaire (SOQ), to distinguish creative teams from non-creative teams. These are: challenge and involvement, freedom, trust and openness, idea time, playfulness and humour, idea support, debate, risk-taking, and a lack of conflict (Isaksen & Lauer, 2002). These factors measured people's perceptions of the climate of the workplace. Its particular emphasis is on how attitudes, feelings and behaviours support creativity and change (Ekvall, 1996). Based upon Ekvall's (1996) Creative Climate Questionnaire, the SOQ has been used in a number of studies to investigate the creative climates of teams and also organisations. In both research examples, they were once again more concerned about providing a list of variables that leads to either a creative team or creative work environment. I could find no research that focuses on the influence that trust has on variables of the organisational environment that affects creativity. The remainder of this section will address this gap in the literature by focusing on the relationship that exists between trust and organisational creativity.

Based upon Mayer, et al's, (1995) definition and model mentioned earlier, trust at the organisational level occurs when managers take a risk by believing that employees will not take advantage of any autonomy or resources given to them, and that their employees are capable of coming up with useful and creative ideas. Employees on the other hand, take a risk by believing in their managers and perceiving that they are safe and will not be exploited or ignored when they act in a creative manner. The central issue identified by researchers, is that one must feel emotionally safe to be able to act creatively and innovatively (Martins & Terblanche, 2003). Feeling safe is not the same as feeling

comfortable; in contrast it is predicted to facilitate risk (Edmondson, 1999). Emotional safety in organisational relationships was identified by Ekvall (1996) in his Creative Climate Questionnaire (CCQ), as a significant component of the trust dimension at both the team and organisational level. “When there is a level of trust, individuals can genuinely be open and frank with one another. People can count on each other for personal support. People have a sincere respect for one another. Where trust is missing, people are suspicious of each other, and therefore they closely guard themselves and their ideas (Isaksen, 2007, p. 6)”. This theory implies that managers and supervisors who engage in trustworthy behaviours increase the likelihood that employees will reciprocate this trust, which develops a relationship that supports creativity (Blau, 1964). Conversely, when employees’ trust in their supervisor or manager is low, they are less likely to be open with them and put forth creative ideas. Given the reciprocal nature of trust and mistrust, superiors, in this situation, are also likely to be secretive and be less transparent in their dealings with their subordinates (Lau & Buckland, 2001).

## **7.4 The Organisational Environment, Trust and Creativity**

The literature establishes that management’s willingness to take a risk to facilitate employee creativity and employees’ willingness to operationalise the variables that are provided to be creative, are both dependant upon the level of trust that the parties initially hold for one another (Bichard, 2000; Tan, 1998). Many academics have identified the importance of trust in the context of organisational creativity, yet very few studies have been conducted that focus upon this area. This research found that it was the establishment of trust, between different levels of management and between management and employees that had a significant affect on organisational creativity. Reina & Reina (1999) provide a similar argument that trust is the foundation of these organisational relationships, which leads to increases in creativity. If trust is not present, then it is imperative that management, in particular the most senior managers, try to build trust if

they wish to have any chance of operationalising the positive contextual variables that support a creative work environment. This theory is explained further through the presentation of two models.

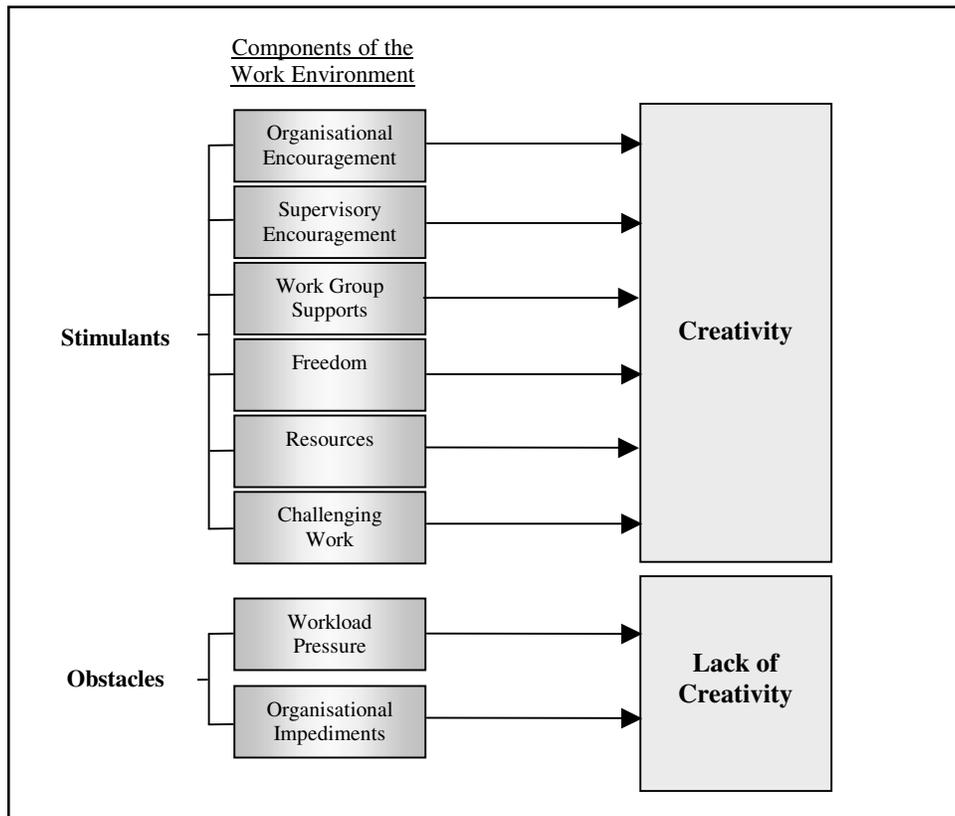
The important role that trust plays in supporting organisational creativity in a work environment is clearly depicted through the presentation of Figures 7.2 and 7.3. Figure 7.2, which is derived from the original research model developed in Chapter Three, is based on Amabile, et al's, (1996) theory that organisational stimulants lead to creativity whilst organisational obstacles create a lack of creativity. This is a simple concept to comprehend, however, from the findings of this exploratory research it was discovered that there is more than meets the eye. Trust was found to be a key intervening variable that is required if management are to successfully utilise the stimulants that activate creativity. As is shown in Figure 7.3, as long as trust is present, both organisational stimulants and obstacles can exist within a work environment at the same time and the organisation will still be capable of encouraging employee creativity. In this situation, trust between key parties can decrease the detrimental affect that any contextual obstacles may present within a work environment. This is because trust provides employees with the perception that they are still safe enough to challenge the system, express their ideas and utilise the other positive variables provided (Reina & Reina, 1999). When a lack of trust exists, an organisation that provides a work environment that possesses stimulating variables will not be able to facilitate creativity and as a result a lack of creativity will be present within this work environment. This occurs because employees become suspicious of managements intentions when they are supplying such positive variables as autonomy and organisational encouragement and this impedes on their willingness to act in a creative manner. The cross-analysis of the two plants that follows provides evidence that supports the relationships depicted Figure 7.3.

