

Canterbury District Health Board Masters Project Description

The Project

Project Title:

Internal Communications Systems and Effectiveness

University Project Leaders/Supervisors & Department / School / Research Centre:

Lead Supervisor: Associate Professor Colleen Mills: Communication Management
(organisational, intercultural, professional), Department of Management

Second Supervisor: Donald Matheson, Senior Lecturer & Acting Programme Co-ordinator,
Mass Communication, Political Science & Communication

Canterbury DHB Project Sponsor:

Michele Hider, Communications Manager, Canterbury DHB

Degree level:

Masters

Timeframe:

1 year. Expected to be February 2009 – February 2010

Scholarship Funding:

The scholarship is funded by the Canterbury DHB. The successful student will receive NZ\$15,000 for living and research-related costs and up to a \$5,000 grant for tuition fees.

Project Description: Brief outline of project (up to 400 words):

(Describe the proposed research project)

The Canterbury DHB is the South Island's largest employer. It has a wide range of employees. It would be of great benefit to Canterbury DHB to better understand internal communication processes. Such an understanding would provide a foundation for improving the efficacy of these processes and identifying opportunities for refinement. Despite much attention being paid to communicating messages, it is uncertain whether messages always reach their intended audience and whether the sender's motivation is well understood. There is opportunity to research in detail the effectiveness of the current communication and suggest new communication mechanisms based upon this research.

Ideally the study would include:

1. Identifying the process and outcomes of a particular organisational communication event.
2. Examining how stakeholders make sense of this event and the consequences of this sense for the way they approach subsequent communication.
3. Gathering suggestions from participants on how formal organisational communication could be refined to make it more appropriate to their needs and ways of operating.
4. Establishing the degree to which participants understand and take advantage of upward communication mechanisms.
5. Generating suggestions regarding how these upward communication mechanisms could be refined to facilitate more effective use.
6. Identifying general principles to guide the design and management of both downward and upward internal communication management.
7. Preparing a brief report and presentation for the Canterbury DHB on the primary findings of the study.

The Student

Student Academic background / specific skills sought:

1. A Bachelor Honours degree in organisational communication, management communication, management, human resources (HR but preferably HRM) or a related subject such as organisational psychology, sociology, anthropology, mass communication or journalism.
2. Evidence of competence working with qualitative data.
3. Competent computing skills including experience using Endnote and ideally INVIVO.
4. Experience conducting research interviews.
5. Highly developed interpersonal and academic (oral and written) communication skills.
6. Excellent project management skills.
7. Highly developed sense of professionalism.

The Process

1. The student will be assigned a mentor by the sponsor to ensure the student has expert advice on matters pertaining to organisational practices, structure, confidentiality, safety and appropriate practice when in the field.
2. An advisory committee will be established which includes both supervisors and up to two nominees from the sponsoring organisation to facilitate the research process and ensure processes such as gaining access to participants occur in an efficient and appropriate manner.