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**The relationship between organisational structure and  
information and communication systems**

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## Title, summary, and keywords

**Title:** The relationship between organisational structure and the information and communication systems.

**Summary:** The organisational structure influences the communication within a company. This study aims to clarify how the organisational structure influences the communication systems of a company. It begins by explaining the principles of the organisational process within management, defining common organisational structures, and describing information and communication systems. The theoretical framework is followed by a practical analysis which is conducted on a Spanish travel agency, aiming to verify the hypothesis by analysing the organisational structure and communication systems usage.

**Keywords:** Organisational structure, information and communication systems, principles of the organisation process.

## Títol, resum i paraules clau

**Títol:** La relació entre la estructura organitzativa i els sistemes d'informació i comunicació.

**Resum:** L'estructura organitzativa influeix en la comunicació dins d'una empresa. Aquesta tesi pretén aclarir com influeix l'estructura organitzativa en els sistemes de comunicació d'una empresa. Comença explicant els principis del procés organitzatiu dins de la gestió, definint les estructures organitzatives comunes i descrivint els sistemes d'informació i comunicació. El marc teòric va seguir d'una anàlisi pràctica que es duu a terme en una agència de viatges espanyola, amb l'objectiu de verificar la hipòtesi analitzant l'estructura organitzativa i l'ús dels sistemes de comunicació.

**Paraules clau:** Estructura organitzativa, sistemes de comunicació, principis del procés organitzatiu.

## Título, resumen y palabras clave

**Título:** La relación entre estructura organizativa y los sistemas de información y comunicación.

**Resumen:** La estructura organizativa influye en la comunicación dentro de una empresa. Esta tesis pretende aclarar cómo influye la estructura organizativa en los sistemas de comunicación de una empresa. Comienza explicando los principios del proceso organizativo dentro de la gestión, definiendo las estructuras organizativas

comunes y describiendo los sistemas de información y comunicación. El marco teórico va seguido de un análisis práctico que se lleva a cabo en una agencia de viajes española, con el objetivo de verificar la hipótesis analizando la estructura organizativa y el uso de los sistemas de comunicación.

**Palabras clave:** Estructura organizativa, sistemas de información y comunicación, principios del proceso organizativo.

## Presentation

When we speak about an organisation, it means much more than just the company we work for. From the first moment to our last, we are involved with some kind of organisation.

We all know how important organisations are for our own lives, but most do not know how difficult it is to manage them. An organisation needs goals, a plan, a structure, and so much more to work properly.

Among these aspects, one element critically determines the success or failure of a company: its structure and organisation. Nature offers numerous examples illustrating how everything is interconnected through structures. For instance, a tree exemplifies perfect organisation; its leaves, flowers, and fruits are all connected through branches. These branches manage resources from within, ensuring steady growth and working non-stop to fulfil their eternal mission. This concept can be seen across nature, such as the organisational patterns of animal groups and plant families. Although this comparison might initially seem unrelated, it illustrates that organisation is a fundamental part of society, even in the most unexpected places.

There is another important aspect related to the organisational structure which is *communication*. It has the power to create a comfortable workspace and a good and fast interaction between people. Therefore, communication will influence the performance of a company.

The reason to relate the organisational structure with a company's communication system is that they depend on each other. The information and communication systems are established simultaneously with the organisational structure of the company, making it obvious that they will be influenced by each other.

In conclusion, a company's organisational structure and information and communication systems have a major impact on its performance, both individually and collectively. Therefore, this project will focus on explaining these elements and how they are interconnected to each other.

## Introduction

Modern business management has been one of the most researched fields since its first empirical appearance over 100 years ago in the papers of Peter Ducker (1909-2005), who is the father of modern business management. However, the core of business management started almost 200 years ago when various industrial scientists, socialists, and philosophers started dedicating their research to the changes that arose during the first Industrial Revolution. The most popular are Henry Fayol (1841-1925), Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915) and Elton Mayo (1880-1949) among others. Although it has been almost 200 years, their contribution to remain highly important. One of the reasons for this is that historical patterns often provide insights into contemporary problems.

The topics that have been studied since the beginning from these authors is the organisational structure and the management process. These two aspects of business management are crucial for any kind of organisation. The project will focus on explaining the organisational process within the management process and different types of organisational structure.

Among the various facets of business management, there is one topic that is crucial for is directly related to the organisational structure and human interaction: *communication*.

Communication or information and communication systems (as we will call it in the project) is the second topic of the project and will be explained in a more concise way.

The relation of the two topics leads us to the main question of the project “What relation does information and communication systems have with companies?” or more precisely “What is the relation between information and communication systems and the organisational structure of a company?”

The answer to these questions will give a precise view of how different aspects of the organisational structure are related to the communication flow inside of a company and how it can affect a company's workflow. To do so, the project will be separated into a theoretical framework and a practical part which aims to enforce the real-life implications.

The theory will be sustained by the revision of multiple papers and different authors (historical and modern). The first part of the theoretical framework explains the principles of the organisational process (as the second step of the management process). The second part explains the most important types of structures seen in companies. The third and last part of the theoretical framework explains information and communication systems as well as briefly discusses their implications in organisational structure.

The practical part will be done on a company called Viajes Para Ti S.L. (further "VPT"), a popular travel agency in Spain. It aims to break down all the crucial organisational and communication aspects of each department both separately and jointly.

The conclusions will offer both theoretical and practical perspectives to determine if the practical aspect supports the theory or not.

# CHAPTER 1: Theoretical Framework

## 1.1. Management Process: Planning, Organisation, Leadership and Control

The management process is an essential framework for achieving organisational goals and has been studied by various economists and managers since the beginning of business management who have set its fundamental principles. Some authors like Taylor (1909), Mintzberg (1973), Días de Castro (2002), Grant (2012), Marcó, F. et al. (2016), Mero Vélez, J. M. (2018) among others have done extensive research about the needs and difficulties of management to create a model accessible for everyone to facilitate effective company management. The purpose of the management process is to provide guidelines and steps to assist an organisation in achieving its goals. This model is a theoretical framework that centres around the management of the company from various perspectives and follows a strict order.

The framework consists of a 4-step process Corrales et al. (2022):

- 1) *Planning* is where a company will set their goals and objectives, defining vision, mission, and objectives.
- 2) *Organisation* is where the company will define how they organize the resources given and how to implement them to reach the objectives set in the previous step.
- 3) *Leadership* has the purpose of regulating how subordinates will be influenced and motivated to accomplish the company's objectives.
- 4) *Controlling* sets the parameters that the company will use to evaluate and follow up on the accomplishment of the objectives.

The focus of this project will be set on *organisation* and its underlying principles.

To clarify, the term "organization" can refer to two concepts: the workplace (such as a company or firm) and the second step in the management process. This project will focus on the latter, specifically the concept related to the management process.

## 1.2. Principles of the Organisational Process

According to the management process, the organisation, as the second step in the process, determines how the company will achieve the goals set in the previous step

(Mero Vélez, 2018). Therefore, as explained by Días de Castro (2002) the structure of a company is as important as the skeleton of an animal. Every part of the company needs to be structured in a way that will help them achieve their goals and that suits their vision, mission, and objective.

Within the organisation process, there are a series of principles that create the theoretical framework of this step within the management process. The principles are mentioned in different papers and books internationally. Some traditional authors are Henri Fayol (2016) and Taylor, F. W., (1911), who have been driving and popularising the implementation of scientific studies and research in economics and management, as well as modern authors like Días de Castro (2002) (who will appear in different parts of this chapter because of its academic value), Smith, W. K., & Lewis, M. W. (2011) and Draft Richard L (2009) have contributed to the recognition of the organisation principles.

Even though there can be more principles depending on the author, the most known and recently established are *specialisation* as the division of tasks and definition of the number of tasks done by one individual, *span of control* which determines how many subordinates will be managed by one supervisor, *departmentalisation* that defines the tasks to be done and the people that will work in one department, *hierarchy* which handles the distribution of authority within the organisation, *delegation* as the principle that defines the management of tasks and who will be responsible for distributing them, *centralisation* that decides how responsibility will be divided though the organisation, *groups* will set the limits in which a team will work together and *formalisation* which sets the end of the process and determines the degree to which rules are protocolised throughout the organisation (Días de Castro, 2002).

The organisational structure of a company is defined throughout the previous principles; therefore, each company must evaluate each of them to create its structure. At the same time, to analyse the structure of an existing company, the evaluation of the principles will give hints about the type of structure the company may have.

According to Días de Castro, J. (2002) these principles must be homogeneous, i.e., one cannot be contradicted by another. In the same way, they must be treated both jointly and separately and in the proposed order whenever possible, since one decision will condition the other. Each of these principles will be presented in more detail in the next parts of the project below.

### 1.2.1. Specialisation

*“Job specialisation is the degree to which the overall task of the organisation is broken down into smaller parts”* (Adeyoyin et al., 2015; p. 2). In the modern world, there is a tendency towards automatization, which is the progress in which machines instead of humans make more and more tasks. Machines are programmed to excel at specific tasks, which is the essence of specialisation (having each task performed by a specialist).

Before the onset of the first industrial revolution, all tasks involved in production were performed solely by humans. In the present day, however, certain tasks are now completed through machines or computers, while others remain the domain of human labour. More so with Industry 4.0, as Di Nardo et al. (2020) explain in their recent work, there are different levels of performance and tasks within the company; while the industrial revolution continues, more and more levels are taking over human labour. For now, and from what we can see over the past three industrial revolutions, there will always be a need for individuals with specialised skill sets to bring their expertise to bear within various industries.

There is a relation between the specialisation and the number of employees in a company. The highest level of specialisation is at 100% when one employee performs each task. At the same time, 0% specialisation means one employee manages all tasks Di Nardo et al. (2020).

Specialisation has some positive and negative aspects to consider. Positive aspects are *greater proficiency* and *higher productivity* due to focused task performance, the *ease of training* people since the tasks performed are broken down into simpler jobs, which also ensures *higher quality* and *speed* and, on the other hand, *reduces costs* on quality control and training (Thibodeaux, 2012).

The negative aspects, however, complement the positive ones. The first one is that employees won't get the possibility to develop multitasking and organisation skills, making them less valuable for the company as a resource. Job specialisation can impact employees' ability to adapt to new tasks and environments. This phenomenon is also evident in society, leading to higher unemployment rates when companies shut down or implement machines to perform tasks previously done by humans. Individuals who have not been trained in a variety of tasks, but rather in a single task within the production chain of a specific company, may find themselves unqualified for new job opportunities that require higher-skilled employees (Adeyoyin et al., 2015). Nowadays, this last aspect

is even more crucial due to the Industrial Revolution. Employers search for highly skilled employees and talented workers. Also, stated by Adeyoyin et al. (2015) is that job specialisation will not only affect employees' skills but also have effects on their overall well-being and work environment.

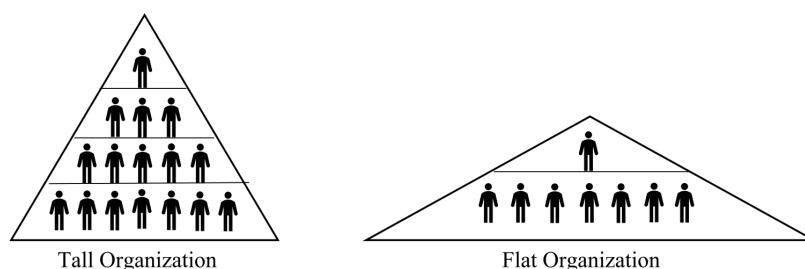
Another related aspect is the division of tasks where a high division of tasks is linked to a high level of specialisation and a low division is linked to a low level of specialisation. The positive and negative aspects are similar to the ones in job specialisation including some nuances of cost and production efficiency of each form of division. A high division of tasks will increase costs and productivity while a low division of tasks will have the opposite effect (Días de Castro, 2002).

To sum up this principle, the degree of specialisation and the division of tasks will depend on the goals of a company and the type of tasks to be fulfilled. This will have implications for employee training and their skills. The number of employees is closely linked to the amount subordinates assigned per superior, which leads us to the next part of this chapter: Span of control.

### 1.2.2. Span of Control

The span of control is the principle in which a company determine how many subordinates will be managed by one supervisor (Farrar et al., 2023). A span of control can be wide or narrow depending on the structure of the company and the number of subordinates for each supervisor. In this case, a wide span of control will have one supervisor and multiple subordinates (flat structured organisation) whereas a narrow span of control will have more levels of supervision with fewer subordinates per supervisor (tall structured organisation) (Rishipal, 2014).

Figure 1.1: Illustrates the difference between tall and flat structures in relation to the span of control.



Source: *Organization Structures: Tall versus Flat* (Farrar et al., 2023)

To create organisational effectiveness, it is essential to consider factors that will determine the span of control a company or department should have depending on their characteristics. Things like *responsibility*, *time efficiency*, *cost efficiency* and a reasonable *amount of subordinates per manager* are just some of the factors to determine the span of control of a company (Farrar et al., 2023). Other aspects to be considered are the *similarity of tasks*, *daily interaction*, and *proximity between employees*, as well as the *rules and procedures* applied to each group and the *capacity of a supervisor* to lead and control people (Días de Castro, 2002).

In summary, span of control is influenced by economic and efficiency factors as well as management factors. Within the span of control, supervisors should have the ability to manage and control people and be able to complete their tasks while being the leader of their team. This can be accomplished by creating time and space for communication. To do so, the span of control should be formed by a reasonable number of subordinates that have similar tasks, a daily communication pattern and work in the same physical space. If the span of control is not adapted to the company's conditions, supervisors or managers will not be able to take over control or leadership over their teams.

A principle directly linked to the span of control is departmentalisation which we will discuss in the next part.

### 1.2.3. Departmentalisation

Departmentalisation is the principle in which a company groups employees according to a specific and logical factor (Adeyoyin et al., 2015). While the span of control provides a natural approach to grouping employees and establishing direct links between them, departmentalisation is crucial for defining the criteria by which a department should be formed.

According to various authors like Adeyoyin et al. (2015), Días de Castro (2002), Larson & Gobeli (1987), and Draft Richard L (2009) the most common forms of departmentalisation are *functional* division, *product* division, *geographic* or location division, *matrix* division, *team* division and *network* division.