Frozen Meals provides an example of how trust intervenes to facilitate creativity in a work environment that contains both organisational stimulants and obstacles. At Frozen Meals trust was seen to exist between the different levels of the organisation. The

behaviours and attitude of the Production Centre Manager were believed to be the key reason that trust had been established within this work environment. He established trust with his management team by providing an environment where each party could be open with each other. These managers' supported each other in their roles and had a sincere

**FIGURE 7.2**

**Amabile's Model of the Influence of the Organisational Environment on Creativity**

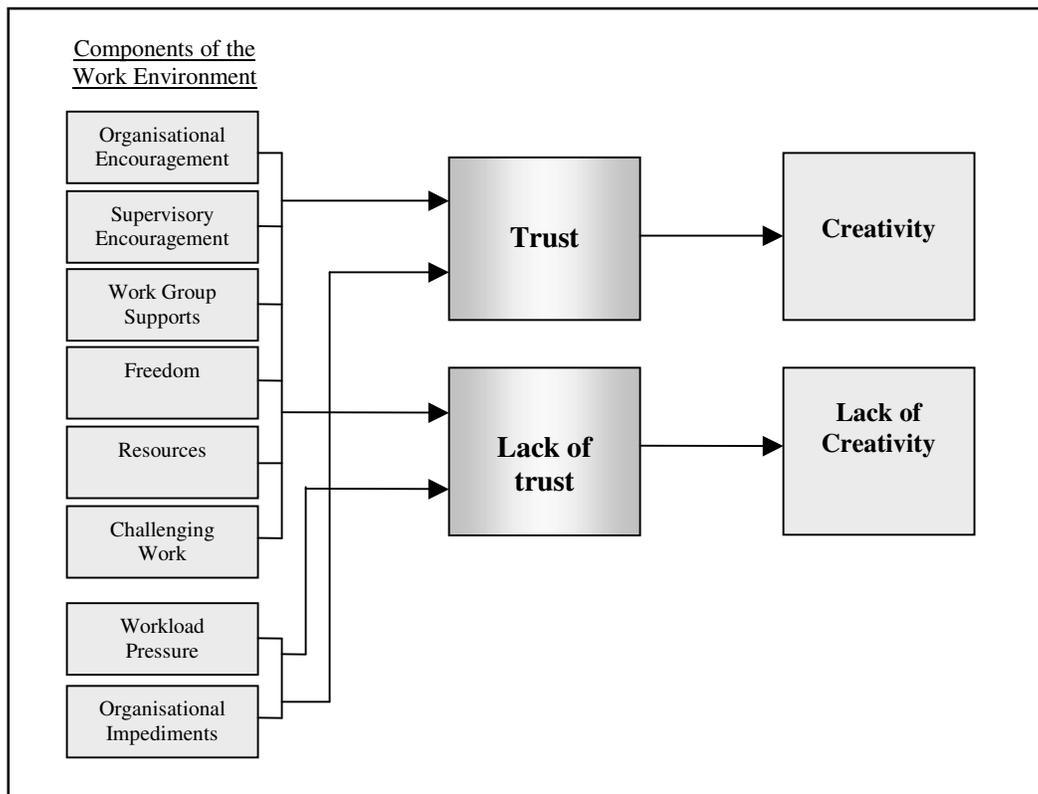


respect for one another. This level of trust did not end at the management level, as these same characteristics were found to be operating between management and their employees. Managements' trust for their employees was based on their belief that they had the ability to be creative. Consequently, management were known to preach to their employees in meetings that they wanted them to present their ideas. Management reinforced that they were genuinely interested in employees' ideas by regularly

discharging their obligations, which produced such benefits as recognising employees' ideas and getting things done. These behaviours met employees' expectations of how management should act if they really wanted to facilitate them to be creative. In the eyes of these employees' management was acting with integrity and in a benevolent manner. Consequently, employees had a considerable amount of trust for the management team and perceived that they were safe and supported enough to present their ideas within this

**FIGURE 7.3**

**Proposed New Model of the Influence of the Organisational Environment on Creativity**



work environment. The effect of trust in this environment is shown by employees' willingness to take the risk to present their ideas, even though the work environment still had problems with negative contextual elements, such as poor communication, things not getting done and a lack of autonomy.

Frozen/Dry Vegetables provides an example of how a lack of trust intervened with the components of the work environment construct to create the perception amongst employees that they were not being creative. At Frozen/Dry Vegetables there was a lack of trust operating between different levels of management, and management and employees. The Operations Manager demonstrated inconsistencies in the level of trust that he showed towards members of his management team. A number of managers were trusted to carry out their jobs with minimal interference, while other managers found that they were consistently micro-managed. The managers that were micro-managed in their roles had low motivation to present new ideas, as they believed that their ideas would just get thrown back at them. A lack of trust from a number of managers towards the Production Manager was prevalent, as he behaved in a manner that these managers found to be unacceptable. This lack of trust was not only coming from the managers who were micro-managed, but the Operation Manager's behaviours and attitudes towards some managers did not meet the expectations of other managers within the plant. The lack of trust that existed between the Operations Manager and a number of his managers was found to be spiralling down the hierarchy. This was the result of the negative attitudes and behaviours of other key managers that were ignoring or exploiting employees who presented their ideas or voiced opinions.

As a consequence of the lack of trust that existed within Frozen/Dry Vegetables, the positive organisational stimulants that were provided to employees, such as the considerable amount of control employees felt that they had in their jobs and managements' open door policy, were seen in a negative light by many members of staff. This is because they felt that although management were telling them to present their ideas, in reality the work environment did not genuinely support them to be creative. Employees' lack of trust towards their managers led them to believe that they were not being creative within this plant, as they perceived that their work environment did not support creativity.

## 7.5 Senior Management's Influence on Creativity

The literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two established the theory that the crucial role managers from all levels play in shaping a work climate that supports and nurtures creativity, was the result of formally communicated rules, policies or regulations, behaviours, practices and styles of leadership (Anonymous, 2001; Judge, et al, 1997; Seithi, et al., 2001). More specifically the theory suggests that the basic orientation of an organisation towards innovation, as well as the supports for creativity, come directly from the behaviours of the highest levels of management (Amabile, 1996; K. A. Pervaiz, 1998). From the results gathered at both plants, Senior Managers, in this case the Operations Manager and the Production Centre Manager were identified as playing a substantial role in laying the foundations for the levels of trust that is present. Their behaviours were found to be the key to determining whether or not a work environment facilitated creativity.

The findings from this research have shown that a Senior Manager may say that they want a creative work environment, but unless they are prepared to try and build a trusting relationship with their employees, any effort to provide positive contextual variables to support this initiative will be futile. This was the scenario occurring at Frozen/Dry Vegetables. The Operations Manager had stated that he wanted to establish a creative work environment, but ultimately he was unable to adapt his own behaviours or provide the contextual cues that would support this initiative. As a result, managers and employees did not trust him enough, which lead them to believe that they were not being creative within this work environment. Conversely, the Operation Centre Manager at Frozen Meals also wanted to support creativity, but what differentiated his approach from the other Senior Manager, is that he did provide employees with the positive contextual cues that support this initiative. More importantly, he recognised the significance of gaining the trust and respect of his employees. Consequently, this manager aligned his behaviours with the initiatives of getting employees involved and presenting their ideas, which was seen to establish trusting relationships with his staff. In this situation,

employees perceived that they were given provided with a work environment that supported creativity.

As the results show, the behaviours of Senior Management in both plants played a crucial role in determining whether or not the key variables would be available to facilitate organisational creativity. These findings not only provided support for the literature that was reviewed, but it provides an answer to the research question that was proposed: “How do the management functions create the stimulants and impediments of an organisations environment that affects organisational creativity?” Although the answer does not focus on the management functions, it does show that these managers are the key to establishing trust within the work environment, which has been recognised as the key variable that lays the foundations to creativity.

## **7.6 Summary**

Chapter Seven compared and discussed the findings from this research with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. From this, there were three key findings that were presented. (1) Amabile, et al’s, (1996) theory that a number of variables stimulate creativity, while others impede upon it, was supported. (2) Trust was found to be the key intervening variable, the foundation, from which a creative context must be built upon. (3) The Senior Manager, in the case of this research the Operations Manager and Production Centre Manager, played a crucial role in providing the contextual variables that facilitate creativity. From these three key findings, Chapter Eight will look at discussing the implications that they have on management. It will then go onto highlighting the weaknesses in the research and suggesting further research opportunities that may remedy some of these problems.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

Chapter Seven compared and discussed the findings from both plants with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The analysis was utilised to support the findings of the research and the refined theoretical model that was presented. Chapter Eight will provide a brief summary of the study's main findings from Chapter Seven, discussing the implications that they have on the existing literature. It will then go on to highlight the weaknesses in the research and suggest further research opportunities that may remedy some of these problems.

