



S461751

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AT RINGWAY, MILTON KEYNES

CRANFIELD SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

MSc STRATEGIC MARKETING
Academic Year: 2024-2025

Supervisor: Dr. TAMIRA KING
SEPTEMBER 2025



CRANFIELD SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
MSc STRATEGIC MARKETING
MSc
Academic Year 2024- 2025

S461751

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AT RINGWAY, MILTON KEYNES

Supervisor: Dr. TAMIRA KING
SEPTEMBER 2025

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of MSc Strategic Marketing
(NB. Remove if the degree award is based solely on examination of the thesis)

© Cranfield University 2025. All rights reserved. No part of this
publication may be reproduced without the written permission of the
copyright owner.

(NB. Refer to the guidance in Chapter 1 if sponsored by the MOD or other
employers/funders)

Academic integrity declaration

I declare that:

- the thesis submitted has been written by me alone.
- the thesis submitted has not been previously submitted to this university or any other.
- that all content, including primary and/or secondary data, is true to the best of my knowledge.
- that all quotations and references have been duly acknowledged according to the requirements of academic research.

I understand that to knowingly submit work in violation of the above statement will be considered by examiners as academic misconduct.

Abstract

Internal communication is increasingly recognised as a strategic driver of organisational effectiveness, particularly in industries where safety, coordination, and dispersed teams define day-to-day operations. Despite this, infrastructure and construction firms often face persistent challenges in ensuring consistent, accessible, and engaging communication across varied employee groups. This study addresses these challenges by examining the internal communication practices of Ringway, a highways maintenance provider operating in Milton Keynes.

The rationale for this research stems from observed communication gaps in hybrid and operationally complex settings, where frontline workers, office staff, and managers often experience different levels of access, trust, and engagement. By investigating these issues, the study seeks to provide both theoretical contributions to the field of internal communication and practical recommendations for industry.

A qualitative case study design was adopted, underpinned by an inductive approach. Data were collected through 15 semi-structured interviews with employees across managerial, non-managerial, and operational roles. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, was employed to identify patterns and meanings within the data.

The findings revealed four overarching themes: (1) fragmented communication channels, where multiple tools are used inconsistently and sometimes ineffectively; (2) high levels of trust in supervisors but weaker trust in distant leadership, influenced by accessibility and visibility; (3) a reliance on informal feedback over formal mechanisms, which fosters interpersonal trust but limits organisational learning; and (4) employee-led suggestions for improvement, emphasising simplified, human-centred communication strategies.

By situating these findings within theories such as Media Richness (Daft & Lengel, 1986), Social Exchange (Blau, 1964), and Psychological Safety (Edmondson, 1999), the research demonstrates how communication directly shapes employee trust, engagement, and organisational culture. The thesis concludes by offering actionable recommendations for Ringway and highlighting broader implications for internal communication in the infrastructure sector.

Keywords:

Internal Communication; Construction; Employee Engagement; Media Richness Theory; Social Exchange Theory; Psychological Safety; Trust; Two-Way Communication; Infrastructure Sector; Ringway; Thematic Analysis

Acknowledgements

I would first like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis supervisor, **Dr. Tamira King**. Her exceptional guidance, thoughtful feedback, and constant encouragement were instrumental in shaping this thesis. She not only challenged me to think critically but also supported me with patience and care throughout the entire process. I am truly fortunate to have had her mentorship.

My sincere thanks also go to **Suzanne Moss** at Ringway, whose generosity, understanding, and guidance during my internship provided me with both knowledge and confidence. I am also grateful to **Dr. Sharifah Alwi**, my course director, for her encouragement and leadership. Beyond them, I extend heartfelt appreciation to all my professors at Cranfield School of Management. Their teaching, insights, and passion for their subjects have been nothing short of inspiring and have given me the academic foundation to approach this research with confidence.

I would also like to acknowledge the employees at Ringway who participated in this study, openly sharing their time, experiences, and perspectives. Their voices lie at the heart of this thesis.

Finally, my deepest thanks go to my family, whose unwavering love, patience, and belief in me made this journey possible. Their support carried me through the most challenging moments, and this achievement is as much theirs as it is mine.

Table of Contents

Academic integrity declaration.....	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Figures.....	vii
List of Tables	viii
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background and Research Rationale	1
1.3 Research Problem	3
1.4 Research Aim, Objectives & Questions	3
1.5 Target Audience and Contribution	5
1.6 Thesis Outline	5
1.7 Conclusion	6
2 Literature Review	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 The Role of Internal Communication in Organisations.....	7
2.3 Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Internal Communication	8
2.4 Internal Communication and Employee Engagement..... (Supports Research Objective 1).....	8
2.5 Communication Channels and Platform Effectiveness	9
(Supports Research Objective 2).....	9
2.6 Trust and Two-Way Communication..... (Supports Research Objectives 3 & 4).....	9
2.7 Conclusion and Research Gap	10
3 Methodology.....	11
3.1 Introduction	11
3.2 The Research Onion.....	11
3.2.1 Research Philosophy	12
3.2.2 Research Approach.....	12
3.2.3 Research Strategy.....	12
3.2.4 Methodological Choices	13
3.2.5 Time Horizon	14
3.2.6 Data Collection and Analysis Techniques	14
3.3 Research Sample Selection.....	17
3.3.1 Overview of Participants.....	18
3.4 Data Analysis Strategy.....	19
3.5 Ensuring Research Quality	20
3.6 Ethical Considerations	20
3.7 Limitations of the Methodology	21

3.8 Conclusion	21
4 Findings and Analysis	22
4.1 Introduction	22
4.2 Initial Coding	22
4.3 Theme 1: Fragmented Communication Channels	23
4.3.1 Sub-theme: Multi-Platform Dependency.....	23
4.3.2 Sub-theme: Misalignment in Communication Tools	24
4.3.3 Theme 2: Trust and Accessibility in Communication	24
4.3.4 Sub-theme: High Trust in Supervisors.....	24
4.3.5 Sub-theme: Leadership Distance and Low Visibility	25
4.4 Theme 3: Informal Feedback Over Formal Channels	25
4.4.2 Sub-theme: Limited Formal Engagement.....	26
4.5 Theme 4: Suggestions for Improvement.....	26
4.5.1 Sub-theme: Simplified Communication and Human Touch	26
4.5.2 Sub-theme: Structured Meeting Preparation	27
4.6 Conclusion	27
5 Discussion	29
5.1 Introduction	29
5.2 Communication Tools and Channel Effectiveness.....	29
5.3 Trust and Transparency	30
5.4 Feedback and Engagement Practices	31
5.5 Bridging Organisational Silos	31
5.6 The Role of Communication in Psychological Safety.....	32
5.7 Conclusion	33
6 Conclusions and Recommendations	34
6.1 Introduction	34
6.2 Reflections on the Research Process	34
6.3 Academic Recommendations and Future Research Directions	36
6.3.1 Explore Sector-Specific Communication Norms.....	36
6.3.2 Expand Cross-Cultural Studies in Communication.....	36
6.3.3 Test Long-Term Effects of Communication Interventions.....	36
6.4 Organisational Recommendations for Ringway	37
6.4.1 Simplify and Prioritise Internal Messages.....	37
6.4.2 Consistent Use of Microsoft Teams Across Roles	37
6.4.3 Create Trust Through Action-Based Communication	37
6.4.4 Encourage Feedback Culture Across All Levels	37
6.5 Final Thoughts	38
7 Reflective Report.....	39
7.1 Introduction	39
7.2 Understanding Ringway and Its Context.....	39
7.3 Adaptation Journey and Challenges	39
7.3.1 Entering a New Industry	39

7.3.2 Hybrid Work Arrangement.....	40
7.3.3 Data Collection Challenges	40
7.4 Applying Marketing and Communication Frameworks in Practice	40
7.4.1 Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984)	40
7.4.2 Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC).....	40
7.4.3 Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004)	41
7.4.4 Psychological Safety (Edmondson, 1999).....	41
7.4.5 McKinsey’s 7S Framework.....	41
7.5 Key Learnings and Growth	41
7.5.1 Stakeholder Communication	41
7.5.2 Internal Communication Challenges	41
7.5.3 Professional Confidence	41
7.5.4 Personal Growth	42
7.6 Workplace Anecdotes	42
7.7 Conclusion	42
References	43
APPENDIX A.....	49
Ethical approval letter	49
APPENDIX B.....	50
Interview Consent Form.....	50
Information Document	51
Research Objectives.....	51
Data Collection.....	51
Interview Questions.....	52
APPENDIX C.....	53
Interview Transcript	53
APPENDIX D.....	71
Detailed Coding Table	71

List of Figures

Figure 1 Research Objectives 4

Figure 2 Lifted Diagram from Saunders et al., 2015..... 11

Figure 3 Research Design based on Research Onion 12

Figure 4 Data Collection Timeline 15

List of Tables

Table 1 Chapter Outline 6

Table 2 Interview Questions 17

Table 3 Participant Information..... 19

Table 4 Examples of Initial Codes from Participant Interviews 23

Table 5 Themes Aligned with Research Objectives and Literature 28

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study, focusing on internal communication at Ringway, Milton Keynes. It outlines the organisational context, research problem, and rationale for the investigation. The chapter also sets out the research aim, objectives, questions and structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background and Research Rationale

Ringway is a UK-based infrastructure services company with almost 50 years of experience as a leading provider of local authority highways contracts (Ringway, n.d.). The Milton Keynes division of Ringway is responsible for maintaining the local road network and delivering highway services in partnership with the Milton Keynes Council. Operating in the construction and infrastructure industry, Ringway's business involves a geographically dispersed workforce including field crews on construction sites, maintenance teams on the roads, and office-based staff. Effective internal communication in this context is challenging and critical: information must flow across different locations, job roles, and levels of the organisation to ensure that all employees are informed, engaged, and working towards the company's goals. In an industry where safety, coordination, and timely information-sharing are paramount, strong internal communication practices can directly impact operational performance and service delivery (Ringway, n.d.).

Within the broader construction and infrastructure sector, internal communication has traditionally been top-down and focused on ensuring compliance and safety messaging. However, the industry is evolving alongside advances in communication technology and changing work patterns. The rise of hybrid work arrangements combining on-site and remote work and the distribution of teams across various project sites mean that old communication approaches (e.g. periodic memos or onsite briefings) are no longer sufficient. Ringway, like many infrastructure firms, now operates in a hybrid and distributed team environment where some managers and support staff work from offices or home, while many frontline employees work in the field. This dispersion of staff poses a challenge for maintaining consistent and engaging internal communication for example, ensuring that a road crew worker receives and understands the same key messages as a manager on Microsoft Teams requires a strategic approach to communication channels and content. The evolution of digital communication tools from intranet portals and email to mobile apps and enterprise social networks offers new opportunities to connect with employees, but also raises questions about which platforms are most effective for a complex organisation like Ringway.

Internal communication is increasingly recognised as a strategic function that contributes to employee engagement and organisational success. Researchers have emphasised that transparent, two-way internal communication builds trust

and aligns employees with organisational goals. For example, Mishra, Boynton, and Mishra (2014) define internal communication as the interaction between an organisation's leaders and its employees, and find that effective, transparent communication can engage employees in the company's mission and foster trust between managers and staff. Engaged employees are more productive and act as "corporate ambassadors," reinforcing the importance of internal communication for achieving business outcomes (Mishra et al., 2014). Likewise, Verčič and Vokić (2017) confirmed that internal communication satisfaction is strongly correlated with high employee engagement, indicating that when employees feel well-informed and heard, their commitment and motivation increase. Prior studies also link internal communication to performance: Mmutle (2022) highlights the *strategic nature of internal communication in cultivating high levels of employee engagement for organisational performance and success*. In a recent study, Mmutle (2022) found that the effectiveness of internal communication was a key determinant of an organisation's engagement efforts and that a collaborative, open communication climate empowered employees to perform beyond expectations. These insights from the literature provide a strong rationale for focusing on Ringway's internal communication – improvements in this area are likely to enhance employee engagement, which in turn can drive better performance, safety, and service quality in Ringway's operations.

Moreover, aligning employees with the company's vision and values through internal communication can yield significant benefits. Fernandes (2019) reports that employees who find their company's vision meaningful have engagement levels about 18% higher than average. This underscores that clarity of purpose and strategic messaging– communicated internally by leadership – can boost morale and commitment. For a company like Ringway, communicating its mission (e.g. "*Delivering Sustainable Mobility*") and values consistently to all staff can help create a shared sense of purpose, even as teams work in different locations. Furthermore, internal communication is a conduit for employee voice and feedback. Brunton et al. (2017) note that companies use a variety of internal communication practices such as intranet sites, emails, team meetings, and briefing sessions to reach employees at all levels. Each channel has strengths and limitations; for instance, face-to-face meetings are rich in feedback and nonverbal cues (and are one of the most effective communication forms), whereas emails or newsletters can efficiently disseminate information to large numbers but may be less engaging. The communication technology landscape has expanded in recent years to include internal social media platforms, instant messaging, and mobile apps designed for frontline workers. Adopting these tools can facilitate faster, two-way communication across a distributed workforce. However, organisations often struggle with selecting the right mix of channels and ensuring messages are consistent across them. In practice, finding this balance is crucial for Ringway: too many channels can overwhelm or confuse employees, while too few can leave segments of the workforce under-informed. The research rationale thus stems from a need to understand how Ringway can optimise its internal communication approach amid these industry and technological trends.

At the same time, there is a recognition that internal communication in such contexts is challenging and under-researched; as Mmutle (2022) observed, communication's direct contribution to engagement has not been fully explored and warrants further study. This thesis responds to that call by focusing on Ringway, Milton Keynes, to investigate how internal communication can be improved to benefit both employees and the organisation.

1.3 Research Problem

Despite its importance, internal communication at Ringway Milton Keynes faces challenges in reaching a distributed workforce spread across sites and offices. Field staff often feel “out of the loop,” while remote employees risk missing informal updates due to reliance on digital tools. Multiple channels such as emails, newsletters, and team briefings are used, but their effectiveness and reach remain uncertain. This reflects a broader gap in practice and literature: how can large, hybrid organisations select and manage communication platforms that truly engage employees and support performance?

The research problem therefore centres on the question: ***How can Ringway Milton Keynes improve its internal communication to enhance employee engagement and organisational performance?*** Ineffective communication risks lowering morale, weakening safety compliance, and hindering teamwork. Conversely, better communication promises higher engagement, stronger alignment with organisational goals, and improved operational outcomes. This study systematically investigates Ringway’s practices, employee needs, and platform options to address this gap, ultimately providing actionable recommendations for more effective and engaging internal communication.

1.4 Research Aim, Objectives & Questions

Given the above problem, this research aims ***to investigate the current internal communication at Ringway with employees and recommend strategies for improvement.*** In pursuit of this overarching aim, the study will examine current practices, challenges, and opportunities related to internal communication within Ringway Milton Keynes, and will draw on both theoretical frameworks and empirical insights to recommend effective communication strategies (including appropriate platform choices) for a distributed, hybrid workforce.

