MAKING THEM PROUD:
INTERNAL REPUTATION MANAGEMENT
IN THE TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

by
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Abstract

This study sought to further understanding of the impact of gaps between executive-led and front-line manager reputation management strategies through a case study of the largest public transit organisation in Canada, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC). The study was conducted as the TTC was nearing completion of a five-year plan to improve the organisation's reputation, including through a renewed focus on customer service delivered. At the same time, the organisation's leadership has been engaged in high profile discussions with elected officials and opinion leaders regarding financial investment in the operating and capital needs of the organisation. Varying reputation management strategies are more effective for those publics with high proximity to an organisation than for those with low proximity, yet public service organisations like the TTC may face challenges should front line employees delivering service to clients have weak levels of coorientation with leadership. The study used semi-structured interviews with executives and managers to explore the impact of differences in perceptions of organisational reputation. The study contributes to the field of reputation management by demonstrating that: (a) employees will use concrete data for communications with stakeholders with low proximity and personalised communications for stakeholders with high proximity; (b) a coorientation analysis can provide valuable insights into the nature and impact of gaps in perceptions of organizational reputation; and (c) substantive reputation repair actions are valued by high proximity stakeholders.

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Introduction

As Warren Buffet famously proclaimed, "it takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently" (Tuttle, 2010). Clearly, many professionals and researchers agree – a Google Scholar search for "reputation management" yielded over 34,000 results. Anyone who has received bad customer service knows how quickly an organisation's employees can ruin its reputation, a role that has also been documented in research (Fombrun & van Riel, 2004). In an era when front line employees are trusted more than official spokespeople (Edelman, 2016) and have the ability to reach more people than ever through social media (Arthur W. Page Society, 2007), employees play a significant role in forming public perceptions of an organisation. And yet, despite the key role of employees for an organisation's reputation, the field of reputation management remains almost exclusively focused on external publics (Men, 2014).

In large urban centres, few organisations touch as many people's lives and have as pervasive a reputation as public transit. The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) is so simultaneously loved and reviled that it has been referred to as the organisation that "Torontonians love to hate" (e.g. Grief, 2015). Steered by new leadership brought in following reputational crises attributable in part to poor customer service, this public sector organisation is nearing the end of an inaugural five-year corporate plan that aimed to "transform the TTC from top to bottom" to achieve the vision of "a transit system that makes Toronto proud" (Toronto Transit Commission, 2013a). As an organisation seeking much-needed public funding in a highly-politicized environment, the stakes for the TTC are exceptionally high. And, with 14,000 employees servicing 1.6 million daily riders 24 hours a day (Toronto Transit Commission,

2016a), the TTC is facing a situation where to repair its reputation it must, as CEO Andy Byford characterized it, "with the money we are given … work miracles" (Draaisma & Naccarato, 2017). Those miracles have to extend not only to its millions of customers, most armed with smart phones ready to record any slip-up, but also to the elected officials who hold the purse strings on public funding.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the literature on reputation management through a case study of the TTC, a high profile public service organisation. The study examines the perceptions of organisational reputation of two groups of employees, executives and line managers, which each are managing relationships with different groups of stakeholders during a period of reputation repair. Using the concepts of proximity and coorientation, the study aims to address three key research foci: (a) relationship management tactics used by executives and managers with distinct stakeholder groups; (b) perceptions of organisational reputation held by executives and managers; and, (c) the ways that executives and managers assess the organisation's reputation management tactics. The paper begins with a brief literature review, outlines the research problem, questions, and hypotheses, next provides an overview of the organisation being studied, then presents the results, discussion, and implications of the study, and finally concludes with limitations and areas for future research.

Literature Review

This section will include an overview of the key themes in the strategic communications management and public relations literature. The literature review starts with an overview of the organisational reputation literature, which has grown exponentially over the previous fifteen years. Next, the small yet growing literature on internal reputation management is examined.

Third, the concept of stakeholder proximity is introduced, and studies that have applied the concept to reputation management are discussed. Finally, the theory of coorientation is examined, with a view to its application to reputation management.

Organisational Reputation

Reputation is at once simple and complex. The concept is one that the lay public intuitively understands and that has understandable appeal for practitioners seeking to improve the awareness and favourable perception of their organisations. At the same time, an explosion of academic research into organisational reputation in the last 15 years has led to a plethora of definitions and applications that highlight the complexity of the concept. Twenty years ago, in the inaugural issue of *Corporate Reputation Review*, Fombrun and van Riel (1997) stated, "although corporate reputations are ubiquitous, they remain relatively understudied" (p. 5). That is hardly the case now. To the contrary, a later analysis by Fombrun (2012) found that after the year 2000 there was a steep increase in the number of academic research and mainstream media articles. This explosion of interest marks what Lange, Lee, and Dai (2011) characterize as the formative phase of organisational reputation research. The spike of academic and practitioner interest can be attributed to the increased importance of organisational reputation due to a number of factors, including, as Fombrun and van Riel (2004) state in their landmark book on the topic: (a) globalization; (b) increased information availability; (c) product commoditization; (d) media mania; (d) ad saturation; and, (d) stakeholder activism.

In an extensive review of management literature, Lange et. al (2011) identify three central dimensions of organisational reputation present in the bulk of research during this

formative phase: (a) being known; (b) being known for something; and, (c) generalized

favourability. Similarly, in their review of 49 definitions of reputation in the literature, Barnett,

Jermier, and Lafferty (2006) found three clusters of meaning: (a) a state of awareness; (b) an

assessment or evaluation; or, (c) an asset. While a full review of definitions is beyond the scope

of this study, a widely adopted definition of reputation is that proposed by Fombrun (2012), "a

collective assessment of a company's attractiveness to a specific group of stakeholders relative to

a reference group of companies with which the company competes for resources" (2012, p. 100).

To truly understand what organisational reputation is, it is important to also understand

what it is not. In particular, there continues to be a lack of clarity around the terms organisational

reputation, image, identity, legitimacy, and brand (Barnett et al., 2006; Fombrun, 2012).

Organisational identity, as Albert and Whetten (1985) outlined in their seminal paper, can be

defined as "that which is most central, enduring, and distinctive about an organization" (as cited

in Whetten & Mackey, 2002, p. 394). Organisational identity is drawn from the perceptions of

internal stakeholders, and can be either negative or positive (Walker, 2010) – it is essentially

what an organisation believes itself to be. Organisational image, on the other hand, is the desired

image an organisation projects to external stakeholders, and is often seen as the outcome of

corporate communications (Walker, 2010). Another concept that tends to be conflated with

reputation is legitimacy, "a judgment of the appropriateness of the organization as an example of

a social type, form, category, or role" (Foreman, Whetten, & Mackey, 2012, p. 184). A final area

of confusion can be between reputation and brand. Some researchers characterize brand as a

subset of reputation; for example, Fombrun and van Riel (2004) state, "branding affects the

likelihood of a favorable purchase decision by customers. Reputation, however, affects the

likelihood of supportive behaviors from all of the brand's stakeholders" (p. 4). Other researchers

characterize reputation and brand as interrelated but distinct concepts; for example, Ettenson and

Knowles (2008) argue that reputation conveys the perceived legitimacy of an organisation,

whereas brand is focused on the relevancy and differentiation of that organisation's services or

products. Perhaps the easiest way to differentiate between reputation and brand is to recognize

that the former is most commonly used in the strategic management and public relations

literature, while the latter is most common in marketing management literature (Grunig & Hung,

2002).

Reputation management, then, can be conceived as the "deliberate actions by leaders and

spokespersons designed to improve, protect, or repair perceptions of the organization's quality

and character" (Elsbach, 2012, p. 467). Effective strategies will vary based on the nature of the

organisation, its stakeholders, and the valence of the organisation's reputation. Fombrun and van

Riel (2004) find that organisations with stronger reputations are visible, transparent, distinctive,

and authentic. Similarly, Men (2014) groups the factors that impact organisational reputation into

three categories: (1) corporate capabilities, such as leadership, strategic management, and

products and services; (2) social accountability, which encompasses ethical behavior; and, (3)

strategic communication, as it is central to building and maintaining relationships with

stakeholders.

Given the impact that crises can have on reputation, there has been particular attention

paid to the differing implications of crises and of issues for reputation management (Heugens,

Van Riel, & Van Den Bosch, 2004). The challenge with crises, as Rhee and Kim (2012) note, is

that while crises can unfreeze an organisation and so create opportunity, they can lead to

superficial problem-solving because time sensitivity undermines the organisation's ability to properly identify the root of the problem. Issues, on the other hand, tend to evolve more slowly and so give an organisation time engage in substantive reputation repair activities—that is, if the organisation recognises the salience of the issue (Rhee & Kim, 2012).

Internal Reputation

Like other stakeholders, employees form perceptions of an organisation. While some researchers and practitioners capture these perceptions using the concepts internal brand building (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006) and identity management (Simoes, 2005), because as discussed previously there is a consensus in the communications management and public relations literature that reputation differs from brand and identity, there is a small but growing focus on research into internal reputation management. Internal reputation can be defined as "the employees' overall evaluation of the organisation based on their direct experiences with the company and all forms of communication" (Men, 2014, p. 256).

Since reputation research started burgeoning in the 1990s, studies have shown that a strong internal reputation improves recruitment and retention of employees, increases employee engagement and productivity, and boosts efficiency and effectiveness (Fombrun & van Riel, 2004). For example, a study of financial services industry professionals found that employees leaving organisations with high reputations experience greater promotions, and also that employees changing organisations are more likely to forgo a promotion if they are joining an organisation with a higher reputation (Hamori, 2003). Likewise, in a study of non-academic managers at a large university, Swider, Zimmerman, Boswell, and Hinrichs (2011) found that

perceiving an employer as having a positive organisational reputation was correlated with higher commitment and a lower rate of job search.

Employees not only evaluate organisational reputation, but also impact organisational reputation in a synergistic relationship (Cravens & Oliver, 2006). Helm (2011) defines Internal Reputation Building (IRB) as "all activities or behaviors employees exhibit in order to contribute to the formation of corporate reputation (p. 658). In The Nice Company, Lloyd (1990) argues that the social and cultural changes that began in the early 1990s favour corporations that eschew aggressive for more empathic strategies, including as demonstrated through employee behaviour. Fombrun, Gardberg, and Server (2000) argue that employee behavior impacts organisational reputation more than any other factor. In a study of the impact of reputation in labour markets for professional service firms, Harvey, Morris, and Smets (2013) found employees both create and evaluate reputation. Helm (2011) found that internal reputation has a strong impact on both employee pride and job satisfaction, and that a strong organisational reputation can improve employee recruitment and retention, although not necessarily performance. Fu, Li, and Duan (2014) examined the impact on employee behavior of several dimensions of internal reputation, and found that positive employee behavior is correlated with strong perceptions of corporate social responsibility, a relationship that is mediated by organisational commitment.

The impact of employees on reputation is important because they shape the views of other stakeholders (Helm, 2011). One of the most visible ways this can occur is through customer service. In a study of 14 large service organisations, for example, Davies and Miles (1998) find that senior leaders value internal perceptions of organisational reputation and see a particular risk in gaps between internal and external perceptions of organisational reputation.

Employees also impact reputation through their own roles as communicators, particularly in today's digimodern era (Kirby, 2009) in which social media and other technologies have increasingly empowered employees to communicate with external audiences (Grady, 2011).

Compounding this is the trend towards increasing trust in employees as unofficial spokespeople and decreasing trust in executives and government officials (Edelman, 2016). Men (2014) states, "how the employees perceive the organisation determines what they say publicly, and their opinions consequently become the basis for how other stakeholders and stockholders perceive the organisational reputation" (p. 256). Increasingly, then, employees play a key role in reputation, often at little to no direct financial cost (Haywood, 2005). Employee behavior can undermine reputation management strategies if it is not aligned, since "influencing public opinion through orchestrated communications is doomed to failure in the long run if those programs are not rooted in core values that are articulated, believed, and lived by employees inside the company" (Fombrun & van Riel, 2004, p. 93).

While there is agreement in the literature that employees are important to reputation management, there is much less research into how internal reputation is built. Several studies have found key drivers of improved internal reputation. Fombrun and van Riel (2004) find that the employees are both more likely to have positive perceptions of organisational reputation and to demonstrate their support for an organisation through behavior when information availability is strong, personalized messaging is present, communications are high quality, and the organisation engenders emotional appeal. Men (2012) found that CEO credibility, expertise, and trustworthiness amongst employees are positively correlated with a strong internal reputation, and that a strong internal reputation is correlated with increased employee engagement. In a later

study, Men (2014) found that authentic leadership plays a key role in fostering transparent

organisational communication, which then in turn leads to stronger internal reputation. In

particular, Men (2014) found that employees were more likely to have positive perceptions of

organisational reputation when their immediate managers displayed authentic leadership.

In the first research study to examine the transfer of perceptions of internal reputation

between managers and employees, Olmedo-Cifuentes, Martínez-León, and Davies (2014) found

that employees are more likely to have a positive perception of internal reputation when their

managers do as well. The views of managers and front line employees, however, are impacted by

different factors. In their study of Spanish accounting audit firms, Olmedo-Cifuentes et al. (2014)

found that managers' perceptions of organisational reputation are more likely to be impacted by

leadership, media coverage, and customer loyalty, while front line employees' perceptions are

more likely to be impacted by the reputation of management and by human resources practices.

The study further indicated that the relationship between employee performance and

organisational reputation is more complex than suggested by earlier research such as that

conducted by Helm (2011), as performance can have an indirect impact on employees through

their managers (Olmedo-Cifuentes et al., 2014).

Situational Theory and Proximity

As Grunig (2006) so clearly explained through the situational theory of publics, people

can be grouped into stakeholder groups with differing interests, needs, and objectives.

Stakeholders will therefore have different perspectives on and expectations of an organisation.

The reputation management literature recognizes this, acknowledging that not only is reputation

multidimensional and issue-specific, but that different stakeholders may have different perceptions of organisational reputation (Walker, 2010). In their analysis of reputation research, Lange, Lee, and Dai (2011) note studies have found that stakeholders' perceptions of organisational reputation will vary along with nature of their relationship with the organisation.

Several scholars have examined the precise ways in which a stakeholder's degree of experience with an organisation will impact perception of organisational reputation. Bromley (1993) distinguished between perceptions of organisational reputation formed through direct experience and those formed through hearsay, which he termed primary and secondary reputations. Building on Bromley's analysis, Grunig and Hung (2002) argued that organisational reputations may either be based on experience or on what others communicate, which they terms first-order and second-order reputations, or on a combination of both. Grunig and Hung (2002) predict that second-order reputations would tend to be more superficial than would first-order reputations.

