THE DYNAMICS OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN A CORPORATION

AFTER MULTIPLE MERGERS

by

Patricia O. Foster

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

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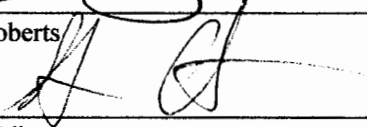
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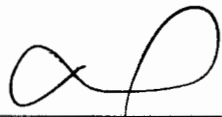
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ABSTRACT

Mergers and acquisitions are a key component of many corporate growth strategies, yet companies often perform poorly after a merger, and can see a negative impact to profitability ranging from 23 to 50 percent (DePamphilis, 2003). Several factors are considered to contribute to this poor performance, including paying too much for an overvalued asset, lower than expected cost savings or changes in market or industry conditions (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993). An often overlooked factor in the success of a merger is the impact on employees (Antila, 2006; Grensing-Pophal, 2004). This qualitative phenomenological case study explored the lived experiences of a purposeful sampling of managers at a telecommunications company, who had been involved in two or more mergers. The study obtained their perceptions and interactions with employees of a single merger, and then how those interactions and feelings changed after a subsequent merger. Data suggested that the presence of conflict, preconceived ideas, existing corporate cultures and level of employee integration all impact the interpersonal dynamics of employees during a merger, and subsequent mergers can redefine how employees of the original merger interact.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my dad, John Foster, who always encouraged me to pursue whatever it was that I wanted to do, and whom I know would have been thrilled to see me continue in with my education. And to my Mom, Ann Foster, who supported this educational journey, and had to listen to me for three years talk about finishing this.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the last 30 years, mergers and acquisitions have become a key part of many corporate growth strategies, with $4.7 trillion deals being announced in 2007, an increase of 24 percent over 2006 (Platt, 2008). In spite of this, they are not always considered a success (Fairfield-Sonn, Ogilvie, & DelVecchio, 2002; Hopkins, 2008). According to Cartwright and Cooper (1993) the financial return from a merger is difficult to assess, but overall mergers have been demonstrated to have a negative impact on profitability, and that success rate ranges from 23 to 50 percent.

In a review of mergers from 1985 through 2000, DePamphilis (2003) found that as many as 50 to 80 percent of companies underperform their peers after a merger or do not earn their cost of capital. Several factors are commonly cited as the cause of this pattern of unrealized merger objectives, including over-inflated purchase price, unrealized economies of scale or changes in market conditions (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993). According to Ferguson (2003), unless the causes of this poor performance are found the trend toward merger financial loss, performance failure and eventual divesture will continue.

One aspect of the merger process that is often not considered is the impact on employees, and this oversight can seriously jeopardize the success of a merger (Antila, 2006; Grensing-Pophal, 2004; Lesowitz & Knauff, 2003). Organizations often ignore the people-related aspects of a merger, and the issues that can arise during the merger process (*People Issues Last on List*, 2002). This lack of attention to the human resource impacts on mergers may be because it is the hardest and least understood aspects of a merger (Shrivastava, 1986).

The increasing trend toward multiple mergers can lead to even greater confusion and unclear and overlapping work responsibilities (Guest, Cosh, Hughes, & Conn, 2004). It can also lead to a demoralized and negative work environment (Lesowitz & Knauff, 2003; Schweiger, & Vrey, 2003). The problem is that without an understanding of how employees react to and cope with multiple mergers the success of the merger may be at risk (Lesowitz & Knauff, 2003). Given the trend of companies to merge multiple times, and the increasing interest in the human aspects of the merger process, the dynamics of employee interaction during the process of multiple mergers may be useful information for corporations planning future mergers.

The purpose of this study was to gain a greater understanding of one aspect of the employee merger dynamic, namely the forming and reforming of alliances among employees over the course of multiple mergers. This qualitative study will use the case study method, defined by Creswell (2002) as a type of ethnography within a bounded system based on extensive data collection. For the purposes of this research, Verizon Corporation will be used as the site of the case study. Verizon was chosen because it has experienced multiple mergers in the last 10 years, including Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, and then Bell Atlantic and GTE. Recently Verizon also acquired MCI and has also folded this company into the Verizon family.

Background of the Problem

Verizon, the nation's second largest telecommunications company, is the result of multiple mergers of various Regional Bell Operating Companies (RBOCs) and national telecommunications provider GTE, which was made possible by the signing of the telecommunications act of 1996. This act allowed providers of local service to offer long distance, and long distance providers to offer local service. It also permitted the local

providers to join forces, which had previously been forbidden due to anti-trust issues. The mergers that formed Verizon were among the largest in U.S. business history, culminating in a definitive merger agreement in 1998 between Bell Atlantic and GTE, (http://investor.verizon.com/profile/history/index.aspx).

Prior to the merger, GTE was one of the world's largest telecommunications companies, with 1999 revenues of more than $25 billion. Bell Atlantic was even larger than GTE, with 1999 revenues of more than $33 billion (http://investor.verizon.com/profile/history/index.aspx). Both companies had previously experienced mergers, including GTE and Contel, as well as Bell Atlantic and NYNEX. The Bell Atlantic/GTE transaction was valued at more than $52 billion and was designed to join Bell Atlantic's network serving 13 states with GTE's national footprint, including its advanced data communications capabilities and long-distance expertise. The goal of the combined company was to be able to provide a full suite of communications services, with the scale and scope needed to compete as one the telecommunications industry's leading companies (http://investor.verizon.com/profile/history/index.aspx).

When Verizon Communications began operations in early 2000s, the leaders of Bell Atlantic and GTE shared management responsibility for the company. Former GTE Chairman and CEO Chuck Lee became Verizon's founding Chairman of the Board and co-CEO, while former Bell Atlantic CEO Ivan Seidenberg became Verizon's founding President and co-CEO. In accordance with a leadership transition plan announced at the time of the merger, Lee retired from Verizon in 2002, and Seidenberg remained as Chairman and CEO (http://investor.verizon.com/profile/history/index.aspx).

Due to its past history of multiple mergers, Verizon has also experienced multiple realignments of personnel. It has been witness to various upheavals that come from

multiple mergers and acquisitions, and is an ideal environment to study the

effects that multiple mergers can have on personnel. The repeated blending of companies

and cultures provide ample opportunity and history for the alignment and realignment of

loyalties and alliances. Due to the relatively recent multiple mergers, including the

acquisition of MCI, the former Bell Atlantic provided the right situation to study these

historical relationships and realignment.

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

Mergers and acquisitions are a key growth strategy for companies today, with the

primary objective to improve revenues and profitability, as well as achieve faster growth

and speed to market (Pramod & Vidyadhar, 2007). Yet in the years following a merger

many companies underperform after the merger event (Andre, Kooli, & L'Her, 2004;

DePamphilis, 2003). In fact, as many as 50-80% of companies underperform their

industry peers post-merger (DePamphilis, 2003). Once reason for the poor performance is

thought to be the lack of attention to how a merger impacts employees, and how to

integrate employees of merging companies (Grensing-Pophal, 2004; Harding & Rouse,

2007; Harrison, 2007; Lesowitz & Knauff, 2003).

The increasing trend toward successive mergers can create even greater confusion

for employees, which can lead to unclear and overlapping work responsibilities (Guest et

al., 2004). It can also lead to a demoralized and negative work environment (Buono &

Bowditch, 1990; Lesowitz & Knauff, 2003; Schweiger & Vrey, 2003). The problem is

most companies don't take the time to gain an understanding how employees from

merging companies relate to each other and how that interaction impacts the success of

the merger, nor do they do anything to prepare the employees for the merger integration

failure (Atkinson & Clarke, 2007; Johnson, 2004; LaMarsh, 2006; Stahl, 2004; Want,

2003; Weber & Camerer, 2003). Given the trend of companies to merge multiple times, and the increasing interest in the human aspects of the merger process, as well as the dynamics of employee interaction during the process of multiple mergers, the results of this study may be useful information for corporations planning future mergers.

A phenomenological case study method was chosen for this research because of its ability to gain a more personal view of the qualitative and emotional impacts that a merger has on individual employees. This methodology allows for an in-depth exploration to see if the merger affected the employee's attitudes and behavior toward their coworkers, from both their legacy company as well as the employees from the merging company. This exploration is specific to employees who have experienced more than one corporate merger, as the focus of this study is to understand the way that attitudes and behaviors change toward colleagues after several mergers. Current managerial employees at Verizon that have experienced several mergers in the last ten years were studied. Managerial employees were chosen because of their size relative to the entire employee base and the belief that they have experienced the greatest amount of integration.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological case study was to explore and understand the dynamics of employee interaction during the process of multiple mergers at a major telecommunications company. The phenomenological case study methodology was chosen because of its ability to revisit a past event and, through reflective structural analysis, portray the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Specifically, this study sought to understand the dynamics that occurred between the separate employees of the merging companies after the two organizations had merged, their impressions of each

other and how they worked together, and how that may have changed after a subsequent merger. During this process, ideas for improvement and alternative strategies were explored to identify how the process may have been improved. This may allow for a better understanding of how to improve this process for future mergers.

Twenty mid-level managers from Verizon were interviewed. Potential subjects were identified through internal referrals. The referred managers were chosen according to their personal experience with the multiple mergers that have occurred within Verizon over the last 10 years. Quota sampling was used until the referral process yielded 20 subjects for study. Each manager had to have experienced at least two of the mergers in order to gauge how the employee interaction changes with each subsequent merger. The interviews were conducted via face-to-face interviews, and were taped and transcribed for analysis. The employees were chosen from among the companies' various locations in New York, New York, Arlington, Virginia, Trenton, New Jersey, Boston, Massachusetts, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Significance of the Study

This phenomenological case study is different than other studies in that it explored the way that personnel of merging companies interacted with each other, and how that interaction may have changed over multiple mergers. Extensive research has been published regarding the factors that contribute to the success of a merger (Carr, Elton, Rovit, & Vestring, 2004; de Camara & Renjen, 2004; DiGeorgio, 2003). There have also been studies on the impact of corporate culture on merger success (Atkinson & Clarke, 2007; Johnson, 2004; Stahl, 2004; Want, 2003). Recent studies have also identified the lack of understanding that companies have on the impact a merger can have on its people (LaMarsh, 2006; Weber & Camerer, 2003). Other research has demonstrated

the psychological attachment employees can develop towards their existing

organization, deemed organizational identification, which can impact merger integration

(Lipponen, Helkama, Olkkonen, & Juslin, 2005; Van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, Christ,

& Tissington, 2005; Vora, Kostova, & Roth, 2007). A variety of qualitative and

quantitative studies have identified the performance of companies after successive

mergers (Champlin & Knoedler, 2002; Guest et al., 2004; McMains & O'Leary, 2004).

The value of this qualitative study is that it may provide learning, and advance the

understanding of organizational behavior theorists to the emotional impact that a merger

can have on employees, and how that impact can drive behavior towards the merging

employees of the organizations. In addition, it may provide insight into the way those

emotions and identification with the company can change over successive mergers.

The learning from this research may have significance to the numerous

corporations and industries that continue to see consolidation through multiple mergers

and industry convergence. The alignment of personnel after a merger, and the cultural

dynamics that result may impact how well the different groups work together to solve

problems (Pepper & Larson, 2006). A study by Deloitte & Touche indicated that in a

merger often the companies' customers and employees are given little to no attention (as

cited in Mitleton-Kelly, 2006).

After a merger, employees are often anxious and fearful, and they may view the

employees of the merging company as the enemy, forming an 'us' versus 'them'

mentality (McGee-Cooper, 2005). When multiple mergers occur, often former

antagonists may now become allies against the common new threat, to the detriment of

the corporation (McGee-Cooper, 2005). A better understanding of this dynamic may

provide insight to the fields of organizational behavior and human resources that may

lead to a greater understanding of how employee interaction is impacted through

the merger process, which may ultimately lead to the facilitation of effective employee

integration and better merger performance (Grensing-Pophal, 2004; Lesowitz & Knauff,

2003).

Significance of the Study to Leadership

The role of leadership is a critical component in determining the extent to which a

merger successfully integrates the two separate entities of the merging organization.

Failure by leadership to pay attention to the importance of merging disparate cultures,

and actively defining the new organization's culture, can contribute to poorer than

anticipated performance of the newly merged organization (Mitleton-Kelly, 2006).

Leaders are also responsible for developing the traits necessary for merger success, such

as appointing a cohesive management team, creating the new corporate values and

identity, promoting a performance-driven culture, corporate learning and self-awareness

(Fubini, Price, & Zollo, 2006; Hsieh & Yik, 2005; Pepper & Larson, 2006). "An ideal

post-merger integration…would resemble the creation of a child…[i]t has some of the

characteristics inherited from both parents, but it has its own unique personality and

identity" (Mitleton-Kelly, 2006, p. 39).

Without strong leadership through the integration effort, a superficial integration

can occur, which can promote dissent and a lack of cooperation among the employees

(Fubini et al., 2006). At one company, for example they experienced the 'us' versus

'them' mentality, and rather than integrating, they continued to operate as two different

teams for months after the merger was complete while maintaining the illusion that they

were a single team. Rather than address the issue, they simply ignored it (Fubini et al.,

2006). The conscious or unconscious struggle for power that merging companies often

experience – particularly among the employees who are attempting to ensure their survival -- can contribute to the mergers lack of success. Studies have suggested that clear leadership, and the drive to build a performance-based culture with strong values, may help alleviate some of the cultural power struggle that often ensues post-merger (Fubini et al., 2006).

Providing clear leadership in the face of organizational change can prove challenging, as often leaders may find that their employees on both sides of the merger are resistant to the new organizational direction. According to Davy (as cited in Kavanagh & Askanasy, 2006), it is estimated that between a third to half of all merger failures are due to unresolved employee problems. The authors also believed that the underlying cause of employee resistance should be better understood by senior management in order to ensure a successful merger. "…leadership is essentially a process of social influence in which individuals want to feel included, supported and reinforced, especially during change … [r]elations between individuals and their leader will affect perceived leader effectiveness" (Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006, p. S88).

Leaders of change understand that employees are their greatest asset, and recognize that employee involvement in all aspects of the changes affects the outcome of the change effort (Bruhn, 2004). The value of this study to the theory of leadership is the insight that may be obtained from the research participants regarding employee attitudes toward the merging employees, and how that changes over successive mergers. It may also provide insight into the role that research participants see a leader could take in facilitating the merger process, and how that role can ease or impede employee integration.

Nature of the Study

This study used the phenomenological case study methodology. The case study methodology was chosen in order to highlight the impact of an event, specifically the personal dynamics of two merging entities, and how those interpersonal relationships may have changed the way individuals within the merging organizations viewed themselves and each other. According to Creswell (2002), a case study allows for the in-depth exploration of an event using extensive data collection. Moustakas (1994) described the use of the phenomenological case study method as an opportunity to return to an experience in order to obtain detailed descriptions and personal reflections of an event that lead to an understanding of the essence of the event itself. Moustakas (1994) identifies several traits of qualitative research that make the use of this methodology appropriate for this research, namely: the ability to recognize the value of human experiences, the ability to focus on the wholeness of the event, and to search for meanings and essences of experience within that event rather than measurement or explanation. The phenomenological case study method also allows for the obtaining of descriptions of the experience through first person accounts, the ability to formulate questions and problems that are relevant and of interest to the researcher, and lastly, viewing the experience and behavior of the subject as part of the whole (Moustakas, 1994).

The use of the phenomenological case study method in this research specifically offers the opportunity to fully study the event, in this case the personal dynamics between employees of Verizon as it changed through several mergers, and as the events were experienced by the individual, and then collectively among several individuals in order to interpret that event as a whole (Weed, 2005). This type of methodology allows the

researcher to achieve an insider's perspective of the event, which is tempered

by the subjective interpretation of the subject as well as through the interpretation of the

researcher (Weed, 2005). It is important, during this interpretive process, and the

synthesizing of the individual interviews for a collective view, that as much of the

individual detail be maintained as possible (Weed, 2005).

The choice of phenomenological case study methodology over other qualitative

methodologies such as ethnographic research was due to its ability to uncover hidden

meanings or interpretations of an event (Maggs-Rapport, 2000). This differs from an

ethnographic study that seeks to describe an event or the cultural interpretation of the

research participants, rather than seeking the concealed meaning of the narrative of the

subject (Maggs-Rapport, 2000). In addition, in the case of phenomenological case study

methodology, the researcher starts the process with some level of understanding of the

event being researched, which allow for a pre-understanding of the event, which can then

be built upon during the course of the research and the interpretation of the research

participants input to form new ideas (Maggs-Rapport, 2000; Moustakas, 1994).

This study was conducted via face-to-face interviews consisting of semi-

structured questions with 20 mid level managers that had experienced at least two of the

mergers that have occurred within Verizon, where they are currently employed. These

subjects were chosen using purposeful sampling, rather than random sampling, because it

allowed for the identification and participation of individuals who have personally

experienced the phenomenon, which would potentially provide the most amount of

information regarding the event or phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2002; Donalek

& Soldwisch, 2004; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The interview questions focused on the

perceptions of these individuals about how they identified themselves within the

organization, and how they interacted with their new co-workers from the

merging company. They were also asked to reflect on their perceptions of those

employees, and if the interaction between co-workers may have changed with subsequent

mergers, including any possible changes to their interactions with coworkers from their

'old' company.

According to Moustakas (1994), perception is a key element to understanding an

event, and the primary source of information and knowledge relating to that event. One of

the questions asked participants to reflect back on what role leadership played in

facilitating the employee integration. They were asked to identify if there were

opportunities for leadership to have done anything differently to facilitate the coming

together of the different employee groups. Moustakas (1994) believed that it is through

this interview process -- using semi-structured questions to allow subjects to reveal their

past experiences and to reflect on the past events – that an essential description and

understanding of the event should emerge. In some cases the research questions evolved

and change within and over the interview process, as a greater understanding of the

subjects and events developed, which is frequently the case with qualitative research.

Research Question

The research question developed to guide this study was designed to prompt an

open and candid discussion with the research participants to share their experiences as an

employee who has experienced multiple mergers, and the way they viewed and interacted

with the employees of the merging company. It also helped to determine if or how those

views changed as additional mergers were experienced.

The research should be derived from a personal and intense interest in the topic to

be researched (Moustakas, 1994). According to Moustakas (1994), the researchers own

experience is a primary source of information in the phenomenological research process. Moustakas (1994) also emphasized how critical the development of the research question is, as it guides the research and is the focus of all investigation. Through the careful and deliberate development of the research question a rich portrayal of the phenomenon is possible, as the interviews give texture and meaning to the event. The research question that guided this study was:

How do individuals within merging companies interact with and view each other during the merger process, and does that view change when faced with additional mergers?

In addition to the central question that guided this research, a sub question was asked. According to Creswell (2002), sub questions provide greater specificity to the central question guiding the research. There are two types of sub questions: issue sub questions and procedural sub questions (Creswell, 2002). Issue sub questions narrow the focus of the central question into specific topics that the researcher hopes to gain greater insight on. Procedural sub questions help to define the steps to be taken to guide the analysis of the date (Creswell, 2002). An issue sub question was used in this research effort to specifically focus in on the role that leaders play in the way individuals of merging organizations view each other. This sub question was used to identify, from the employee's perspective, what the leaders of Verizon could have done differently to promote greater cultural integration. The objective of this sub question was to provide insight into organizational behavior and to further expand the knowledge of the role that leadership plays in the integration of employees within a corporate merger. The sub question is:

What could the leadership have done differently to promote greater harmony between employees of the merging companies?

Theoretical Framework

The occurrence of an 'us' versus 'them' mentality when two groups – or organizations – come together is not unprecedented. Social categorization in inter-group behavior has been studied extensively and forms the foundation of group identity. "Self-categorization is essentially the preconditions for all other dimensions of collective identity" (Phinney, as cited in Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004, p. 84). Self-categorization theory promulgates the belief that human beings have a natural tendency to organize social stimuli into categories based on their similarity to other stimuli (Ashmore et al., 2004).

Social identity allows people to place themselves in a similar group that provides a sense of self-worth, affiliation, resources and social support, helping to protect the individual from adverse conditions (Haslam, O'Brien, Jetten, Vormedal, & Penna, 2005). People will place themselves in the category that seems to most closely resemble their personal ideals, beliefs, situation or characteristics. Through this association individuals are protected from stress and adverse reactions and experience greater satisfaction, which in turn strengthens the bonds to and identification with that group rather than with other groups (Haslam et al., 2005). This then forms the beginnings of the 'us' versus 'them' mentality.

The notion of self-categorization and the study of the self within a category or group was examined by Tajfel. Tajfel performed a series of studies in the 1970s which demonstrated that the mere act of an individual in categorizing his or her world into distinct groups was sufficient to create an 'us' versus 'them' mentality, which then led to

competition between the two groups, and in-group bias among the group

members (Ashmore et al., 2004; Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004).

Tajfel's studies demonstrated that the smallest differentiating factor was sufficient to

produce in-group bias, but additional studies have shown that the greater the differences

between the groups the greater the self-differentiation that occurs, particularly when the

groups differ in their values (Jetten et al., 2004). The results of his studies further

suggested that it is considered normal to favor people that are similar, or part of an

identified group, and that the identification with that group has the ability to affect a

person's self image as long as the group can clearly differentiate itself from other groups

(Billig & Tajfel, 1973). This differentiation, or in-group bias, can lead to conflict between

the groups as group members' use these stimuli to create negative views of the out-group

(Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, & Manstead, 2006; Wenzel, Mummendey, & Waldzus,

2007).

A second model relevant to the proposed research is the model of group conflict,

as postulated by Esses, Jackson, and Armstrong (1998), which suggests that competition

for resources is a determinant of the presence and level of conflicts between groups,

specifically with respect to immigrants and immigration, but this research has larger

implications as well. The authors postulate that perceived competition for limited

resources such as jobs can negatively impact the perceptions of one group on another.

This effect can be further exacerbated between high-status and low-status group within a

merging organization, as low-status groups perceive a bias within the merger

implementation, with the bias favoring the high-status group, which can lead to further

dissatisfaction and lower identification with the newly merged organization (Amiot,

Terry, & Callan, 2007).

Realistic group conflict theory promotes the belief that prejudice and discrimination can arise when there is perceived or real conflict between two groups (LeVine & Campbell, as cited in Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998). The conflict is between groups in their entirety, rather than between individual members of differing groups. Esses, Jackson, and Armstrong built on the theory of realistic group conflict to promote the Instrumental Model of Group Conflict (see Figure 1). This model proposes that the presence of scarce resources and a competitive out-group can result in inter-group conflict and competition for the resource in short supply.

Resource Stress - scarcity - unequal distribution -desire for unequal distribution		Group Competition - zero sum beliefs - anxiety, fear		Attempts to Remove Competion - decrease competitiveness of outgroup - increase competitiveness of ingroup - avoidance
Relevant Outgroup - salience and distinctiveness - likelihood of taking resources				
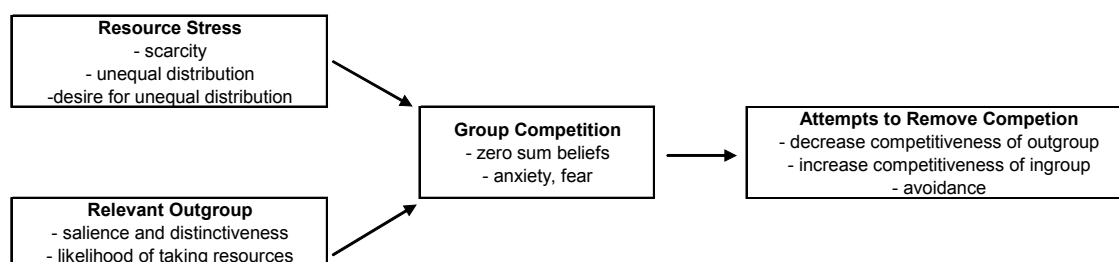
Figure 1. Instrumental model of group conflict

(LeVine & Campbell, as cited in Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998, p. 703).

Self categorization theory, self identity theory and realistic group conflict theory all demonstrate the tendency of individuals to align themselves with others of similar thoughts, beliefs and backgrounds, especially when resources are short or if there is a threat to the individual or like individuals. These theories demonstrate how the development of an 'us' versus 'them' mentality can arise within merging organizations, and can lead to dissent among the groups. This tendency, when experienced across multiple mergers, may cause the definition of the 'us' versus 'them' to get redefined, and new alignments to occur, where enemies become friends in the face of a new threat or enemy. These theories provide the supporting foundation for this research study.

Definition of Terms

In order to ensure a common understanding of terminology and definitions within this study, the following definitions are working terms in this study:

Mergers and Acquisitions: Often used interchangeably in business, there is a subtle difference between the two terms. In an acquisition, one company takes over another company, the acquired company ceases to exist, and the acquiring company typically retains its name, and continues to be traded on the stock exchange under the old name. In a merger, two entities typically agree to continue to operate together as a new company, with a new name and brand identity. The former companies will typically cease to exist; the two will no longer be traded on the stock exchange under the old names, and will begin trading under the new, merged organization's new name (investopedia.com).

Merger of Equals: Often when two companies join together, and begin trading under a new name, they will claim to have a 'merger of equals'. In reality, one company often acquired the other company, and in order to promote harmony within the organization, as well as avoid the often negative connotation associated with an acquisition they will claim to have merged (investopedia.com).

Organizational Culture: A shared set of norms, values and beliefs (or assumptions) that make up an organization. These emerge within an organization through the shared history and experiences of individuals who work within an organization. This history and shared assumptions provide a guide on how individuals should act within the context of the organization (Korte & Chermack, 2007; Schein, 1992).

Phenomenological Research: A qualitative study which describes a person's experience as it is lived by the person, and which are difficult to observe or measure

(Wilding & Whiteford, 2005). It is a particular way of "…doing qualitative research by substituting individual descriptions for statistical correlations and interpretations resulting from the experiences lived for causal connections" (Sadala & Adorno, 2002, p. 283). The process of phenomenological research includes the relating of the experience as it was lived by the subject, the analysis and interpretation of the description, and finally a distillation of the experience down to what is essential to provide an understanding of the phenomenon (Sadala & Adorno, 2002).

<div align="center">Assumptions</div>

For purposes of this study, it was assumed that that the length of time between the merger process and this research did not have distort the study participant's recollections and that they were able to separate their memories of the events at the time of the merger from the subsequent events of later years. A second assumption was that the status of the researcher as a current employee of the company being studied did not prevent subjects from providing objective input regarding what occurred during the merger process. In order to minimize this issue, only research participants who are unknown to the researcher, and vice versa, were chosen. This may have helped the participant to be more willing to share his or her experiences as the researcher was not someone they work with day to day. Research participants were assured of anonymity.

The use of a phenomenological case study provides an interesting level of complexity to the research. By its nature, in a phenomenological case study the researcher brings personal interest in the topic and the research question being asked, and is intimately connected to the events being studied (Moustakas, 1994). In order to provide an objective view of the research, the researcher must set aside prejudgments of the phenomenon being studied. This process is called epoche, and is used to free the

researcher of preconceived notions, prejudices and beliefs in order to be open

to the information the research subjects are providing, and to provide an objective view

of those findings (Moustakas, 1994). The assumption in this research effort is that the

researcher will be able to separate and set aside judgments and presuppositions, through

the epoche process, and be able to view the phenomenon with fresh eyes, objectively and

without preconceptions in order to see and report the event as others have experienced it,

not as the researcher has experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). To achieve this level of

objectivity, a complete review of the past event was done by the researcher. First, the

memories of the past event were written out and included the facts of the event as they

were recalled, as well as the emotions, personal experiences and perceptions.

Prejudgments and emotions were labeled, and reviewed carefully and repeatedly until the

conscious awareness could recognize them and identify them in both the construct of the

research, the questions asked of participants, and in the interpretation of the findings. By

being conscious of these preconceived judgments and emotions, any findings that

indicated the presence of these similar feelings were carefully reviewed to ensure that the

interviewee's words were not misinterpreted, etc. in order to fit these prejudgments

(Moustakas, 1994).

Scope

The research was limited in scope to the lived experiences of 20 middle managers who had ten or more years experience with Verizon, worked within specific geographic locations, and had experienced two or more mergers during their tenure with the company. The specific circumstances of the research yielded a rich, in-depth view of the specific event, as was expected with phenomenological case study methodology, but it limited the ability to generalize the findings to other populations or situations. The findings of the research may be indicative of how the company would behave in a future merger, how other employees in other companies in a similar industry may behave, and may offer opportunity for similar studies in other industries to derive generalizabilty.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, the accuracy of the findings of the study are limited to the ability of the respondents to accurately and objectively remember the events, given the personal and subjective nature of the research methodology, as well as the length of time since the merger occurred. Secondly, the subjects were all current employees of Verizon, as was the researcher. Third, in the limited amount of time for the interview process, it could have been difficult to transcend the natural reticence of individuals to open up to a stranger, and get past the social dialogue to explore the thoughts and feelings of the individual at the time of the initial mergers, and currently. Confidentiality was ensured for all participants, and the consent to act as a research participant form (see Appendix C) that participants signed set forth the agreements of confidentiality, which may have helped to ease participant's fears somewhat. In addition, in quantitative research, it is common for the researcher to ask questions in order to help

the participant discuss past events and to bring them to light, and to explore

ideas and memories that are unexpected (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994).

Lastly, the researcher is a current employee of Verizon, and began employment

shortly after the NYNEX and Bell Atlantic merger, and was employed at Bell Atlantic

when the GTE merger occurred. In order to prevent the researcher's personal experiences

from affecting the veracity of the research, it was important that the researcher limit her

questions to the subject's experiences, and avoided any possible personal commentary or

input.

Delimitations

This study consisted of semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with 20 former

Bell Atlantic employees who had experienced the mergers between NYNEX and Bell

Atlantic and then Bell Atlantic and GTE. These employees were salaried, full-time

managers who were not part of the union. While union employee perspectives may have

been an interesting aspect to the research, accessibility to these employees would have to

be reviewed and approved by the union, possibly disrupting the research. Management

level employees were chosen as having most likely experienced the personal interaction

dynamics on which this study was focused. In addition, the choice to eliminate higher

level positions was made to minimize the potential for a lack of openness in the dialogue.

More senior managers, for the purposes of this study, were assumed to be less likely to

share their experiences with counterparts from the merging companies openly and

candidly with another Verizon employee whose position is below theirs.

In addition, this study focused on documenting the interpersonal experiences of

individuals that occurred during the successive mergers. Only individuals who were

employed at either NYNEX or Bell Atlantic at the time of that merger, and then remained

employed and experienced the subsequent merger between Bell Atlantic and

GTE were included in the study. This limited the perspective of the study to the former

NYNEX or Bell Atlantic employee, and did not include the perspective of former GTE

employees, who may or may not have experienced the merger differently given the

different past experiences of those employees as well as a potentially different cultural

outlook. This restriction on employees having experienced both the NYNEX/Bell

Atlantic and Bell Atlantic/GTE merger also limited the choice of participants to

individuals employed for ten or more years with the company, which could also influence

their perspective and recollections, as these employees have been acculturated into the

telecommunications industry for a long time, versus the perspective of employees who

may not be as assimilated in the culture of the company. This likely also limited the

participants to individuals in their thirties or older, which may also have influenced their

perspectives and recollections given their life experience and perspectives on career, etc.

Lastly, the use of a phenomenological case study method may have restricted the

respondents to individuals who were willing to participate in a qualitative study that

required a substantial investment in time for an interview, possible follow up discussions,

and the potential to be part of a study that featured the company where they are currently

employed. This may have caused some potential participants to choose not to participate,

and may have skewed the results. In addition, the in-depth nature of this case study

methodology may limit the generalizablity of the research to other industries, and even to

other types of companies within the telecommunications industry.

Summary

Mergers and acquisitions have become an important part of corporate growth

strategies. Globally, the total value of mergers reached the 3.79 trillion mark in 2006

(Papini, 2007), yet it is estimated that up to half of all mergers do not deliver on the expected return due to employee issues (Daly as cited in Kavanagh & Askanasy, 2006). The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological case study was to identify how employees' relationships change across multiple mergers, and to potentially identify strategies that could be employed by leaders to more successfully integrate employees during possible future mergers.

A phenomenological case study method was employed to provide an in depth analysis of the 'us' versus 'them' attitude that many corporate mergers experience. This study was conducted among 20 mid-level managers at Verizon Corporation, which has experienced several mergers in the last 10 years. Specifically, the study explored the changing relationship between employees of either the former NYNEX or Bell Atlantic companies, which experienced the merger between those two companies, and then the subsequent Bell Atlantic merger with GTE.

Chapter 2 of this study provides an extensive literature review that examines the success of past mergers, as well as the performance of companies experiencing multiple mergers. It also explores several aspects of organizational culture and dynamics. This includes interpersonal relationships within an organization, the impact of employees on a merger's success, organizational culture and dynamics, and cultural compatibility. The insights gleaned from this literature review provide a framework for this phenomenological case study.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the first quarter of 2007 worldwide merger and acquisition activity totaled

$428.5 billion, a 19 percent increase from the same time period a year before

(Hamerman, 2007). The total value of the 39,958 deals that were completed in 2006 was

$3.8 trillion, $1.6 trillion in the US alone (*"Need to Know"*, 2007). In spite of all this

activity, only three in ten deals are deemed successful in that they created value for

shareholders, and as many as half actually destroyed value (Atkinson, 2005; Corbett,

Lemire, Ballance, Barnicoat, Clavir, Fernyc et al., 2005; Pepper & Larson, 2006). One

study determined in a review of mergers from 1991 to 2001 that acquiring companies'

shareholders lost $216 billion (Farrell, 2004).

Chapter 2 of this study is an extensive review of the factors that determine the

success of mergers, including both individual mergers and the impact of successive

mergers. During this review, the factors that make a successful merger, what makes up

the elusive aspects of a corporation's culture, and the effect of cultural compatibility on

the success of a merger will be examined. Organizational identification and conflict and

their impact on organizational functioning is also reviewed. Lastly, the impact of these

elements on successive mergers is identified. Figure 2 demonstrates how these various

factors work together to result in a successful merger. The insights gleaned from this

literature review provided a framework for this phenomenological case study.

Figure 2. Elements of successful mergers

Documentation

The review of the literature pertaining to mergers, corporate identity and conflict assisted in defining and clarifying the research effort. Initial research focused on general mergers and acquisitions, interpersonal dynamics and employee culture. Further study, however, identified cultural compatibility and organizational identification as well as corporate culture as three of the key elements that make up a successful merger. The majority of the research was conducted using the University of Phoenix online library. Secondary resources included general website searches and local library resources.