Research Objectives

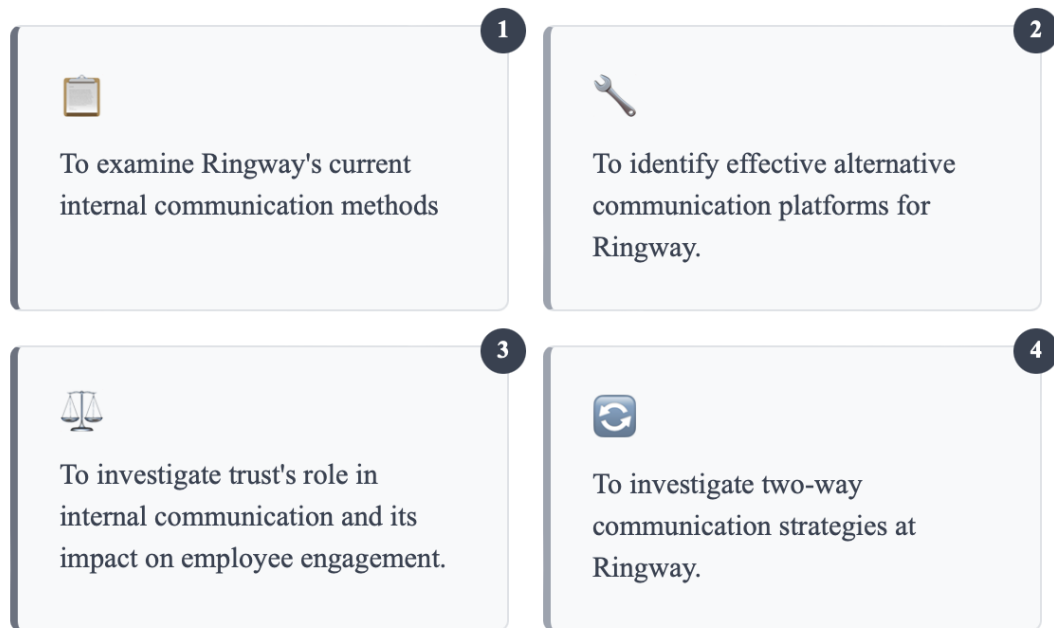


Figure 1 Research Objectives

To achieve this aim, the research sets out the following specific objectives:

1. To examine Ringway's current internal communication methods among three employee categories: non-managerial employees, site-based contractors, and managers.
2. To identify alternative communication platforms or channels that could be applicable and effective within Ringway.
3. To investigate the role of trust in internal communication and its impact on employee engagement and perception.
4. To investigate the presence and quality of two-way communication strategies at Ringway and how these support relationship-building and employee voice.

Correspondingly, the research questions that guide this investigation are:

1. What internal communication methods are currently in use at Ringway, and how are they perceived by different employee groups?
2. What alternative communication platforms or channels do employees believe would improve internal communication at Ringway?
3. How does the level of trust in communication affect employees' engagement with internal messages at Ringway?
4. What opportunities exist for two-way communication between employees and management, and how do these affect working relationships and inclusion?

These research questions are directly aligned with the objectives and will be addressed through the thesis. By answering these questions, the study will fulfil

its aim of finding ways to improve internal communication at Ringway. It is worth noting that the approach taken will be analytical and evidence-based: the questions will be explored through a review of relevant literature (to understand established principles and findings) and through empirical research within Ringway (such as interviews) to gather context-specific data.

1.5 Target Audience and Contribution

This thesis primarily serves Ringway's management and decision-makers in infrastructure service firms, offering practical insights into enhancing internal communication in complex, distributed environments. By analysing how communication methods support safety, coordination, and engagement, the study provides a guide for strengthening both formal and informal channels. Lessons on what works such as effective use of digital platforms and what risks failure, like overreliance on emails, will help industry professionals refine their strategies. The findings will therefore contribute to industry best practices, supporting better safety adherence, quicker knowledge sharing, and stronger workforce motivation.

Academically, the study adds to the literature on internal communication and employee engagement by addressing a key gap: limited evidence on how communication is implemented in hybrid, field-heavy organisations. By examining Ringway, the research validates or challenges theoretical frameworks such as media richness, stakeholder theory, and psychological safety, while introducing practical considerations like tailoring communication to different employee groups. Beyond theory and industry, employees themselves stand to benefit indirectly, as improved communication fosters inclusion, trust, and job satisfaction, thereby contributing to both organisational effectiveness and workplace culture.

1.6 Thesis Outline

Chapter	Brief Description
Chapter 1: Introduction	The first chapter introduces the background of the project along with the rationale for undertaking the study. It defines the research problem in the context of Ringway's internal communication challenges and presents the research aim, objectives, and questions. The chapter also identifies the target audience and contributions of the research, and it concludes with an outline of the thesis structure.
Chapter 2: Literature Review	The second chapter critically reviews the relevant literature on internal communication, employee engagement, and related concepts. It examines key theories and previous research findings including studies on communication in hybrid work environments, the role of internal communication in distributed teams, and the impact of communication technology on engagement.

Chapter 3: Methodology	The third chapter describes the research design and methods used to address the research questions. It discusses the choice of a case study approach focusing on Ringway Milton Keynes and justifies the methodology. The chapter details the data collection techniques and explains how these methods align with the research objectives.
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Research Findings	The fourth chapter presents the findings of the research. The findings are organised around the study's objectives: showing the current state of Ringway's internal communication, the identified challenges, the evaluation of different communication channels, and any insights into employee preferences or needs.
Chapter 5: Discussion	The fifth chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the findings, interpreting their meaning and significance in light of the research objectives and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.
Chapter 6: Conclusion & Recommendations	This chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the research and its key findings. The chapter then presents concrete recommendations for Academics and Ringway on further research on improving internal communication.
Chapter 7: Reflective Report	The final chapter throws light on the internship journey with Ringway, Milton Keynes. It mentions the adaption journey, the challenges and key learnings.

Table 1 Chapter Outline

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research context, problem, and objectives for studying internal communication at Ringway. The next chapter critically reviews existing literature on communication, engagement, trust, and platforms to provide the foundation for this study.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter critically reviews literature on internal communication, employee engagement, trust, and communication platforms, with particular focus on infrastructure firms such as Ringway. The review not only synthesises theoretical and empirical perspectives but also compares, evaluates, and interrogates the evidence to highlight gaps relevant to this thesis.

2.2 The Role of Internal Communication in Organisations

Scholars consistently agree that internal communication is strategic rather than purely operational. Mishra, Boynton, and Mishra (2014) describe it as a driver of engagement through transparency and authenticity, while Brunton et al. (2017) emphasise its role in aligning employees to corporate goals. Karanges et al. (2015) add that effective communication fosters belonging and meaning. Collectively, these perspectives frame internal communication as essential to organisational performance.

However, while these studies provide compelling evidence, most rely on cross-sectional surveys in corporate or service industries, which may not generalise to field-based, high-risk sectors like construction. Here, communication not only coordinates tasks but directly influences safety outcomes, an angle underexplored in mainstream literature. Cheng et al. (2001), one of the few studies in construction, revealed persistent “network disconnections” due to fragmented tools and dispersed sites, supporting the relevance of investigating firms like Ringway.

Theoretically, both Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and Communication Theory (Shannon & Weaver, 1949) reinforce this view. The former highlights the need to balance employee expectations with organisational goals, while the latter underscores minimising “noise” in message transmission. While valuable, these theories largely assume symmetrical communication environments, leaving practical challenges in hybrid, field-based organisations insufficiently explored.

Thus, the first research objective to analyse Ringway’s current internal communication methods addresses this gap by focusing on segmented experiences across office staff, contractors, and managers.

2.3 Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Internal Communication

A second strand of literature situates internal communication within integrated marketing communication (IMC). Rogala and Kaniewska-Sęba (2013) and Kitchen and Daly (2002) argue that employee alignment is a prerequisite for coherent brand behaviour. Ewing, Men, and O'Neil (2019) demonstrate that internal communication shapes cultural norms that underpin external reputation.

Studies by Kliatchko (2005) and Masterson and Pickton (2004) extend this further, proposing that employees act as “brand ambassadors” when internal branding is consistent. These findings are persuasive, but they predominantly derive from retail, FMCG, or hospitality sectors where brand-consumer interactions are immediate. For infrastructure firms like Ringway, employee “ambassadorship” manifests less in direct customer service and more in how roadworks are conducted safely, visibly, and with community consideration.

In practice, IMC principles apply internally when messages about safety culture or community responsibility are consistently communicated across posters, digital platforms, and briefings. Yet, little empirical research demonstrates *how* IMC translates into infrastructure contexts. This underscores the contribution of the current research in exploring communication practices in an industry where branding is enacted through public-facing works and operational delivery.

2.4 Internal Communication and Employee Engagement

(Supports Research Objective 1)

Engagement literature consistently positions internal communication as a central driver. Mishra et al. (2014) stress that transparent, credible messages enhance engagement. Karanges et al. (2015) report strong correlations between clarity, timeliness, and cognitive engagement. Fernandez (2019) quantifies this link, noting an 18% increase in engagement when leaders communicated meaningfully.

Mmutle (2022) highlights how internal communication empowers employees to make better decisions, improving efficiency. Similarly, Vokić, Bilušić, and Najjar (2021) argue that open dialogue enhances organisational commitment. These studies, however, are largely descriptive and rarely disaggregate findings by employee category, which may mask critical differences between frontline and office staff.

In infrastructure settings, where safety and responsiveness are critical, engagement may be mediated more by immediate communication tools than by corporate newsletters or surveys. This gap justifies the present study's emphasis on analysing experiences of different employee categories to reveal nuanced drivers of engagement at Ringway.

2.5 Communication Channels and Platform Effectiveness

(Supports Research Objective 2)

The rapid expansion of digital communication tools has reshaped workplace practices. Verčič and Špoljarić (2020) show that satisfaction depends heavily on channel fit, while Ali et al. (2021) argue that richer tools such as mobile apps foster clarity and emotional connection. However, Cheng et al. (2001) demonstrate that construction firms face unique barriers, with dispersed worksites making some platforms impractical.

Comparative analyses add nuance. Leonardi and Contractor (2018) suggest Microsoft Teams supports clearer task management and centralised records, whereas Slack fosters speed and informality. Gartner (2021) and McKinsey (2022) confirm that Teams integrate better with structured workflows, while Slack excels in agile collaboration. Yet, few studies assess platform fit in hybrid, safety-critical environments, leaving firms like Ringway without empirical guidance.

The literature also highlights persistent mismatches between digital tools and field conditions. Ruck and Welch (2012) and Goodman and Truss (2004) stress the importance of context-appropriate tools, noting that noise, mobility, and accessibility barriers can undermine adoption. For infrastructure firms, this raises the question of whether tools like Teams or tablets are sufficient, or whether simpler modes (e.g., phone calls, posters) remain indispensable.

By addressing this, the second research objective to explore alternative communication platforms contributes practical insights where current literature is largely speculative.

2.6 Trust and Two-Way Communication

(Supports Research Objectives 3 & 4)

Trust is consistently positioned as central to effective communication. Mishra et al. (2014) highlight that authentic, dialogic communication builds trust across competence, integrity, and benevolence dimensions. Mbhele and de Beer (2017) argue that two-way channels cultivate participative culture, and Pološki Vokić et al. (2021) link transparent communication to higher organisational trust. Theoretically, Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) explains how reciprocal respect underpins trust, while Psychological Safety Theory (Edmondson, 1999) clarifies why employees speak up when they feel secure. Verčič and Špoljarić (2020) support this empirically, showing that interactive platforms outperform one-way channels in fostering trust.

Yet, barriers remain. Cheng et al. (2001) show that hierarchical norms and dispersed worksites limit voice in construction. Men (2014) adds that leadership responsiveness, not just message frequency, is decisive. This literature, however, tends to generalise across industries, without deeply examining field-heavy contexts where communication can directly affect safety.

By investigating both trust and feedback practices, this thesis addresses Objectives 3 and 4, examining how two-way communication and leadership visibility can enhance both relational trust and organisational performance at Ringway.

2.7 Conclusion and Research Gap

The literature converges on the view that internal communication is strategic, foundational to engagement, and increasingly mediated by technology. It links directly to trust, brand alignment, and performance. However, three critical gaps emerge:

1. **Platform Effectiveness in Hybrid Settings:** Limited empirical evidence on which tools (Teams, Slack, microsites) work best for dispersed, high-risk industries.
2. **Segmented Employee Experiences:** Sparse research disaggregating communication needs across managers, contractors, and office staff.
3. **Integration with Marketing Strategy:** Underexplored alignment between internal communication, brand identity, and external stakeholder perception in infrastructure contexts.

This thesis addresses these gaps by investigating current practices at Ringway, evaluating platform suitability across employee categories, and linking internal communication to brand and organisational strategy.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates the research design employed to investigate internal communication practices at Ringway, Milton Keynes. To ensure a systematic and coherent approach, the methodology is structured using the research onion framework proposed by Saunders et al. (2015).

3.2 The Research Onion

The research onion, developed by Saunders et al. (2015), is a comprehensive model that illustrates the layers of methodological decisions required to design a robust research study. Each layer builds upon the previous one, guiding the researcher from broad philosophical assumptions to specific data collection techniques. By systematically addressing each layer, the research onion ensures that the methodology is coherent and aligned with the study's objectives. In the context of this research, the onion framework is applied to justify the qualitative approach, the use of semi-structured interviews, and the focus on multiple employee categories at Ringway, ensuring that the design captures the complexity of internal communication in a safety-critical, hybrid work environment.

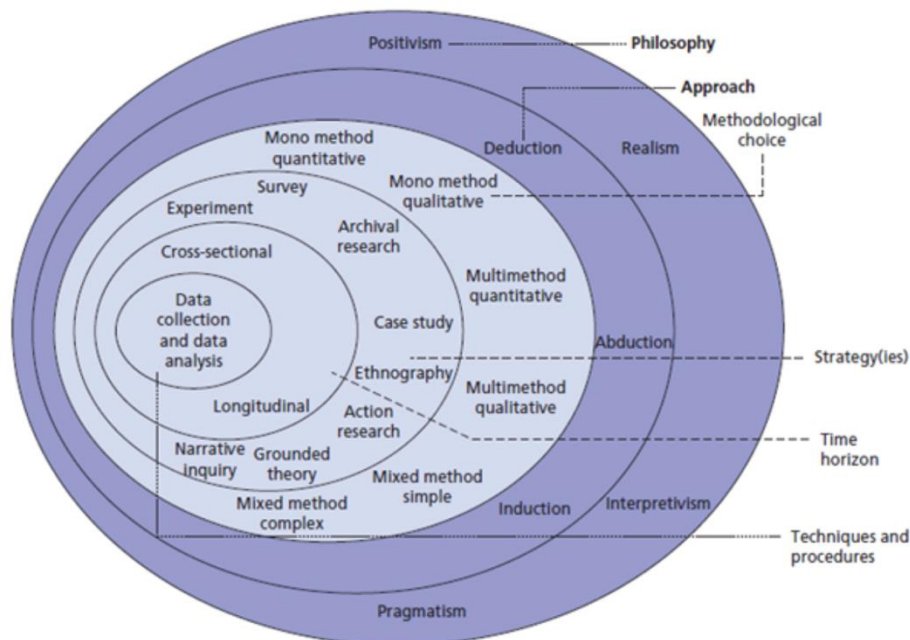


Figure 2 Lifted Diagram from Saunders et al., 2015

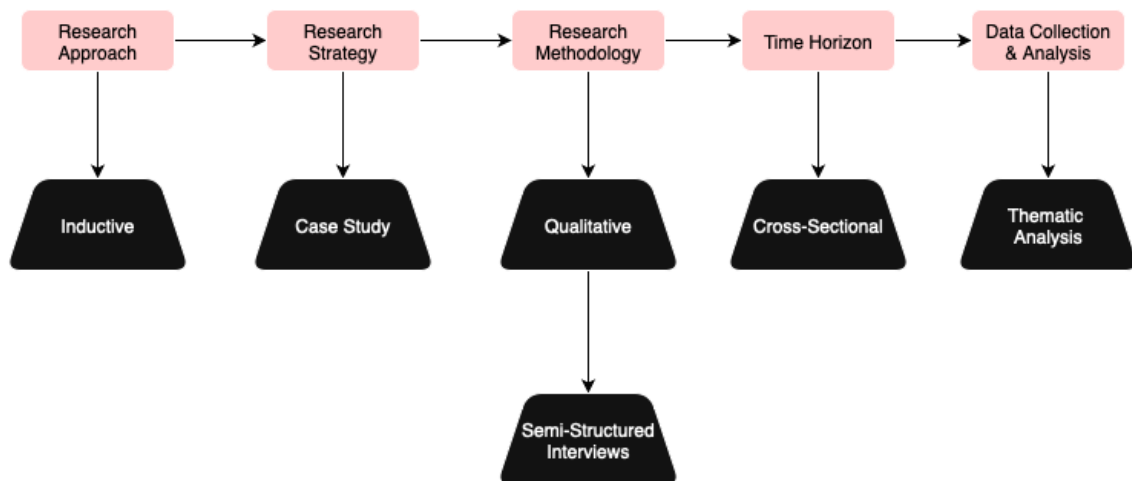


Figure 3 Research Design based on Research Onion

3.2.1 Research Philosophy

The outermost layer of the research onion is the research philosophy, which encompasses the researcher's assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology). As this study is a part of a Master's thesis and not a PhD, hence a research philosophy will not be explored.