Finch, Hillenbrand, and Rubin (2015) build on Lakoff's (1987) cognitive categorization theory, which proposed that individuals will develop perceptions about an organisation or another individual based on traits shared in common with others in the same category, a mental shortcut that increases in importance as less is known about an actor. Finch et al. (2015) explore how stakeholder proximity—"how much experience a stakeholder has with a focal organization" (p. 174)—will impact perceptions of organisational reputation. Stakeholders with low proximity, Finch et al. (2015) find, will depend on the strategic group characteristics of an organisation when assessing reputation.

There has been limited research into how organisations seek to manage reputation with stakeholders of differing proximities. In one study, Schons and Steinmeier (2016) analyzed the impacts of symbolic and of substantive corporate social responsibility (CSR) actions on stakeholders at different degrees of proximity. The study found that substantive CSR actions directed at employees and management, stakeholders with high proximity, have a positive impact on financial performance (Schons & Steinmeier, 2016). Symbolic CSR actions, such as greenwashing, have a positive impact on financial performance when they are directed at low proximity stakeholders, who may have difficulty differentiating between symbolic and substantive actions (Schons & Steinmeier, 2016). While they do not directly reference the concept of proximity, Rhee and Valdez (2009) argue that organisations are more likely to engage in superficial reputation repair with stakeholders that have limited information on an organisation, such as the general public, and then to engage in substantive as well as superficial repair with stakeholders with detailed information that have the ability to impact others, such as the news media.

Some researchers have examined the differences in perceptions of organisational reputation between stakeholder groups. Samli, Kelly, and Hunt (1998) argued that organisations should seek to close gaps between the perceptions of customers and the perceptions of management, what they termed image congruence/incongruence. Hatch and Schultz (2001) likewise argue there is an advantage to aligning internal and external perceptions of reputation. The arguments for aligning internal and external perceptions of reputation were questioned by Davies and Chun (2002), who in a study of two department stores found that reputation gaps could generate competitive advantage where employee perceptions were higher than customer

perceptions. In a further study of 56 business units in nine service corporations, Davies, Chun, and Kamins (2010) found that those organisations with higher employee than customer perceptions of reputation experienced sales growth of more than 16 percentage points higher than those organisations with negative reputation gaps. This is, Davies et al. (2010) argue, based on assimilation-contrast theory, because "if customers sense that the reality offered by their service experience with employees is significantly above or below that of their expectation, then they contrast their perceptions away from their prior views, recognize the difference, and are influenced through a transfer of affect" (p. 542).

Coorientation

The coorientation model is a useful means to compare two stakeholders' perspectives on an issue. The model was first introduced by Newcomb (1953) as a way to explain the mutual orientation of two individuals to an object. Chaffee and McLeod (1968) applied the theory of coorientation to mass communication, and through an evaluation of opinion survey panels found that an individual's behavior will be influenced by their own views and by their orientation to others and perceptions of what those others believe. Chaffee and McLeod's (1968) coorientational model has three variables to measure these relationships. First, congruency is the extent to which person A believes that person B's opinions match their own (Chaffee & McLeod, 1968). Second, agreement is the extent to which person A's evaluations of person B resemble person B's evaluations of person A (Chaffee & McLeod, 1968). Third, accuracy is the extent to which person A's perception of person B's perceptions match person B's true perceptions (Chaffee & McLeod, 1968).

The coorientation model can be used to analyze internal communications in an organisation. For example, in a study of supervisors and their employees at a manufacturing company in the United States, Eisenberg, Monge, and Farace (1984) found that when supervisors and employees have higher levels of congruency, they will have more positive impressions of each other. Actual levels of agreement and accuracy were found to be less important (Eisenberg et al., 1984). Similarly, nearly a decade later, in a study at two organisations in the United States, Cameron and McCollum (1993) found that when employees have a low degree of congruency to management and believe that their manager views the organisation differently than they do, they will be less receptive to organisational communication. Despite its utility, the coorientation model has only been used to a limited degree for analysis of internal communications management, with the studies being mentioned above the only reputable peer-reviewed publications that the researcher identified.

Research Problem

As discussed above, there has been an increased research focus in recent years on the impact of an organisation's reputation on its success. For organisations that rely on public support, a negative reputation can lead to crisis and even collapse. One of the biggest reputation management challenges for organisations is that stakeholders will have different perceptions of reputation. In particular, people who have direct experience with an organisation will have a different assessment of reputation than those with no direct experience. At the same time, with the prevalence of social media and other contemporary factors, an organisation must ensure what it is saying to one stakeholder group does not conflict with what it is saying to another. This need

to align messages delivered to different stakeholder groups can be especially challenging for organisations that deliver public services, given that different parts of the organisation are managing relationships with clients and with the broader public that funds the services through tax dollars.

This research study examines to what degree the messaging used by and beliefs of line managers differ from those of executives in a public service organisation, and how these stakeholder groups manage any perceived gaps. This research aims to contribute to the current literature on reputation management, which has focused predominantly on strategies for external stakeholders (Men, 2014). The research also aims to use the concepts of coorientation and proximity to address the need for what Barnett and Pollock (2012) highlight as an area as a priority for future research, "how stakeholder interactions at the individual level, influence and are influenced by corporate reputation" (p. 13).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

In order to further an understanding of the impact of gaps between executive-led and front-line reputation management strategies through a case study of the largest public transit organisation in Canada, the Toronto Transit Commission, this study will examine three research questions. This paper will adopt a modified version of the definition proposed by Fombrun in his integrative analysis (2012), replacing the word "corporate" in his definition with "organisation" to ensure applicability to the public sector. Organisational reputation is defined here as: a collective assessment of an organisation's attractiveness to a specific group of stakeholders

relative to a reference group of organisations with which the organisation competes for

resources.

> **RQ1: How do the ways that executives talk about the Toronto Transit Commission with medium-to-low proximity stakeholders differ from how front line managers talk about the organisation with high proximity stakeholders?**

The review of the literature makes clear that different stakeholders will have different

perceptions of organisational reputation. Consequently, reputation management strategies must

be tailored for different stakeholders. The concept of stakeholder proximity is particularly

helpful in understanding the differences between stakeholders, as this recognizes first order

reputations exist with high proximity stakeholders that have direct experience of an organisation,

while second order reputations exist with low proximity stakeholders that base their perceptions

on what they hear from others (Grunig & Hung, 2002). The researcher hypothesises that

employees will gravitate towards different reputation management strategies when they are

managing relationships with high proximity stakeholders than with low proximity stakeholders.

> **RQ2: How are executive leaders and line managers coorientated when it comes to perceived organisational reputation with (a) high proximity stakeholders, and (b) low proximity stakeholders?**

As discussed in the literature review, coorientation research has found that congruency

between management and employees benefits an organisation, and is more important for the

success of internal communications than either accuracy or agreement (Eisenberg et al., 1984).

Research has also found that positive assessments of organisational reputation transfer from

managers to their employees (Olmedo-Cifuentes et al., 2014). The researcher hypothesises that a

greater degree of agreement between line managers and executives on perceived internal

reputation would be an indication that such transfer is occurring, which would also then facilitate

a greater degree of congruency on items including perceived organisational reputation with

internal and external stakeholders.

It should be noted that degrees of proximity are relative. For the purposes of this study,

high proximity stakeholders are defined as employees, moderate proximity stakeholders are

defined as customers and City Hall, and low proximity stakeholders are defined as the general

public of the City of Toronto, including as reached through the local news media. Stakeholders

with even lower degrees of proximity, such as the general population of Canada, are not within

the scope of this study.

RQ3: How do senior leaders and line managers assess the impact of reputation management tactics?

Research has found that substantive actions directed at high proximity stakeholders,

including employees, have significant impact (Schons & Steinmeier, 2016). In addition, research

has shown that reputation management tactics directed at the public will only be successful when

reflective of core values exhibited by employees in their actions (Fombrun & van Riel, 2004).

The researcher hypothesises that if employees perceive the reputation management

actions being undertaken by senior leadership as symbolic rather than substantive, the impact on

internal reputation will be negative. Given that reputation management following a crisis can

lead to more superficial actions than in response to issues (Rhee & Kim, 2012), the researcher

intends to focus where possible on reputation management actions taken to address long-standing issues rather than specific crises.

Methodology

This section provides an overview of the methodology employed in the study. First, the rationale for the single embedded case study method is provided. This is followed by an overview of the data collection, including the selection of interview subjects, the interview guides, and the documents referenced. Finally, the data analysis techniques are reviewed.

Case Study Method

This study employs a case study method because it meets the three conditions outlined by Ying (2014) for which such a method is optimal. First, this study asks 'how' or 'why' research questions. Second, the study does not require any control over behavior at either the individual or group level. Third, this study involves the examination of a contemporary situation for which the researcher can draw on interviews with people involved, in addition to primary and secondary documents.

The researcher considered several factors in order to determine the case study design best suited for this research. As Yin (2014) explains, single-case designs can be used for studies that use critical, unusual, common, revelatory, or longitudinal cases. This study uses a single case to determine the strength of a certain set of propositions grounded in theory (Stacks, 2011), an approach that can "represent a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building by confirming, challenging, or extending the theory" (Yin, 2014, p. 51). The single case study

method used is an embedded design, as it examines multiple units of analysis: (a) executive

leaders, and (b) managers of front line employees.

Data Collection

Yin notes, "a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many

different sources of evidence" (2014, p. 119). In order to strengthen the analysis through

triangulation, this case study draws upon three primary data collection methods: interviews with

executives, interviews with line managers, and analysis of documentation. This data collection

methodology was approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board (Appendix L).

In-Depth Interview Subjects

This study included interviews with three executive leaders at the TTC. The individuals

interviewed were selected for their high degree of influence over the organisation's reputation

management strategy and operations. These three executives represented one-third of the nine-

member Executive Team (see organisational chart in Appendix H). All three executives had

significant professional experience, a broad scope of responsibility, and positions with high

public profile. The executives were recruited through an email invitation from the researcher

(Appendix A). All executives were based out of the TTC Head Office at 1900 Yonge Street. Two

of the three interviews were conducted in person. The third was originally scheduled to occur in

person, and was changed to occur over the phone due to a situation beyond the researcher's

control. A fourth executive initially scheduled for an interview was removed from the study after

they announced they would be leaving the organisation.

The study also included interviews with eight permanent, management employees in the

Operations Group and the Service Delivery Group at the TTC. These interviewees were

responsible for managing or supervising front line employees with responsibilities including

operating buses, streetcars, and subway trains, maintaining and repairing equipment, collecting

fares, and cleaning stations. The average length of tenure of these line managers was eleven

years. The line managers were recruited through an email sent from the TTC Senior

Communications Specialist to Heads in the Operations Group and the Service Delivery Group

(Appendix C), who then cascaded the email through to managers and supervisors on their teams.

The email invited managers and supervisors to contact the researcher directly. The email

invitation was further shared amongst managers and supervisors directly. The line managers

were based out of various stations throughout Toronto. The line manager interviews were

conducted by phone in order to lessen the barriers to participation, as these individuals have

varying work schedules and locations that could have made scheduling in-person interviews

challenging.

Interview Guides.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with line managers and executives

to further an understanding of the differences between how these two groups of employees

perceive organisational reputation. Two questioning routes were developed; the interview

questioning routes for executives and line managers are included in Appendix E and Appendix F

respectively. Certain questions were asked of all participants, while other questions were tailored

for each group of employees. While the interviews followed a structured interview schedule

(Stacks, 2011) the author built room for flexibility in the conversation. Both questioning routes consisted of what are characterized as level one questions as per the typology outlined by Yin (2014). These interview questions were developed to help further an understanding of the research questions, which can be characterized as level two questions. Note that the researcher asked each interviewee to respond to an excerpt from a column in the National Post by Chris Selley (2017), which was selected to assess perceptions of external organisational reputation.

Organisational Documents Analysis.

This study used primary and secondary documents to "corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (Yin, 2014, p. 107). These documents include organisational documents that have been released publicly, documents obtained directly from the source organisation, and mainstream news coverage.

Several documents were provided to the researcher by the organisation. In particular, the researcher was provided access to the data from the 2014 and the 2016 employee engagement surveys; the survey questions for the latter are included in Appendix K. The survey data was provided in aggregate form, as given the conditions under which it had been collected by a third-party firm the raw data could not be accessed by the researcher for the purposes of this study. The researcher drew upon the employee engagement data for the organisation-level analysis. The researcher was also provided with a copy of an internal Leader's Guide document (Appendix G), which was distributed by TTC Corporate Communications to management employees to provide key messages and background information on an important internal initiative, the release of the customer satisfaction survey results.

The researcher further referenced publicly-available organisational documents, including reports for the Board of Directors, news releases, Annual Reports, and CEO speaking remarks. The researcher also referenced the TTC's employee-facing website, The Coupler, which contains communications aimed at employees and retirees. In addition, the researcher referenced public documents such as media coverage and social media posts.

Data Analysis

Yin outlines four general strategies to guide analysis of case study data: "rely on theoretical propositions, work your data from the 'ground up', develop a case description, and examine rival explanations" (2014, p. 132). The data analysis technique for this case study draws on the theoretical propositions technique. In particular, reputation management theory, proximity theory, and the coorientation model guide the analysis of how executives and line managers perceive organisational reputation and reputation management tactics.   To compensate for the lack of precision associated with the narrative form of explanation building, the researcher has grounded the analysis in the research questions.

The researcher recorded and had transcribed all of the interviews with the exception of one, for which she took careful hand-written notes due to technical issues with the recording software on her phone. The researcher conducted a qualitative analysis of the interview data, which as per the approach recommended by Stacks (2011) included taking notes of key points during the interview and of the researcher's initial impressions immediately following each interview. Once all interviews had been transcribed, the researcher then went through all the interviews and coded data by research question. Finally, the researcher went through the data and

identified the key quotes to be included in this report. The researcher took care to ensure quotes from line managers included in the report would not include information that could identify the individuals who participated, such as names of stations or routes.

The researcher employed several methods for data analysis. First, a web search of media coverage between 2009 and 2017 was conducted to compile the overview of the TTC's history. Second, the researcher reviewed reports prepared for the TTC Board of Directors for the same time period to verify information in the media coverage and provide additional context. The researcher drew upon the 2014 and 2016 employee engagement survey data to provide high-level context, and also extracted the results for specific questions related to internal reputation in order to assess the similarities and gaps between management and non-management employees.

The Toronto Transit Commission

Background

The Toronto Transportation Commission, as the Toronto Transit Commission was known until 1954, began operations in 1921 after taking over the Toronto Railway Company, the Toronto Civic Railway, and parts of the City-owned Toronto & York Radial Railway (Toronto Transit Commission, n.d.). Canada's largest provider of transit, the publicly-owned TTC serves 1.6 million daily riders (Toronto Transit Commission, 2016a), making it the third-largest in North America (Toronto Transit Commission, 2017b). The TTC has 14,000 employees (Toronto Transit Commission, 2017b), of which over 10,000 are unionized employees represented by the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113 (Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113, n.d.).