Successful Mergers

In spite of the proliferation of mergers in the last several decades, merger success has often proven to be elusive. Several studies have demonstrated the lack of success in merging companies with as few as three in ten considered successful (Corbett et al., 2005; Honore & Maheia, 2003). The most frequently cited reasons for merger failure include an inability to realize the promised economies of scale, a failure to integrate

effectively, and poor implementation strategies (Honore & Maheia, 2003). In

fact, only about 20 percent of merged companies realize the synergies for which they

were originally created (Atkinson & Clarke, 2007). Yet in the first half of 2007 the total

value of deals in North America had scaled the $1 trillion mark, ten weeks earlier than in

2006 (Harris, 2007).

  Overly optimistic or unrealistic assumptions on return, as well as the ambitions of

CEOs, play a major part in the decision for many corporations to merge, in spite of the

low success rate of merger activity overall (Atkinson & Clarke, 2007). Yet mergers can

play a critical role in the long-term success of corporations, if the mergers are handled

correctly. Companies such as GE have been demonstrated to earn higher returns than

those who do few or no deals at all (Corbett et al., 2005). When utilized correctly,

mergers can be a critical aspect of a corporation's growth strategy, and many larger

corporations have been shown to use mergers as a means of generating long-term growth

(Palter & Srinivasan, 2006).

  The literature on what constitutes a successful merger is remarkably consistent.

Most of the research indicates several key areas that contribute to merger success:

identifying synergies, rapid integration, maintain business focus, put customers' first,

extensive communication and focusing on cultural issues (Atkinson & Clarke, 2006; Carr

et al., 2004; de Camara & Renjen, 2004; DiGeorgio, 2003). While all of these aspects are

important to the mergers success, oftentimes the cultural aspects of a merger are the least

reviewed part, yet it is the people who will really determine if a merger is deemed

successful or a failure (Atkinson & Clarke, 2007; Johnson, 2004; Stahl, 2004; Want,

2003). However, companies often don't realize or understand the impact that a major

change like a merger can have on the people who work there (LaMarsh, 2006;

Weber & Camerer, 2003).

In many mergers the first time management will address the people aspects of the

merger is after the merger is complete (Atkinson & Clarke, 2007; Weber & Camerer,

2003). This lack of attention to cultural compatibility, and the building of a successful

corporate culture post-merger contribute directly to the success or failure of the merger

(Buono & Bowditch, 1990; Want, 2003). Companies that have made culture a priority

during the merger process have demonstrated better performance than companies that

focus more on the financial aspects of the merger (Carr et al., 2004). Oftentimes the way

the post-merger integration is handled is more important than the pre-merger process in

determining a merger's success (Featherly, 2006).

Leadership plays a critical role in ensuring that the key areas are cared for in the

merger process, yet few companies recognize the importance of leadership as the starting

point of cultural change (Hsieh & Yik, 2005). Leaders are responsible for the strategy,

implementation and for setting the vision of the newly merged entities new culture

(DiGeorgio, 2003; Fubini et al., 2006; Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006; Stahl, 2004).

According to Kavanagh and Ashkanasy (2006), leaders need to select the appropriate

method to manage the merger process, establish a vision of the new company's culture,

and clearly communicate that vision and the milestone to achieve it throughout all levels

of the organization. Leaders also need to design and nurture the culture of the new

organization, and have established business models to achieve this (Atkinson & Clarke,

2007). In addition, leaders must rally the spirit of employees and inspire them to embrace

the new culture of the merged corporation (Hseih & Yik, 2005).

Management and retention of key talent is an important aspect of the merger process that leadership must address (Airoldi & Rauch, 2005; Hsieh & Yik, 2005). It is estimated that nearly half of executives in a merged organization will leave within the first year, and that rises to nearly 75 percent after three years (Steffen, 2001). It is important that the leadership in a merging organization identify key executives for long-term retention, as well as identifying gaps in talent, or the need for new leadership (Johnson, 2004). Failure to properly assess leadership capacity before launching a merger effort can leave leaders with significant gaps that can negatively impact the ultimate success of the merger (Hsieh & Yik, 2005).

Ongoing, frequent communication has also been identified as a critical success factor in the merger process (Brahma & Shivastava, 2007; Carr et al., 2004; de Camara & Renjen, 2004; Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006; LaMarsh, 2006). Communication that is open and honest will help diffuse fear and uncertainty (Airoldi & Rauch, 2005). Various stakeholders need to be the recipients of this communication, including customers, investors and the media (de Camara & Renjen, 2004). The amount of communication needed is a byproduct of the level of integration required between the merging entities. This is determined by the strategy behind the merger, specifically whether it is an active merger (the kind handled by investment firms), or a merger for growing scope or for growing scale (Carr et al., 2004). According to Palter and Srinvansan (2006), poorly handled integration is responsible for up to 70 percent of merger failures.

It is important that companies remain focused on the base business as the merger occurs. Mergers are often seen as exciting and offer opportunities to get noticed during the merger process by the new management team, but this lack of focus on day-to day operations can have a negative impact on the business performance (de Camara &

Renjen, 2004; Fubini et al., 2006). According to Carr et al. (2004), only 10

percent of employees should be actively engaged in the merger process. This leaves the

remaining 90 percent of employees to focus on the day-to-day management, particularly

in the customer-facing aspects of the business.

The purpose of this phenomenological case study is to understand how employees

of merging companies view each other, and how they work together during an initial

merger, then through subsequent mergers. Cultural integration has been identified as a

component of successful mergers, with the company's leadership as the catalyst for that

integration and cultural change. Part of this study sought to identify what the leadership

at Verizon could have done differently to improve the cultural integration of the differing

employee bases during the merger, in an attempt to offer insight into future merger

efforts to improve their chances of success.

Corporate Culture

Culture can be defined as "…the sum total way of living built up by a group of

human beings and transmitted from one generation to another…" (dictionary.com), but at

the heart of culture are human beings, and the relationships that human beings have with

one another – how they interact with one another. Corporate – or organizational - culture

is a collective belief system that employees have, and how they act on that belief system,

which is transmitted through their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors (Want, 2003; Waters,

2004). Corporate culture is developed over time and through shared experiences, and

allows employees to work together more effectively due to the ability to coordinate

activity implicitly through this shared understanding (Weber & Camerer, 2003).

According to Atkinson and Clarke (2007), business performance and financial success is

driven by the intangible element of human capital and culture, and without harnessing

this asset a company is worthless. Commitment, innovation and productivity

are all determined by employee behavior within a corporate culture (Want, 2003).

Human attitudes, actions and emotions contribute significantly to how differing

organizations behave toward one another when they are artificially put together, as in a

merger, and can impact the success or failure of the merger (Atkinson & Clarke, 2007;

Steffen, 2001; Want, 2003). "We sometimes look at it as there being three elements to a

deal. There's the strategy in terms of whether this business fits, the people aspects, and

the financials. The people aspects weigh in at a full third" ("New Priorities in Fusing

Talents", 2003). Corporate culture affects intra-group behavior and relationships, and

how the groups work together (Chuang, Church, & Zikic, 2004). Yet, while the cultural

aspects of mergers have increased in importance, many executives in merged

corporations do not succeed at integrating the two organizations. According to a study by

Bain Consulting, less than 10 percent of businesses succeed at building high-performance

cultures ("How important is culture", 2007).

The stress that a merger can impose on the individual can impact on their ability

to function within the merging company (Pepper & Larson, 2006). The cultural

integration required in a merger creates tension in employees, who feel pulled between

their old organizational culture and the new one (Pepper & Larson, 2006). This tension

can frustrate workers, and impact their performance (Pepper & Larson, 2006). It can also

drive them to choose to leave the company altogether, and it is typically the best

performers who will go first (Garver, 2006). Although human reactions to change are

usually rational and predictable, unplanned and subconscious reactions to the stress and

uncertainty of a merger can impact behavior in non-rational and surprising ways (Legare,

1998).

This is especially true when employees of merging entities are facing reductions in staffing, which is all too common during the merger and acquisition process. In an effort to reduce costs and realize the promised synergies of the merger, job reductions are typically one of the first moves a merged company will make, as duplication is natural when merging similar entities (Pomeroy, 2007). However, cutting too quickly and too deeply can cost the company in the end, as the cost of replacing employees may exceed the cost-savings realized during the initial reduction (Badrtalei & Bates, 2007; Johnson, 2004). It can also damage employee morale, and lead to poor attitudes, a lack of motivation, increased absenteeism, and increased attrition (Badrtalei & Bates, 2007; Buono & Bowditch, 1990; Pepper & Larson, 2006; Pomeroy, 2007).

The competitive and individual spirit of the human being is a consideration that corporations should look at when merging two entities:

> People always look for 'winners' and 'losers' in any acquisition. Winners tend to feel a sense of smugness and superiority; losers resent their old firm's status as underdog. They may feel violated and angry. They may blame their former senior managers for waging an inept fight or for leaving the company vulnerable to takeover (Patch, Rice & Dreilinger, 1992, 48).

These feeling can interfere with workers performance in the corporation, and their ability to successfully focus on the corporate objectives versus their own personal feelings and agendas (Badrtalei & Bates, 2007). Involving employees early in the process can help generate creative ideas to help the merger, and increase the employee's commitment to making the merger work (Badrtalei & Bates, 2007; Buono & Bowditch, 1990). When employees are not brought into the merger process, they can suffer from a

lack of direction and anxiety, which may cause them to withdraw from the

merger process, slowing it down, or they can actually sabotage the merger (Galosy,

1990). In general, involving employees in changes efforts, and allow employees to have

input in decision making experience higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment, as

well as lower turnover (Buono & Bowditch, 1990; Sikorska-Simmons, 2006).

The issue of corporate culture is central to this research effort. The primary

research question is focused on seeking to understand from the research participants how

individuals interact with and view each other during a merger, and then does that view

change when faced with additional mergers. In addition, a secondary focus of the

research is to understand how executives of the merging companies could have provided

greater leadership in the forming of the new corporate culture that may have improved or

accelerate the merger process.

Culture Compatibility

When reviewing the literature on mergers and acquisitions people are often cited

in context with the role that they play in the merger's success or failure. Many of the

articles focus on how leaders manage the compatibility issues between merging personnel

organizations, and how those issues impact decision making and strategic choices,

leading to ultimate performance (Legare, 1998). This cultural aspect to mergers, and

cultural misunderstanding, is often cited as a reason for the poor performance of mergers

(Atkinson, 2005; Badrtalei & Bates, 2007; Schein, 1992). The very act of combining two

differing organizations leads to an 'us versus them' situation (Marks, 1997). This can add

to the difficulties of combining two organizations into one, and the hardest part of a

merger may be getting the employees to adapt to the new culture (Featherly, 2006).

During this process people tend to exaggerate the differences between the two companies,

instead of looking for areas of synergy or similarity (Marks, 1997). They may

feel torn between their "old" culture and the "new" culture of the merged corporation, as

well as divided loyalties between their former managers and associates, and their new

colleagues (Pepper & Larson, 2006). The stronger the cultures of the two merging

companies, the more difficult the establishment of a new culture will be because

employees are heavily vested in their current companies culture and are less willing to

change (Pepper & Larson, 2006).

It is up to the leadership of the merging entities to set the tone for how the two

organizations are going to work together going forward (DiGeorgio, 2003). Leaders play

a strong role in shaping and supporting corporate culture, although many don't realize it

(Kane-Urrabazo, 2006). They need to manage how the relationship develops, beginning

as early as with initial discussions between the companies on the possibility of merger

(DiGeorgio, 2003). It is important for leaders within the merging organizations to have

open communication and a common understanding of the expected corporate culture and

employee behavior needed to succeed in the new organization (DiGeorgio, 2003).

Visibility to employees, open communication and strategic leadership are hallmarks of

savvy leadership that can help ease the merger transition (Badrtalei & Bates, 2007). The

process by senior management to integrate cultures must be handled in a way that does

not alienate long-term employees or newcomers while building the new culture (Pepper

& Larson, 2006).

Culture differences or clashes are almost inevitable when two different cultures

come into contact. According to Badrtalei and Bates (2007), no merger is a combination

of equals; one firm is always going to be dominant over the other, whether financially or

in its market position, leading to conflicts between the two companies as they come

together. This can be exacerbated when former enemies are merged,

challenging fundamental assumptions about personal and professional identity (Atkinson,

2005; McEntire & Bentley, 1996). The process of a merger can often lead to anger,

betrayal and disengagement by the employees (Thach & Nyman, 2001). In the case of an

acquired firm, there are often negative feelings that have to be overcome, particularly in

older, more established companies where the existing culture may be more entrenched

(DiGeorgio, 2003). According to McEntire and Benley (1996):

> Each pre-merger organization brings an established organizational culture
>
> to a merger transaction, and their patterns are disrupted by contact with the
>
> other pre-merger entity. The acculturation process is especially tumultuous
>
> when the pre-merger organizations are rivals, because competitive
>
> strategies and animosities are no longer appropriate: 'they' are now 'we'"
>
> (p. 154).

The disruption to the organizational culture that a merger brings, as well as the

tumultuous acculturation process are some of reasons that over 90 percent of cultural

change efforts fail (Atkinson, 2005). Even when handled well, the process of

acculturation is not a quick one and can take years to accomplish (DiGeorgio, 2003;

McEntire & Bentley, 1996; Wolf, 2003). It extends into all aspects of the business,

including manufacturing, marketing, organizational design, technology versus financial

focus, etc. Each group will often have competing values, work styles and philosophies,

and will view their company as superior and the other as inferior, bureaucratic or

backward (Marks, 1997). Often the resistance to the change is not overt, but rather

passive and covert, making it more difficult to address and manage (Atkinson, 2005).

To help stave off this kind of cultural 'us' versus 'them' mentality, merging companies need to embrace and respect the differences of each other in order to allow trust to grow between the two former competitors (Stahl, 2004). It is important to avoid arrogance on either companies part as well, which is often a by product when one company is more dominant in the merger relationship (Badrtalei & Bates, 2007; Johnson, 2004). According to DiGeorgio (2003), the timeline for acculturation can also be shortened through top management focusing on communicating and building the kind of culture needed to win in the marketplace. Management also needs to move quickly to integrate jobs and infrastructure so that the new company emerges quickly after the merger completes. Involving middle management in the integration process helps to rapidly spread the strategic rationale for the merger, and can more quickly generate employee support (Johnson, 2004).

Cultural compatibility is directly tied to the success of any cultural integration effort, as described in this section. It is also a critical component in the primary research question for this phenomenological case study. An important aspect of this research was to understand how the participants felt about the employees of the merging company, and if and how those feeling changed during subsequent mergers. Is there, or was there, an 'us' versus 'them' attitude, and if so how did that change, if at all, thorough subsequent mergers, and over time? Understanding the importance of perceived compatibility of merging employees is indicated here as an important aspect of a leaders merger efforts, and how they guide employees through the merger process.

Organizational Identification

One possible impediment to the merger process is the strength of employee's identification with their current, pre-merger company. Organizational identification is

defined as a psychological attachment, or perceived oneness, with an organization (Lipponen et al., 2005; Van Dick et al., 2005; Vora et al., 2007). Through this attachment individuals will begin to adopt attitudes and characteristics of the organization as their own, and to perceive the organizations successes and failures as theirs as well (Fuller, Marler, Hester, Frey, & Relyea, 2006; Morgan, Reynolds, Nelson, Johanningmeier, Griffin, & Andrade, 2004; Vora et al., 2007). It also has the ability to provide a psychological and social context for the individual, and allows the individual to identify their own self-identity with that of the organization (Vora et al., 2007).

This perceived oneness can be demonstrated through employee behaviors, attitudes and work styles (Chan, 2006; Loi, Hang-yue, & Foley, 2004). The longer employees work together, and for a corporation, the stronger the bond to the organization can be (Chan, 2006; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Loi et al., 2004). Organizational tenure has also been demonstrated to increase employees' satisfaction with their job and improve their performance (Chan, 2006; Loi et al., 2004). In a merger situation this connection to the organization, and pressure by other members of the pre-merger corporations can further strengthen the employees affiliation with the pre-merger culture, making cultural integration more difficult (Chan, 2006). It can also cause stress and confusion among employees, when faced with conflicting role identification during the merger process (Vora et al., 2007).

Typically, organizations deliberately create organizational commitment and identification within a company, as it has been demonstrated to increase productivity and loyalty, while decreasing turnover within the organization (Chan, 2006; Fuller et al., 2006; Harris & Cameron, 2005; Van Dick et al., 2005). It also creates a sense of personal and organizational identity within the corporation that allows employees to identify

themselves within the context of the organizational environment and provides a sense of self-esteem for the role they play within that environment (Fuller et al., 2006; Loi et al., 2004; Van Dick et al., 2005). Through this identification an individual will often adopt the organization's goals and values into their personal and professional life (Lipponen et al., 2005; Vora et al., 2007).

During the merger process, employees can experience role conflict when faced with integrating two different companies and cultures, especially if these cultures are dissimilar (Vora et al., 2007). Employee organizational identification is fostered over time, through training, co-worker support, and understanding of the individual's role within the organization and the potential of career advancement (Loi et al., 2004). When faced with merging entities which may have competing goals and organizational requirements, employees may be put in a situation where they feel unable to fulfill the organization's requirements. This may lead to employee stress, job tension, increased turnover or decreased employee performance, commitment and job satisfaction (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Vora et al., 2007).

These negative side effects can be further enhanced by external perceptions of the merger. In other words, external opinion on the prestige or potential success of the newly merged company can positively or negatively impact the employees' self-esteem and willingness to identify with the newly merged entity (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Fuller et al., 2006; Lipponen et al., 2005). Organizational reputation is an important component of employee identification, as employees perceive the organization's reputation as an external evaluation of a company by stakeholders (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004).

Organizational identification can cause intra-group conflicts and competition during the merger process, as group boundaries are more firmly established, and a natural

'we versus them' mentality or an 'in-group' versus an 'out-group' develops

(Lipponen, 2005; Loi et al., 2004). People naturally tend to differentiate themselves and

their group from others on the basis of perceived differences, and will make comparisons

between their own group and others, with their own group coming out more favorably

(Carmona, Buunk, Piero, Rodriguez, & Bravo, 2006; Chuang et al., 2004). During

organizational socialization, employees internalize their group's and the overall

company's values (Morgan et al., 2004).The sense of belonging that organizational

identification can foster within employees also creates feelings of safety, affiliation and

self-esteem (Carmona et al., 2006; Loi et al., 2004). These feelings can create a positive,

feel-good attitude among employees similar to how one feels about a social group

(Carmona et al., 2006; Harris & Cameron, 2005). This can manifest itself through in-

group favoritism, creating the 'us' versus 'them' attitude (Loi et al., 2004). In addition,

employees want to see their organization as better than others and will act in a manner

that positively impacts the organization's reputation (Van Dick et al., 2005). The more

prestigious the group is perceived to be, the strong the sense of identification (Lipponen,

2005). This strong identification with the organization or sub-group's values can lead

employees to hold onto those values even when the organization itself shifts ideologies

(Morgan et al., 2004).

 Organizational disidentification can also occur among employees, when it is felt

by employees that they do not identify with or have the same values and principles as the

organization (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). In a merger situation this could happen when an

employee makes a conscious (or unconscious) decision to reject the merged

organization's mission, values and culture (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Morgan et al.,

2004). This rejection can lead to dissatisfaction and possibly destructive behavior toward

the organization, including decreased employee commitment, increased

turnover and a generally negative employee attitude that can impact other employee's

morale (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004).

Organizational identification has also been seen as impacting both distant and

proximate employee working teams and relationships (Connaughton & Daly, 2004).

When employees are located in disparate work locations, it is difficult to establish

working relationships among team members. Social interaction has been demonstrated to

increase employees' identification within groups and the organization, and to categorize

him or herself as a member of the group (Lipponen et al., 2005; Van Dick et al., 2005).

Organizational identification is seen as a key component to overcoming the feelings of

disconnectedness, establishing trust among co-workers and to creating a functional group

that can achieve the desired outcome for the organization regardless of work location

(Connaughton & Daly, 2004).

Organizational identification can be a strong driver in the speed and success of a

cultural integration effort such as a merger. The research would indicate that stronger the

cultural identification, the more difficult the cultural integration process during a merger

effort. The presence and strength of cultural identification may have contributed to the

willingness of employees at Verizon to work with and assimilate merging employees and

may provide learning on how successful that integration has been, as well as offer insight

into what the company could do differently during future mergers.

Employee Conflict

Conflict among employees is common in organizations, both between individuals

and within groups, as well as between groups (Desivilya & Eizen, 2005; Haraway &

Haraway, 2005; Medina, Munduate, Dorado, Martinez, & Guerra, 2005; Song, Dyer, &

Thieme, 2006). Conflict is often the results when real or perceived bonds are

broken, such as in a relationship or even between organizations and individuals, which

can result in tension, frustration, loss and even grief (Kohlrieser, 2007). Conflict can also

occur when individual or group behavior negatively affects another individual or group,

when backgrounds and work experiences differ, or when their needs, values and goals are

not in alignment (Choudrie, 2005; Chuang et al., 2004; Kohlrieser, 2007; Starks, 2006,

2007). Conflict can arise in relationships that are both competitive and cooperative at the

same time, and can create a win-lose climate among employees within an organization

(Tjosvold, 2006).

Demographic diversity can also cause conflict, in particular visible diversity,

which can generate negative emotions and affect group processes (Chuang et al., 2004).

Conflict is so prevalent in organizations that it has been identified as consuming up to 20

percent of an employee's time in a typical work situation and can be a source of

frustration for teams (Meyer, 2004; Passos & Caetano, 2005; Song et al., 2006). The

presence of conflict can affect the ability of employees to think clearly, to keep focused,

and ultimately impact job performance (Meyer, 2004). Organizational culture has a direct

influence on intra-group conflict and stems from differences in values among team

members (Chuang et al., 2004).

Two different kinds of conflict within organizations have primarily been

identified: task conflict and relationship conflict (Medina et al., 2005; Passos & Caetano,

2005). Task conflict is when there are differing viewpoints and opinions on items such as

the distribution of resources or interpretation of facts. Task conflict can often result in

positive outcomes, and may encourage innovative thinking that enhances the outcome

(Chuang et al., 2004). Relationship conflict is more emotional and reflective of

interpersonal incompatibility and is often characterized by tension and

animosity between the individuals (Barki & Hartwick, 2004; Chuang et al., 2004; Medina

et al., 2005; Passos & Caetano, 2005). Task conflict can evolve to be relationship conflict,

if the task conflict isn't handled well and it results in negative emotions between the

parties (Barki & Hartwick, 2004; Chuang et al., 2004). According to Barki and Hartwick

(2004), disagreement, negative emotion and interference represent the fundamental

properties of interpersonal conflict, and can appear in any combination in both task and

relationship conflict.

  Traditionally thought of as having a negative effect on the organization, recent

research has begun to identify positive aspects to organizational conflict (Kohlrieser,

2007; Medina et al., 2005; Passos & Caetano, 2005; Song et al., 2006; Starks, 2006,

2007). The nature of the conflict itself can have an impact on the work teams, and their

overall state of mind, which in turn can affect how they manage conflict (Desivilya &

Yagil, 2005). For example, task conflict has been identified as sparking new solutions,

problem-solving ideas and creativity as long as there is not a great deal of relationship

conflict (Andrade, Plowman, & Duchon, 2008; Callanan, Benzing, & Perri, 2006;

Medina et al., 2005; Passos & Caetano, 2005; Song et al., 2006; Tjosvold, 2006). Another

benefit is that in finding a solution to the problem or task, multiple perspectives can be

taken into account, potentially providing a better solution than an individual could

accomplish (Choudrie, 2005). It can also provide the impetus for individuals to increase

their knowledge and skills, as well as provide areas of innovation and productivity

(Bacal, 2004).

  Task conflict can create greater understanding of the task itself when seeking

resolution to the conflict (Song et al., 2006). This kind of conflict can provide helpful

information as participants express differing viewpoints, processes and procedures, which in turn can facilitate greater understanding and conflict resolution (Parayitam & Dooley, 2007). Through this resolution process, a shared understanding of the resolution can occur, which in turn provides a clear direction to team members, enabling them to act in a way consistent with other employees and the resolution (Parayitam & Dooley, 2007). Trust and trustworthiness are identified as critical components to allowing positive outcomes from conflict to occur (Parayitam & Dooley, 2007).

If employees begin to perceive task-related conflict as a personal attack, then task-conflict can degenerate into the more negative relationship conflict (Parayitam & Dooley, 2007). When relationship conflict is present it can have a negative affect on the organization, and is a source of tension and stress between individuals and within an employee (Medina et al., 2005; Passos & Caetano, 2005). It can manifest itself in negative behavior such as the withholding of information or biased-information processing, and misinterpretation of communication and intentions (Parayitam & Dooley, 2007). Relationship conflict has been demonstrated to decrease employee job satisfaction and to increase the employees desire to leave the organization and has a detrimental effect on decision-making (Medina et al., 2005; Passos & Caetano, 2005). Organizational conflict can occur when different organizations come together, and their values, behaviors and processes differ, which can result in both task and relationship conflict (Chuang et al., 2004).

Given the increasingly complex business environment, including globalization, workforce diversity and virtual work teams, it is critical that conflict within the organization be managed effectively if the organization is going to be successful (De

Dreu, van Dierdendonck, & Dijkstra, 2004; Meyer, 2004; Song et al., 2006).

Desivilya and Eizen (2005) identified a model of five different approaches to handling

conflict within an organization, including dominance, integration, compromising,

obliging and avoidance. The impacts of these various approaches on the organization can

vary, with dominating and avoiding thought to have the most negative impact, and

integration, compromising and obliging offering varying degrees of positive impact

(Desivilya & Eizen, 2005).

Group identification, or how strongly an individual identifies with other group

members and the group as a whole, is believed to reduce an individual's need to employ

the more negative conflict handling approaches of dominance and avoidance (Desivilya

& Eizen, 2005). The negative, passive approach of avoidance however, is often seen as a

primary coping mechanism of individuals in a conflict situation (Kelly, 2006). De Dreu,

van Dierdendonck, and Dijkstra (2004) also identified that avoidance and withdrawal are

common forms of coping mechanisms by individuals within organizations.

Song, Dyer, and Thieme (2006) offered a very similar model to Desivilya and

Eizen (2005), with 'forcing' in place of 'dominance' and 'accommodating' replacing

'obliging'. Song, Dyer, and Thieme's model differs in that it demonstrates that all five of

the conflict handling approach can offer both destructive and constructive impacts to the

organization, and that both can lead to improved performance. The context of the

situation is what determines if the situation is seen as creating destructive conflict or

constructive conflict, and thereby creating improved or decreased performance (Song et

al., 2006). Tjosvold (2006) proposed that only the protagonists in a perceived conflict

situation can determine whether they have opposing interests, and in fact are engaged in

negative or positive conflict. Often increased and effective communication can help identify sources of conflict and to manage that conflict (Tjosvold, 2006).

The literature on employee conflict would suggest that conflict can stem from cultural incompatibility or cultural identity, and can be a key factor in the success or failure of a cultural integration effort during a merger. The concept of employee conflict within the context of the current state of integration at Verizon was explored as part of the research effort, as research participants were asked to identify the presence of employee conflict, and explored whether employee conflict was or still is a factor in the integration of employee groups during a merger.

Success of Multiple Mergers

Studies indicate that the performance of a company over time and multiple acquirers will decline as it grows through acquisition (Guest et al., 2004). McMains and O'Leary (2004) identified the struggles that companies have after having experienced successive mergers at the Lowe advertising agency, which has been through several mergers and acquisitions. This experience of repeated mergers has left Lowe with leaders with conflicting agendas and priorities, which in turn has created internal strife an prevented the different groups from coming together as a team (McMains & O'Leary, 2004). Repetitive mergers without the acculturation process having completed for one merger before the next occurs can prevent the merger from being successful (McMains & O'Leary, 2004).

Champlin and Knoedler, in a study of the media industry, also found that rampant mergers have hurt that industry and impacted the quality of the work that is being produced (2002). People issues and integration of corporate culture, if cared for early on, can have a major impact on merger success and corporate integration (Featherly, 2006;

Marks, 2003). Culture is often identified as ultimately leading to merger failure,

due to the inability of the people from the merging organizations to get along and to mesh

as a team (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993).

Unfortunately, the acculturation process and cultural fit are typically neglected

and most executives do not take into account the culture differences when making

integration decisions (Atkinson, 2005; Atkinson & Clarke, 2007; Featherly, 2006;

LaMarsh, 2006; Steffen, 2001). In retrospect, most executives feel they would put more

weight on the compatibility of business philosophies and management styles, as well as

cultural fit (Mirvis & Marks, 1992). Marks (1999) suggests that executives who have

been through a merger, and have experienced the different personnel and cultural issues

that can occur, will not want to repeat the experience and will look to facilitate a full

cultural audit to minimize conflict during the merger process. Managing the cultural

change process necessary in a merging organization is a systematic process that allows

leaders to predict possible resistance and to mitigate the negative impact that mismanaged

cultural integration can have on merging organizations (LaMarsh, 2006).

A study conducted among French and German managers involved in acquisitions

found that over half indicated that the cultural conflicts between merging companies was

a source of tension, but that senior management did not consider that conflict important

and worth addressing (Marks, 1999). Yet, in another study of 100 failed acquisitions, it

was found that the differences in management styles and business practices were the main

problem in 85 percent of the cases (Marks, 1999). Culture has a clear and quantifiable

impact on the success of mergers. Companies that identified the need to manage their

corporate cultures realized significantly better returns than those that didn't across

multiple measures, including revenue, net income and stock price (Marks, 1999).

Organizations that choose to ignore the importance of culture in the merger process risk fully realizing a mergers potential and even its failure (Atkinson, 2005; Atkinson & Clarke, 2007; Steffen, 2001; Valentino, 2004). According to Airoldi and Rauch (2005) executives have realized the impact that culture can have on the success of a merger, and are paying greater attention to it during the due diligence phase of a potential merger.

Summary

Mergers and Acquisitions continue to be a key business strategy for many companies, as evidenced by the 19 percent increase in the first quarter of 2007 over the same time period a year before (Hamerman, 2007). In spite of all this activity, only three in ten deals are deemed successful, and as many as half actually destroy value (Atkinson, 2005; Corbett et al., 2005; Peppers & Larson, 2006). When utilized correctly, however, mergers can be a critical part of a corporation's growth strategy, and corporations such as GE have been shown to use mergers as a means of generating long-term growth (Palter & Srinivasan, 2006).

In the fervor and excitement of a merger or acquisition, oftentimes the cultural aspects of the merger are forgotten or left last for examination in the merger process, yet it is the people who determine the success or failure of the merger (Atkinson & Clarke, 2007; Johnson, 2004; Stahl, 2004; Want, 2003). The review of the cultural 'fit' of an organization is often left until after the merger is complete (Atkinson & Clarke, 2007; Weber & Camerer, 2003). Yet, companies that focused on the cultural aspects of the merger process upfront during a merger have demonstrated greater performance than companies that prioritized the financial aspects (Carr et al., 2004). Poorly handled

cultural integration has in fact been identified as being responsible for up to 70 percent to merger failures (Palter & Srinivasan, 2006).

The intangible elements of human capital and culture are critical company assets, and help drive business performance and financial success (Atkinson & Clarke, 2007). Corporate culture is the reflection of human capital and human interaction, and is a collective belief system that drives employees' attitudes, beliefs and behaviors (Want, 2003). In the merging of two companies, it is often the cultural aspects that determine how the differing organizations will behave toward one another, and can impact the success or failure of the merger (Steffen, 2001; Want, 2003).

The merging of two cultures can create a source of tension and stress among employees, who are divided between their old organizational culture and the new one (Pepper & Larson, 2006). This tension can frustrate workers and impact their performance (Pepper & Larson, 2006). In addition, in a merging organization, there is no merger of equals, but rather one firm is always going to be dominant over the other (Badrtalei & Bates, 2007). This can create an 'us' versus 'them' attitude among employees, and establish a climate where people are people are looking to identify 'winners' and 'losers' within the acquisition (Marks, 1997; Patch et al., 1992).

Managing the cultural aspects of the merger process, or the culture 'fit' or compatibility can determine the success or failure of the merger (Legare, 1998). A merger can often lead to feelings of anger, betrayal and disengagement by employees (Thach & Nyman, 2001). It is for these reasons that over 90 percent of cultural change efforts fail (Atkinson, 2005). It is up to the merged company's leadership to set the tone for how the two organizations will function together in the newly merged entity (DiGiorgio, 2003). Visibility to employees, open communication and strategic leadership

are all aspects that leaders can employ to ease the merger transition (Badrtalei & Bates, 2007).

The longer employees have worked together, and for a company, the stronger their bond to that company and their identification of their role within the company (Chan, 2006; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Loi et al., 2004). This organizational identification creates a psychological attachment to the organization (Lipponen et al., 2005; Van Dick et al., 2005; Vora et al., 2007). This perceived oneness with the organization can be demonstrated through employee behavior, work attitudes and styles (Chan, 2006; Loi et al., 2004). During the merger process, employees can experience role conflict and emotional stress when faced with the integration of two different companies and cultures, especially if those cultures are dissimilar (Vora et al., 2007).

Disparate cultures, the 'us' versus 'them' attitude and organizational identification can all create sources of tension and conflict in a company (Marks, 1997; Patch et al., 1992; Vora et al., 2007). Employee conflict is common in organizations, between both individuals and within or between groups (Desivilya & Eizen, 2005; Medina et al., 2005; Song et al., 2006). It is so prevalent that it has been identified as consuming up to 20 percent of an employees time in a typical work environment and can be source of frustration for teams (Meyer, 2004; Passos & Caetano, 2005; Song et al., 2006). There are two primary types of conflict within organizations: task conflict and relationship conflict (Meidna et al., 2005; Passos & Caetano, 2005). Task conflict can encourage innovative thinking and positive outcomes of conflict. Relationship conflict is often characterized by tension and animosity between individuals, and can have a detrimental affect on the organization (Barki & Hartwick, 2004; Chuang et al., 2004; Medina et al., 2005; Passos & Caetano, 2005).

All of these aspects of organizational merger and merger success: corporate culture, cultural compatibility, organizational identification and employee conflict will occur within individual mergers and across multiple mergers. These may be contributing factors to why the performance of a company over time and multiple mergers will decline as it grows through acquisition (Guest et al., 2004). Managing cultural change in a merger is a systematic process that allows for the identification and possible prevention of a mismanaged cultural integration that may negatively impact a merger (LaMarsh, 2006). Leaders who have experienced one merger may be more sensitive to identifying and addressing possible cultural mismatches early in the merger process and preventing it from negatively impacting the merger's success (Marks, 1999).

Conclusion

Mergers and acquisitions have become a key business strategy for corporate growth, even though they are often not considered a success after the merger has completed (Fairfield-Sonn et al., 2002). In fact, when reviewing mergers from 1985 through 2000 as many as 50 – 80 percent of merged companies under performed when compared to peers (DePamphilis, 2003). Several factors have been commonly cited as the cause of this underperformance, including over-inflated purchase price, unrealized economies of scale or changes in market conditions (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993). Yet the review of the literature provides a more humanistic view of why mergers fail, namely the lack of due diligence around identifying potential cultural issues and ensuring cultural fit before the merger is finalized (Atkinson & Clarke, 2006; Atkinson & Clarke, 2007; Johnson, 2004; Stahl, 2004; Want, 2003).