3.2.2 Research Approach

The research approach determines how theory is developed or used in the study. An inductive approach is selected, as it involves collecting data and then identifying patterns or themes to generate new insights or theories (Saunders et al., 2015). This approach is particularly appropriate for qualitative research that seeks to explore complex phenomena in depth, such as internal communication at Ringway. By conducting semi-structured interviews and analysing responses without preconceived hypotheses, the study can uncover unique perspectives on communication practices, trust, and potential improvements. The inductive approach aligns with the interpretivist philosophy, as it prioritises data-driven insights over testing existing theories, which a deductive approach would entail. For Ringway, this approach ensures that findings are grounded in employees' lived experiences, providing context-specific solutions to communication challenges.

3.2.3 Research Strategy

The research strategy outlines the overall plan for conducting the study. A case study strategy is employed, focusing on Ringway as a single organisational case. Case studies allow for an in-depth investigation of a specific phenomenon within its real-life context, making them ideal for exploring complex issues like internal communication in a specific organisational setting (Yin, 2014). Ringway, with its diverse workforce and safety-critical operations, provides a bounded system for examining communication practices across different employee categories. This strategy enables the study to capture the nuances of communication dynamics within a single organisation, offering richer insights than broader strategies like surveys or experiments, which may lack the depth

needed to address the research objectives. The case study approach is particularly relevant for Ringway, as it allows for a detailed exploration of how communication methods impact managers, contractors, and staff differently.

3.2.4 Methodological Choices

Methodological choices involve selecting between qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. This study adopts a qualitative methodology, which focuses on understanding meanings, experiences, and contexts through non-numerical data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research is ideal for exploring the subjective experiences of Ringway's employees, as it allows for in-depth insights into their perceptions of communication practices, trust, and potential improvements.

Semi-structured interviews are well suited to exploring communication practices in depth, as they combine a structured framework of guiding questions with flexibility to follow participant perspectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

A key advantage of this approach was the use of **open-ended questions**, which allowed participants to express their views in their own words rather than being constrained by predefined options. Open questions are widely recognised for enabling richer narratives and uncovering attitudes, beliefs, and meanings that may not emerge through closed questioning (Flick, 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2013). For example, asking *“How would you describe the level of trust in communication with your supervisor?”* allowed employees to reflect on both their experiences and perceptions, rather than being restricted to a numeric scale.

Closed-ended questions were deliberately avoided as the primary format, as they tend to generate more limited responses and are better suited to quantitative survey-based studies (Gill et al., 2008). In contrast, this research sought to generate contextual depth and explore underlying dynamics of communication, which required flexibility beyond binary or scaled answers.

Additionally, **probing questions** were strategically employed during interviews to encourage elaboration or clarification where necessary. Probes are particularly valuable in semi-structured interviewing as they deepen the exploration of emerging themes and ensure richer, more detailed insights (Patton, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). For instance, when participants gave brief responses such as *“we just talk to the supervisor,”* probes like *“Can you give an example of when that worked well?”* were used to generate more contextually grounded data.

Overall, the combination of open-ended guiding questions, avoidance of closed formats, and the strategic use of probing ensured that the interviews remained participant-led while still aligned with the research objectives.

3.2.5 Time Horizon

The time horizon indicates whether the study is cross-sectional or longitudinal. This research adopts a cross-sectional design, collecting data at a single point in time. Cross-sectional studies are suitable for exploratory research aiming to capture a snapshot of current practices and perceptions (Saunders et al., 2015). Given the time constraints of an MSc thesis and the need to provide timely insights for Ringway, a cross-sectional approach is practical, allowing for a comprehensive examination of internal communication without requiring long-term observation. This contrasts with a longitudinal design, which would track changes over time but is less feasible within the study's timeframe. The cross-sectional approach ensures that the study can deliver actionable findings relevant to Ringway's current communication landscape.

3.2.6 Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

The innermost layer of the research onion involves selecting specific techniques for data collection and analysis. Participants were recruited with the support of the researcher's line manager at Ringway Milton Keynes, who helped identify relevant individuals across three categories: managers, on-site contractors, and non-managerial employees. In total, 15 interviews were conducted.

Participants received a Microsoft Teams calendar invite which included a detailed information sheet, the consent form, and an overview of the research objectives and interview questions (see Appendix B). At the start of each interview, verbal consent was recorded, including permission to disclose limited personal details such as job role and tenure for contextual accuracy (see Appendix C Interview transcript for consent statement and approval).

Interviewees also received the question list in advance to prepare, ensuring a more engaged and thoughtful dialogue. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via Microsoft Teams, depending on participant availability.

Data Collection Process Timeline

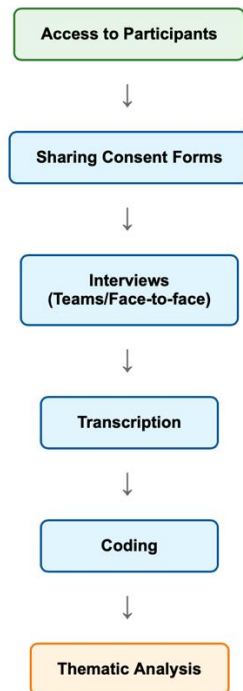


Figure 4 Data Collection Timeline

Given below is the table that outlines the objectives and interview questions, alongside the relevant literature that supports it.

OBJECTIVES	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	LITERATURE
Analyse Ringway's current internal communication methods	Can you describe how you primarily communicate with colleagues at Ringway and what you find most effective or challenging about these methods in your role?	Welch & Jackson (2007); Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra (2014); Brunton et al. (2017); Karanges et al. (2015)
	How do the current communication methods meet or fail to meet your needs as a [manager/on-site worker/non-managerial employee], particularly in terms of accessibility and clarity?	Shannon & Weaver (1949); Cheng, Li, Love, & Irani (2001); Fernandez (2019)

	What specific advantages or drawbacks have you experienced with email or face-to-face communication when collaborating with other teams or departments at Ringway?	Welch & Jackson (2007); Kitchen & Daly (2002); Brunton et al. (2017)
Explore alternative communication platforms or channels applicable to Ringway	Are you aware of any digital communication tools used in other organisations that you think could improve communication at Ringway? If so, why?	Verčič & Špoljarić (2020); Men & Jiang (2016); Ewing, Men, & O'Neil (2019)
	What features would you want in a new communication platform to better support your work as a [manager/on-site worker/non-managerial employee] at Ringway?	Leonardi & Contractor (2018); McKinsey & Company (2022); Gartner (2021)
	How do you think introducing a new communication tool, such as a messaging app or project management platform, could change the way you collaborate with colleagues?	Verčič & Špoljarić (2020); Ewing, Men, & O'Neil (2019); Men & Jiang (2016)
Investigate the role of trust in communications	How would you describe the level of trust in the communication you receive from colleagues or leadership at Ringway, and what factors influence this trust?	Blau (1964); Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra (2014); Karanges et al. (2015)
	Can you share an example of a situation where trust (or lack of trust) in communication affected your work as a [manager/on-site worker/non-managerial employee]?	Edmondson (1999); Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra (2014); Karanges et al. (2015)
	What specific actions or communication practices do you	Mbhele & de Beer (2017);

	believe could enhance trust among employees at Ringway?	Men & Jiang (2016); Freeman (1984)
Examine strategies for two-way communication and relationship building	How often do you have opportunities to provide feedback or engage in two-way communication with your team or managers, and how effective do you find these interactions?	Welch & Jackson (2007); Mbhele & de Beer (2017); Edmondson (1999)
	Can you share an example of a time when two-way communication (e.g., open discussions or feedback sessions) helped strengthen your relationship with colleagues at Ringway?	Ewing, Men, & O'Neil (2019); Men & Jiang (2016); Edmondson (1999)
	What strategies or practices do you think could encourage more open, two-way communication to build stronger relationships in your role as a [manager/on-site worker/non-managerial employee]?	Mbhele & de Beer (2017); Welch & Jackson (2007); Freeman (1984)

Table 2 Interview Questions

3.3 Research Sample Selection

Purposive sampling was used to ensure participants were directly relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2015). A total of 15 employees were interviewed, stratified as follows:

- 4 Managers
- 6 On-site Workers
- 5 Non-managerial Employees

This ensured balanced representation from across the organisation, capturing the perspectives of office-based leadership, field-based operatives, and administrative staff. Combining insights from each group created a holistic view of internal communication challenges and strengths.

3.3.1 Overview of Participants

A total of 15 interviews were conducted with participants varying in role, tenure, and communication exposure. Some interviews were conducted face-to-face, while most were held via Microsoft Teams.

Participant Code	Role	Tenure at Ringway	Meeting Date, Time & Duration	Place
P1	Business Unit Manager	9.5 years	15/07/2025 4:49PM 30:41 mins	Teams
P2	Contract Manager	5 years	16/07/2025 9:22AM 12:08 mins	In-person
P3	Supervisor	11 years	16/07/2025 9:46AM 11:59 mins	Teams
P4	Scheduler	10 years	16/07/2025 11:25AM 20:48 mins	Teams
P5	Contracts Manager	10 years	16/07/2025 1:49PM 18:24 mins	In-person
P6	Sustainability Coordinator	1 year	16/07/2025 2:14PM 22:36 mins	In-person
P7	Health, Safety & Environment Advisor	5 years	18/07/2025 9:59 AM 26:23 mins	Teams
P8	Business Manager	31 years	21/07/2025	Teams

			10:00AM	
			26:25 mins	
P9	Highways Operative	1.5 years	22/07/2025 7:30AM	Teams
			11:07 mins	
P10	Highways Operative	2.5 years	22/07/2025 8:00AM	Teams
			20:10 mins	
P11	Street Light Operative	7 years	22/07/2025 8:30AM	Teams
			10:46 mins	
P12	Street Light Operative	7 years	23/07/2025 8:00AM	Teams
			19:55 mins	
P13	Highways Operative	4 years	23/07/2025 8:30AM	Teams
			16:34 mins	
P14	Street Light Operative	1.5 years	23/07/2025 9:00AM	Teams
			20:05 mins	

Table 3 Participant Information

3.4 Data Analysis Strategy

Thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), provides a structured yet flexible approach to analysing interview data. The process begins with:

1. Familiarisation with the data through transcription and repeated reading

2. Generation of initial codes to highlight important features
3. Searching for patterns and grouping similar codes into themes
4. Reviewing themes against the dataset to ensure relevance and coherence
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the final report with direct participant quotes as evidence

This rigorous process ensures that the analysis is systematic and grounded in the participants' perspectives, providing meaningful insights for Ringway.

3.5 Ensuring Research Quality

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies are employed, aligning with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for qualitative research. Credibility is enhanced through member checking, where participants review transcripts or summaries to confirm accuracy. Transferability is supported by providing thick descriptions of Ringway's context and participant roles, allowing readers to assess the applicability of findings to other settings. Dependability is ensured through an audit trail, documenting methodological decisions and analysis steps. Confirmability is maintained by grounding interpretations in the data, using direct quotes and linking findings to the literature. These strategies collectively strengthen the study's rigour and reliability.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This study followed the ethical guidelines provided by Cranfield University and adhered to the principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, and data protection (Saunders et al., 2019).

All participants were invited through professional channels and provided with an **Information Sheet** and a **Consent Form** (see Appendix B). These documents clearly outlined the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Participants were assured that no identifiable personal data would be used in the final report.

At the beginning of each interview, **verbal consent** was obtained. This included permission to record the conversation and to use basic identifiers (such as job role and tenure) to provide context for the analysis. This approach was appropriate for a semi-structured, qualitative format, where participants often engage more freely when trust and flexibility are established (Bell & Bryman, 2007).

The **consent form** covered the following key elements:

- **Purpose of the study:** Exploring internal communication practices at Ringway Milton Keynes.
- **Voluntary nature:** Clarified that participation was optional and could be withdrawn at any point.
- **Use of data:** Explained how responses would be used academically and to inform organisational recommendations, with strict confidentiality.

- **Anonymity:** Ensured that names or identifiable details would not be published.
- **Recording:** Stated that interviews would be audio-recorded for transcription and analysis purposes only.

The consent form also provided contact information for the researcher and supervisors in case of concerns. The form design followed best practices in ethical qualitative research, ensuring transparency and respect for participant autonomy (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001).

Participants were given the opportunity to review the interview questions in advance through the Microsoft Teams invite. This step aligned with ethical recommendations for reducing participant stress and increasing informed dialogue (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

All data were stored securely in password-protected digital files, and only the researcher had access to raw recordings. Transcripts were anonymised during the analysis phase.

3.7 Limitations of the Methodology

While the qualitative methodology is well-suited to the research objectives, it has limitations. The case study approach and small sample size (15 participants) limit generalisability, as findings may be specific to Ringway's context. The cross-sectional design captures a snapshot of communication practices, potentially missing temporal dynamics. To mitigate these, the study provides detailed contextual descriptions to enhance transferability, acknowledges subjective interpretations, and encourages future longitudinal research to explore changes over time.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a robust methodology for investigating internal communication at Ringway, using the research onion to justify an interpretivist, inductive, qualitative approach. The next chapter will present the findings from the data analysis, offering insights into Ringway's communication practices and potential improvements.

4 Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from 15 semi-structured interviews conducted with employees across Ringway's key workforce categories. The study used thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework.

Thematic development was inductively derived from the data, then mapped against the research objectives. There was no use of tools, the analysis was done manually. Patterns identified through coding were grouped into four themes, each reflecting a dominant area of concern or strength in internal communication at Ringway.

4.2 Initial Coding

Each transcript was reviewed manually, and descriptive codes were assigned to highlight key features of the data. These codes provided the foundation for building sub-themes and themes in later phases.

A summary of sample codes is presented in the table below. A more detailed version of the coding table, including all codes generated across the 15 interviews, can be found in Appendix D.

Participant Quote	Initial Code	Notes
"It depends, really. If it's something urgent, we just ring up. Otherwise Teams or email, but often stuff gets missed on tablets." (P5, Contracts Manager)	Multi-platform switching; Missed communication on tablets	Shows reliance on urgency to determine channel; lack of consistency.
"You can't hear the tablet ping when you're next to a live carriageway." (P13, Highways Operative)	Ineffective notifications; On-site barriers	Illustrates environmental mismatch between channel and work context.
"We've always trusted our supervisor... he's done the job longer than we have." (P10, Highways Operative)	Supervisor trust; Experience builds credibility	Reflects reliance on supervisors' expertise as a trust anchor.
"There's a bit of a disconnect between the office and the site teams. They don't always see our messages right away." (P1, Business Unit Manager)	Office-site communication gap; Delayed response	Highlights leadership distance and structural communication barriers.
"We just go to our manager whenever we need. It's not formal, but it works." (P6, Sustainability Coordinator)	Informal feedback; Open-door communication	Demonstrates preference for direct, personal interactions.

"I've filled out surveys, but never heard anything back." (P4, Scheduler)	Lack of feedback loop; Formal channels ineffective	Reflects distrust in formal mechanisms; low response visibility.
"Phone calls are just better. Straightforward. You get things sorted then and there." (P12, Street Light Operative)	Preference for phone; Directness valued	Highlights desire for simple, immediate communication.
"Emails should have a summary of what's expected. Sometimes you just walk into a meeting blind." (P5, Contracts Manager)	Need for structured briefs; Meeting preparation	Suggests improvement in formal communication clarity.