The TTC has a $2.1 billion annual operating budget, with $1.1 billion of revenue from passengers, $649.9 million from a City of Toronto operating subsidy, and the balance from a variety sources including advertising and property rental (Toronto Transit Commission, 2016a). The subsidy per rider the TTC receives is much smaller than other large public transit systems in Canada and the United States (Keenan, 2016), leading to significant operational challenges. The TTC also has an aggressive capital program, including a $9.44 billion ten-year base capital program that faces a $2 billion funding shortfall (Rodo, Roche, & Imbrogno, 2016)

Reputation Crisis and Repair 2010 – 2017

In January 2010, mounting public anger over a fare hike, service disruptions, problems with an outmoded transit token system, and perceptions of poor customer service escalated into a crisis for the TTC when a photo of a fare collector sleeping in his booth lit up on social media (Balkissoon, 2010; "TTC to investigate 'sleeping' fare collector," 2010). The TTC responded by announcing several new or expedited measures meant to improve customer service, including the creation of a Customer Service Advisory Panel (Toronto Transit Commission, 2010b). The panel made a total of 78 recommendations in its final report released in September 2010, focusing on communications, complaint management, human resources, training, and customer engagement (Toronto Transit Commission, 2010a).

A mere two years after the sleeping fare collector crisis, in February 2012 allies of Toronto Mayor Rob Ford ousted TTC Chief General Manager Gary Webster over political differences (Kalinowski, 2012). The TTC Board of Directors appointed Chief Operating Officer Andy Byford, who had joined the TTC in November 2011, as the interim head (Gee, 2012).

After he was praised publicly for introducing a number of reforms and his hands-on approach, in March 2012 the TTC Board of Directors appointed Byford as the new Chief Executive Officer (Gee, 2012).

As CEO, Byford moved quickly. In his first year, he implemented a reorganisation, established key performance indicators, and led the creation of the TTC's vision of "a transit system that makes Toronto proud" (Toronto Transit Commission, 2013a; Toronto Transit Commission, 2013c). In May 2013, the TTC released its inaugural five-year Corporate Plan (Toronto Transit Commission, 2013b). Byford explicitly positioned the plan as a reputation repair strategy, characterizing it as "a five-year journey to completely modernize the TTC and thereby transform our reputation" (Toronto Transit Commission, 2013b). The plan contains seven strategic objectives: safety, customer, people, assets, growth, financial sustainability, and reputation (Toronto Transit Commission, 2013a).

By 2017, the final year of the Corporate Plan, the TTC's key performance indicators were showing improvements on major objectives. For example, the customer satisfactions score was on an upwards trend, rising to 77 percent by the end of 2016, well above its target of 72 percent (Byford, 2017a). The two marked dips in customer satisfaction shown in Figure 1 can be attributed in 2015 to the removal of the increased service levels for the PanAm Games (Toronto Transit Commission, 2016b) and in 2016 to over-heated subway cars on the Bloor-Danforth line (Toronto Transit Commission, 2017a). At the same time, the TTC was receiving external validation for its progress, albeit with the caveat that there is much room for improvement. Relations between the TTC and the City Hall were favourable, with City Council voting to increase the operating subsidy by $80 million in 2017 and Mayor John Tory trumpeting the

commission's improvements (Spurr, 2017). Byford was hailed for turning around the

organisation, called by one columnist "the most impressive leader this city has" (Gee, 2017). In

June 2017, the TTC was recognized with an award for Outstanding Public Transportation System

of the year by the American Public Transportation Association (Toronto Transit Commission,

2017b).
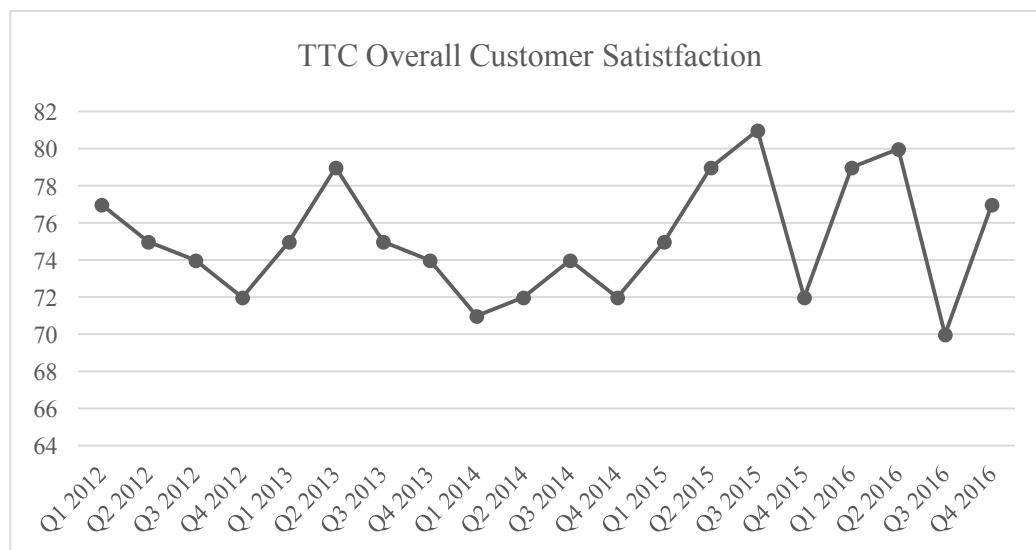
Figure 1. TTC overall customer satisfaction scores show an upwards trend, 2012 to 2016. Data

source: Toronto Transit Commission, 2017a.

Despite these improvements, the TTC continued to face challenges, including declining

customer journeys, increasing subway disruptions, and delayed delivery of new streetcars

(Byford, 2017a). The American Public Transportation Association award drew skepticism and

derision on social media and in news coverage, with the Toronto Star editorial board stating,

"this is not yet a transit system deserving of awards and accolades. It could be, one day" ("TTC

must earn its 'most outstanding' title (Editorial)," 2017). As Byford stated in an April, 2017

update to the Board of Directors (Byford, 2017a, p. 10):

> While it will be for others to judge whether we have achieved best-in-class status for
>
> North America, what cannot be disputed is the sheer magnitude of the change program
>
> that we will have delivered by the end of this year. People, processes and infrastructure
>
> will have been transformed in addition to complete or well advanced, delivery of five
>
> mega-projects. While much remains to be done over the next 265 days [of the five year
>
> plan], I am very confident that the TTC will deliver on the remaining elements of our
>
> inaugural five year plan and that our customers will continue to notice relentless
>
> improvements (p. 10).

Clearly, the TTC has come far in repairing its reputation, but still has much room to grow.

State of Employee Engagement

While there has been significant cultural change at the TTC since 2012, there remain

significant challenges with employee communications and engagement. The TTC Corporate

Communications department has stated that it recognizes this and has made internal

communications a priority, allocating dedicated staff resources and introducing the

organisation's first Internal Communications Strategic Plan (Kosmack, 2017). As the plan

(Kosmack, 2017) states:

> … there continues to be a perceived lack of information-sharing among some groups, in
>
> particular those who have less access to more modern communication channels, such as

email. Further, across all groups, there is a lack of trust and feeling of openness between

employees and senior management (p. 1).

Several key factors present particular challenges for internal communications at the TTC,

including: (a) a large and diverse workforce, dispersed across many locations; (b) varying hours

of operation and employees on shift work; (c) lack of contact between many employees and their

supervisor or manager; (d) large portions of the workforce without work email or intranet access;

(e) cultural, linguistic, and generational diversity; (f) a weak role for supervisors and managers in

communicating organisational messages; and, (g) resistance to change in segments of the

organisation (Kosmack, 2017).

The TTC conducted employee engagement surveys in 2014 and 2016, and these provide

further insight into the organisation. The survey was conducted in both years by a third-party

provider, Malatest, which took steps to ensure respondents' anonymity. In both years, the survey

was conducted during the month of November, with non-union and some unionised employees

completing the survey online and most unionised employees completing paper surveys (Malatest,

2017). In 2014, 4,808 surveys were completed for a response rate of 36 percent; this response

rate increased to 42 percent in 2016, when 5,855 surveys were conducted (Malatest, 2017). In

2016, 1,003 of these responses came from managers, a response rate of 80 percent, and 4,840

came from non-managers, a response rate of 38 percent (Malatest, 2017). The definition of the

"manager" category was expanded in 2016 to include all leadership levels, whereas in 2014 it

had been restricted to more senior levels; as a result, the "manager" and "non-manager" splits

cannot be compared between the two years (Malatest, 2017).

The overall engagement score in 2016 increased marginally for non-unionised employees and remained stable for unionised employees, with scores of 8.1 for managers and 7.6 for non-managers in 2016 (Malatest, 2017). In 2016, the top-scoring results were for items primarily relations to safety and job security: (a) I am strongly encouraged to report unsafe working conditions; (b) I feel comfortable discussing safety issues at work; (c) the TTC offers good job security; (d) I often look for ways to make improvements in how things are done; and, (e) my manager/supervisor/foreperson is well informed about safety issues (Malatest, 2017). The bottom five scores were for items related to communications, information sharing, and trust in senior leadership: (a) there is effective sharing of information across the TTC; (b) if something goes wrong, people concentrate on putting it right, not blaming others; (c) I feel involved in major changes taking place at the TTC; (d) I trust Senior Management; (e) and, there is good collaboration between different parts of the TTC (Malatest, 2017).

An examination of the employee engagement survey data yields some useful findings for the purposes of this study. In particular, there are marked differences on certain questions between the 'non-management' category and the 'management' category of employees, which includes all levels of leadership from forepersons and supervisors right up to the executive. As shown in Table 1, there are significant gaps between the ways that managers and non-managers perceive senior leadership and information sharing in particular.

Table 1

TTC Employee Engagement Survey Scores for Manager and Non-Manager Employees for Select Questions, 2016. Data source: Malatest, 2017.

	Manager	Non-Manager	Gap
Overall employee engagement	8.1	7.6	0.5
I am satisfied with the Senior Management of the company	6.6	5.5	1.1
I am satisfied with the job I do at the TTC	8.2	7.7	0.5
I am proud and passionate about the TTC	8.3	7.4	0.9
There is effective sharing of information across the TTC	5.4	4.8	0.6
I trust Senior Management	6.2	5	1.2
I feel sufficiently well informed about what is happening in the TTC	6.4	5.3	1.1
I feel confident that Senior Management is making the right decisions for the company's future success	6.4	5.1	1.3
Senior Management welcomes all feedback, both positive and negative	6.5	5.6	0.9
I feel that the TTC's vision to be "A transit system that makes Toronto proud" is realistic and achievable	7.7	6.8	0.9
I am satisfied with the way I am managed	7.4	6.6	0.8
Where appropriate, my manager/supervisor/foreperson, involves me in decisions which affect me	7.5	6.3	1.2

My manager/supervisor/foreperson keeps me well informed about issues which affect me	7.6	6.5	1.1
My manager/supervisor/foreperson leads by example	7.6	6.4	1.2

Results

Interview data are reported below, starting with the data from the executives and followed by the data from the line managers. All of these interviews were conducted by the researcher during May and June, 2017. Four members of the nine-member executive team agreed to participate, one of whom was withdrawn following a decision to leave the organisation. Eight managers and supervisors of front line employees in two divisions also volunteered to participate. Generic job titles are used for the executives and pseudonyms are used for the line managers; all interviewees are referenced using gender-neutral language. Further information on the responses from executives and line managers can be found in Appendix I and Appendix J respectively.

Results: Executive Leaders

Q1: Can you start by telling me a little bit about why you have chosen to work for the TTC? What do you find most rewarding about this work?

While not directly relevant to the research questions, responses to the opening question did yield some interesting results. All three executives interviewed for the research cited the challenge of their position as one of the key reasons they joined the TTC. The Chief Executive, for example, stated "there was a golden opportunity there to be a part of a team that got the TTC

back to where it used to be once upon a time, number one in North America." In addition, all

three executives stated that they found the opportunity to make a difference rewarding. The

Operations Executive, for example, said "you really can impact any area with transportation.

And I love that about it."

> **Q2: Imagine you are talking with a friend of family member, and this person tells you that they don't like riding the TTC because of delays and poor customer service. How would you respond?**

Two of the executives said that they were regularly engaged by friends and family

members in conversations about the TTC, while one of the executives said such discussions were

rare as their personal contacts usually respected their preference to not discuss the TTC outside

of work. All three of the executives said that when they did get questions or comments about the

TTC from personal contacts, they would listen to what was said, and then use the opportunity to

share information and defend the organisation. The Operations Executive, for example, said "the

public, friends, and family, wherever I go, I'm proud to say that I work for the TTC. And I make

sure I educate and inform them."

The researcher also asked follow-up questions to two of the executives to determine how

they felt front line employees might respond in a similar situation. Both executives who

answered this question stated that they felt the responses of front line employees would vary,

with some defending the TTC while others might agree with the criticism. These two executives

both said they believed that many front line employees would feel pride in the TTC, while also

acknowledging that other front line employees may be less supportive.

Q3: Reflect on conversations that you may have had with journalists, elected officials, and senior civil servants in the past year or so. How do you think the media and decision makers perceive the TTC?

All three executives stated that they felt that the views of journalists and decision makers on the TTC were improving. All three executives pointed to increased transparency and improved performance as primary reasons for this positive change. The Operations Executive, for example, said they found it useful to spend time educating City Councillors on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), so that the elected officials could better understand the root causes of problems and the impact of solutions that were implemented. The same executive also noted that City Councillors can be sources of information about problems in the system, and so it is important to listen without defensiveness. Two of the executives said that they felt that civil servants at City Hall believe the TTC is a slow-moving and antiquated.

All three executives highlighted the TTC's transparency, including proactive disclosure of performance metrics, as a reason for improved media coverage. The executives also cited the accessibility of TTC spokespeople, including the CEO, and the practice of publicly taking responsibility for errors and issues. Two of the executives said that the TTC is an "easy" target or mark for the mainstream media, a result of which is a substantial quantity of media coverage, much of it negative. The Communications Executive, for example, said:

> Everybody rides the TTC. Everybody thinks they understand how transit works. Everybody thinks it's really simple. All the things that happen behind the scenes are incredibly complex. And we've told those stories, and we continue to tell those stories. And reporters cover them… [but] some of the coverage is frankly borderline lazy because

it's served up to them on a platter. And that's maybe a function of newsrooms and they're

not being able to do a whole lot of original reporting in many cases.

Q4. What is your opinion of the newspaper article excerpt?

All three executives had different opinions of the newspaper article excerpt (included in

Appendix E). The Chief Executive focused on the overall tone and conclusion of the excerpt and

stated that they agreed: "that's consistent with what we've been saying… that you must not rush

for expansion at the expense of the state of a good repair." The Operations Executive agreed with

the first two sentences of the excerpt, including the role of capital funding, but did not agree with

the characterization of improvements as "clumsily implemented", noting that the TTC has made

changes to processes and reporting. The Communications Executive focused more closely on the

details of the excerpt and stated did not agree, noting the excerpt contained factual errors.