The literature has revealed how mergers, and in particular multiple mergers, can lead to employee confusion, conflict and a demoralized and negative work environment

(Badrtalei & Bates, 2007; Guest et al., 2004; Lesowitz & Knauff, 2003; Thach & Nyman, 2001). This can be exacerbated when companies with strong corporate cultures -- where employees have established identities with that organizational culture -- are merged, making integration difficult (Chan, 2006). However, there is a wide body of research which demonstrates that if cultural integration is identified early in the merger process, and addressed by leadership both before and early on after the merger is complete, the combination of the two cultures is likely to be much more successful (Chan, 2006; Fuller et al., 2006; Harris & Cameron, 2005; Van Dick et al., 2005).

This literature review has helped to identify the various aspects that contribute to the research question, namely: What are the interpersonal dynamics that occur between merging cultures, and do those interpersonal dynamics change when faced with additional mergers? In addition, the literature helped guide an understanding of the secondary research question: what can leadership do during the process of an organizational merger to promote greater organizational harmony? Through the combination of the varied literature identifying the aspects of a successful merger through cultural integration, and this phenomenological case study, a better understanding of how to successfully manage multiple mergers should emerge. Chapter 3 will further define how the use of the phenomenological case study method, which was chosen because of its ability to provide a rich and personal understanding of an event, will contribute to the knowledge of how interpersonal dynamics change over multiple mergers.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

This qualitative, phenomenological case study explored the experiences of 20 employees at a large telecommunications company that had undergone several mergers in the last 10 years. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the dynamics of employee interaction during the process of these multiple mergers. The participants of this study were manager level employees who had experienced two or more of the mergers during their employment at the company.

Mergers and acquisitions have become a key strategy for growth for many companies, with an expectation that 33 percent of businesses will change hands in the next 10 years, and 25 percent of them are expected to do so in the next two years ("DATA POINTS", 2007). Yet, despite the frequency of mergers, they do not always yield the expected results, and are often not considered a success (Fairfield-Sonn et al., 2002). Employees are often an overlooked reason for this lack of success, as companies often don't consider the impact of the merger on their workers, yet employees are considered an important factor in merger performance (Grensing-Pophal, 2004; Lesowitz & Knauff, 2003).

This chapter will identify the methodology to be used to gain a greater understanding of the dynamics of employee interaction across multiple mergers, and if and how it changes with each subsequent merger. The choice of methodology and how it supports this research effort will be clarified. The research design, proposed population, sampling frame, geographic location and method of analysis will all be discussed in detail.

Research Design

This research effort was a qualitative phenomenological case study. A qualitative research design was chosen over quantitative because of its ability to describe and understand a phenomenon from the participant's point of view (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of how employees react to the incoming employees of merging companies. It also sought to understand if that employee interaction changed with subsequent mergers. The use of qualitative research, which is based on observations and is exploratory in nature, allowed for an examination of the topic that was in depth and holistic, with the possibility that it could evolve as the research continued and more insights were gained into the phenomenon (Donalek & Soldwisch, 2004; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Walker, Cooke, & McAllister, 2008). In general, in qualitative research reality is considered less tangible and more subjective (Walker et al., 2008). The case study methodology is very sensitive to the context in which it is studied (Greenwood & Lowenthal, 2005; Walker et al., 2008). Qualitative research is typically chosen if the objective of the research is to provide a description of an event, provide interpretation and to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, verify certain assumptions or evaluate the effectiveness of certain practices or policies (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Walker et al., 2008).

The use of quantitative methodology in this study would be appropriate if more generalized predictive findings that could be applied within and across industries was desired (Shields, 2003). But while this would be beneficial, it lacks the ability to provide the greater depth and understanding of a complex and specific event or situation, with rich dialogue and personal observations as experienced by individuals (Donalek & Soldwisch, 2004; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). According to Greenwood and Lowenthal

(2005), research that separates a phenomenon from the experience for the purposes of research, as is done in the case of quantitative research, is not likely to be representative of the experience. It is because of this that a smaller sample of research participants is identified in qualitative research than in quantitative, in order to better understand the phenomenon, as personally experienced by the research participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

A phenomenological case study was chosen over other qualitative methodologies (case study, ethnography, grounded theory, or content analysis) for several reasons. The use of a phenomenological case study allows for the understanding of an experience to develop from the view of the person or persons who have experienced the phenomenon. It also limits the research participants to a small sampling of individuals (typically 5 – 25), which allows for more in-depth exploratory into the lived experiences of the individual, but there is enough representation to gain an understanding of how the phenomenon is more broadly experienced (Donalek & Solwisch, 2004; Jacelon & O'Dell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). In addition, an understanding on the part of the researcher, and perhaps even prior experience or knowledge of the event, are often considered essential to the research, provided the researcher is able to separate those personal experiences from the data collection and analysis phases of the research (called bracketing or epoche) (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994). The process of epoche is necessary to prevent the research from becoming "narcissistic and insignificant" (Walker et al., 2008, p. 83). The ability to separate the first hand knowledge of the researcher from the research event was critical in this study, as the researcher is employed at the company, and began her employment in the middle of the last two mergers that were being researched.

Appropriateness of Design

The choice of a phenomenological case study was appropriate for this in depth exploration into the lived experiences of 20 managers at a leading telecommunications company during the course of several mergers. A phenomenological study was correct for this research as it allowed for the examination of a person's perceptions of an event, rather than how it appeared to have existed external to the person (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). In the case of this research study, the event that was explored was people's perceptions and feelings toward the merging employees from the other company, and to see how those perceptions and feelings changed, if at all, when a second merger was introduced, with a new set of employees to be integrated. A phenomenological case study attempts to understand what it was like – from the individual's point of view – to experience the event of multiple mergers, the acclimation to new employees and the individual's perceptions of those employees.

The choice of participants for the study was directly linked to their having experienced the last several mergers at the company, and required the participants to have direct interaction with the employees of those merging companies. This allowed the research participants to have had the experience necessary to have developed feelings and perceptions about the merging employees during each of the subsequent mergers. Twenty employees who were currently at least manager level with the company were studied.

The research methodology consisted of semi-structured face-to-face interviews that ranged in length from 12 to 54 minutes. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), the interview is more like an informal conversation, and allows the research participant to lead the discussion, with prompting by the researcher for the participant to recall and examine their feelings at the time of the event. It is critical during this process that the

researcher suspends all prior knowledge and feelings regarding the event, in

order to gain an understanding of the event from the participant's point of view, without

the researcher's own experience or bias leading the participant's recollections (Leedy &

Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994).

<div align="center">Research Question</div>

Unlike quantitative research, which relies on a hypothesis to guide the research

efforts, in qualitative research it is more common for a research question to form the basis

of the research. Specifically, a research question differs from a hypothesis in that it

doesn't presuppose or speculate answers to the research, but rather guides the kind of

data the researcher should collect, and suggests how the data can be analyzed (Leedy &

Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994). For the purposes of this study, a central research

question was identified guided the interviews, but it was supported by a small number of

interview questions designed to allow the research participant to recall and describe the

event as they experienced it. This type of semi-structured interview process allowed the

participant to explore his or her own feelings and perceptions of the event, but also

allowed the participant to potentially explore new or different ideas and feelings that the

researcher didn't expect.

The central question that guided this research was: how do individuals within

merging companies interact with and view each other during the merger process, and

does that view change when faced with additional mergers? With this as the guiding force

behind the interview process, the researcher asked seven questions that helped to

encourage the research participant to recall the event, their feelings and perceptions at the

time of the mergers, but were asked in such a way that they did not lead the participant to

specific recollections or leading to a particular answer that the interviewer

subconsciously was seeking. It was imperative that the researcher remain

neutral and encouraging without leading the interview (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

In addition to the central question that guided this research, a sub that was asked

was: could leadership have done anything differently to promote greater harmony

between employees of the merging companies? The intent of this question was to gain

insight into the perceptions of the employees of how they felt leadership handled the

merger process, and if there was anything that could be been done differently to improve

cultural integration for future mergers.

Population

The population for this research effort were employees of a leading

telecommunications company that had experience several mergers over the past 10 years.

Research participants were chosen based upon a purposeful sampling of 20 managerial

employees who had been with the company for the past 10 years, and had experienced

two or more of the mergers that had occurred. Purposeful sampling was used, rather than

random sampling, because of its ability to provide the most amount of information

possible regarding the event or phenomenon being studied (Donalek & Soldwisch, 2004;

Creswell, 2002; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Specifically, theory sampling, or concept

sampling, which allows for choosing individuals or research sites in order to create or

discover specific concepts that support the theory was employed, as this technique

allowed for the selection of the most appropriate, knowledgeable subjects to be studied

(Creswell, 2002).

For the purposes of this study, managerial employees were chosen as the

population for the research because of their likelihood to have experienced cultural

integration between the merging companies (union and non-management employees may

be in areas of the company that remained operationally separate post-merger).

The literature varies on the number of subjects needed, from one to 25 (Creswell, 2002; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). For the purposes of this study, 20 individuals were chosen to ensure that data saturation in the interview process was achieved, and that sufficient participants were included in the study to ensure that geographic or historical employee affiliation were not guiding the results (as some employees may have experience four or more mergers during their tenure with the company depending on what geographic location they work in). Subjects were chosen that met the criteria of tenure, status and merger experience, but that were also either unknown or peripherally known to the researcher. These participants were chosen through internal referrals and their willingness and ability to participate in the research.

<div align="center">Informed Consent</div>

Participants were identified through internal referrals. The request to participate in the study was conducted via telephone solicitation. Once the identified subjects had agreed to participate in the research, an informed consent form was provided to them at the time of the interview for their review and approval. This consent identified the nature of the study, the confidentiality of the subject's participation, and the requirements of the study. Specifically, it included that the study would require a minimum of 1 hour to a maximum of 1 1/2 hours of their time for the face-to-face interview, and that the study would be recorded so that their statements could be reviewed and analyzed at a later date. They were informed that their participation would be entirely anonymous, pseudonyms would be used in the final research report to ensure confidentiality and that no distinguishing characteristics would be identified to allow for their possible identification. The possibility of a follow-up discussion or contact to answer a question

via telephone or email was also included, in case the researcher required further clarity during data analysis. A copy of the informed consent is included in the appendix (see Appendix B). The letter also stipulated the requirement of the participant to have been an employee of the company for more than 10 years and to have personally experienced integration with the employees of companies that were merged. The participants all had to have experienced a minimum of two mergers in order to ensure that the participants could provide the necessary information and experience for the study. Participants were required to sign the informed consent prior to being interviewed.

<div align="center">Sampling Frame</div>

The subjects for this study were selected using purposeful sampling, and were identified via internal referrals. Participants were required to be salaried managerial employees, employed at the company 10 or more years, have personally experienced two or more mergers that involved integration of personnel and were not intimately acquainted with the researcher. Union employees were not included in the sampling criteria because of their general lack of integration during a merger and also the difficulty in obtaining permission from the union to conduct the interviews. In addition, more senior employees were not included due to their potential for a lack of openness and honesty as a result of their stature within the company and possible lack of comfort expressing their personal feelings and experiences regarding the merger.

Inclusion in the sample was also dependent on the participant's willingness to participate, his or her geographic location and his or her ability to participate in a face-to-face interview. After identification of potential participants via internal referral, participants were contacted via telephone (see Appendix A), the research explained the

study to them and based on their willingness to participate and confirmation of

their suitability during that discussion, the face-to-face interview was scheduled.

Four locations were selected for the research: Boston, Massachusetts, Arlington,

Virginia., New York, New York and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. These locations were

chosen based on the high concentration of employees in these geographic areas. Five

employees per location were identified for the research study in order to provide a wide

range of experiences and participants background.

Due to the various geographic locations studied, participants also needed to be

available on specific days when the researcher was at the location to conduct the

interviews. The interviews were conducted in company-owned buildings in those

locations. These restrictions prevented some participants from being able to participate,

and in those cases the participants were eliminated and new participants identified and

recruited. Permission to use Verizon locations was requested prior to the research (see

Appendix D).

<div align="center">Confidentiality</div>

Confidentiality is an important part of any research effort. Participants needed to

be assured that what they shared would not be identifiable to anyone else besides the

researcher, and that they could not be identified in the final published report. The

commitment to ensure anonymity was clearly stated in the informed consent document

that participants signed at the beginning of the interview. In addition, the steps taken to

ensure confidentiality were reviewed with the participant and the consent to act as

research subject form (see Appendix C) was also reviewed. This form included the terms

that the subject's participation was voluntary, that the list of participants would be kept

confidential and that personal anonymity was guaranteed. In addition, the actual names of

the participants were not shared with the original referrer, and when soliciting

referrals, the researcher alerted the referrers that not all names would be used in order to

avoid the referrer from knowing with certainty who participated in the research, and

possibly identifying the subject in the final report.

In order to ensure confidentiality during and after the interview process, all

participants were given a pseudonym both during the interview (subjects identified on

tape) and in the transcription. All references to the subjects in the final report utilized that

pseudonym, and any personal references by the participants during the interview process

were removed from the transcripts in order to ensure anonymity. A list of pseudonyms

linking the participants to their real names was kept by the researcher separate from the

research to further prevent identification. This list was not kept electronically, and is kept

in a locked personal safe of the researcher, and the list will be destroyed once the

research is complete and accepted.

<div align="center">Geographic Location</div>

The face-to-face interviews were conducted in four geographic locations: Boston,

Massachusetts, Arlington, Virginia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and New York, New

York. Five interviews per location were conducted. These locations were chosen because

they are inclusive of all the major business locations of the former Bell Atlantic, and

therefore were representative of the affected population. In addition, those locations had a

high concentration of employees. The interviews were conducted in company-owned

buildings unless otherwise requested by the participant. Conference rooms were used to

conduct the interviews, in order to prevent distractions that might have occurred if the

interviews were held in the participants' offices or cubicles. Access to the building was

achieved through the use of the researcher's and subject's employee badges and

permission to conduct the interviews on Verizon property was be secured (see Appendix D).

Instrumentation

There was not a formal instrument chosen for this research. Rather, the researcher was the primary source for data collection, through the use of face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. During the interview, the researcher asked a series of five to seven questions of the subject (see Appendix E), while allowing the subject to explore his or her recollections and feelings regarding the merger process. During the interview process, new information occasionally emerged and ideas developed that the researcher wanted to explore as part of the research (Creswell, 2002; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). With a phenomenological case study, the researcher must take care to prevent personal feelings, attitudes or beliefs of the event from guiding or shaping the research, given her personal experience with the events. The process of separating the researcher's personal opinions and preconceived notions toward the events is known as epoche, which allowed the researcher to put aside personal bias to gain an understanding of the participant's experiences (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994).

Data Collection

The data collection process in qualitative research is generally less structured than quantitative research (Creswell, 2002). It involved asking participants more general, open ended questions that allowed the participant to share their experiences, memories or thoughts in a relatively unrestrained manner, and without the interference of the researcher (Creswell, 2002). The process of data collection in this phenomenological case study was conducted in face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, which allowed for the exploration of the subjects memories and emotions during the merger process. Semi-

structured questions are a small series of central, open ended questions (see

Appendix E) that allow participants to describe their personal experiences, memories and

emotions of the event with little interference or bias from the researcher, while permitting

the researcher to ensure that the same type of information is collected from all research

participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This method of data collection is appropriate for a

phenomenological case study, where the researcher and the participant have a dialogue

around the event, with the researcher allowing the participant to lead the discussion

(Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The researcher may ask questions and will also observe the

participant in order to identify any physical cues which may add meaning to the subject's

retelling of the event (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). One disadvantage of the use of the semi-

structured interview is that it is dependent upon the veracity of the information provided

by the participant, and the participant may knowingly or unknowingly adjust their

retelling of the event in a manner he or she thinks the researcher wants to hear, or in order

to put themselves in a better light (Creswell, 2002).

Participants in this study were identified through internal employee referral, and

20 face-to-face interviews were conducted. Participants were selected based on their

tenure with the company (10 or more years of service), their employment status as a

manager, geographic location, and personal experience with several of the mergers the

company had experienced over the last ten years. Once 20 participants were identified

and had agreed to be interviewed, the researcher conducted the face-to-face interviews in

company-owned buildings where the participants currently worked. Informed consent

was explained and obtained from the participants (see Appendix B). The interviews were

tape recorded, with the knowledge and permission of the subject, which was be part of

the formal informed consent document. Agreeing to be tape recorded was a requirement

for participation in the study. In addition, cues such as the participant's

demeanor, facial expression and attitude were recorded by the researcher for further

assessment during the data analysis process. The interviews were transcribed verbatim for

analysis, in combination with any information recorded by the researcher.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

Data collected from this phenomenological case study was obtained using face-to-

face semi-structured interviews with 20 managers from a leading telecommunication

company. Participants were managerial employees with 10 or more years of service with

the company, and had experienced the integration of employees over the course of

several mergers at the company. The participants were asked to describe the interactions

between themselves and the employees of the merging company, and the participant's

perceptions of those employees. They were also asked to identify if and how those

interactions and perceptions may have been altered with a subsequent merger. In

addition, the participant's thoughts on how leadership may have influenced that

integration and interaction were reviewed. The objective was to explore the personal

experience of these 20 managers and to identify if the process of multiple mergers

changed the interactions of the merging employees as each subsequent merger occurred.

All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. In order to analyze the data,

several steps had to be performed. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) describe Creswell's

approach that allows for the analysis of the data obtained the interview process in a

qualitative study. For each interview the following steps must be completed:

1.   Organize the data: it may be necessary to break large amounts of text

                into smaller units that will be easier to analyze later on.

2.   Peruse the data: get an overall sense of what it contains and
        start to identify any preliminary interpretations

3.   Code the data: this involves grouping the data into various categories or
        themes that help create a sense of meaning from the data

4.   Integrate and summarize the data: offer hypotheses or propositions that
        describe the relationship between the categories. Tables, diagrams or
        hierarchies may be employed here to help visualize the relationships
        found in the data.

In order to facilitate the organization and analysis of the data, QSR International's NVivo 8® software package was used. This software helped organize and identify text for analysis, and helped to code the data into major themes. The coding process helped to make sense of the large amount of data obtained during the interview, and to break the information into a few consistent themes that emerged within the data. According to Creswell (2002), coding of data should be minimized to 25-30 codes, which are then grouped together to form five to seven themes which form the major ideas in the data. Key phrases or quotes that most accurately support the emergent themes are identified, as these support the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Brown, Karley, Boudville, Bullas, Garg, & Muirhead, 2008). From these themes the major findings and conclusions from the research are identified, as well as recommendations for future research.

<div align="center">Validity and Reliability</div>

The phenomenological case study methodology for research, while it yields an in depth, rich view of the lived experiences of an event by research participants, offers challenges with regards to the validity – or credibility -- of the research. The researcher is

part of the process, and has often experienced the event being studied (Leedy &

Ormrod, 2005; Moustakas, 1994; Walker et al., 2008). This personal experience with the

research can prevent the researcher from being objective in the conducting the research

and in analyzing the findings. In order to conduct a phenomenological case study, the

first step a researcher has to take is to enter into the research through the epoche process

(Moustakas, 1994). This process requires the researcher to step away from his or her own

experience with the event, and to eliminate any preconceived notions, in order prevent

any personal bias or previously held beliefs regarding the event to affect or influence how

the researcher hears or interprets the input from the research participants. The epoche

process allows the researcher to approach the research with a fresh, almost naïve point of

view, and all previous ideas and judgments are set aside (Moustakas, 1994). Once the

researcher has identified and set aside his or her preconceived ideas, thoughts, and

personal judgments of the event to be studied, then the research can be conducted without

bias and without letting the researcher influence the outcome.

Internal Validity

The internal validity of a research study is the degree to which the study is

constructed and the subsequent data collected such that it allows the researcher to

indentify and draw conclusions about the findings within the data (Leedy & Ormrod,

2005). According to Neuman (2006), internal validity is "…when the hypothesized

independent variable alone affects the dependent variable" (p. 259). There were several

potential threats to internal validity regarding this study. First there was the potential for

selection bias (Neuman, 2006). This study used purposeful sampling, through employee

referrals, to identify research subjects. This posed the potential problem of picking

subjects whose experience matched the expected outcome. However, by selecting

participants in geographically dispersed locations, and through the referral

process so that the subjects were not intimately known to the researcher and had not

necessarily had similar experiences and exposure to the same merging employees this

helped mitigate the potential for selection bias.

Another potential threat was the instrument used for the research itself (Neuman,

2006). In the case of this phenomenological case study, the researcher was the

instrument, thorough the face-to-face interview process, for collecting data. The

researcher took care to ensure that personal feelings or biases were not inadvertently

communicated to the subject, which in turn might have affected the way the participant

responded or the interpretation they may have put on their recollection of the events

during the merger. A similar, related threat is experimenter expectancy (Neuman, 2006).

If, during the interview process, the researcher's non-verbal communication or way of

asking the questions unconsciously leads the subject to a specific way of answering, then

the experimenters expectations have created the outcome the researcher anticipated, but it

may not be accurate to what the subject really experienced, they just adjusted their

retelling of the events to fit what the researcher was unconsciously communicating they

were expecting them to say. It was important to avoid this internal validity problem that

the researcher remained neutral during the interview process, and was careful not to

indicate through verbal or non-verbal communication what the researcher expected the

subject to say.

External Validity

External validity is the applicability of the research findings to other contexts, or

the extent to which they can be generalized to other situations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005;

Neuman, 2006). One of the concerns of or threats to external validity is whether or not

the research is realistic. Given that this was a phenomenological case study, and was a study about a specific event that occurred, it can be expected that the research and findings are realistic. However, this assumption can be drawn into question by a second threat to external validity, namely reactivity (Neuman 2006). Reactivity is when research participants react or behave differently than they normally would because they know they are in a study or being studied (Neuman, 2006). One specific type of reactivity is demand characteristics (Neuman, 2006). Similar to the concern regarding internal validity, in that a research subject may communicate experimenter expectancy, subjects may realize through the interview process the hypothesis or goal of the research, and answer in a manner designed to please the researcher (Neuman, 2006). In doing this, they confirm the researcher's hypothesis, but invalidate the research findings, as they are not actually giving an in-depth review of what they experienced or felt during the event being studied, but rather confirm what the researcher unconsciously communicated they expected to hear.

Generally speaking, field experiments – experiments that take place in the field rather than in a laboratory – have greater external validity than laboratory experiments (Neuman, 2006). However, the case study is not an experiment, but rather the retelling and analysis if an actual event that has occurred. As such, it is creates the possibility that the research will only ever relate to the situation being studied and prevents generalization (Greenwood & Lowenthal, 2005; Jacelon & O'Dell, 2005). It is this real-life setting, however, that is a benefit of qualitative research as it offers a view of how people act and behave in their natural environment (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). One way to create external validity in a case study is to select a representative sample of the

population in the research, in order to allow the findings to be generalized to

the population or category as a whole (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

This phenomenological case study focused on the experiences of 20 managers at a

large telecommunications company, who had specifically experienced two or more

mergers and were involved in employee integration both times. While specific to this

setting and these circumstances, the real-life setting, and the relatively large number of

research participants for a qualitative study allowed for the generalization of these

findings specifically to this population within this company as long as the internal threats

of selection bias, instrumentation and experimenter expectancy, as well as the external

threats of realism and reactivity were cared for. While specific to the events of Verizon,

this research may offer the opportunity for guidance to other telecommunications

companies that are or may experience similar circumstances. It also provides a

framework for replication of this research in a different context.

Summary

In summary, this phenomenological case study was an in-depth view of how

employees viewed the employees of merging companies, and how (if at all) that view

changed with subsequent mergers. The choice of quantitative methodology was

appropriate in order to provide the greater depth and understanding a specific event, with

rich dialogue and personal observations as experienced by individuals (Donalek &

Soldwisch, 2004; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were

held with 20 managerial employees, who had been with the company for more than 10

years and had experienced two or more mergers, and had been involved directly with

employee integration. Purposeful sampling was be used to select the subjects, utilizing

employee referrals, in order to yield the richest data with people most likely to have

experienced the phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Data analysis consisted

of coding and categorizing the resulting transcribed interviews, which was used to

identify common themes. These themes were reviewed against current literature to

identify if similar findings had been discovered in research in other industries or

circumstances, in order to supply a richer analysis of the identified themes and findings.

Chapter 4 will present the data gathered from this phenomenological case study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological case study was to explore the experience of 20 management level employees at a large telecommunications company – Verizon – that had undergone several mergers in the last 12 years. The participants of the study had experienced two or more mergers during their employment at Verizon. The objective was to obtain an understanding of the dynamics of employee interaction during the process of these multiple mergers. A phenomenological case study method was chosen because of its ability to describe and understand a phenomenon from the participant's point of view (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The 20 interviews were conducted face-to-face, and audio recorded with the participant's permission, in order to facilitate data analysis post-interview. The interviews were conducted in four cities: New York, New York, Boston, Massachusetts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Arlington, Virginia, with five participants per city to achieve the 20 interview requirement. Interviews occurred in Verizon locations, and permission was received to conduct these interviews on company property (see Appendix D).

Research participants were chosen using purposeful sampling, and were identified via internal referrals. Each participant was required to be a salaried managerial employee, employed at the company 10 or more years, and needed to have personally experienced two or more mergers that involved the integration of personnel. Participants were not personally acquainted with the researcher, although in many cases the participant and the researcher were aware of each other, in terms of having heard of each other during the course of work, or had been on the same telephone conferences or email distributions. Participants were contacted via telephone and email solicitation, and once permission was received to conduct the interview, participants were scheduled for a face-to-face

interview in the city where their offices were located. All scheduling was done

via the telephone, and an overview of the research was provided during that conversation

(see Appendix A). Although the objective was to obtain five interviews per city, six or

seven interviews were scheduled in each city in case a participant was unable to attend or

if, during the interview, it was uncovered that the participant didn't fit the criteria, or that

they didn't have sufficient recollection or experience with the event to provide insight

into the study. This happened in several cities, and in two cases the interviews were

aborted after approximately five to ten minutes due to a lack of personal experience with

the merging of employees. Only five interviews per city were used in the data analysis,

chosen based on the first five interviews in each city that fully met the requirements. A

total of 26 interviews were attempted, and 24 were completed. Only 20 (five per city)

were used in the data analysis.

Of the participant, 45 percent were female and 55 percent were male. Twenty-five

percent were directors, and 75 percent were manager level. All participants had been with

the company more than 10 years and had either been with Bell Atlantic or NYNEX at the

time of the initial merger, and had experienced the subsequent merger with GTE. The

interviewees were from a variety of job functions, including marketing, finance, product

line management, human resources, external affairs, database management and marketing

communications. They ranged in age from mid-thirties to early sixties, and many had

changed jobs both during the merger time period and since the last merger with Bell

Atlantic and GTE.

Of the former NYNEX employees, five were from Boston and five were from

New York. The Boston employees had also been former New England Telephone, while

the New York employees had all been former New York Telephone employees, so all had

experienced the merger of New England Telephone and New York Telephone, which formed NYNEX. This additional merger experience provided further insight into this study, as the NYNEX employees brought broader merger insight and past merger experience to the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger that was part of this study. The Philadelphia and Arlington participants had all been legacy Bell Atlantic, and had not been through a merger prior to the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger. The majority of the interviewees had spent their entire careers at Verizon, but two of the participants had previous work experience outside of Verizon, and both had experienced previous mergers in other industries. Interview 25 from New York had past experience with a merger at a public relations firm she had worked at, and Interview 14 from Arlington had experienced a merger while working in the airline industry. Both were able to bring that past experience to this research, providing further insight into how employees experience mergers.

All 20 participants were current Verizon employees, although two of the employees had been recently impacted by a reduction in force at the company and were leaving the company within 30 days of the interview. All participants had been on a team where employees from each of the merging companies had been combined onto a single team, either during the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger, or the subsequent Bell Atlantic/GTE merger. Employees from Boston (Interviews 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8) and New York (Interviews 21, 23, 24, 25 and 26) also reflected on the earlier New England Telephone and New York Telephone merger. In two of the total of 26 interviews (Interview 5 from Boston and Interview 2 from Philadelphia) that were conducted employees had not experienced the blending of employees – although their teams had been merged, the functions had not – and could not discuss the phenomenon being

researched and the interviews were terminated. Participants were also required

to be salaried, managerial employees (non-union). Table 1 provides a profile of the

participants whose interviews were analyzed and became part of the study:

Table 1

Research Participant Profile

Participant	Gender	Title	Former Company Affiliation
Interview 1 Arlington	Female	Director	Bell Atlantic
Interview 2 Boston	Female	Manager	NYNEX
Interview 3 Boston	Male	Manager	NYNEX
Interview 4 Boston	Male	Manager	NYNEX
Interview 6 Boston	Male	Director	NYNEX
Interview 8 Boston	Female	Manager	NYNEX
Interview 9 Philadelphia	Male	Manager	Bell Atlantic
Interview 10 Philadelphia	Female	Director	Bell Atlantic
Interview 12 Philadelphia	Female	Manager	Bell Atlantic
Interview 13 Philadelphia	Male	Manager	Bell Atlantic
Interview 14 Arlington	Male	Manager	Bell Atlantic
Interview 15 Arlington	Male	Manager	Bell Atlantic
Interview 16 Arlington	Male	Manager	Bell Atlantic
Interview 18 Arlington	Female	Manager	Bell Atlantic
Interview 19 Philadelphia	Female	Manager	Bell Atlantic
Interview 21 New York	Male	Director	NYNEX
Interview 23 New York	Female	Manager	NYNEX
Interview 24 New York	Male	Manager	NYNEX
Interview 25 New York	Female	Manager	NYNEX
Interview 26 New York	Male	Director	NYNEX

At each interview the research was explained to the participant, and the Informed

Consent form (see Appendix B) and the Consent to Act as a Research Participant form

(see Appendix C) was reviewed and signed by the participants. The participants were

then asked a series of seven semi-structured questions about their personal experiences

during the merging of employees across two mergers: Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, and

then subsequently Bell Atlantic with GTE (see Appendix E). These questions

were developed to encourage the research participant to recall the event, their feelings

and perceptions at the time of the mergers, but were asked in such a way that they did not

lead the participant to specific recollections or to a particular answer that the interviewer

was subconsciously seeking. Interviews typically lasted about half an hour, with the

shortest interview lasting 12 minutes and the longest lasting 54 minutes.

All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Once the transcription was

complete, several steps were taken in order to facilitate analysis. Creswell's approach for

data analysis was employed (as cited in Leedy & Ormrod, 2005), which includes the

following steps:

1. Organize the data: it may be necessary to break large amounts of text into

   smaller units that will be easier to analyze later on.

2. Peruse the data: get an overall sense of what it contains and start to identify

   any preliminary interpretations

3. Code the data: this involves grouping the data into various categories or

   themes that help create a sense of meaning from the data

4. Integrate and summarize the data: offer hypotheses or propositions that

   describe the relationship between the categories. Tables, diagrams or

   hierarchies may be employed here to help visualize the relationships found in

   the data.

QSR International's NVivo 8® software package was used to help organize the

data, identify text for analysis, and provided assistance in coding the data into major

themes. This coding process helped to make sense of the large amount of data obtained

during the interviews, and to break the information into a few consistent themes that

emerged within the data. According to Creswell (2002), coding of data should

be minimized to 25-30 codes, which will eventually be grouped together to form five to

seven themes which then form the major ideas in the data. Key phrases or quotes that

most accurately supported the emergent themes were identified, as these support the

credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Brown et al., 2008).

For the purposes of this study, a central research question was identified that

guided the interviews, supported by a small number of interview questions that were

designed to allow the research participants to recall and describe the event as they

experienced it. The primary research question that provided the framework for the study

was: how do individuals within merging companies interact with and view each other

during the merger process, and did that view change when faced with additional mergers?

In addition to the central question regarding the direct personal experiences of the

interviewee, a sub question was asked: could the leadership of the organization have done

anything differently to promote greater harmony between employees of the merging

companies?

Study Findings

A series of seven questions (see Appendix E) were asked that related to the

central question of: how do individuals within merging companies interact with and view

each other during the merger process, and did that view change when faced with

additional mergers? During the course of the interview, if an idea or thought arose that

was not directly related to the question being asked, but seemed relevant to the

overarching topic of employee interaction during the merger, it was explored in greater

depth with the research participant. In qualitative research, when presented with ideas or

thoughts not previously expected in the course of the research, a researcher may probe

more deeply on that topic, and thus expand upon the primary questions and to explore new information or ideas that may have been uncovered as part of the research (Creswell, 2002; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Data received from the interviews was divided into four primary categories: conflict, culture, integration and perception. A fifth category was identified – future applications – as part of the secondary. The nature of the questions asked of the research participants partly led to this categorization, and the analysis of the interview transcripts identified these as the five primary categories that were consistently seen throughout the interviews.

The interviews were analyzed for themes, ideas and descriptions using QSR International's NVivo 8® qualitative data analysis software. NVivo 8® provided a systematic process for the identification and coding of the verbal descriptions obtained during the interviews. The use of NVivo 8® for the coding of the data allowed for the detection of new themes and ideas under the five main categories, and provided the linkage between interviews for the classification of the responses to the questions in the interview transcriptions.

Within the five major categories, two to seven major sub-themes emerged, with several of these having a third level of categorization. All of the interviews were coded, and each new idea that was identified by the researcher was coded and categorized under one of the five primary categories. New codes were added whenever a new idea emerged, until all of the research participants' answers could be assigned to an existing code, and data saturation was reached. The NVivo 8® software helped to organize the data, but the identification of the themes and the coding was performed by the researcher. Ultimately,

all of the responses fit within one of the five major levels, and one of the

subcategories. A diagram of the categorization is included in the appendix (see Appendix

F).

All of the respondents' answers were coded to each of the categories in the coding

hierarchy. Sometimes responses applied to two or more codes, and would be attributed to

each applicable code. The percent breakout of coding occurrences by participant is

included in the appendix (see Appendix G). All 20 participants cited examples of

conflict, integration, cultural issue and preconceived perceptions of employees across the

Bell Atlantic/NYNEX and Bell Atlantic/GTE mergers. Given the nature of the questions,

this was to be expected. Eighteen of the 20 participants (90%) offered examples of where

the leadership team could have done something differently to speed up or improve the

integration of future mergers.

Theme 1: Conflict

Two major sub themes emerged under the category of conflict from the

interviews: conflict involving people and conflict involving structure. Eighteen of the 20

subjects (90%) experienced conflicts with employees from the merging companies, while

seventeen of the 20 interviewees (85%) identified the different organizational structures

between the two merging companies as a major source of conflict.