Table 4 Examples of Initial Codes from Participant Interviews

4.3 Theme 1: Fragmented Communication Channels

Alignment with Objective 1: This theme captures the variety of current communication methods in use at Ringway, aligning with the first research objective. Participants highlighted frequent shifts between channels Teams, emails, verbal updates, tablets, and calls, indicating a lack of consistency.

4.3.1 Sub-theme: Multi-Platform Dependency

"It depends, really. If it's something urgent, we just ring up. Otherwise, teams or email, but often stuff gets missed on tablets." (P5, Contracts Manager)

"I speak to the site guys verbally mostly, but with leadership, it's Teams or email. Not everyone checks messages promptly though." (P3, Supervisor)

"We sometimes get emails, sometimes a call, sometimes a message on Teams. No standard way. That's the problem." (P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor)

This variability supports Daft and Lengel's (1986) Media Richness Theory, which emphasises the importance of aligning message complexity with appropriate communication channels. Additionally, Welch and Jackson (2007) highlight the necessity of message consistency for enhancing employee engagement. Kitchen and Daly (2002) further assert that effective internal

communication requires a coherent system for information dissemination across hierarchical levels.

4.3.2 Sub-theme: Misalignment in Communication Tools

"You can't hear the tablet ping when you're next to a live carriageway." (P13, Highways Operative)

"Sometimes, you're out in the rain or traffic, and you can't read a tablet. It's not ideal." (P11, Street Light, Operative)

"My Team's notifications are on, but I don't get to them till I'm back at the depot." (P9, Highways Operative)

These responses align with Ruck and Welch (2012), who advocate for context-appropriate tools in internal communication strategies. Poor alignment between channel and environment can impair message retention (Mazzei, 2010). Goodman and Truss (2004) similarly argue that organisational communication should adapt to the working conditions of employees to ensure accessibility.

4.3.3 Theme 2: Trust and Accessibility in Communication

Alignment with Objective 3: This theme addresses the role of trust in workplace communication, especially in relation to accessibility and leadership responsiveness.

4.3.4 Sub-theme: High Trust in Supervisors

"We've always trusted our supervisor... he's done the job longer than we have." (P10, Highways Operative)

"He listens when we say something didn't go well, and he'll note it down for tomorrow." (P15, Street Light Operative)

"We can always call him. There's no judgement. That helps a lot." (P5, Street Lighting Operative)

This supports Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory, emphasising the reciprocal nature of trust and its importance in direct communication. Mishra (1996) further outlines that trust in supervisors enhances psychological safety

and job satisfaction. Tkalac Verčič et al. (2012) note that direct managerial communication is a key determinant of employee trust and commitment.

4.3.5 Sub-theme: Leadership Distance and Low Visibility

"There's a bit of a disconnect between the office and the site teams. They don't always see our messages right away." (P1, Business Unit Manager)

"Sometimes decisions are made without our input. You just get an email, no discussion." (P4, Scheduler)

"I wouldn't know the names of some of the managers making those decisions." (P13, Street Light Operative)

Welch's (2012) model of internal communication effectiveness stresses the value of leadership visibility and dialogue, supporting these findings. Men (2014) also highlights that transparent leadership communications foster greater trust and engagement. MacLeod and Clarke (2009) argue that visible and empowering leadership is essential for effective employee voice.

4.4 Theme 3: Informal Feedback Over Formal Channels

Alignment with Objective 4: This theme focuses on two-way communication, particularly the dominance of informal exchanges and perceived limitations in formal feedback mechanisms.

4.4.1 Sub-theme: Informal Feedback Norms

"We just go to our manager whenever we need. It's not formal, but it works." (P6, Sustainability Coordinator)

"Every day, communication is what keeps us safe. If we don't talk, we're at risk." (P10, Highways Operative)

"I think just talking during the shift helps the most. Not all of us are big on emails." (P14, Highways Operative)

This aligns with Edmondson's (1999) concept of psychological safety and Tourish and Hargie's (2004) view on informal, trusted communication. Hargie et al. (2002) suggest that informal communication helps strengthen social cohesion in high-risk environments. Reissner and Pagan (2013) argue that

informal interaction plays a significant role in supporting trust and culture in dispersed teams.

4.4.2 Sub-theme: Limited Formal Engagement

"I've filled out surveys, but never heard anything back." (P4, Scheduler)

*"They ask for feedback sometimes, but no one ever says what they did with it."
(P2, Contracts Manager)*

"If it's important, I'd rather just go talk to someone. I don't trust those online forms." (P6, Contracts Manager)

This disconnect echoes Macnamara's (2015) emphasis on feedback loops and response visibility. Welch and Jackson (2007) stress the importance of feedback utilisation in reinforcing employee voice. Additionally, Cornelissen (2017) suggests feedback must be seen as consequential for it to contribute to organisational learning.

4.5 Theme 4: Suggestions for Improvement

Alignment with Objectives 2 and 4: This theme combines forward-looking suggestions related to platform suitability and enhancing communication effectiveness. Participants proposed simplifying tools and increasing the quality of interaction.

4.5.1 Sub-theme: Simplified Communication and Human Touch

"Phone calls are just better. Straightforward. You get things sorted then and there." (P12, Street Light Operative)

"A poster in the depot, maybe even just a big screen that loops messages." (P6, Sustainability Coordinator)

"Some things need to be said in person. It saves time and confusion." (P8, Business Manager)

This resonates with Eisenberg's (1984) strategic ambiguity theory, where clear messaging benefits from contextual grounding. Cardon and Marshall (2015) suggest that humanised communication is critical in operational settings.

According to Zerfass et al. (2021), employee-preferred channels like verbal or face-to-face communication enhance perceived message credibility.

4.5.2 Sub-theme: Structured Meeting Preparation

"Emails should have a summary of what's expected. Sometimes you just walk into a meeting blind." (P5, Contracts Manager)

"Just a heads-up or context would help. Especially when it's cross-department." (P4, Scheduler)

"If it's a big update or change, an agenda helps us prepare better." (P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor)

This supports Clampitt and Downs' (1993) argument for cognitive readiness in communication. Argenti (2007) stresses the importance of structured internal communication in building organisational clarity. Chandler (2020) also emphasises that pre-meeting briefs increase communication efficiency in hybrid teams.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter illustrated the lived realities of internal communication at Ringway. Key themes such as trust in direct supervisors, limitations of digital channels in field environments, and the strength of informal communication practices were uncovered. These findings offer rich ground for deeper theoretical engagement in the next chapter.

Theme	Sub-themes	Objective(s)	Key Literature
Fragmented Communication Channels	Multi-Platform Dependency	Objective 1	Daft & Lengel, 1986; Welch & Jackson, 2007
	Misalignment in Tools	Objective 1	Ruck & Welch, 2012; Goodman & Truss, 2004
Trust and Accessibility	High Trust in Supervisors	Objective 3	Blau, 1964; Mishra, 1996; Tkalac Verčič et al., 2012
	Leadership Gaps	Objective 3	Welch, 2012; Men, 2014; MacLeod & Clarke, 2009

Informal Feedback Culture	Informal Norms	Objective 4	Edmondson, 1999; Hargie et al., 2002; Reissner & Pagan, 2013
	Lack of Formality	Objective 4	Macnamara, 2015; Cornelissen, 2017
Suggestions for Improvement	Simplified & Verbal Channels	Objectives 2, 4	Eisenberg, 1984; Cardon & Marshall, 2015; Zerfass et al., 2021
	Pre-Meeting Briefs	Objectives 2, 4	Clampitt & Downs, 1993; Argenti, 2007; Chandler, 2020

Table 5 Themes Aligned with Research Objectives and Literature

5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter 4 considering the academic literature explored in Chapter 2. By linking interview insights with theoretical frameworks, it highlights how internal communication at Ringway both reflects and challenges existing research. The analysis is structured around the four research objectives: communication tools, trust and transparency, feedback and engagement, and strategies for communication improvement.

5.2 Communication Tools and Channel Effectiveness

Objective 1 – Analysing Ringway’s Current Internal Communication Methods

Employees at Ringway described a wide mix of communication tools like email, Microsoft Teams, face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and tablets. However, site operatives expressed that digital tools were not always practical in field environments. One operative explained, *“You can’t hear the tablet ping when you’re next to a live carriageway”* (P13, Highways Operative), reflecting the environmental limitations of digital notifications. This finding highlights a mismatch between channel design and working context, where environmental noise, weather, and physical conditions create barriers to effective digital communication.

This strongly supports **Media Richness Theory** (Daft & Lengel, 1986), which emphasises the importance of selecting communication channels that match task complexity and urgency. Richer media, such as face-to-face and phone calls, were clearly preferred in safety-critical situations. Similarly, **Welch and Jackson (2007)** argue that consistency and clarity across communication channels are essential for effective engagement, yet at Ringway, employees described fragmentation, where important updates were sometimes missed because different teams relied on different tools.

Other scholars, such as **Ruck and Welch (2012)** and **Mazzei (2010)**, highlight that organisations must ensure communication tools are accessible to all employees. At Ringway, accessibility challenges were most evident among operatives, who did not regularly check Teams or email while working on-site.

This resonates with **Cheng et al. (2001)**, who describe the “communication disconnection” that often affects dispersed infrastructure teams.

The findings confirm that while Ringway’s existing system offers multiple channels, the lack of standardisation reduces overall effectiveness. The study contributes to the literature by showing how environmental conditions such as noise or weather, can exacerbate communication challenges, adding nuance to existing research on channel effectiveness (Ewing et al., 2019).

5.3 Trust and Transparency

Objective 3 – Investigating the Role of Trust in Communication

Trust emerged as one of the strongest themes in the interviews, particularly in the relationships employees had with their immediate supervisors. Operatives repeatedly expressed confidence in managers who had previously worked in their roles and demonstrated empathy: “*We’ve always trusted our supervisor... he’s done the job longer than we have*” (P10, Highways Operative). Trust was closely tied to responsiveness and accessibility, where supervisors were described as approachable and non-judgmental.

This aligns with **Social Exchange Theory** (Blau, 1964), which highlights how trust develops through reciprocal relationships. It also supports **Mishra et al. (2014)**, who emphasise transparency and authenticity in communication as critical for building organisational trust. Importantly, the interviews revealed a contrast: while supervisors were viewed as highly trustworthy, trust in senior leadership was weaker. Employees described leadership as distant, with decisions communicated primarily through emails without opportunities for dialogue.

This distinction echoes **Pološki Vokić et al. (2021)**, who argue that internal communication is a key driver of organisational trust, but only when it involves visibility and dialogue. **MacLeod and Clarke (2009)** similarly emphasise the importance of leadership visibility, while **Men (2014)** highlights the role of transparent leadership communications in building employee engagement. At Ringway, employees felt excluded when decisions were made without consultation, echoing **Stakeholder Theory** (Freeman, 1984), which stresses the need to involve employees as key stakeholders.

A particularly noteworthy finding is that employees felt *inauthentic communication eroded trust more than silence*. Receiving an update without evidence of action such as feedback requests without follow-up was perceived negatively. This insight refines existing research by highlighting the **visibility–action**

gap, where communication without follow-through risks damaging rather than building trust.

5.4 Feedback and Engagement Practices

Objective 4 – Examining Two-Way Communication and Relationship Building

Feedback practices at Ringway were largely informal. Many employees relied on spontaneous conversations or shift debriefs rather than formal mechanisms such as surveys. For example, one participant stated, *“We just go to our manager whenever we need. It’s not formal, but it works”* (P6, Sustainability Coordinator). This finding underscores the importance of informal communication as a reliable and trusted channel, particularly in safety-driven environments.

This aligns with **Edmondson’s (1999)** concept of psychological safety, which argues that employees must feel safe to speak openly. Informal communication was also identified by **Hargie et al. (2002)** and **Reissner and Pagan (2013)** as a critical driver of social cohesion and trust in dispersed teams. Similarly, **Men (2014)** shows that spontaneous, personal exchanges often have greater impact than formal, top-down processes.

However, employees expressed frustration with formal feedback systems, such as surveys, because they rarely saw outcomes: *“I’ve filled out surveys, but never heard anything back”* (P4, Scheduler). This directly echoes **Macnamara’s (2015)** critique of ineffective feedback loops and supports **Cornelissen’s (2017)** argument that communication must demonstrate visible consequences to be perceived as meaningful.

This study extends the literature by showing how informal communication acts as a strategic asset in the construction sector. Instead of dismissing informal channels as “unstructured,” the evidence suggests that they are valued for their immediacy and dependability. The key challenge for Ringway lies not in replacing informal channels but in complementing them with stronger feedback utilisation, ensuring that employees see the impact of their input.

5.5 Bridging Organisational Silos

Objectives 1 & 2 – Analysing Current Methods and Exploring Alternative Platforms

One of the most striking findings was the divide between office staff and site operatives. Office-based employees relied heavily on Teams and emails, while operatives depended on face-to-face conversations and calls. This separation

created **parallel communication systems**, where messages were not always translated across groups. As one manager noted, *“Sometimes decisions are made without our input. You just get an email, no discussion”* (P4, Scheduler).

This echoes the work of **Brunton et al. (2019)**, who identify silos as a persistent barrier to organisational alignment. It also mirrors findings by **Mbhele and de Beer (2017)** in the construction sector, where dispersed teams often experience weak communication links with central leadership. Efforts such as briefings and Teams updates at Ringway have value, but their impact is undermined when communication does not reach operatives in ways that fit their working reality.

Saunders et al. (2019) argue that layered communication strategies are necessary for complex organisations, different approaches for different contexts, audiences, and tasks. The Ringway case illustrates this vividly: office staff benefit from structured digital updates, while operatives require more direct, verbal methods.

This finding adds to the literature by showing that silos are reinforced not just by organisational structure but also by **technology preferences**. Unless alternative platforms are carefully orchestrated with clear routing rules, they risk creating more fragmentation rather than solving the problem.

5.6 The Role of Communication in Psychological Safety

Objectives 3 & 4 – Linking Trust and Two-Way Communication

Psychological safety was a recurring theme in the interviews, particularly in the way employees valued the accessibility of supervisors. One operative explained, *“We can always call him. There’s no judgement. That helps a lot”* (P5, Street Lighting Operative). These accounts show that open-door policies and informal communication foster the confidence to speak up about concerns, particularly around safety.

This directly reflects **Edmondson (1999)**, who defined psychological safety as the ability to express concerns without fear of negative consequences. It also aligns with **Lincoln and Guba’s (1985)** concept of “credibility through proximity,” where trust is highest with those closest to employees’ daily work. In contrast, distant leadership communication lacked authenticity, confirming **Mmutle’s (2017)** critique of disengaged leadership practices.

The study highlights an important contribution: psychological safety is **localised rather than uniform** across the organisation. It exists strongly in close-knit teams with responsive supervisors but weakens at higher levels of leadership where communication is perceived as top-down. This finding extends the work

of **Karanges et al. (2015)** and **Reissner and Pagan (2013)** by demonstrating how psychological safety can vary across hierarchical levels, reinforcing the need for organisations to actively scale local trust-building practices.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how Ringway's internal communication practices both validate and challenge the academic literature. The study confirms existing theories on trust, psychological safety, and informal communication while contributing new insights on the role of environmental context, parallel communication systems, and the risks of performative leadership communication. These findings provide a strong foundation for the practical recommendations presented in the next chapter.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the findings of the study, offering personal reflections on how each research objective has been addressed, followed by recommendations for both academia and organisational practice.

6.2 Reflections on the Research Process

Conducting this research proved to be an eye-opening and transformative journey for the researcher. By engaging directly with 15 employees across diverse roles, the study captured an authentic understanding of how communication is experienced within Ringway. The reflections below outline how each research objective was addressed and fulfilled.

Objective 1: To analyse Ringway's current internal communication methods

At the outset, the researcher assumed that an organisation of Ringway's size and reputation would employ a fairly standardised communication system. However, the findings revealed a fragmented mix of channels like Teams, emails, depot briefings, tablets, and phone calls. While this diversity offered flexibility, it also led to inconsistency, delays, and in some cases, risks to safety.