Q5. The TTC has seen its reputation improve over the past few years. In your
opinion, what are some of the reasons for that change?

There was agreement amongst the executives that improvement in the TTC's

organisational reputation could be attributed to changes implemented as part of the five-year

plan, including in customer service, communication, and reliability. The Chief Executive

identified four key reasons for improvements in organisational reputation: (1) getting better at

"the basics", such as cleanliness; (2) becoming more outward-looking and transparent; (3)

improving delivery through new projects, new delivery models, and a focus on customer service

facilitated in large part through improved internal communications; and, (4) improved

community liaison and stakeholder relations. Similarly, the Communications Executive

identified four factors: (1) new leadership; (2) improvements to service, including cleanliness

and timeliness; (3) culture change and increased customer focus; and, (4) new technology and

equipment. The Operations Executive raised similar points, noting in particular the impact on

customer satisfaction of improvements such as the drastic reduction in bus and streetcar short-

turns, and the impact on complaints around discourtesy of a focus on customer service.

Q6. What role do you think that front line employees and their managers have in improving the TTC's reputation?

All three executives characterized the role of front line employees as important for the

TTC's organisational reputation. The Chief Executive spoke about the importance of holding

employees at all levels of the organisation accountable, and also noted the importance of

increased communication with managers in particular to allow for that accountability. The

Communications Executive said that "there's a huge role" for front line employees, and

referenced as an example the important role that operators played in communicating with

customers when there were a high number of Line 2 subway cars with no air conditioning during

the summer of 2016. The Operations Executive said that "we're not in the moving people

business, we're in the customer service business," and spoke about the importance of responding

to front line employees' concerns around issues like scheduling and then holding them

accountable for delivering professional service.

All three executives also spoke about the impediments to an increased role for front line

employees in building organisational reputation, particularly when it comes to communications.

The Chief Executive, for example, said that "it's very difficult to communicate with front line

staff" due to the nature of their positions, which often entail shift work at dispersed locations,

and to the labour relations environment, which at the time of the interview was complicated by

instability in ATU Local 113 that represents the majority of TTC employees. The

Communications Executive said that "getting good information" to front line employees in a

timely way "is the biggest challenge we have." This executive spoke about new technology the

TTC will be implementing to improve communications with operators, noting that "having the

right information in a timely way is super critical to allow them to do their jobs well [and] to

give them the confidence that they can do their jobs well." Similarly, the Operations Executive

raised the challenges of communicating with employees who may not have regular direct contact

with their manager. The Operations Executive said they saw communication with front line

employees as a priority for improvement, stating, "I think we do a fairly decent job externally

talking about ourselves, and modernization, and upgrading [but] when it comes to the [front line

employees] I still think we fail."

Q7. How do you think that front line employees and front line managers perceive the TTC's reputation?

The Chief Executive spoke about how while some employees are excited by the changes

at the TTC and so have a positive perception of its organisational reputation, others do not like

the changes. This executive stated, "I have to say I'm a little worried about pressure. People are

kind of overwhelmed, there's a fine line between pushing ahead and pushing the boundary, and

between maintaining momentum and challenging people and overwhelming them." The

Communications Executive said that while most employees are grateful to be employed by the

TTC and "see the TTC as an organisation that is trying its best to do what it can and to do a good

job every day to move people around safely," they are concerned that front line employees do

not feel supported or engaged by management. The Operations Executive said while they felt

front line employees appreciate how public perception of the TTC has improved, the lack of

interaction with management can "leads them to believe that we don't care about them when we

do."

Results: Line Managers

> **Q1. Can you start by telling me a little bit about why you have chosen to work for the TTC? What do you find most rewarding about this work?**

While the first interview question was not directly related to the research questions, as

with the executives the line managers' answers provided interesting results. All of the line

managers mentioned at least one of the following reasons for joining the TTC: the potential for

career growth, the opportunity to make a positive difference, and the TTC's reputation as a good

employer. Most of the line managers spoke quite passionately about their pride in the TTC. For

example, Ahmed stated:

> There's so much that happens with the TTC that the constituents of the city of Toronto
>
> and our customers don't even realize. It's such a proud feeling to know that we can move
>
> so many people and react to so many situations almost flawlessly most of the time.

Similarly, Graham said:

> TTC is an excellent company. What I've been able to do for myself and for my family is
>
> unheard of. I'm very proud of that fact and the direction that we're moving in and the
>
> opportunities that are open to anybody.

Q2. Imagine that you are talking with a friend or family member, and this person tells you that they don't like riding the TTC because of delays or poor customer service. How would you respond? How do you think the employees who report to you would respond?

When asked how they would respond to criticism of the TTC from a friend or family member, seven of the eight line managers said that they would attempt to explain the root cause of the issue. Even though the line managers often expressed frustration with having to face such criticism about their employer, they also believed it was important to inform friends and family who would not be aware of the reasons for issues such as service disruptions. For example, Ben said, "I think of this as my own business and it hurts. People don't understand the complexity of how things happen and what we do." Most of the managers also said they would explain what the family member or friend could do to resolve the problem. For example, Hasina said they direct their friends and family members to call in concerns to the customer service line.

Three of the seven line managers who said they would respond to criticism with explanation also said they would take information from the complaint back to the workplace, either in an attempt to resolve that specific situation or to inform decision making more generally. For example, Graham said that while they would have responded to such complaints defensively when they were an operator, now "I'm a lot more interested in finding a resolution." Similarly, Ahmed said, "I will bring [the concern] back to my colleagues and the other departments and say 'hey, you know what? My friend complained about this, is there something we can do?'"

Darnell's response differed from the other line managers in that they said they avoid discussions about work with friends and family members. Darnell echoed the concerns of several other managers who spoke about the toll of facing criticism about the TTC, stating "I take the

brunt of every bad experience they've had on the TTC." This manager said that because of that, they only maintain friendships with people who respect their desire not to talk about their employer.

The researcher asked all of the line managers a follow-up question to determine how they felt the employees who reported to them would respond to criticism of the TTC from friends and family members. Two of the line managers stated that they felt the employees on their teams would defend the TTC. Hasina, for example, said that because their department deals with planned disruptions:

> We deal with out of the norm… So my employees are used to it. They have a pretty thick skin and they're pretty good at reacting to issues and not taking it personally because they can see and then try to get better.

The other six line managers spoke about how some or most of the employees on their teams would respond to the criticism differently than managers would. For example, Ben said that 90 percent of supervisors would respond with, "yeah, yeah, well the TTC, what do you expect?" Graham said that most operators would respond by saying, "it's not our fault. These are the tools we have to work with and it's crap but whatever this is what they want us to do." When discussing how responses would vary amongst employees, two of the line managers spoke about how operators would be more likely to join in the criticism, while supervisors would be more likely to take a middle ground position.

Managers spoke about how culture and access to information impact employees' responses to criticism from friends and family. For example, Carlos said:

A lot of [front line employees] don't know all the things we're doing to try and make

things better. And they're likely to say 'yeah, I think it's messed up too' instead of trying

to explain why because they probably don't know why or don't take an interest as to

why… and the front line is probably the worst for that because it's the most difficult to

get the right information to those people.

Q3. What is your opinion of the newspaper article excerpt?

All eight line managers said they agreed at least to a certain extent with the newspaper

excerpt, included in [Appendix F](#). Graham, for example, said they agreed "100 percent" with the

excerpt because:

Our riders deserve better service than we're providing. I think that I would agree with

that. I think we need to step up our game. And I think that there's just a lot of talk and

now we're moving in the direction of there being more action.

Similarly, Ahmed said "I think the city, the constituents should demand more." They went on to

speak about the changes at the TTC since Byford became CEO, saying "I think we're getting to a

place where people have started to respect the service again. And I think that there's such an

investment in transportation from a national perspective that we won't see support withdrawn in

the near future."

Three of the line managers used this question as an opportunity to express frustration

with what they characterized as overly negative media coverage. Fiona, for example, said that

"99 percent" of media coverage is "bashing the TTC," while Carlos said that they appreciated

that the tone of the excerpt was not "super negative" because the "media are too quick to jump to

the negative." Hasina said that they are frustrated by negative media coverage, because

"considering the amount of funding and what we have available, we need a miracle every day."

When the researcher asked the line managers how they felt the employees on their teams

would respond to a media excerpt such as this, the responses varied. Ahmed, for example, said

that the employees on their team do not pay much attention to media coverage, while Fiona said

their team is split evenly between those employees who ignore media coverage and those who

notice and want to discuss it. Two of the managers said that due to internal communications,

their employees usually know about issues before they are reported in the news media.

Of those line managers who said their employees pay attention to media coverage, all

mentioned negative impacts. Two of the line managers referenced recent media coverage of

random drug testing of TTC employees and of air quality in the subway system, and said that the

employees had responded with criticisms of TTC management. Hasina said their employees "get

frustrated" with negative media coverage, while Ben said, "it's very demoralizing to them… You

put on a TTC uniform and all the problems of the world are your fault." Graham said that their

employees' main concern with media is the constant fear of being captured on smartphone video

and then having that be used by the news media in a harmful way.

Q4. Tell me about a time when a customer was very upset. What did they say to you or to your staff, and how did you respond?

Not surprisingly, all of the line managers were very familiar with dealing with upset customers. Darnell, for example, said "you grow a thick skin being in this job, that's for sure." Graham spoke about the importance of empathy and humility, and referenced how finding points of shared experience with a customer can defuse a tense situation. Hasina spoke about the importance of showing organized customer groups that their feedback had led to changes.

Five of the managers spoke about how providing an explanation for a situation can help with some customers. For example, Fiona said when they explain the reason for a service disruption "a lot of the time, the customer actually tends to understand and appreciates the work we're doing. And the other ones are upset that it's still out of service." Ben said that they felt that while customers used to predictably respond with "disgust", reaction is now split between those who are critical of the TTC and those who are supportive. Ben said, "I think the interaction is a lot better now. Passengers will come up to you and they don't automatically start berating you. They want answers, they want knowledge, they want to know why things happen."

Several of the managers spoke about the impact of complaints on front line employees. Carlos, for example, spoke about the importance of training front line employees, saying:

> We want to do better customer service and we're telling everybody that and we're trying to tell our operators, but I don't think everybody [has] the right tools to deal with difficult people. I think that's where we should probably put a little more effort into an order to get better results.

Darnell referenced the impact of social media, saying that customer service for the front lines has been changed by customers' belief in the right to record activity on smartphones. Darnell also

spoke about how they support their team when facing customer anger by reminding employees, "they're yelling at the uniform, not at you personally."

Q5. The TTC leadership has made improving the organisation's reputation a priority under the five year plan. Do you see evidence that the reputation is improving? Why or why not?

All of the managers said they see evidence that the TTC's organisational reputation is improving. Managers pointed to operational or technological improvements and to changes in culture and vision as causes for the improved organisational reputation. Carlos said they believe the most important factor in the TTC's organisational reputation is reliable and safe transportation, with customer service being a secondary factor. As this manager said, "it doesn't matter how good your customer service is if you don't perform well in your primary function." Similarly, Emma said that the TTC's reputation is improving under "Andy's direction and vision," in particular due to operational improvements such as improved cleanliness, reduced short-turns, and new subway cars and streetcars. Darnell also referenced operational changes such as reduced short-turns, also noting that improved reliability leads to better morale for front line employees. Three managers specifically referenced increased transparency and improved communications as being integral to improvements in organisational reputation.

Managers differed in their analysis of how front line employees perceive the changes at the TTC. Ahmed, for example, said that "change is palpable" and that employees feel listened to, as they feel that change is being effected based on their input. However, Fiona said that front line employees feel that things are worse than several years ago, which this manager ascribed to increased accountability for front line employees. Carlos said that while the TTC has rightly

been more focused on technological improvements, to improve customer service the organisation

must invest more in training for front line employees.

Q6. Do you remember if and how you used the Leaders' Guide on the customer satisfaction survey? What is TTC Corporate Communications doing now that helps you do your job, and what are some areas where you see room for improvement?

All but one of the managers remembered receiving a Leader's Guide from Corporate

Communications, although one of them referenced a different guide than the one mentioned in

the interview question. The researcher believes that the manager who did not recall a Leader's

Guide may not have received one due to their role in the organisation. While all seven managers

who recalled receiving a Leader's Guide appreciated having the tool, they varied in their

assessment of its utility. For example, Darnell said that they are finding the increased flow of

information from Corporate Communications to be helpful, even though the guide itself was "too

long to be effective." Ben said, "knowledge is power and the more you know, the easier it is to

do your job." Some managers shared the guide directly with their employees, either by email

with those who have access or verbally at a meeting. Others said that while they found the

information in the guide helpful in their role as manager, they would not share it directly with

front line employees. For example, Ahmed said, "my front line staff is not really going to listen

to what [Executive Director of Corporate Communications] Brad Ross puts on a notice right? So

I'm not going to use it directly." One manager said that they create their own hard copy

newsletter using corporate updates.

While managers did appreciate the support from Corporate Communications through

tools such as the Leader's Guide, seven out of eight also spoke about other ways that Corporate

Communications could better support the front lines. Given the challenges of reaching front line

employees, one manager suggested more regular touch points between leaders and operators

through approaches such as digital town halls, and another suggested that an employee mobile

app would be helpful. Another manager said they were sometimes frustrated by learning about

decisions made by executives through social media, rather than through internal channels. A

manager said they felt the TTC overreacts to media inquiries, as employees are pulled away from

their duties to chase down answers for journalists.

Discussion

This case study examined executives' and line managers' perceptions of organisational

reputation to better understand the impact of any differences between their relationship

management strategies. The TTC, a large public service organisation undergoing reputation

repair, provided a unique and timely case for the study. Key findings pertaining to the impact of

proximity on reputation management, the degree of coorientation on perceived organisational

reputation, and the impact of substantiveness on assessment of reputation repair actions are

discussed below.

Impact of Proximity on Reputation Management Tactics

This study's finding support the researcher's hypothesis that the reputation management

strategy employees gravitate towards will vary depending on whether stakeholders are high or

low proximity. The proximity circles of Schons and Steinmeier (2016) were adapted to

differentiate among an inner circle of high proximity stakeholders (TTC management and

employees), an intermediate circle of moderate proximity stakeholders (customers and the City

Hall), and an outer circle of low proximity stakeholders (news media and Toronto civil society),

as illustrated in Figure 2.