Subtheme 1: People Conflict

Within the category of people conflict, seven sub categories of the types of

conflict that the research participants experienced in relation to the integration of people

during the merger process included: feelings of competition between the merging

companies, concern regarding differing ethics as displayed by the merging organizations,

favoritism, being suspicious of people because of worries about job security and conflict

amongst people as they sought to position themselves in the merging

organizations. Figure 3 demonstrates the occurrence of these subthemes within the

category of people conflict:

Types of People-Oriented Conflict Experienced by Research Participants
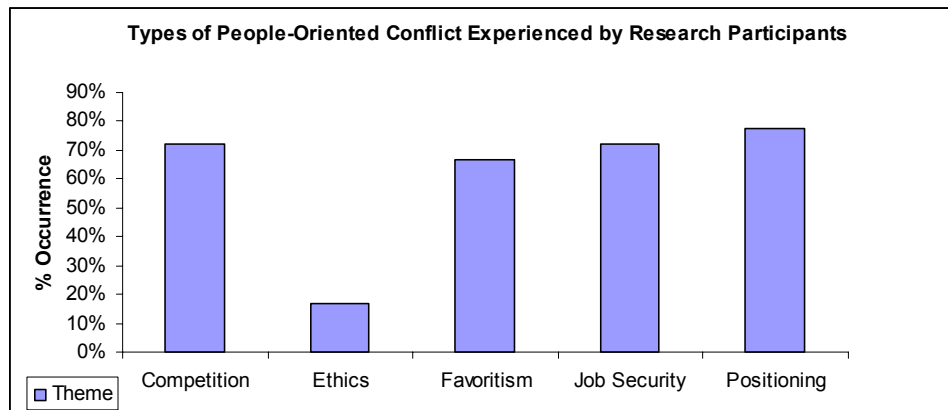
Figure 3. Types of people-oriented conflict experienced by research participants.

Occurrence reflects the number of people who mentioned each of the subthemes.

It does not measure the frequency of mentions, or intensity or level of intensity or focus

with which the participant discussed the subtheme. This varied greatly across the

interviews, and was dependent on the interviewee's overall engagement in employee

interaction, the kinds of interactions they had with merging employees, and the

interviewee's personality. Interview 15 from Arlington, for example, was passionate

about his perception of the lack of ethics displayed by the GTE employees during the

GTE merger. The following verbatim comments were made by research participants in

each of the subcategories, and help to demonstrate the employee's personal experiences

and feelings around each of the topics:

Competition

Feelings of conflict tended to center around competition for job placement,

established ways of doing business, organizational structure and individual personalities:

INTERVIEW 10: "When we acquired, or merged with GTE, it was her and [name omitted] that were both vying for the same job. And you didn't know who was going to end up with it."

INTERVIEW 14: "There were definitely power struggles going on, there were the… there were definitely differences of opinions on how to do things, how things should look, how things should be structured… it was across the board, it wasn't one little faction here, one little faction there, it was pretty much all around."

INTERVIEW 16: "… we were caught at that period in sort of a power play if you will... our counterparts were attempting to gain control over… well at least the decision making part of that process."

Ethics

Issues regarding ethics focused on behavioral patterns and the different ways the merging companies handled expenses, business travel and inter-company policies:

INTERVIEW 1: "My other recollection was that in GTE, you know, people were kind of rewarded for being creative and circumventing policies and everything, and you know, Bell Atlantic was always very straight-laced and tight on policies so that created some problems as well."

INTERVIEW 15: "I kind of felt like they did things differently. More on a … on an uncontrolled spending kind of behavior where I thought that, uh, I remember having a discussion with somebody saying that, um, some of the employees of GTE were really appalled by how scrutinized they were on their expenses. They were used to going out and living it up when they travel, and going to this restaurant. And now suddenly they had these rules, uh, well you only have forty-

five dollars you can spend. And I kind of felt like, hah, tough, like join

the club. You've got to cut expenses, and we acquired you because you were

about to go under. Um, your ways of spending and unethical behavior [laughs]

um, got you in this position, so now you are going to have to follow the rules."

INTERVIEW 4: "… the biggest tensions, though, and I was at some of the

meeting with the fifth levels or so, where the sales VPs in the old Bell Atlantic

who ran the show, I mean you had the Chesapeake and Potomac, you had like…

there were even like little companies within BA, they just ran the show. I mean

these guys used to pull stuff, I mean … there should have been sexual harassment

suits like lined up outside the door on these folks."

Favoritism

Concerns regarding favoritism focused on employee affiliation with previous

supervisors or the legacy company, and its impact on job security and placement:

INTERVIEW 1: "Well, I think that the best way to describe it, that maybe on

occasion… I have seem what I would almost call cliques, the formation of

cliques, where senior leaders have honored relationships that they have had in

their former companies and have, you know, essentially surrounded themselves

with people from that culture, from former GTE, and I think to the detriment of

the business. I think it's been exclusionary."

INTERVIEW 12: "My executive director was from Texas and I had applied for

the job because I just couldn't take staffing anymore, I wanted to go back into my

normal role. And I waited forever, and then finally the manager called me, uh, it

was a former Bell Atlantic and offered me the job and I said absolutely. She told

me later that the reason it had held so long was that the executive

director from Texas didn't want somebody from Bell Atlantic."

INTERVIEW 14: "And, and um, the director, fortunately for me, was from Bell

Atlantic, so you had, you definitely had favoritism there…"

Job Security

Seventy-two percent of the interviewee's worried about job security during the

mergers, which included concerns regarding keeping their current position in the earlier

mergers as well as concerns about remaining employed after the second merger:

INTERVIEW 14: "The NYNEX people were just…they were not in it as a group,

as looking for the best, you know, this could be a good opportunity, I think they

were fearful that they were going to get screwed and their reactions were as

such."

INTERVIEW 16: "Oh, any time there is a merger, you worry about job security,

especially when there are redundant teams – they had a marketing team, we had

marketing team, other than that I… uh… I think – at certain levels it got personal,

um, but I think the primary thing is probably job security because you feel like

you could easily be replaced by that group over there that's coming in, why do

you need two of them?"

INTERVIEW 2: "The position I was in there was another group of people that

performed pretty much exactly what our group performed. Pre-merger we didn't

have much exposure to them at all but once the merger occurred and we were

made aware of each other, uh, there was certain, um, intensity… concern… who

is going to survive here?"

Positioning

Positioning was mentioned by 78 percent of the interviewees as a concern. Specifically this was with regards to making sure that in the new organizational structure that they were known sufficiently by the new management to ensure they were given the better assignments, at less risk of being let go, and in the increasingly distant relationship between employee and manager, to be visible to their management and to seek their recognition and support.

> INTERVIEW 2: "Um, again initially it was rocky because of the fact that you just … you were nervous about where you were going to land and who was going to take over, and who was going to be in charge, um, you know you are hoping the person you work for at that time is going to handle everything because then, you know, you have more of an in."

> INTERVIEW 3: "…[name omitted] was my boss, and she wasn't there every day and I really had to sell myself to her on a regular basis. So maybe to a certain extent, you know, just trying to get myself sold to get myself known, so there might have been some reservations about that, but not so much from a job security thing. I wasn't worried that I was going to lose my job over the Bell Atlantic merger, but I was worried that I could possibly get lost in the shuffle. Because, again, now I had to go to more places to sell myself… to get myself known."

> INTERVIEW 8: "And it was hard because it was really a… the conversations really began from a position of… you knew you were in a subordinate position. And whenever that happens, ya know, its always I gotta prove myself yet again."

Subtheme 2: Structural Conflict

Structural differences were identified by research participants as a major source of conflict, although at a lower incidence than people conflict – 85 percent of the respondents felt that structure caused conflict, while 90 percent of the respondents identified people issues as a source on conflict. Within the category of structural conflict, five sub categories of structural conflict were identified that the research participants experienced during the various mergers, including: differing compensation levels, geographical differences, differing policies and procedures, issues with reporting structure, and differences in systems that caused conflict.

Figure 4 demonstrates the occurrence of these subthemes within the category of structural conflict.

Types of Structural-Oriented Conflict Experienced by Research Participants

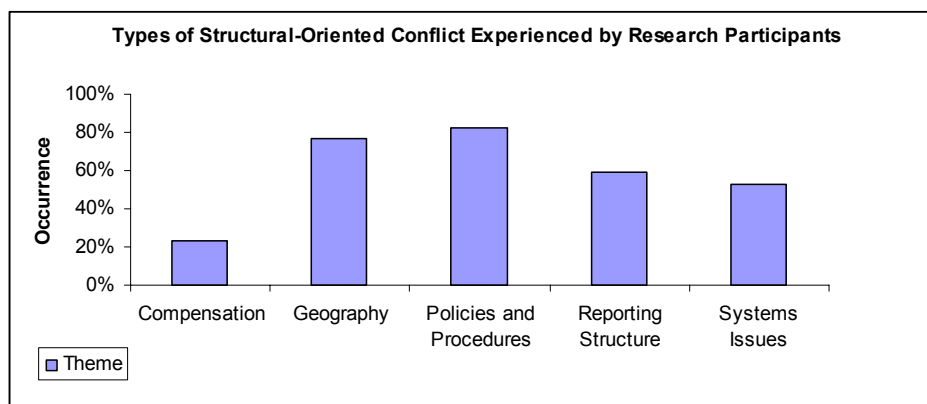*Figure 4.* Types of structural-oriented conflict experienced by research participants.

Occurrence is the number of research participants who mentioned the types of conflict; it does not measure frequency with which the theme was mentioned, or the intensity of the discussion. The following verbatim comments were made by research participants in each of the subcategories and help to provide context to the discussion:

Compensation:

Concerns regarding compensation were tied to current compensation structures between the merging companies, and were primarily mentioned in relation to the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger, due to the different compensation structures that the companies had upon merger:

INTERVIEW 2: "… the perception was they were all really really highly paid versus our side of the house… I don't know whether it was true or not, still don't to this day"

INTERVIEW 24: "Uh, I think uh, the other problem too, that caused a little animosity was a lot of times the people at the same level at GTE were making way more money."

INTERVIEW 4: "Well… I'm thinking that, I remember one of the first discussions with the original BA/NYNEX merger… what's your salary grade range, what's your benefits, I forget what we used to call it at the time, how many weeks vacation do you get? Very protective in the room… oh, I remember, GTE used to have, and I think it's gone, that if you lateraled, which isn't even a word, but if you took a lateral move, you could get a small bump. Just for the experience. Two or three percent. So, over time, the rumor was that the GTE folks made more money than the BA folks."

Geography:

As the mergers expanded the geographic base (from the Northeast, to the Eastern seaboard, to spanning the United States) concerns about working remotely from management and teammates, the effectiveness of distance working and the impact geography had on work styles and effectiveness surfaced:

INTERVIEW 1: "But I remember one of the biggest problems that we encountered, you know shortly after the merger was complete had to do with the fact that those guys were in a central location, and… Bell Atlantic… had geographic dispersion of staff reporting everywhere, and I remember it was very difficult having meeting with folks in Dallas, particularly if the teams were heavily stacked with people from Dallas, because what would happen they would all be in a room together, and there might be one or two of you calling into the meeting remotely, and it was very difficult to follow what was going on. They just didn't have the experience of doing things remotely. So it took a while to be able to have good conference calls and stuff like that, with the people from Dallas, simply because they were so used to being co-located."

INTERVIEW 14: "…I think a lot of it also had to do with the… distance had a lot to do with it too. I think if the groups were all here, and it was one solid, function, and everybody was … on the same floor or whatever, it probably would have gone a little bit smoother and more interaction, you'd know people a lot better but that whole dividing of East versus West was probably a big hindrance in… in any type of adaptability of anybody."

INTERVIEW 18: "So there were two differences, I have not only felt this in terms of merging with GTE, and there was a shift, because all of a sudden not only were we dealing with differences in the corporate culture, but also in a… in an American's regional difference… um… because New England and Bell Atlantic has an Eastern, an East Coast point of view and GTE had much more of a Midwestern and Western point of view."

INTERVIEW 9: "I think the problem with the GTE merger – the initial problem was there was nobody close by. You know … you know… you were reporting to people and dealing with people who… the chances of meeting them were pretty slim initially, so you probably were dealing with… you know… an unknown entity for quite a while."

Policies and Procedures:

Each organization pre-merger had differing policies and procedures that impacted the work styles of the employees, the systems they used, their overall processes and affected how the employees of the merging companies interacted and blended:

INTERVIEW 12: "… you could see where we started looking at different policies and procedures trying to take the best of both. It was difficult – and we had the same thing when Bell Atlantic merged with all the states. Their policies were one way, our policies were different, and they were still working on – if you as manager or director – you had people all over and you had to think, okay, New England has this policy this is what you have to go by, New York has this, and then down here [Pennsylvania] you have a different one."

INTERVIEW 15: "My boss was, uh, may have come up through the union, so she was really strict on rules most people like to ignore. I do… I work closely with IT – IT security… so I know how strict they are. And I think that some former GTE – some, not everybody – are used to interpreting rules, policies and procedures any way they want."

Reporting Structure:

Who was put in charge during the merger, and how employees were divided up and were assigned to various teams affected the how employees interacted with each other during the merger, as well as overall satisfaction with their positions post merger:

INTERVIEW 10: "Um… the leadership of the team was [name omitted] and so, at the time, she was also very New York, [name omitted] and [name omitted] were very New York-centric and NYNEX-centric in their thinking, so that shadow cast down and therefore a lot of those directors and managers at the worker bee level kind of had the same approach to things."

INTERVIEW 12: "I was in HR and I could just see the difference in the chain, in how things were. If it was our – if Bell Atlantic was in charge of finance and the operations environment you could see it was more the former Bell Atlantic mentality and the culture. If you were in the NYNEX, where you had your vice… your presidency of HR or communications or, um, public relations, and it was the former NYNEX territory, it took on that culture."

INTERVIEW 9: "The initial alignment with GTE found a number of us, who had always been together, being assigned to different directors for no… I didn't understand why, I think it was just a matter of, you know, each director had to have X number of people according to…. so we were split apart. I didn't see any good rationale for that."

Systems Issues:

Differences in the systems between the merging companies arose in 53% of the cases as a source of conflict, as different systems prevented or hindered full integration of work processes and employees:

INTERVIEW 12: "Systems are the biggest issue, because they don't

talk to each other. And that took an awful long time to get things like that done."

INTERVIEW 18: "… it's one of those things that's written about in business

literature and yet I, in my day to day work experience I found out that it's written

about for a good reason, and that is that the computer systems between the

different companies were different and I think that's led to as many delays and

problems and the flow of work and communication as anything else."

INTERVIEW 2: "… we had known that Bell Atlantic coded, did their hierarchy

the same way we [NYNEX] did, they used the exact same systems, to us that

seemed like, it was very exciting to us, because we were like we are just going to

merge all the customers, its going to be great, you know we'll take their data,

they'll take our data, we'll merge it, we'll aggregate the customers across the

whole Eastern seaboard, we'll be fine. From the calls that we had with GTE, they

had a whole different hierarchy structure, so we didn't know what was going to

happen, because you couldn't have both. Because you had to merge the customers

together. And so you either had to do it the GTE way or you had to, you know, do

it the Bell Atlantic way, and it was always well, how… what are we going to do?"

Theme 2: Culture

Culture emerged as a major factor in the interpersonal dynamics of employees as

they merged companies, and the process of blending two disparate cultures was impacted

by subsequent mergers. One hundred percent of the subjects identified culture as a factor

in the blending of companies during merger, with several subthemes emerging which

played a role in the ability of cultures to blend together and function as a new, single

culture. Successful acculturation or the process assimilation between individuals to a

culture – or two merging cultures to a new culture – was identified by 40

percent of respondents as an important part of integration and ability of employees of the

merging companies to interact well together.

The ability to advance, and past history with advancement opportunities within

discrete organizations that were now being merged, affected the respondent's impressions

and feelings about the merging employees. Advancement opportunities were cited by 25

percent of the subjects as impacting their interactions with merging employees.

Geography was felt to be a major contributor to how well cultures were able to merge,

with 60 percent of respondents indicating it has an impact on culture and employee

dynamics. Identification with past culture and leadership philosophy during a merger was

cited by roughly the same number of respondents as affecting the blending of cultures (55

percent cited identification and 50 percent cited leadership philosophy).

The company's openness to sharing information – or transparency – was

identified by a small percent of the respondents (10 percent) as impacting their feelings

about the merging companies and employees. The most frequently cited difference

between merging cultures and its impact on the dynamics of the merging employees was

work styles, with 90 percent of respondents indicating that work style both defined the

respective cultures of merging companies and impacted the ability of employees to

successfully blend with the new merged company.

Figure 5 reflects the incidence of the seven subthemes within the major theme of

culture:
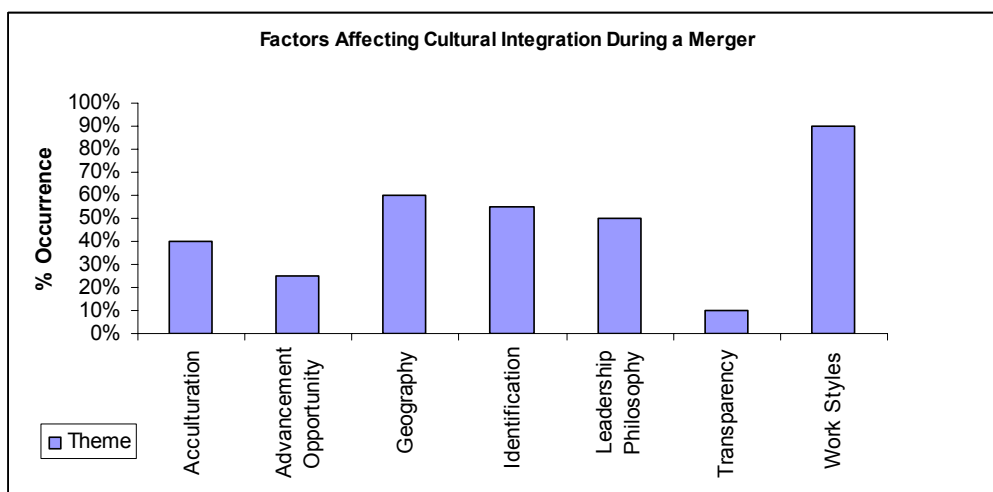
Figure 5. Factors affecting cultural integration during a merger.

Occurrence is the number of research participants who mentioned the factors affecting integration, it does not measure frequency with which the theme was mentioned, or the intensity of the discussion. The following verbatim comments were made by research participants in each of the areas and help to provide context to the discussion:

Subtheme 1: Acculturation

Forty percent of interviewees discussed the process of merging cultures, and how time and familiarity aid in the process of merging different organizations:

INTERVIEW 1: "I think that we seem to have closed the gap, and we now have a new culture that is a blend, but it's a blend that probably tilts a little more toward the Bell Atlantic culture. Again, just because of what is going on in the business. And the marketplace. So I think it's become more of the Bell Atlantic culture. And frankly, the people in Dallas have simply been around longer now... they have more tenure than so they are a bit more similar. They are older; there is less opportunity for everybody. We are all going through RIFs. So, I think the cultures have come closer together."

INTERVIEW 2: "So we did the coding at NYNEX, they did it the same way at Bell Atlantic and once we were introduced to who were going to be our counterparts, and everyone realized that they were pretty safe as far as employment, we worked together really well, and everyone had a common goal and that was to get the customers consolidated together. And so they were regulated entity, we're regulated, I think that we were all coming at it from the same angle and we actually had a pretty good working relationship with that team once everyone realized, once the dust settled, that we weren't going to lose our jobs, they weren't going to lose their jobs, and the structure was setup and aligned, and the objectives were set and we were all on the same page, we were fine."

INTERVIEW 23: "Well, over time it got easier and easier, needless to say, I think groups started to re-gel, uh, the more, I think you have contact with people; the more you get to know them. Some of the more, uh, social or friendlier aspects start coming into play. And I think that takes time to develop, so…. I don't think there was any hostility or fear or backstabbing, no, I never had that impression, but I think it takes time, whenever you have a group of people that are just thrown into one boat, and get told now go row [laughs] that it becomes a question of putting the rowers at the right spot in the boat to get it going. So, I think, with any relationship things like that take time."

Subtheme 2: Advancement Opportunities

Differing policies and opportunities for advancement affected how the interviewees perceived the employees of merging companies, and were mentioned by several interviewees in reference to the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger, although it emerged as a

concern in the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger as well:

> INTERVIEW 1: "… [GTE] had hired a lot of people in the course of the previous three to four years, many of whom were quite a bit younger and they had a different culture. I mean, people tended to get promoted much more quickly… so people were getting promoted very quickly, you know within a couple of years. They might make it from a specialist level to a manager, and maybe three years after that be a director. So it wasn't at all uncommon for someone to move to a director slot within three to five years, depending at what level they came in at. It was a very different experience for us because, you know, we had obviously been in our locations for much longer periods of time. Um, many members of the staff had a lot of experience and tenure with the company. We had gone through mergers, and there is always concern in a merger situation that bodies are going to hit the floor. So there wasn't a lot of opportunity on the then Bell Atlantic side of the fence, and there was a lot of opportunity on the GTE side of the fence. So there was kind of a, um, there were much bigger cultural gaps going through that merger than there was going through the, you know, Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger."

> INTERVIEW 15: "… a lot of the people at GTE were younger, and they had fast tracked their careers. There was a lot of… well, the relationships… there was resentment, I think… People at Bell Atlantic may have been working for years – research in general there are not a lot of promotions. So I think… um… in general... you had all these young people who might have been less than five years out of college, who were equal or above some of us. And uh… I can't

remember… it … some of that resentment sticks to today. We are

talking nine years already."

INTERVIEW 3: "I always got, personally speaking, great evaluations, I was

always… I will say that when I had a boss in New England, even before we

merged with New York, I felt 100 percent settled in my job, comfortable from a

job security perspective because my boss was here every day, and she was seeing

what I was going on a daily basis, and you know, like I said, I was getting positive

evaluations all the time. And that… that might have ebbed a little bit when we

merged with New York and [name omitted] was my boss, and she wasn't there

every day and I really had to sell myself to her on a regular basis. So maybe to a

certain extent, you know, just trying to get myself sold to get myself known, so

there might have been some reservations about that, but not so much from a job

security thing. I wasn't worried that I was going to lose my job over the Bell

Atlantic merger, but I was worried that I could possibly get lost in the shuffle."

Subtheme 3: Geography

Differing work styles and personal styles across the merging companies, as well as

distance between team members impacted played a role in merging the way employees

felt about themselves in the new organization, as well as how they felt about the

employees of the merging company:

INTERVIEW 1: "I remember you know, us sharing stories about how difficult it

was in those meetings when you are the only one, or one of a few, on the phone

when everyone else is in the room. There was definitely a feeling of kind of being

shut out or very hard to feel included in those instances. It was like a very

different experience."

INTERVIEW 10: "… they had moved their corporate headquarters

down to Dallas a couple of years prior from Connecticut. Everybody was in one

place, which was a joke to us because we had been used to – both in Bell Atlantic

and then for NYNEX, we spread to them some advanced business practices at the

time which included job sharing and work at home. And when we merged with

GTE, everybody was in one or two buildings in the same location and no one

worked at home, nobody job shared. Most people were young, most people were

newer to the company, um, their footprints were very dispersed. But the corporate

headquarters, there was only one, and we had not only – we had more

concentrated footprint, but also several dispersed, big large locations."

INTERVIEW 19: "… I was put in, uh, a group where the director was from New

England, the coworkers were from New England, NYNEX and um Bell Atlantic

and so were integrated but what we found fascinating on the Bell Atlantic side is

that we had had a good ten years at least, I forget if it was '87 or '88, you know,

but we had had at least eight to ten years of experience working across the aisle as

they say, in political years, but it didn't matter where you worked you know, you

just stick to the phone. They were more accustomed to meeting face to face

because the New York folks met with New York folks and New England met with

the New England, so I think the challenges actually in our group in integration

was getting the New York and New England companies to act like one company -

and then to merge with us"

Subtheme 4: Identification

Personally identifying themselves or their co-workers with their legacy company

was mentioned by 55 percent of the interviewees as something that still exists within

Verizon, and impacted employee integration across companies. It also affected

how the employees perceived each other and the leadership of the merging companies:

> INTERVIEW 14: "… you look at somebody and you first identify them as they're
>
> former GTE or former Bell Atlantic."
>
> INTERVIEW 6: "So I don't think here, in the Boston area, we had a belief in the
>
> most senior leadership. We thought we're just marking time until [name omitted]
>
> gets back in charge again, and takes over, and really starts running this business
>
> the way it needs to be run."
>
> INTERVIEW 8: "And the conversations you had with people who were hanging
>
> on to things like… in the good news/bad news story nobody liked the NYNEX
>
> name, so everybody was ready to deep six it to go to Bell Atlantic. There was not
>
> a lot of angst over that. The Bell Atlantic to Verizon thing, and the GTE to
>
> Verizon was deathly… that was tough. And I think that also goes to the people
>
> because GTE struggled, they didn't want to give that up at all. They didn't know
>
> from Verizon, they didn't want it…."

Subtheme 5: Leadership Philosophy

Each company had a different leadership philosophy pre-merger. Sometimes,

differences in this leadership philosophy guided the way employees behaved and created

tension between the employees of the merging companies:

> INTERVIEW 10: "… at Bell Atlantic we had this whole culture called the Bell
>
> Atlantic Way. And it was a cultural transformation that was ahead of its time, and
>
> it had some basic premises of innovative thinking, out of the box thinking, and
>
> thinking outside the nine dots, and shadow of the leader and about empowerment.
>
> At NYNEX they couldn't make a decision to save their life. Only the people at

the top could make a decision. And anything you wanted to get done – I

have to check with my boss."

INTERVIEW 12: "If it was our – if Bell Atlantic was in charge of finance and the

operations environment you could see it was more the former Bell Atlantic

mentality and the culture. If you were in the NYNEX, where you had your vice…

your presidency of HR or communications or, um, public relations, and it was the

former NYNEX territory, it took on that culture. And that was very… it was an

obvious culture change."

INTERVIEW 8: "Winning Ways was uh, if I remember correctly was a

Verizon… I mean NYNEX thing where… it was shadow of a leader, it was how

you are supposed to lead in the world, and the Bell Atlantic Way was how they –

that group – that had been their motto."

Subtheme 6: Transparency

Differences in philosophy on the sharing information was cited by two of the

interviewees as something they experienced and that caused tension between the merging

employees, where they felt that way the mergers were handled was secretive, or the way

that the employees of the different legacy companies interacted with one another and

shared information differed:

INTERVIEW 13: "I think it was more of the culture but I am not 100 percent sure

of that. There was a lot of job jealousy, too, even now. I mean, I'm not…coming

from that background where I was in the corporate economist office and my job

was to collect and share information. Now I am in more of a line job, and I still

have to adjust my thinking. Like things are secret and you don't share. And

secret's probably too strong of a word, but I have to think a little bit

about what I can share and what I can't share."

INTERVIEW 25: "… I feel like if I look back at GTE I feel like it was secretive,

and I think maybe it was because the people heading up the department I was in

weren't sure if they were secure in their positions, and they didn't want to divulge

too much."

Subtheme 7: Work Styles

As was to be expected, employees of the merging companies differed in their

approaches to their job and how they managed their work. Ninety percent of the

interviewee's cited the differences in work styles as leading to cultural conflict and

tension, and made it difficult for the employees to effectively work together and hindered

integration:

INTERVIEW 10: "At NYNEX they couldn't make a decision to save their life.

Only the people at the top could make a decision. And anything you wanted to get

done, I have to check with my boss. Even the directors would say that. So it was

very slow, because we were very empowered and we were used to, hey, I'm here,

I'm authorized to make a decision. Um, they didn't have anything like the Bell

Atlantic Way up there, and therefore we had tools for developing teaming

relationships, we had team agreements, we had some things that had been using in

our corporate culture for a few years and they had nothing like that. So there was

a lot of conflict. Um, so you didn't have any choice other than to storm out of the

room, go to your separate corners, calm down and come back again for the next

day and try and figure out where to go from there."

INTERVIEW 12: "The first time I became aware that there was a total difference between the NYNEX – and I don't mean the NYNEX New England, mainly NYNEX New York – was when our people went up, like our executive directors went up, and were stationed in New York, and they scheduled a meeting, saying you have a meeting at – one executive director for example – scheduled a meeting at seven o'clock in the morning and said you will all be here, and they said oh, we don't start before eight thirty. So that was like – okay – and then another one scheduled a meeting at like five thirty, and that was just norm here, and they said, oh no, we are gone long before that, we don't stay in the city. And it was like … you could… the tension was there because our directors and our people were used to working those hours, but it was very different there, they were different mentality – different values I guess you could say."

INTERVIEW 18: "I'm thinking that they were more maverick. They were much more the cowboys, yes, they're from Texas and guess what, it shows. They were much more maverick. Yeah well, we know that's the rule, but that's not, the fact that it's a rule doesn't necessarily mean that we're going to do it that way. Wait a minute (*laughing*). Wait a minute, where we come from, um, folks deal with consequences if they don't follow the rules and yet it seemed to me that GTE had this much more freewheeling attitude, and there was much more a sense of, um from the folks that I was dealing with, and I um, there was much more a sense of just get it done, whereas I tend to be much more of a plotting, get it right type of person. And what I kept hearing from my new GTE associates was get it done, as opposed to get it done right, so there's, that's been one of my first and lasting impressions with the folks from GTE."

Theme 3: Integration

The degree to which employees were integrated, and the way that integration was handled, played a major part in the way the subjects perceived the merging of employees. Two subthemes emerged under the primary theme of integration, including: team affiliation and team structure, with 100 percent of employees identifying their feelings toward their teammates, or affiliation with teammates, as a major factor influencing integration. The second subtheme – team structure – was cited by 75 percent of employees as impacting employee integration.

Subtheme 1: Team affiliation

Within the subtheme of team affiliation, five tertiary themes emerged as representation of the impression the subjects had of the experience of the integration, and how well the employees were integrated across the mergers. The presence of a 'common enemy' was cited by 60 percent of the subjects as a major catalyst in causing the eventual integration of employees in the initial mergers – NYNEX and Bell Atlantic. In the case of former NYNEX employees many cited the merger of New England Telephone and New York Telephone as the first merger where this phenomenon was observed. Identification with employees, either through process or shared experiences was cited by 85 percent of the employees as helping bring about integration, through either initial or subsequent mergers.

Shared experiences between employees over time also helped to bring about integration in 75 percent of the cases, as well as the sister theme of shared goals and objectives for 55 percent of the subjects. Lastly, tenure – or simply time – was identified by 65 percent of employees as a catalyst for integration

Figure 6 reflects the incidence of the six subthemes within the major theme of
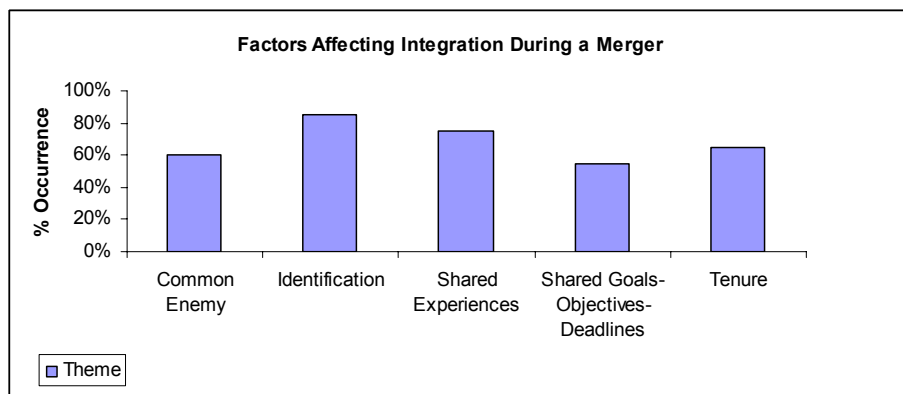
integration:

Figure 6. Factors affecting integration during a merger.

Occurrence is the number of research participants who mentioned the factors

affecting integration during a merger, it does not measure frequency with which the

theme was mentioned, or the intensity of the discussion.

Common enemy:

The creation of a common enemy as companies merged and then merged again

with another company was cited by 60 percent of employees as a phenomenon they

observed, and which developed culturally within the organization as a means of handling

the integration of employees of another company:

> INTERVIEW 10: "…I think [name omitted] said it best when he said the best
>
> thing that ever happened to the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger was the merger of
>
> GTE, was the acquisition of GTE, because it united us against a common enemy.
>
> And all of a sudden we shifted from 'we' being a Bell Atlantic definition to 'we'
>
> being a Bell Atlantic plus NYNEX. And 'they' were not NYNEX anymore, 'they'
>
> were GTE."
>
> INTERVIEW 14: "Um, you know by that time, I think we were all pretty co-
>
> existing for the most part to begin with, um, but I think we probably became

tighter, even though we weren't apart we became tighter as a group

because it was drawing the battle lines, we didn't have three different factions

fighting against each other, it was Bell Atlantic/NYNEX fighting together, now

fighting against the GTE people, so it was draw, we sort of chose sides."

INTERVIEW 15: "…before it was 'us' and 'them', North and South. And now it

was 'us' and 'them', East and West. So, my perceptions of the employees of the

former NYNEX were… we are now on the same side."

INTERVIEW 2: "…It was almost like we bonded closer together with the Bell

Atlantic folks when the GTE merger was pending. It was like, because now we

are all in the same boat, ya know, and some people joke and it's a horrible thing

to say, but now we have a common enemy. Nothing brings two people together,

you know, it wasn't like we hated them, it was like you just didn't know them and

you didn't know what was going to happen, and, you know, what is going to

happen to the group, and yourself, your job…"

Identification:

Identification appeared again as a sub-theme, this time within the larger category

of integration, because in this instance it was a means of both creating and preventing

integration of employees across organizations as they merged:

INTERVIEW 10: "… I had more in common with them [employees at NYNEX

vs. employees at GTE]. And, um, we would then commiserate [about the merger

with GTE]."

INTERVIEW 14: "I think that there still is a we vs. them, in some cases it's much

better than it definitely was back then, but there still is that, that identification of

former GTE/former BA people and I think that it still causes some problems."

INTERVIEW 24: "… when you had to, uh, meet with someone like, if they were formerly from Bell Atlantic, and they were on your team, you met with them and you compared notes, and stuff like that. It was pretty easy. I think one of the reasons it was pretty easy was that we were both former Bell companies, and the systems were the same, you talked the same lingo, you talk about a service order or a billing problem. Or if you were rolling out a new product and you had to get into the billing system, whatever, you were talking the same language, it was pretty easy, you know…"

Shared experiences:

Over time, as employees of the merging companies worked together, and experienced similar challenges and successes, this helped to facilitate integration between the employees:

INTERVIEW 1: "They have blended better because to be perfectly honest, business had declined significantly since that merger, and so all of us have kind of arrived a the lowest common denominator, in terms of opportunities for advancement, or opportunities to expand staff, or you know, on the other side of the coin, the vulnerability to RIFs [reduction in force] so I think the GTE culture has become more similar to the previous Bell Atlantic culture simply because of environmental issues."