For instance, operatives shared how tablet notifications often went unheard amidst the noise of traffic or adverse weather. Such examples brought Media Richness Theory to life in a tangible way. The analysis showed that communication methods were not inherently poor but rather poorly aligned with the operational realities of infrastructure work. By mapping these practices and their challenges, the researcher achieved this objective, while also gaining a deeper appreciation of the practical complexities of communication and the need for context-driven solutions.

Objective 2: To explore alternative communication platforms or channels applicable to Ringway

This objective enabled the study to move beyond diagnosis towards exploring solutions. Participants eagerly suggested alternatives, ranging from the continued value of direct phone calls over Teams to the use of depot posters and TV screens for quick updates. Notably, employees were not calling for more technology, but for communication tools that were better suited to their working environments.

By capturing these employee-driven suggestions, the study demonstrated that meaningful alternatives already exist within the workforce's own imagination. This reinforced the importance of co-creating communication strategies with employees rather than imposing top-down systems. In fulfilling this objective,

the researcher highlighted feasible, inclusive, and context-sensitive approaches that Ringway could adopt to enhance its internal communication effectiveness.

Objective 3: To investigate the role of trust in communication

Trust emerged as one of the strongest themes throughout the study. Operatives expressed confidence in supervisors who were approachable and hands-on, but many also voiced concerns about feeling distant from senior leadership. For many, trust was framed not in abstract concepts but in practical, everyday situations such as relying on a colleague to confirm that equipment was safe.

The study revealed two distinct levels of trust: localised trust with supervisors, which was strong and consistent, and weakened institutional trust with senior leadership, due to limited visibility and delayed responsiveness. This finding highlighted the fragility of trust in communication and its reliance on behaviours such as listening, responding, and being visibly present. In fulfilling this objective, the researcher came to understand that trust is not built through systems or surveys, but through authentic, consistent action, a valuable insight for both academic and professional contexts.

Objective 4: To examine strategies for two-way communication and relationship building

The final objective revealed a dual reality within Ringway's communication culture. On one hand, informal, day-to-day exchanges were highly effective, enabling employees to raise issues directly with supervisors, discuss challenges during shift briefings, and engage in open conversation. On the other hand, formal feedback mechanisms, such as surveys, were viewed as ineffective, with participants questioning whether their input was ever acted upon.

This highlighted both the strengths and limitations of informal communication. While personal trust and open-door practices were vital assets, the absence of robust formal systems meant that not all voices were equally heard, and valuable insights risked being overlooked. By addressing this objective, the study demonstrated that genuine two-way communication requires not only accessible channels but also structured mechanisms to ensure that feedback is valued, visible, and translated into action.

6.3 Academic Recommendations and Future Research Directions

While this research has contributed meaningfully to the academic literature, several areas could benefit from further exploration:

6.3.1 Explore Sector-Specific Communication Norms

This study focused on infrastructure, particularly civil engineering, but similar research could be extended to sectors like healthcare, logistics, or education to compare internal communication effectiveness across industry types.

Future Research Opportunity:

- Comparative studies across sectors using similar interview-based qualitative designs could help generalise or contrast findings.

6.3.2 Expand Cross-Cultural Studies in Communication

Given the UK's multicultural workforce, it may be valuable to explore how cultural background affects perception of communication tone, channel preference, or trust.

Future Research Opportunity:

- Cross-cultural qualitative studies comparing employees from different backgrounds within the same organisation.

6.3.3 Test Long-Term Effects of Communication Interventions

Finally, it would be valuable to test some of the recommendations (like “You Said, We Did” boards or simplified message formats) over time to assess their actual impact on engagement and trust.

Future Research Opportunity:

- Design longitudinal studies that track employee perception before and after specific communication initiatives.

6.4 Organisational Recommendations for Ringway

Drawing from interview data and academic models, the following recommendations are presented:

6.4.1 Simplify and Prioritise Internal Messages

Participants indicated that excessive or unclear internal updates (especially on Teams or email) diluted engagement. A clearer hierarchy of message urgency, perhaps through visual labels or summary dashboards, can improve comprehension.

Actionable Suggestion:

- Implement colour-coded headers in internal messages (e.g., Red: Immediate action, Yellow: FYI)
- Use a weekly bulletin for non-urgent updates to reduce email overload.

6.4.2 Consistent Use of Microsoft Teams Across Roles

Digital inequalities were evident: operatives struggled to access or notice the Team's updates, while office staff over-relied on the tool.

Actionable Suggestion:

- Provide light-touch training on Teams for field workers.
- Explore hybrid tools: integrate Teams alerts with SMS notifications or use louder hardware for tablets.

6.4.3 Create Trust Through Action-Based Communication

Trust was strongest when promises were followed by action, especially from supervisors.

Actionable Suggestion:

- Managers should publicly follow up on feedback from staff meetings.
- Consider creating a "You Said, We Did" board, digital or physical to visualise progress.

6.4.4 Encourage Feedback Culture Across All Levels

A recurring insight was that informal feedback thrives, but formal channels are limited or intimidating.

Actionable Suggestion:

- Encourage daily debrief circles for site teams.
- Introduce quarterly open forums or anonymous suggestion channels.

6.5 Final Thoughts

The significance of this research lies in its ability to bridge the gap between theory and practice. It takes abstract concepts such as trust, media richness, and two-way communication and grounds them in the voices of people working on highways, in depots, and in offices. It demonstrates that communication is not just an academic framework or a leadership slogan, it is the difference between safety and risk, inclusion and exclusion, engagement and frustration.

The study contributes not only to academic debate but also delivers actionable insights for Ringway. It shows that listening to employees can generate practical, low-cost improvements that enhance both engagement and organisational performance. More broadly, it demonstrates the researcher's ability to conduct rigorous and meaningful work that bridges theory and practice, offering value to both academia and industry.

In essence, this thesis gives employees a voice, provides leaders with a path forward, and showcases the potential of research to drive change. That is its greatest impact.

7 Reflective Report

7.1 Introduction

From 19th May to 31st July, I had the privilege of completing my internship with Ringway Milton Keynes, a highways service provider operating under Eurovia, part of Vinci Group. Unlike my prior experience in marketing roles in India, where I was surrounded by retail and service-based industries, this was my first foray into the construction and infrastructure sector. It required me to adapt rapidly to a new organisational culture, work environment, and stakeholder landscape.

This reflection details my adaptation journey, challenges faced, strategies adopted, and the personal and professional growth I experienced. It will also illustrate how I applied marketing and communication frameworks learnt during my MSc Strategic Marketing course directly into practice, thereby bridging academic knowledge and industry experience.

7.2 Understanding Ringway and Its Context

Ringway plays a vital role in keeping Milton Keynes moving. Working in partnership with Milton Keynes Council, the company is responsible for maintaining roads, footways, lighting, and overall infrastructure safety. Early interactions with my manager, Suzanne Moss, and the wider team helped me map the company's structure: office staff managing planning, administration, and strategy; operational supervisors coordinating workflows; and on-site operatives delivering services in challenging, often high-risk environments.

As a newcomer to this industry, I was fascinated by how much infrastructure work is embedded in the everyday functioning of a city. What stood out was Ringway's dual responsibility: not only keeping residents safe and mobile but also communicating the 'why' behind roadworks, a story often invisible to the public eye.

7.3 Adaptation Journey and Challenges

7.3.1 Entering a New Industry

The construction sector initially felt overwhelming. Technical terminology and health & safety protocols were unfamiliar, and I needed to understand how they tied into my research on internal communication. A key adaptation strategy was immersive observation: during commutes, grocery runs, or even casual outings, I found myself scanning roads for the Ringway logo. This habit transformed into a source of pride, it symbolised belonging.

7.3.2 Hybrid Work Arrangement

Originally expected to be in-office daily, I later transitioned to a one-day office presence with the rest being remote. This shift was disappointing, as I had looked forward to constant exposure. However, Suzanne personally ensured continuity by driving me weekly to the office, keeping me embedded in the team. I adapted by using Teams for structured check-ins and applying Kotter's (1996) change management lens: recognising the shift as a small "change curve" I needed to manage through acceptance, relationship-building, and digital engagement.

7.3.3 Data Collection Challenges

My project required 15 semi-structured interviews. Two participants withdrew unexpectedly, which could have derailed timelines. But colleagues stepped in one even arranging replacements, demonstrating supportive workplace culture. Another memorable incident was when a participant, a recent graduate, empathised with my thesis pressures, sharing strategies to remain calm reminding me of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle where reflection and advice-sharing become powerful learning tools.

7.4 Applying Marketing and Communication Frameworks in Practice

7.4.1 Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984)

While working on recommendations for a micro website to engage stakeholders, I applied stakeholder mapping to identify priority audiences:

- Residents (who needed clarity on roadworks)
- Council officers (key decision-makers)
- On-site operatives (the ones delivering services)
- Office staff and managers (internal enablers)

The micro website's goal wasn't just information but storytelling, helping residents see the "struggle behind the cones". This directly reflected Freeman's principle that stakeholders want to understand both outcomes and the processes behind them.

7.4.2 Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

I recognised that Ringway's challenge mirrored those in IMC: multiple channels (Teams, emails, posters, tablets, face-to-face briefings) but inconsistent impact. Using Schultz & Schultz's (1998) IMC model, I examined how messages could be better integrated, for example, aligning depot posters with Teams updates and council press releases to ensure consistency across audiences.

7.4.3 Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004)

Though a construction firm, Ringway ultimately delivers services, safe and functional roads. Applying service-dominant logic, I reframed communication not just as information flow but as value co-creation between operatives, managers, and residents. Every time an operative trusted their supervisor or a resident understood why a road was closed, value was being co-created.

7.4.4 Psychological Safety (Edmondson, 1999)

Through interviews, I observed how informal conversations created a safe communication environment. Operatives openly expressed concerns to supervisors without fear. This framework helped me interpret why informal, trust-based exchanges were more effective than formal surveys.

7.4.5 McKinsey's 7S Framework

During initial meetings, Suzanne walked me through how Ringway is structured. I reflected on the 7S framework (Strategy, Structure, Systems, Shared Values, Skills, Style, Staff) to understand how communication threads across the company. For example, shared values of safety and teamwork permeated from operatives to managers, binding the organisation.

7.5 Key Learnings and Growth

7.5.1 Stakeholder Communication

I learnt how storytelling in infrastructure builds legitimacy. Meeting the council's communications officer reinforced this, as she explained residents care less about "what is being done" and more about "why it's happening". This insight was pivotal for my micro website recommendations.

7.5.2 Internal Communication Challenges

Interviewing both office staff and on-site operatives gave me a holistic view of communication barriers. For operatives, tablets and Teams notifications often failed in noisy environments. For office staff, feedback loops (like surveys) lacked visibility. This taught me that audience context is everything, echoing Media Richness Theory.

7.5.3 Professional Confidence

This internship pushed me beyond my comfort zone, first time in construction, first time on a micro website project. But with Suzanne's support, access to company materials, and opportunities to engage with staff, I grew confident in translating academic theory into practical solutions.

7.5.4 Personal Growth

Coming from India, where roadworks are often seen as inconveniences with little explanation, I developed an appreciation for transparent civic communication in the UK. It reshaped my perspective on governance and infrastructure, strengthening my sense of civic responsibility and pride.

7.6 Workplace Anecdotes

Beyond the data collection, there were personal moments that made this internship unforgettable:

- During one interview, a participant realised I was a student writing my thesis. Having recently completed her own postgraduate degree, she empathised with my stress and offered practical tips on staying calm, structuring arguments, and not overthinking. That small conversation reminded me how human connections in the workplace often go beyond tasks.
- On another occasion, two participants backed out of scheduled interviews at the last moment. I panicked, but before I could even escalate the issue, another colleague stepped in, made a few calls, and found replacements. That act of kindness showed me the collaborative spirit at Ringway, people didn't just care about their own tasks; they cared about supporting each other.

7.7 Conclusion

My internship at Ringway was a transformative experience. It demanded adaptability, challenged me with unfamiliar industry dynamics, and gave me the platform to apply marketing and communication frameworks in real-world practice. I not only fulfilled my research goals but also experienced personal pride in being part of Milton Keynes' civic fabric—from spotting Ringway logos on my grocery runs to seeing operatives' struggles and successes first-hand.

Most importantly, I walked away with confidence, empathy, and a deeper understanding of the power of communication in complex, high-stakes industries. This reflective journey proves that I can thrive across industries, adapt quickly, and leverage academic learning for meaningful organisational impact.

References

1. Ringway. (n.d.). About Us. Ringway. Retrieved July 25, 2025, from <https://www.ringway.co.uk/about-us>
2. Ringway. (n.d.). Posts. LinkedIn. Retrieved July 25, 2025, from <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ringway/posts/?feedView=all>
3. Rogala, A., & Kaniewska-Sęba, A. (2013). Internal communication as a marketing communications tool. *13th International Marketing Trends Conference*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280052936>
4. Ali, B. J., Anwar, G., Gardi, B., Othman, B. J., Aziz, H. M., Ahmed, S. A., Hamza, P. A., Ismael, N. B., Sorguli, S., & Sabir, B. Y. (2021). Business communication strategies: Analysis of internal communication processes. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 3(3), 16–38. <https://doi.org/10>
5. Ana Tkalac Verčič, & Špoljarić, A. (2020). Managing internal communication: How the choice of channels affects internal communication satisfaction. *Public Relations Review*, 46(3), 101926. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101926>
6. Brunton, M., Eweje, G., & Taskin, N. (2010). Communicating corporate social responsibility: A case study of employee engagement at a UK retail bank. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 19(1), 79–94. DOI: [10.1002/bse.1889](https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.1889)
7. Ewing, M., Men, L. R., & O'Neil, J. (2019). Using social media to engage employees: Insights from internal communication managers. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 13(2), 110–132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2019.1575830>
8. Karanges, E. R., Johnston, K. A., Beatson, A., & Lings, I. N. (2015). The influence of internal communication on employee engagement: A pilot study. *Public Relations Review*, 41(1), 129–131. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.12.003>
9. Men, L. R. (2014). Strategic internal communication: Transformational leadership, communication channels, and employee satisfaction. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 28(2), 264–284. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318914524536>
10. Pološki Vokić, N., Rimac Bilušić, M., & Najjar, D. (2021). Building organisational trust through internal communication. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 26(1), 70–83. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-01-2020-0023>
11. Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350–383. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999> (Original work published 1999)
12. Fernandez, C. (2019). Engaging employees through internal communication. *Journal of Communication Management*, 23(1), 65–80.
13. Leonardi, P. M., & Contractor, N. (2018). Better people analytics. *Harvard Business Review*, 96(6), 70–81. <https://hbr.org/2018/11/better-people-analytics>
14. Masterson, R., & Pickton, D. (2004). Evaluating IMC: An empirical study across UK universities. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 10(1), 17–34.