Low Proximity
News Media,
Toronto Civil
Society

**Moderate
Proximity**

Customers, City
Hall

High Proximity

TTC Management
& Employees
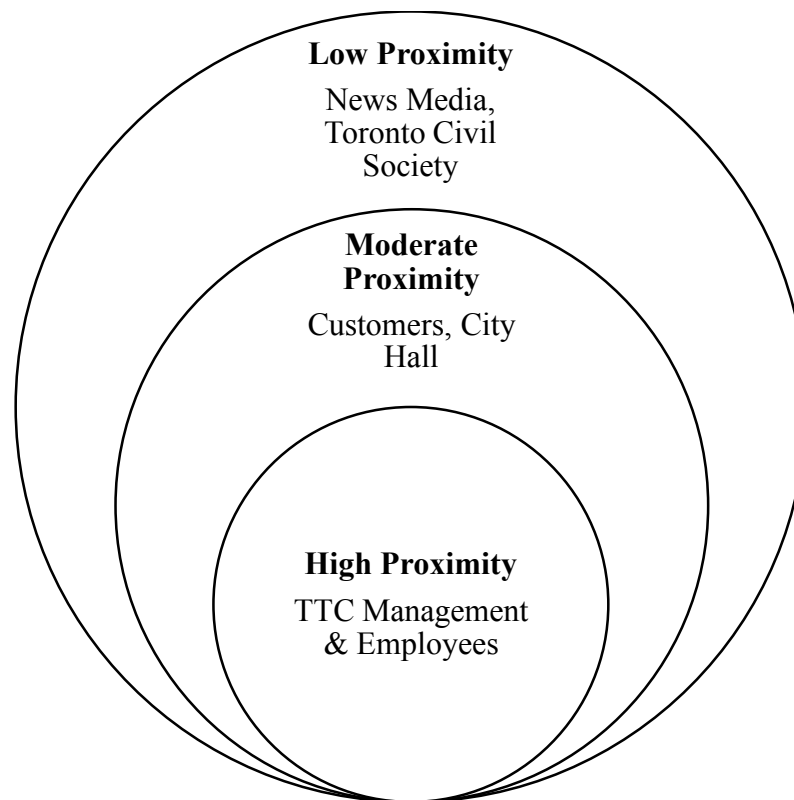
Figure 2. Inner circle of high proximity stakeholders, intermediate circle of moderate proximity
stakeholders, and outer circle of low proximity stakeholders. Adapted from Schons and
Steinmeier (2016).

This study found that when employees managed relationships with low proximity

stakeholders, they relied primarily on quantitative and objective data, using more personalised

communication tactics such as anecdotes to a lesser degree. When describing how they

communicated with low proximity stakeholders such as journalists and moderate proximity

stakeholders like City Hall employees and City Councillors, TTC executives referenced relying

on quantitative data and achievements of concrete objectives under the five-year plan. For

example, all three executives interviewed stated that they felt proactive disclosure of

performance metrics is an important and effective reputation management strategy for the news

media. TTC corporate materials aimed at low proximity stakeholders similarly relied on

quantitative and objective data. For example, a news release announcing the TTC had been

named Outstanding Public Transportation System for 2017 by the American Public

Transportation Association cited data from the customer service satisfaction survey and listed 16

specific accomplishments from the previous five years (Toronto Transit Commission, 2017b).

In addition to reliance on quantitative and objective data, TTC executives discussed the

importance of plain language and personal stories when communicating with low proximity

stakeholders. For example, the Chief Executive said that when speaking with the news media or

the general public they aimed to "think like a customer, talk like a human." This is further

supported by the TTC's corporate communications products aimed at low proximity audiences,

including as evidenced by the inclusion of employee profiles in the *24 Hours Toronto* newspaper

and the TTC Annual Report (Toronto Transit Commission, 2016a).

This study further found that when employees managed relationships with high proximity

stakeholders, they used personalised communication, such as anecdotes and examples. TTC line

managers used different tactics when managing relationships with high proximity stakeholders

than executives did with low proximity stakeholders. Line managers discussed relying on shared

experience and personal anecdotes when managing relationships with employees. For example,

Graham spoke about how they frequently use anecdotes from their own experience as an

operator when managing front line employees, saying:

I can say to [front line employees], I remember what that was like. I remember the bus

with no air conditioning, packed to the doors, and not wanting to go out of service

because you know that none of these people are going to get home [because] all the buses

behind them are full.

Similarly, Ben spoke about personalizing the experiences of customers when coaching

employees, saying they ask their employees, "if you had your 90-year old great grandmother or

grandmother [on the subway train], would you want that person hit with the [subway train]

doors? And 99 percent of them say 'No. You know what? You're absolutely right.'"

The study also found that TTC line managers used quantitative data and concrete

references when managing relationships with customers, stakeholders with a moderate degree of

proximity. For example, all but one of the line managers interviewed used the word "explain" to

describe how they would respond to criticism of the TTC from a friend or family member. Line

managers said that this explanation would include references to, for example, the ratio of revenue

from fares relative to public funding. Similarly, TTC line managers said that when responding to

concerns from customers they would seek to explain the reasons for situations, including for

example by referencing government-regulated schedules for preventative escalator repair.

By providing insights into the impact of proximity on relationship management, the

findings in this study build on the research by Bromley (1993) into primary and secondary

reputations and by Grunig and Hung (2002) into first and second order reputations. In particular,

this study provides insight into the impact for communicators of Finch et al.'s (2015) finding that

low proximity stakeholders rely on strategic group characteristics to form perceptions of

organisational reputation. This study finds employees communicating with low proximity

stakeholders will use quantitative data and achievements of concrete deliverables, information

useful when comparing an organization to its cognitive category. The study finds that employees

communicating with high proximity stakeholders, on the other hand, will use personalised

communications such as anecdotes, information more easily compared to the personal

experiences used for forming Grunig and Hung's (2002) second order reputations than

quantitative data. This study also connects proximity research (Finch et al, 2015) and the internal

reputation management research of Men (2014) by suggesting that employees may be using

personalised communications with high proximity stakeholders in order to demonstrate authentic

leadership.

Degree of Coorientation on Organisational Reputation

This study found a high degree of agreement between executives and line managers on

internal reputation, a moderate degree of agreement on external organisational reputation, and a

moderately high degree of congruency of line managers' evaluations of executives' perceptions

of internal reputation (Figure 3). Analyses of accuracy and of the congruency of executive

leaders' evaluations of line managers' perceptions of internal reputation were beyond the scope

of this study.
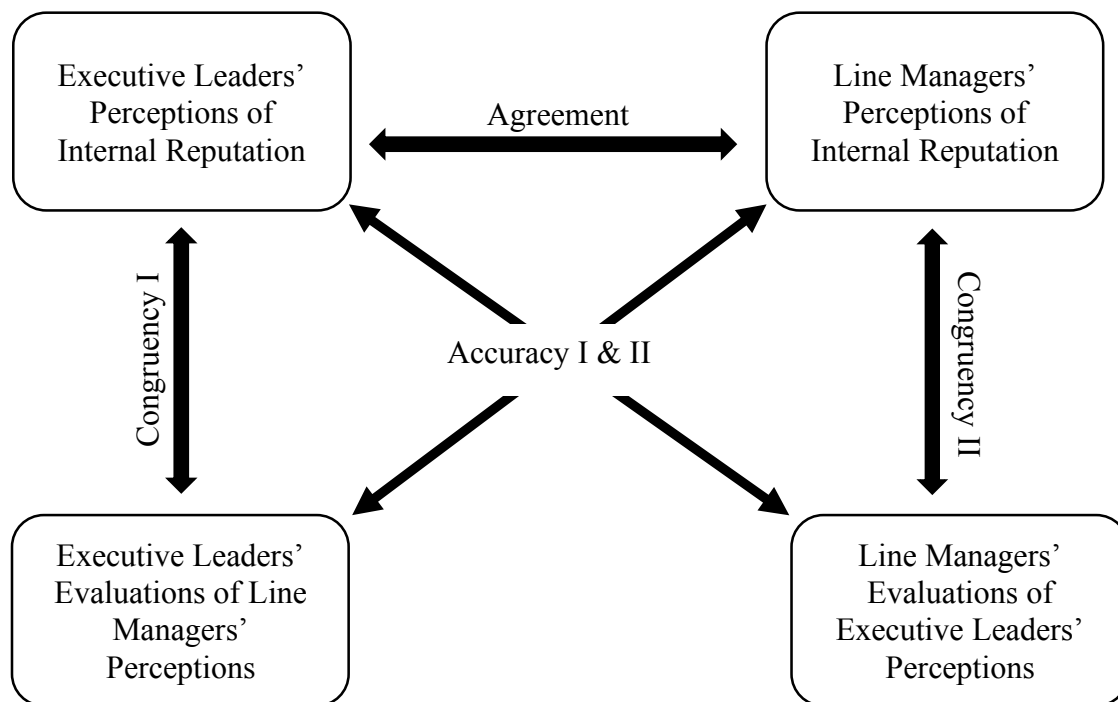
Figure 3. Coorientation of TTC line managers and executives on internal organisational reputation. Concept from McLeod and Chaffee (1973).

Results from the study indicated a relatively high degree of agreement between

executives and line managers on perceptions of internal reputation. Both groups were in general

agreement that the internal reputation of the TTC with its front line employees is weaker than

with other groups of employees. This sentiment is supported by the employee engagement

survey (Malatest, 2017). Furthermore, the study indicated a relatively high degree of agreement

on the impact for organisational reputation of challenges communicating with front line

employees. For example, the Communications Executive said:

Let's say Broadview [subway station] is a turn back location. They potentially have a

thousand people at Broadview station [because the subway trains are turning around]. A

bus is coming into the subway station, [and] the operator has no idea there's a problem on

the subway because we have no way of effectively communicating [to operators]… and there's a sea of people and the customer on the bus is like 'what's going on?' and asks the operator quite rightly what's happening, and the operator's like 'I don't know.' It puts the [bus operator] in a very difficult position. That is harmful to our reputation because we have a front line employee who doesn't know what's going on.

Compare this to the following quote from Carlos:

A lot of [front line employees] don't know all the things we're doing to try and make things better. And they're likely to say 'yeah, I think it's messed up too' instead of trying to explain why because they probably don't know why or don't take an interest as to why… and the front line is probably the worst for that because it's the most difficult to get the right information to those people.

The study also found a moderately high degree of agreement on external organisational reputation, as assessed through responses to the newspaper excerpt. While the executives had slightly differing perspectives on the excerpt, the line managers had a relatively high degree of consensus in their assessment.

The study also found a moderately high degree of congruency between line managers' perceptions of internal reputation and their evaluations of executives' perceptions of internal reputation. This congruency was indicated through the line managers' evaluations of the reputation management actions led by TTC executives. All line managers interviewed said that they see evidence that the TTC's organisational reputation had been improving. When asked for their opinion on the reasons for that improvement, the line managers consistently identified reputation management actions that were priorities of senior leadership. A majority of the line

managers also specifically mentioned the CEO's leadership as a driving force for the improvement in reputation.

Building on the research from Cameron and McCollum (1993) that found employees with low levels of congruency to their managers will be less receptive to organisational communications, this study suggested the positive assessment by line managers of executives' actions can indicated a strong degree of congruency. Hence, the results from this study supported for the researcher's hypothesis that a greater degree of agreement between line managers and executives on perceived internal reputation can indicate transfer of perceived reputation, which can then facilitate a greater degree of congruency on items including perceived organisational reputation with internal and external stakeholders. The study further builds on research by Men (2012) that found CEO credibility is an important driver of internal reputation, given the unprompted references by line managers to CEO Andy Byford and his vision as being important factors in the TTC's reputation repair.

Perhaps most significantly, this study found that coorientation can be a useful model for assessing the extent of and impact of reputation gaps between different stakeholders. While studies have assessed the impact of reputation gaps (G. Davies & Chun, 2002; G. Davies et al., 2010; Hatch & Schultz, 2001; Samli et al., 1998), this study demonstrates that coorientation is a useful lens for analyzing such reputation gaps that could lend greater clarity by focusing not only on whether there is a gap in perceptions, but more importantly on whether stakeholders believe there to be a gap.

Assessment of Reputation Management Actions

The study found support for the researcher's hypothesis that substantive reputation repair actions will have a positive impact on internal organisational reputation. Managers assessed many of the reputation management actions led by the Executive Team as being effective, as evidenced through their references to the importance of more reliable service and to culture change, the same two key factors identified by the executives. For example, a line manager stated:

> I mean our reputation is improving just in general, with Andy's direction and vision. We have done a good job in terms of our operations, improving cleanliness… reducing short turns and what not, new streetcars, new subways, I think our reputational improvement has happened and that's helpful as well. And I think that with Andy's new leadership, people do really generally respect Andy and that's helped as well.

Similarly, an executive stated:

> … [reputation is improving because of] the recent improvements, the cleanliness, the on-time performance, the customer service stuff. Everything that we've done with the five year corporate plan, the customer charter, [and] Andy's leadership in bringing on people to really drive that change.

Executives have recognized that more superficial reputation management actions were important early in the five-year plan, to help start a shift in public support. For example, Byford stated in a speech (Byford, 2017b):

Quick wins were being delivered [in 2012] to show management intent and immediate

improvement, but my fundamental point was the need for a comprehensive corporate

plan, a five-year plan to completely modernize the TTC from top to bottom.

While there was some disagreement about how much reputation repair remained to be

done, all interviewees were in agreement that support for front line employees must be a priority

for the TTC. This is further indicated by the employee engagement survey data (Malatest, 2017),

which shows gaps between management and the front lines on assessment of trust in leadership

and engagement.

Therefore, building on Schons (2016), this study found support for the hypothesis that

substantiveness of reputation management strategies is associated with stronger perceptions of

organisational reputation for stakeholders of high proximity, as demonstrated in Figure 4. Given

the moderately high degree of congruency between the two groups of employees, the study also

builds on Cameron and McCollum (1993) by finding that congruency on key beliefs facilitates

communication regarding strategy, including in this case the substantiveness of reputation

management tactics. The study further builds on Olmedo-Cifuentes et al. (2014) by suggesting

that assessment of substantiveness of reputation management tactics may be a common factor

that impacts perceptions of organisational reputation held by different groups of employees.
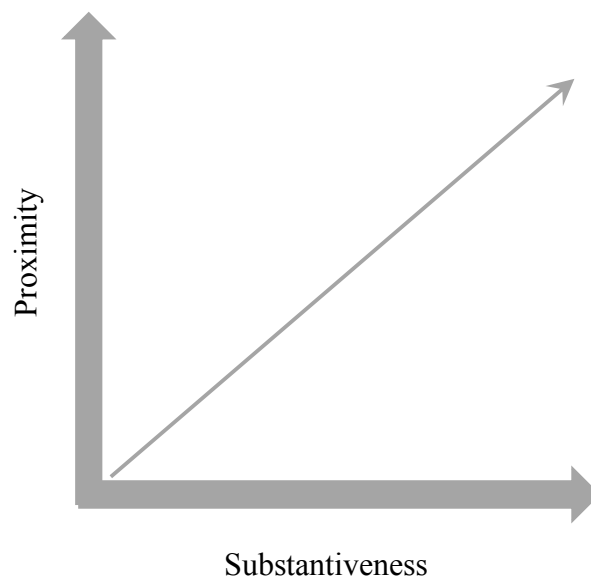
Figure 4. The proposed relationship between increasing proximity of stakeholder and increased substantiveness of reputation management tactics required in order to be effective.