INTERVIEW 3: "…we were both in the same boat, doing the same thing. A me and a [name omitted] for instance, or a [name omitted] for instance, there were other names too. So, um, you know when you are in the trenches together you get closer. So, it… it… wore off relatively quickly at least from my perspective."

INTERVIEW 26: "I think if you look at the history now, thinking of the merger – if you want to call it – the merger of New York Telephone and New England Telephone, um, those two groups were at odds. And New Yorkers didn't want to be associated with New Englanders, and New Englanders didn't want to be associated with New Yorkers. Um, and we were NYNEX for I don't know I forget how many years, whatever, whatever number of years, um, but then when the merger came with Bell Atlantic I think the New York and New England relationships, people relationships, kind of solidified because even though you were in different camps so to speak, you were on the same side. And here's this group of people who were now coming from Philadelphia and D.C. and Charleston and whatnot, and even though going back to what I said before, they still had the same issues, they were still a phone company as we were and what not…. It was now we're on the NYNEX side, we're New York and New England and we're merging with you who are from these other cities and other areas, so I think that kind of solidified that. And I think that kind of grouping, um, together happened each time. So in other words, the Bell Atlantic… and the NYNEX people were on different sides. They solidified when Verizon, when GTE came along. Um, and it was then, don't take this the wrong way, it was then us against them, and I don't mean us against them in a bad way."

Shared goals and objectives:

Similar to shared experiences, establishing shared goals and objectives, especially at the outset of the merger, helped to facilitate the integration of employees and to break down perceived barriers, as each team came together to achieve the objectives the organization had set for them:

INTERVIEW 10: I think it's always hard initially because you're

trying to get to know the other organization and you're trying to get to know the

people. And that was the first really big merger we went through as a company, so

we didn't really have any experience at how to do a merger either. Um, which

made it harder and when you build transition teams what do you do? How do you

prioritize, how do you bring things together, how do you take an inventory of

current practices to determine what best practices are. None of us had really ever

done that before. And so, we just sort of jumped in and started… Um, it was hard

at first, but you know, you pick a place and you start and then – and even through

the transition you start to do the team building. And you start to have

conversations, and so, little by little we got to know them, and they got to know

us, we weren't so stupid, they weren't so arrogant. And so, we knew there was no

option but to move forward together, so we did."

INTERVIEW 14: "I think it might have become easy because of person…

person… personnel changes, but I think it also was also because we got used to

each other in certain cases, you know, we sort of molded into you sort of know

who's a pain in the ass, who's not and how to get things done, things like that.

Definitely power struggles, still continuing, but it… it… it was faster, I know

based on my [other merger] experience, I've gone through mergers, but it was

faster, it sort of melded quicker, but I think that's because we had a task to do,

Bell Atlantic was just launching their products and had a whole bunch of things to

do so we weren't – we were moving on to bigger and better things as a whole

entire team, it wasn't sort of just taking over the business, we were launching a

business, so I think it was probably a little bit different than you would just taking

over an existing business and modifying it, this was actually launching

something, probably just a little different."

INTERVIEW 19: "Um, I will say the … um … because of the task at hand it was

pretty quick, it wasn't like, there wasn't like a lot of drama or anything because of

the culture change, people just, people might have had certain opinions on the

merger, but they got over it. We had a project to um, to work on, so I would say

that, I saw total alignment and respect, I think it's also even if you work in the

same company you have to get to know and trust people, I'd say within a year. ….

But I'd say within literally within two to three weeks we all were rolling up our

sleeves doing what we needed to do. But I'd say within a year we felt, it felt like,

like one group, one company – at least on the project we were working on."

Tenure:

Tenure, or time, was also cited by 65 percent of employees as a major factor in

facilitating integration. Similar to shared experiences and goals, the longer the employees

worked together, the less the cultural differences and geographical distances mattered,

and led to increased integration:

INTERVIEW 1: "I think that we seem to have closed the gap, and we now have a

new culture that is a blend, but it's a blend that probably tilts a little more toward

the Bell Atlantic culture. Again, just because of what is going on in the business.

And the marketplace. So I think it's become more of the Bell Atlantic culture.

And frankly, the people in Dallas have simply been around longer now. You

know, when they created the headquarters, they obviously created a lot of

opportunity for people in that area and they didn't have long tenure. Well, now

they have long tenure. I've got some folks that have you know, 10 years now

from the former GTE territories. You know, they have more tenure

then so they are a bit more similar. They are older; there is less opportunity for

everybody. We are all going through RIFs. So, I think the cultures have come

closer together."

INTERVIEW 10: "At this point – eight years later – um, I think enough has

happened to us, where we have been through so much together … We've taken

our knocks."

INTERVIEW 23: "Well, over time it got easier and easier, needless to say, I think

groups started to re-gel, uh, the more, I think you have contact with people; the

more you get to know them. Some of the more, uh, social or friendlier aspects

start coming into play. And I think that takes time to develop, so… I don't think

there was any hostility or fear or backstabbing, no, I never had that impression,

but I think it takes time, whenever you have a group of people that are just thrown

into one boat, and get told now go row [laughs] that it becomes a question of

putting the rowers at the right spot in the boat to get it going. So, I think, with any

relationship things like that take time."

Subtheme 2: Team structure

Within the subtheme of team structure, four tertiary themes emerged as

representation of the experiences that the subjects had regarding merging employees, and

how the way the teams were structured during that merger process affected the level and

success of integration. Geography played a major role in facilitating or preventing the

feeling of team integration, with 60 percent of employees citing geography as factor in

team integration. One hundred percent of employees who identified team structure as a

factor in integration claimed that in at least one of the mergers their teams were mixed

between the two companies, but 60 percent also experienced in one of the

mergers their teams remaining in silos, and therefore team integration was not necessary.

Lastly, only 20 percent of the subjects claimed to have experienced a concerted effort on

the part of management to facilitate team building.

Figure 7 reflects the incidence of the four tertiary subthemes within the major

theme of integration:
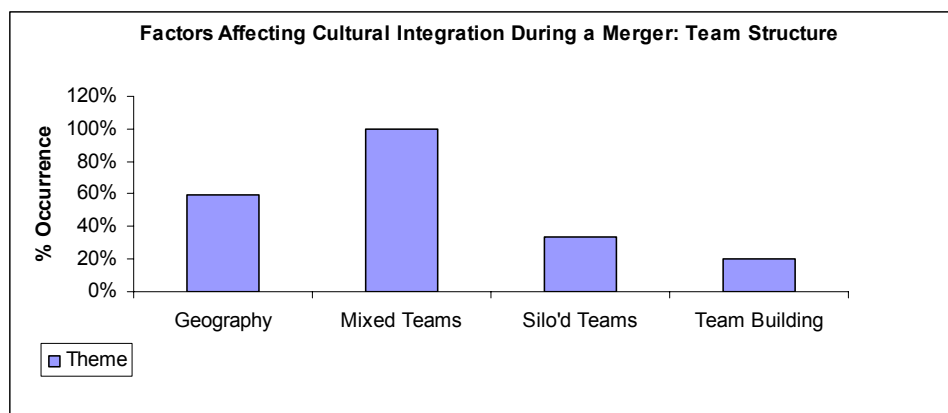
Figure 7. Factors affecting cultural integration during a merger: team structure.

Occurrence is the number of research participants who mentioned the types of

cultural integration, it does not measure frequency with which the theme was mentioned,

or the intensity of the discussion. The following verbatim comments were made by

research participants regarding each of the subthemes and help to provide context to the

discussion:

Geography:

During the different mergers between Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, and then Bell

Atlantic and GTE, teams became more geographically dispersed; with many team

members working in locations located a great distance from other teammates. This

geographical disparity, and the employees experience with working with remote teams,

affected how seamlessly the newly formed teams integrated:

INTERVIEW 1: "… I remember one of the biggest problems that we encountered, you know shortly after the merger was complete, had to do with the fact that those guys [GTE employees] were in a central location, and both Bell Atlantic, which of course by that time was Bell Atlantic and NYNEX combined, that company, you know, had geographic dispersion of staff reporting everywhere, and I remember it was very difficult having meeting with folks in Dallas, particularly if the teams were heavily stacked with people from Dallas, because what would happen they would all be in a room together, and there might be one or two of you calling into the meeting remotely, and it was very difficult to follow what was going on."

INTERVIEW 18: "So there were two differences, I have not only felt this in terms of merging with GTE, and there was a shift, because all of a sudden not only were we dealing with differences in the corporate culture, but also in a, in American's regional differences… um… because New England and Bell Atlantic has an Eastern – an East Coast point of view and GTE had much more of a Midwestern and Western point of view. And uh, you know we make a lot of jokes about it, but it's there."

INTERVIEW 14: "…I think co-location has a lot to do with it, um, I know they tried to intermingle functions, you know, everybody's sort of doing [everything], you have marketing people here, marketing people there, in theory, I don't know if that was the best thing to do. Might have been better to have everybody clear cut, organizational structure, you know, marketing would be in the East Coast, operations would be on the West Coast, so you, you know, that might have been a better way to handle it instead of mixing the bag up."

Mixed teams:

The approach to mixing employees of the merging companies differed based on functional area, and had an impact on how employees perceived the employees of the merging company, and guided their interactions between teammates:

INTERVIEW 14: "You know, not at first, they were sort of kept separate, then from what I remember, basically, the Bell Atlantic people, I was in the marketing group, the Bell Atlantic people took over most of the marketing and that in, that did come with a couple people, but for the most part it didn't come with a good majority of the NYNEX people, [name omitted] came, she actually – she came down here, [name omitted] don't know if you remember her, there were a couple of other people, but for the most part the marketing team was sort of absorbed you know…"

INTERVIEW 4: "So, product line management spanned those groups, but market management was geographically focused. So rather than saying, you know, here is a market management team for New York, and we're going to put some Virginia people on it, and we're going to put some New York people on it, they made the market management folks were still New York, so the New York sales folks, their market management folks is still the team they knew in New York. With the institutional bias', with the favoritism, with… and the Virginia folks, who might have benefited from a guy like me coming down and saying no, you need to look at this differently, were all the old Virginia crowd."

INTERVIEW 6: "I am in a state-based organization so, even though I was second or third level at different times in this, if you're state based… above you its getting merged, and… and so maybe the higher ups up in the business, clearly the

merger of organizations is happening, the integration or whatever word

you want to use, but when you are really on a state team, it didn't matter that

much…"

Team Building

The philosophy of team building was handled differently by different

organizations, but was not felt to be a priority of leadership by 20 percent of

interviewees, and these employees expressed the presence or lack thereof of team

building as impacting how well employees integrated:

INTERVIEW 4: "There was a guy [name omitted], who was a great guy, he made

director, and he and I – about the same age group, same education, same kind of

socio-economic – we really hit it off. But that was all, I think, because we had

certain traits outside the business that we just kind of hit it off. And I think that's

the alliances that were made. But, there was no encouragement from senior

management, there was no team building, there was no, you know, it was all kind

of we had a meeting, and then we formed alliances or didn't form alliances…"

INTERVIEW 8: "…And we travelled a lot, between and among to… to… you

know to see people and I was in Philadelphia, and I would go down to Arlington,

and there was a lot more, you know, freedom to travel, to meet people face to

face, and to have these dialogues face to face, which I think helped a lot."

Theme 4: Perceptions

The initial perceptions or preconceived notions that subjects had of the employees

of the merging company played a major role in determining how the mergers were

initially received by the subjects. Ninety-five percent of the subjects felt that the

employees of the merging companies had an 'attitude' or a way of handling themselves

that the subjects found difficult to deal with during the merger. Thirty percent

of the subjects felt the actual or perceived capabilities of the merging employees

impacted their perceptions of the employees and their comfort level with the merger, and

lastly 80 percent of the subjects confessed to having preconceived notions of the type of

people the merging employees were, which impacted their initial interactions with the

employees. These stereotypes differed by company, with 69 percent admitted to having a

stereotype of the kind of people the former Bell Atlantic employees were, 88 percent

having preconceived notions of NYNEX employees, and 63 percent having formed

impressions of GTE personnel prior to having met them.

Figure 8 reflects the incidence of the three subthemes within the major theme of

perceptions:

Figure 8. Perceptions of Merging Employees.
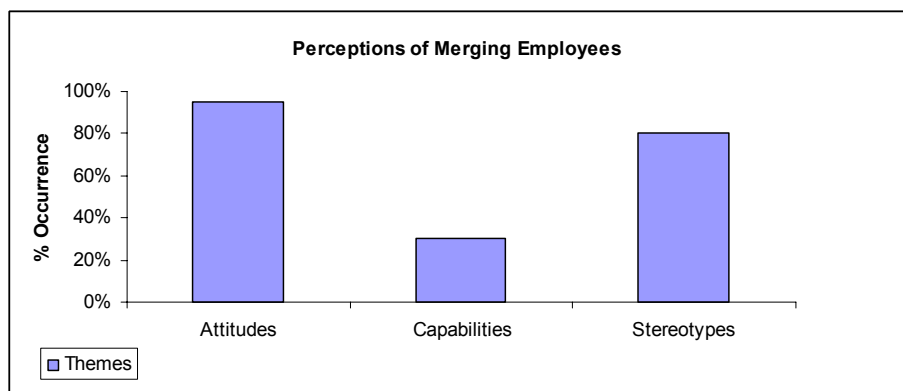
Occurrence is the number of research participants who mentioned the different

factions affecting perception of merging employees, it does not measure frequency with

which the theme was mentioned, or the intensity of the discussion. The following

verbatim comments were made by research participants regarding each of the subthemes

and help to provide context to the discussion:

Subtheme 1: Attitudes

The presence of a perceived 'attitude' by employees was cited by 95 percent of interviewees as a factor in how they viewed the employees of the merging company, and led to certain behavior patterns that hindered initial integration of employees and guided how people behaved to one another:

INTERVIEW 13: "...the New York people that were difficult to work with…"

INTERVIEW 14: "…from a executive director level, they [NYNEX people] were very egotistical, and very, you know, they were better than… than everybody else. From a peer level, they were pretty decent for the most part..."

INTERVIEW 15: "And my impression was, uh, that these northern New York type, Boston type, they were really quick and uh, more willing to rush things."

INTERVIEW 24: "Ummm, it seemed like the people from Tex… well everyone was from Texas when you think of it, mostly, the people from GTE. It just seemed like there was a very … uh… Texas…. I am trying to think of the right terms, it was very colloquial. They really were, they really were protecting their Texas people. And, uh, they were very turf conscious, and stuff like that."

Subtheme 2: Capabilities

Perceptions regarding the capabilities of merging employees were also a factor in how people viewed and behaved toward the employees of the merging companies:

INTERVIEW 1: "I think the Bell Atlantic people, it just so happened, that in my area of expertise, the Bell Atlantic people were probably more senior just in terms of experience and everything."

INTERVIEW 19: "…when we got together with NYNEX…I knew that they'd have some best of best practices and that we'd have some. I wasn't anticipating

that GTE would and would what really had me laugh during that year

working with them was that we took more of their processes… within a year we

were throwing out all of our processes from service order systems, voicemail

systems, platforms, we were doing everything from GTE. So initially my thought

was ok, they're going to come to the table, we've merged a million times, I can

work with anyone but they'll be, they'll be getting with the game plan with us and

in the end, we switched to almost everything they were doing…."

INTERVIEW 21: "…So, I try to protect my psychology by saying, well… even

NYNEX, in the New York and New England Tel, only New York would know

how to deal with a New York customer. How could a New England CAM

[corporate account manager] ever talk to a New York customer? It's New York."

Subtheme 3: Stereotypes:

In both mergers, employees approached the merging employees with certain

stereotypes in mind based on previous beliefs centered on geography and company

affiliation:

Bell Atlantic:

INTERVIEW 10: "I think they thought we [Bell Atlantic] were a little bit of

bump… like we were country bumpkins. Again, from that New York

perspective."

INTERVIEW 14: "I think they looked at all of, at least I'm looking at my long

distance group, um they probably looked at this team [Bell Atlantic] as being

green, naïve, um, you know, they launched their product first, literally it was

months difference, but um, they didn't see us as having the experience…"

INTERVIEW 26: "…my impressions as a NYNEX employee of the employees from Bell Atlantic is frankly that they were a step ahead of us, that they did things a bit more progressively than we did at NYNEX, that they were just a little bit ahead of the issues than we were at NYNEX."

NYNEX:

INTERVIEW 1: "Well, interesting enough, before we [Bell Atlantic] interacted with them in any way, you know, we had heard stereotypical things about New Yorkers in particular, so we just believed that coming into the gate they were going to be very aggressive, um, sort of take control was I guess our biggest fear. Um, so there was a certain level of suspicion and skepticism about what these people were going to be like."

INTERVIEW 10: "... I think we were operating from a base of stereotypes about New Yorkers, so they rude, they were pushy, they were arrogant, they thought they had all the answers and they knew everything, and there was nothing that anybody – and our corporate headquarters had been operating from Arlington, VA – there was nothing that anyone from Arlington was going to tell them about how to do anything."

INTERVIEW 9: "Um… again, this is through the rumor mill, but there seemed to be an emphasis on 'it's going to be done the New York way'."

GTE:

INTERVIEW 10: "When we met the GTE people they seemed… a lot of them had sort of a Texas sort of drawl and you could see where a cultural thing like that, when a lot of the interactions were taking place on the phone because of being Texas and then the Northeast. We had time zone differences and you had

some of those cultural differences, because they spoke more slowly it

sort of led to the perception that they thought more slowly and that they weren't

that sharp. That they were a little dumb… that's not the right word but not as

sophisticated. We thought we were much more sophisticated in our thinking and

in the practices we had."

INTERVIEW 13: "My experience with the GTE people was they were always

very easy to work with. I mean it was a totally different kind of thing than the Bell

Atlantic/NYNEX merger. And maybe…maybe part of that was we kind of

decided to get a new name, and stuff like that, but I kind of doubt that. I think it's

just… a lot of it was just personal culture. People from Texas vs. people from

New York. They were just a lot easier to deal with."

INTERVIEW 8: "I remember thinking that they [GTE] are all rich, they all live

well, because the quality of life. They had huge homes, country club

memberships; everyone drove a Mercedes or a really big SUV. I remember being

amazed by the quality of their haircuts and the quality of their clothes. Everybody

had, you know, was married; everybody had children nearly, or was very involved

with their church. So I remember thinking, wow this is really, if you needed to

test something this is probably not a bad place to go. But, I remember thinking

this is not exactly how I have grown up. So, I remember thinking … okay, I have

to stop thinking about big oil rigs and big hair, you know?"

Future Applications

At the conclusion of each interview, where the discussion had centered on the

past, and the personal, lived experiences of the individual, a secondary question was

posed to the research participants: "based on your experience, is there anything you think

the leadership of the organization could have been done differently to improve
or speed up the integration?"

Three key ideas emerged from this question, with 90 percent of respondents
offering thoughts and ideas on how the Verizon leaders could have improved the
integration process across both mergers. The three key ideas were: communication,
integration and leadership. Specifically, 28 percent of respondents cited increased
communication – and time spent together – as a critical factor in helping employees
weather a merger. Eighty-three percent felt that greater physical integration would
improve employee dynamics and foster a sense of one team vs. opposing factions. And
39 percent actually felt that the leaders themselves often caused the issues that employees
faced in merging two organizations. Respondents felt that often times employee's
behavior was driven by the 'shadow of the leader' philosophy, and that leadership itself
could have helped speed up the integration by setting an example.

Figure 9 reflects the incidence of the three emergent ideas on what leaders could
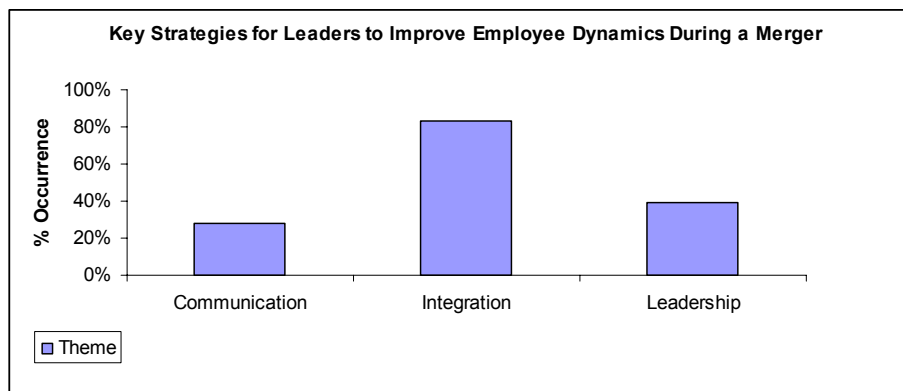do to improve and speed up the integration of employees during a merger:

Figure 9. Strategies for leadership to improve employee dynamics during a
merger.

Occurrence is the number of research participants who mentioned each of the key ideas; it does not measure frequency with which each was mentioned, or the intensity of the discussion. The following verbatim comments were made by research participants regarding each of the subthemes and help to provide context to the discussion:

Theme 1: Communication

Increased communication was cited by 5 out of the 18 interviewees, who offered suggestions for how the handling of future mergers could be improved in order to more rapidly facilitate the integration of employees and to manage employee behavior:

INTERVIEW 12: "… they needed to do more about talking about the culture and more communications to the company about this is what we are trying to do…. It's not a secret. Tell them what we are going to be doing. We are going to be merging these groups and doing things… and they didn't do that."

INTERVIEW 25: "I feel like when people are secure, you know there is more sharing, more forthcoming, I feel like if I look back at GTE I feel like it was secretive, and I think maybe it was because the people heading up the department I was in, weren't sure if they were secure in their positions, and they didn't want to divulge too much. But I think that once people are named and they are sure of what they will be doing, there is more of a forthcomingness. There is less… you are dealing with less … you don't have to deal with people's insecurities."

Integration:

Eighty-three percent of the respondents to this questions felt that leadership needed to more proactively manage the integration of employees, and facilitate the rapid integration of teams after a merger in order to create an effectively merged team

structure:

> INTERVIEW 1: "Zero tolerance for sniping back and forth. Zero tolerance for positioning that way. You know, rewarding – however possible – teamwork behaviors that really helped to integrate the groups."

> INTERVIEW 10: "I think that the key thing is to, um, rip the band aid off. I think, um, and make it happen as quickly as possible. I think it happened faster with the merger with GTE than it did the merger of NYNEX. Um, I think that idea of parallel processing is the right way to go. I think the idea of putting key leaders, almost like co-leaders, one from them one from us, and forming the organization that way, you don't leave anyone out the way we felt left out in the merger with NYNEX."

> INTERVIEW 12: "You could say it took too long to merger the groups, and that's because it's difficult to take organizations this large and combine them into one and assume that policies and procedures are the same and you can just mesh them together. They're working at the bigger things, and the smaller things, just simple things like your vacation, your days off, how do I do this, and how do I do that. Even payroll, that was so different, that was the biggest issue because it was so complicated to transfer a person from one end to another and remember all the steps. And you didn't want anything to go wrong with someone's paycheck. After they started merging things together and you knew what was going on, it got easier over time. It could have been done a lot faster, they could have done maybe something more on the culture…"

Leadership:

Leaders, and strong leadership, were cited by 39 percent of respondents as setting the tone for the successful integration of employees after a merger:

INTERVIEW 1: "I don't think there was a win/win mentality going in [to the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger]. I think there was a win/lose mentality. The win heavily skewed toward the GTE people. So, you know, I don't know if the leadership did everything they could have done to make that an easier transition, because that is where the behavior was coming from – senior leadership."

INTERVIEW 6: "I think you have to be very decisive in your leadership… I think that stuff just has to be done quickly and done decisively. You have to put senior leadership in there early, you know who is going to run this new entity, this new business, whatever it is, and that person has to set clear direction and clear expectations. And lay out timelines, and when things are going to happen, and then do it quickly and… and decisively. I just think indecision is a killer in how… when you're merging."

INTERVIEW 8: "I don't know if there is anything more they could have done except what always helps is when they put… when a company comes together, when they put out some kind of a mandate. You know, when Kennedy said I want to be on the moon, everyone galvanized to meet that goal. I think the same thing kind of held true when they said, okay, we are going to launch long distance, or we are going to launch FiOS, we are going to launch whatever, if there could be some common goal, because people want to… they want to be able to talk to you about something. And have a critical role."

Summary

Chapter 4 presented the data that were gathered from in depth interviews with 20 current managerial employees, who had experienced two or more mergers while employed at Verizon. The data gathered centered around four major themes: conflict, culture, integration and perceptions. In addition, a secondary idea of what leadership could have done to improve or speed up the integration was explored, and yielded three primary themes around communication, integration and leadership.

The methodology described in chapter 3 was used to code and organize the data gathered, and resulted in several subthemes and even tertiary themes within the subthemes. All of the data for each of the subthemes was analyzed for its percent occurrence within the data, as described by the subjects, and verbatim comments from the research were provided against each of the primary, secondary and tertiary themes.

Chapter 5 will provide further analysis of the data uncovered during the research, and help to provide linkages between the experiences of initial mergers and subsequent mergers and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships across the mergers. It will compare these findings to the literature findings in chapter 2, and help to provide context and perspective on how employees think and behave when faced with a merger and then a subsequent merger, and how those interactions change. It will also provide recommendations to the field of leadership based on this research, and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological case study was to explore and understand the dynamics of employee interaction during the process of multiple mergers at a major telecommunications company. The phenomenological case study methodology was chosen because of its ability to revisit a past event and, through reflective structural analysis, portray the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). The study sought to understand the dynamics that occurred between the separate employees of the merging companies after the two organizations had merged, their impressions of each other and how they worked together, and how that may have changed after a subsequent merger. Twenty mid-level managers were interviewed for this study, and their interviews were audio taped and transcribed. The data obtained through these interviews was analyzed for common theses and ideas using QSR International's NVivo 8® software. During this process, ideas for improvement and alternative strategies were explored to identify how the process may have been improved. This may allow for a better understanding of how to improve this process for future mergers.

Chapter 5 provides a review of chapters 1 through 4 of this study, which offers context for the interpretation of the data and the recommendations contained within this chapter. Interpretations of the data analysis are summarized from the data uncovered during the interview process and summarized in chapter 4. Recommendations are presented based on the analysis and interpretation of the data from the research that was conducted. These recommendations may help leaders faced with the task of merging companies in the future identify ways to improve the merging of employees in differing organizations into one newly merged entity, and ways to more quickly integrate employees to form a united team for the betterment of the merged company. In addition,

the learning from this research may form the basis of future research in other industries to future expand the body of knowledge on how employees, faced with a merger, react to and work with merging employees.

Chapter 1 identified the problem and the purpose of this study, which was that while mergers have emerged as a key growth strategy for companies, as many as 50-80 percent of companies underperform their industry peers post-merger (DePamphilis, 2003). One reason for this underperformance is thought to be the lack of attention to how a merger impacts employees, and how to integrate employees of merging companies (Grensing-Pophal, 2004; Harding & Rouse, 2007; Harrison, 2007; Lesowitz & Knauff, 2003). The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological case study was to identify how employees' relationships change across multiple mergers, and to potentially identify strategies that could be employed by leaders to more successfully integrate employees during possible future mergers. Better integration of employees may improve the post-merger performance of companies, especially when faced with multiple mergers. The significance of the study in general, and to leadership in particular was discussed in chapter 1, as well as the nature of the study, the research question, and the theoretical framework which provided the context for the study. The limitations, delimitations, assumptions and definition of terms were also covered in chapter 1.

Chapter 2 provided an extensive literature review of the factors that determine the success of mergers, including both individual mergers and the impact of successive mergers. During this review, the factors that contribute to a successful merger, what makes up the elusive aspects of a corporation's culture and the effect of cultural compatibility on the success of a merger were examined. Organizational identification and conflict and their impact on organizational functioning was also reviewed. Lastly, the

impact of these elements on successive mergers was identified. The insights

gleaned from this literature review provided a framework for this phenomenological case

study.

Chapter 3 identified the methodology that was used for this research study, and

provided a rationale for the use of the phenomenological case study method, which was

chosen over other qualitative methodologies because it allows for the understanding of an

experience to develop from the view of the person or persons who have experienced the

phenomenon. It also limited the research participants to a small sampling of individuals,

in this case 20, which allowed for more in-depth exploratory into the lived experiences of

the individual, but there was enough representation to gain an understanding of how the

phenomenon is more broadly experienced (Donalek & Solwisch, 2004; Jacelon &

O'Dell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

The central question which guided the research was defined. That question was:

how do individuals within merging companies interact with and view each other during

the merger process, and does that view change when faced with additional mergers? A

secondary question was also asked in order to help provide guidance for future learning,

specifically: could leadership have done anything differently to promote greater harmony

between employees of the merging companies? The methodology for selecting the

research population was described, specifically that research participants were selected

using purposeful sampling of current Verizon employees who had been with the company

for more than 10 years, and whom had experienced both the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX

merger and then the subsequent Bell Atlantic/GTE merger. All participants in the research

were management employees who were solicited through employee referrals, and who

were not intimately known to the researcher.

Chapter 3 also reviewed the script used to recruit participants for the research (see Appendix A), the informed consent letter that was distributed to all research participants (see Appendix B), the consent to act as a research participants (see Appendix C), and location of the study. In addition, the chapter described the instrumentation, data collection and analysis, and the validity and reliability of the study.

Chapter 4 provided an analysis of the data that was collected during the interview process, and outlines the major themes that were consistently expressed by research participants as a result of the questions posed to them during the interviews. QSR International's NVivo 8® software was used to help organize and code the data into primary, secondary and tertiary themes. Four major themes emerged in this process, specifically: conflict, culture, integration and perceptions. In addition, a secondary idea of what leadership could have done to improve or speed up the integration was explored, and yielded three primary ideas around communication, integration and leadership. The data was presented using tables, charts and textural description in order to help clarify the incidence of the themes, as well as provide the verbatim descriptions from the research participants of what they experienced.

Chapter 5 will provide an overview of the research findings centered on answering the primary question that guided the research: how do individuals within merging companies interact with and view each other during the merger process, and does that view change when faced with additional mergers? The four major themes that emerged will be discussed in as key findings, and interpretations of those findings are discussed, as well as opportunities for leadership to improve the process in future mergers and recommendations for additional research are provided.

Conclusions

The phenomenological case study methodology was employed to gain a greater

depth and understanding of the lived experiences of 20 Verizon managers during the

mergers of NYNEX and Bell Atlantic and then the subsequent merger of Bell Atlantic

and GTE. These interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, and then analyzed using

QSR International's NViVo 8® software in order to identify key themes and ideas that

emerged during the course of the interviews. The objective was to gain a greater

understanding into how individuals within merging companies interact with and view

each other during the merger process, and if that view changes when faced with

additional mergers. In addition, a secondary objective was identified which was to gain a

greater understanding of what leaders can do going forward to improve the merger

process.

Four major themes emerged around the primary objective of how individuals

within merging companies interact with each other. It seems inevitable that conflict will

occur when merging two disparate organizations with differing cultures. Employees

approach the new company with preconceived notions of what the employees are going

to be like, based on the culture of the company, where the company is located (East vs.

West; North vs. South), and how similar the company or industry is compared to their

own company. There is also a natural tendency for people to cling to their familiar

culture, and regard the other company's culture with suspicion and fear. The level of

integration of the organizations as they merge seems to have an effect both on how strong

that suspicion and fear is, but also how well the cultures ultimately merge.

In interviews with employees whose groups were mingled but functions were kept

separate, there seemed to be little conflict, and people kept doing what they had always

done. But in the majority of the interviews, where groups were merged, the level of discomfort and conflict rose dramatically. Personal interactions, concerted efforts to spend time together in spite of geographic distances and time generally seemed to help mitigate some of the fear and conflict. However the presence of a common or shared goal seemed to rapidly increase the speed of integration as employees were forced to work together to achieve their goal. When multiple mergers occurred, however, the speed of integration for the former merger accelerated dramatically as the merged employees were faced with a new threat, or common enemy. And then the former rivals became united against the newly merging employees, and the merging of employees was complete for the former merger, and begins anew with the recent new merger.

Leaders play a critical role in managing those employee interactions and integration by how they personally handle the merger, as well as how they lead their teams. Open communication, forced integration of teams and the establishment of a challenging goal all contribute to faster integration, as leaders create an environment where employees can spend time together, are given clear direction and accountability for the achievement of goals and when leaders themselves set the tone by avoiding favoritism and prejudice.

Conflict, perception, culture and integration are intertwined and impact the way employees interact with one another, but each offer interesting insights into employee behavior and interactions. They also provide guidance for how leaders can influence and improve the dynamics of employee interactions during a merger:

Conflict is inevitable

Conflict is a natural by product of the merger process. According to Badrtalei and Bates (2007), no merger is a combination of equals – one firm is always going to be

dominant over the other, whether financially or in its market position. This

leads to conflicts between the two companies as they come together. Varying degrees and

types of conflict were experienced by all the participants in the research, and can be

viewed in two major categories: people-oriented conflict and structure-oriented conflict.

Some of the primary drivers of the conflict that emerged as common in both the Bell

Atlantic/NYNEX merger and the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger centered around job security,

competition for key jobs that occur in both companies that may be getting combined, and

jockeying or positioning oneself in a merger to ensure a person gets noticed or is in the

right place to get the better jobs. As one participant stated:

Oh, any time there is a merger, you worry about job security, especially when

there are redundant teams – they had a marketing team, we had a marketing team, other

than that I…uh…I think – at certain levels it got personal, um, but I think the primary

thing is probably job security because you feel like you could easily be replaced by that

group over there that's coming in, why do you need two of them? (INTERVIEW 16)

Feelings of uncertainty regarding job security or position can be expected during a

merger, as reductions in staffing are an all too common by product of the merger or

acquisition process and as companies seek to realize savings through synergy or cost

reductions when merging similar entities (Pomeroy, 2007). This has been shown in other

studies to damage employee morale and lead to poor attitudes and a lack of motivation

(Badrtalei & Bates, 2007; Buono & Bowditch, 1990; Pepper & Larson, 2006; Pomeroy,

2007). These findings are consistent with the findings of this research effort.

In addition, even greater conflict can occur when former enemies are merged,

which can challenge the employee's fundamental assumptions about personal and

professional identity (Atkinson, 2005; McEntire & Bentley, 1996). This can often lead to

feelings of anger, betrayal and disengagement by the employees (Thach &

Nyman, 2001). Negative feelings can be even more difficult to overcome in older, more

established companies where the corporate culture is even more entrenched. (DiGeorgio,

2003). This phenomenon could be observed in this research effort, as the Bell

Atlantic/GTE merger occurred, and conflicts arose regarding the processes, compensation

and structure of the newer GTE vs. the heavily regulated, long-established Bell Atlantic,

with its ties to the hundred plus year history of AT&T.