#### **8.2 Overview of the Research**

The study begun by reviewing the importance of facilitating creativity within today's dynamic business environment. Chapter Two then proceeded to provide a comprehensive literature review on individual and organisational creativity drawn from a number of disciplines. From this, understandings of the key organisational variables that facilitate and obstruct creativity were provided. The second section reviewed the literature on management functions and the influence that this had on creativity. A conceptual model of the theorised relationships between the management functions, organisational environment and creativity was then presented, which outlined the scope of the research that was to follow.

Following this, Chapter Three built on the basic research model by presenting a research question and research model that depicts the relationships between the key contextual

variables that were investigated. Chapter Four described the qualitative methodology and tools used to gather and analyse the evidence required to address the research question and the needs of this exploratory type of research. Finally, the data gathered from the research was presented in Chapters Five and Six, and the results were discussed in Chapter Seven.

### **8.3 Overview of Results and Discussion**

Chapters Five and Six presented the data gathered from the qualitative research that was conducted at Frozen/Dry Vegetables and Frozen Meals. These chapters provide the background of the respective plants and outline elements of the work environment that were found to either stimulate or inhibit employees' perceptions of organisational creativity. In both case studies trust, or a lack of it, was the unexpected intervening variable found to be responsible for the work environments operating at both plants. Chapter Seven compared and discussed the findings presented in the previous two chapters with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. As a consequence of trust surfacing as an unanticipated intervening variable not explored in Chapter Two, a literature review on the concept was undertaken. From this, a new theoretical model was developed and the main findings of the research were presented.

### **8.4 Summary of Main Findings**

The following provides a summary of the study's main findings:

1. Positive contextual variables similar to the ones found in Frozen Meals: good communication, things getting done, adequate rewards and recognition and autonomy contributed to a work environment where employees' perceived that they were being encouraged and supported to act in a creative manner. A work environment laden

with negative variables, as was found in Frozen/Dry Vegetables: over-emphasis on the status quo, lack of autonomy, lack of sufficient rewards and recognition and poor communication, contributed to a work environment where employees' felt that they were not supported, nor encouraged to act creatively in their roles. This study did not produce a set of contextual variables that exactly mirrored the one's presented by Amabile, et al's, (1996), but the contextual variables found in this research were very similar. This supports Amabile, et al's, (1996) Componential Theory and its assumption that certain positive contextual variables stimulate creativity, while other negative contextual variables impede upon it. A number of other studies (Ford, 1996; Woodman, et al., 1993) also produced lists of similar contextual variables that also supported this theory.

2. Frozen/Dry Vegetables, which did not facilitate employee creativity successfully, was plagued by a number of negative contextual elements that over-powered the few stimulating elements operating within the work environment. The opposite result was discovered at Frozen Meals, as a strong presence of stimulating variables seemed to decrease any effect that the few negative variables had, creating a creative work environment. These findings provide support for Proposition 6 presented in Chapter Three: "A work environment that possesses greater organisational stimulants than organisational impediments will encourage a more creative work environment than one that possess greater organisational impediments than stimulants."
3. Trust was found to be the key intervening variable, the necessary foundation, from which a creative context could be built.. The establishment of trust between different levels of management and between management and employees had the most significant effect on organisational creativity. This was illustrated at Frozen Meals where a significant level of trust existed between the different levels of the organisation. The effect of trust was shown by employees' willingness to present their ideas, even though the work environment still had problems with obstructing contextual elements, such as poor communication, things getting done and lack of autonomy. At Frozen/Dry Vegetables the opposite scenario was occurring, as there was a lack of trust operating between different levels of management, and management and employees. As a consequence of the lack of trust, employees felt

that even though they were provided with a number of organisational stimulants, they were not able to be creative within their work environment.

4. In both case studies the Senior Manager played a crucial role in providing not only the contextual variables that facilitate or impede upon organisational creativity, but they also were the key to determining the level of trust that existed within the work environment. This finding not only supported arguments that were reviewed in the existing creativity literature, but it addressed the research question that had been proposed: “How do the management functions create the stimulants and impediments of an organisation’s environment that affects organisational creativity?” Although the answer does not focus on the particular management functions that were identified, it does show that these higher level managers’, through the provision of organisational variables and the establishment of trust, are the most influential party within an organisation that is linked to laying the foundations from which creativity is born.

## **8.5 Implications of Findings on the Existing Creativity Literature**

This research has added to the existing creativity literature by identifying trust as the key intervening variable in the facilitation of organisational creativity. The current organisational creativity literature based on work from such researchers as Amabile (1997), Woodman, et al, (1993) and Ford (1996), provide prescriptions of the necessary contextual variables that are believed to lead to organisational creativity. Providing a list of stimulating variables, such as autonomy and resources which encourage creativity, is well and good. However, it was found in both case studies here that without some degree of trust operating between management and employees, such contextual factors are of little or no use to managers that want to encourage creativity within their organisations. This is because employees who do not trust their managers become suspicious of their managers’ intentions when they are supplying such positive variables and this impedes on their willingness to act in a creative manner. It was found that building trust within an

organisation must start from the most senior manager and work its way down the hierarchy. It is from the behaviours of these managers that employees determine whether they can trust their senior manager or not. This finding is similar to Amabile (1996) and Pervaiz (1998) theories that the basic supports for creativity come directly from the behaviours of the highest levels of management. However, these authors focus mainly on senior management facilitating creativity through the provision of stimulating contextual variables. This research also found this to be true, but this study discovered that it is the behaviours of these manager's that shapes the degree of trust within a work environment. The significance of trust and its role in facilitating creativity has been substantially underestimated and at times overlooked in the existing literature.

## **8.6 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

The main contribution of this research is that it proposes that providing organisational stimulants is not going to guarantee the facilitation of creativity, if trust is not present. The modified creativity model is a step forward in recognising the key role that trust plays in establishing a creative work environment. However, several limitations in the current research suggest avenues to be explored in future research.

The first of these limitations is the question of generalisation. The purpose of this research was to explore the work environment and organisational creativity within a New Zealand context. Yet, this research only focused a single New Zealand company from the manufacturing sector. Caution must therefore be used in generalising the results of the research, not only towards other manufacturing companies, but to all other New Zealand organisations. In addition, there was also a significant difference between the characteristics of the two case studies. Plant 1 was a large factory that employed around 310 employees, while Plant 2, which employed 44 to 60 staff, was not a stand alone factory, but a single division of a larger plant. The difference in the size of the two plants' could have a significant influence on the results that were gathered. For instance, because

of the small number of employees at Frozen Meals, it operated quite a flat organisational structure that naturally had fewer levels of management. This characteristic may have made it easier for this plant to facilitate creativity. On the other hand, Frozen/Dry Vegetables employed a larger number of employees, which required more levels of management to organise the staff and as a result the plant operated a more bureaucratic structure. Operating under a bureaucratic structure has been identified in the literature as suppressing creativity, as employees under this type of organisation structure are controlled more by the system and have less freedom in their roles (Sharma, 1999). To overcome these two distinctive limitations, it is suggested that future investigations sample a larger number of organisations, across various industries, with similar organisational characteristics e.g. similar numbers of staff, similar organisational structures, etc.

This research was conducted at the two plants, over a two month period. However, due to resource constraints the researcher could only spend one week at each plant collecting the relevant data that was required. Although this satisfied the requirements of this thesis, it would be beneficial to carry out a longitudinal study of the two case studies. This would present further research with rich data that would provide findings that would either support the conclusions of this research or may uncover new data, which the researcher was not able to capture in the short time period. The ideal scenario would to follow up with the two case studies in a couple of year's time to see if anything has changed within their organisations and if so, what has caused these changes.