The study was not able to make findings regarding front line employees' assessments of reputation management tactics as compared to either line managers or to executives, although the employee engagement survey (Malatest, 2016) would suggest lower levels of support than with management as whole. While the survey data indicates a different perception of reputation at the front lines, the study is not able to make a finding as to at which point or points in the cascade from executives to the front line the transfer of reputation weakens, or as to whether the perception of substantiveness of reputation management tactics is a contributing factor.

Implications for Management

The findings from this study lead to several key implications for strategic communications management, particularly in public service organisations.

First, to be effective, a reputation management strategy must include strategic consideration of employees, both as an end audience and as a channel for reaching other stakeholders. As this study demonstrates, employees will be paying attention to the organisation's reputation management communications, whether or not these are targeted at employees. Employees must therefore be considered not only in their capacity as an important driver of organisational reputation with external audiences, including customers, but as also as highly engaged stakeholders. If an organisation targets its reputation management strategy solely at external stakeholders, it risks creating a blind spot.

Second, communications should be tailored for each audience, with particular consideration given to stakeholders that have the highest degree of direct experience, employees. While employees will want to know the impact for them of any change or initiative, a reputation management strategy should also take into consideration how different employees will communicate about the change or initiative with others. Managers and supervisors who are tasked with communicating information to front line employees may depend on anecdotes and shared experiences to contextualize information, while executives and spokespersons who are communicating information to removed audiences may be more likely to use facts and figures. It is particularly important to reflect this requirement when communicating about reputation repair tactics, as employees are more likely to be skeptical of changes unless they can understand how those changes will address the root causes of what they understand the problems to be.

Third, given the reality that employees will talk about the organisation outside of work, and that what they say can have a significant impact, it is essential to give employees the information they need to respond to concerns or queries from friends and family. While arming

employees with information to be ambassadors outside of work is hardly a new recommendation

(Thomson & Hecker, 2000), this study also demonstrated the importance of considering how the

information employees will use during such interactions differs from that used when engaging

with other employees or with customers. The challenge then becomes how to ensure that

employees have the information they require both to communicate with the audiences they are

responsible for as part of their job, and to communicate on an informal basis with external

audiences removed from the organisation. For organisations that have large portions of their

workforce that are not based at a desk, meeting this challenge may require the creative use of

multiple communications tools.

Finally, if there is a gap in trust between groups of employees, it is important to

determine where the breakdown is occurring. In particular, since employees are more likely to

listen to their managers if they believe they are both on the same side of an issue, should

employees have significantly different perceptions on key concepts than their direct managers

this could be a barrier. To develop a solution, it is not enough to know that there are varying

opinions amongst employees; what must be determined is how those opinions are dispersed

amongst employee groups, and whether there are particular blocks that are preventing effective

two-way information sharing.

Conclusion

This study makes an important contribution to the field of reputation management by

helping address knowledge gaps around internal reputation (Men, 2014) and stakeholder

relationship management at the individual level (Barnett & Pollock, 2012). However, there are

several significant limitations to the study's findings, due largely to the limited scope of the study. First, the sample size was quite small. The researcher interviewed 11 employees out of 14,000, and so care must be taken not to generalise these results to the entirety of the TTC. Second, the study examined a single organisation. The single case study method employed here has built-in limitations, and the results cannot simply be extrapolated to other organisations, particularly those in different industries, cultures, or of different sizes. Third, the interviews were limited to two groups of employees, line managers and executives. Significantly, the researcher did not interview front line employees, due in part to instability in the labour union representing front line employees that would have caused challenges with securing approval to interview unionised employees.

In addition, while the researcher attempted to minimise bias, it could not be fully eliminated. There are several sources of potential bias in this study. First, while the researcher did not name the executives who participated, she did use generic jobs titles and, given the nature of their roles, was not able to offer anonymity. Hence, while the researcher attempted to mitigate for the potential resulting bias in the study design, such bias could not be fully eliminated. Second, while the researcher took steps to protect the identity of the line managers who participated, given that these interview subjects were being asked to comment on their employer, bias could not be fully mitigated. Third, the researcher is a resident of Toronto who regularly travels by TTC. While the researcher took care not to include her own experiences in the study, she recognizes that it is not possible to completely mitigate any personal bias arising from her own perceptions of the TTC, its employees, and its organisational reputation.

There are several areas for future research that emerge from this study, particularly given the limited research in the area of internal reputation. First, given the limited scope of this study, the single embedded case study here could be used as a pilot study for a more comprehensive, multi-case study that examined the research questions in more detail. Second, labour-management relationships are clearly an important factor for internal reputation management in unionised environments, and so the coorientation between unionised employees and other employee groups as to organisational reputation could be addressed in a future study. Third, this study was not able to make findings as to the transfer of perceptions of organisational reputation from one group of employees to another; such an examination would be particularly useful if it were to assess the transfer between managers and unionised employees. In addition, this case study was restricted to a point in time; a longitudinal study would add further insights regarding the impact of perceptions of organisational reputation over time. Finally, this case study could be replicated with other organisations, including in the private or non-profit sectors, different industries, and different locations or cultures.

Despite these limitations, by using the concepts of coorientation and proximity this study makes three key findings regarding reputation repair for stakeholder groups with different degrees of interaction with an organisation. First, this study finds that employees will use concrete data for communications with low proximity stakeholders and personalised communications for high proximity stakeholders. Second, this study finds that a coorientation analysis can provide valuable insights into the nature and impact of gaps in perceptions of organizational reputation. Third, this study finds that substantive reputation repair actions will be valued by high proximity stakeholders. As the TTC gets set to embark on its next corporate plan,

this study's findings indicate that the public transit organisation will only achieve its vision of an organisation that makes Toronto proud if its employees buy in and reflect that belief through their words and actions.

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Appendix A: Email Recruitment Script for Executives

Email Subject line: McMaster Study – Perceptions of the Toronto Transit Commission

Hello [name],

I am inviting you to participate in a 45 to 60-minute one-on-one interview about how you communicate with external and internal stakeholders about the TTC. I am speaking with several TTC senior leaders, as well as a number of line managers in Operations and Service Delivery. I should note that I am conducting this study with the endorsement of Executive Director of Corporate Communications Brad Ross.

I am completing these interviews as part of research for my master's degree with the McMaster-Syracuse Master of Communications Management program under the direction Dr. Philip Savage. As part of this graduate program, I am carrying out a study about the ways that employees and that senior management think and talk about the TTC and the impacts of any similarities or differences between the views of these groups. The results of the study should help the TTC and similar organizations improve the ways they communicate with employees and with external stakeholders.

I have attached a copy of a letter of information about the study that gives you full details. This study has been reviewed and cleared by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you any have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is being conducted you can contact the McMaster Research Ethics Board at ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca or (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration. If you are interested in participating in an interview, please let me know and I can coordinate a time when we can meet at your office. If you do participate in an interview, there is the possibility that I may also approach you with follow-up questions, if required.

Sara Goldvine
Masters Candidate in Communications Management
Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia
McMaster University
goldvisl@mcmaster.ca

Appendix B: Letter of Information and Consent for Executives

A Study about Perceptions of Toronto Transit Commission

Student Investigator:
Sara Goldvine
Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia
McMaster University
647-204-2198
Email: goldvisl@mcmaster.ca

Faculty Supervisor:
Dr. Philip Savage
Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia
McMaster University
905-525-9140, ext. 2346
Email: savagep@mcmaster.ca

What is this study about?

This research study will compare the ways that front line employees and that senior management think and talk about the TTC. The study will look at the impacts of any similarities or differences between the views of these groups. The results of the study should help the TTC and similar organizations improve the ways they communicate with employees and with external stakeholders.

This research is part of the Master of Communications Management Program I am completing through McMaster University. The TTC has endorsed this study.

What will happen during the study?

You will meet with me one-on-one for around 45 minutes to an hour. You will get to choose how we do the interview. We can meet in your office or do the interview over the phone.

I will be asking you questions about your perceptions of the TTC's reputation and about conversations with external stakeholders about the TTC. Here are examples of the questions I will ask you:

- Imagine that you are talking with a friend or family member, and this person tells you that they don't like riding the TTC because of delays and poor customer service. How would you respond?

- Reflect on conversations that you may have had with elected officials and senior civil servants in the past year or so. How do you think decision makers perceive the TTC?

Are there any risks to doing this study?

The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. You may feel uncomfortable with some of the questions I ask. You do not need to answer questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable. I describe below the steps I am taking to protect your privacy.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

This study could help the TTC develop better ways of supporting its managers and its front line employees. This study could also help the TTC and other similar organizations develop better reputation management and communications management strategies and techniques.

Who will know what I said?

I will not use your name. However, given the nature and profile of your role, other people who read the study may be able to tell who you are. Please keep this in mind. You can choose not to answer some questions. If there is anything you tell me that you would like me to not include in the report, let me know and I will ensure it is kept confidential.

The information you provide will be kept in a safe place in my home where only I will have access to it. Any information on a computer will be kept on my personal computer, protected by a password. Five years after the study is done, I will safely destroy all of the data.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?

It is your choice to be part of the study or not. You can be part of the study even if you only want to answer some of the questions I ask.

If you decide to be part of the study, you can stop for whatever reason, even partway through the study, until approximately May 14, 2017, when I expect to be submitting my research project.

If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, any information you have given me will be destroyed.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?

I expect to have this study completed by approximately June 30, 2017. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you.

Questions about the Study:

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please call or text me at 647-525-6739 or email me at goldvisl@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

> McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
> Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
> C/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support
> E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Sara Goldvine of McMaster University.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time or up until approximately May 14, 2017.
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study.

1. I agree that the interview can be audio recorded.
      [ ] Yes
      [ ] No

2. [ ] No, I do not want to receive a summary of the study's results.
   [ ] Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study's results. Please send them to:
      [ ] Email: _____
      [ ] Mailing address:

      _____

_____

_____

3. I agree to be contacted about a follow-up interview, and understand that I can always
    decline the request.
              [ ] Yes
              [ ] No

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: Email Recruitment Script for Managers

From: Kosmack, Jessica
Sent: May 4, 2017 11:13 AM
To: [REDACTED BY RESEARCHER]
Subject: Call out for your managers/supervisors >> Participation in McMaster study about communications at the TTC
Importance: High

Good morning!

Reaching out today to get your help in finding some of your front line managers/supervisors who might be interested in participating in a research study with McMaster University. This has been approved/endorsed by the TTC's Executive (including Andy) as a meaningful study to participate in.

This research project will compare the ways that front line employees and senior management think and talk about the TTC. The TTC, guided by the new Internal Communications Strategic Plan, is using best practice research to guide our actions and we have agreed to participate in this research study with McMaster University, led by Master's candidate Sara Goldvine.

The results of the study should help the TTC and similar organizations improve the ways they communicate with employees and with external stakeholders. This research will be done under the oversight of McMaster University, where Sara is enrolled in the Master of Communications Management Program.

The research study will include interviews with a small number of management employees who oversee front line employees in Operations and Service Delivery. These interviews would last around 30 to 45 minutes, and would be conducted over the phone with Sara during work time. **Any employee who participates will never have their name or any information that could identify what they said shared with anyone other than Sara, and she will be bound by the university's rules around confidentiality.** The study also includes interviews with a selection of the Executive team – these are underway now.

I'm looking for your help to **share this request with your teams or specific individuals** who would be interested in participating. Interested participants can contact Sara directly at the number/email below. She is looking to set these up within the next week, if possible.

•   Participation in this research is completely voluntary. **For managers/supervisors interested in getting more information about taking part in Sara's study, please contact Sara directly by calling/texting her at 647-204-2198 or emailing her at goldvisl@mcmaster.ca.** Sara will not tell me or anyone else at the TTC who participated or not.

Many thanks in advance for your help.

Sincerely,
Jessica

Appendix D: Letter of Information and Consent for Managers

A Study about Perceptions of Toronto Transit Commission

Student Investigator:
Sara Goldvine
Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia
McMaster University
647-204-2198
Email: goldvisl@mcmaster.ca

Faculty Supervisor:
Dr. Philip Savage
Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia
McMaster University
905-525-9140, ext. 2346
Email: savagep@mcmaster.ca

What is this study about?

This research study will compare the ways that front line employees and that senior management think and talk about the TTC. The study will look at the impacts of any similarities or differences between the views of these groups. The results of the study should help the TTC and similar organizations improve the ways they communicate with employees and with external stakeholders.

This research is part of the Master of Communications Management Program I am completing through McMaster University. The TTC has endorsed this study.

What will happen during the study?

You will have a phone call with me, during work time, for around 30 to 45 minutes. You will get to choose when we do the interview. We can do the interview on work time or, if you prefer, on personal time.

I will be asking you questions about your conversations with front line employees about the TTC. I will also be asking you what you think about how other people talk about the TTC.

Here are examples of the questions I will ask you:

- Imagine that you are talking with a friend or family member, and this person tells you that they don't like riding the TTC because of delays and poor customer service. How would you respond?

- TTC Corporate Communications develops guides to help leaders talk with employees about important initiatives. Think back to when you would have received the leaders' guide on the Customer Satisfaction Survey, in February. Do you remember if you used the guide? Do you remember how your team members responded? [Note: a copy is included at the bottom of this letter, for your reference.]

Are there any risks to doing this study?

The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. You may feel uncomfortable with some of the questions I ask. You do not need to answer questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable. I describe below the steps I am taking to protect your privacy.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

This study could help the TTC develop better ways of supporting its managers and its front line employees.

Who will know what I said?

I will make every effort to protect your confidentiality. I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified.

It possible that other people at the TTC may know that you have spoken with me. Even though I can keep parts of the stories you tell me confidential (e.g. names of people, names of stations), it is possible that other people may be able to identify you on the basis of the stories that you tell me. Please keep this in mind.

The information you provide will be kept in a safe place in my home where only I will have access to it. Any information on a computer will be kept on my personal computer, protected by a password. Five years after the study is done, I will safely destroy all of the data.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?

It is your choice to be part of the study or not. You can be part of the study even if you only want to answer some of the questions I ask.

If you decide to be part of the study, you can stop for whatever reason, even partway through the study, until approximately May 14, 2017, when I expect to be submitting my research project.

If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal, any information you have given me will be destroyed.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?

I expect to have this study completed by approximately June 30, 2017. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you.