Systems issues also emerged as a critical driver of conflict in a merger – the

blending or incompatibility of systems and processes. Caring for the early integration of

systems and processes, as well as establishing short and long-term objectives to blend

systems was felt by 53 percent of research participants as something that would have

helped the legacy companies to be more integrated and to function as a single company.

Perceptions can negatively impact the merging of employees

Preconceived notions or perceptions can drive conflict and delay the merging of

employees. According to Marks (1997), combining two differing organizations naturally

leads to an 'us versus them' situation, which can further exacerbate the natural prejudices

or preconceived notions that people might have of the merging employees. During this

process people tend to exaggerate the differences between the two companies, instead of

looking for areas of synergy or similarity (Marks, 1997). In each of the mergers – even in

the New York Telephone/New England telephone merger (as expressed by former

NYNEX employees) – employees went into the merger with preconceived notions or

perceptions about New Yorkers or New Englanders, "southerners" in the case of Bell

Atlantic, and the "wild Texans" in the case of GTE, as one interviewee put it:

Well, interesting enough, before we interacted with them in any way,

you know, we had heard stereotypical things about New Yorkers in

particular, so we just believed that coming into the gate they were going to

be very aggressive, um, sort of take control was I guess our biggest fear.

Um, so there was a certain level of suspicion and skepticism about what

these people were going to be like. (INTERVIEW 1)

These preconceived notions created artificial barriers and prejudices that needed

to be broken down before the blending of employees could happen, and in some cases

those perceptions still exist even nine to twelve years after the respective mergers,

particularly in the case of the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger.

There is still a sense of the Dallas people being a bit different, and there is

still some struggles I think that exist. Nowhere near the magnitude of what

occurred when the merger first closed, but you know, even now I detect

that there were some relationships that were established in the GTE

organization that still exist today in a way that people believe that its a

network that was created back then that still exists today, and is at times

exclusionary. (INTERVIEW 1)

Culture drives behavior

Every company has an established set of norms and patterns of behavior that

forms the basis of an employee's reaction and willingness to embrace a merger. Various

studies have demonstrated that the longer employees have worked together, and for a

company, the stronger their bond to that company and their identification of their role

within the company (Chan, 2006; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Loi et al., 2004).

The closer the culture of the merging companies is, the easier it is to merge the two cultures. According to Vora et al. (2007), employees can experience role conflict and emotional stress when faced with the integration of two different companies and cultures, especially if those cultures are dissimilar. In the case of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, both companies came from a history of regulation and were by products of the break up of AT&T, and had been a regional Bell operating company (RBOC) prior to the merger. They had shared history, many of the systems and processes were similar, if not the same, and they were used to working in a Bell company environment. While leadership philosophies were different, and each company had evolved its own way of running their business, the origins were similar enough that the merging of the two companies as not a completely new experience.

The merger with GTE, however, posed additional problems, as their culture was dramatically different, in that they were a non-regulated company, they had a dispersed footprint, and they had not operated in some of the more highly competitive markets that had sprung up after de-regulation, specifically Boston and New York. They were also a younger company, with a centralized work location, had more opportunity for advancement and were much more willing to take risks for personal and organizational advancement. These differences in philosophy and culture created significantly different merger experiences between the Bell Atlantic and NYNEX merger vs. the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger. According to one interviewee "I do think there still is this sense that the GTE folks think we act too much like a phone company. And that we are not market based." (INTERVIEW 4).

This finding is consistent with the outcomes of other research efforts, where it was identified that in many mergers the first time that leaders will address the people

aspects of a merger is after the merger is complete (Atkinson & Clarke, 2007;

Weber & Camerer, 2003). Previous studies have indicated that a lack of attention to

cultural compatibility contribute directly to the success or failure of the merger (Buono &

Bowditch, 1990; Want, 2003). As one legacy Bell Atlantic employee stated:

If you were in the NYNEX, where you had your vice… your presidency of HR or

communications or, um, public relations, and it was the former NYNEX territory, it took

on that culture. And that was very… it was an obvious culture change. You could see that.

But for most of the part it was just a… that we didn't blend right at first because it

wasn't… there wasn't a whole lot of preparation, we just merged and you're all mushed

together and it was very difficult trying to get used to that environment. Even though our

business was the same. (INTERVIEW 12)

In the case of the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger, the shared history and similar

organizational structure made that merger easier for employees to align behind and blend

cultures, and for 'them' to become 'us'. However, the much more disparate cultures of

Bell Atlantic and GTE continue to create a perception of 'us' versus 'them' and

employees in general still seem to identify employees with their former company (former

Bell Atlantic versus former GTE). One interviewee described that continuing sense of

identification "…you look at somebody and you first identify them as they're former

GTE or former Bell Atlantic. They still have that label regardless…" (INTERVIEW 14).

Pepper and Larson (2006) also found that the stronger the cultures of the two

merging companies, the more difficult the establishment of a new culture will be because

employees are heavily vested in their current companies culture and are less willing to

change. This echoes the experience of Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger, where the cultures

were more similar and the integration happened more quickly, and the Bell Atlantic/GTE

merger, where the differences in culture have led to a much slower integration, which many of the participants still feel has not yet fully happened. One research participant described his experience:

> I'm thinking that they [GTE] were more maverick. They were much more the cowboys, yes, they're from Texas and guess what, it shows. They were much more maverick. Yeah well, we know that's the rule, but that's not, the fact that it's a rule doesn't necessarily mean that we're going to do it that way. Wait a minute. (*Laughing*) Wait a minute, where we come from, um, folks deal with consequences if they don't follow the rules and yet it seemed to me that GTE had this much more freewheeling attitude… that's been one of my first and lasting impressions with the folks from GTE."
>
> (INERVIEW 12)

Integration impacts the merger experience

The participants in the research study experienced various levels of integration during each of the mergers. Most of the participants were in teams that were highly integrated across companies, teams and functions. These participants experienced significant conflict and cultural differences during each of the mergers. Some of the participants, however, were in groups that were merged across companies, and may have been on a team that now contained people from the merging companies, but their functions remained the same due to the nature of the work. Their jobs essentially didn't change although their actual team may have grown or expanded. This occurred specifically in the areas of regulatory and government affairs, or public relations. Each of these functions remained state-based, so with each merger more states were added, but

these functions remained static. In cases such as this, participants experienced little or no impact or conflict with each merger.

While time played a major part in the process of merging employees, the setting of shared objectives and a rallying cry by leadership can speed up the process of integration. Participants who were part of a project early on with specific goals and deadlines seemed to experience a faster integration of employees and processes then groups who merged and were focused on typical day-to-day activities. However, this also led to some level of conflict if the two merging employee groups had fundamentally different perspectives on how to achieve the shared goal or deadline. In general, however, 55 percent of employees stated that the early setting of big goals with very specific outcomes and deadlines seemed to help participants form alliances and work together more effectively.

> …it was hard at first, but you know, you pick a place and you start and then… and even through the transition you start to do the team building. And you start to have conversations, and so, little by little we got to know them, and they got to know us, we weren't so stupid, they weren't so arrogant. And so, we knew there was no option but to move forward together, so we did. (INTERVIEW 10)

Physical integration also plays a critical role in the how quickly or effectively employees merge. Working in the same office plays a part of it, but the integration of teams and the ease of people being able to have face-to-face meetings versus meeting via conference call seems to help either create integration or to maintain that feeling of separation that characterizes the early days of a merger. With the earlier mergers experienced by research participants, in each new merger – while they had to go further

afield to have meetings – it remained a shuttle ride or a quick train trip. With

the merger of Bell Atlantic and GTE, however, the physical difference between the two

companies prevented the frequent in person meetings most of the research participants

felt was critical for effective integration. As one interviewee participant said:

> It's still a very big difference. I mean, we are talking a huge geographic
>
> area. We're talking California, we're talking Florida, we're talking
>
> Indiana, I mean, we've got people all over the map. So, number one, you
>
> don't get to see these people every day, obviously, and number two, there
>
> is just clashes of culture all over the place. So, you know, uh, I personally
>
> have a great relationship with tons of people from Dallas, but I had to go
>
> down there. No kidding, I have flown to Dallas at least sixty times, since
>
> the merger. And, so, spend two or three days down there each time, so I've
>
> built a lot of great relationships with the people in Dallas, so the cultural
>
> difference isn't so – I'm still not going to ride electric bulls or anything –
>
> but the cultural difference isn't so great. (INTERVIEW 3)

Travel restrictions and budget concerns also prevented frequent in person team

meetings and these restrictions hindered the ability of employees to let go of the

prejudices and sense of rivalry that characterized each merger, which time spent together

could have helped mitigate.

The presence of a common enemy, however, seemed to bring about the fastest

level of integration for employees of earlier mergers. Sixty percent of research

participants mentioned the common enemy phenomenon as a catalyst for bringing

disparate employee groups together. This phenomenon was mentioned by both employees

who had experienced the New England Telephone/New York Telephone merger, as well

as those that subsequently experienced the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX and Bell

Atlantic/GTE merger. The definition of the 'us' in the 'us' vs. 'them' changed with each

merger, as former enemies aligned against a new threat. This presence of a new 'them', or

common enemy, solidified emergent alliances and seemed to often be the catalyst to

finally merging differing employee factions from past mergers.

> I think [name omitted] said it best when he said the best thing that ever happened
> to the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger was the merger of GTE, was the acquisition of GTE,
> because it united us against a common enemy. And all of a sudden we shifted from 'we'
> being a Bell Atlantic definition to 'we' being a Bell Atlantic plus NYNEX. And 'they'
> were not NYNEX anymore, 'they' were GTE. (INTERVIEW 10)

Various studies support this finding, as people naturally tend to differentiate

themselves and their group from others on the basis of perceived differences, and will

make comparisons between their own group and others, with their own group coming out

more favorably (Carmona et al., 2006; Chuang et al., 2004). This sense of belonging that

organizational identification can foster within employees also creates feelings of safety,

affiliation and self-esteem (Carmona et al., 2006; Loi et al., 2004). This could be seen as

former Bell Atlantic and NYNEX banded together to view themselves as one entity and

the incoming GTE employees as outsiders who needed to be watched and guarded

against.

Leadership plays a key part in successful employee integration

Three key ideas emerged as areas that leadership could have improved in order to

speed up or improve how employees of merging companies interacted with each other

and the speed at which they began to view themselves as a unified entity. These three

ideas were: leadership, communication and integration.

Leadership is essentially the bedrock of all the ideas, as it is from leadership that effective communication and structural integration occurs, although according to Kane-Urrabazo (2006) many leaders don't realize this. They need to manage how the relationship develops, beginning as early as the initial discussions between the companies on the possibility of merger (DiGeorgio, 2003). In this study, it was felt by many research participants that leadership actually caused, and continues to cause, the feelings of 'us' vs. 'them' that arose in each merger, and that is still felt to exist today to varying degrees within Verizon.

> Well, to be perfectly honest, I think that leadership caused some of the problems… to give you an example, I mentioned that early on in that merger distrust started to build simply because of detecting things that were going on on the other side. In this case, GTE, for example right before the merger the uh, at least in our organization, the senior VP reorganized her groups, gave them more functions, so at the end of the day when the merger closed, they probably were in a better position to occupy the jobs that they wanted. So, you know, they were doing things proactively to position their people in a way that they would win out over the Bell Atlantic side… well that is kind of a leadership behavior that I think is kind of a detriment, and led to that level of skepticism and distrust. (INTERVIEW 1)

It is critical during the merger process that leadership communicates frequently and with substance to employees. Nearly all of the research participants indicated an understanding of the motivation and business objectives behind the various mergers, so justification of the merger is not typically necessary. What is necessary is the

communication on how that merger is going to happen, frequent updates about the vision post-merger, and very specific information around the structure of the organization, where the headquarters is going to be and the plan for employee integration and potential job reductions. This is consistent with the findings of DiGiorgio (2003), who recognized that within merging organizations it is important to have open communication and a common understanding of the expected corporate culture and employee behavior needed to succeed in the new organization.

The idea that emerged as the most critical factor to improve employee interaction during the merger process was the integration of employees. Integration was cited by 83 percent of employees as the primary way that leadership can create a unified employee base. Specifically, employees felt that in each of the mergers, leaders should have made a more concerted effort to bring employees physically together. Some felt that job functions should have been blended together physically, but the main idea was that employees needed to spend more time together. This could be accomplished in face-to-face meetings, team meetings, regular in-person leadership meetings and time spent out of the office getting to know co-workers on a personal level, through organized gatherings by the leadership. As one participant stated:

> … integration is all about getting to know one another so you can work better and grow as an organization. And, things are so crazy and so hectic around here that I don't think enough time is given to team building. And I know that is considered kind of fluff, you know team building is great, but you know we have deadlines and ARPU [average revenue per unit] commitments, and so forth… umm we'll get to team building. But there is not enough team building. And as you become more and more

geographically dispersed it becomes more and more difficult to have

that team building exercise. …I think that is what the corporation needs to

do… I know it costs money to fly everyone to Tampa or fly everybody to

New York, and I know we don't have that kind of dollars and cents but

then again, you gotta sacrifice something if you can't spend the money to

do that, and I think you have sacrificed unity and camaraderie, and the

sense of team. (INTERVIEW 3)

Time spent together helps to break down prejudices and create greater personal and professional affiliation and understanding, leading to individuals who want to work together rather than work against each other. This shared understanding is what creates a team and fosters team spirit within an organization.

In summary, the research indicated that the integration of employees during a merger can be a difficult process that must be managed by the leadership of the organization in order to be effective. Prior to merger, due diligence should be undertaken to understand the cultural and geographic challenges that employees will face, which can help form the post-merger integration strategy. During the merger, clear objectives and a rallying cry that involves the delivery of tangible outcomes and deadlines should be set by leaders to help focus employees on a shared goal. Employees should be brought together physically as much as possible, with structured team building and opportunities for employees to meet and get to know one another personally, which will help break down prejudices and change perceptions. Leaders should set an example of team work and promote the new values and vision of the new organization, and work to focus employees on the shared objectives and external threats or opportunities for the company, rather than promote internal conflict through an 'us' versus 'them' mentality. Time,

tenure and shared experiences will eventually lead to a level of teamwork and

a sense of oneness between the teams, but ultimately it may take a new external or

internal threat, or a 'common enemy' to achieve what time and leadership cannot

achieve.

Recommendations

Based on the summary of findings from the in depth interviews held with 20

Verizon employees who experienced both the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger and the Bell

Atlantic/GTE mergers, several recommendations can be derived for companies planning

mergers.

First, leadership sets the tone and creates the vision for a merger. It is important

the leadership take into account the culture of the companies being merged, and

understand their similarities and differences. The greater the difference, the more difficult

the merger of employees is going to be. Understandings issues such as commitment to the

current culture, similarities of processes, styles of communication and compensation, and

geographical differences all contribute to how willing employees will be to seamlessly

integrate.

Secondly, communication by leadership is critical. Lack of understanding of the

strategy behind the merger, vision by leadership of the merger, fears about job security

and the possible combining of positions during the merger all contribute to employee

unrest and conflict. Early, frequent and ongoing communication by senior leadership can

all contribute to the willingness of employees to collaborate and work together for the

betterment of the corporation, rather than against each other out of fear or lack of

direction.

The creation of shared goals and objectives can also create a rallying cry for employees and bring them rapidly into alignment. The creation of a common enemy outside of the company or merger process may also help to bring employees into thinking of each other as an 'us' versus 'them'. While in the case of the Verizon merger, it was each subsequent merger that made the previous one work – or brought employees to think of former enemies as friends, with the GTE merger remaining today as the 'them' or the common enemy, if leadership had rallied the merging employees around an external enemy – or 'them' – they may have created a more rapidly integrated employee base who was aligned against an external enemy (like a competitor) versus the internal focus on employee disagreement.

Lastly, leaders need to understand that team building and time spent together is not just a 'nice to have' but is rather an essential component of merging companies and cultures. When employees spend time together, both in meetings and out of the office, it helps to break down cultural and mental barriers that may be preventing merging cultures from forming effective teams. Spending time together helps to break down the preconceived notions or perceptions that may have been formed prior to or during merger, and which may be based on fallacy or prejudice. All of which may be overcome when people spend time together getting to know each other, and getting past accents, colloquialisms and geographic differences.

The learning from this study could be further enhanced through additional research. This additional research could be conducted internally or externally. Additional research within Verizon offers several possibilities to enhance the learning gleaned from this study. Additional research opportunities include:

a) This study was limited to current Verizon employees in middle management positions. Expanding the research to either senior level managers or union employees may yield significantly different results, expanding the body of knowledge.

b) Recreating this research effort as a quantitative exercise. The focus would need to remain on employee interaction between merging companies, and then to subsequent mergers, and would need to only address current managerial employees who have experience the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger as well as the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger, but would allow the researcher to expand the base beyond 20 employees.

c) Recreating the research but expanding it to include the former employees of GTE may provide a different perspective, and may help identify if the experiences of the managers in this study were defined by their former Bell System history.

d) Lastly, Verizon has had several additional mergers since the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX and Bell Atlantic/GTE mergers, specifically the merger with Verizon Business with MCI and the Verizon Wireless merger with Alltel. Recreating this research with different business units with different competitive mindsets might yield different results, or add to the body of knowledge gleaned from this research.

In addition to opportunities for additional research within Verizon, mergers have become a way of business for many different industries. Repeating this phenomenological case study with other industries that have experienced multiple

mergers will help to establish whether the experiences expressed by the

managers in this study were unique to Verizon, the telecommunications industry, or

mergers in general.

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APPENDIX A: VERBAL SCRIPT OF TELEPHONE SOLICITATION

Hello, XXXXXXX

XXXX referred me to you as a possible research participant in a study I am conducting.

I am currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Phoenix, pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration. I am also employed at Verizon.

The purpose of this call is to request your participation in my qualitative phenomenological research study, which will entail interviewing current Verizon employees that have experience two or more mergers during their tenure at Verizon. The interview process will take approximately 1 – 1 1/2 hours of your time.

The purpose of the study is to discuss the interpersonal dynamics among merging employees during each of the mergers, and to understand how employees personally experienced the integration of employees during the merger.

Participants for this research study must been employed at Verizon during the last 10 years, and have been in a managerial position. Any information that is provided during the interview process is strictly confidential and your personal anonymity will be guaranteed.

The interview is strictly voluntary and poses no risk to you, whether you choose to participate or not. If you elect to participate in my study, I would like to schedule a date and time that is convenient for you. [Schedule interview or proceed to closing].

Thank you very much for your time today.

Goodbye.

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT: 18 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER

Dear   ,

I am a student at the University of Phoenix working on a Doctorate of Business Administration. I am conducting a research study entitled "The Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships in a Corporation after Merger". The purpose of the research study is to understanding how employees react to and interact with the employees of a merging company, and then if that relationship changes when additional mergers occur.

Your participation will involve a 1 – 1/2 hour face-to-face interview that will be tape recorded. Your interview will be transcribed and will be used on conjunction with other interviews. You may be recontacted via telephone at a later date for further discussion if subsequent interviews with other subjects requires additional information from you.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, you can do so without penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. The results of the research study may be published but your name will not be used and your results will be maintained in confidence.

In this research, there are no foreseeable risks to you**.**

Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation is to help create a better understanding of employee interaction during the merger process. Potentially this will aid organizational behaviorists and other organizations to better understand the employee perspective and interaction during the merger process, which may have implications for employee integration in future mergers.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at 732-239-4527. I will be contacting you shortly to schedule an interview. Thank you.

Sincerely,

_____
Patricia O. Foster

APPENDIX C: CONSENT TO ACT AS A RESEARCH PARTICPANT

Introduction:

Patricia Foster, a Doctoral student at the University of Phoenix and an

independent researcher, has been given permission by Verizon

to conduct a research study on the "The Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships in a

Corporation after Merger".

Interviewee:

I, _____, have agreed to participate in this research study.

My participation in the study is entirely voluntary and my participation or non-

participation will not reflect on me personally or my position at Verizon. I understand

that

1. I may refuse to participate and/or withdraw at any time without consequences to

my employment.

2. Research records and list of interviewees will be confidential.

3. Personal anonymity will be guaranteed.

4. Results of research data will be used for presentation and publications.

5. _____ (researcher) has explained this study to me and

answered my questions. If the researcher has other questions or research related issues, I

can be reached through _____.

There are no other agreements, written or verbal, related to this study beyond that

expressed in this consent and confidentiality form.

By signing this form I acknowledge that I understand the nature of the study, the potential

risks to me as a participant, and the means by which my identity will be kept confidential.

My signature on this form also indicates that I am 18 years old or older and that I give my

permission to voluntarily serve as a participant in the study described.

Signature of interviewee_____ Date_____

Signature of the researcher_____ Date_____

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION TO USE PREMISES, NAME, AND/OR SUBJECTS

University of Phoenix

INFORMED CONSENT: PERMISSION TO USE PREMISES, NAME,

AND/OR SUBJECTS

Name of Facility, Organization, University, Institution, or Association

I, hereby authorize Patricia Foster, student of the University of Phoenix, to use the premises, name, and or/subjects requested to conduct a study entitled "The Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships In a Corporation after Multiple Mergers." This authorization is contingent upon final review and approval of the completed study document by the External Affairs and Legal Departments.

Signature *Todd Schramm*   Date *6/24/08*

Title *Assistant General Counsel – Legal Compliance*

Name of Facility:

Verizon, 140 West Street, New York, New York

Verizon, 1320 North Courthouse Road, Arlington VA

Verizon, 185 Franklin Street, Boston, MA

Verizon, 1717 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. During the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what were your perceptions of the employees of the merging company (NYNEX/Bell Atlantic)?

2. How do you perceive your co-workers viewed the employees of the merging company (NYNEX/Bell Atlantic)?

3. How well did you work together initially? Over time?

4. When the merger with GTE happened how did you feel about the employee of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic? Was there any sort of conflict?

5. During and after the merger with GTE, did your perceptions or feelings about the employees of the former (NYNEX/Bell Atlantic) change?

6. How well integrated do you think the employees are today?

7. Based on your experience, is there anything you think the leadership of the organization could have been done differently to improve or speed up the integration?

APPENDIX F: PARTICIPANTS CODED RESPONSES – PERCENT OCCURENCE

Major Theme	Sub Theme	Sub theme	% Occurrence
Conflict			100%
	People		90%
		Competition	72%
		Ethics	17%
		Favoritism	67%
		Job Security	72%
		Positioning	78%
	Structural		85%
		Compensation	24%
		Geography	76%
		Policies and Procedures	82%
		Reporting Structure	59%
		Systems Issues	53%
Culture			100%
	Acculturation		40%
	Advancement Opportunity		25%
	Geography		60%
	Identification		55%
	Leadership Philosophy		50%
	Transparency		10%
	Work Styles		90%
Future Applications			90%
	Communication		28%
	Integration		83%
	Leadership		39%
Integration			100%
	Team Affiliation		100%
		Common Enemy	60%
		Identification	85%
		Shared Experiences	75%
		Shared Goals-Objectives-Deadlines	55%
		Tenure	65%
	Team Structure		75%
		Geography	60%
		Mixed Teams	100%
		Silo'd Teams	33%
		Team Building	20%
Perception			100%
	Attitudes		95%
	Capabilities		30%
	Stereotypes		80%
		Bell Atlantic	69%
		New Yorkers	88%
		Southerners	63%

APPENDIX G: MAJOR THEMES AND SUB-THEMES FROM PARTICIPANT

INTERVIEWS

- **Conflict**
  - **People**
    - Cliques
    - Competition
    - Ethics
    - Favoritism
    - Job Security
    - Positioning
  - **Structural**
    - Compensation
    - Geography
    - Policies and Procedures
    - Reporting Structure
    - Systems Issues
- **Culture**
  - Acculturation
  - Advancement Opportunity
  - Geography
  - Identification
  - Leadership Philosophy
  - Transparency
  - Work Styles
- **Integration**
  - **Team Affiliation**
    - Common Enemy
    - Identification
    - Shared Experiences
    - Shared Goals-Objectives-Deadlines
    - Tenure
  - **Team Structure**
    - Geography
    - Mixed Teams
    - Silo'd Teams
    - Team Building
- **Perception**
  - Attitudes
  - Capabilities
  - Stereotypes
    - Bell Atlantic
    - New Yorkers
    - Southerners
- **Future Applications**
  - Communication
  - Integration
  - Leadership

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Interview #1 Arlington

Interviewer: During the merger between Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what were your

perceptions of the employees of the merging company?

Interviewee: Well, I think the initial reaction is one of defensiveness because as we

interacted with employees of NYNEX the question arose as to whose

procedures, policies and processes were superior and so that had a tendency

to cause people within each company to band together to support their

company, it was almost a certain defensiveness about it that over time

dissipated but right at the merger there was a lot of activity trying to choose

best in class, so it sort of naturally put people in a defensive position.

Interviewer: How did you perceive your co-workers viewed the employees of the

merging company? So you obviously were part of Bell Atlantic…

Interviewee: Correct

Interviewer: So how did you perceive, and your coworkers at Bell Atlantic, how did you

perceive the people that were coming in from NYNEX?

Interviewee: Well, interesting enough, before we interacted with them in any way, you

know, we had heard stereotypical things about New Yorkers in particular,

so we just believed that coming into the gate they were going to be very

aggressive, um, sort of take control was I guess our biggest fear. Um, so

there was a certain level of suspicion and skepticism about what these

people were going to be like.

Interviewer: And so did that come to fruition?

Interviewee: Interestingly enough, um, shortly after the merger was announced, and even

before it was finalized, I had the opportunity to go to New York to discuss a

particular set of projects and I'm telling you, the people in New York

couldn't have been nicer to me. I mean, it was almost a surprise [laughs],

um, that everyone was just very solicitous, very interested in who I was and

what I did in Bell Atlantic. It was a very good experience, to be honest,

every experience I had subsequent to that was also a good experience so

very shortly after the merger was announced, for me personally, since I had

a chance to interact with them, the skepticism, the concern about the

aggressiveness of people in New York went away for me, because I had

experienced first hand that it didn't occur. There was still some jostling,

after that, about whose Brand Tracker was better, or whose research team

was better, or, you know, who should be doing what based on skill sets. So

there was still some political jostling, but at least the concern about being

kind of bowled over by sort of the stereotypical New Yorker never came to

pass.

Interviewer: Do you think that is the case for your other coworkers? Did they feel the

same way when you talked amongst yourselves?

Interviewee: Yes, I think it very much was the feeling at the time. I mean, obviously

amongst our team there were people from New York, but most had a

concern, because you hear so much about New Yorkers, we just had a

concern that you know, we weren't going to be able to work with them very

easily they were just going to be very assertive and kind of roll right over

us. And so I think everybody kind of shared that feeling but again, as soon

as people started to meet the people in the other company, that kind of

perception went away pretty quickly, and it was kind of replaced by the

recognition that we had more in common than was different. Because we

were still two companies from the Bell System legacy, and so we still did

many things in the same way. So there were more cultural similarities than

there were differences.

Interviewer: Did you see differences between the people between the people from

NYNEX that were from the New York area, and the people that were

NYNEX from the northern are, like the Boston area?

Interviewee: No, not really. What I noticed very quickly was that the Boston people were

almost always in New York. I mean they traveled to New York frequently.

So from a cultural perspective, they were very similar. They really were

steeped in the same company culture, and that the people from Boston

travelled to New York pretty regularly. The person who ultimately became

my director was from Boston, the Boston area, you know worked in the

Boston office, she was probably in New York three times a week every

week, so there was just so much sort of intermingling of the NYNEX

people that you know, there wasn't really that much difference between

New York and Boston.

Interviewer: Did you have co-workers in other areas of Bell Atlantic besides Virginia?

Did they have similar experiences as you, or did you talk amongst

yourselves, were they different at all?

Interviewee: Um, not really. I did have people distributed pretty much everywhere throughout the old Bell Atlantic territories. I had people in Pennsylvania, people in New Jersey, you know, people in Arlington and you know, I think it was pretty consistent across the board in terms of how people felt.

Interviewer: And when the teams initially came together, how well did you work together?

Interviewee: Uh… I would say… better than expected because it turned out that our director was somebody from NYNEX and so, she brought the teams together, and she was like a very sort of strong personality, and she wouldn't tolerate you know, any kind of finger pointing or, I mean, you know she pretty much brought the team working as a team pretty quickly because she wasn't one to tolerate a bunch of finger pointing or 'we do it better than they do' or uh, the team became intermingled from a former company perspective very quickly so that I had people from the Boston team reporting to me, well from Boston and New York reporting to me shortly thereafter, so she kind of picked who she wanted her group manager to be, and some of them were from NYNEX and some of them were from Bell Atlantic, but the teams were fixed almost immediately.

Interviewer: And did you have any issues internally within the team from the people who were picked as group mangers vs. not picked to be group manager, was there any jostling?

Interviewee: Uh, [pauses] I am sure there must have been a little bit, but I can't recall too much of it because at the end of the day, I think the Bell Atlantic people, it

just so happened, that in my area of expertise, the Bell Atlantic people were

probably more senior just in terms of experience and everything, so I think

that folding the – in my case it was the researchers – folding the researchers

under me, you know, we were actually taking more inexperienced people

and folding them in under me.

Interviewer: And over time, did that working relationship change at all or did it remain

pretty consistent from the start in terms of how well you worked together?

Interviewee: I think it improved. I think it improved over time because we became more

and more of a team over time. So, I think it improved quite a bit and

truthfully what both companies had in common which helped the process is

we had both been part of the Bell system, and when divestiture occurred in

1984 we were both thrust into having remote reporting relationships. So,

you know, we operated similarly from the standpoint of, you know, bosses

who had people distributed throughout that particular regional area, and we

were used to doing things by phone, used to what occurs in a remote

reporting situation.

Interviewer: When the merger with GTE happened how did you feel about the employees

of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Well, its interesting because my personal perspective, well the first thing

that pops into my mind was, you know, because of my initial, um, concern

about New Yorkers, and remember that was mostly based on stereotypes,

but you carry them in your head until you actually meet and experience

something. So my initial reaction was oh, well, if we merged with New

York this will be a piece of cake. These are people from the South, you know, who are usually pretty laid back and this will be easier.

Interviewer: And was it?

Interviewee: It was much more difficult. Much more difficult.

Interviewer: And why?

Interviewee: Well, a couple of things. The, um, GTE company had a couple of years prior to the merger centralized their operations in, you know, in Irving, Texas. I believed they had been in Connecticut before. So what that meant was they lost a lot of people. A lot of people decided not to make the move, so they had hired a lot of people in the course of the previous three to four years, many of whom were quite a bit younger and they had a different culture. I mean, people tended to get promoted much more quickly, because of what I have just described, where they were in a building mode, so people were getting promoted very quickly, you know with in a couple of years. They might make it from a specialist level to a manager, and maybe three years after that be a director. So it wasn't at all uncommon for someone to move to a director slot within three to five years, depending at what level they came in at. It was a very different experience for us because, you know, we had obviously been in our locations for much longer periods of time. Um, many members of the staff had a lot of experience and tenure with the company. We had gone through mergers, and there is always concern in a merger situation that bodies are going to hit the floor. So there wasn't a lot of opportunity on the then Bell Atlantic side of the fence, and there was a

lot of opportunity on the GTE side of the fence, So there was kind of a, um, there were much bigger cultural gaps going through that merger than there was going through the, you know, Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger.

Interviewer: Did those cultural gaps lead to conflict?

Interviewee: They led to quite a bit of conflict. My other recollection was that in GTE, you know, people were kind of rewarded for being creative and circumventing policies and everything, and you know, Bell Atlantic was always very straight-laced and tight on policies so that created some problems as well. You know, there was much more jostling for position, you know, some things that occurred, um, just prior to the merger, where they were attempting to position their people probably more favorably than the Bell Atlantic people. So I think going in there was a lot of resentment, to be perfectly honest. You know, once we were in the new organizations, again, you know very quickly people's teams became cross-pollinated with the folks in Texas, so some of the problems went away. But I remember one of the biggest problems that we encountered, you know shortly after the merger was complete, had to do with the fact that those guys were in a central location, and both Bell Atlantic, which of course by that time was Bell Atlantic and NYNEX combined, that company, you know, had geographic dispersion of staff reporting everywhere, and I remember it was very difficult having meeting with folks in Dallas, particularly if the teams were heavily stacked with people from Dallas, because what would happen they would all be in a room together, and there might be one or two of you

calling into the meeting remotely, and it was very difficult to follow what was going on. They just didn't have the experience of doing things remotely. So it took a while to be able to have good conference calls and stuff like that, with the people from Dallas, simply because they were so used to being co-located.

Interviewer: And do you think some of that was deliberate?

Interviewee: No, I really don't think it was deliberate, although thinking back, there may have been some other people on other teams that may have said something like… I guess it wasn't that it was deliberate, but their perception was that the people in Dallas weren't really interested in their opinion, so they were not really trying to integrate them into the conversation. But it became very difficult, um, because I can remember instances, for example, where I was the only one on the phone, and members of my team were in a room with my boss and they were drawing pictures on the board, it was literally impossible for me to follow what was going on because I wasn't there, you know there wasn't quite the sensitivity to that as we have today where if you are presenting something or you are drawing something, you're giving a commentary of what is occurring. It is very easy to forget the people on the phone, particularly if most of the people are in the room. So, I remember that being an issue and I remember just a general concern, or general frustration, on the part of people from the GTE team that they weren't advancing as fast as they thought they should.

Interviewer: Based on history.

Interviewee: Exactly. Because now they are in a merger situation where you've got

multiple people doing the same jobs, you know, so right off the top there

was RIFs [reductions in force], right when the merger was complete, or

shortly thereafter, and we lost people on both sides, so, you know we started

to go through the competitive environment and shrinkage of lines, and the

whole nine yards, so they started to experience some of the lack of

opportunity that the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX teams had been experiencing and

that was a source of frustration.

Interviewer: Do you think after the merger with GTE happened, did you see any change

in your relationship with the former NYNEX people?

Interviewee: Well, yeah, like anything else, when there is a new invader into the territory

[laughs] the people that are already there tend to pull together, so, yes, I

think that the people by that time, the people form NYNEX, the former

NYNEX and the people from the former Bell Atlantic, you know by the

time the merger closed, you know, we had been together for about two

years, and as I said earlier, we shared the same legacy, so we had more

commonalities of cultures than differences, so it was kind of natural for the

former NYNEX and former Bell Atlantic to kind of draw together and, you

know, this was probably more prevalent just before the merger officially

closed, I know, for example there was a lot of research going on prior to the

official merger on the name of the company – Verizon – and on positioning

and I remember there was lots of nasty grams going back and for the

between the research teams on some of research that was occurring.