The *functional division* is the grouping of employees according to the type of activity, e.g. the Marketing department, the Financial Department, or the Production department (Mintzberg, 1989). An advantage of functional division is the specialisation of workers in

a specific field, which makes them autonomous in their jobs and daily activities, facilitating the work for superiors and managers (Dias de Castro, 2002).

The *product division (or divisional structure which was defined by Henry Mintzberg)* forms departments according to products and procedures (Lunenburg, 2012). It is typically implemented in companies where the production process differs a lot between products. Each department will create its own procedures, tasks, and rules to be followed. Advantages include personalisation of production and working processes and independence between products and their procedures. Disadvantages, on the other hand, are decentralisation of responsibility which can affect the management negatively when it's not correctly implemented and the inefficiency of resource management since all functional tasks are multiplied by the number of products (Mintzberg, 1980).

*Location or geographic division* created departments through their physical location such as nations, states, towns, or buildings. Most advantages and disadvantages are similar to those of product division but separated by location instead of products (Adeyoyin et al., 2015).

*Matrix division* as in *matrix structure* is difficult to define because of their various definitions. Davis & Lawrance (1977; p. 3) defines matrix division/structure as “*any organisation that employs a multiple command system that includes not only multiple command structure but also related support mechanisms and an associated organisational culture and behaviour pattern*”. Everything about matrix structure is defined in this chapter under epigraph 1.3. *Types of structures and organisations within companies and their organisational charts*.

Next up is *team division*, Mintzberg (1980; p. 337) included this idea in his paper as “*a tendency to group the professional specialists in functional units for housekeeping purposes but to deploy them in small market-based teams to do their project work*”. In other words, departments are created by grouping professionals into functions or markets to do tasks based on them. Advantages include the specialisation of the tasks and the centralization or decentralization of responsibility depending on the company's needs. On the other hand, small grouping means that the larger the company is, the higher the number of groups and teams needed to maintain their structure, this leads to a highly horizontal structure and can be counterproductive if control and management are not distributed and planned correctly.

The last form of departmentalisation is the *network division*. Burt (1980; p. 81) states that “*Network models describe the structure of one or more networks of relations within a system of actors. Specific models can focus on specific aspects of structure in these*

*multiple networks*". The purpose of the network division is to create a constellation of actors (industries, organisations, sectors, markets, etc) that work together to deliver a specific product or service. An example of network division is when a company maintains the crucial tasks within the company while outsourcing other functions and tasks that can be done by external companies (Días de Castro, 2002).

As we have seen, departmentalisation is strictly linked to the structure of a company itself. Some concepts will be further explained in section 1.3. *Types of structures and organisations within companies and their organisational charts.*

After the decision of the departmentalisation system, a company must define how authority is distributed throughout the company, this is done with hierarchy which is the next part of this project.

#### 1.2.4. Hierarchy and authority

As explained by Thompson (1961; p. 486) "A hierarchy is a system of roles -the roles of subordination and superordination- arranged in a chain so that role 1 is subordinate to role 2; 2 is superordinate to 1 but subordinate to 3; and so forth until a role is reached that is subordinate to no other role (but perhaps to a group of people, such as a board of directors or an electorate)". This means that hierarchy is the line that defines the chain of command of a company and determines who has the authority in each work relationship. In each relationship, we can define two different roles: the superior and the subordinate.

The superior has the authority to decide and veto their subordinates, and with it comes the responsibility of the position they occupy within the organisation. The subordinate, on the other hand, has the obligation of following the commands of their superior but has less responsibility than their superior. The level of authority, responsibility and decision-making power will depend on each position within a company (Thompson, 1961).

We can find different kinds of authority in a company, some of them are *line authority* which is applied to the activities that contribute directly to the accomplishment of objectives like financial and commercial departments, *staff authority* is found in departments like human resources or legal departments which act as a support department within a company, and lastly, the *functional authority* which gives department directors or managers the right to delegate members of another department. These three types of authority have some advantages and disadvantages that must be considered.

In line authority, the major advantage is the simplicity of fixing a direct chain of command. The disadvantage, however, is the centralization of command and decision-making held by the top position within the hierarchical structure (Días de Castro, 2002).

Staff authority has the advantage that the departments work as support teams that give professional expertise to the rest of the departments. The disadvantage is the lack of knowledge and understanding of the company's economic activities and production workflow, which can lead to misunderstandings and wrong expertise (Días de Castro, 2002).

Functional authority has the advantage of coordinating departments efficiently. The disadvantage, however, is that it can disrupt the chain of command and may not be adequate for all types of departments (Días de Castro, 2002)

To sum up, hierarchy means the authority that a person has over another. When this authority is established in a vertical line throughout all hierarchical levels of the company, this is called a chain of command, which is to be followed and respected by each employee. This helps everyone understand to whom they must report problems and issues and gives supervisors and managers the ability to delegate tasks and responsibilities to their subordinates. Delegation is the next principle we will discuss.

#### 1.2.5. Delegation

When speaking about delegation, we refer to a superior executing their authority by deciding and communicating the tasks to be fulfilled by each subordinate (Dobrajska et al., 2015).

To effectively delegate, some basic notes need to be considered in the process, beginning with the capability of the subordinate to understand the task given, this means that each superior must be aware of the capacity and skill of each subordinate. The subordinate must have access to the tools, resources and information needed to fulfil the task, which means that the supervisor must be aware of the accessibility of the tools (and if they have the capacity and education to use them). In summary, a superior must know their subordinates and their capacities to perfection to delegate the tasks and responsibility correctly, taking into consideration aspects like capability, sense of responsibility, and accessibility to tools and information (Días de Castro, 2002)

Taking these concepts and factors into consideration, the conclusion is that *delegation* is the function taken by an employee (called superior) who has a certain level of authority within a company's hierarchy that *determines the tasks and responsibilities of employees that are on a lower hierarchical level (subordinate)*.

Even though responsibility can be delegated, the level and distribution of responsibility throughout a company is determined by its level of centralisation or decentralisation, as seen in the next part.

#### 1.2.6. Centralisation and Decentralisation

Centralisation and decentralisation mean "*The term centralised indicates that authority to make important decisions lies towards the "head" or centre of an organisation, while conversely, decentralisation implies more autonomy, whereby authority is vested in those further removed from the centre.*" Cummings (1995; p. 100). Thus, these concepts refer to the form in which authority is distributed within a company, where *centralisation* means a concentration of authority within a few people on the top of the hierarchical level and normally found in more vertical structures, whereas *decentralisation* is focused on the distribution of authority and decision-making throughout different hierarchical levels (Alhamad & Aladwan, 2019; Cummings, 1995).

As per the definitions above, we can conclude that centralised organisations will have a more vertical structure, while more decentralized organisations will have a rather horizontal form. Decentralisation of responsibility and tasks is also present from a geographical view, where companies that are present in different locations (e.g. franchises or international companies) are more prompt to have a decentralised organisational structure (Aiken & Hage, 1968).

The degree of centralization within a company can be measured by the index of participation in decision-making and the index of hierarchy of authority. The higher these indexes are, the more centralized the responsibility (this is decision-making power, delegation, authority degree, etc) within a company (Aiken & Hage, 1968).

These indexes are measured through various aspects like the *number and quality of decisions taken by the middle and lower parts of the organisation*. The degree of decentralisation increases as lower levels of the hierarchical structure take on more decisions and have a higher influence on resource utilisation. Another aspect is the intensity of supervision, where the autonomy of the subordinates is decided. In this case,

the degree of decentralisation increases as subordinates get more autonomy and are less supervised by their direct supervisors (Días de Castro, 2002).

Cummings (1995) brought this topic to the discussion in a very detailed way in his article "*Centralisation and Decentralisation: The Neverending Story of Separation and Betrayal*". In this article, he compares both concepts and determines if the popular opinions of that time were accurate and logical in the business management context. The most relevant statements are; whether decentralisation is the future of organisational structure or not, if centralisation and decentralisation are a matter of balance, and if the balance between them shifts due to changes in environmental conditions.

The statement that decentralisation is the future of organisational structure arose in the late 1990s when companies tended to emerge from vertical to horizontal structures. Today, almost 30 years later, we can see that lots of companies prefer horizontal structures over vertical ones due to the positive advantages of decentralisation this, however, cannot be generalised as seen in part 1.3. *Types of structures and organisations within companies and their organisational charts*.

Cummings (1995; p. 109) states that "*Decentralisation versus centralisation is a question of balance*". This statement contradicts the previous one by saying that both decentralisation and centralisation need to be balanced. Decentralisation and centralisation or, in other words, autonomy and control are crucial for the overall performance of a company. Cummings (1995) states that each company must find their "*golden mean*", which presumably exists in any company.

The last statement is the relationship between environmental changes and the "golden mean". It explains that the "*golden mean*" will be affected by environmental changes through its relation to a company's workflow.

In summary, centralisation and decentralisation are concepts that relate all the principles seen before with the structure of the company. Some may think that each company has a perfect balance between these two concepts, but this may only be a theoretical point of view. Some mechanisms and equations will identify the degree of decentralisation a company has, but to say that there is a perfect equilibrium that a company should achieve is highly improbable. Solely because multiple internal and external factors directly affect companies and change their workflow every day. This balance sure exists (seen from a philosophical and theoretical point of view as seen in the mentioned paper), but, as we live in a highly volatile world, it will change daily.

### 1.2.7. Groups

Group or teamwork is the collaboration of two or more individuals within the same company or department who work towards a specific purpose or goal (Odoardi et al., 2015). More and more companies adapt their workflow to more collaborative and teamwork structures (Días de Castro, 2002). Multiple studies have discussed groups and teamwork throughout history, from their perfect size to the risks and difficulties that may arise. Today, teamwork is considered the optimal way to go. The aim of explaining this principle is to understand what teamwork is about and point out some of its advantages and disadvantages. The extensive research and investigation done on groups is justified by the fact that individual workflow and behaviour are very different from the ones seen in groups.

Groups aim to maximise productivity and profitability through the collaboration of individual work capacities, where each member must contribute to the greater goal. One example is the learning aspect: when individuals with different experiences, capabilities and talents come together, they will learn from one another. Ideally, the less qualified or "junior" employee will learn from the more experienced or "senior" one (Odoardi et al., 2015). However, talent management has recently demonstrated the importance of "junior" employees due to their talent and different points of view, which can enhance innovation (Vivas-López, 2014).

In every group, each member assumes a specific role that they will maintain during a project or period. A role defines a certain behavioural pattern that comes with the position the individual has been assigned to. Some of them can be the *leader*, the *secretary*, the *organizer*, the *researcher*, etc (Días de Castro, 2002).

Group creation is a way to improve innovation, coordination, and communication in a company. To benefit from this, a company must create an environment in which team members feel empowered to share their knowledge and thoughts. It is proven that employees with a higher decision-making power, who feel safe and valued within their group, will engage more in the company's mission, and share more ideas. Therefore, with effective group implementation, more innovation and knowledge are brought into the company (Odoardi et al., 2015). Regarding each employee's role, the team will benefit from a team leader or manager who can identify "hidden talent" within the team and push their capabilities further to create more innovation and promote talent (Vivas-López, 2014).

Another aspect of groups is how they will be managed. One way is to implement the idea of autonomy and creativity, where each member will have the possibility to express their ideas and work on their tasks independently as a crucial part of the team. To strengthen this idea, it is only helpful when managers or leaders encourage employees to use their creativity and autonomy freely, which is even more important in tasks that require a higher level of knowledge. In addition, as explained before, the distribution of decision-making power (even on a lower scale) will encourage employees to work and engage with their tasks (Vivas-López, 2014).

Lastly, there is the degree to which an individual in the group will identify with other group members and the organisational goals. This is defined as *cohesion*. The effectiveness of cohesion within a group depends on how well the group's goals align with the company's overall objectives. For instance, a marketing team might have high cohesion if its members share a common vision for launching a new product which is also aligned with the goals of the company. A similar point of view is explained by Odoardi et al. (2015) where the group's engagement with the company is improved and encouraged when the company shares information about their overall goals and objectives.

To summarise this principle, the things to keep in mind are:

- 1) The effectiveness of teamwork, which is accomplished by a management that has a group and collaborative-oriented mindset. This management should implement and encourage autonomy and creativity throughout their company, where everyone has a responsibility and feels valued, as part of the greater goal.
- 2) The role taken by each team member, which is related to the individual characteristics of each employee. Some of them are assigned or elected, which are roles that will affect the group's workflow (i.e. the team leader) or adopted by the team member which are roles that will be adopted by each member by the time they prof some capabilities (i.e. the secretary, the organizer, or the researcher).
- 3) The cohesion between groups and the company's objectives. The more they align they are, the easier it is for employees to understand the goals and work towards them, as well as create a feeling of empowerment within the company.

#### 1.2.8. Formalisation

As per Pugh et al. (1968; p. 75), "*formalisation denotes the extent to which rules, procedures, instructions, and communications are written*". Thus, the formalisation process is a principle in which the company establishes action protocols as well as a

standardized way of doing tasks and how to behave in different kinds of situations. Rules, norms, and procedures are formalised when written down and accessible to everyone. Two key questions are: to what degree the company will formalise different aspects of their workflow and how they will transmit it to its employees?

Pugh et al. (1968) proposed measuring formalisation by the degree to which different aspects related to rules, norms, procedures, and protocols are formalised or standardized. The first aspect is the *role* which is the degree to which the positions within a company are defined, as well as their job descriptions. The second aspect is *authority relations*, which measure how hierarchy and authority are defined and documented. The third aspect is *communications*, which examines the extent to which the channels and communications processes are formalized. The fourth aspect is *norms and sanctions* which involve assessing the number of written policies and rules, as well as the clarity of penalties for non-compliance. The fifth and last aspect is *procedures* which refers to how thoroughly orientation programs for new employees are formalised, including training and internal promotions (Hall et al., 1967; Pugh et al., 1968) .

In conclusion, the degree of formalisation within a company determines the level of control over its workflow. This means that the more formalised a company is, the more structured an employee's work will be, as they follow rules, norms, and procedures. This also enables supervisors and managers to evaluate and control subordinates through clear and formalised protocols.