This study utilised an input measure of creativity, which focused on employee perceptions of creativity within an organisation. For several reasons, this has been one of the most commonly used research methods in the field of measuring creativity in organisational environments (Sundgren, et al., 2005). Although this was a suitable measure for this exploratory type of study, there was no measure of the actual level of creative output that existed within both case studies. The literature provides two output measures that are used to determine the level of creativity within an organisation. These

include the amount of R&D spending that a company allocates per year and the number of ideas that are generated within a company over a period of time. Utilising the number of creative ideas generated for this study was not suitable as neither case officially or unofficially records the ideas that were generated by their employees. In terms of R&D spending, this particular organisation did not have an R&D department within either of the plants. Instead, they had product development departments in place. However, the majority of products that originated out of both the frozen and dry foods sections of the departments were driven predominantly by marketing, rather than pure research. This again makes this output measure of the level of creativity within this organisation incompatible with this research.

To overcome the limitation of not having a measure in place to gauge the level of creativity that exists within the case studies, it is suggested that again, a longitudinal study is implemented where the organisation under investigation is asked to document creative ideas put forward by their staff members over a twenty-four month period. By utilising this method, a comparison can be made between the two plants over two years. From the ideas that are collected, it would be the researcher's task to determine how many ideas were deemed to be creative and which ones were not. To carry out this task, a definition of creativity would have to be developed. With a general idea of the level of creativity of the organisation, the researcher would then utilise the input measure of employees' perceptions of creativity and see if it correlates with the findings of the output measure of creativity. Although some ideas may come under the radar of the documentation process utilised by an organisation, the measure would still give some indication of the level of creativity that exists.

Finally, the results and suggestions that have been derived from the research are considered to be exploratory and preliminary. There is much more research that is required that develops and uses more specific research instruments to systematically collect and examine data relating to the relationships between the organisational

environment, trust and creativity. This would be useful in confirming the relationships found in this research and also help in providing further clarity.

## **8.7 Summary**

Managers, in particular senior management, who are interested in fostering creativity within their organisations, can do so not only by paying attention to what sort of individuals they hire. As is suggested in this research, they can further foster that creativity by paying particular attention to the environments they craft for these potentially creative individuals (Amabile, et al., 1996). The purpose of this research was to explore the nature of the relationships between the work environment and creativity, which would contribute to the existing theories of organisational creativity. It was not the intention of this research to follow other researchers and develop further lists of organisational variables that are supposed to generate creativity. As the findings of this research suggest, it is not enough for organisations to provide employees with a list of organisational stimulants and believe that this will be enough to facilitate creativity. Organisational creativity is complicated by the fact that it is affected by the social dynamics operating between key parties within an organisation. Consequently, it is characterised by informal relationships, freedom and resource allocation which ultimately requires that a level of trust exists between key parties. It is senior management's responsibility to ensure that such a work environment is created. These managers are only able to build trust within their organisations by acting with benevolence, integrity and demonstrating that they are committed to employee creativity. Due to organisational economic pressures, fewer resources and tighter profit margins, the trust issue for managers becomes even more vital if they want to reap the benefits of encouraging organisational creativity.

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## **APPENDIX 1: EMAIL TO CASE STUDIES OUTLINING THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS RESEARCH**

### **Case study of Organisational Creativity at Heinz Watties**

Innovation is one of the keys to cutting edge performance in organisations. Creativity is the precursor to innovation and little is known about the conditions that encourage it within organisations. This research aims to conduct an in-depth study with an organisation known to be both creative and innovative.

The method will be to interview and observe key people at Heinz Watties at all levels in an attempt to capture the salient drivers and roadblocks of creativity in an organisation. This will entail interviewing around thirty people for half to one hour each over a period of about a month, both in Christchurch and in Hastings.

The information should prove useful to working managers and enable them to gain a better understanding of the creative dynamics in the organisation. The information gained will also contribute to the theoretical literature and increase understanding of the processes of creativity to assist management education.

All information collected will be completely confidential, both internally and externally. The names of people involved and the name of the company will be concealed, unless otherwise approved by Heinz Watties.

### **Why has Heinz Watties Been Selected for this Study?**

When endeavouring to investigate the complexities of organisational creativity at an in-depth level, it is sensible to choose a case study in which the process of interest is clearly

observable. It is for this reason that Heinz Watties has been selected as the desired case study, as this firm possess key characteristics that align with the requirements of the study; that Heinz Watties is considered to be an outstanding local company at the forefront of new ideas and technologies in the food industry, and is an organisation that is continually striving to be more creative and innovative. These characteristics make Heinz Watties an extremely desirable, as well as suitable case to examine how creativity and innovation are managed in a dynamic and fast moving environment.

### **Key Benefits to Heinz Watties**

Heinz Watties will receive a condensed version of the final report with the key learning points identified, accompanied by conclusions and recommendations for future action. In addition, a presentation of the final results of the research will be made available to the company, either on site or at Lincoln University. It is anticipated that the report and presentation will prove to be of great value to the managers in the organisation, by providing insight into, and guidelines for future action.

We would like to thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you.

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**APPENDIX 2: TABLE OF TRUST STATEMENTS MADE AT THE FROZEN/DRY VEGETABLES PLANT**

| <b>LEVEL OF TRUST WITHIN FROZEN/DRY VEGETABLES</b>  |  |
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| <b>Positive Statements (27)</b>   | <b>Negative Statements (67)</b>  |
| <p><u>Trust Between Peers (2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think the safety meetings do provide a safe environment to present your ideas. The best thing is that in those meeting there is usually a lot of people that will support you. They usually say, “Oh jeez that would make a big difference.”</li> <li>• When we’re at a meeting, if you bring up an idea it’s probably not only you that’s being thinking about it. There are other people that agree with you and they speak up about it. So get a lot more support then if you presented it by yourself. With the support from others, you’ve probably got a better chance of succeeding there.</li> </ul> | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Peers (7)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a lot of tension between people mainly within the departments. People do not support others, as they are trying to guard their jobs. For instance, when I was asked to pick up the slack of another employee, he felt as though his job was being threatened and he was not happy. This is because he realises that it is going to show up how much little work he is doing. So, there’s a bit of come and go, but I don’t care because at the end of the day it’s him that’s going to get bitten and not me.</li> <li>• It’s typical of this place, as long as the work is getting done those people are left alone. Then all of a sudden something happens or something changes, like me coming into another department or into that same department, and all of a sudden “you’re threatening me, you’re moving into my territory.”</li> <li>• Some people around here are a bit long in the tooth. They’ve got the stage where they are a little bitter towards other people. So no matter what you do, these people don’t think its good enough. There’s always going to be someone who’s going to whinge.</li> <li>• I found that there is conflict within the ingredient handlers. There’s a lot of arguing and a lot of the older one’s that have done it for like 7 years, expect people to just come in and just</li> </ul> |

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|  | <p>know it all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people have been here too long. It's just a nine to five job, or a six to two job or a two to ten job, or whatever it maybe for them. I don't care, I come in I get paid and go home. But they don't stop to think that if they don't do their jobs properly they might not have a job tomorrow. That same mentality also damages the likes of me that tries and puts ideas forward, because they are so negative. But what can you do, you can't fire them and you'll never get them to change their attitudes.</li> <li>• Some people are not just intimidated by their managers, but even by their own peers. They're intimidated by them because verbally they abuse people.</li> <li>• Some people won't present their ideas. They will just go "oh well I won't." Or a lot of people have ideas but never do or say anything about it. They are like this because they are worried about what someone else might say about it, or they think that other people might laugh at them and go "oh no, that will never work." Just those sorts of things.</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Trust Between Employees and Supervisors (2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are not like "oh go away don't talk to us." I think that we have a very good relationship with all our staff and we're very open and approachable. I know that if our staffs feel that there's any way that things could be done better they will ask us.</li> <li>• We've got two charge-hands and a manager and they're all approachable.</li> </ul> | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Employees and Supervisors (10)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not everyone's ideas are fairly evaluated. Some people come up with weird ideas that they just don't like, or they just don't like the person that is presenting them.</li> <li>• I'd hate to be on the bad side of them, I wouldn't like that. I mean two of them are cool; they're fun, they let things slide. But there's two other's that are just terrible.</li> <li>• There are big problems that happen here between people because not enough rules are being enforced.</li> <li>• I wouldn't go to the boys because they are just like "yeah whatever, it's not our job." The female supervisor, she's really</li> </ul>   |