Questions about the Study:

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please call or text me at 647-525-6739 or email me at goldvisl@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

> McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
> Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
> C/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support
> E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Sara Goldvine of McMaster University.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time or up until approximately May 14, 2017.
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study.

4. I agree that the interview can be audio recorded.
    [ ] Yes

[ ] No

5. [ ] No, I do not want to receive a summary of the study's results.
    [ ] Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study's results. Please send them to:
        [ ] Email: _____
        [ ] Mailing address:

        _____
        _____
        _____

6. I agree to be contacted about a follow-up interview, and understand that I can always
    decline the request.
        [ ] Yes
        [ ] No

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E: Interview Guide for Executives

Opening	1. Can you start by telling me a little bit about why you have chosen to work for the TTC? What do you find most rewarding about this work?
Transition	2. Imagine that you are talking with a friend or family member, and this person tells you that they don't like riding the TTC because of delays and poor customer service. How would you respond?
Key	3. Reflect on conversations that you may have had with elected officials and senior civil servants in the past year or so. How do you think decision makers perceive the TTC?
	3.1. Potential follow up: What strategies have you found are most effective for changing the perceptions of journalists, city councilors and city staff about the TTC?
	3.2. Potential follow up: in your opinion, what are some of the biggest challenges the TTC faces when talking to elected officials and the news media about the organisation's priorities and challenges?
	4. Here is an excerpt from a recent newspaper article. What is your opinion of this description?
	Transit riders have cause to be optimistic right now. Service is improving, the system is expanding and, crucially, money is flowing from three levels of government. Some on City Council act like that will last forever — as if reopening the Scarborough subway debate for the eighth time presents no risk, only opportunity.
	It won't last forever. Imperfect, late, over budget and clumsily implemented as many recent TTC improvements have been, they add up to something significant. Torontonians should demand better, certainly — but not at the expense of more, and not at the expense of faster.
	5. As the article we just discussed illustrates, the TTC has seen its reputation improve over the past few years. In your opinion, what are some of the reasons for that growth?

	6. What role do you think that front line employees have in improving the TTC's reputation?
	6.1. Potential follow up: How do you think that front line employees and front line managers perceive the TTC's reputation?
Ending	7. Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix F: Interview Guide for Line Managers

Opening	1. Can you start by telling me a little bit about why you have chosen to work for the TTC? What do you find most rewarding about this work? 1.1. Follow up: How many years have you worked for the TTC?
Transition	2. Imagine that you are talking with a friend or family member, and this person tells you that they don't like riding the TTC because of delays and poor customer service. How would you respond? 2.1. How do you think the employees who report to you might respond?
Key	3. Now I would like to get your opinion about the ways that other people talk about the TTC. I am going to read part of a newspaper article aloud. [Read excerpt.] *Transit riders have cause to be optimistic right now. Service is improving, the system is expanding and, crucially, money is flowing from three levels of government. Some on City Council act like that will last forever — as if reopening the Scarborough subway debate for the eighth time presents no risk, only opportunity.* *It won't last forever. Imperfect, late, over budget and clumsily implemented as many recent TTC improvements have been, they add up to something significant. Torontonians should demand better, certainly — but not at the expense of more, and not at the expense of faster.* What do you think about this description of the TTC? 3.1. Potential follow up: do front line employees on your team talk with you about news stories? What do you hear from them?
	4. As a manager/supervisor of front line employees, you talk with customers often. Tell me about a time when a customer was very upset about something. What did they say to you or to your staff, and how did you respond?
	5. The TTC leadership has made improving the organisation's reputation a priority under the five year plan. Do you see evidence that reputation is improving? Why/why not?
	6. TTC Corporate Communications develops guides to help leaders talk with employees about important initiatives. I sent you one of these by email, focused on

	the customer satisfaction survey results. I am going to read the first few lines aloud. Feel free to follow along. [Read aloud]. Think back to when you would have received this guide, in February. Do you remember if you used the guide? Do you remember how your team members responded? 6.1. Follow-up: What is Corporate Communications doing now that helps you do your job and support your team? What are some areas where you see room for improvement?
Ending	7. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix G: Sample TTC Leader's Guide

From: Ross, Brad
Sent: February 14, 2017 11:09 AM
To: TTC Leadership Group
Subject: For Leaders - how to share the latest Customer Satisfaction Survey results with your team

The Customer Satisfaction Survey results for Q4 2016 are now in. As an organization, we have made a commitment to start sharing this kind of information with all staff, regardless of role or location. Later today, we will share the note attached with all employees who have email.

We are reaching out to the Leadership Group first to provide you with some speaking points to use to share this info with your teams.

How do I do that?

Use existing team or individual meetings to share this positive news, or set up a specific meeting to walk them through the highlights, focusing on the stats that resonate most for your group.

For those of you with frontline or maintenance employees, we ask that you find ways to share this positive news with them – face to face is best, but posting the info in high traffic areas also works. A PDF of the email is attached for posting, if needed.

How should I deliver this message?

• **Be positive** – this is the first time we are sharing any survey results with all employees and it's a good news story

• **Customize the message** – spend more time focusing on the results that will resonate with your teams

• **Reiterate the importance of the *employee*** – without the work of our employees we would not achieve these strong stats – this is an important message to convey – their hard work pays off.

• **Keep it short** – this does not need 30 minutes of discussion – a quick huddle or add-on to an existing meeting, or casual discussion in a lunchroom works. 10 minutes is all you need.

We all need to see ourselves in the big picture. Your help in keeping employees informed and connected to our shared vision is making that possible for the thousands of people who work hard every day.

The full survey results will be available on the intranet later today.

If you have questions about the survey data, please contact Viktoriya Artemyeva in Customer Development.

If you have questions or ideas about communicating with your teams, please contact Jessica Kosmack in Corporate Communications.

Thank you.

Brad Ross
Executive Director,
Corporate Communications
Toronto Transit Commission

Appendix H: TTC Organisational Chart

Andy Byford
Chief Executive Officer
CEO's Office

Brad Ross
Executive Director
Corporate Communications

Brian Leck
Head & General Counsel
Legal

John O'Grady
Chief Safety Officer
Safety & Environment

Tara Bal
Head
Internal Audit

Jody Humble
Director
Change Management

Keith Sibley
Chief Project Manager
Spadina Subway Extension

Gemma Piemontese
Chief People Officer
Human Resources
|
Training & Development
Paul Maglietta, Head

Diversity & Human Rights
Valerie Albanese, Head

Joan Taylor
Chief of Staff
|
Commission Services
Kevin Lee, Head

TBA
Chief Financial Officer

Corporate Services Group
Oversees financial compliance. Provides comprehensive systems and logistical support.

Finance
Michael Roche, Head & Treasurer

IT Services
Dan Guna, Head & Chief Information Officer

Materials & Procurement
Ted Zlotnik, Head

Pensions
Sean Hewitt, CEO - Pension Fund Society

Susan Reed Tanaka
Chief Capital Officer

Engineering, Construction & Expansion Group
Develops, improves and expands the network. Owner of the capital portfolio.

Capital Programming
Jim Fraser, Head

Construction
Jane Murray, Chief Project Manager

Engineering
Pierre Laurin, Head

Property, Planning & Development
Pamela Kraft, Head

Scarborough Subway Extension
Rick Thompson, Chief Project Manager

Mike Palmer
Chief Operating Officer

Operations Group
Delivers reliable, punctual subway service, and maintains the transit network and rail fleet to stringent safety and customer service standards.

Operations Financial Control
Sam Castiglione, Head

Plant Maintenance
Glen Buchberger, Head

Revenue Operations
Chris Salvador, Head

Subway Operations
James Ross
Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Automatic Train Control
Pete Tomlin, Senior Project Manager

Rail Cars & Shops
Raffaele Trentadue, Head

Subway Infrastructure
Craig Harper, Head

Subway Transportation
Raewyn Jackson, Head

---

*Rick Leary
Chief Service Officer

Service Delivery Group
Delivers world-class service on all bus and streetcar routes, and to customers in all TTC stations, day in and day out.

Bus Maintenance & Shops
Allan Pritchard (Acting), Head

Service Delivery Control
Dave Campbell, Head

Streetcar Maintenance & Infrastructure
Rich Wong, Head

Transit Enforcement Unit
Mark Cousins, Chief Special Constable

*Kirsten Watson
Deputy Chief Service Officer

Bus Transportation
*Collie Greenwood, Head

Stations
Tim Bauble, Head

Streetcar Transportation
John Morrison, Head

Wheel-Trans
Eve Wiggins, Head

Chris Upfold
Deputy CEO/Chief Customer Officer

Strategy & Customer Experience Group
Represents the customer throughout the journey. Sets standards, develops service offerings and analyzes performance.

Customer Communications
Cheryn Thoun, Head

Customer Development
Arthur Borkwood, Head

Customer Service Centre
Sue Motahedin, Head

Farecard Team
Bob Hughes, Head

Strategy & Service Planning
Jacqueline Darwood, Head

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* Rick Leary appointed Deputy Chief Executive Officer, effective July 1, 2017.

* Kirsten Watson appointed Acting Chief Customer Officer, effective June 12, 2017.

* Collie Greenwood appointed Acting Deputy Chief Service Officer, effective June 12, 2017.

TTC Organization Chart
As of June 26, 2017

Source: https://www.ttc.ca/Coupler/Short_Turns/TTC_Org_Chart/index.jsp

Appendix I: Executive Interviews Summary Table

	Executive 1	**Communications Executive**	**Operations Executive**
Q2 – your response to complaint from friend	Stick up for TTC, correct facts.	Happens quite often. I educate. Proud to say I work for TTC	Politely listen but never comes up. If it did may try to educate
Q2.1 – front line's response to complaint from friend	n/a	Not going to be as positive. Some proud & grateful. White noise problem = hard to connect w employees. Love that Byford defends TTC. Travesty that 40% of employees don't think execs on right track.	Hope they have pride
Q3 – talking with lower proximity stakeholders	Easy target. With media, transparent; CEO is accessible, relationship is symbiotic. With politicians: lobby hard so they understand transit good for voters, also improve performance. Plain language, customer-centered.	Media like our transparency. City hall feels we're antiquated. Educate on KPIs. Media have job too. All about openness. Elected officials can be source of info (about issues).	See TTC as doing lot with little. Like transparency, seeing progress. Perception that City Hall that TTC is "immovable beast" of bureaucracy, always wanting more. Journalists generally well-informed about TTC. Frustrating = when media twist issue, find 1 person who says something negative, run story to generate clicks.
Q4: opinion on article excerpt	Agree.	Agree w first 2 sentences; doing better in general.	Corner desk opinion, not factual.

	Executive 1	**Communications Executive**	**Operations Executive**
Q5: reasons for reputation change	(1) better at basics, laying foundation; (2) outward-looking, transparent; (3) delivery - service, projects, station management model; communications push -- TTC TV, 24 Hours column, weekly CEO blog post to leadership, (4) community liaison, stakeholder relations	Quality of service. Courtesy.	Leadership of CEO. Cleanliness, on time. Culture change - customer at centre. New technology.
Q6 – role of front line	Improving service can mean changes controversial w front line. Quick wins in 2012 included cleaning trains at end of each route, replaced handwritten notes in collector booths w laminated signs, professional uniforms for janitors. Push accountability down to front line, and increase communications to do that.	Not just moving people business, customer service business.	E.g. hot car issue -- lots of good communications from operators. Some very good, some don't want to be. Role is critical. Biggest challenge = getting info to them in timely way, challenges w cascade; informed workforce will improve reputation.
Other	Very difficult to communicate with front lines. Try to address shift work challenges with TTC TV, more face to face meetings, communications to the	Challenge = operators can be isolated, often don't see boss for long periods of time. Do reasonably good job on communications with politicians; wish we	Wonder how supported front lines feel.

	front line supervisors. Also, because changes controversial, they tend to get counter briefed by the union.	could do more for front lines.	

Appendix J: Line Manager Interviews Summary Table

	Ahmed	**Ben**	**Carlos**	**Darnell**
Q2 – your response to complaint from a friend	Try to get as much info as can. Explain reasons why. Sometimes will bring info back, see if there's something I can do.	Think of this as my own business and it hurts. People don't understand the complexity. Explain.	Listen & explain.	Try to avoid. Only maintain friendships w those who don't ask about TTC.
Q2.1 – front line's response to complaint from a friend	Operators will join in complaint aspect. Supervisors are middle ground.	90% of supervisors would say yeah it's the TTC what do you expect	Likely to say things are messed up because they don't know why things are the way they are. Difficult to get info to front lines. Culture of us vs them.	Operators find it easier to brush it off because they're not in charge. Reaction would depend on individual.

	Emma	**Fiona**	**Graham**	**Hasina**
Q2 – your response to complaint from a friend	Try to explain. If in scope of what I can control, take info back to workplace	Give facts, background info.	When was operator, would be defensive. Now rolls off back. Want to know what happened, find resolution.	Explain - funding, we do our best. Direct to customer service line. May f/u on what happened, get answers.
Q2.1 – front line's response to complaint from a friend	Vary. Some similar to me, some would throw up hands.	Would defend TTC, clarify situation.	Say it's not our fault, these are the tools we have to work with and it's	Employees on team are used to it. Defend TTC.

			crap.	

	Ahmed	**Ben**	**Carlos**	**Darnell**
Q3 – opinion on article excerpt		Correct -- there should be shovels in ground by now. The reason it's improved is because spent money.	Didn't come across as super negative, which is good. Media too quick to jump to negative.	Well scripted, objective. Don't take offence to people having own opinions. Not necessarily that we mess up, often it's City Council.
Q3.1 – front line's response to media coverage		Demoralizing, feel it's always our fault no matter what.		If come ask me if something is true, will give as much info as I have. Generally don't put a lot of weight on media coverage, except when about safety. See Facebook threads from those looking for any reason to bash management.

	Emma	**Fiona**	**Graham**	**Hasina**
Q3 – opinion on article excerpt	Agree -- nothing is done easily & quickly.	Some truth to it. If read it, wouldn't think much about it. 99 times out of 100, media is bashing TTC.	Agree 100%. Our riders deserve better service We need to step up our game. There's been a lot of talk, now going	Frustrates me -- they only look at negatives. Considering what TTC receives, need a miracle every day.

			in direction of there being more action.	
Q3.1 – front line's response to media coverage	99% already know of something before covered in media. No big discussions.	50-50 split between employees who want to talk about it more, and those who just ignore.	Focused on not getting captured on video.	Get frustrated. Usually already know b/c of strong internal communications.

	Ahmed	Ben	Carlos	Darnell
Q4 – response to customer	E.g. customer gave thanks for how station was cleaner, responded that it was due to hard work of team.	Customers used to always respond w disgust. Now, either for or against TTC, interaction is a lot better. Passengers don't automatically start berating you -- they want answers, they want to know why things happen.	E.g. called customer directly, took complaint seriously. Complaints not necessarily substantive -- dealing w things that could be resolved at customer service level. Employees need training, not everyone has the right tools	Either give as little info as possible (when customer not willing to listen) or as much as possible (when they are). Grow thick skin. Public is much more well informed now than few years ago, but it hasn't stopped people from either loving or hating us. Social media has changed things, people think they can take a photo anytime.