After discussing all the above-mentioned principles, the next part will be focused on explaining the most common organisational structures and their organisational chart.

### 1.3. Types of organisational structure

As per Mintzberg's (1972) definition of organisational structure, it is "a set of methods dividing the tasks to determined duties and coordinates them" as well as "a framework of relations on jobs, systems, operating process, people and groups making efforts to achieve the goals". This is the core of the first part of the project, now however, the question that arises is how these methods and relations will be combined to create a formalised structure.

This section of the project will focus on explaining the most discussed organisational structures and their corresponding charts. On the other hand, the explanation of the organisational chart will give the ability to identify the different elements within a company and the relations between them.

The 9 principles discussed in the previous part of the project are seen within the planning of organisational structure in the following way. *Specialisation* is seen within the number of employees and the diversity of the tasks, which is directly linked to, for example, groups and departmentalisation. The formal relations within a company are decided and formalized by *hierarchy* and *span of control*. *Departments* and *groups* are easily identified by the structure of an organisation and are some of the most relevant parts of the division of the company, which directly determines the hierarchy and span of control. Lastly, centralisation/decentralisation, coordination, and delegation are organisational concepts that cannot be solely identified through the structure of a company by analysing their organisation chart but are key points for the relations within a company and to assure a healthy work environment (Ahmady et al., 2016).

*Formalisation* is a process that governs the implementation and organisation of various principles within a company. It involves creating rules and procedures, as well as determining if the company has properly planned their organisational structure and created an organisation chart. Ultimately, formalisation plays a critical role in ensuring that a company is well-organized.

As per structure, it has been defined by Ahmady et al. (2016) as “*Structure refers to the relations between the components of an organized whole*”. Structures are found everywhere, not only in organisations. There are multiple types of structures and infinite ways to implement them, the most known, however, are *vertical structure* and *horizontal structure*, as the most basic structure forms, and *matrix organisation* as the most implemented organisational structure nowadays. The types of organisational structures were elected by analysing various papers that discuss organisational structures and compare which types appear the most frequently. Some authors are Ahmady et al. (2016), Scott (1975), Mintzberg (1989), Kuprenas (2003), Días de Castro (2002), and Draft Richard L (2009)

While vertical and horizontal organisation (or tall and flat organisation) are basics and do not define the whole structure of a company but their tendency (if they are more hierarchical or group-based, small, or big companies, middle staff, etc), Matrix structure is a more precited and detailed organisation type that will have an in-depth explanation.

The relationship between the organisational principles and horizontal and vertical structure will be explained in the theoretical conclusions of this project to create a direct link between both topics.

### 1.3.1. What are Organisational Charts and how to read them

Organisational charts show organisational structures. Therefore, explaining how to interpret organisational charts before speaking about organisational structure types helps understand organisational aspects within the management process. The basics of an organisational chart are the boxes and lines, as well as their position in the drawing. The interpretation is as follows (Ahmady et al., 2016):

- 1) Boxes or circles are used to show organisational units. For example: positions (manager, supervisors, work groups, etc).
- 2) Lines will determine the relation between the organisational units. Some charts will use different types of lines between units. However, these should always be explained within the chart to ensure an easy understanding. One example is the assumptive line, which normally indicates that there is some kind of power from one unit to another. The manager of one department has power over the working group of the commercial department, then, there would be an assumptive line from the manager to the working group.

The horizontal relation between departments or units must be well defined. Thus, all units that have the same hierarchical position must be in a horizontal line. It helps to identify the level and position of each unit within the company's whole and has the name "organisational hierarchy" (Ahmady et al., 2016).

The first structure we see is the "vertical or tall structure" which is explained in the following part.

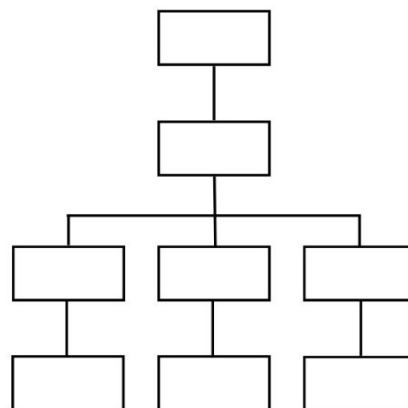
### 1.3.2. Vertical or Tall Structure

This type of organisation has a structure easily identified by its multiple hierarchical positions and layers of management (Rishipal, 2014). It tends to centralise power and divide the organisation through functional departmentalisation (Fouraker & Stopford, 1968).

If we dive more into the concept of centralisation, we will see that, within vertical organisations, there is a distribution down the chain of command, being high on the top parts of the organisational chart or hierarchical structure and less or non-existent on the lower parts of the structure (Lunenburg 2012; Mintzberg, 1989).

The chain of command in these structures should also be well-known to ensure correct communication (Draft Richard L, 2009). Since it is the core element of a tall, structured company, it will be important to communicate and formalise the hierarchical positions to the employees to know who oversees each unit and who each employee must report to.

Figure 1.2: Illustration of a basic vertical or tall structure.



The organisational chart of a vertical or tall structured company will tend to evolve in a structure like this image. It represents a top-down approach, with numerous layers of management, from the executive to the front-line managers, each one will have its level of reasonability and decision-making power (Rishipal, 2014).

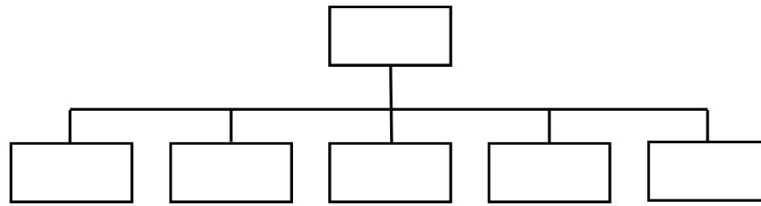
In conclusion, the verticality of a company is linked to the amount of people working in a company and the complexity of the tasks. This means that, the need for a tall or vertical structure increases by the time the company gets more complex (Rishipal, 2014).

The relationship between this structure and the principles explained at the beginning of the project will be found in epigraph 3.1. *Conclusions of the theoretical framework.*

### 1.3.3. Horizontal or Flat Structure

Flat or horizontal structures are easily recognized by their lack of middle management layers. It means to have a wide span of control and a short chain of command. Flat structures are often seen in small companies, where one manager has a wide span of control, meaning that he is responsible for a big working unit Rishipal (2014).

Figure 1.3: Illustration of a basic vertical or tall structure.



The structure has little to no supervisor or manager positions in the middle layer of the organisation. This structure can be maintained in a small company, where the number of tasks is manageable by one superior. Otherwise, when the tasks, employees and workload increase and superiors or managers are not able to complete them, the need for middle layers increases. In the end, any small company must decide whether to maintain a horizontal structure or evolve into a taller/vertical organisation Rishipal (2014).

Even though horizontal or flat structures are more common in small businesses, they can also exist in bigger companies. The key here is to ensure that managers won't feel overwhelmed by the tasks they have to fulfil. One way to create a horizontal structure in big companies is to create many groups (up to 7 employees per group) with a specific amount of reasonability for each employee. This way the supervisors or managers won't have to delegate much and can dedicate more time to organisational and administrative tasks. Additionally, the company would benefit from a leader figure in each group to create a communication line between the manager and the team.

The relationship between this structure and the principles explained at the beginning of the project will be found in epigraph 3.1. *Conclusions of the theoretical framework.*

#### 1.3.4. Matrix Organisation

The matrix organisation is a structure in which two chains of command are created, one from a functional standpoint, and the other from a project standpoint. In a Matrix structure, an employee will depend not only on the head of the department or supervisors of the functional department but also on the project manager's indications (Larson & Gobeli, 1987). The name "matrix" comes from its simultaneous vertical and horizontal connections (Kuprenas, 2003).

A functional departmentalisation will create a structure divided into functional areas, whereas a project organisation will create a structure based on divisional organisations, where departments are separated by working groups that interact with a specific project. Matrix combines both organisations and creates a communication net and a new

hierarchical structure in which all employees have two lines they need to follow, one being the functional department, and on the other hand, they need to fulfil their tasks within the project through the project manager's indications (Larson & Gobeli, 1987).

The functional departments' task is to provide the tool to the project manager to fulfil the project, whereas the project manager's task is to coordinate the project and know what is needed. Nonetheless, there are different degrees of authority between project and functional managers, which divides matrix structure into three types (Larson & Gobeli, 1987).

Commonly, there can be three types of matrix organisation, one of them is the *Project Matrix* which has the philosophy that the project managers will have full authority not only over the project but also over the personnel and their workflow. Functional managers will have limited involvement and are only responsible for providing help (Larson & Gobeli, 1987).

The *Balanced Matrix* is where the project manager will be responsible for understanding and interpreting the project's needs and the functional manager will have to figure out how the needs of the project can be satisfied through the services, they can provide (Larson & Gobeli, 1987).

Lastly, the *Functional Matrix* is focused on giving the functional management full responsibility for their part in the project. This makes the project manager more of an assistant to the project, mostly to monitor it. They only have limited to no authority over employees from functional departments (Larson & Gobeli, 1987).

In the end, Matrix Organisation is a fusion between functional and project organisations, it can be more flexible than a functional organisation, but not as much as a project organisation. Different positive and negative aspects of this type of organisation may contradict each other and often depend on how it is implemented (Larson & Gobeli, 1987).

### **Advantages**

One of the advantages of the Matrix organisation is the *efficient use of resources*, which is present in all three forms seen before. Matrix enables the incorporation of specialists into the projects and other resources (Larson & Gobeli, 1987).

*Project integration* is an advantage that can also become a disadvantage depending on the equilibrium of the structure. The control and implication of project managers in the tasks of each employee can increase project integration. Still, it can also affect the output

quality since the functional department is less implicated in the project and won't be able to supervise and check details to ensure better quality (Larson & Gobeli, 1987).

Another advantage is *flexibility*. It is present in all three types of Matrix Organisation but especially in Balanced Matrix. It refers to the multidisciplinary involvement which provides not only flexibility but also adaptability (Larson & Gobeli, 1987).

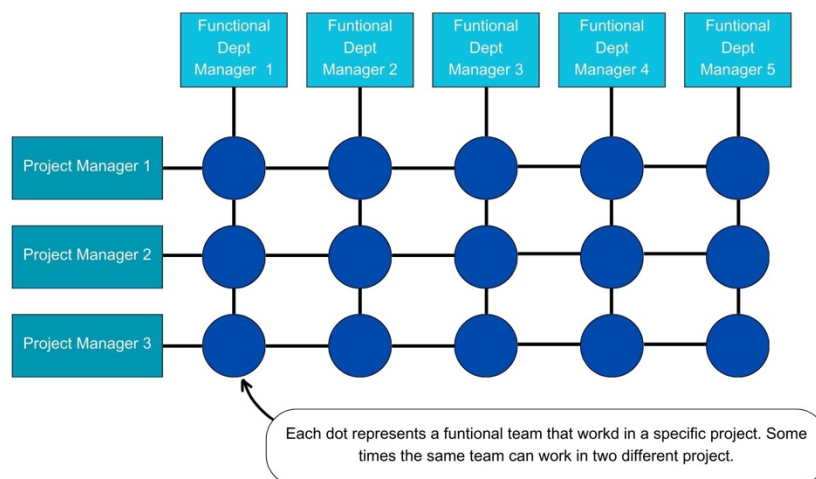
The *information flow* is another advantage of Matrix Organisation since this type of organisation facilitates the flow of information from the project manager to the specialists working on the projects and the top management. Vertical and lateral communication is key to guaranteeing a correct information flow, even though lateral communication is more important in the Balanced Matrix type (Larson & Gobeli, 1987) Lastly, the *discipline retention*. It refers to the link that multidisciplinary participants have with their functional departments. This means that, even though employees will work on multidisciplinary projects, they will still be linked to their functional area and, in consequence, retain their discipline or specialisation (Larson & Gobeli, 1987).

### **Disadvantages**

The disadvantages are *power struggles* that can happen concerning the authority issues between functional manager and project manager and *heightened conflict* that is attached to the share of resources. This happens when employees are implemented in different projects or positions. Another one is the *slow reaction* time because of having two or more managers deciding and consulting over the project. Some more disadvantages are the *difficulty in monitoring and controlling*, *excessive overhead* and *experienced stress*. All of them are related to the discrepancy between having more than one manager or directive committee that must decide on the use of resources through the different functional departments. One of the major problems, from an operational and subordinate point of view, is the experienced stress which refers to the communication issues created by dual reporting. This can create ambiguity within the company (Larson & Gobeli, 1987).

Matrix organisation is still one of the most common organisation types seen in companies that work in project sections. It has multiple advantages but is a double-edged sword that can have major complications when implemented the wrong way. Each company will have to define the details and formalise rules and processes to ensure a flawless workflow and minimise communication issues.

Figure 1.4: Illustration of a Matrix structure.



Many more structures could be analysed; however, the purpose of this project is to explain and understand the most known structures to get a clearer view of the organisation process. To conclude the theoretical framework, one more concept must be explained: Scrum

### 1.3.5. Scrum

Scrum is an agile project management (1) framework often used by software development companies or departments that work in teams and have more of a horizontal structure approach (Atlassian. s. f.)(2). It provides some practices, principles, and values which a company can use to organize the tasks and teams to finish pending projects and reach their goals within the indicated deadline (Atlassian. s. f.). The importance of this framework is shown in its real-life application in companies worldwide.

Scrum is a system that encourages employees to learn through experience. One of the most important values is the responsibility that has each member to organise themselves and finish their work within the established deadline (which is well defined by the Scrum system) (Scrum Alliance, s.f.).

Some key points help to understand what Scrum organisation is:

- *Members of a scrum team:* it is a nimble team with up to 10 people dedicated to delivering committed product increments. It is large enough to complete the tasks and not too big to create disconformity and chaos in the group (Atlassian. s. f.).
  - *Scrum product owner:* they focus on understanding the product, the customer, and the market. Ideally, they build and manage the backlog (prioritized list of all the features, enhancements, bug fixes, and other work items that need to be addressed to deliver the final product), closely partner with the business and teams to ensure that everyone understands the backlogs and the product, gives guidance to the team, has a certain power to decide within the team (Atlassian. s. f.).
  - *The scrum master:* they coach/manage the scrum teams and the scrum product owners. They understand deeply the work done by every team member and the product to be delivered. They find ways to tune up the teams and the tasks to find the best organisation possible within the department or company (Atlassian. s. f.).