15. McKinsey & Company. (2022). *The new tools for organisational communication: Comparing Slack, Teams, and beyond*. McKinsey & Company <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/all-about-teams-a-new-approach-to-organizational-transformation>
16. Men, L. R., & Jiang, H. (2016). Cultivating quality employee–organisation relationships: The interplay among organisational leadership, culture, and internal communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 10(5), 462–479. DOI:10.1080/1553118X.2016.1226172
17. Mmutle, T. (2022). (Re-) Positioning and recognising the influence of internal communication on employee engagement for maximum organisational performance. *Communicare: Journal for Communication Sciences in Southern Africa*, 41(1), 46-62. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-comcare_v41_n1_a5
18. Ruck, K., & Welch, M. (2012). Valuing internal communication: Management and employee perspectives. *Public Relations Review*, 38(2), 294–302. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.016>
19. Verčič, A. T., & Špoljarić, A. (2020). Managing internal communication: How the choice of channels affects internal communication satisfaction. *Public Relations Review*, 46(3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101926>
20. Vokić, N. P., Bilušić, M. R., & Najjar, D. (2021). Building organisational trust through internal communication. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 26(1), 70–83. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-01-2020-0023>
21. Bell, E., & Bryman, A. (2007). The ethics of management research: An exploratory content analysis. *British Journal of Management*, 18(1), 63–77. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2006.00487.x>
22. Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*(4th ed.). Sage Publications.
23. Clampitt, P. G., & Downs, C. W. (1993). Employee perceptions of the relationship between communication and productivity: A field study. *Journal of Business Communication*, 30(1), 5–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002194369303000101>
24. Cornelissen, J. (2017). *Corporate communication: A guide to theory and practice* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
25. Daft, R. L., & Lengel, R. H. (1986). Organizational information requirements, media richness and structural design. *Management Science*, 32(5), 554–571. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.32.5.554>
26. Eisenberg, E. M. (1984). Ambiguity as strategy in organizational communication. *Communication Monographs*, 51(3), 227–242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758409390197>
27. Goodman, J., & Truss, C. (2004). The medium and the message: Communicating effectively during a major change initiative. *Journal of Change Management*, 4(3), 217–228. DOI: [10.1080/1469701042000255392](https://doi.org/10.1080/1469701042000255392)
28. Hargie, O., Tourish, D., & Wilson, N. (2002). Communication audits and the effects of increased information: A follow-up study. *The Journal of Business Communication*, 39(4), 414–436. DOI: [10.1177/002194360203900402](https://doi.org/10.1177/002194360203900402)

29. MacLeod, D., & Clarke, N. (2009). *Engaging for success: Enhancing performance through employee engagement*. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/1810/1/file52215.pdf>
30. Mazzei, A. (2010). Promoting active communication behaviours through internal communication. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(3), 221–234. DOI: [10.1108/13563281011068096](https://doi.org/10.1108/13563281011068096)
31. Mishra, A. K. (1996). Organizational responses to crisis: The centrality of trust. In R. M. Kramer & T. R. Tyler (Eds.), *Trust in organizations: Frontiers of theory and research* (pp. 261–287). SAGE Publications. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247083532_Organizational_Responses_to_Crisis_The_Centrality_of_Trust
32. Reissner, S. C., & Pagan, V. (2013). Generating employee engagement in a public–private partnership: Management communication activities and employee experiences. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(14), 2741–2759. DOI: [10.1080/09585192.2013.765497](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.765497)
33. Tkalac Verčič, A., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2012). Internal communication: Definition, parameters, and the future. *Public Relations Review*, 38(2), 223–230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.019>
34. Welch, M. (2012). Appropriateness and acceptability: Employee perspectives of internal communication. *Public Relations Review*, 38(2), 246–254. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.017>
35. Zerfass, A., Tench, R., Verhoeven, P., Moreno, Á., & Verčič, D. (2021). *European Communication Monitor 2021*. EACD/EUPRERA. <https://www.communicationmonitor.eu/>
36. Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research: Interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal*, 204(6), 291–295. <https://doi.org/10.1038/bdj.2008.192>
37. Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
38. Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). SAGE.
39. Edmondson, A. C. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350–383. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999>
40. Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.
41. Schultz, D. E., & Schultz, H. F. (1998). Transitioning marketing communication into the twenty-first century. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 4(1), 9–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135272698345852>
42. Zerfass, A., Verčič, D., & Wiesenbergh, M. (2021). The dawn of a new golden age for employee communication? How COVID-19 shifted the focus from efficiency to empathy. *Journal of Communication Management*, 25(4), 381–396. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCOM-11-2020-0130>
43. Ali, A. J., Cundiff, E., & Hamid, H. (2021). Digital communication platforms and workplace collaboration: Enhancing clarity and emotional resonance. *Journal of Business Communication*, 58(2), 145–162.
44. Argenti, P. A. (2007). *Corporate communication*. McGraw-Hill Education.
45. Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. Wiley.

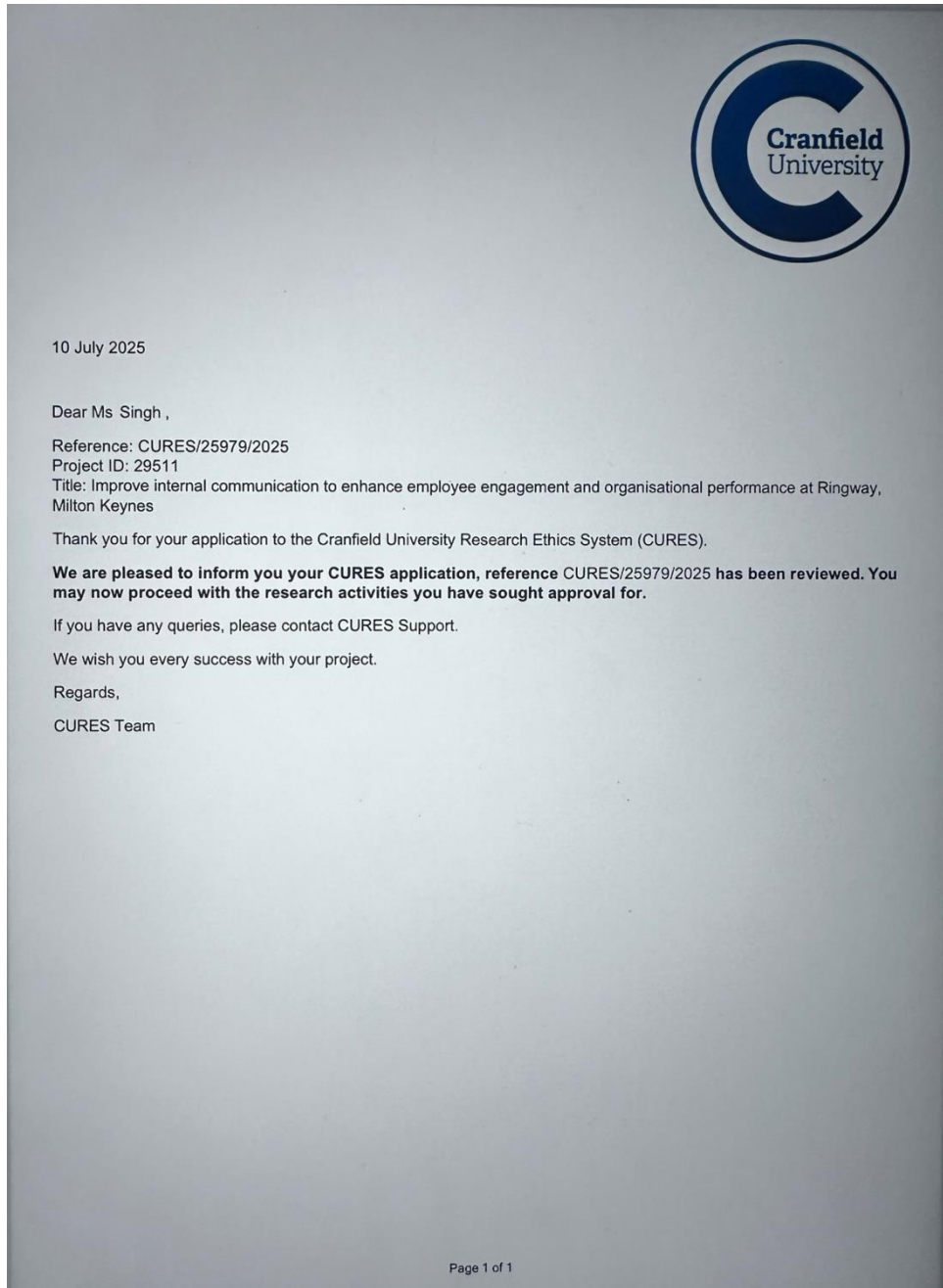
46. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. DOI: [10.1191/1478088706qp063oa](https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa)
47. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/256089360_Successful_Qualitative_Research_A_Practical_Guide_for_Beginners
48. Brunton, M., Eweje, G., & Taskin, N. (2017). Communicating corporate social responsibility in organisational contexts: The challenges of engagement. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 26(3), 390–402. DOI: [10.1002/bse.1889](https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.1889)
49. Cardon, P. W., & Marshall, B. (2015). The hype and reality of social media use for work collaboration and team communication. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 52(3), 273–293. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488414525446>
50. Cheng, E. W. L., Li, H., Love, P. E. D., & Irani, Z. (2001). Network communication in the construction industry. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 6(2), 61–70. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13563280110390314>
51. Clappitt, P. G., & Downs, C. W. (1993). Employee perceptions of the relationship between communication and productivity: A field study. *Journal of Business Communication*, 30(1), 5–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002194369303000101>
52. Cornelissen, J. (2017). *Corporate communication: A guide to theory and practice* (5th ed.).
53. Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.).
54. Daft, R. L., & Lengel, R. H. (1986). Organizational information requirements, media richness, and structural design. *Management Science*, 32(5), 554–571. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2631846>
55. Eisenberg, E. M. (1984). Ambiguity as strategy in organizational communication. *Communication Monographs*, 51(3), 227–242. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637758409390197>
56. Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350–383. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999>
57. Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5th ed.).
58. Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Pitman. DOI: [10.2139/ssrn.263511](https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.263511)
59. Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research: Interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal*, 204(6), 291–295. doi: [10.1038/bdj.2008.192](https://doi.org/10.1038/bdj.2008.192)
60. Karanges, E., Johnston, K., Beatson, A., & Lings, I. (2015). The influence of internal communication on employee engagement: A pilot study. *Public Relations Review*, 41(1), 129–131. DOI: [10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.12.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.12.003)
61. Kitchen, P. J., & Daly, F. (2002). Internal communication during change management. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 7(1), 46–53. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13563280210416035>

62. Kliatchko, J. (2005). Towards a new definition of integrated marketing communications (IMC). *International Journal of Advertising*, 24(1), 7–34. DOI: [10.1080/02650487.2005.11072902](https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2005.11072902)
63. Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235701029 Experiential Learning Experience As The Source Of Learning And Development](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235701029_Experiential_Learning_Experience_As_The_Source_Of_Learning_And_Development)
64. Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Harvard Business School Press.
65. Leonardi, P. M., & Contractor, N. S. (2018). Better people analytics: Measuring knowledge, learning, and performance in organizations. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 60(1), 1–9. <https://hbr.org/2018/11/better-people-analytics>
66. Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
67. MacLeod, D., & Clarke, N. (2009). *Engaging for success: Enhancing performance through employee engagement*. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/1810/1/file52215.pdf>
68. Masterson, R., & Pickton, D. (2004). *Marketing: An introduction*. McGraw-Hill Education.
69. Mazzei, A. (2010). Promoting active communication behaviours through internal communication. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 15(3), 221–234. DOI: [10.1108/13563281011068096](https://doi.org/10.1108/13563281011068096)
70. Mbhele, N., & de Beer, E. (2017). Internal communication as a driver of employee engagement in the South African construction industry. *Communicare*, 36(2), 1–23.
71. Men, L. R. (2014). Strategic internal communication: Transformational leadership, communication channels, and employee satisfaction. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 28(2), 264–284. DOI: [10.1177/0893318914524536](https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318914524536)
72. Men, L. R., & Jiang, H. (2016). Cultivating employee–organization relationships: The interplay of leadership style and internal communication. *Public Relations Review*, 42(5), 962–970. <https://instituteforpr.org/interplay-among-organizational-leadership-culture-communication/>
73. Mishra, K., Boynton, L., & Mishra, A. (2014). Driving employee engagement: The expanded role of internal communications. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 51(2), 183–202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488414525399>
74. Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L., & Wynaden, D. (2001). Ethics in qualitative research. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33(1), 93–96. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1547-5069.2001.00093.x>
75. Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage.
76. Reissner, S., & Pagan, V. (2013). Generating employee engagement in a public–private partnership: Management communication activities and employee experiences. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 24(14), 2741–2759. DOI: [10.1080/09585192.2013.765497](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2013.765497)
77. Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.). Sage.

78. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2015). *Research methods for business students* (7th ed.). Pearson Education.
79. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.
80. Schultz, D. E., & Schultz, H. F. (1998). Transitioning marketing communication into the twenty-first century. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 4(1), 9–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135272698345852>
81. Shannon, C. E., & Weaver, W. (1949). *The mathematical theory of communication*. University of Illinois Press. <https://people.math.harvard.edu/~ctm/home/text/others/shannon/entropy/entropy.pdf>
82. Tourish, D., & Hargie, O. (2004). *Key issues in organisational communication*. Routledge. DOI: [10.4324/9780203634394](https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203634394)
83. Tkalac Verčič, A., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2012). Internal communication: Definition, parameters, and the future. *Public Relations Review*, 38(2), 223–230. DOI: [10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.019](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.019)
84. Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004). Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 68(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.68.1.1.24036>
85. Verčič, A. T., & Špoljarić, A. (2020). Managing internal communication: How the choice of channels affects communication satisfaction. *Public Relations Review*, 46(3), 101–911. DOI: [10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101926](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101926)
86. Verčič, A. T., & Vokić, N. P. (2017). Engaging employees through internal communication. *Public Relations Review*, 43(5), 885–893. DOI: [10.1016/j.pubrev.2017.04.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2017.04.005)
87. Welch, M. (2012). Appropriateness and acceptability: Employee perspectives of internal communication. *Public Relations Review*, 38(2), 246–254. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.017>
88. Welch, M., & Jackson, P. R. (2007). Rethinking internal communication: A stakeholder approach. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 12(2), 177–198. DOI: [10.1108/13563280710744847](https://doi.org/10.1108/13563280710744847)
89. Zerfass, A., Verčič, D., Nothhaft, H., & Werder, K. P. (2021). Strategic communication: Defining the field and its contribution to research and practice. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 15(4), 237–255. DOI: [10.1080/1553118X.2018.1493485](https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1493485)

APPENDIX A

Ethical approval letter



APPENDIX B

Interview Consent Form

Dear participant,

You are invited to partake in an interview about internal communication at Ringway Milton Keynes. The purpose of the study is to understand how communication currently takes place among different categories of employees and to explore ways to improve internal communication and employee engagement through better platforms and strategies.

Your participation in this study will help contribute to the understanding of internal communication practices and employee needs within Ringway Milton Keynes. Please understand that your participation is voluntary. If you don't want to take part, you do not have to give a reason. You also have the right to withdraw from the research at any point you like. All information gathered will be used to suggest improvements in internal communications at Ringway and for academic analysis as part of my MSc Strategic Marketing thesis. By participating in the interview, you have granted your consent for the results to be used in our research. If you agree to take part, all the information you give us will be confidential and used for the purposes of this study only. The information will be used in a way that will not allow you to be identified individually. Data generated by the study will be retained in accordance with the University's policy.

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Please answer all of the questions as openly as you can. This interview will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. There are no right or wrong answers; we just want to obtain your opinions. Think about the information on the sheet and ask me if you are not sure about anything.

If you have any queries or would like any further information about this interview or the research project, please contact: vartika.singh@cranfield.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and for participating in the interview.

Sincerely,
Vartika Singh
MSc Strategic Marketing
Cranfield School of Management

Dr. Tamira King
Lecturer
Cranfield School of Management

Suzanne Moss
Business Manager
Ringway Milton Keynes

Teams Invite Email

Dear [Participant's Name],

I hope you're well.

My name is Vartika Singh, and I'm a Strategic Marketing Master's student at Cranfield University. I'm currently working as a marketing intern with Ringway Milton Keynes, and as part of my thesis project, I'm conducting short interviews with colleagues to understand and suggest improvements in internal communication across the organisation.

The interview will be held in person/on teams, take no more than 20 minutes, and your insights would be greatly appreciated. I have attached the consent form and an information document that comprises the research aim, objectives and interview questions for your reference.

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,
Vartika Singh
Marketing Intern, Ringway
vartika.singh@cranfield.ac.uk

Information Document

Improve internal communication to enhance employee engagement and organisational performance at Ringway, Milton Keynes

Aim of the Research

To investigate the current internal communication at Ringway with employees and recommend strategies for improvement.