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|  | <p>cool, you can talk to her about anything and she also puts me in my place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One aspect I dislike about my job is the bosses. Sometimes I find that they don't know when to draw the line, whether it's work or personal. It's just the way that they talk and some of the things that they say. They will talk about other staff and it makes you think when you walk away, do they say the same about me? It makes you question whether you are doing your job right. They need to be put on a leash a bit.</li><li>• There is a lot of bitching and the bosses aren't going to nip it in the ass. A lot of time they join in with it. It just makes it a bit harder, more pressure. It is almost as if everyone is waiting for you to make a mistake and jump on you. You don't want to come to work half of the time. It just gets too much when people go around and pick out little faults. You just can't be bothered with it.</li><li>• I just don't feel that a lot of my workers are up to presenting ideas at the moment.</li><li>• No, I don't think big problems within our department are discussed too much with the lower level workers. This is basically because they probably have no comprehension of the process involved from A to B. They know the end bit, what they do, but they don't have any idea what's actually happening in-between. The things that go wrong in our department, they wouldn't be able to solve.</li><li>• I'm pretty sure that we tell our staff that anything that they see, that they think could be an improvement, to come and tell us about it. I'm sure that I'd say that to some of our staff, not all of them though, it pretty much depends on who they are. You just know the type of staff that you have, some aren't and some are able to provide useful ideas.</li></ul> |
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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's not so much that I wouldn't encourage everyone. It's just that some people have more knowledge of processes and have ideas. I guess that you may encourage them a little bit more because you know their ideas could be quite valuable to you, to the business. Whereas some just come in and just clock in, clock out. But you get all that from talking to your staff. You learn which one's are like that and which ones are not.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><u>Trust Between Employees and Managers (18)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you do your job, they leave you alone. I've never had any problems with them. Just do what you're employed to do and you're pretty much safe.</li> <li>• Managers always come and ask if we can pack new products, and how we can pack them. I mean that's the thing, they come to you and say "can we do this and how can we do that."</li> <li>• I feel free to ask our managers questions and I tell them that we've got some ideas. That is not just middle management, but top management as well. I don't have any problems with them.</li> <li>• I feel that management does encourage me to come up with new ideas. That maybe in safety meetings or just an expectation that they have of their staff.</li> <li>• I've had a conversation with the Operations Manager here. It's a long story, my old man use to work here. There was a lot of talk about me just being like my old man, people bagging on me. The Operations Manager pulled me into his office and just said "look this is what has been going on, I've tried to stop it." That was good, that engendered a bit of trust and stuff. He didn't have to do that, so that's certainly a start. But whether you can do that with everyone, I don't know.</li> <li>• My manager recognises the ideas that I put forward, and it just makes you feel really good in terms of: "yes, I'm not doing this</li> </ul> | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Employees and Managers (35)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would go up to management and present my ideas. Whether they listen or not is another matter, they just go "oh not you again."</li> <li>• A lot of the problem around here is that they think that the average Joe Blogg on the bottom rung is stupid. They don't stop to think that half of those people have got a brain up here. But because they work sorting peas or beans or carrots or whatever it is, they're stupid. They're not stupid, but half of management treat them like they're stupid. That's not how you should be treating them because they've all got brains and they've all got ideas.</li> <li>• A lot of them are intimidated to put their ideas forward, they're too frightened.</li> <li>• I think you could go and talk to someone if you had an idea. Whether they'd listen or not is probably another show. But you could always give it a go.</li> <li>• I'd say this is my view coming through, that employees are saying that things don't get done. They've got an idea for an improvement and they take it to the boss and it doesn't happen. That's what I imagine might be coming through.</li> <li>• That comes back to that ownership, because what the good boss should say is "hey thanks for the ideas go and see that</li> </ul> |

for nothing.” It’s good to see that you got what you wanted and everyone’s happy.

- It’s a nice relaxed here; you don’t feel stupid saying something to management.
- Our managers say to us that if we have any ideas or suggestions, put them forward and they’ll be listened to. If they can be dealt with they would be, which is good.
- My manager is good at encouraging me and listening to any thoughts that I have. He’ll either tell me then and there that it won’t go any further than this. I would expect a reasonable answer and he usually gives it to me. He’s a good manager that I do trust.
- Well seeing that our managers are prepared to help you if they can, makes you want to put your ideas forward because you feel that you will be listened to.
- My manager listens, I guess because he’s relatively new. There’s one or two things that he has brought up that I’ve had discussions with him about. I’ve said “well this is what I think” and he has agreed. But some of these things can’t be put in place in two seconds, so it’s a bit early to comment directly on my manager on that. At this stage it looks like he will think things through and if he thinks it’s the right thing he will do it. If not, he’ll go away and come back with another suggestion.
- There is definitely freedom of speech within this company.
- In the Health and Safety meetings the manager asks if you have any ideas. We know that if we have an idea we can either present it in those meetings or go up to him later.
- We are supported by our peers and managers in those meetings. I wouldn’t be afraid of saying something there.
- Management is quite happy to take new ideas and have a look at them; they’re quite approachable.

person.” At some point of time he’s got to say “thanks for that we’re going to investigate it.” Once they’ve investigated it he should tell them that “thanks for the idea we’re going to do it” or “thanks for the idea but it’s just not practical for these reasons.” If you did that they’d be happy. But we don’t do that here and you’ll probably find that people are not happy with that.

- My manager knows how hard we work, the charge-hands don’t. They think we sit around all day fluffing around. All they can see is that you guys stand around all day and have long smoko’s. They don’t really see the hard work we do.
- Three weeks ago I asked a charge-hand about getting an extra person in our department to take of some of the pressure off. He looked into it and nothings happened. Then I asked him again yesterday about putting someone else on and he said “oh yeah you know it might happen.” But I don’t think it will, which is really quite depressing.
- I don’t think there is any manager that isn’t approachable here, but whether it will go in one ear and out the other, that’s the other question.
- Every so often you will hear someone slagging you off or this person said that. This does affect you in the fact that you think “well why should I be bothered doing this? Why didn’t they just come up to me?” A lot of them are probably your bosses that do it too. So then you start saying “well if you’re not prepared to come up to my face and say something, why should I bother myself.” But I mean you’re there to do a job and you’re paid to do a job, but when people do things that they shouldn’t, it affects you in a negative way.
- You go around and you think “oh that would be a good idea.” But when you get into the situation where the company is sort