(1) No date is provided by the organisation, we can assume that it is a recognised organisation in the field and the information provided through the website is updated as the framework changes.

(2) Agile project management is an “iterative approach to managing software development projects that focuses on continuous releases and incorporating customer feedback with every iteration.”(Atlassian. S.f.)

- *The scrum development team:* they are normally organized in a 5-to-7-member group. Interestingly, there is a method coined by Amazon ex-CEO Jeff Bezos, which is the “two pizza rule” (a team small enough to share two pizzas). A perfect scrum team has a strong “we” character, all members are cross-trained, so no one becomes a bottleneck, and they will deliver the work on time. This is accomplished because they organize themselves and set team goals through records, which is an accurate way of setting new goals (in terms of tasks) and the due date (Atlassian. s. f.).
- *Scrum Artifacts:* these are important information that helps the employees understand the product and the work to be done to create it (Scrum Alliance, s.f.). There are different types of artefacts:
  - *Product backlogs:* This is a kind of to-do list for the team and the product owner. It establishes the list of features, requirements, enhancements, and fixes that serve as input for the sprint backlog (Scrum Alliance, s.f.).
  - *Sprint backlog:* a list of items, user stories (3), or bug fixes that the team must implement within the current sprint cycle (Figure 1.5.). These are taken from the product backlog. Even though the sprint backlog is flexible and can evolve during the sprint timeframe, the sprint goals or increments to be accomplished cannot be missed or compromised (Scrum Alliance, s.f.).
  - *Increment:* it is the sprint goals and usable product at the end of each sprint. It is a way for the team to tell that the product is finished and that the goal is reached for this period. It is the way to say “done and delivered” but in each company’s context and work system (Scrum Alliance, s.f.).
- *Scrum ceremonies or events:* these are practices, meetings and ceremonies done by the teams to discuss important matters of the tasks, work environment and other aspects of the workflow. Some teams may do more of these events than others depending on various factors like experience, size of the team, type of tasks and others (Scrum Alliance, s.f.).
  - *Organise the backlog:* this is the job of the product owner; they drive the product towards its vision from the customer side and are constantly involved in the customer and the market. They gather this information to keep the backlog clean and set priorities for the team (Scrum Alliance, s.f.)

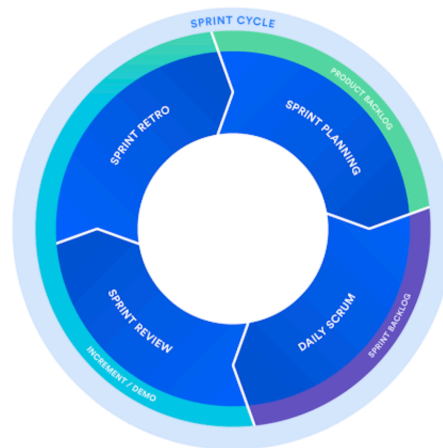
(3) “A user story is an informal, general explanation of a software feature written from the perspective of the end user. Its purpose is to articulate how a software feature will provide value to the customer.”(Atlassian. S.f.)

- *Sprint planning*: a meeting of the team to organize and plan the next sprint and everything that comes with it. This is an important meeting coordinated by the scrum master where the team agrees on the goals and the tasks that are added to the sprint from the product backlog. This way the team oversees determining if the number of tasks is feasible or not and compromises to accomplish that (Scrum Alliance, s.f.).
- *Sprint*: it is the actual time in which the scrum team works to accomplish the increment or sprint goal. It is normally set for a period from 2 to 4 weeks. All the events are happening during the sprint, so they need to be considered when establishing the sprint (Scrum Alliance, s.f.).
- *Daily scrum or stand-up*: this is a daily meet-up of all team members at the start of the day. It is also called stand-up because it is done standing up in the middle of the office. Normally, when a company implements scrum, they organize the office in a way where all the team members work beside each other in the same space or room, which makes the daily scrum fast and effective. It should not take more than a few minutes a day. It is the time to comment on problems or blockers that may happen during the sprint or other concerns that a team member may have. It is normally structured in three quick questions: what did I do yesterday? What will I do today? Are there any obstacles? Daily scrum depends on each team, some more senior teams may not do daily scrums if there are no concerns they want to address (Scrum Alliance, s.f.).
- *Sprint review*: it is the moment when the team gets together with the stakeholder or product manager to showcase the increment and the list of backlogs that are “done”. Then, the manager and team decide whether to release the increment or not. This also helps to continuously plan for the next sprint and reorganize some aspects of the team or workflow if needed (Scrum Alliance, s.f.).
- *Sprint retrospective*: it refers to a time when the team comes together to discuss everything that has to do with workflow, work environment, relationships, tools and other aspects of work or the company in general. There, each member can address their concerns and comment on the things that went well and the ones that didn't (Scrum Alliance, s.f.).
- *Scrum values*: the scrum values were recently added in 2016 and are meant to provide direction to the work, action, and behaviour of a scrum team. The values

are the following: commitment, courage, focus, openness, and respect (Scrum Alliance, s.f.).

To get a better view of the sprint cycle there is a graph created by Atlassian that helps to understand where a sprint starts and when it ends. It is, as displayed, a never-ending cycle.

Figure 1.5: Illustration of a Sprint Cycle



Source: <https://www.atlassian.com/agile/scrum> - Agile VS Scrum

Scrum is not just a theoretical framework of an organisation system but also one that has been implemented in lots of companies and is used more than ever usually in software development companies and IT Departments (Atlassian. s. f.).

Since the goal of the project is not to speak solely about scrum, there is only the necessary information to understand and know more about organisation, structures, and workflow overall (Atlassian. s. f.).

This organisational system creates another perspective on the importance of structure and communication inside a company. It is a system that should be implemented in a horizontally structured company or department to make it feasible. It is also a system that implements core values of group and teamwork through constant communication and interaction between team members to ensure that everyone knows not only where they are and where they come from, but also where they are going (Atlassian. s. f.).

All these values and aspects of Scrum lead us to the next part of the project: Communication inside an organisation (Atlassian. s. f.).

#### 1.4. The information and communication systems and its relation to organisational structure

This section aims to clarify Information and Communication Systems (ICSs), provide examples, and discuss their relationship with organisational structure.

As commonly known, communication is “*The transmission or exchange of information, knowledge, or ideas, by means of speech, writing, mechanical or electronic media*” (Oxford Language, 2023). ICSs, however, refer to the technological framework that manages the transmission of information between different networks (Norikazu, 2020). Following these definitions, we can conclude that communication and ICSs are crucial for any kind of relationship, whether between humans, networks, or devices. Therefore, organisations will have to adopt ICSs to guarantee accurate information management.

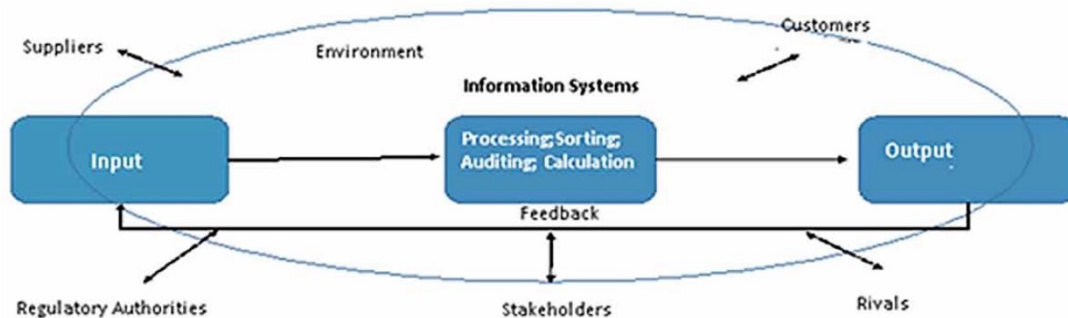
Nowadays, the technological process is at its peak which is one of the reasons why the implementation and regulation of ICSs are crucial for any kind of organisation. As time passes, the internet and other networks get more accessible to users through the decreasing costs of mobile devices and computers. This process will force public and private organisations to invest in a structural reform also known as digital transformation. This digital transformation will change a company's physical infrastructure, organisational structure, and the ICSs it implements. Each technological progress and change will affect the organisation's workflow and, simultaneously, how employees communicate. However, when done correctly, these changes will positively impact cost efficiency, usage of resources, and external factors like competitiveness and market positioning (Yildiz et al., 2020).

One of the features that ICSs have is the ability to gather comprehensive information about various aspects of business processes within an organisation and transmit it to the required destination. This information can be accessed by anyone within the company and can be used to enhance the decision-making process or to develop new rules, protocols, and processes (Yildiz et al., 2020). Therefore, ICSs are one of the most accurate methods of collecting and accessing information from within a company to further analyse and manage data and improve different aspects of the organisation.

ICSs provide the tools to convert raw data into understandable information through the usage of computer software. One of the business cycles through which ICSs are performed is called the *Information Systems Function*. It is a conceptual model focused on the input, process, and output of information from different external and internal actors involved in a company's daily commercial activity. These actors interact with the

information systems and the organisation (input). Then, the collected data is converted into information considering their relationship (processing). The output of the model is the processed data and its usage inside the company. The cycle starts again with the input of more information which must be processed (Yildiz et al., 2020).

Figure 1.6: Representation of information system function.



(Yildiz et al., 2020) *The impact of information and communication systems on organizations*

There are many more models and approaches to this matter, the project, however, will only focus on this model. Since the project only considers internal factors, it would be interesting to transform the *Information Systems Function* into a solely inter-organisational model. The input would only be taken from the organisational units, processing would be done on the collected data and the output of this information would be used to analyse business matters from a structural standpoint and other organisational perspectives. This information can help a company track tasks, evaluate infrastructure and organisational transformations, consider new business models, etc.

It is fair to say that information systems function and ICSs help organisations to process information from within the company to make decisions. Whether on tall or flat structures, this information is passed to each employee who needs it. On taller structures, even the low-level employees obtain the information that will complete the decision-making process without their superior's command. Simultaneously, middle and top managers can quickly access updated information about business processes and the internal and external factors of the organisation. Flat structures with wide spans of control will be more efficient through information system technologies and reduce middle management costs. The reason for that is found in the processing step within the business process model. Without ICSs, a middle or top manager must process all the data from different organisation units on its own, which leads to the incorporation of more middle managers that will do this task. With the ICSs and information system technologies, however, this

process is done by computer software. When the data is processed, only information is left, which is directly evaluated by the top management (Yildiz et al., 2020).

Another way to look at communication systems is how a company transmits information between employees or departments on a daily basis. Most of these systems are applications or techniques that facilitate communication. We mainly distinguish between face-to-face and online communication.

Face-to-face communication is based on the interaction between two or more individuals without interference and in real-time, some methods are meetings, discussions, conference calls, or any kind of real-time interaction between two individuals without a specific purpose.

Online communication is based on applications that help to transfer information without the need to be physically present. This interaction can happen between individuals or groups. Some methods are online chats, E-Mails, and apps for data collection (i.e. Google Drive/Suits).

## 1.5. Hypothesis

The theoretical framework in Chapter 1 had the goal of explaining the three topics this project is centred around. This knowledge, in combination with the practical part of the project, will be used to accept or reject the following hypothesis:

*The formalisation of the organisational structure positively influences the usage of communication systems inside a company.*

The practical part will reflect the real-life aspects of the theory seen previously. Further information is stated in the methodology.

## CHAPTER 2: Methodology

The practical part consists in the analysis of the organisational structure of a company and their ICS's to proof the hypothesis stated before. The company studied is Viajes Para Ti S.L.

There are various types of data collection methods that can be used. They are divided into quantitative and quantitative methods. This depends on the type of data that needs to be collected. Whether or not it is qualitative (not measurable through numbers) or quantitative (measurable through numbers) data. In this case, the data that has to be collected is not measurable. Therefore, the type of method used is a qualitative one.

Among the qualitative data collection methods, the most adequate is the "long interview" or "discussion", which are methods where two people (interviewer and interviewee) have a conversation based on questions that the interviewer has written beforehand. The questions must be related to the topics that the interviewer wants to study.

The main reason to use this method is its flexibility when gathering the information. It is a method that enables the possibility to gather detailed information about the company's internal workflow and organisational aspects.

In this context, the interviewer is the author of this project (Alicia Kaiser) and the interviewees are the employees of the company selected. The officially known positions are:

- The Manager of the Human Resource Department.
- The Manager of the Financial Department.
- The Manager of the Marketing Department.
- The Manager of the Commercial and Product Department.
- The Manager of the Booking and Customer Support Department.
- The Manager of the Informatic Technology and Software Department.
- The Manager of the Quality Department.

One more interview will be taken with the Supervisor of the Andorran Commercial Department, which is part of the commercial and product department but has an independent role and organisation. The final and most important interview will be done with the CEO of Viajes Para Ti S.L. which will conclude the analysis.

The selection of the interviewees has been done by analysing the different positions in the company. In general, the positions that will have the most detailed information about

the department's organisational structure, are the management positions. Therefore, the interviewees are the managers of each department.

As per the structure of the interviews, they are focused on 4 main parts:

1. Structure of the department as well as the presentation of a chart that represents each department.
2. Organisation within the department.
3. Communication systems and ways to communicate within the department.
4. The relations between departments (from both structural and communicational aspects).

*The script for each interview is attached in the Annex I.*

To create a cohesion between theoretical framework and practical analysis, the topics are presented and discussed in the same order. The practical part will start with introducing the company and will be followed by the organisational structure (which incorporates the structure and organisation of each department), the communication system from within the department, the relation that the communication systems have with the department's organisational structure, and finally the relationship between departments.

The final questions of the interview will provide insights into how the company has developed since its inception, as well as its vision for the future in terms of organisational adjustments and challenges to be overcome. These once will be discussed in the last section of the practical analysis.

The hypothesis of the project will be proven through the combination of the theoretical framework and the practical analysis which will be explained further in the conclusion.