Interviewer: Between the research teams at Bell Atlantic and NYNEX or between Bell

Atlantic and GTE?

Interviewee: Between Bell Atlantic and GTE. The now converged Bell Atlantic and

GTE. There was a lot of stuff going on, some backhanded stuff, like there

be agreements made in meetings and then the you know, the people on the

Bell Atlantic side – you know I had the perspective into the Bell Atlantic

view – but I know they were very upset because they had meetings and the

decision was made that we would do research, and that we would report out

the results to our teams at the same times. Then the Bell Atlantic people

became aware that the GTE were not doing that, they were actually

presenting results – their results – to management before the agreed upon

time. There was some stuff going on there, and I remember seeing some

pretty nasty memos go back and forth.

Interviewer: Can you cite any specific examples where… instances where Bell Atlantic

and NYNEX were working together, during the first merger, and then when

the GTE merger came in, that changed? Like specific examples of how they

banded to together?

Interviewee: You know, I think, by the time the merger actually closed, Bell Atlantic and

NYNEX had been together as a team long enough where we weren't really

having problems in that regard. It was more of a psychological support,

where as, like, here is a perfect example. One of the individuals that

reported into my boss, he didn't report into me at the time, he reported into

my boss, and he did brand and brand tracking and that sort of thing, so prior

to the official close of the merger, he and some members of his team were

participating in that research effort I told you about, the naming and the

positioning of the brand, and I remember him telling me stories about what

was going on, and some of the stuff that was going on on the GTE side, and

I remember just my feeling of outrage, feeling of "I can't believe they are

doing that, they are disadvantaging my team, they're this, they're that". By

then he and I had a good relationship regardless but he was a former

NYNEX, he was reporting into our boss, who was a former NYNEX person

as well, so I remember you know, I remember being very angry about was

occurring, you know, about what kind of things his team was being put

through, I do remember that. I also remember when he ended up reporting

to me later, he was working on a study, and we were kind of appalled at

some of the things that were happening at NYNEX because they were all –

um I mean GTE – because they all didn't have the same kind of policies and

stuff that we had, um, so I remember there was this particular project that

this team member was working on, it was a brand evaluation project, and

they wanted the vendor, who was doing the evaluation, to come to Dallas

and to take them out for golf, literally. And I remember the NYNEX person

being horrified that this was occurring, you know, and was just horrified

that that seemed to him to be like unethical, or whatever. So, certainly I

pulled closer together with him, than when the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX

merger started we were kind of dueling over whose brand tracking study

was better, but concluded in the end they were probably pretty similar, um

they ended up migrating over to our vendor anyway, but I remember having

those discussions. So, he was a nice guy, a little bit of jostling but not too

much, but by the time the NYNEX merger, or the GTE merger occurred, he

was a, you know, I certainly felt for him and felt the sense of outrage that he

did that some of this stuff was happening, because its very frustrating, you

know? 'Cause you… the kinds of things that were happening resulted in a

level of… a highly increased level… of distrust in the people from GTE,

unlike in the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger, probably because we had a

similar legacy, there was some stuff that went on, but it wasn't to this

degree. We were able to resolve differences, nobody was uh, quite as, um,

open in terms of what they were saying. In other words, at the Bell

Atlantic/NYNEX merger, maybe because we had a similar culture, people

weren't zinging nasty grams across the transom. I mean, it was a much

more, um, amiable – I mean there were disagreements – but it was a much

more amiable, you know, the kind of communications that were getting shot

across the bow were much more of a nasty nature, they were nasty, and

questioning the capabilities of the other group, and the whole nine yards,

and that never happened with NYNEX and Bell Atlantic. So when that

started to happen, and again, there were much larger cultural differences,

between the companies then. I do remember that with this particular

individual feeling very close to him, because he was kind of the vanguard,

he was going through it much earlier than everybody else having been

drawn into the research prior to the close of the merger, so I remember.

Interviewer: Did you see other groups having similar issues?

Interviewee: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I mean, like other people in the MarCom organization? They were struggling, I remember, you know, us sharing stories about how difficult it was in those meetings when you are the only one, or one of a few, on the phone when everyone else is in the room. There was definitely a feeling of kind of being shut out, or very hard to feel included in those instances. It was like a very different experience.

Interviewer: Do you think that it's changed at all today? Are they better integrated now?

Interviewee: Yes, yeah. Much better integrated. I think there is still a little bit of…what is the word I want…uh… I wouldn't call it prejudice or bias, but that really is the right word. There is still a sense of the Dallas people being a bit different, and there is still some struggles I think that exist. Nowhere near the magnitude of what occurred when the merger first closed, but you know, even now I detect that there were some relationships that were established in the GTE organization that still exist today, in a way that people believe that its a network that was created back then that still exists today, and is at times exclusionary.

Interviewer: So do you think that over time, the relationship has gotten better just because of time? Or do you think you are actually working together better?

Interviewee: We're working better together. Because, again, there has been an integration of team, and for example, I was promoted right at the GTE merger so I had both people from GTE and people from Bell Atlantic on my team. So, you know, there was a little bit of that going on, but over time, because it was

within my control, I was able to kind of stamp that out. Simply because I tried to reward team work behaviors, I tried to mix people up, so that I had people from Dallas reporting to Bell Atlantic people and vice versa. So, over time, when the people are really integrated into your group, and reporting relationships are established, it kind of goes a long way. Because at the end of the day, most people are not going to trash their boss or stomp out or act in an inappropriate way, because they report to these people. So I think the teams became intermingled and I think that helped a lot.

Interviewer: Do you think the cultural differences have blended better, or do you think they still exist?

Interviewee: Um. I think they still exist but to a lesser extent. They have blended better because to be perfectly honest, business had declined significantly since that merger, and so all of us have kind of arrived at the lowest common denominator, in terms of opportunities for advancement, or opportunities to expand staff, or you know, on the other side of the coin, the vulnerability to RIFs so I think the GTE culture has become more similar to the previous Bell Atlantic culture simply because of environmental issues. You know, the opportunities just aren't there, the geographical dispersion has become a way of life, um, their business or the people from GTE have been reduced in force as well, so you know I think that the intermingling of the teams combined with just the environmental issues um, the declining market, the lack of opportunity, you know have brought the cultures closer together. And probably to the more conservative culture.

Interviewer: You say this is across your own team. Do you think that is also the case with other teams as well? Across the whole organization?

Interviewee: I believe so. I absolutely believe so. You know, 'cause most of the client groups we deal with are in the same situation, you know with again, a geographically dispersed team, and so I really think – working with the client groups as well – I have kind of seen that. I think that we seem to have closed the gap, and we now have a new culture that is a blend, but it's a blend that probably tilts a little more toward the Bell Atlantic culture. Again, just because of what is going on in the business. And the marketplace. So I think it's become more of the Bell Atlantic culture. And frankly, the people in Dallas have simply been around longer now. You know, when they created the headquarters, that obviously created a lot of opportunity for people in that area and they didn't have long tenure. Well, now they have long tenure. I've got some folks that have you know, 10 years now from the former GTE territories. You know, they have more tenure than so they are a bit more similar. They are older; there is less opportunity for everybody. We are all going through RIFs. So, I think the cultures have come closer together.

Interviewer: You mentioned earlier that you think there is still some disparity between the groups, that although they have come together better, there is still some little bit of distrust. Can you elaborate on that?

Interviewee: Well, I think that the best way to describe it, that maybe on occasion – and I don't think this is true of all – I think these are fairly isolated situations, but

I have seen what I would almost call cliques, the formation of cliques, where senior leaders have honored relationships that they have had in their former companies and have, you know, essentially surrounded themselves with people from that culture, from former GTE, and I think to the detriment of the business. I think it's been exclusionary.

Interviewer: Based on your experience, is there anything you think the leadership of the organization could have done differently to improve or speed up the integration?

Interviewee: Well, to be perfectly honest, I think that leadership caused some of the problems.

Interviewer: In what way?

Interviewee: Well, to give you an example, I mentioned that early on in the merger distrust started to build simply because of detecting things that were going on on the other side. In this case, GTE, for example right before the merger the uh – at least in our organization – the senior VP reorganized her groups, gave them more functions, so at the end of the day when the merger closed, they probably were in a better position to occupy the jobs that they wanted. So, you know, they were doing things proactively to position their people in a way that they would win out over the Bell Atlantic side. And I can't say that is true of everybody, but I certainly saw that within our general area, functional area that that did occur. And I was aware of it only because people have conveyed to me some of the interactions that had occurred. I'll give you another example. This is the same senior leader that I am talking

about, on the GTE side, but I remember our VP conveyed this conversation to me, where she had said to her counterpart you know, we have to be sensitive to the way our teams are feeling, because of course you know, in the event of a merger there is sort of a natural anxiety about job security and that sort of thing so we want to keep that in mind moving forward, and the other VP simply snapped back 'well, my people aren't worried at all, because they are so good at what they do they have no concern whatsoever'. Well that is kind of a leadership behavior that I think is kind of a detriment, and led to that level of skepticism and distrust. So, certainly I think that senior leader – and again that is a specific example that I am aware of with a specific individual – um, but in observing some other individuals, I think that there was similar behavior. You know I don't have as much of a view into but just based on some of the things that I observed as opposed to heard.

Interviewer: So do you think the leaders in GTE were actually setting themselves up to succeed as opposed to integrate over the Bell Atlantic people.

Interviewee: Correct. That is correct. I don't think that there… now again, I can only speak to the parts of the organization that I saw, I don't think there was a win/win mentality going in. I think there was a win/lose mentality. The win heavily skewed toward the GTE people. So, you know, I don't know if the leadership did everything they could have done to make that an easier transition, because that is where the behavior was coming from senior leadership.

Interviewer: So, what do you think they could have done to improve?

Interviewee: Zero tolerance for sniping back and forth. Zero tolerance for positioning that way. You know, rewarding – however possible – teamwork behaviors that really helped to integrate the groups.

Interviewer: Well, is there anything else, looking back, that you can think of about the interpersonal relationships, either between Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, or then the Bell Atlantic and GTE that would lend insight into the cultural differences or the way that they integrated or could have integrated better?

Interviewee: Um, I would say that you know, to the degree that the cultures are similar, it is easier to assimilate. Which is, I guess, a fairly obvious statement, but you know, when I think back, what really floored me about the whole thing is that I thought the NYNEX one was going to be tough, and I thought the GTE one was going to be a piece of cake, and it was exactly the opposite, it was a total shock. So, based on that learning experience, which was driven I guess in large part driven primarily by stereotypes, it suggests to me that going forward, in another merger or acquisition I would know better. I simply would not rely on any stereotypes [laughs], I would realize that the, you know, whatever cultures are coming together, depending on my sense of how similar or different they were, I would understand kind of what I was up against and I think the degree to which I have a team I would definitely be better equipped to try to work some of the issues. But the experience of having gone through two big mergers was defiantly a learning experience and whatever we did going forward we would be far better

equipped to handle it. At the end of the day, once there was time for

assimilation, I mean people really are more similar than different. At the

end of the day people want the same things and you know will hold concern

over their teammates as important. At the end of the day it's possible to get

through these things and end up with at team that really does practice

teamwork, and really does care about each other and that sort of thing.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Interview #14 Arlington

Interviewer: Okay, just for the record, you were with Bell Atlantic during the Bell

Atlantic/NYNEX merger, correct?

Interviewee: Yes, I was, correct.

Interviewer: So, during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what were your

perceptions of the employees of the merging company, so your perception

of the NYNEX employees?

Interviewee: Um, in two different levels, from a executive director level, they were very

egotistical, and very, you know, they were better than, than everybody else.

From a peer level, they were pretty decent for the most part, I mean you

know, there were some that actually came over [unintelligible] which were

actually very very decent, they, they, they weren't, they were in it for the

long haul, um, they were willing to work together, for the most part, there

were a couple of people who had the same attitude as their bosses at

NYNEX. But for the most part, um, it was a battle because Bell Atlantic

was the acquiring entity for the most part, and I was in the long distance

division then. So then it, then NYNEX they were the first, they launched

their business a little bit before ours but Verizon, er, Bell Atlantic Long

Distance team was taking over, 90% of the NYNEX, so they resented that,

they resented that. It was difficult, it was difficult.

Interviewer: How did it manifest itself, that resentment?

Interviewee: I don't know if I was directly involved with a lot of that resentment, I mean you could see it and, and, and observe it, but it really didn't impact me that much. I heard a lot of struggles and battles that were going on around me.

Interviewer: Like how? I mean, in meetings or in discussions?

Interviewee: First of all, it was, in you know, you had these nice let's get together meetings and discussed things like this, and then that ensued with you know, this is how you do it, we were the first people to launch the product we know exactly what we're doing, then you know, you have the BA people saying well we're just launching, and this is sort of the odd position, but, but. The NYNEX people were just…they were not in it as a group, as looking for the best, you know, this could be a good opportunity, I think they were fearful that they were going to get screwed and their reactions were as such. They were feeling very put up against a wall, and they were very – I wouldn't say belligerent – but very condescending and very um, abrupt at the way they handled themselves and that ensued into a power struggle.

Interviewer: So when the two groups came together initially, were you, inter- – what's the word I'm looking for – integrated, were the teams integrated?

Interviewee: You know, not at first, they were sort of kept separate, then from what I remember, basically, the Bell Atlantic people, I was in the marketing group, the Bell Atlantic people took over most of the marketing and that in, that did come with a couple people, but for the most part it didn't come with a good majority of the NYNEX people, [name omitted] came, she actually

she came down here, [name omitted] don't know if you remember her, there were a couple of other people, but for the most part the marketing team was sort of absorbed you know, only a couple people and that was you know, not too much of a problem, but since we were just launching a product, getting ready to launch the long distance product a lot of the stuff that was going on was operational and a lot of the people that came from NYNEX took over the operational aspects, so even though it wasn't directly impacting the marketing team per se, it did because of all the operational issues associated with launching the product so that's where a lot of the crap or stuff hit the fan is on the operational side because most of the people, were the NYNEX people and those telecomm-ers are telecomm-ers or telcos the telcos. Um, but it's just the attitude it was, it was, it was very very interesting, but you know, the Bell Atlantic people were always very casual and easy going, it was a new group too. Long Distance, everybody was gung-ho and things like that and you had the New York attitudes sort of come down and it was very interesting, very interesting.

Interviewer: How do you perceive your co-workers viewed the employees of Bell Atlantic so the NYNEX people, how do you think the NYNEX people looked at Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: I think they looked at all of – at least I'm looking at my long distance group, um, they probably looked at this team as being green –naïve – um, you know, they launched their product first, literally it was months difference, but um, they didn't see us as having the experience, having the uh, we

didn't know the mark-, the big markets like they do meaning they had 'Meet Me In New York' and New York is a totally different market, I do agree that, I do agree with them that you can't treat New York like you would Pennsylvania, like you would Maryland it's a totally different animal, so I do agree on that, but they just took it to the extreme, to the extreme. I think that they think we didn't know what we were doing and there was a lot of young people, but we also had a lot of people here that came from MCI, that came from long distance companies, there was also a company called LCI, which is now Qwest, but they were based here. We had a lot of people come from them too, it wasn't like we were Bell-heads running this, they were people that came from outside of Bell Atlantic, so that in itself was a wrong impression that they had of our marketing team, it was, it was, if it would have been Bell Atlantic people or CPE people, I could see them saying that but this wasn't the case, but they didn't even give that, they just used that umbrella as Bell Atlantic telephone people they don't know what they were doing, it, it festered itself.

Interviewer: So, how well did you work together when you were integrated, I guess with the operations team? How well did you work together initially or and then over time?

Interviewee: Um, you know, I would probably, say the first six months to a year was probably very, very difficult, because there was just a lot of learning curves going on, because there were systems issues, and personality issues, that sort of go on and I think after the first six months or so there were some

radical changes in the director structure if I remember correctly a lot of people just sort of left, this is the NYNEX team, and the people that took their place were a little bit more reliable, if you want to call it that, a little bit more how do I put it, amenable to work with, with the team, you know after, so within six months to a year it became easy, and I think it might have become easy because of person… person… personnel changes, but I think it also was also because we got used to each other in certain cases, you know, we sort of molded into you sort of know who's a pain in the ass, who's not and how to get things done, things like that. Definitely power struggles, still continuing, but it, it, it was faster, I know based on my airline experience, I've gone through mergers, but it was faster, it sort of melded quicker, but I think that's because we had a task to do, Bell Atlantic was just launching their products and had a whole bunch of things to do so we weren't… we were moving on to bigger and better things as a whole entire team, it wasn't sort of just taking over the business, we were launching a business, so I think it was probably a little bit different than you would just taking over an existing business and modifying it, this was actually launching something, probably just a little different.

Interviewer: So you say after about a year it was better, but still not integrated?

Interviewee: I don't necessarily, yeah, it took probably a good three or four years before the cultures were melded, at least in my group as such, that, that, there was no you're with NYNEX, you're with Bell Atlantic, I can't remember the

timing, but the GTE merger, what was the difference between when NYNEX was completed and GTE started?

Interviewer: 1997 to 2000, three years.

Interviewee: So it's three years. I would say we were probably , within three years we were seamless per se, there was no NYNEX/Bell Atlantic, it was pretty much Bell Atlantic. But I was in the Long Distance group, it was because we were launching a whole entire, it was totally different, the, uh GTE merger was a different story.

Interviewer: Leading into that... when the merger with GTE happened, how did you feel about the employees of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: How did I feel? Um, I would say, there was more of animosity and struggle with that merger than the NYNEX merger.

Interviewer: Why? Like how did it manifest itself?

Interviewee: Um, there were definitely, and it might have been due, because I was in a different position, that the industry was different too, so comparing the two might not be an accurate apples to apples comparison but um, it was sort of like the Civil War, the North versus the South. Across the board, their attitude towards the Northerners, and, and Bell Atlantic acquiring per se, you know, however you want to term it, that's how it was I think deemed in their minds, we were sort of in our group, in our group we were probably a little bit full of ourselves too, probably, thinking that we knew everything, we were the bigger company, they were sort of pocketed and structured, and they didn't really own anything. They were a more rural phone company,

you know, so they did bring some, some good assets with them, but for the most part, it would have been different if they'd owned all of California and Washington, and Texas and things like that but since they were pocketed, our opinion of them as being a smaller, independent, rural company, our opinion of them was that they were probably not the brightest bulbs and I think we probably had a little bit more attitude towards them than in the previous NYNEX/Bell Atlantic merger.

Interviewer: Now, how integrated were the teams initially between Bell Atlantic and GTE?

Interviewee: Oh, that was bad. It, it, um, there were some like coordinated efforts that you know, but part of the thing about six months or so after the merger we merged, um, and it was not pretty. It was definitely not pretty at all. I would say it was more of a like 50/50 in all honesty, I don't know if they tried it that way or however they did the split on the teams but our team was probably half GTE, half Bell Atlantic people.

Interviewer: You say it wasn't pretty, like what happened, what were the personal interactions, what were the meetings like, what were the email exchanges like? What did you actually see that would say it wasn't pretty?

Interviewee: There were definitely power struggles doing on, there were the, there were definitely differences of opinions on how to do things, how things should look, how things should be structured, um and that is not, that is across the board, that is from a peer to peer level, and an executive to executive level. It was across the board, it wasn't one little faction here, one little faction

there, it was pretty much all around. Um so, probably within the first six, within the six months to probably year and a half period, we were all sort of pushed together, um, there were definitely battles just within our own teams of how to do things and cliques and even when we were able, when we had massive meetings together, literally because there were half in Texas, half here, um, or whatever, we would have group meetings and it was just very typical one side of the room was the GTE people and one side of the room was Bell Atlantic, you know that these are people that you were working with and at the time the, the, the teams weren't structured as, I had a couple people in Dallas that worked for me, you know and they had a couple people in New York that worked for them. It was pretty much the entire group who did certain functions for all endowed, so it was very functional divided, so we weren't, we were merged as a group so we all had marketing, we all had different levels of the marketing, but there was a group manager in Texas, with 5 or 6 group managers, you had group managers under them, were the same thing up here, a group manager with 5 or 6 subs, but we were never integrated so you always had those two pillars and you never had that cross pollination.

Interviewer: Were the two pillars reporting into the same director?

Interviewee: Umm, hmm, yeah. Yeah. And, and um, the director, fortunately for me, was from Bell Atlantic, so you had, you definitely had favoritism there, I think a lot of it also had to do with the – distance had a lot to do with it too. I think if the groups were all here, and it was one solid, function, and everybody

was the under on the same floor or whatever, it probably would have gone a little bit smoother and more interaction, you'd know people a lot better but that whole dividing of East versus West was probably a big hindrance in any type of adaptability of anybody and until, I don't think we've still gotten over the… the GTE. I think that there still is a we/they, in some cases it's much better than it definitely was back then, but there still is that, that identification of former GTE former BA people and I think that it still causes some problems.

Interviewer: After the merger with GTE, did your perceptions or feelings about the employees of the former NYNEX change?

Interviewee: Um, you know by that time, I think we were all pretty co-existing for the most part to begin with, um, but I think we probably became tighter, even though we weren't apart we became tighter as a group because it was drawing the battle lines, we didn't have three different factions fighting against each other, it was Bell Atlantic/NYNEX fighting together, now fighting against the GTE people, so it was draw, we sort of chose sides, and but it was, it was sort of natural because we were there already almost, at least in my group we were pretty much there because most of the NYNEX people left and a lot, there was only one or two or three leftover NYNEX people that I think I was really interacting with or dealing with, so they were part of our group, there was no issues at all so, they just, we became part of a tighter team fighting the other with the new people.

Interviewer: How well integrated do you think the employees are today?

Interviewee: I don't think we are. I don't think we are. Um, in, I think we're all, well,

we're all working together better, but I think, if you look at it as structurally

getting the work done, it's ok, but mentally, personally, it's not, it's not

there, it's not good, and I think if it was, it would be a lot easier to get

things done or work together a little bit better but um, I guess it all depends

on who you work for, I am now working for a former GTE person, literally,

I'm the outsider in that work group and only a handful of us are the you

know, old Bell Atlantic, you want to call us. I don't think there's any

opinions, but I think that there's just the familiarity, with their people and

they're all there, working together all in the same building, not that we're

considered second class citizens, but we're not on top of mind um, for

whatever reason, and that's probably totally opposite if you have a former

Bell Atlantic boss or whatever and you have people, you'd probably get

totally different answers from the Texas people who have Bell Atlantic

bosses versus the Texas people that have GTE bosses and vice versa again,

I mean we work well together, but there still is that identification, and the

same thing with the airline mergers, there's Piedmont and US Air and

Piedmont bought PSA, which is a West Coast airline and it was, there's still

to this day former Piedmont and former US Air. That is what I'm seeing

here with this GTE thing, and it probably could have a South/North thing,

our problem I think is really physical than mental….

Interviewer: [Interrupting] The fact that we're not co-located?

Interviewee: Co-located, I think co-location has a lot to do with it, um, I know they tried to intermingle functions, you know, everybody's sort of doing area, you have marketing people here, marketing people there, in theory, I don't know if that was the best thing to do. Might have been better to have everybody clear cut, organizational structure, you know, marketing would be in the East Coast, operations would be on the West Coast, so you, you know, that might have been a better way to handle it instead of mixing the bag up because it just, I don't think it's hard now, but it's just something that we've sort of become accustomed to but it still is you look at somebody and you first identify them as they're former GTE or former Bell Atlantic. They still have that label regardless, and there's a lot of good people down there, but there's a lot of people too that have still that attitude that you know, because they have people that are in power that they're better than you know, but I think that comes from top down that isn't necessarily, that's coming from top down.

Interviewer: That leads into my next question, based on your experience, is there anything you think the leadership of the organization could have done differently to improve or speed up the integration?

Interviewee: I don't know, um, as I mentioned before, maybe the functional split maybe would have been a better way to, to, it may not be the most logical way to do it, but it may be the best way, it's just hard having so many people scattered about a working group, I think that when you have people co-located, it makes things a lot easier from a communications standpoint, um

and not just business-wise, when you start knowing these people personally, it fosters a whole totally different type of work environment and work ethic and um dynamic. Um, but like, like having people co-located per se, in the same groups, I think that would have been the smarter thing to do and that in itself would have turned, could have in my opinion, could have been a little bit better, but then again you would have certain functions then all East and West and that itself could have caused some huge issues because you're talking very, very siloed views of the world or different things like that, um and plus that would have caused more animosity on some cases, where you would have marketing team in New York and operations team was in Dallas, but you have marketing people in Dallas and you say you gotta move to New York or whatever, they would always have that animosity that I can't do marketing anymore because, but they could also, I don't know, I don't know if they could have done it better but I think that probably trying to intermingle everybody and scatter people and divide and make it 50/50 and things like that probably wasn't the best thing to do. It made sense probably, but probably looking back on it, it wasn't the best thing to do, in my opinion.

Interviewer: So looking back, um or just today, is there anything else you'd like to share around interpersonal relationships how that'd have worked through the various mergers?

Interviewee: You know, I don't necessarily think that the mergers, that it's not necessarily that you're a Bell Atlantic person, that you're a GTE person,

and it depends on who's sort of in charge or from the upper, or who's sort of making the decisions or where they come from, it's natural and it's human nature to if you work with somebody, and you know somebody, it's, it's easier to reach out to them, to rely on them, to depend on them um, and that's a comfort level that you have with them, so from an executive perspective, it probably would have been better to know the other teams more personally and that in itself could have fostered a whole bunch of more camaraderie and facilitate communication, as it stands today, I don't think that ever happens, so if a Bell Atlantic person takes over and has GTE people reporting to them, and vice versa, GTE has, there's, there's, there's that natural camaraderie that the GTE people have, that I will always be an outsider on my team, where the people in Dallas or the majority of people that work with Bell Atlantic people, which I think has a lot to do with co-location, but also has to do with the executives, they see my boss every day, they see them in the halls, it's more casual, you know, you can have face to face meetings, you're not on the phone all the time, so you're there, you're in their face, they rely on you more, even if it's just pure convenience to give them things, so that in itself, you know, out of sight, out of mind, has probably a lot to do with it, and I think that, how to fix that, I don't know, structurally there could be things done, but that I think, it's not that they didn't give the GTE people, from a boss perspective didn't, as I said, it's natural, it's just the way it works, it just happens, I don't know if you could force, the only way you can force is to co-locate people and

that's not a good thing probably from a cost perspective, you know uprooting things like that, you know they could have made some decisions as that honestly, instead of pacifying everyone that we're going to keep all of these different centers, they could have made the decision, the merged company is going to be in Virginia, or whatever the case may be, and it… even though it would have been tough long term, that probably would have been a better idea to, whether it's called marketing or whatever the case might be, give one location, just sort of naturally would have been a little bit better to have that face to face, it's not bad but it's not the best, it's not the best, the way we do some things today.

Interviewer: Okay, that's it, thank you.

Interview #15 Arlington

Interviewer: So, for the record, you were former Bell Atlantic prior to the Bell

Atlantic/NYNEX merger, correct?

Interviewee: Former Bell Atlantic, yes.

Interviewer: Okay. So, during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX what were your

perceptions of the employees of the merging companies? So, specifically,

what were your impressions of the NYNEX employees?

Interviewee: Uh, my impression was that, uh, Bell Atlantic employees were… how do I

say it… uh, I am not going to say ethical, I can't think of the word, they had

a certain Bell Atlantic way, a certain way of doing things, you know slow,

by the rules, by the book. And my impression was, uh, that these northern

New York type, Boston type, they were really quick and uh, more willing to

rush things. And I uh, being related to a lot of IT issues, um, I kind of felt

that uh, we were forced into this… I guess New York/NYNEX way of

doing things – going to Lotus Notes, that kind of thing. Um, they were an

IBM shop so I saw a lot of that. I just kind of felt that, uh, I mean I don't

know what the truth of it is. You kinda … we kept the Bell Atlantic name,

so you kind of felt that really Bell Atlantic was acquiring NYNEX, but it

seemed like the other way around. Headquarters went up to New York City,

and uh… you know its kind of hard to remember what I thought at that

time, but you know we were meeting new directors, new managers, so….

Interviewer: And when you were meeting those folks, what was the interaction like?

Interviewee: Uh, the first time, I think my director was going to be [name omitted], she

came down with [name omitted] to visit us in the library – the corporate

library – or whatever you want to call it that we had back then. They came

down to Arlington, and we were just meeting them, they were seeing what

we had, what we did. That… they were very friendly. But I did feel like…

basically they were taking ownership and they were taking over. And we

now report to them.

Interviewer: Did they do something that made you feel that way, or is it more just an

initial reaction.

Interviewee: No, it was more just an initial reaction. All the Bell Atlantic bosses and Bell

Atlantic directors, it seemed like they disappeared.

Interviewer: And during the integration, you said your bosses all disappeared, like how

much were the teams integrated? Like, were there managers form NYNEX

and managers from Bell Atlantic that were merged together within our

team? 'Cause that didn't happen everywhere.

Interviewee: Um… yes, yes there were. There were… lets see… [name omitted], she was

introduced to our team, she was Boston, so… yeah definitely there were.

Ah, it seemed like there were more managers – let me rephrase this. Maybe

we had a larger team; maybe market research had a larger team, maybe in

Bell Atlantic than they did in NYNEX. Because it seems like – if I recall –

that the management was heavier on the Bell Atlantic side. Uh, and the

leadership was heavier on the NYNEX side.

Interviewer: And during the course of the interactions, like as you formed together as a team, what were those interactions like? What was the tone of the discussion, what was the tone of the email, that kind of stuff?

Interviewee: You know, that's going back. I … the tone of the discussion, the relationships… uh, it was pretty much friendly. Um, I mean you could go back and say that in general New York slash Boston types are … seem cold, just because of their – the way they react. The way they, uh, the way they talk. The speed. But you know it took a while to get to know them, so of course initially I am like, you know, I was a little scared. A little intimidated. By both [name omitted] and … I can't remember who our VP was, but somebody in New York, and uh, [name omitted] she was also Boston. They were very hardened on the outside I kind of felt.

Interviewer: Okay, and uh, during the merger as well, what do you think the NYNEX people thought of the Bell Atlantic people? So, your coworkers on the NYNEX side, what do you think they thought of the Bell Atlantic people?

Interviewee: I'm sure they thought we were friendly, but maybe slow, that maybe they had to teach us a thing or two. I kind of felt like that.

Interviewer: And, um, how long do you think it took before you worked together…or do you think you worked together … did you ever work together well? How did you work together initially and then over time is actually what I am trying to say. I can't get it out [laughs].

Interviewee: Okay, I am trying to stick to the Bell Atlantic merger, and not get at GTE…

Interviewer: Yeah, we are coming to that.

Interviewee: Yeah, we worked together well. We uh… for the first time… at least the

first time in a while, were forced into metrics, and things like that. And it

was all for the better. Maybe we were, uh, kind of being… maybe we were

doing things the old way – hands off. And, uh, we didn't really have as

many objectives for, uh, to do our work. Did we work together well? I think

so. Again, most of my…most of my… the relationships that I had were, you

know, they were people that were above me. So, uh….

Interviewer: So you didn't team or do team projects together or stuff like that?

Interviewee: Actually… when was the merger, was it like '97?

Interviewer: '97.

Interviewee: So we were still together '99 or 2000 that was right around the time GTE…

Interviewer: GTE was 2000.

Interviewee: Okay. '99 going into 2000, I think, it was still, uh, it was still Bell

Atlantic/NYNEX, so … I got a promotion around that time by [name

omitted] and reported directly to her. So, I was feeling pretty good about

things. We would have… I flew a lot back and forth to New York and to

Boston, I mean I racked up a lot of miles, actually. But, uh, I was made to

feel one of the equals, you know? I think things were going pretty good.

Interviewer: Okay. Then um, when the merger with GTE happened, how did you feel

about the employees of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Same kind of thing. I… I kind of felt like they did things differently. More

on a… on an uncontrolled spending kind of behavior where I thought that,

uh, I remember having a discussion with somebody saying that, um, some

of the employees of GTE were really appalled by how scrutinized they were on their expenses. They were used to going out and living it up when they travel, and going to this restaurant. And now suddenly they had these rules, uh, well you only have forty-five dollars you can spend. And I kind of felt like, hah, tough, like join the club. You've got to cut expenses, and we acquired you because you were about to go under. Um, your ways of spending and unethical behavior [laughs] um, got you in this position, so now you are going to have to follow the rules.

Interviewer: And those interactions how were they… was your team integrated? Was there people from…?

Interviewee: [interrupting] Yes, yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yes, definitely at that point we had a lot of … we had about half and half.

Interviewer: Okay, and how did that go in term of the relationships… working together?

Interviewee: Uh, they … [long pause] I kind of felt like they…like a lot of the people at GTE were younger, and they had fast tracked their careers. There was a lot of… well the relationships… there was resentment, I think.

Interviewer: On whose side?

Interviewee: On, uh, our side. People at Bell Atlantic may have been working for years – research in general there are not a lot of promotions. So I think… um… in general... you had all these young people who might have been less than five years out of college, who were equal or above some of us. And uh… I

can't remember, it… some of that resentment sticks to today. We are

talking nine years already.

Interviewer: And when you had… when you work together, um, initially, was there

jockeying for positions or anything like that that was going on? And how

did that manifest itself…

Interviewee: [interrupting] As I mentioned, late in 2000 – was it 2000 – I was promoted,

you know I might have been promoted right after the merger, so …

uh…and I had a unique position so I just saw amongst the team members

who did the actual research that there was some jockeying for position. In

general we all worked together. Uh, [name omitted], she was from Boston,

she was… she was the director. So… I'm sorry this is … I am at a loss of

words here. There was a jockeying… your question was there was a

jockeying…

Interviewer: [interrupting] Well, I am just trying to get a little bit of an understanding

when the two teams came together, and they were actually working

together, or… how those interactions were going. I know you said that there

might have been some resentment, how did that manifest itself in the

behavior patterns within the group?

Interviewee: Well, you have … you had teams that were basically West, and then you

had teams that were basically East. Or North and South. And you still see

that to this day, a little bit. And you don't really… you wonder what they

are up to. And you think that, if they had the leadership, and if there was

somebody who was going to get laid off it wasn't going to be them. It

doesn't really matter who's better for the position. They want to take care of their own. The people in the North wanted to take care of their own, and the people in the South wanted to take care of their own. Actually, I felt that the people in the South – the former Bell Atlantic, the true former Bell Atlantic – had probably the highest ethical… the more likely to go. I mean of course I am going to say that, it's just an 'us' and 'them'. I mean, there are people in my group now that, uh, they aren't going to… and my group is pretty small so maybe I shouldn't say anything… there is a bit of mistrust to this day. That, uh, I am still jockeying to make sure that whoever I report to is on my side, because I don't trust… that some people may not be around if it got to that. I mean, you're talking about your own leader right now; I kind of have a feeling some of that goes down to the good old boy network on the West… I don't know, but that is just what I hear and it makes sense.