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are supportive of people around here and they seem to look after people pretty well. If I had an idea I wouldn't hold back on it.</li> <li>• They encourage you to look for new ideas to make your job easier.</li> <li>• In the technical and EHS team they are definitely fed information, because we rely on those guys to come up with initiatives.</li> </ul> | <p>of slugging you off, you're like why should I bother? Yeah and it is a shame. I like to tinker and fiddle, so I see things where this could be better this way, or we can do it this way. But I've never really pushed because I'm doing them a favour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The thing that would drive me to present my ideas is working in an environment where you are liked. Not so much liked, but you are respected or your opinions are respected. I mean if you don't have the Timaruvian perspective, you're seen as an outsider, not company orientated.</li> <li>• I think people need to realise that everyone has got a difference of opinion, I don't hold a grudge. If I'm standing up and saying "hey I don't think this is acceptable," then people should be respectful of your opinion. They might not like it and I don't expect you to like it all the time, but respect the fact that the person is prepared to stand up and say something. You have to have that communication going back and forth where you're not stubbed in the back. This obviously engenders a freer environment where you can discuss things, and you would be more prepared to like say "hey, why don't we do this?"</li> <li>• The closer you work with someone the more you'd be prepared to talk to them. But I have found that the higher you go, when you slip up or you say something that they don't think is acceptable, they're going to punish you. Whether it is punished at the time or punished by a mission later on down the track.</li> <li>• Rules that are made are constantly broken.</li> <li>• You can't have a free exchange of views without them sort of pencilling in their little notebook...trouble maker. I find that quite strange.</li> </ul> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I wouldn't help [management] out because the next time that you do something wrong, they'll jump on you and they will. They won't treat you the way that they should treat you.</li><li>• Maybe it's just the way that I've been treated over the years that I think that "I'm not going to help you. It's only going to be a while before you sharpen your ends."</li><li>• I've interacted with management, various managers and they're all the same. They are nice to your face but when push comes to shove you'll be down road. They don't like people standing up and saying "I told you this two weeks ago, why the hell has it not been done?"</li><li>• I've been outside of this Plant and worked in different places, but there's nothing approaching the amount of animosity generated in a place like this.</li><li>• I feel that I can present my ideas here, but it has cost me in the past, and it continues to cost me so I won't do it.</li><li>• I think in general [the company] is good with systems and written procedures "this is the way it should be," but it never really happens like that. It's all bullshit, it's all talk, there's no real action behind it. It's just management bullshit as far as I'm concerned.</li><li>• There wouldn't be any factors required to encourage me to present my ideas. It would be a trust thing. Trust takes time.</li><li>• Whether you can get a free exchange of ideas in an environment like this I don't know.</li><li>• I think that they feel that if you just brush it under the carpet the problem will just go away.</li><li>• You never see anything happen. You don't know if your idea is in progress or they've just gone into bin thirteen. You don't know. That is probably, the biggest down fall of this place; they don't tell you "oh we're looking at doing this, this, this</li></ul> |
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|  | <p>and this.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sometimes you get trodden on for saying something to one person, but if you said it to someone else they may be like “oh yeah that’s a good idea.” It depends entirely on who you say it to. You know the one’s that you can’t say it to. Oh I mean I’ve got a new boss he seems prepared to listen, and prepared to get on and get things going. So I’m prepared to help and if he was to slide back into the way that the other was, well forget it. I’ll just carry on, do my job and go home.</li><li>• I wouldn’t approach just anyone here with my ideas, because I don’t have the respect for some of them to do that.</li><li>• I would not trust some senior managers with my ideas because you know that it would get spun back, and six months down the track your ideas come in and it’s got somebody else’s name attached to it. It’s happened to me so I don’t; some of them know I wouldn’t. Others just don’t have my respect because of their attitude, the way that they talk to people, the way that they treat certain things and situations, that sort of thing. Others I wouldn’t because they’ve just shrugged their shoulders and not do anything.</li><li>• I don’t think that manager dealt with the problem properly, and that fuels discontent within the employees. It fuels bad feelings and it fuels disharmony amongst everybody.</li><li>• I wouldn’t be stupid enough to put myself into that situation in the first place. But then sometimes you’ve only got to open your mouth and you are in that situation. So you just don’t know, you could be here today and gone tomorrow. But I just guess it’s the run of the mill here.</li><li>• If I was an average Joe working down the back and I went and presented an idea to some managers, I don’t think it would be fairly evaluated. Unless you fill in all the correct paper work</li></ul> |
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|  | <p>and it goes through the correct channels nothing will be done. If [a particular member of my staff] had an idea and he went to [a particular team-leader] and said “I would like this kind of thing done,” it would be fobbed off. That would happen to a lot of people’s ideas around here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Two senior managers] in particular have got big areas with a large number of people. They definitely have this attitude that people aren’t interested in making a difference. They just want to come earn their money and go home. That’s just bullshit. There might be one or two that are like that but most people want to do a good job.</li> <li>• You know that you could be shot down for presenting your ideas, so some people that come up with a great idea have trouble taking that to higher authorities to present.</li> <li>• Someone actually filled out one of those [improvement forms] and after three months they still had no reply to what happened. But then some of that could be deemed to be personal, because that person has a tendency to bring things up in a big meeting, rather than having quite word to the manager.</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Trust Between Supervisors and Managers (2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [Our manager] has a lot of trust in us, which means that if there is an issue we better make sure that we get our facts straight. Because if there’s problem it is our job to find out why we have got a problem, identify the problem or hazard or whatever it might be, then deal with it to the best of our abilities. As long as we have got all the facts he is quite happy.</li> <li>• I designed a wee machine just to make things easier for kneeling down. I went and presented that to my manager, he’s quite good about stuff like that. Whereas other people I’d just</li> </ul> | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Supervisors and Managers (6)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people I’d by-pass, there’s no point seeing some people.</li> <li>• They’re all pretty much willing to listen to new ideas; I think that this is the kind of culture that they are trying to foster. But whether they take it on board or not that is a different story.</li> <li>• No I wouldn’t bother presenting ideas to my direct managers because I know that it wouldn’t go any further, they’d just push it off.</li> <li>• There are a couple of us within the department that have a lot</li> </ul>   |

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| <p>bypass. There's no point in seeing some people. I find my manager very good to get along with, he's quite easy to just go sit down with and talk to.</p>   | <p>of knowledge with how to run the process. So we sort of have a better idea of how to run things and what creates problems. It's a bit frustrating when they don't really listen to what we say. We know its right but they have their own theories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think half of the problem comes from the upper management. That's my own feeling because I know that my manager wants the change to occur. So if it's not coming from my manager it's got to come from further up there that's stopping it. But how come my manager can't get that change to occur? Is he pushing it hard enough or is he not pushing it hard enough? It's just a matter of how hard is he pushing it, which I would assume that he's pushing it quite hard cause he knows obviously the process.</li> <li>• I've presented ideas when I first started in Binland, of a hand basin and a bit of a cleaning area by the office. That was filed four years ago and that's as far as that ever got.</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Trust Between Managers (3)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a manager I really like the work environment. Although [the Operations Manager] pokes his nose into things, if you do a good job he will leave you alone and you given a lot of autonomy. So if you take things to him and say "this is how it should be and this is my case and this is why I think that", he will go with that. So personally it works very well for me as a manager.</li> <li>• The Operations Manager has got an open door. He expects people to identify new ideas, opportunities and that sort of thing.</li> <li>• If I approached [the Operations Manager] with a sound proposal, clearly mapped out the possible benefits, I would think that he would support that. I know he would support it just</li> </ul> | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Managers (8)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Operations Manager tends to poke his nose into everybody's business. So although they have got responsibility for their own area some are left alone, I certainly got left alone to a large extent. But some of the other's aren't left alone too much. They feel that he has too much of an overview of their area and therefore it stifles their initiative.</li> <li>• While [the Operations Manager] might claim that he likes his managers to take ownership, he also has a lot more involvement, a lot more input into the guys work.</li> <li>• The Operations Manager has got a management style where if he rates you as a performer, he will let you do whatever you want. If he has any doubt he will get completely involved.</li> <li>• The perception is that "hey no matter what we decide if the</li> </ul>   |