## CHAPTER 3: Viajes Para Ti SLU – structure and communication system

To better understand the relationship between a company's organisational structure and the communication systems, the project will be focused on the analysis of Viajes Para Ti S.L., one of the most popular travel agencies in Spain. Detailed information about the company will be provided in the following sections including an analysis of its organisational structure and communication system. The ultimate goal, however, is to prove the hypothesis of the project.

The practical parts consist in finding evidence to support the stated hypothesis. First, information is provided about the company's activity, mission, values, and objectives (in case they are defined) and the number of employees that work in the company. Since the project's hypothesis and aim focus on structural information rather than economic or financial, no numeric data like income, net worth, or expenditure is presented.

### 3.1. What is Viajes Para Ti S.L.?

Viajes Para Ti S.L. is an online travel agency located in Reus, Catalonia (Spain).

To this day, Viajes Para Ti S.L. (further VPT) has over 125 employees divided into 7 departments and is experiencing exponential growth over the last 5 years, excluding 2020 were they had a stop in their economic activities due to covid-19 pandemic, even though they did not close their offices during this period.

#### *History and values of Viajes Para Ti S.L.*

As displayed on their official website:

*"Viajes Para Ti S.L.U is a travel agency specialising in online sales, owner of the brands 'Esquiades.com', 'BuscoUnChollo.com', 'Amimir.com', and 'Jump2spain.com'.*

*Throughout our work, we organize countless trips for our clients. We started as a small travel agency and soon expanded our list of offerings. Today, we have valuable experience in travel and can recommend the best hotels and most impressive cities to visit!" (Viajes Para Ti - Agencia de Viajes, 2023)*

This company has over 21 years of experience in the market of online travel agencies. On top of that, their brands *Buscounchollo.com* and *Esquiades.com* are some of the market leaders in Spain.

This is what they have to say about their brands:

*“Viajes Para Ti, S.L.U. is a travel agency specializing in online sales, owner of the brand 'Esquiades.com', a leader in the sale of ski packages and adventure sports in Spain, and 'BuscoUnChollo.com', a pioneering website in flash sales of tourist packages in Spain, 'Amimir.com' a very promising worldwide hotel search engine and 'Jump2spain.com', a flash deals website aimed at international tourists, which will offer the best bargains to visit Spain.” (Viajes Para Ti - Agencia de Viajes, 2023)*

Even though the company manages their brands as a whole and tries not to specialize their employees, it is important to see what kind of products each of the brands sells, what is their position in the market and when they were created. VPT further explains:

*“Esquiades.com specialises in ski trips (hotel + ski pass packages) and mountain tourism. Throughout their 21 years of experience, we have specialized in major ski destinations such as Andorra, the Catalan Pyrenees, the Aragonese and French Pyrenees, the Sierra Nevada, and the French Alps.” (Viajes Para Ti - Agencia de Viajes, 2023)*

*“BuscoUnChollo.com is a different kind of online travel agency. They don't overwhelm you with offers; instead, they only provide you with genuine travel bargains. For nearly 11 years, BuscoUnChollo.com has been offering prices for travel that fit every budget.” (Viajes Para Ti - Agencia de Viajes, 2023)*

*“Amimir.com is your new hotel search engine where you can choose from over 60,000 accommodations located in Spain, Portugal, Andorra, France, and ALL over the world.” (Viajes Para Ti - Agencia de Viajes, 2023)*

*“Jump2spain.com is our travel agency specialising in flash offers in Spain, aimed at international tourists. Spain is one of the top destinations in the world, and who better than us to offer the best prices? The website is available in English, French, and Portuguese!” (Viajes Para Ti - Agencia de Viajes, 2023)*

VPT has some values but no mission, vision, or objectives that they display officially or internally.

The core values are:

“EFFORT Perseverance is key to making the daily work bear fruit.

CONSTANCY We do whatever it takes to achieve our goals. We never give up.

TEAMWORK We all contribute and add up to be more decisive and effective.

LOYALTY Our commitment to clients, suppliers, and employees defines us.

PATIENCE Achieving the goals we set takes time and it's important to keep that in mind.

HUMILITY We are a young company, and we still have a long way to go.” (*Viajes Para Ti - Agencia de Viajes, 2023*)

### 3.2. Description of the organisational structure and information and communication systems

This part of the project is focused on discussing the organisational structure and ICSs of each department following the theoretical framework and the results of the interview.

The organisational chart of the company is attached to Annex II, while the rest of the departments are attached to Annex III. It is helpful to follow the explanation of each department while looking at the organisational charts to have a clearer view of each department.

Before starting with the analysis of each department, some overall aspects of the company's communication tool had to be clarified, since they will appear throughout the whole analysis.

#### 3.2.1. Introduction to the company's most common communication tools

To give a global view of the organisation and communication of the company, it is important to keep in mind the most common ICS tools and organisation aspects of VPT.

Regarding ICS tools, VPT uses the following:

1. *Slack*: an inter-organisational chat that allows employees to communicate with each other. Individual chats and group chats can be created freely to ensure flexible communication between all the employees within the same company. The

messages in Slack will disappear at some point in time, which conditions and restricts the usage for certain kinds of matters.

2. *Jira*: a project and organisation application that has multiple features. VPT uses Jira for project control, task reports and as an information transmission system between departments.
3. *Admin*: a virtual workspace and data collector created by the company that saves information about the bookings of the clients. It also allows internal communication, and it is a workspace for some departments such as booking and marketing.
4. *Gmail*: they have both different corporate E-Mails (one product and department) and personal E-Mails for each employee.
  - a. *Google Suits*: as a database and working tool.
5. Telephone: the whole company is connected by an internal switchboard where each employee has one telephone extension.
6. *The "wiki"*: It is a Wikipedia from the company where they share and save information and instruction. F.e. How to install an application onto the computer. The whole company has access to it.

Regarding organisation aspects, it is important to note that VPT has 130 employees who work in an open-space office where all employees work in one big room. Recently, the IT department has been moved to the upper floor of the building, but they have kept the open-space organisation which now is separated into two floors. This means that all employees aside from the IT department members are in the same physical workspace.

### 3.2.2. Informatic and technology department

*The organisational chart of this department can be found in Annex II*

The IT department is organised through a system called Scrum which has been explained in a previous section of this project.

From a structural standpoint, the department has a flat structure with the department manager and a support manager (2<sup>nd</sup> manager) at the department's top and project teams of up to 9 members at the bottom. When the team reaches 10 members, it is split into two different teams of 5 members. The optimal number of members is 6 to 7 members to ensure a fast organisation and recognition of tasks. Between each group, there are one or more senior employees who must give support to more than one team. As explained by the IT department manager, the senior employees will create a link

between two different departments that can benefit from each other. These employees may have more responsibility but no supervision power. There are over 30 members in this department.

As per the department's organisation, the manager will only attend to organisation and administrative tasks with the help of the 2<sup>nd</sup> manager. The IT manager states that the working groups and senior employees are completely independent and do not need to be delegated because they have a system (the Scrum framework) that tells them what needs to be done daily. However, one of the top manager and 2<sup>nd</sup> manager's tasks is to always be ahead of things which means that they work on a medium-term and they must be prepared for any kind of situation where they may have to intervene. This also means that they help to prioritise important tasks for the next "sprints".

The workflow of this department is based on the Scrum principle, which is already explained. Based on the organisation principles, the department has a decentralised structure, that gives independence to each working group. Because there is no middle management, the department has only two hierarchical positions, operational or low level, and high or top level (IT Manager and 2<sup>nd</sup> manager). These factors indicate a wide span of control and little to no delegation of tasks. The Scrum framework, on the other hand, gives us hints about the specialisation of the employees which is middle to high specialisation, since each team will have some kind of specialisation of tasks.

The information and communication systems used in the department are mostly linked to the Scrum framework, therefore, they have daily, and weekly "Scrums" as explained previously in section 1.3.5. *Scrum*. In this context, the IT Department will follow the Scrum standard with some variations. One of them is that the daily scrum depends on the maturity of each team. On the other hand, we have the weekly scrums with refer to the "Sprint review" in which the department discusses relevant things about the teams and workflow which takes up to 15 minutes.

When speaking about daily communication, however, the department uses the "open space" that the office provides to attend to spontaneous matters and "Slack" to chat with colleagues or transmit important information simultaneously to multiple team or department members. Other systems like Gmail are used for other matters, like personal issues, ideas, proposals, or anything that must be reviewed mid- or long-term.

As for the information systems used, the IT department relies on Jira, as explained before it is a multifunctional application. Jira is used to track the tasks of each IT member and it is the source used in the "sprint" planning. Through Jira, all members of the company can file issues in the form of tasks for the IT department which are saved in the backlog

and included in future sprints. They also use the “Wiki”, for any kind of issue that may arise and the “Tablón” which is a function within the “Admin” that helps to save important information just as the “wiki” but internalised into the company’s virtual workspace.

### 3.2.3. Human resource department

*The organisational chart of this department can be found in Annex III*

The structure of this department is very simple because it is formed by 4 employees. As seen in the organisational chart, the department has two top managers, one of them being the head of the department and the other one being the 2<sup>nd</sup> manager. On the lower level, two more employees manage the daily tasks of the HR department.

The organisation of tasks is managed and delegated from top to bottom. Even though there are autonomous tasks, both lower-level employees will depend on the indications of both managers. One of these employees handles administrative and documentation tasks (called HR Support member), while the other one handles talent management and incorporation of new employees into the company as well as other seasonal tasks. Both tasks, however, are supervised by the 2<sup>nd</sup> manager who is responsible for the tasks related to personnel and external agencies. The head of the department will take on organisational and administrative tasks that affect the company, as well as being the connection between the CEO and the rest of the department.

In this department, we can see a strong hierarchical structure, where the position of each employee is defined by their length of service. Therefore, the most recent employees will be at the bottom of the chart, while the oldest will be at the top. The delegation is meant to be only supportive, which means that each employee knows which tasks are to be done daily but will get inputs from the management whenever needed. There is low specialization in the department where all employees (aside from the HR Support member) will handle multiple tasks, all different to each other. The span of control is narrow, considering the number of employees, while the power is decentralised since almost every employee has the same reasonability (aside from the top manager). The formalisation of procedures is present in all actions and tasks since most of the tasks are related to laws, rules, and personnel treatment.

From the communication standpoint, the department communicates mostly through face-to-face systems and Slack. Each Monday, all three members (aside from the support member) will meet up to discuss what must be done the following week and what the

planning. From a daily perspective, communication is fast and efficient and is based on face-to-face communication thanks to the open space office. All members sit in the same area, which facilitates this aspect. On the other hand, Slack is the online communication system that is used the most inside of the department and is useful when one of them is not in the office. As we will see in most departments, the E-Mail flow is based on more sensible and important information regarding things outside of the department/company or matters that are not directly related to the operational tasks of the department.

As per information systems, this department only uses the Admin and Google suites, the first one for transmission of global information to the company, and Google suites for integrating information from around the company to the HR department. Therefore, all information systems are used for communication between de HR department and the others, more than within the department itself.

#### 3.2.4. Quality department

*The organisational chart of this department can be found in Annex IV*

The quality department is also a small department divided into two groups managed by the top manager. These are the “quality” group and the “support” unit. There are 3 members in the quality group and only one member in the support unit. This last one is a recently incorporated unit in the company and counts as an annexe to the department. All employees aside from the top manager are on the same hierarchical level. There are 5 members in this department.

The task division is made according to the skills of each group. While the quality department will handle things related to customer experience, the support unit is responsible for the satisfaction of employees within the company. Both groups are managed by the top manager, who will dedicate more time to administrative and organisational matters while being the direct supervisor for the rest of the department.

The organisation of the tasks is made by the top manager and depends on the season of the year. The list of tasks that must be done each season is defined through an internal document and does not vary a lot from one year to another. Since these tasks are clear to everyone, the only thing that must be done daily is “planning”, which is done by the top manager or the employee with the most experience in the department at that given moment (in case the top manager is not available). This planning will determine the tasks that have to be done on that day and who will be responsible for it. Aside from that, some

members will have more responsibility, which means that they will have another task aside from the one assigned each day. They are fully responsible for this task which means that they will have to organise their working time to finish both tasks each day.

Concerning the principles, the department is not specialised; all members of the quality group are equally qualified to do all the tasks of the department. The hierarchy and authority are determined by two levels, the top management, and the operational level where each member supervises and helps each other in difficult matters. The span of control is big if we consider the size of the department, where the top manager supervises 4 employees. From the degree of decentralisation of power, we can say that it is quite decentralised. Even though all employees will support each other on decisions, everyone can decide on important matters on their own. The department and the tasks are formalised through protocols and procedures, which guide their members in difficult tasks and decision-making.

The quality department does not have any meetings or periodic check-ups. Nonetheless, they have fluid daily communication thanks to two systems. One of them is Slack, which they use daily to transmit important and relevant information, as well as ask questions or discuss less relevant matters. The other one is face-to-face communication, which is enhanced by the open space office. Whenever someone has a question or needs to talk in private, they will meet up in a spontaneous meeting or discuss it on the spot. The E-Mail system is not used inside the department. When there is important information to share and everyone should know about that, the top manager tries to not only write this information into Slack but also meet up with the whole department to quickly inform them about it.

The information systems used are Google Suits, where the department will have its protocols and task lists, and Slack, where it transmits the daily planning. The admin is a tool to share important information but, since it is directly related to the daily tasks, it is more of a workspace, than an information or communication system. Finally, Jira is used as a connection thread between the quality and the IT department.

### 3.2.5. Product and commercial department

The product department is divided into two geographic sections, the section in Reus and the section in Andorra. Both are independent from each other which is the reason why they are treated independently. There are approximately 20 people in this department.