	Emma	Fiona	Graham	Hasina
Q4 – response to	Explained issue	Explain reason	E.g. customer	Met w rider

| customer | to customer. Responses have gotten more positive in last few years. | for service disruption, give backgound info. Some customers understand and, others still upset. | upset re delays. Focused on shared experience. Remember that may have something going on, may be upset for reasons not to do w TTC. Stay grounded, stay humble. | group -- listened, made changes, then demonstrated that changes were made. |

	Ahmed	**Ben**	**Carlos**	**Darnell**
Q5 – Reputation change	Byford & 5 year plan -- positive change, expansion of the system, cleanliness. People have started to respect the service again. Employees feel listened to.	Customer charter. Transparency. Employees more informed -- communications is better. Cleaner, fewer delays.	Mostly been focused on technical so far -- most important is to improve getting people moving, then customer service is secondary.	Increased reliability decreased short turns help morale of drivers. Sometimes we apologize too much for actions of the front line, and don't defend quite enough.

	Emma	**Fiona**	**Graham**	**Hasina**
Q5 – Reputation change	Improving in general b/c of Byford, reducing short turns etc	Bit more positive. More transparent. Customer charter, employee charter. Take responsibility when fail. Employees feel	Some customers see improvement, others say it is just crap -- about 70/30 split neg to pos. More focus on customer service, e.g.	More customer-focused. CEO vision.

		things are worse -- being held responsible, not used to change.	complaints process. More focus on dignity, respect.	

	Ahmed	**Ben**	**Carlos**	**Darnell**
Q6 – Leader's Guide	Good tool, but don't use directly for communication.	Disseminate to supervisors. Let union rep know about it. Use when meet with supervisors. Knowledge is power.	Presented it & went through talking points.	Scanned it – too long. Find receiving these types of things helpful. Forwards by email to supervisors.
Q6.1 – Corp Comms support	Feel comms overreacts to media -- chasing down answers can take employees off doing job.	Help build public awareness of certain issues e.g. why/how subway doors close.	Problem is that supervisors don't get face-to-face time w operators -- can post info but can't force them to read it. Not more times when can reach every operator, could be digitally e.g. town halls.	Like being able to reference back info in emails. Sometimes learn about decisions on twitter; understand sometimes have to make decisions without consulting us but at least tell us first.

	Emma	**Fiona**	**Graham**	**Hasina**
Q6 – Leader's Guide	Shared at team meeting.	Don't recall receiving.	Recalled receiving guide for employee engagement survey. Held meeting w supervisors, went through	Helpful – forwarded email.

			results.	
Q6.1 – Corp Comms support	Regular updates great for those who have email. Difficult to reach front lines.	Have all support I need.	Small incentives have been cut back; understand why, but hear complaints.	Been seeing more from comms. No email is challenge; app would be good.

Appendix K: Employee Engagement Survey 2016

malatest
Program Evaluation
& Market Research

Toronto Transit Commission Employee Engagement Survey 2016

About This Survey

R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. is one of Canada's largest independently owned and operated research and evaluation firms. Our reputation is based on our integrity; we maintain the highest standards to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of our survey participants.

As a Gold Seal member of the Marketing Research Intelligence Association (MRIA), we abide by the MRIA's Codes of Conduct which are based on the principles underlying the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

We have been commissioned by the TTC to collect your feedback on a range of workplace and workforce issues. Your local manager and Senior Management will use this feedback to respond to the issues that are important to you and ensure that the TTC continues to be a great place to work. The survey data that we collect will never be viewed by anyone at the TTC or any other company, and rest assured that your individual responses *(including any complaints and comments critical of the TTC)* will be kept **strictly anonymous** and not linked to you in any way.

There is a code on your survey envelope. Malatest uses this code to combine your survey responses with others in your department.

Only Malatest uses this code. If we receive fewer than 10 completed surveys for your department, we will combine results with another similar department to protect your confidentiality. We analyze results at the department level (when possible) in order to identify specific actions the TTC can take to increase satisfaction among employees in each department.

Your responses to this survey should accurately reflect your views of the organization and its overall performance. The survey takes about 10-15 minutes to complete. To access the survey, simply record your answers on this paper version of the survey and return to R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. using the return envelope provided.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED SURVEY BY NOVEMBER 21, 2016. Thank you for making your voice heard.

The following questions are used only to understand how different groups of employees feel about various subjects. If you do not feel comfortable answering any of these questions, please select the "N/A" or "Prefer not to answer" option and move on to the next question.

Questions: If you have questions about the study itself, or if you prefer to complete the survey online through your personal email address, please contact **Asa Goldman at 1-800-598-0161 or a.goldman@malatest.com**.

Overall Ratings

Throughout the survey, please note that "N/A" refers to "Don't know" and "Not applicable," "1" means "Strongly disagree" and "10" means "Strongly agree."

A1. Based on any impression you have, how much would you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree								Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
I am satisfied with the TTC as an employer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I enjoy coming to work every day	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I see the value in the work that I do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Your Job

B1. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your job?

	Strongly disagree								Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
I feel motivated in my job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My work enables me to use my skills and abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have the proper equipment/tools to do my job well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am given the freedom to make decisions in my job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In my job, I feel able to put customers first	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I often look for ways to make improvements in how things are done	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am not afraid to suggest new ways of doing things in my job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel well informed about how to improve customer service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel involved in major changes taking place at the TTC that affect my work area	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall, I am satisfied with the job I do at the TTC	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2

Your Company/Senior Management

C1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the company and/or Senior Management (that is, Department Heads, Chiefs and other senior leaders who make decisions about the direction of the company).

	Strongly disagree								Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
I am proud and passionate about the TTC	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The TTC puts customers first	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People get things done both quickly and efficiently at the TTC	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There is effective sharing of information across the TTC	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I trust Senior Management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People take personal responsibility for getting things done at the TTC	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
If something goes wrong, people concentrate on putting it right, not blaming others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People show each other respect across the TTC	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There is good collaboration between different parts of the TTC	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel sufficiently well informed about what is happening in the TTC	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel confident that Senior Management is making the right decisions for the company's future success	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Senior Management welcomes all feedback, both positive and negative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel that the TTC's vision to be "A transit system that makes Toronto proud" is realistic and achievable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall, I am satisfied with the Senior Management of the company	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C2. In the past 12 months, working for the TTC has...

☐ 1 Gotten better   ☐ 2 Stayed the same   ☐ 3 Gotten worse   ☐ 4 Don't know

C3. Please explain the answer you gave to the previous question (i.e., question C2).

┌───┐
│   │
│   │
│   │
└───┘

3

Your Manager/Supervisor/Foreperson

D1. Thinking about your immediate manager, supervisor or foreperson (that is, the person to whom you report directly, on a day-to-day basis), please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about this individual.

	Strongly disagree								Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
I am satisfied with the way I am managed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My manager/supervisor/foreperson actively discourages prejudice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My manager/supervisor/foreperson treats me fairly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have confidence in my manager's/supervisor's/foreperson's skills and abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Where appropriate, my manager/supervisor/foreperson involves me in decisions which affect me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My manager/supervisor/foreperson leads by example	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I get help and support from my manager/supervisor/foreperson when I need it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My manager/supervisor/foreperson keeps me well informed about issues which affect me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My manager/supervisor/foreperson gives me regular, constructive feedback about my performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My manager/supervisor/foreperson is open to constructive feedback from employees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall, I am satisfied with my immediate manager/supervisor/foreperson	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4

Your Team

E1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the people with whom you work at the TTC

	Strongly disagree								Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
There is good morale in my team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel that my opinions count in my team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
All the people in my team are treated fairly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel supported by my fellow team members	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My team members do quality work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel that workload is fairly distributed in my team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall, I am satisfied with my relationship with my coworkers/colleagues at the TTC	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

E2. Does your team hold regular team meetings?

☐1 Yes --------------→ E3. Do you feel team meetings occur...?
☐2 No   ☐1 Too frequently
☐3 Don't know   ☐2 Frequently enough
                                   ☐3 Not frequently enough
                                   ☐4 Don't know

	Strongly disagree								Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
E4. How much do you agree or disagree that your team meetings are useful?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5

Your Working Environment

F1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements describing the TTC's work environment.

	Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Strongly agree 9 10	N/A
The TTC cares about my mental health and emotional well-being	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐	☐
I feel that I belong at the TTC	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐	☐
I am satisfied with my work/office space and facilities	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐	☐
I can adjust my work hours/shifts if needed	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐	☐
The hours I work are reasonable	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐	☐
The TTC hires and promotes people who apply to competitive job postings based on their skills, knowledge and experience ("competitive" meaning those jobs posted as Job Opportunities)	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐	☐
The TTC is dedicated to diversity and inclusiveness	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐	☐
Overall, I am satisfied with the work environment at the TTC	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐	☐

F2. In the last 12 months, have you experienced any workplace discrimination or harassment by any TTC employee?

☐1 Yes ----------------------→ F3. If you have experienced workplace discrimination or harassment ("yes" to F2), please indicate by
☐2 No   whom:
☐3 Prefer not to answer   ☐1 Co-worker
                                                 ☐2 Foreperson, supervisor, manager, or any other senior TTC employee?
                                                 ☐3 Prefer not to answer

                                                 F4. Did you bring the matter to the attention of your foreperson, supervisor, manager, other senior
                                                 TTC employee or TTC's Diversity and Human Rights?
                                                 ☐1 Yes
                                                 ☐2 No
                                                 ☐3 Prefer not to answer

6

If you were discriminated against or harassed at work and you brought the matter to someone's attention ("yes" at F4), please answer F5:

	Not at all satisfied 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	Very satisfied 9 10	N/A
F5. How satisfied were you with the way the matter was handled?	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	☐ ☐	☐

If you were discriminated against or harassed at work and you did not bring the matter to someone's attention ("no" at F4), please answer F6:

F6. Could you please tell us why did you not bring this matter to the attention of a supervisor, manager, foreperson, other senior TTC employee or TTC's Diversity and Human Rights?

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F7. In the last 12 months, have you experienced workplace violence (assault, attempted assault or threat of violence?) from any TTC employee?

☐1 Yes   ☐2 No   ☐2 Prefer not to answer

F8. If you have experienced workplace violence ("yes" at F7), please indicate by whom:

☐1 Co-worker
☐2 Foreperson, supervisor, manager, or any other senior TTC employee
☐3 Prefer not to answer

7

Safety

G1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the TTC's approach to ensuring your physical safety.

	Strongly disagree								Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
I feel comfortable discussing safety issues at work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
People in my team report all injuries no matter how minor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Protecting employees from safety risks is a high priority for Senior Management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My manager/supervisor/foreperson is well informed about safety issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My manager/supervisor/foreperson acts quickly to address safety issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am strongly encouraged to report unsafe working conditions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall, I feel safe when I am at work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Training and Development

H1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the training you receive as an employee at the TTC.

	Strongly disagree								Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
My on-boarding/induction experience was positive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have received the right sort of training to do my job properly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I discuss with my manager/supervisor/foreperson whether training meets my needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied with the learning and development opportunities available to me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied with the support I receive on my personal development	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have a clear, agreed, personal development plan which I have agreed to with my manager/supervisor/foreperson	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall, I am satisfied with my training and development at the TTC	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8

Performance and Reward

I1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements with respect to the TTC's practices and behaviours in the areas of employee reward and recognition.

	Strongly disagree								Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
Poor performance is not tolerated	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied with the recognition I receive from my manager/supervisor/foreperson	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am satisfied with my pay and benefits, given the job I do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At the TTC, the recognition and/or rewards are meaningful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have the opportunity to progress within the company	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The TTC offers good job security	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall, I am satisfied with the way the TTC recognizes and rewards employees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How are we doing?

J1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree								Strongly agree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
The TTC has taken action based on the feedback employees provided in the 2014 Employee Engagement Survey	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

J2. What would you most like to see improved to increase your satisfaction as a TTC employee? If you need additional space, feel free to continue on the back of the page.

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Diversity and Inclusion (Voluntary Section)

The information in this section will be used to help the TTC improve its diversity and inclusion programs, by better understanding the extent to which all employees feel valued and included, and whether barriers exist for any groups.

If you choose not to complete this section, your previous survey answers will still be compiled with those of other TTC employees. As with all questions in the survey, your individual responses will not be provided to the TTC. Responses to the Diversity and Inclusion section will only be compiled at the organization and group level (i.e. not department level or lower).

Do you personally identify with any of the following groups?

1. Age:
   ☐ Under 30
   ☐ 30-39
   ☐ 40-49
   ☐ 50-59
   ☐ 60 and over
   ☐ Prefer not to answer

2. Gender: _____
   ☐ Prefer not to answer

3. Do you identify as an Indigenous Person?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Prefer not to answer

4. Are you a person with a disability?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Prefer not to Answer

5. Do you identify as a person who is racialized (i.e. identify with a certain race, colour and/or ethnicity)?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Prefer not to answer

   If you wish to provide further details, please specify race, colour, and/or ethnicity:

   _____

6. Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Prefer not to answer

Thank you very much for completing the survey. The results will be made available in Q2 2017.
Your responses will help us increase employee satisfaction moving forward.

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Appendix L: Certificate of Ethics Clearance

McMaster University *Inspiring Innovation and Discovery*	**McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB)** c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support, MREB Secretariat, GH-305, e-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca **CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS CLEARANCE TO INVOLVE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH**

Application Status: New ☑ Addendum ☐ Project Number: 2017 014

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:

In the Eye of the Storm: Coorientation in a Public Organization During a Period of Reputation Repair

Faculty Investigator(s)/ Supervisor(s)	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
P. Savage	Communication Studies		savagep@mcmaster.ca
Co-Investigators/ Students	**Dept./Address**	**Phone**	**E-Mail**
S. Goldvine	Communication Studies	647-525-673	goldvisl@mcmaster.ca

The application in support of the above research project has been reviewed by the MREB to ensure compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the McMaster University Policies and Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants. The following ethics certification is provided by the MREB:

☐ The application protocol is cleared as presented without questions or requests for modification.
☑ The application protocol is cleared as revised without questions or requests for modification.
☐ The application protocol is cleared subject to clarification and/or modification as appended or identified below:

COMMENTS AND CONDITIONS: Ongoing clearance is contingent on completing the annual completed/status report. A "Change Request" or amendment must be made and cleared before any alterations are made to the research.

Amendment#1, cleared April 4, 2017

Reporting Frequency:	Annual: Feb-03-2018	Other:

Date: Feb-03-2017   Vice Chair, Dr. S. Watt *[signature]*