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| <p>by the way he looks at innovation and so forth.</p> | <p>Operations Manager doesn't like it, it won't happen." Or if he wants to do it another way, he will do it his way rather than taking on our ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To me it's lead from the top and I perceive that the Operations Manager might say that "nobody does anything around here." In fact I'm pretty certain that he would have said that "nobody does anything around here." I would be pointing the finger right back at him and saying "what are you going to do about it?" Because if he does nothing about it nothing will ever change, that's why he has got the problem.</li><li>• You rely on the management team I guess to lead by example there; it's not just about [the Operations Manager]. I think that the management team is the key. They are usually making decisions in terms of creativity, process improvement or something. They are the ones that are making the decisions. There's no reason that they can't feed that information back personally or via their supervisor. But that doesn't tend to happen.</li><li>• Managers aren't getting feedback from the Operations Manager, so they're not giving feed back to their supervisors; supervisors are not getting back to their staff.</li><li>• When managers perceive the Operations Manager saying "no we should be doing it this way," they perceive it as him sticking his nose into their area. The feeling is that if he's going to do that, why doesn't he just do the job himself. Then they just do the bare minimum the basics.</li></ul> |
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**APPENDIX 3: TABLE OF TRUST STATEMENTS MADE AT THE FROZEN MEALS PLANT**

| <b>LEVEL OF TRUST WITHIN FROZEN MEALS</b>   |  |
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| <b>Positive Statements (63)</b>   | <b>Negative Statements (20)</b>  |
| <p><u>Trust Between Peers (5)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a small percentage of employees that will help and want to present new ideas and carry them through.</li> <li>• What encourages me to come up with new ideas, I guess, is just working with other people. You have other people helping you on the line and people just come up with little ideas and you go “oh that’s a good idea.”</li> <li>• The people around here are just awesome. That is everybody not just my peers but everybody.</li> <li>• Yeah we have a good team. We work as team rather than individuals</li> <li>• It’s also from the ground level, my peers also support you. There is a lot of team work too.</li> </ul> | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Peers (5)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some of the people around here are quite young and they should have just stayed at school, because they are just being stupid or running around like idiots. They should have stayed at school for another year and got that out of their systems.</li> <li>• I think there is a large percentage of employees’ that can’t be bothered.</li> <li>• Most people would say something in the meetings, but a quite person would probably just hold back.</li> <li>• That is probably the main issue I find when people who are trying to be creative get knocked for their ideas by their peers. That’s why I think a lot of people are afraid to speak up. There’s also the embarrassment that they maybe laughed at. They might not get laughed at, they might have an idea and someone is like “shit that is a good idea”. But they are too afraid to actually speak up in front of the group.</li> <li>• I would say that probably 95% of the people that we have would not want to get up in front of people and talk. That’s just because of their peers and I think that they are afraid to be judged.</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Trust Between Employees and Supervisors (6)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I have got my own little thing going where I normally keep</li> </ul>  | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Employees and Supervisors (6)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am a QC and I have a line co-ordinator who is suppose to be</li> </ul>  |

track of at least two workers in the week. I give these people a little chocolate bar at the end of the week, that's just my own little thing. It's not something that I spread around to everybody; I don't think my management know that I do this. But it is just a little thank you. I let them know what they are getting if for. I've been doing it for the last two or three months now. The idea just come up from me because I would just see people doing the little bit of extra work. You know they may just being sweeping the floor or doing my house keeping. So I thought that person needs to be rewarded in someway.

- My shift leaders and I know of some others that aren't approachable. But on my line the shift leaders and the team manager and that are all approachable.
- Our shift leader's pretty cool, we can tell him anything. He'll be like "yes write it down, give it to me," and the next day he'll say "I told blah, blah and what not."
- We have a team brief every month and that's when our ideas that we've given to our shift leaders are brought up in the team briefs. That's when others are given the opportunity to agree and say "oh yeah I've had that problem" or what not, and that's when they sort it out from there.
- I would say that most of the time they would probably go up to our shift leader or team leader and tell them their ideas. Those guys are pretty open, if we have got ideas we should let them know, which is good.
- Everyone is very supportive of each other. I've got a book from when people come to me and say "hey listen I've got this idea" and I write it down. I might not act on it right then and there, but further down the line things might come up and I'll say "that's right thing said that."

running the line. So you are meant to go to them and they are meant to fix things. But if they don't fix things, you are left to fix it, so why bother yourself going to them in the first place?

- I guess when you ask them once or twice, but after that when you don't get any answers you don't bother. What's the point of giving them ideas or talking about changing something, because they don't seem to take an interest. At the moment this is just about my supervisor, because I don't really go to management.
- This environment doesn't support employees to be creative. You don't get any response and if we want something, it just feels like it is not important to them.
- When you are directly working under someone you can't really go to them and moan, because you know nothing else will get done.
- Sometimes someone will put something forward to a team leader and it doesn't necessarily go all the way through the channel, if the team leader doesn't believe it is a good idea. It does happen, as to the percentage of time that it happens, I'm not sure.
- There can probably be a lack of trust coming from the workers towards us [team leaders]. We might only have 50% or a third of the information, whereas the workers think that we know it all, but we don't. We are the first in line that get come at by the employees, but we don't know what's going on ourselves. So they aim all their frustrations at us, yet we have our own frustrations with our managers because we don't know what's going on either.

### Trust Between Employees and Managers (49)

- The new manager changed the way people felt. He was getting more knocks on his door than the shift leaders themselves. You go to someone that is higher, where you know something will be done.
- The way that I sort of approach things is that, well if you say that you're going to do it, you do it. From that you get results and respect from the staff. They can see that you are trying to move things forward, and they know all the goals and they'll jump on board.
- I suppose, to use an example, we have had an issue with down time and those sorts of things. So we went out to them and said we have got these issues, this machine keeps breaking down or this is stopping and the amount of downtime in some areas is quite high. We went out to everybody and asked them to give us their thoughts on what they believe are the main issues or the main drivers that are causing this down time. So I gave the opportunity for everyone to come through and there was probably about half a dozen ideas that came out of that. This has reduced the down time. So just across the board giving them the opportunity, probably not in a very formal way, but certainly you're making them more aware that you want their ideas to come forward.
- I say "any idea is a good idea," there are no stupid ideas. It might sound silly, but I've seen it before that the silly idea is the bloody good idea in the end, well part of it. I guess some of them are going to be a bit stupid but on a whole it's good. Again it goes back to giving them the opportunity to put their thoughts forward, and when they see those thoughts being put into practice it boosts morale.

### Lack of Trust Between Employees and Managers (7)

- In terms of managers I think that as long as things are coming out smoothly then they don't care what happens. Because they are busy and it is the line co-ordinators job to take care of that.
- If you want anything it takes a long time to get done. There is always that delay in getting things done. Sometimes you wonder whether they heard you or if they are listening or whatever.
- They say that they want your input but that's about it. There is not real method of putting your input to the managers other than going and knocking on his door and seeing him.
- They do provide feedback in the meetings, but it is normally about what they want to do. It is not about what you want.
- I remember when they handed out a sheet and they asked us for improvements on the line. But because they didn't listen before why do they want this now? So I didn't do anything.
- In Health and Safety meetings it is alright saying things, but you think "just how far is it going to go sort of thing."
- I think people here feel a little bit disappointed because they have put an idea forward, which to them is like just brilliant, but the reality is it is not practical and it can't be completed.

- I always welcome feedback and creativity. I think it is something that we need to continually work on.
- It's more of a family culture that we have. That is the result of that approachability between the different levels.
- The meetings definitely provide a supportive environment to present ideas. There have been the odd occasion when someone has mentioned something and it hasn't been the ideal platform. It is not forgotten and the person has been told that we will discuss that later on, as this is not quite the right venue. It does it get followed up; it's not just brushed away.
- I think it is supportive culture here. I don't know what it was like before this time last year before the team and I both started. But I think that we both had different approaches to how it had been run before. We certainly involve people more than had been done in the past, so I think that we are developing a more supportive culture now. We do try and involve people as much as we can, so supportive would be a good way to describe it.
- When I first started people were reluctant to approach supervisors or managers with ideas or problems. They just either dealt with it, ignored it or whatever. The performance of the line was okay. But certainly within the first few months that we started you did see people start to come forward more and that's happening all the time now. Even though I'm not sort of directly involved with staff, there's usually people waiting outside my door with an idea "oh I've got a good idea of how I could..." and I would say "wonderful come sit down". You'd have never seen that this time last year.
- Ideas are coming from suggestions, staff involvement and trying to give ownership to the people. As soon as you take some ideas on-board then the involvement increases even

more.