Research Objectives

1. To examine Ringway's current internal communication methods among three employee categories: non-managerial employees, site-based workers, and managers.
2. To identify alternative communication platforms or channels that could be applicable and effective within Ringway.
3. To investigate the role of trust in internal communication and its impact on employee engagement and perception.
4. To investigate the presence and quality of two-way communication strategies at Ringway and how these support relationship-building and employee voice.

Data Collection

Data will be collected through **semi-structured interviews** with three categories of Ringway employees:

- **Managers:** To understand leadership perspectives on communication strategies.
- **On-site Workers:** To capture insights from field-based workers.
- **Non-managerial Employees:** To reflect the experiences of office-based or support staff.

Interviews will be designed to elicit detailed, qualitative insights aligned with the research objectives, allowing flexibility for participants to share their perspectives while maintaining focus.

Interview Questions

1. Can you describe how you primarily communicate with colleagues at Ringway and what you find most effective or challenging about these methods in your role?
2. How do the current communication methods meet or fail to meet your needs as a [manager/on-site workers/non-managerial employee], particularly in terms of accessibility and clarity?
3. What specific advantages or drawbacks have you experienced with email or face-to-face communication when collaborating with other teams or departments at Ringway?
4. Are you aware of any digital communication tools used in other organizations that you think could improve communication at Ringway? If so, why?
5. What features would you want in a new communication platform to better support your work as a [manager/on-site worker/non-managerial employee] at Ringway?
6. How do you think introducing a new communication tool, such as a messaging app or project management platform, could change the way you collaborate with colleagues?
7. How would you describe the level of trust in the communication you receive from colleagues or leadership at Ringway, and what factors influence this trust?
8. Can you share an example of a situation where trust (or lack of trust) in communication affected your work as a [manager/on-site worker/non-managerial employee]?
9. What specific actions or communication practices do you believe could enhance trust among employees at Ringway?
10. How often do you have opportunities to provide feedback or engage in two-way communication with your team or managers, and how effective do you find these interactions?
11. Can you share an example of a time when two-way communication (e.g., open discussions or feedback sessions) helped strengthen your relationship with colleagues at Ringway?
12. What strategies or practices do you think could encourage more open, two-way communication to build stronger relationships in your role as a [manager/on-site worker/non-managerial employee]?

APPENDIX C

Interview Transcript

[Student] Vartika Singh

0 44 0:44

[Student] Vartika Singh 0 minutes 44 seconds
Hello.

[Student] Vartika Singh 0 minutes 46 seconds
2.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

0 48 0:48

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 0 minutes 48 seconds
Hello.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

0 48 0:48

[Student] Vartika Singh 0 minutes 48 seconds
Good morning. How are you?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

0 50 0:50

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 0 minutes 50 seconds
I'm very well, thank you. Yourself?

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

0 53 0:53

[Student] Vartika Singh 0 minutes 53 seconds
Thank you. I'm good too. Thank you so much for doing this.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

0 58 0:58

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 0 minutes 58 seconds
That's okay, no problem.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

1 1 1:01

[Student] Vartika Singh 1 minute 1 second

I want to start by taking two permissions from you. First of all, do you consent to this interview?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

1 5 1:05

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 1 minute 5 seconds

Okay.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 1 minute 7 seconds

Okay, yeah, so, uh, what do I... how do I send it? How do you want to do it?

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

1 minute 12 seconds 1:12

[Student] Vartika Singh 1 minute 12 seconds

You just have to say yes. Do you consent?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

1 minute 14 seconds 1:14

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 1 minute 14 seconds

Oh, okay. Yeah, sorry. Yes, yes, sure, yeah.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

1 minute 16 seconds 1:16

[Student] Vartika Singh 1 minute 16 seconds

Awesome. And second, I would like to take permission to, you know, gather a few of your personal data, which is around your tenure and your role at Ringway.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

1 minute 29 seconds 1:29

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 1 minute 29 seconds

Yep, yep, that's fine. Yep. So I'm a Health and Safety Environment Advisor.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

1 minute 34 seconds 1:34

[Student] Vartika Singh 1 minute 34 seconds

Awesome. How long have you been at Ringway?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

1 minute 37 seconds 1:37

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 1 minute 37 seconds

So, with Ringway, I've been five years now; with VINCI Group it will be 15 years. So that's the wider business—VINCI Group, yeah.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

1 minute 49 seconds 1:49

[Student] Vartika Singh 1 minute 49 seconds

Yes.

[Student] Vartika Singh 1 minute 52 seconds

Right. I want to start by telling you the aim of my research. Basically, it is to investigate the current internal communications at Ringway with employees and to recommend strategies for improvement.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

1 minute 58 seconds 1:58

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 1 minute 58 seconds

Okay.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

2 minutes 8 seconds 2:08

[Student] Vartika Singh 2 minutes 8 seconds

So my questions are basically going to be around how Ringway Milton Keynes communicates with its employees, all of them, whether it's managers or leadership or even people working on site. So I want to understand...

[Student] Vartika Singh 2 minutes 27 seconds

...what kind of problems you're facing with the current communications basically the channels you guys use, whether it's email, face to face, WhatsApp and if there are any suggestions, if there are any changes that you would like to incorporate...

[Student] Vartika Singh 2 minutes 44 seconds

...within the system. And it's totally anonymous. Your name won't be mentioned anywhere. It's just to help the company as well as help my thesis. Like I said, it's going to be a semi-structured interview, 12 questions in 20 minutes.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

2 minutes 48 seconds 2:48

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 2 minutes 48 seconds

Okay.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 2 minutes 59 seconds

Okay, no problem.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

3 minutes 3:00

[Student] Vartika Singh 3 minutes

So let's begin. My first question is: can you describe how you primarily communicate with colleagues at Ringway and what you find most effective or challenging about these methods?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

3 minutes 11 seconds 3:11

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 3 minutes 11 seconds

Okay, so I mostly communicate via meetings. We have meetings face to face, and there is a bi-monthly health and safety meeting that we hold. We actually had one yesterday.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 3 minutes 28 seconds

It is a very productive meeting because we can discuss things, problems, and so on. The only problem I see with this one is that they don't send the whole team, there are just representatives...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 3 minutes 48 seconds

...for each team, and then the representative is supposed to cascade that information to their team. So what I would like is assurance that the representative who attends that meeting will obviously cascade and communicate whatever they learned...

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

3 minutes 55 seconds 3:55

[Student] Vartika Singh 3 minutes 55 seconds

Mhm.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

4 minutes 7 seconds 4:07

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 4 minutes 7 seconds

...you know, whatever actions there were from these meetings, that is then further cascaded to their team. So that's the one thing. Then, obviously, I communicate via emails too.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 4 minutes 25 seconds

If it is, for example, from the Group from Ringway to communicate with the Milton Keynes team, then we have, for example, safety alerts that we cascade. So again, just to make sure that Danny Mullins, for example you know, the Business Unit Manager received that safety alert...

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

4 minutes 43 seconds 4:43

[Student] Vartika Singh 4 minutes 43 seconds

Yeah.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

4 minutes 45 seconds 4:45

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 4 minutes 45 seconds

...and then he communicates then cascades further to his team. So, you know, because you send it to one nominated person, there is a risk that you might, you know, miss that a little bit.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 5 minutes 4 seconds

Is that person going to, you know, cascade the information is he going to forward that

information? That's the only challenge, I suppose: that it is not lost. Like, what if that person is off on holiday or something, or misses that email? That could be...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 5 minutes 21 seconds
...a challenge sometimes, yeah.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

5 minutes 24 seconds 5:24

[Student] Vartika Singh 5 minutes 24 seconds

Right. So how do the current communication methods meet or fail to meet your needs as an employee, particularly in terms of accessibility and clarity?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor
5 minutes 36 seconds 5:36

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 5 minutes 36 seconds

Okay. So yeah, we have the meetings. As long as the meetings are held regularly—and not, you know, if there is a need to postpone it—making sure that they definitely take place, because it's important. We have our targets to meet, and the health and safety...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 5 minutes 56 seconds
...meetings have to take place, so making sure that that is happening. Then, obviously, with emails—again, as I said—making sure that whatever I'm sending is then communicated to the team, that they forward that information.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 6 minutes 13 seconds
That people know the system and are aware of the system. So, if anything changes—we have loads of health and safety documentation on the business system called “The Way We Work”—making sure that the people...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 6 minutes 31 seconds
...know how to find this. A bit of training as well, because very often they will come back and say, “Oh, can you help find me this document?” They should know by now. So just giving that training to people to make sure they know.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 6 minutes 48 seconds
In regards to emails—again, it's fine as long as people send the message around. Yeah, I think that's what it is, yeah.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

7 minutes 7:00

[Student] Vartika Singh 7 minutes

Yes. So, just retracing to the question again, would you say that the current communication methods are meeting your needs? I know you gave suggestions that, you know...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

7 minutes 11 seconds 7:11

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 7 minutes 11 seconds

Yeah, yeah, I think they are—they do meet my needs. But, as I say, if the meeting is, for example, postponed or changed for the day, make sure that it is happening—that it's not lost somewhere.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 7 minutes 31 seconds

Because it's important that it is held on a regular basis. So I think people just need to realise that. You know, the suggestion would be: if the representative cannot...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 7 minutes 51 seconds

...attend the meeting, then delegate someone else to make sure that someone else attends the meeting.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

7 minutes 56 seconds 7:56

[Student] Vartika Singh 7 minutes 56 seconds

Yeah, absolutely. And what about accessibility? For the communications that you get from, let's say, leadership or any internal communication from the company, are you able to access it properly? Does it have clarity?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

8 minutes 8 seconds 8:08

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 8 minutes 8 seconds

Yeah.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 8 minutes 12 seconds

Yes, usually. I would say most of the time, yes. Obviously, sometimes things can be missed because there's so much information thrown at you that it can be complicated, but in general...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 8 minutes 32 seconds

...in the Milton Keynes team, Suzanne is really good in holding that communications—she sends things around. But another thing: are people reading these emails? So that is maybe a little verification...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 8 minutes 49 seconds

...of that. So it is accessible, but then to the point—it's accessible to the people who work in the office, but for people on the ground like our operatives, that message can very often be lost. So it may not be as accessible for them...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 9 minutes 7 seconds

...because we rely on people. They don't have constant access to computers or the internet—well, they have access to the internet, but you know what I mean. The nature of their work is not sitting by a laptop or computer, so...

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

9 minutes 7 seconds 9:07

[Student] Vartika Singh 9 minutes 7 seconds

Okay.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

9 minutes 23 seconds 9:23

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 9 minutes 23 seconds

So whatever Suzanne sends out, how do we make sure that that goes down and is communicated to our operatives?

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

9 minutes 32 seconds 9:32

[Student] Vartika Singh 9 minutes 32 seconds

Right. What specific advantages or drawbacks have you experienced with email or face-to-face communication when collaborating with other teams or departments at Ringway?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

9 minutes 43 seconds 9:43

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 9 minutes 43 seconds

Yeah, I think maybe the distribution list of the emails that are sent out as well. Recently I received a quality alert...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 9 minutes 58 seconds

...and sent it to Danny saying, "Have you seen this?" And he said to me, "No, I don't think I have." So probably going back to the Group to check in with whatever they send to Ringway Milton Keynes that they have the right distribution list and emails.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 10 minutes 16 seconds

So that, again that missing communication.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 10 minutes 23 seconds

I still think saying that I know it's a new era now of having Teams meetings and stuff but in certain aspects, face-to-face meetings are better.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

10 minutes 36 seconds 10:36

[Student] Vartika Singh 10 minutes 36 seconds

M.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

10 minutes 39 seconds 10:39

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 10 minutes 39 seconds

However, if there is a need and there's no other way—say, for example, they postponed

health and safety meetings recently because of the refurbishment of the office my opinion was they should have held it on Teams anyway...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 10 minutes 54 seconds

...but they decided no; they decided to wait for face to face. So, you know, it's entirely their decision. However, I think, you know, sometimes when you have to—then just do it on Teams...

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

11 minutes 10 seconds 11:10

[Student] Vartika Singh 11 minutes 10 seconds

You're right.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

11 minutes 10 seconds 11:10

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 11 minutes 10 seconds

...rather than not having it at all.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

11 minutes 14 seconds 11:14

[Student] Vartika Singh 11 minutes 14 seconds

Absolutely. So, are you aware of any digital communication tools used in other organisations that you think would improve communication at Ringway?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

11 minutes 26 seconds 11:26

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 11 minutes 26 seconds

Um...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 11 minutes 28 seconds

I know people still use—well, we use—WhatsApp, but I don't think that's the way the business wants to go; they want to use more Microsoft tools...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 11 minutes 46 seconds

...and now with AI as well. In terms of our clients, I think they tend to use WhatsApp and Teams primarily.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 11 minutes 59 seconds

I don't think so that there is—

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 12 minutes 5 seconds

There were yeah, there are some but I don't think... Do you know what? I probably don't have any. We don't have a say anyway; the Group will decide. So, yeah yes, please yeah, suggest, yeah, yeah, yeah.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

12 minutes 5 seconds 12:05

[Student] Vartika Singh 12 minutes 5 seconds

Right.

[Student] Vartika Singh 12 minutes 15 seconds

No, yeah, yeah—but you can always, you know, suggest. Yes, absolutely. Like you said, you mentioned WhatsApp and AI as well. So, what is your opinion—don't you think it can improve communication?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

12 minutes 21 seconds 12:21

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 12 minutes 21 seconds

Yeah.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 12 minutes 28 seconds

Mm.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

12 minutes 34 seconds 12:34

[Student] Vartika Singh 12 minutes 34 seconds

I mean, what are your opinions about these two?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

12 minutes 36 seconds 12:36

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 12 minutes 36 seconds

Yeah, I think they can improve. Anything that can improve communication, for me, is better. You know, if there is instant, quick communication and you can do that—this is much better. You can...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 12 minutes 52 seconds

...take a photo, send it out straight away if there's an issue or problem. Oh yeah, definitely, we should be using technology as much as we can.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

13 minutes 3 seconds 13:03

[Student] Vartika Singh 13 minutes 3 seconds

Awesome. So just to follow up on that: what features would you want in a new communication platform to better support your work as an employee at Ringway?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

13 minutes 15 seconds 13:15

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 13 minutes 15 seconds

Yeah, probably have everything in one place, in one system, when you go in for the

information, you don't have to go to different sources. Everything's on one platform, easily accessible.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 13 minutes 31 seconds

Yeah, the recent communication easily found. So you have a good search engine if you look for something—maybe some libraries and a knowledge-sharing platform that you can...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 13 minutes 48 seconds

...use. Yeah, probably that with AI to assist, something like that. So when you just quickly type in and you get the information that you need. And the same when I want to cascade and send information. For example, from my reports having one platform, a quick, accessible one, where I just take a photo, send actions...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 14 minutes 7 seconds

...boom, done. Yeah. So, yeah, definitely something like that would be very helpful, because at the moment what we have—they're slowly working on it—but it seems, again, very disjointed, and one system does this, another system does that, and they don't really communicate...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 14 minutes 27 seconds

...and talk to each other.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 14 minutes 30 seconds

But they are on the path they are working on it. But yes, and then obviously we have the one that you've seen our main pages and stuff but you can sometimes be very lost there.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

14 minutes 39 seconds 14:39

[Student] Vartika Singh 14 minutes 39 seconds

Yeah.

[Student] Vartika Singh 14 minutes 46 seconds

Right. My next question is: how do you think introducing a new communication tool, such as a messaging app or a project management platform, could change the way you collaborate with colleagues?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

14 minutes 58 seconds 14:58

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 14 minutes 58 seconds

Mhm.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 15 minutes 1 second

Yeah, as I said, I've already mentioned having something in one place would definitely help. The project management platform or things like that definitely, yeah. It would be easily accessible, one place.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 15 minutes 17 seconds
Yeah, I think it would definitely help. Yeah, yes.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh
15 minutes 18 seconds 15:18
[Student] Vartika Singh 15 minutes 18 seconds
Yeah, yeah, you got that, yeah.