### 3.2.5.1. Product department - Reus

*The organisational chart of this department can be found in Annex V*

From a structural standpoint, the department has two managers, one top manager and a 2<sup>nd</sup> manager, after that the department is divided into 7 groups: Buscunchollo.com, Esquiades.com, Amimir.com, Jump2Spain.com, Boí Taüll Resort, Hotel Don Juan Tossa, Group Reservations and technological improvements (one person that handles the transmission of technological improvements to the IT department, it is a thread between both departments). There is one product manager in each group, which has the expertise and experience to guide and supervise all the members of each group. The next level is senior members who serve as reference people who will help to solve everyday problems from the bottom part of the department, which are the lower-level employees. These are often juniors who were recently incorporated into the company or department. Therefore, each group has 3 hierarchical levels in total, one manager, one or more seniors, and one or more juniors. Nonetheless, as seen in the chart, not every group has all 3 levels. This depends on many factors, some of which are: quantity of tasks, profit per product, issues related matters and others. Important is also the horizontal line that unites Buscunchollo.com and Esquiades.com. Since the workload of each product depends on the season, some members of Esquiades.com will give support to Buscunchollo.com in the summer. The same happens the other way around in winter.

From an organisational standpoint, the top manager will delegate all the tasks to each member of the department. Some will be more independent than others, which depends on the product they manage and the kind of tasks that must be done. From there, each member will fulfil the assigned tasks and others that are related to their position. The tasks will vary depending on the season of the year and the strategic planning. As stated by the top manager: *“The commercial/product department is the fuel that the company needs to make a profit (...) this is a lot of pressure (...)”*. This means that the company needs to adapt fast when strategic planning changes the way things are done. Therefore, the top manager considers that each member of the department should be able to do as many tasks as possible. This will increase the adaptability of the employee. The kind of tasks will vary a little between each hierarchical level, leaving the organisational and administrative tasks for the top manager who can rely on the help of the 2<sup>nd</sup> manager when needed. This one, however, is still involved in some daily tasks of the department.

We can identify a low specialisation in the department, as well as a structure with 4 hierarchical levels and a span of control that will depend on each product group. The hierarchical level is defined through the top management, product management, seniors, and juniors. The span of control can only be measured at the top management position and product management position, which is generally wide, aside from the small groups which have little to no span of control due to lack of subordinates. The decision-making power is centralised at the top of the department, even though the top manager states that each employee is autonomous in their tasks, they still are attached to the responsibility of consulting some actions to their seniors or managers. The delegation of tasks is done by the top manager and each employee will be responsible for finishing them in the set time frame. The rules and procedures of most of the tasks are formalised.

As per the communication systems used, they have 3 types of meetings, one of them is a commercial meeting done every three weeks in which the department will discuss new commercial actions, innovations and other aspects related to the commercial quality of the department and the quality and price of the products. The second one is focused on a group dynamic, and the third one is about technological improvements and Jira, where only a few members of the department attend to give feedback about the improvements that must be done and the ones already in progress. On a daily basis, the department, like all the others, communicates through Slack and face-to-face communication. This is also used when handling important information. The E-Mail system is only used for external purposes.

The information systems used are Google Suits, through which the top manager will organise the daily tasks of each member and where some data and protocols are saved. The next tool is the admin, which serves as a workspace more than a communication tool and Jira is used to transmit issues and improvement requests to the IT department.

#### 3.2.5.2. Product department – Andorra

*The organisational chart of this department can be found in Annex VI*

From the structural standpoint, there are only 3 members, the product manager, the senior and the junior member. They organise their tasks from more to less responsibility, meaning that the top manager leads the commercial actions with providers, while the senior will manage the technical tasks. The junior is recently incorporated and handles technical support tasks together with the senior.

The commercial tasks are different to the ones in Reus because they are centred around Andorra only, which changes the way offers are negotiated and which techniques are applied.

The communication inside the office is solely face-to-face, they only use Slack when one of them is not in the office or busy. They do not track their tasks and are extremely independent from the office in Reus, due to the differences between the tasks management and the products they handle.

The communication between both departments is held through Slack and telephone. The product manager participates in the technical improvements meeting, but they are not part of the group dynamics or commercial meeting. Sometimes the product manager and or senior will go to the office in Reus for an important event or any other matter.

The rest of the mentioned principles and systems used are equal to the ones of the product department in Reus.

### 3.2.6. Booking and customer service department

*The organisational chart of this department can be found in Annex VII*

The structure of this department is defined through various hierarchical levels. A top manager and 2<sup>nd</sup> manager are at the top of the charts, while they get support from two more manager figures below them. After that, there is a series of employees that are called “equipo de referencia” which can be translated as the “reference team”. This group of people will act as a supervisor for the subordinates at the bottom of the chart. The bottom of the charts is not divided into any groups, everyone is at the same level. There are over 30 people in this department.

From an organisational point of view, the managers will each have a type of task and discipline they are responsible for. The top manager will be responsible for the organisation of the department as well as structural and technological improvements. The 2<sup>nd</sup> manager will be responsible for anything related to personnel management and the structure of the department as well as some other tasks that are either risky or need to be handled with special care. Both support managers will have a discipline they are responsible for. The reference team is also divided into disciplines. 5 members at this level manage tasks like post-travel, amimir.com, documentation and finance support. The bottom or operational level is the largest group and is the less specialised one. While all members are equally qualified there are members at this level that have more

experience and length of service, which gives them the ability to train and help recently incorporated members and, therefore, support each other when needed. The daily tasks of this level will be determined by one of the managers, ideally by the 2<sup>nd</sup> manager or a support manager (when the 2<sup>nd</sup> manager is not available).

The organisation principles we see in this department are a high to low specialisation from top to bottom, even though all the members of the department have good knowledge of all the different aspects and tasks, some members (managers and reference team) are specialised in a task or discipline and will have the responsibility for it. The span of control is always wide, the reason for that is that the responsibility of the department will be assigned to the highest hierarchical position in the department available at a given moment. This is important because this department works 24/7 and there must always be someone in the department who knows how to handle difficult situations. Even though the hierarchy is defined, there is no clear separation in the department, therefore, each member could go directly to one of the managers when they have a problem, instead of going to their direct superior which can create unnecessary workload to the managers. The decision-making power is decentralised since almost all members of the department have the same capacity to decide on daily issues. Nonetheless, the decision-making power increases at the middle and top levels. The delegation of tasks is decided from top to bottom, which means that the 2<sup>nd</sup> manager will indicate the tasks assigned to all the employees from the reference team to the operations team. Aside from that, some members will have side tasks they are responsible for, and therefore, must manage their time wisely. The protocols and rules are strictly formalised. Almost every task is protocolised which is essential to the department to keep uniformity.

The communication inside the department is mostly done through Slack and face-to-face communication. There are seasonal group dynamics done to improve the department's cohesion and strengthen the team spirit. Employees will also have the opportunity to address issues and improvements that must be made for the next season. Since there are a lot of people in the department and they must be available 24/7 to attend phone calls, there is no possibility of meeting up with all the members at the same time. The training in the department is continuous, therefore, they will have training meetings on different days of the week with a small group of people. These meetings will be repeated until all members of the department have done it. The daily communication of the department, however, relies on Slack. E-mail is used in some protocols, which will define when to send an E-Mail and to whom. It is also used for external usage (between departments) or to transmit information to the top manager and 2<sup>nd</sup> manager.

The information systems used are mostly Google Suits, where all the members have access to the protocols and task lists. Aside from the protocol, they also track the time spent on a specific task in a Google Slide to make statistics and evaluate the time spent on each task. There are also different types of slides where the managers track important issues that need to be controlled daily or hourly. We can say that the whole control centre of the department is in Google Suits. The Admin has also a function that allows to track the amount of work done by each employee within the booking management tasks.

### 3.2.7. Marketing department

*The organisational chart of this department can be found in Annex VIII*

From a structural perspective, the department has 3 hierarchical levels. The department is separated into 3 sections with the top manager as the head. Each group has one supervisor and multiple members. There are approximately 15 members in this department.

The groups are separated by the kind of tasks done. There is one handling anything related to publicity and client attraction, one that manages everything related to SEO and web design, and the last one that englobes international marketing. All of them are supervised by the top manager who handles organisation and administrative tasks, as well as, getting involved in improvements and innovations within the department.

The organisation principles seen in this department are a high specialisation, where everyone has a different kind of task, even though the recently incorporated members will learn multiple tasks, they will be slowly specialised into the section they better fit. The span of control is neither narrow nor wide, the top manager controls the whole department but relies on the supervision of 3 members, which are the middle level of the department. These three members will have 3 to 5 subordinates they have to supervise. The same happens in the hierarchical structure where the top, middle and lower levels of the department, as well as the authority, are clear to everyone. The power is mostly decentralised, since each of the members has the reasonability to make decisions, nonetheless, since this department relies on teamwork, the decisions may be taken by more than one member. There are also aspects where the consideration of the top manager's view is important to making a final decision. The tasks are not always delegated, everyone knows what they need to do, and the top manager is mostly a leader and organisation unit that is less involved in daily tasks. The top manager will keep track

of the tasks that involve high investment like SEO which means that it must be controlled and lead correctly. As per formalisation, there are protocols and rules for some tasks and the department will write summaries and analysis of the meetings and statistics to keep track of possible improvements and issues.

The communication within the department is held through face-to-face meetings and online systems like Slack. Once per week, each section of the department will have a meeting with the top manager, these meetings will be on different days of the week. A group dynamic is held every 2 months with the whole department. Additionally, there is a third meeting, held every 2 months to discuss the department's efficiency and how to improve it. Lastly, Slack and face-to-face communication are essential to keep the communication flow of the department. E-mail is only used for external purposes or important aspects that must be handled with care.

As per information systems, the marketing department uses Jira to analyse the efficiency of the department through task tracking as well as being the direct link to the IT department. The Admin is only used as a workspace, not as a communication or information system.

### 3.2.8. Finance department

*The organisational chart of this department can be found in Annex IX*

From a structural perspective, the department is separated into two main sections that depend on two managers, the top manager, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> manager. There is one section for the hotels' financial management and the other for the rest of the company's financial management. There are approximately 8-10 members in this department.

The organisation of tasks and roles in the department depend on the specialisation of each employee, which means that the section that manages the hotel will have tasks centred around the financial matters of the hotels and the other section will handle the rest of the financial matters in the company. The 2<sup>nd</sup> manager is more involved in the hotels' finances than in the rest of the company.

The department is specialised to a certain degree. Since this is a small department, everyone must be able to fulfil the tasks of their colleague, which means that, generally, everyone has specific tasks or is specialised in a function within the department, but all of them have the necessary knowledge to fulfil almost all the tasks of the department. The span of control is wide, the whole department depends on two managers. The

hierarchical levels are only two, the top managers and the operations team from each section. The decision-making power is centralised for all important matters and will be attended by the 2<sup>nd</sup> or top manager. The delegation of tasks is made once every season when the managers will decide what tasks will be performed by each member. The protocols and procedures are generally formalised, and the department has a clear structure followed by everyone. It is important to notice that everything that happens in this department will depend on the law. Therefore, the outcomes of the department will have to be in line with the rules and norms of the law.

As per the communication of the department, the systems used are face-to-face and online communication like meetings, E-Mails, and Slack. There are two meetings held by the department, the first one is a group dynamic, held every 3 months, and the second one is to discuss the efficiency of the department and the improvement that can be done. In the second one, some information systems are used to gather data and transform it into graphs that will be analysed by the managers to innovate certain aspects of the workflow. The E-Mail system is commonly used for important matters that need to be discussed carefully as well as for external purposes. The Slack application is used for daily communication, as well as the open space that improves the communication flow inside the department.

The information systems used are Google Suits, where the managers get their data and use it to analyse workflow aspects of the department, as well as the Admin, which saves data related to daily tasks. This last one serves primely as a workspace.

### 3.3. The organisational structure of the company and the relationship between departments

*The organisational chart of VPT can be found in Annex X*

The structure of the company is a mix of all departments at one horizontal level, with one CEO at the top. Recently, some changes have been made from a representation perspective, where some managers like the marketing top manager have ascended to CMO. These, however, are not formalised into the structure or organisation of the company and serve primely as a representation outside of it.

In terms of structure, all the departments are linked horizontally, meaning that each level of the hierarchy will communicate with its counterpart. For example, top managers will

communicate with each other, and middle managers and supervisors will have more interaction with each other than with other hierarchical levels.

The communication systems used between departments are face-to-face and online communication. Face-to-face communication is done through a monthly meeting with all the top managers: IT, human resources, quality, product (Reus), booking, marketing and finance and the CEO. Aside from that, they use the open space office to talk and discuss important matters. The last tool used as a communication system is Slack, which serves as a universal communication tool between all the members of the company. All employees of VPT can chat with each other without restriction, which helps to get quick answers, talk about any matter related to work, schedule meetings, and so on. There is also a meeting held between the finance and product departments, which consists of one person from each department coming together and discussing the issues related to the financial and product departments that haven't been resolved and finding solutions to them.

The information systems used in the company are Google Suits and the Admin primarily. Google Suits gives the possibility to share any kind of information as well as create a workspace for some aspects that can't be done within the Admin, which is the primary workspace for any task related to bookings, offers and publicity (only some of them). The Admin also enables the possibility to quickly share information through all the members of the company which is normally taken as a priority for the employees meaning that anything shared through the Admin notification system is important and needs to be checked.

Additionally, to show the importance of the open space office and the Slack system, one of the questions for the managers and the CEO is what they do when they have a big problem and must discuss it with one colleague. The answers were always the same: write the person a message through Slack to check whether they are available and then, they will go straight to this person's desk and talk to them. Delicate matters will be discussed in the meeting rooms. The meeting rooms are also an important aspect of the company's communication, they are essential to keep the open space organised and as silent as possible, therefore, VPT pays attention to having different types of spaces for any occasion. Small meeting rooms are attached to the main office, a conference room, a gaming and relaxing room for employees and a filming room. All the spaces enhance the communication and workflow of the company. Only the CEO will have a separate office.

### 3.4. Relationship between the organisational structure and the ICSs of VPT

One very important aspect of the organisation of VPT is that the organisational chart has never been formalised. Even though each manager did an organisational chart of their department, it was the first time they sat down to make it. This means that, up until now, no employee of the company has ever seen an organisational chart of the company they work for. The CEO commented that there was no need to show everyone a chart of the company, but the importance of formalising the organisational chart goes further than only showing it to the employees. It is the visual representation of the company, its functions, its division of tasks, and the relation of each unit with each other. The organisational chart shows a visual representation of the communication structure of the company.