- Our department is notorious for H&S accidents, because we have a lot of manual handling, such as sprains, strains bumps and bruises. Those have started to drop off and a lot of that has been driven by the people up stairs [line workers]. They'd say lets do this differently and we've implemented what they've said.
- There was some of that team work feeling when I first started, but we've done a lot of work on it since I've been here. This has been done by just trying to get upstairs, trying to talk to the people, find out what they want and try and get them involved in other things.
- We provide feedback in the team briefs, but if a person has come up with something we will do it on an individual basis. We'll say "well this is what you suggested and yes we will do it because we think that we can get this out of it" or "this is why can't do it at the moment."
- I mean we do have a lot of very clever people upstairs and there are three or four that are far more qualified then me who are key operators on machines. There are some of those who are a strength and some of those who could be a strength.
- If it is something that I can do I will just zip off and implement it as fast as we can for employees. I do that just so that they see that we are seen to be doing something.
- The Production Manager, the Team Manager and I are all new. The Production Manager joined at the beginning of 2006 and he has got a completely different approach from the previous manager, which has helped. The people upstairs can see that as well, because he has put in some things straight away. He's been known as saying "right this needs doing, do it."

- Yip I would present my ideas to my managers.
- We have managers that are open to new ideas.
- The managers do have an open door policy here, if they are not going out to have a smoke.
- They follow the procedures when it comes to discipline which is good because people have had to pick up the slack of others and it's not fair. It is about time that they have started to crack the whip on this stuff.
- Our managers are good, you can easily go in and talk to them about anything and they are prepared to sit there and listen.
- Being able to present our ideas is just from the openness that we have with managers. You just feel a bit more comfortable approaching them than the old managers.
- There has been a change in management recently and I have noticed that the Production Centre Manager is firm but fair. He doesn't beat around the bush like the other one use to. He use to push it to the side and fix it later. Our manager now will do it straight away and the Team Manager is the same.
- If I've got something to say I'd tell them. The Team Leader is pretty good. He would tell you if it wasn't a good idea. But he won't put you down or anything. He might say maybe its better this way or something.
- People's ideas are judged fairly and they do inform you whether they would go ahead with it or not, which is really good.
- Well they are always open to new ideas; they've got to listen to what we have to say.
- My bosses are really fair and supportive. Stuff that happens outside of work, if you're willing to let them, then they will listen.
- That is where the Team Manager and Improvement manager

differ, because they know that they are not the ones that are actually putting out the product, it's their workers. So if you keep the workers happy then they perform. Now we find that everyone comes in and does their job and does it really well and then goes home.

- Every week our direct shift leader on the afternoon shift will call a little meeting before we go home just to thank everybody. So it's like well that is something, you are getting a thank you.
- But with our managers they are really encouraging. They always tell us that no idea is a silly idea.
- They want people to actually go there and actually tell them how they feel and not feel that they will get shut down.
- That is what management preach to us, they want a team environment. A good team environment is always a good, blah, blah, blah. This happens in our team briefs and they thrive on team work and happy working and that. It's really good because everyone is so approachable. Everyone has kind of got that feeling that we are all equals now.
- Everyone is much happier now that they are actually taking ideas of their workers and feeding off them.
- If there are any problems then we are listened to. This makes us get more involved in the job, safety wise and in other areas also.
- It is quite different, it is quite open and you can talk to the managers anytime.
- It's a good work environment because you are seen and listened to. If you have any ideas you have a feedback follow-up on that.
- One time we had slightly over produced for what the marketers had anticipated. Because of this we had to put a

shift off but there was no rebellion. It was quite amazing when it was announced at the meeting because there was nothing negative. People could see the positive side; they could see why we got in that position. They were also told how far down the track it was before we got back on track and when they would all come back into the role. But there was no negativity, it was really good. I think that it is all part of the management structure and the way it was announced. It wasn't just cut and dry, there was discussion about it. People were all interviewed one-on-one; it wasn't just a mass thing which is normally just the way it is. So there was a discussion about it and people were interviewed one-on-one and options were put to them, "you've got this choice or this choice, which one is going to suit you best?" It was quite caring; it wasn't a cold hearted thing. It was done quite well because the people didn't feel dejected and thrown out

- I think that there is a feeling of sincerity for this guy. He is just how it is and he's been seen to make changes to the line. What he has said is going to happen, has been happening. In fact it is the first time I have ever seen it, we have a safety conscious employee of the month award and this is the very first time in ten years, I have never seen it where the team decided that the manager should get the safety conscious award. I did the certificate for them they took it away and when they presented it to him at the team brief, the certificate had been signed all over by every employee. That's pretty unusual so that gives you an idea of the management within our department.
- Oh the current managers are pretty good, I like them. At least you know that if you've got a problem you can go and see them. I'm pretty much speaking for myself when I say that

because from what I've done they are pretty sweet.

- The health and safety officer, he's pretty good at that. He comes to the monthly meetings and he tries to encourage people to bring up their ideas.
- My office door is always open so people can wonder in here. They can also communicate it through their team leaders, or our Health and Safety committee. We also have a monthly team brief where there is question time at the end if anyone wants to bring anything up. I think the meetings provide a supportive environment for this.
- I think that everything that gets put forward is considered for what it's worth.
- Employees are definitely encouraged to put forward ideas.
- Sometimes someone will just wonder in here and say blah, blah, blah. I will say if you think that you've got an idea come up with that and put it forward to us and we'll all work together. If it's something really simple I'll say it sounds good go for it.
- I guess it's driven by things like our open door policy and never saying no. Rather we say "we'll consider all ideas and investigate them" or whatever. I guess it also comes from actually getting things completed. See I think if a few things get completed it makes people feel good. Joe sees that what three people brought up got done, so it makes them feel like saying something too.
- I think our managers are really good, they are easy to approach and talk to. We had some before which I didn't particularly like. Our managers before they were hard to approach and talk to, they were sort of reserved. Now with Mark and Mike we can just go up to those guys and they are just friendly

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our shift leader and team leaders are really cool people to go and talk to. They are really fair with everyone too.</li> <li>• Everyone knows everyone's business and people hang out with each other outside of the work environment as well. So it is almost like a family, probably more than anything else.</li> <li>• I think that the family culture is primarily from the management level. It is driven from our Production Manager because he is approachable and that has made the difference.</li> </ul> |   |
| <p><u>Trust Between Supervisors and Managers (1)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I actually quite think that with the current managerial structure, where I'm at the moment, and the people that we have in place, it's the best management team that I've worked with within [this Company].</li> </ul>  | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Supervisors and Managers (2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You get angry and sometimes you feel like what's the point when you have got people that are higher than you and they should really be taking responsibility. You're like "where are they?"</li> <li>• I don't think that there is enough autonomy put on the shift leaders themselves. I think that they need to have a little bit more say in how things happen. A lot of the decisions are made without their knowledge or they are brought in at the last minute; after all the decision making has been done and then they are told what is happening. I think that's not good for the company. This can be kind of detrimental because they feel, we feel out of the loop.</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>Trust Between Managers (2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The management team at the top are all new. We are all like-minded, so it makes it easy. I don't have to go and fight with the boss because he always agrees with me; he thinks the same way I do.</li> <li>• I think that if the Production Manager was to leave and another [Company] manager was to come in it could be different. That depends on how much that person is willing to change.</li> </ul>  | <p><u>Lack of Trust Between Managers (0)</u></p>  |