[Student] Vartika Singh 15 minutes 22 seconds
How would you describe the level of trust in the communication you receive from colleagues or leadership at Ringway, and what factors influence this trust?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor
15 minutes 32 seconds 15:32
P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 15 minutes 32 seconds
Yeah, I think the level of trust is fine it's high, I would say. We get regular updates from our CEO. He puts a little video...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 15 minutes 48 seconds
...every quarter—so Q1, Q2 he actually recently did a quarter two update. Then they have in-person updates as well. So yeah, I think the level of trust is I would say they're doing their best; they try...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 16 minutes 7 seconds
...to communicate as best as they can. I don't directly work for Ringway Milton Keynes; I'm in the Group, so I offer services to Ringway Milton Keynes, Ringway Hertfordshire, and so on.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 16 minutes 28 seconds
So just my perspective from the Group what I receive I can say, yeah, from my senior people, I can say the level of trust is okay yeah, it's fine.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh
16 minutes 41 seconds 16:41
[Student] Vartika Singh 16 minutes 41 seconds
And could you name any factors that influence this trust? What I mean is why do you trust it, kind of thing?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor
16 minutes 46 seconds 16:46
P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 16 minutes 46 seconds
Yeah, I suppose the way of doing the little video that the CEO does I think that's a good way of communicating.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

16 minutes 53 seconds 16:53

[Student] Vartika Singh 16 minutes 53 seconds

Okay.

[Student] Vartika Singh 16 minutes 58 seconds

Alright.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

16 minutes 59 seconds 16:59

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 16 minutes 59 seconds

Yeah, they will follow this up with a letter as well sometimes. Recently there were some changes and they've sent the letter home. So, yeah, I think that's what it is that they will do follow-up communication.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

17 minutes 15 seconds 17:15

[Student] Vartika Singh 17 minutes 15 seconds

Right, right. So I think you've answered the next question as well, but I'll still ask you.

Can you share an example of a situation where trust or maybe lack of trust in communication affected your work as an employee?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

17 minutes 25 seconds 17:25

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 17 minutes 25 seconds

Mhm.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 17 minutes 33 seconds

Um...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 17 minutes 35 seconds

Yeah, so obviously the positive thing I said about the CEO. I suppose people below, when they communicate again, maybe checking these distribution lists when they send to senior people making sure that...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 17 minutes 55 seconds

...these people then communicate and share. I think just making sure that, you know, the communication lands with everyone. I'll give you an example:

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 18 minutes 14 seconds

Something would be sent but not necessarily received by lower-down not the senior people or, say, for example, operatives. So just making sure that everything which goes from the top down actually goes down, not just somewhere lost in the middle...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 18 minutes 33 seconds

...with office-based people. Yeah. So I think that's what it is, yeah.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

18 minutes 39 seconds 18:39

[Student] Vartika Singh 18 minutes 39 seconds

So, do you feel that the operatives, or people who miss this communication, might lack trust in the organisation?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

18 minutes 46 seconds 18:46

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 18 minutes 46 seconds

Mm.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 18 minutes 50 seconds

I think so yeah, maybe a little bit. Yeah, they might be, yes probably that, yeah.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

18 minutes 53 seconds 18:53

[Student] Vartika Singh 18 minutes 53 seconds

Right.

[Student] Vartika Singh 18 minutes 58 seconds

What specific actions or practices do you believe could enhance trust among employees at Ringway?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

19 minutes 6 seconds 19:06

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 19 minutes 6 seconds

Yeah, definitely face-to-face meetings. Making sure that we ask people for their opinion.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

19 minutes 11 seconds 19:11

[Student] Vartika Singh 19 minutes 11 seconds

Right.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

19 minutes 17 seconds 19:17

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 19 minutes 17 seconds

So definitely, you know consult with them. I think that would definitely build people's trust.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

19 minutes 18 seconds 19:18

[Student] Vartika Singh 19 minutes 18 seconds

Right.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor
19 minutes 28 seconds 19:28
P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 19 minutes 28 seconds
Yeah.

VS
[Student] Vartika Singh
19 minutes 28 seconds 19:28
[Student] Vartika Singh 19 minutes 28 seconds
Right.

[Student] Vartika Singh 19 minutes 30 seconds
Absolutely. How often do you have opportunities to provide feedback or engage in two-way communication with your team or managers, and how effective do you find these interactions?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor
19 minutes 42 seconds 19:42
P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 19 minutes 42 seconds
Yeah, quite often. In my team my health and safety team we meet every Monday for a 30-minute catch-up. And then we have every two, sorry, every three months we have a face-to-face big meeting.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 20 minutes 1 second
Because we're based all around Ringway in the UK, we have Teams meetings every week and then a big face-to-face meeting. Yeah, it works.

VS
[Student] Vartika Singh
20 minutes 17 seconds 20:17
[Student] Vartika Singh 20 minutes 17 seconds
Awesome. Can you share an example of a time when two-way communication like open discussions or feedback sessions helped your relationship with colleagues at Ringway?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor
20 minutes 29 seconds 20:29
P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 20 minutes 29 seconds
So I think yeah, yesterday I can give you an example. As I said, we had that bi-monthly health and safety environment meeting and, yeah, it was good feedback. You can then communicate to people face to face, and, yeah, that's all working fine.

VS
[Student] Vartika Singh
20 minutes 49 seconds 20:49
[Student] Vartika Singh 20 minutes 49 seconds
So, can we say that face-to-face meetings are really helping you build your relationships with

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor
20 minutes 53 seconds 20:53
P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 20 minutes 53 seconds
God

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 20 minutes 55 seconds
Yeah, yeah, I would say so. Yeah. I think it's definitely better than... and going on site to see operatives as well yeah, definitely. I mean, you know, the nature of our business is... it's all done, you know, in an office, and we have senior people all these meetings and you can sit all day in meetings and...

VS
[Student] Vartika Singh
20 minutes 57 seconds 20:57
[Student] Vartika Singh 20 minutes 57 seconds
Yeah.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor
21 minutes 15 seconds 21:15
P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 21 minutes 15 seconds
...you can, you know attend a single Teams meeting but for us, for the nature of the business, you know, highways maintenance company, you need to be operationally... you need to go and see the sites, how we're doing, because that's where the real work happens.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 21 minutes 35 seconds
And I think that if the operatives see you on site, coming and visiting, then it definitely builds trust as you said and the way of communication is best in person. We want two-way communication. So, yeah, in person, I think, is the best, but...

VS
[Student] Vartika Singh
21 minutes 53 seconds 21:53
[Student] Vartika Singh 21 minutes 53 seconds
Okay.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor
21 minutes 54 seconds 21:54
P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 21 minutes 54 seconds
...but, by saying that, obviously Teams works really well for yeah like today. So, here we go.

VS
[Student] Vartika Singh
22 minutes 1 second 22:01
[Student] Vartika Singh 22 minutes 1 second
Yeah. So we've come to my last question: what strategies or practices do you think

could encourage more open two-way communication to build stronger relationships in your role as an employee?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

22 minutes 15 seconds 22:15

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 22 minutes 15 seconds

I think definitely consultation and making sure that we listen to each other's feedback. As you said, two-way communication not just one-way where you're telling people what to do, you know?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 22 minutes 35 seconds

We just have to be open and talk and definitely listen to each other.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 22 minutes 44 seconds

Yeah, and anything that the company is suggesting new ways probably, again, they should ask employees first as well for any feedback, to make sure we're working collaboratively together...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 23 minutes 4 seconds

...rather than just impose something, because there are so many good minds there that they can come up with something together rather than just, you know...

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

23 minutes 14 seconds 23:14

[Student] Vartika Singh 23 minutes 14 seconds

Right, absolutely. So now my questions are done. Finally, on final notes, I wanted to ask you: is there anything specific that you feel should be done by Ringway for internal communications by the company that you feel is still...

[Student] Vartika Singh 23 minutes 34 seconds

...so any small bits that you think would just help you, maybe with your work in the office. I know we've talked about operatives as well, but I want to know about your role—I mean, I know you're sitting in the office what is something that you may want them to add?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

23 minutes 40 seconds 23:40

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 23 minutes 40 seconds

Mhm.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 23 minutes 42 seconds

Yep.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 23 minutes 44 seconds

Yeah, yeah.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 23 minutes 50 seconds
Um...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 23 minutes 53 seconds
Probably oh, I'm just thinking what would it be, in my role, that would help me? Yeah, include me more, maybe. So if there are any meetings, include me more make sure that I'm included, I'm aware of what's happening even though that might...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 24 minutes 13 seconds
...be not as significant, but still definitely to be included and be informed. Flyers, emails fine but probably less.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 24 minutes 29 seconds
The fewer emails, the better. So communicate what really needs to be communicated. That would definitely help.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 24 minutes 42 seconds
Um, I can't really think of anything else, to be fair.

VS
[Student] Vartika Singh
24 minutes 44 seconds 24:44
[Student] Vartika Singh 24 minutes 44 seconds
Okay.

[Student] Vartika Singh 24 minutes 46 seconds
No, I know it's totally fair. So, what I have heard is that mostly people rely on emails, Teams, and face to face; but like you said, there are a lot of things that get lost in translation with emails.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor
24 minutes 52 seconds 24:52
P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 24 minutes 52 seconds
Yeah.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 25 minutes 2 seconds
Yeah.

VS
[Student] Vartika Singh
25 minutes 2 seconds 25:02
[Student] Vartika Singh 25 minutes 2 seconds
And face to face is always the best, but let's say they wanted to introduce something new, right? You've told me what features you would want. Would you be open to a new communication platform, or will it be very...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor
25 minutes 4 seconds 25:04

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 25 minutes 4 seconds
Hmm.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

25 minutes 18 seconds 25:18

[Student] Vartika Singh 25 minutes 18 seconds

...chaotic for you since you already have Teams and emails and sometimes WhatsApp as well?

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor

25 minutes 24 seconds 25:24

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 25 minutes 24 seconds

It depends on what it would be. I suppose if it is a communication regarding one particular project rather than the overall...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 25 minutes 42 seconds

...day to day yeah, it depends what it is. If it is, say, one project that is starting, it's good to have everyone on the same platform like a knowledge-sharing platform to have one platform and one tool. But...

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 26 minutes 1 second

...you know, you will never get rid of emails and Teams that always stays. So that would be something on top of it, I suppose, because yeah, yeah.

VS

[Student] Vartika Singh

26 minutes 4 seconds 26:04

[Student] Vartika Singh 26 minutes 4 seconds

Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

[Student] Vartika Singh 26 minutes 10 seconds

Yes.

[Student] Vartika Singh 26 minutes 12 seconds

Awesome. Thank you so much.

P7, Health, Safety & Environment Advisor 26 minutes 15 seconds

Oh, you're welcome. No problem. And good luck with your studies.

APPENDIX D

Detailed Coding Table

Participant Quote	Initial Code(s)	Notes	Sub-theme	Theme
"It depends, really. If it's something urgent, we just ring up. Otherwise Teams or email, but often stuff gets missed on tablets." (P5, Contracts Manager)	Multi-platform switching; Missed communication	Shows inconsistency across tools, urgency drives channel choice	Multi-Platform Dependency	Fragmented Communication Channels
"You can't hear the tablet ping when you're next to a live carriageway." (P13, Highways Operative)	Ineffective notifications; On-site barriers	Illustrates environmental mismatch between communication tool and work context	Misalignment in Tools	Fragmented Communication Channels
"Sometimes, you're out in the rain or traffic, and you can't read a tablet. It's not ideal." (P11, Street Light Operative)	Environmental obstacles; Digital unreadability	Reflects physical challenges in digital communication	Misalignment in Tools	Fragmented Communication Channels
"We sometimes get emails, sometimes a call, sometimes a message on Teams. No standard way. That's the	Lack of consistency; Channel overload	Frustration with absence of a clear communication standard	Multi-Platform Dependency	Fragmented Communication Channels

problem.” (P7, HSE Advisor)				
“We’ve always trusted our supervisor... he’s done the job longer than we have.” (P10, Highways Operative)	Supervisor trust; Experience credibility	Direct experience fosters respect and trust	High Trust in Supervisors	Trust and Accessibility in Communication
“He listens when we say something didn’t go well, and he’ll note it down for tomorrow.” (P15, Street Light Operative)	Supervisor responsiveness; Active listening	Feedback acted upon quickly increases trust	High Trust in Supervisors	Trust and Accessibility in Communication
“There’s a bit of a disconnect between the office and the site teams. They don’t always see our messages right away.” (P1, Business Unit Manager)	Leadership distance; Office-site communication gap	Reflects slow responsiveness and weak visibility	Leadership Distance & Low Visibility	Trust and Accessibility in Communication
“Sometimes decisions are made without our input. You just get an email, no discussion.” (P4, Scheduler)	Exclusion from decision-making; One-way communication	Lack of dialogue with leadership; sense of disconnection	Leadership Distance & Low Visibility	Trust and Accessibility in Communication
“I wouldn’t know the names of some of the managers making those	Leadership anonymity; Lack of familiarity	Gap between leadership and operatives	Leadership Distance & Low Visibility	Trust and Accessibility in Communication

decisions.” (P13, Street Light Operative)				
“We just go to our manager whenever we need. It’s not formal, but it works.” (P6, Sustainability Coordinator)	Informal feedback; Open-door communication	Strong preference for interpersonal dialogue	Informal Feedback Norms	Informal Feedback Over Formal Channels
“Every day, communication is what keeps us safe. If we don’t talk, we’re at risk.” (P10, Highways Operative)	Communication for safety; Informal risk management	Informal comms framed as life-saving	Informal Feedback Norms	Informal Feedback Over Formal Channels
“I think just talking during the shift helps the most. Not all of us are big on emails.” (P14, Highways Operative)	Preference for verbal communication ; Low email reliance	Suggests digital exclusion; reliance on direct dialogue	Informal Feedback Norms	Informal Feedback Over Formal Channels
“I’ve filled out surveys, but never heard anything back.” (P4, Scheduler)	Lack of feedback loop; Formal channels ineffective	Dissatisfaction with feedback visibility	Limited Formal Engagement	Informal Feedback Over Formal Channels
“They ask for feedback sometimes, but no one ever says what they did with it.” (P2, Contracts Manager)	Lack of feedback closure; Non-actionable surveys	Reinforces perception of wasted input	Limited Formal Engagement	Informal Feedback Over Formal Channels

“If it's important, I'd rather just go talk to someone. I don't trust those online forms.” (P6, Contracts Manager)	Distrust in formal tools; Preference for immediacy	Highlights inefficiency of formalised surveys/forms	Limited Formal Engagement	Informal Feedback Over Formal Channels
“Phone calls are just better. Straightforward. You get things sorted then and there.” (P12, Street Light Operative)	Preference for calls; Directness valued	Direct channels perceived as faster and more reliable	Simplified Communication & Human Touch	Suggestions for Improvement
“A poster in the depot, maybe even just a big screen that loops messages.” (P6, Sustainability Coordinator)	Visual communication ; Accessible info sharing	Request for visible, persistent communication platforms	Simplified Communication & Human Touch	Suggestions for Improvement
“Some things need to be said in person. It saves time and confusion.” (P8, Business Manager)	Value of face-to-face; Clarity through direct talk	Suggests that humanised channels reduce misinterpretation	Simplified Communication & Human Touch	Suggestions for Improvement
“Emails should have a summary of what's expected. Sometimes you just walk into a meeting blind.” (P5, Contracts Manager)	Lack of meeting prep; Need for structure	Requests for clarity before meetings	Structured Meeting Preparation	Suggestions for Improvement

“Just a heads-up or context would help. Especially when it’s cross-department.” (P4, Scheduler)	Cross-department clarity; Pre-brief necessity	Suggests need for agenda-setting	Structured Meeting Preparation	Suggestions for Improvement
“If it’s a big update or change, an agenda helps us prepare better.” (P7, HSE Advisor)	Agenda-setting; Preparation for major updates	Confirms importance of structured internal communication	Structured Meeting Preparation	Suggestions for Improvement