Through the representation of the organisational chart and the explanations of the managers, some relations between structure and communication can be defined. One of them is the horizontal tendency of the whole company and the grouping system, related to the open space department. Most employees are on the same hierarchical level, or work closely with their direct superiors, which means that communication must be fast and efficient, one way of accomplishing that is with open-space offices. It enhances fast and flawless communication between all members of the team or group. This aspect will also help the top and 2<sup>nd</sup> managers to keep an eye on the whole department and be accessible to their subordinates. This is extremely important since most departments are led and supervised by only one or two managers (wide span of control). Another aspect that is related to the structure of the company is the meetings. The monthly meetings with the CEO and the top managers are directly linked to the structure of the company. Only top managers will attend this meeting. The meetings and group dynamics held by each department are linked to the horizontal structure and the culture of the company.

Some managers have stated that the company is still trying to overcome the small company culture, which means to slowly break the horizontal structure of the company and focus on giving more importance to the middle management. This transition is also seen in some communication and organisational aspects. For example, the division of meetings into different sections means that the meetings are lined up with the specialisation of the employees. The same happens with Slack chat where each

department, section or group of the company has its communication thread to separate their daily communication from others.

From the information systems view, the company tries to transform data collected from the daily work of employees to create new methods, workflows, techniques, and strategies that will help to optimise daily task management.

## CHAPTER 4: Conclusions

The conclusions of this project will be separated into theoretical framework conclusions and the ones taken from the practical analysis.

The conclusions of the theoretical framework are centred around aspects seen in the theory and relationships that can be drawn related to the hypothesis of the project, while the conclusions of the practical analysis will be centred around answering the indicial hypothesis of the project.

### 4.1. Conclusions of the theoretical framework

As mentioned before, through the study of the different theoretical frameworks seen in the project, three relationships can be drawn. The first one is the relationship between vertical or tall structure to the principles of the organisational process, the second one is the relationship between horizontal or flat structure to the principles of the organisational process, and the third one is the relationship between organisational structure and ICSs.

The relations between the principles of the organisational process and the vertical or tall structure are:

1. *Specialisation*: there is more specialisation and more task division.
2. *The span of control*: it is wider at the bottom of the chart and gets smaller at the top.
3. *Departmentalisation*: it tends to have a functional division driven by high specialisation. This way, all employees with similar tasks will be working together.
4. *Hierarchy and authority*: there are a lot of supervision levels that will have some kind of authority according to the position they have in the chart. Authority is more important in this kind of structure because there are more supervisors and scales to the top.

5. *Delegation*: there will be a higher level of delegation throughout the company. More levels of supervision and a high division of tasks means that each employee will get their tasks delegated by a superior position.
6. *Centralisation* and decentralization: the tendency is to have a more centralized responsibility; each supervisor gathers the responsibility for their subordinates. Since more tasks are delegated, the decision-making power is concentrated in the top position of the hierarchy.
7. *Coordination*: the coordination within the vertical line may be very precise and organized, but there is no communication or working procedure between horizontal blocs.
8. *Groups*: there can be teamwork, but it may be less frequent, but it highly depends on the workflow of a company. In this case, the structural organisation of a company won't directly determine the principle, but it can affect the structure the other way around.
9. *Formalisation*: this aspect is not driven by the structure, because the level of formalisation will be decided the same way in any structure. Nonetheless, vertical structures may need more formalisation within the vertical integration (hierarchical aspects, span of control and delegation), and less on horizontal integration (coordination, groups, and teamwork).

The relations between the principles of the organisational process and the horizontal or flat structure are:

1. *Specialisation*: less specialisation, workers usually have to be skilled and diverse, to assume different kinds of tasks.
2. *The span of control*: the span is much wider and there are fewer middle management layers.
3. *Departmentalisation*: this aspect should not be influenced much by the type of structure. Since flat structures are often found in small companies, they may not have a functional departmentalisation but rather be separated by projects or tasks. This, however, will be influenced more by the task division and number of employees rather than by the form of the organisational structure.
4. *Hierarchy and authority*: there are fewer manager and supervisor levels, there may be some leader positions in the teams or groups, but for the most part, there are little to no authority positions aside from the top managers and/or CEOs of the company.
5. *Delegation*: there won't be much delegation throughout the company. Most groups or departments work independently thanks to a more decentralized

organisation. The decision-making power is more distributed through the employees which gives them the autonomy to work autonomously and, therefore, don't have the need to be delegated.

6. *Centralization and decentralization*: the tendency is to have a more decentralized responsibility; each group has a responsibility that is usually distributed evenly among each employee. There may be a team or group leader that helps to coordinate the group, but the responsibility lies on each one separately.
7. *Coordination*: the focus is on having good coordination between group members and, if needed, between groups. Normally they work completely independently. In a horizontal structure, most members will have the same position, which means that effective coordination is crucial for a productive work environment and successful completion of daily tasks.
8. *Formalisation*: as in any other structure, formalisation is important to ensure that each employee knows their place in the company and which rules, norms, and procedures to follow. Even though in horizontal structures everyone has a bigger responsibility, the formalisation process is still very important to guide employees through their daily tasks.

The relationship between the organisational structure and the ICSs can be seen through the whole theoretical framework. The organisational structure is defined through the application of the principles, these include indirect information about the ICSs and how they will be applied. The organisational chart and the structure type implemented in a company will decide the relationship between the organisational units and, as a consequence, the communication structure that a company will have.

Communication structure is another way of saying "the implementation of ICSs in a company's organisational structure". If we take a look at an organisational chart, we can see all the relations between the organisational units of a company. These relations, however, are not only explaining the hierarchical relations between units but also the relationship they have communication-wise. If two units are related to one another through the organisational chart, they will also need to communicate with each other (this is the first relationship between both theoretical frameworks). The principles, on the other hand, will explain the in-depth of the relationship between units. Thus, each principle and the way it is implemented will condition the ICSs of a company (this is the second relation).

In summary, the organizational chart and the company's structure explain the relationships between units, while the principles determine how each unit communicates

with each other. Thus, the communication structure will be positively influenced by the formalisation of the organisational structure and the principles of the organisational process. The concept has been created as a conclusion to the theoretical framework and it explains perfectly how the organisational structure, the principles, and ICSs are related.

## 4.2. Conclusions of the practical analysis

The practical part gives an in-depth view of the organisational nuances of a company. It helps to understand how each unit relates to each other, the reason behind these relations, and the tools they use to enhance the communication flow of a company.

It is fair to say that, even though the company has no formalised organisational chart, it has a clear view of the relationship between employees and the tools needed to maintain an efficient communication flow that helps to fulfil daily tasks.

This brings us to the question: Is an organisational chart needed to have good communication inside a company? No, following the practical example and the interviews, each member of the organisation knows how to use the communication tools provided to ensure efficient communication flow.

Another aspect is the formalisation of protocols and rules regarding daily tasks which has a high importance in VPT. As we know, thanks to the theoretical framework, formalisation will create a behavioural pattern and enhance uniformity within daily tasks. These aspects of formalisation will affect the relationships between employees and, therefore, change the communication structure of a company, department, or group.

This leads us to the question: Does the formalisation of daily tasks enhance flawless communication by standardizing the usage of ICSs? There are two aspects to this. The first aspect is related to the effectiveness of protocolising questions and issues related to daily tasks, this will reduce inefficient communication (remember: no communication is a type of communication too). The second aspect is related to the formalisation of the usage of ICSs, which will directly determine how employees have to communicate with each other.

These questions and their answers help us to understand the hypothesis of this project: *The formalisation of the organisational structure positively influences the usage of communication systems inside a company.*

The hypothesis has been proven and accepted to the extent that formalisation will set the ultimate guidelines for how communication structure will be set in a company. Even though formalisation is not a “must”, it is a “should” because it will positively influence the correct usage of communication systems and, in consequence, the communication flow of a company. The more formalised the different aspects of a company’s workflow are, the more effective communication will be inside of a company.

An alternative research question could be: *How the enhancement of communication systems will affect the economic wellbeing of a company.* This could be a continuation of the project presented and give a better view of the economic aspects that are influenced by communication systems.

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Insider information from employees and personal references.

**Alicia Kaiser**

**The relationship between organisational structure and  
information and communication systems**

**Annex of the Bachelor's Final Project**

**Design and Organisational Behaviour**

**Degree in Business Administration**



**FACULTAT D'ECONOMIA i EMPRESA  
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**Reus**

**Curs 2023-24**

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# ANNEX I – The Interview

## INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

*To understand what the organizational structure means, we must see the company as a machine and all the people as the tools and parts that will make this machine work. The organizational structure is how the parts (people/human resources) have been distributed within the machine (company/organization). Logically, there is no perfect way to organize these resources within the company, but there are ways to improve the existing structure to get the most out of the company and ensure its growth and internal efficiency.*

*\*NOTE: We are not talking about external factors or direct or indirect environments of the company.*

*The communication system is how people/workers communicate within the company, of all kinds, but only internally. In this case, we deal with topics such as face-to-face communication, telematics, and computer systems that centralize information and communication within the company. It is interesting here not only to talk about how workers communicate on an individual level but also how they communicate and transfer information globally.*

## QUESTIONS

1. Create an outline of the department you work in and its direct relationship with the company, commonly called an "organizational chart" or "organigram". Comment on it once finished.
2. Department organization:
  - a. Briefly explain the organization of tasks.
  - b. Does your department work autonomously or so you delegate many tasks as a manager?
  - c. How many levels of supervision would you define in your department?
  - d. How many subordinates are there per supervisor?
3. Communication systems you use in your department:
  - a. How do you communicate on a daily basis ?
  - b. How do you transmit important information? Which communication system do you use?
  - c. What do you do when you have a major problem and need to talk to certain people to resolve it (assuming the people are within the company)?

d. What communication systems do you identify in your department? Explain the 3 types with examples.

4. The department and the company:

a. Do you think the chart you have drawn accurately represents the relationships within the company (both in terms of tasks and communication)?

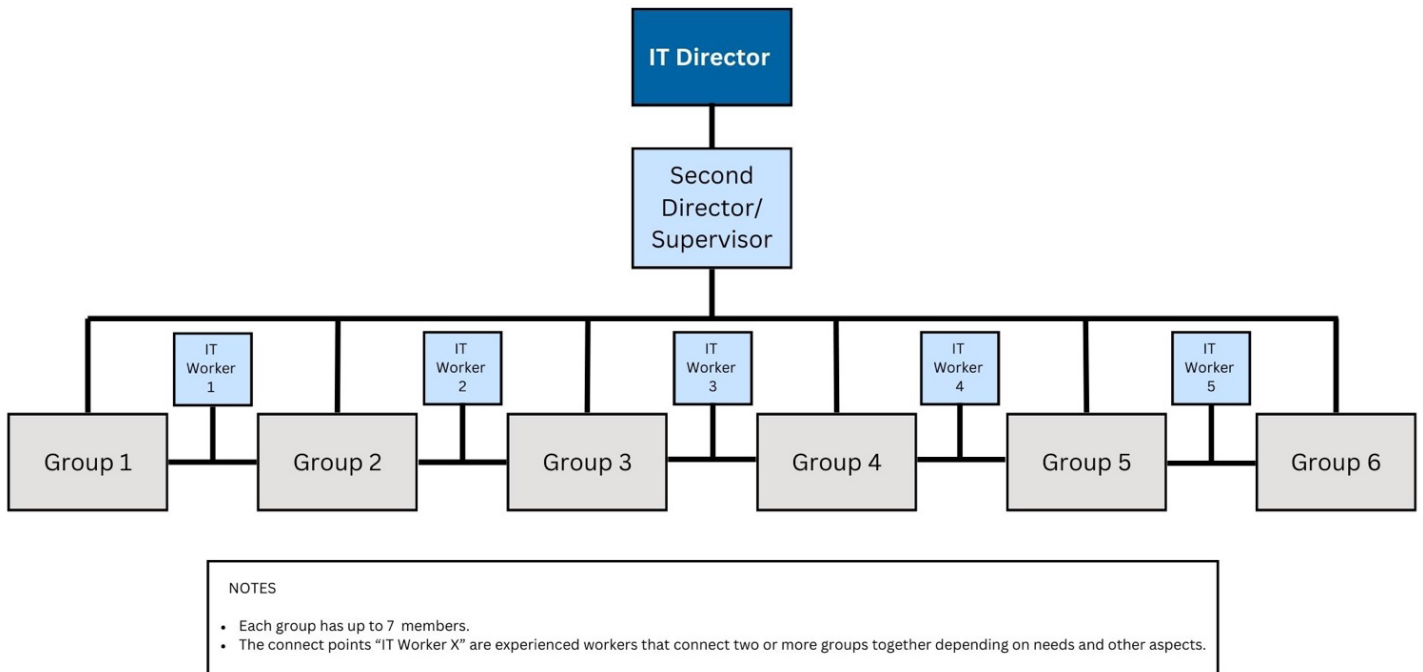
b. How would you describe the relationships between departments and managers? Considering the communication tools mentioned earlier.

c. If you could change something in the company's structure, what would it be?

d. Knowing that you have been in the company for many years, briefly explain how we have reached the current structural point.

# Annex of the organisational charts of Viajes Para Ti S.L.

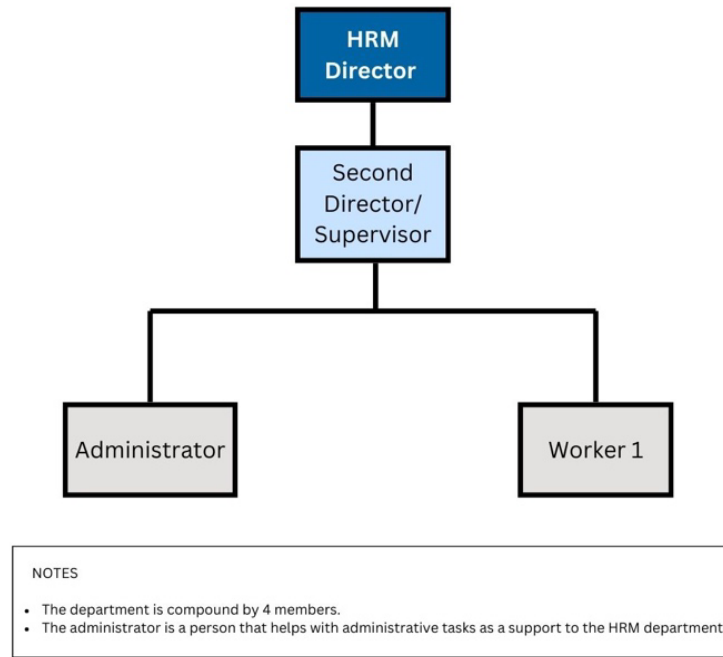
## ANNEX II – Organisational chart: IT-department



*Figure 1. Organisational chart of the IT department. Reference: own elaboration based on the interview with the IT manager.*

*The figure corresponds to section 3.2.2. of the final degree project page. 40*

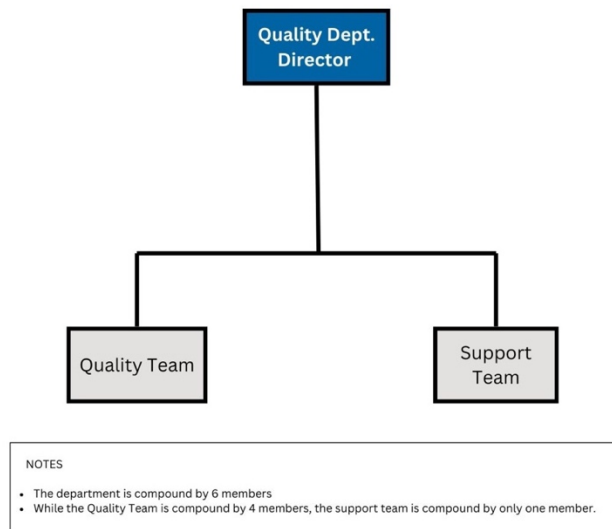
## ANNEX III – Organisational chart: Human resource department



*Figure 2. Organisational chart of the human resource department. Reference: own elaboration based on the interview with the second human resource manager.*

*The figure corresponds to section 3.2.3. of the final degree project page. 42*

## ANNEX IV – Organisational chart: Quality department



*Figure 3. Organisational chart of the quality department. Reference: own elaboration based on the interview with the quality manager.*

*The figure corresponds to section 3.2.4. of the final degree project page. 43*

## ANNEX V – Organisational chart: Product department (Reus)

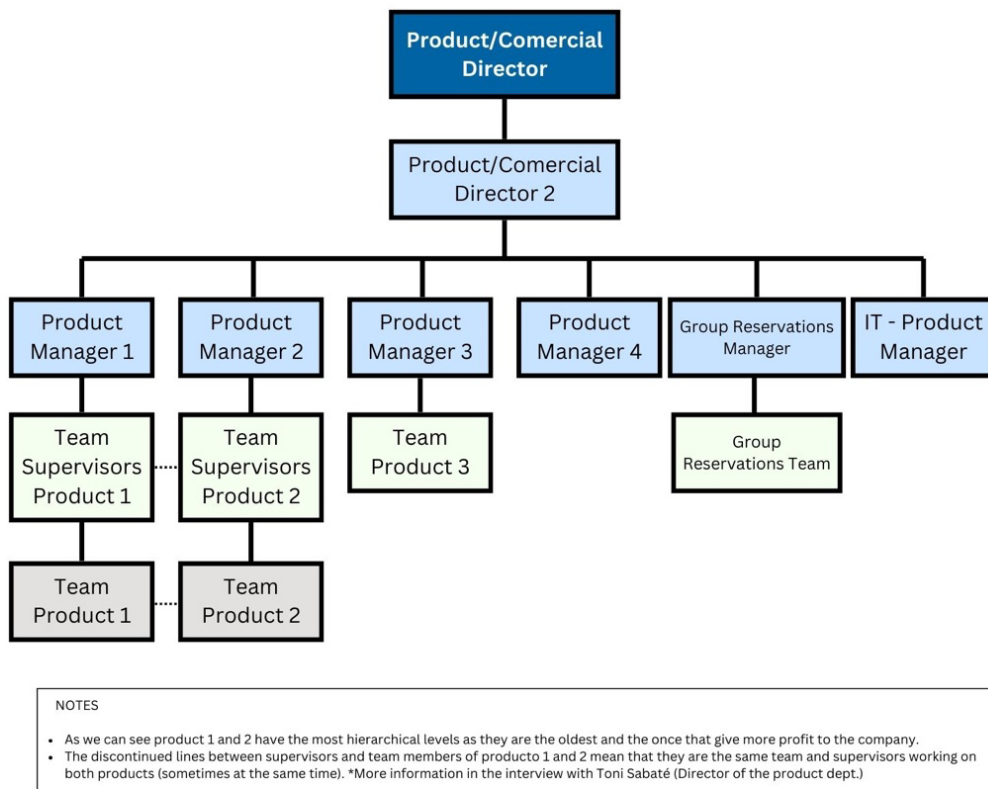
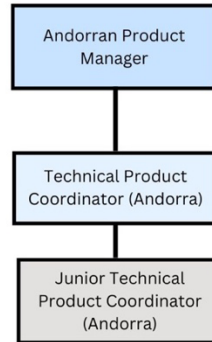


Figure 4. Organisational chart of the product department in Reus. Reference: own elaboration based on the interview with the second product manager.

The figure corresponds to section 3.2.5.1 of the final degree project page. 44

## ANNEX VI – Organisational chart: Product department (Andorra)



*Figure 5. Organisational chart of the Andorran product department. Reference: own elaboration based on the interview with the Andorran product manager.*

*The figure corresponds to section 3.2.5.2 of the final degree project page. 46*

## ANNEX VII – Organisational chart: Booking and customer service department

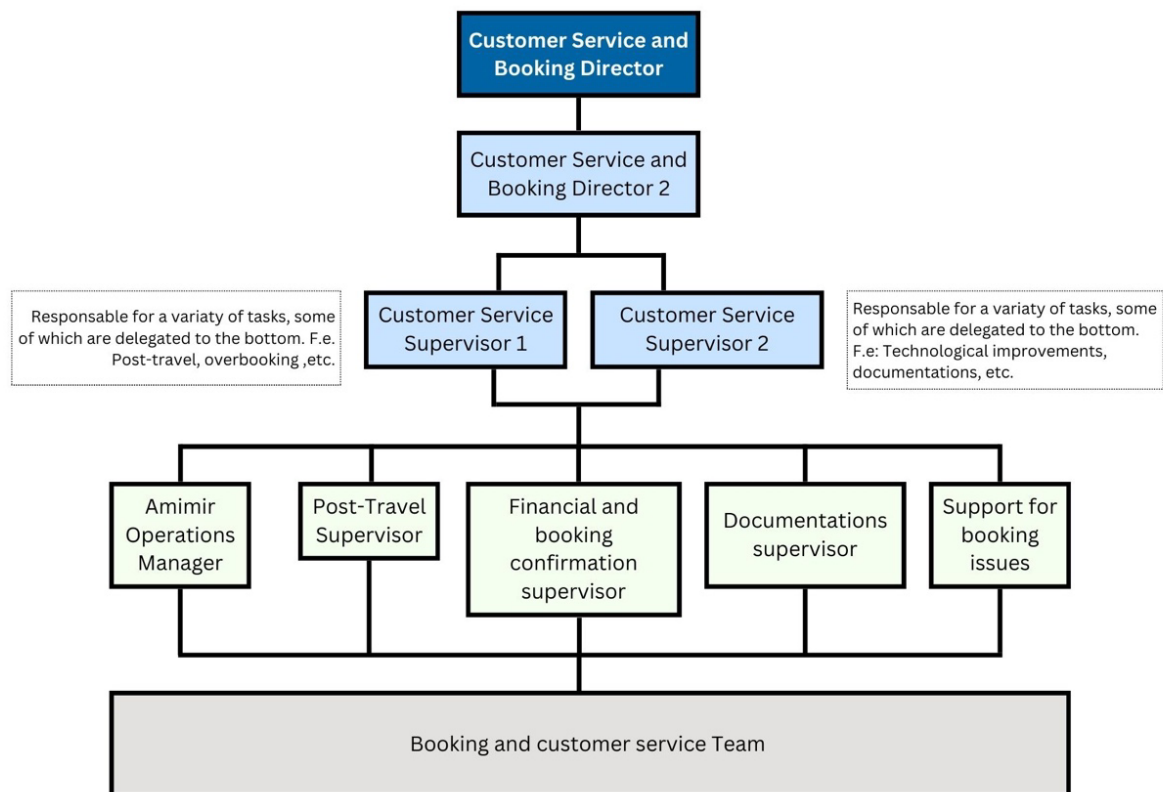
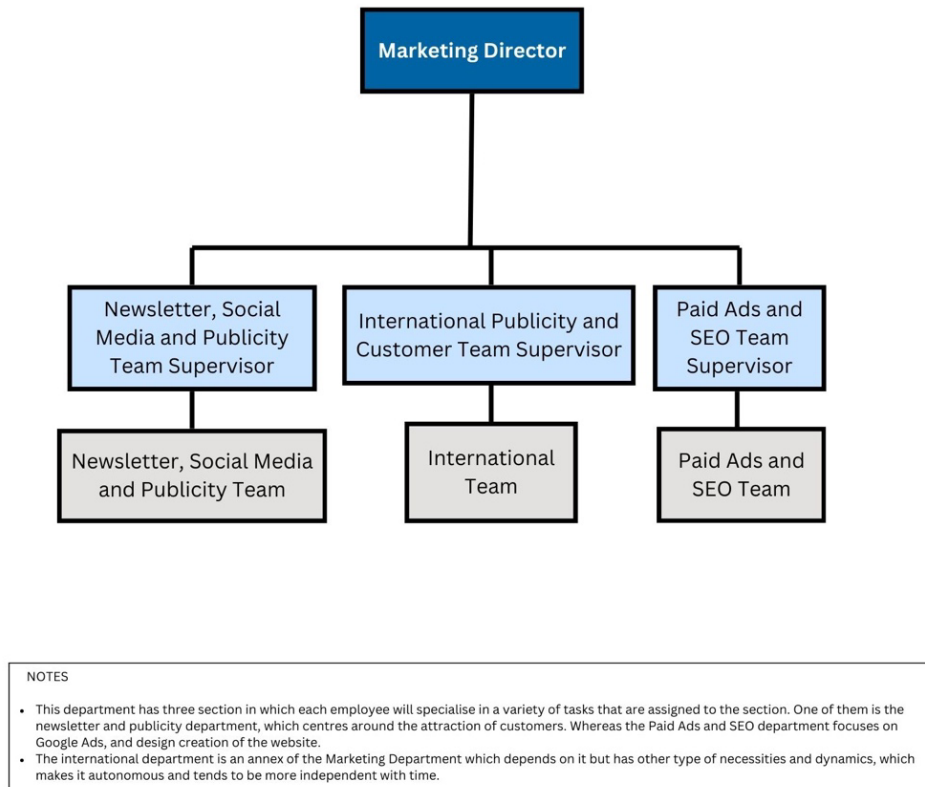


Figure 6. Organisational chart of the booking and customer department. Reference: own elaboration based on the interview with the second booking and customer service manager.

The figure corresponds to section 3.2.6. of the final degree project page. 47

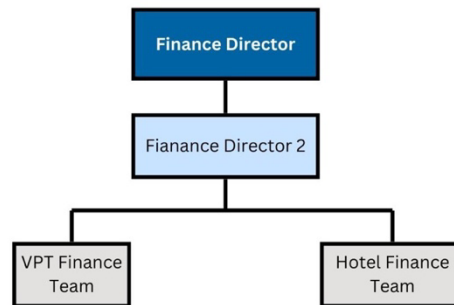
## ANNEX VIII – Organisational chart: Marketing department



*Figure 7. Organisational chart of the marketing department. Reference: own elaboration based on the interview with the marketing manager.*

*The figure corresponds to section 3.2.7. of the final degree project page. 49*

## ANNEX IX – Organisational chart: Finance department



NOTES

- There are two big groups/teams in this department that manages, on one side the hotel's finance aspects, and on the other, the rest of the financial aspects of the whole company, for the different products, hotel suppliers and clients. They do organise though providers rather than products/websites.

*Figure 8. Organisational chart of the finance department. Reference: own elaboration based on the interview with the finance manager.*

*The figure corresponds to section 3.2.8. of the final degree project page. 50*

# ANNEX X – Organisational chart: VIAJES PARA TI S.L

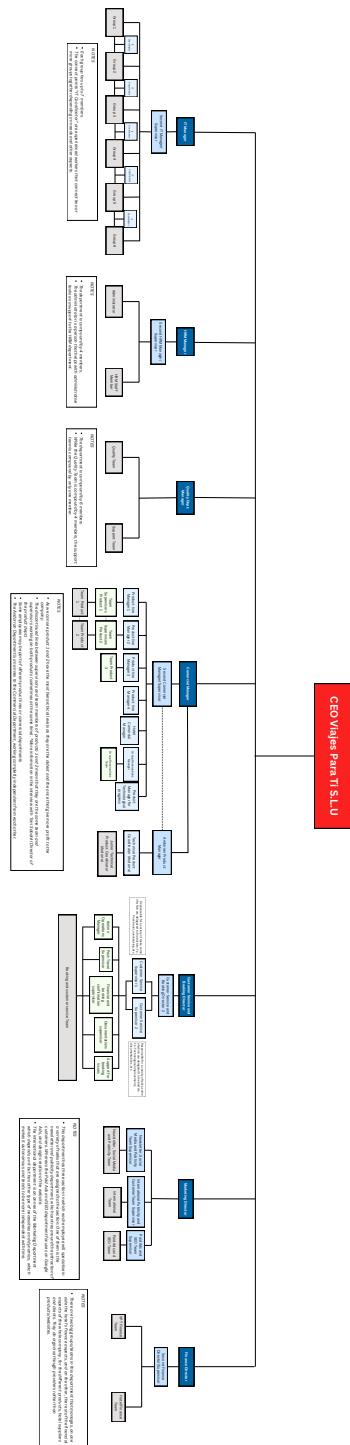


Figure 9. Organisational chart of VPT. Reference: own elaboration based on the interview with the finance manager. For more clarity, follow this link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lkyQs6m5d9oH2MRfWGoQLYbDt4zEfgis/view>

The figure corresponds to section 3.3. of the final degree project page. 51