Interviewer: Okay, during the merger with GTE did your perceptions or feelings about the employees of the former NYNEX change at all?

Interviewee: I'm sorry repeat that?

Interviewer: So, during the merger… during and after the merger with GTE, did your perceptions or feelings about the employees of the former NYNEX change at all?

Interviewee: Yes. Uh, before it was 'us' and 'them', North and South. And now it was 'us' and 'them', East and West. So, my perceptions of the employees of the former NYNEX were… we are now on the same side.

Interviewer: So, did that change the way you worked together?

Interviewee: Yes, I think it did. Some of that carries on to this day. I will talk to my boss, who is former NYNEX, and, you know, we can agree on a lot of things, and, uh, that were different – the way we do things. My boss was, uh, may have come up through the union, so she is really strict on rules most people like to ignore. I do… I work closely with IT – IT security – so I know how strict they are. And I think that some former GTE – some not everybody – are used to interpreting rules, policies and procedures any way they want. I'm willing to stretch things, bend the rules to get work done, but uh, I don't want to get the company in trouble. And I'm not sure that everybody in the West feels the same way. But I have had those exact discussions with former NYNEX and we are in agreement, so there is definitely a feeling of us and them.

Interviewer: Okay and how well integrated do you think the employees are today? You kind of alluded to that a little bit already, but….

Interviewee: Uh… better. Obviously better than nine years ago, but not…still not well integrated. I mean it's kind of like … once you, uh, you… it's like growing up, once you have a certain train of thought, its hard to change somebody.

Interviewer: So, is that NYNEX/Bell Atlantic? Bell Atlantic/GTE? All three? So, like, where do you see it?

Interviewee: It's all three, but the largest separation is GTE/Bell Atlantic.

Interviewer: Uh, okay. So, looking back, do you think that there is anything the leadership could have done differently to improve or speed up the integration?

Interviewee: Uh, almost like a busing in the school system, yes [emphatic]. Is it feasible? Probably not. You know, we live in a spread out world now where you can telecommute, and electronics, you know. There is a lot of flying around. You know, I think it's important to meet face to face. But, uh, and I think that does happen, but not for everybody. And I can imagine getting way down to the bottom of the totem pole; those people must really feel it. That there's, uh, not a lot of integration that goes on. It seems to me that it's not a very transparent company, its vertical. Thinking what the leadership can do, I just suggest that, yeah, spread people around geographically.

Interviewer: So, spread them around? Spread the work around? Like how?

Interviewee: I mean I think they just did that with Directors and above, sticking everybody in Basking Ridge.

Interviewer: You mean actually bring them together?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Or, bring them together. Make sure that teams include organizations… some organizations, team leaders, make sure they include an equal amount of employees from equally dispersed areas.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Okay.

Interviewee: Of course that is hard to do when you have small teams, and everybody has different qualifications. But you really need to go out of your way to prevent these, uh, pockets of this is an all Bell Atlantic team, this is an all NYNEX team, this is an all GTE team. You really need to go out of your

way to split them up. Recently my director split up – reorganized the primary research folks in a way that was the opposite of the way I thought she should have done. You know, with all the RIFs and everything, sometimes you don't have a choice. You know, you have to make smaller teams, but um, you have teams that are strictly Bell Atlantic and you have teams that are strictly GTE. And, um, I can already see resentment between these… the way these people react to each other. They don't know what they are doing!

Interviewer: Okay, so um, thinking back on it, is there anything that I haven't touched on about the relationships between the different groups that you saw or observed over time that I haven't addressed that you could share?

Interviewee: The relationships…

Interviewer: The way people worked together.

Interviewee: I mean, I have to think about my own personal experiences, I'm not sure that is what you want?

Interviewer: That is what this is about… your own personal experiences, so you can certainly share that [laughs].

Interviewee: One time…um I had at least one employee, at least a couple of employees that I worked with… this is the former Bell Atlantic employees, going way back to when I started in Telecom, which was you know mid-'90s. And I've been in some way in the same team with these people ever since. And you know, you become really close friends with them. At one point, I remember a certain person being upset about the way our boss had dictated something

down to her – I guess I shouldn't say her – this person, and I went… I looked at an email that she has sent her, and I replied back to her this is just our boss' way of doing things, very stern, just very too the point you know. She didn't even use, uh, you know you could tell the message that was sent was very – well it was done in about thirty seconds, if that. Get it done, here, blah, blah, blah. It was just taken in the wrong context. And I said that, and I explained it to her, sent it back to her, except accidentally replied back to my boss, and you know, was caught. I learned the hard way be careful what you say in email, cause you might as well be publishing it to the world. I didn't get reprimanded for it, but I think I may have hurt somebody's feelings. And, uh, anther instance a relationship with somebody – although in the West, GTE – and we were in a meeting on the phone and I was expressing my feelings strong about something, I don't think you should do it this way, and this is the way it works, blah, blah, blah. And I might have been a little harsh to the person I was talking to on the phone, and suddenly an instant message popped up on my screen from another person saying he is just being an a-hole. In other words, somebody did the same thing to me and accidentally sent it to the wrong person. And after that, ever since then, I just don't trust these people anymore. I just think that is improper use of company resources. Just, um, you know, these are just some issues that I … that have… I think they cause more resentment than, rather than making a situation better. Then you just sit there and stew and you don't want to. I should have – I could have – gotten this person in a lot

of trouble, possibly even terminated for improper use like that, but I never did, what was that going to buy me. I probably should have just taken it up personally with her. I keep saying 'she' and 'her' so I kind of keep giving people away.

Interviewer: I have no clue who they are, so don't worry about it.

Interviewee: I am the only man on our team anyway, so…

Interviewer: It's like being in marketing communications, there is like twenty women to every one guy. Okay, well that is kind of it, so thank you.

Interview #16 Arlington

Interviewer: So, for the record, I assume you were with Bell Atlantic prior to the merger?

Interviewee: Yeah, I started with Bell Atlantic March 3, 1997, so we were really in the
midst of the merger.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Interviewee: In the midst of working through it.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, cool. Um, so during the merger between Bell Atlantic and
NYNEX, what were your perceptions of the employees of NYNEX – aka
the merging company?

Interviewee: The specific individuals I worked with were mostly favorable; however we
were caught at that period in sort of a power play if you will. Based on what
I did, which was specifically pricing, I was brought in to do pricing analysis
for the build of the LD [long distance] company, and where we found
ourselves at the time, related to the merger were our counterparts were
attempting to gain control over…well at least the decision making part of
that process. So, uh, it was myself and [name omitted]. It was basically
[name omitted] team, because that is who we fell up under, and uh, I had
some unfavorable opinions of some of the folks because of some of the
tactics that were used.

Interviewer: Can you be more specific?

Interviewee: Um, we were responsible for getting the pricing to Sprint at the time, they
were the underlying provider for us, and we had everything we had to do
mapped out from a process perspective, and… and a source perspective,

and… uh… the other director – it was sort of her way or the highway. And uh, I don't believe she, uh, considered…. I don't think there was any consideration given on our processes or our opinions at the time on the path we were already going down. Um, with regards to calling plan, pricing, things of that nature.

Interviewer: Okay. And how do you think the NYNEX folks felt about the Bell Atlantic folks?

Interviewee: Um, it's hard to say specifically because I really didn't know any of them personally. I assume they probably felt the same thing about [name omitted] fighting back with [name omitted] on the issue, they probably felt the same way, that we were acting silly, which we really weren't. Um, I do believe…I am not sure if you are familiar with this, but they did send groups of us to the Wharton School…

Interviewee: No, I didn't know that.

Interviewee: Okay, we were told to go to a quote unquote Bell Atlantic leadership… um… leadership development meeting at the Wharton School. Certain groups of us… it was a week long process. When we got there it was definitely a leadership challenge process – or class – however when you go there you realized it was fifty percent Bell Atlantic and fifty percent NYNEX people, and you could tell Bell Atlantic was trying to make the effort to merge the people. But the specific issues that came up in these sessions it made it really clear that there were divergent opinions on what the new company should look like, specifically certain departments and

there was defiantly animosity – maybe not animosity, that's a strong word, but definitely some touch areas based on some of the interpersonal things that we did during the course of those courses. So, I would probably say they felt the same about us as we… I perceived we felt about them.

Interviewer: And do you think that was a function of… uh… people coming together, job security, cultural differences, like what do you think that was stemming from?

Interviewee: Oh, any time there Is a merger, you worry about job security, especially when there are redundant teams – they had a marketing team, we had a marketing team, other than that I…uh…I think – at certain levels it got personal, um, but I think the primary thing is probably job security because you feel like you could easily be replaced by that group over there that's coming in, why do you need two of them? Now, at the time, Bell Atlantic was not the company it is now. It didn't, to my knowledge, RIF anyone. They just found room for everyone at the table. Whether it is, um, in their current position or in another position. It was a much, uh, gentler time at Verizon, so, uh, I believe it was more job related as opposed to personal feelings. Although sometimes that came into personal feelings and attacks.

Interviewer: And, uh, how integrated was your group – you said at the Wharton School you were kind of fifty-fifty, when your two groups came together – the NYNEX Bell Atlantic group – was it very integrated?

Interviewee: They made certain, um, the course itself was four or five days and they made certain … I mean you would go into a session and it would be virtually half – fifty-fifty – so…

Interviewer: Was that reflective of your actual team – your actual working team – when the two groups came together.

Interviewee: You mean my Bell Atlantic team?

Interviewer: Bell Atlantic/NYNEX, when the two groups were brought together, how integrated were they? Like how many people… was it just one or two people from NYNEX, was it fifty-fifty, was it nobody from NYNEX?

Interviewee: You mean at a company level, or in this class?

Interviewer: No, I mean at a company level.

Interviewee: Oh, at a company level. For my specific function, I believe… I am trying to think now, um, I believe the vast majority of the team was Bell Atlantic. That's why all of a sudden with the merger… the NYNEX folks, they didn't lose their jobs, they just kind of went to other functional areas.

Interviewer: Okay, and uh, how long, um…actually that question comes later… how well – the NYNEX and the Bell Atlantic people – how well did you work together initially and then over time?

Interviewee: Initially there were touchy areas, but I think over time, you know looking back – hindsight's always twenty-twenty – over time it meshed very well.

Interviewer: And how long did that take?

Interviewee: Um, I would say over the course of a year.

Interviewer: And what do you think created the ability to mesh eventually?

Interviewee: I just think that – personally with me – there was any proactive, I don't think

there was anything proactive on Bell Atlantic's part to create that, I just

think over time, when you start to work with people, you get beyond the

differences you had initially. Okay a) your job is safe, you didn't lose your

job as a result of the merger; b) you just start to develop relationships with

people. You know… uh… you know, everyone to a degree has value, so

you saw value in the other people obviously and so, you just became, over

time, you were all in it together, I guess you could say, so…, uh, there were

still some personality issues but, uh, you know, we did it this way – at

NYNEX we did it this way, that type of thing. And, I can't remember now,

looking back on it, I don't – at least from my perspective – I don't believe

the Bell Atlantic way was forced on the NYNEX folks, I definitely think it

was a merger. So, I think that had a lot to do with it, I just think over time

people overcame most of those differences. Uh, I mean to a certain degree, I

know it's been a long time, but I… you know the NYNEX merger was

nothing compared to the next one. So, I just think over time you develop a

relationship with people and all those preconceived notions go away.

Interviewer: Okay, well that leads into the next question, when the merger with GTE

happened, how did you feel about the employees of GTE that were being

merged with Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: I can only speak to… looking back, I can only speak to the people I directly

worked with. You know, had to work with, and, uh, um… I did not have a

favorable impression of them… what was the question?

Interviewer: The question was, when the merger with GTE happened, how did you feel

about the employees of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Okay, um, the direct group that because of their… their – not combative

nature – but um, their sort of take-charge nature. I believe, um, one specific

individual was given, um, not the authority, but given the idea that she was

in charge, and she wasn't, it was an equal group, between the both of us.

And at the time we were merging all of our calling plans, and… well, we

weren't, well we were merging all of the calling plans, but we couldn't…

we were pulling them in, it was what was going to be our lead offer, what

our lead plan was going to be. And, um, what was the pricing, all that. So, it

was very difficult at times to… to deal with them. To work with them.

Interviewer: And do you feel that was prevalent throughout the group, or just your

personal experience?

Interviewee: Prevalent throughout our group, yes… I mean… yes. It wasn't just my

experience. Now, beyond our group, I know there were other issues, but I

couldn't comment, you know, on the GTE vs. Verizon as a whole.

Interviewer: And you…besides this individual, when you… when the groups were

brought together, you said they had a very take charge attitude, um, was that

a function again, like we mentioned earlier, of job security, cultural

differences… what do you think led to those differences?

Interviewee: I think – I don't think it was necessarily job security, because again at that

time, there was no such thing as someone getting RIF'd, as far as I knew. I

think, personally I think this group was told they had the upper hand. And

they really didn't, but I think that was their attitude, or the marching orders they were given. They were, um, uncooperative at times and… and we could turn things on a dime, and we had a really good system in place, and… uh… and they didn't see it as such.

Interviewer: And during the merger with GTE, did your perceptions or feelings about the employees of the former Bell Atlantic or NYNEX change at all?

Interviewee: No… but at that point in time it had been a sufficient number of year behind that I… I think I said before… that I had almost…I think the companies had meshed much better – NYNEX and Bell Atlantic. So, I think that… for the most part… NYNEX – old former NYNEX, people that were my buddies, so… people that I work with great on a daily basis, so I think the NYNEX/Bell Atlantic merger was just a distant memory. Or, any problems associated with it were just a distant memory.

Interviewer: Why do you think the NYNEX/Bell Atlantic merger went better than the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger?

Interviewee: I don't know. I guess my personal opinion would be, I don't now, that the GTE people in general has a high opinion of themselves and GTE. And, um, I think that was evident in their actions and I think that was harder to overcome. Because, um, with the NYNEX, you had people just fighting for what they thought was right, but from a GTE perspective, when things were very black and white on paper, you know which is better, and clearly what we had was better, they still pushed what they had. If that makes any sense.

Interviewer: Um... hmm… more like a sense of ownership…?

Interviewee: Yeah, like, we created this… we launched LD before you did, so we know what we're doing better than you do. Never mind that we launched LD and started capturing market share like nobody's business, you know what I mean, so I… I… I don't know, I just think that… I think… my opinion of the GTE culture was a very… that they were very high on themselves. And based on their success.

Interviewer: Um, how well integrated do you think the employees are today?

Interviewee: Um, I think their integrated, but… and I don't know if it's a product of their still having different systems and things, but I think… I think there is still sort of them and us. You'll hear it. But personally for me I don't … I don't think of it anymore, because I have GTE… a lot of former GTE friends. People that I have worked with over the years.

Interviewer: So where do you see that manifesting itself if you think it still exists?

interviewee: Um…you'll hear a comment… you know, like the good old days, like you know, its one round of bad news after another around here now… well this never went on at GTE. And then my response would be well, it never went on at Bell Atlantic either. But it's the new… it's the company we work for today, that creating… that's having problems, not… I don't think you can point back and say you know, it didn't happen at GTE this way. Well, no, it didn't happen at Bell Atlantic this way, either. That would be my response. But I think that… that's the only time you will hear it, oh, he's former GTE. Like, oh, he's a good guy, he's former GTE. You know, that type of thing.

Interviewer: Okay, um, when you mentioned that people will say that this didn't happen

at GTE, do you think … is there still a perception that one company took

one… the other company over, or…?

Interviewee: I think there is. I mean, from where I sat, to me, it looked like, initially after

the merger; it looked like they took us over, just from my immediate

surroundings and directors I was dealing with, and all of that. But I think

that – ultimately – I think that the former GTE people think that Bell

Atlantic took GTE over. Um… yeah… that's what I was….

Interviewer: So, based on your experience, is there anything the leadership of the

organization could have done differently to improve or speed up the

integration?

Interviewer: Well, um, I don't know, I guess my short answer is that people are people,

and I think that any time you merge two companies together you are going

to have problems like this. Sort of like that, like we had. And I personally

don't think that there is any way… well … I just think its diffi… I don't

know what they could have done to make it better, to answer the question. I

think that Bell Atlantic workshop at Wharton was a really good thing. Of

course, you can't send ten thousand people to that type of thing….

Interviewer: What about it was good?

Interviewee: Uh, and you know it was a long time ago, but the courses – the coursework

– and the – I won't say games, but the activities they had us participate in

made a lot of the, uh, differences and animosities seem trivial. Like, um,

like it was stupid and we thought that. And I think… I think its human

nature, any time you're pushed together with people – people not like yourself – people that are just from a different company or background, you know you're eventually – you get to know the people and some of those things, some of those negative opinions go away. So… um… I think GTE, at least from where I was at the time, we were fast and furious trying to merge calling plans and marketing plans, and things like that, um, there would have been no time to… I don't see how they cold have done it differently, because we had a deadline.

Interviewer: But it sounds like what you are saying is bringing people together may have improved….

Interviewee; I think if they had improved… if they had done some sort of team building , for lack of a better word, you know after… I mean I know we had a deadline to merge, but after the… maybe after that if they had done some sort of teambuilding activities. I mean, from Bell Atlantic, we had team building activities all the time. At least a couple times a year. And that's… we don't anymore, so….

Interviewer: So, looking back, is there anything around the dynamics between Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, and then subsequently Bell Atlantic and GTE that I haven't touched upon that really stand out that you remember or even today?

Interviewee: No, I mean… I… I… I…I look at the whole Basking Ridge thing, and I know this is a huge company spread out all over the country or world, but um… and I know it can't be done differently, but I think the biggest

detriment at Verizon is that we are spread with huge population centers. Because, you know people… [Hidden] Ridge is still GTE, and Verizon is still here, Boston, New York, Philadelphia – same point of centers there, so if you could have people under one roof, you know, that would be the best remedy. Because if you are under one roof you can get a lot done. Um, I don't see, you know, nothing else stands out other than the fact that being separated physically, it harder to overcome the suspicions, I think. I mean, to a degree, the NYNEX/ Bell Atlantic merger, just geographically, was closer. There was more travel between the two – between Boston, New York and Washington. And therefore the integration went better ultimately.

Interviewer: All right, that's it! Thanks you for participating.

Interviewee: Sure.

Interview #18 Arlington

Interviewer: So, for the record, you were I assume, with Bell Atlantic prior to the Bell

Atlantic/NYNEX merger, correct?

Interviewee: I was.

Interviewer: So, during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what were your

perceptions of the employees of the merging company, in this case it would

be NYNEX?

Interviewee: My, uh, during that merger time period, there was a lot of curiosity and also

a lot of suspicion, quite frankly. Uh, because uh the merger with NYNEX

was our first merger, at the least the first merger that I had experienced,

there were all sorts of rumors of um, the company then needing to downsize

and so there – that was the beginning of the real sense of trepidation about

what's going to happen with the changes in the organization, changes in

who we report to, changes in style, uh, there was a – and there was a lot of

uh, uh, sense of competition, um. Is our boss going to protect our jobs and

what we do? Are we going to have a NYNEX uh director or manager or VP

who then is going to favor NYNEX people? There's a sense of sibling

rivalry, because we all knew that the NYNEX folks as well as the Bell

Atlantic folks still carried forth much of the corporate culture left over from

the Bell system. So there was a familiarity in terms of processes and in

terms of training and corporate culture, but there was also a sense of sibling

rivalry. One of my perceptions was a sense of – those NYNEX folks are

snobbish, some of that has to do, again, with the whole sub-cultural

perception of uh, oh you're from Virginia, you talk slower than folks in New Jersey, well New Jersey was part of Bell Atlantic, but New Yorkers, New Yorkers are slick, sophisticated, metropolitan. You folks are from the slower south, kind of uh, um, unspoken yet, in the background, at least in terms of my mind, you know, are these folks going to be snobbish to us because we're not the sophisticated New Yorkers, kind of um thing.

Interviewer: And did you experience that when the two groups came together?

Interviewee: When the groups actually started meeting, there, I... I don't remember that there was a whole lot of that. I certainly didn't experience much of that on a... on a personal level, uh, I did hear some things uh, years later. But it was....

Interviewer: [interrupting] About your teams? Or about other people's experiences?

Interviewee: Um, about conversations other folks had. Uh, in that the... I think looking back, my sense is that the folks in NYNEX, probably had many of the same fears and anxieties that we had. Um, when we did finally merge, our work group reported to a woman who, was um, a force of nature of her own. And I think that we were – many of my impressions were formed by that particular director, as much as anything else. I disagreed with a lot of her work style. Uh, so.

Interviewer: What about with your co-workers, working with them when you first came together? How were those interactions?

Interviewee: There, it seems to me that there is so little in my memory that I'm collapsing the nine, the merger with GTE with the merger of NYNEX.

Interviewer: Well, we'll get to the details of the merger with GTE in a minute.

Interviewee: And part of what I'm finding is that I'm sitting here and I'm trying to remember, what year was the merger with NYNEX. Do you re-

Interviewer: 97

Interviewee: 97?

Interviewer: And then GTE was 2000.

Interviewee: So, and there's a part of me that says I don't know how valuable my interview's going to be for you because, although work is and my job has always been important to me, in 1996, I adopted my daughter from Russia, so um, those first couple of years my, my primary focus and my primary memories center around bringing my daughter home and adjusting to suddenly having this toddler on my hands.

Interviewer: That's fine, whatever you can remember is fine. So do you recall how integrated the two teams were initially? Like, were you primarily Bell Atlantic, were you primarily NYNEX? Was there a 50/50 split?

Interviewee: It was pretty much a split, and because, in secondary research at that time we actually had a physical location here at in complex, over at 1310, a walk-in library, where I worked and there was a walk-in library at 1095. I believe there was also a physical space, or if nothing else a storage room where there were print materials collected and maintained in Boston and um, there was also some, a, a library in Waltham, Massachusetts. So the physical locations of course are by definition distinct and so we worked

separately, there were um, we had, um, staff meetings over the phone, but

there was, um, we continued to work separately for quite some time.

Interviewer: How well, and this is sort of the question I just asked. But how well did you

work together initially and did that change over time?

Interviewee: I would say that initially, there was um, uh, a strong sense of we do it this

way here, uh, I can't say that I was any less vocal about that than what I

heard for example from New York, some of that has to do with personality.

One of the things that we embarked on was taking a look at our systems and

our processes for work. And that was, I think that always helps, in terms of

sharing ideas, that we ok, we do it this way here, but I like your idea of

what you're doing there and going to see the other person's location and

just kind of getting to know the other people.

Interviewer: How long do you think it took – if it ever happened – that the teams became

integrated?

Interviewee: In… in running the separate library spaces, and those processes that we had

in place at that time, I, there're two ways, well, not more than two, but

there's more than one way to think about the term team, I don't know that

we ever truly integrated as a team, and some of that had to do with

personality, but I would say that there continued to be a sense of

standoffishness for a number of years, there's, in terms of sharing work and

actually feeling like someone's really, you can have lots of people reporting

to the same supervisor but to feel like someone is actually your coworker

and on your team and gonna back you up and you call that person and you

share the workload and that kind of thing, I have to say, I don't know that we ever got there.

Interviewer: And um, when the merger with GTE happened, how did you feel about the employees of GTE?

Interviewee: I… I have to say that the merger with GTE occurred so rapidly in my mind after the initial merger, what was that – 2000?

Interviewer: Um… hmm.

Interviewee: Yeah, I felt like, well the announcement came before the actual, um, the actual legal merger took place. The announcement came so quickly after um, our other merger. I remember I got the announcement of the GTE merger, when I was on, uh, when I called into the office while I was on vacation, and my daughter had only been home about 15 months or so, so um, that was in 97, the summer of 97, when the first announcement came out and I remember just dreading it, I just felt like, we'd barely gotten used to the idea that we were this larger Bell Atlantic entity and all of a sudden we wanted to get, create yet a bigger pond. Um, and I… I didn't really think about the people, so much as dreading the stress that comes along with making all the organizational changes that were going to occur again and that were going to benefit… anytime there's a change, there's a… there's small but significant adjustments in the workload and how you do the work and I can't say that I paid a whole lot of attention to the people at GTE. One of my first impressions was, had to do with, the, it seemed to me that the folks at GTE had a whole new attitude.

Interviewer: How? In what way?

Interviewee: Um, my personal impression has been that um, the folks in GTE were…um
more, and I'm gonna, well, it's just it's my interview so I'm just going to
talk.

Interviewer: That's exactly what I want you to do.

Interviewee: I'm thinking that they were more maverick. They were much more the
cowboys, yes, they're from Texas and guess what, it shows. They were
much more maverick. Yeah well, we know that's the rule, but that's not,
the fact that it's a rule doesn't necessarily mean that we're going to do it
that way. Wait a minute. (Laughing) Wait a minute, where we come from,
um, folks deal with consequences if they don't follow the rules and yet it
seemed to me that GTE had this much more freewheeling attitude, and there
was much more a sense of, um from the folks that I was dealing with, and I
um, there was much more a sense of just get it done, whereas I tend to be
much more of a plotting, get it right type of person. And what I kept hearing
from my new GTE associates was get it done, as opposed to get it done
right, so there's, that's been one of my first and lasting impressions with the
folks from GTE.

Interviewer: So when the teams came together and you were faced with that kind of
difference in approach, how did that manifest itself in your daily actions?

Interviewee: How… in terms of… where the rub has come and has come in such ways as
goals, uh, from goals, from GTE, there's the sense is that the goal is, all the
emphasis has been on time savings, rapidity, quickness of turnaround time,

uh, um, so there's been a lot of emphasis around time related features in a goal. And, and I know from my point of view, there's, I've spoken up in order to bal-, to help to try to balance that out, ok yes, it's important, it's important to respond in a timely matter, but where's the fudge room for responding accurately. Um.

Interviewer: How integrated were the two teams, when you, did you get a lot of people from GTE in your team, were you 50/50, you know, mostly Bell Atlantic again, like how was the mixture?

Interviewee: I'm thinking that there was just a slight, a… a slightly, there were slightly more people on the Bell Atlantic side than the GTE side, so there were like 4 to 5, so we're not talking about a big difference.

Interviewer: Fairly equally distributed.

Interviewee: Fairly equally distributed, what we've, I would say that we, the real differences came in terms of the individuals in the team and we, right away, had to deal with different styles of management. Uh, right away had to deal with downsizing. Um, the, deal with uh, discussions over computer systems, which systems we're gonna use, that kind of thing.

Interviewer: During the merger with GTE did your perceptions or feelings about your former NYNEX coworkers change at all?

Interviewee: Um, I… I, um, yes, there was a sense that there was in my mind an overlay of two things, one has to do with the um, corporate culture from prior um, um, RBOC [regional Bell operating company]. But the, I'm sorry, I'm losing my train of thought. When AT&T divested itself to create the

regional, um, local exchange companies, the regional companies, the seven

regional bell operating companies, NYNEX was one, the Mid Atlantic

region then became Bell Atlantic was another, GTE was always considered

an independent telephone um operating company. So there were two

differences, I have not only felt this in terms of merging with GTE, and

there was a shift, because all of a sudden not only were we dealing with

differences in the corporate culture, but also in a… in American's regional

differences um because New England and Bell Atlantic has an Eastern, an

East Coast point of view and GTE had much more of a Midwestern and

Western point of view. And uh, you know we make a lot of jokes about it,

but it's there. They… my… my perspective of my coworkers at NYNEX

was that ok, now I've got this kind of solidarity of Eastern point of view, of

East Coast versus West Coast kind of ideas of how the world works, so yes,

I would say it shifted more to one of solidarity.

Interviewer: And how well integrated do you think the employees are today?

Interviewee: I think we are, every year we become better integrated, as we, as we move

forward.

Interviewer: Do you think the two groups are integrated now?

Interviewee: Yes, we're, we're at this point yes, we are, we're a very small team and

by… some of it's by necessity and some of it's just because we've wanted

to do a good job and wanted to work together well. We've got a really good

team, and… and again, some of it is just necessity, and some of it is just

because the folks I work with are all terrific in their various ways, but yeah,

we have, I think we have really integrated into a true team as opposed to folks who are just reporting up to the same supervisor, same manager, or same director. I think we really are a team.

Interviewer: And based on your experience, is there anything the leadership of the organization could have done differently speed up the integration?

Interviewee: I think that the upper level executives and the leadership could have loosened the budget to allow for more travel and more uh, face to face meeting time. Because that's what brings people together, getting to know one other as real people, as opposed to a name on the IM [instant messaging] or a voice over the phone. I think that's, that's the primary thing, um. I, I, um, currently, Verizon is working with uh, there was the big move with having the directors and above moving to Basking Ridge, what that was 2-3 years ago? And uh, that's yet another change over the more spread out, more uh, decentralized location of Verizon employees previously. In some ways, I think um students who go to business school in the future will probably be studying what the effects were on folks as the pendulum swings between everybody should be in the same place – no we don't need to be in the same geographic location, I think that whereas my preference would be to have people all in the same location, it's for, on a personal basis and because of the dynamics of interpersonal reasons when you actually have a person in the same room. I've become accustomed to having my supervisor sit up in Boston and co-workers in Dallas and other folks that I deal with across the country and I, I don't know, I don't know

that I… I… what I'm gonna do is say that I'm not sure that I want to accept rapid integration and again the time based goal as um, the correct question, um, cause I'm not sure that it's a, it's something that you can push in terms of a time line, except perhaps by throwing people together, but I'm not… I… I am not sure that I agree with the idea that everyone should move to the same town and work in the same building.

Interviewer: So you think it's right now, although personally you'd like to see it, you're not sure that that would really work – that it would be the best solution?

Interviewee: Personally, I'd like to see people work together, I'd like to see this building full of people, so that there's a sense of energy, and so you run into people and you have conversations in the hall and it's just more live, um but I wouldn't want for upper level management to say ok, you're going to move to such and such location, so I'm of two minds, my personal mind and um, my more, if you know, if this were a perfect world, how would it be arranged kind of thing.

Interviewer: Ok, is there anything else, looking back, that I haven't touched on regarding the interpersonal relationships across the mergers that stands out for you?

Interviewee: One, it's one of those things that's written about in business literature and yet I, in my day to day work experience I found out that it's written about for a good reason, and that is that the computer systems between the different companies were different and I think that's led to as many delays and problems and the flow of work and communication as anything else. When you have to shift what computer system you're working with or

someone else has to input vouchers into a whole different system than the system that you're inputting into. That is one area where I would say in terms of making a more rapid integration, I would say that more emphasis and um, meetings, and agreement would have to be, could be reached about the computer systems along with the people, but what are the systems, what are the work processes, along with what are the human element, because at least in my job the computer systems are what I use to do my work. They're what allows me to drive my output, so they're important to me. And right now, we're dealing with yet another change, from the Lotus Notes to Outlook, and, and it's slowed everything down, so if you're looking at how do I make this smoother and more rapid, then pay attention to the tool.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you.

Interview #2 Boston

Interviewer: Okay, so just to establish, you were, I assume, with NYNEX

Interviewee: I was with NYNEX in Boston, yes.

Interviewer: Alright, so during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX what were your

perceptions of the employees of the merging company? So, your

perceptions of the Bell Atlantic company during the course of the merger.

Your experiences with them…?

Interviewee: The position I was in there was another group of people that performed

pretty much exactly what our group performed. Pre-merger we didn't have

much exposure to them at all but once the merger occurred and we were

made aware of each other, uh, there was a certain, um, intensity…

concern… who is going to survive here? Are they going to need all of us?

So that was always the worry for our little group. We do all the customer

hierarchy, all the customer aggregation, the customer coding and we did

know at the time that they used the same hierarchical structure that we did.

So we did the coding at NYNEX, they did it the same way at Bell Atlantic

and once we were introduced to who were going to be our counterparts, and

everyone realized that they were pretty safe as far as employment, we

worked together really well, and everyone had a common goal and that was

to get the customers consolidated together. And so they were regulated

entity, we're regulated, I think that we were all coming at it from the same

angle and we actually had a pretty good working relationship with that team

once everyone realized, once the dust settled, that we weren't going to lose

our jobs, they weren't going to lose their jobs, and the structure was setup and aligned, and the objectives were set and we were all on the same page, we were fine.

Interviewer: And about how long did that take?

Interviewee: I would say… it was pretty fast. I think it was in the first six to nine months of the merger we were all squared away as far as getting to know each other and getting the plan together.

Interviewer: And how were the initial reactions, I know you said there was some concern, like how did you approach each other in the beginning until you did sort out all those issues.

Interviewee: Well, basically it really depended on the individual. There were some, um, there was like one individual who was reluctant to share any information. There was another individual who insisted that, you know, everything we did on the NYNEX side was done incorrectly. But then there were other people that we worked with that were fabulous, and we were able to collaborate and to work off each other and come up with a common process. Um, for the most part, all of us really ended up, um, a core group of nice people. We did have some personality issues, but I don't know if it was the result of a merger so much, or the person's personality.

Interviewer: And during those initial interactions, were they face to face, on the phone, when you first had them?

Interviewee: On the phone, they were all on the phone, yep.

Interviewer: And how was that?

Interviewee: It was challenging because you wanted to try… I always think its best, its better to be face to face with people, you know? We are constantly on the phone now, more so than ever, but it was mostly on the phone, you know, frequently, you know pretty much daily calls trying to work through how we were going to get to get… we had a goal, we knew we needed to code everybody and aggregate all of our customers into a single hierarchy, and so we worked together to try and accomplish that.

Interviewer: And how do you perceive your coworkers viewed the employees of the merging company? Your perception of them, how do you perceive that they perceived you?

Interviewee: Um, I think that their feelings were very similar to ours, um, I think that they were cautious. A little nervous about job security, a little posturing going on and, actually, I think that their behavior was exactly the same as ours coming into this, I really do.

Interviewer: And were there any, from their view or your view, perceptions about Bell Atlantic or NYNEX, not just how people felt, but did you perceive there to be any particular way, stereotypes of people if you will?

Interviewee: Yes. Yes, um, I think that, because we were New York and New England we felt more bigger city, you know, more metropolitan. We… we kind of knew our jobs better, you know, we kind of felt that if anyone had to go it had to be them, and not us, and they're more laid back, and its mid Atlantic, and they're at a little different pace, and… but there was definitely some preconceived notions of the two different groups of people.

Interviewer: And how do you think they perceived the NYNEX team?

Interviewee: I think culturally, particularly women [laughs] in the Northeast, uh, we tend
to just let it out there, and speak our mind, and, uh, that I think gets a little
intimidating to people. I don't think that they're used to that. I mean in the
Mid Atlantic. We are sort of like bull in a china shop, and that is just how
we are, we all deal with each other in a similar way and that was all our
little world, and you know you go down to the Virginia area and the West
Virginia area, and Maryland seem to be a little calmer, a little, you know,
everyone watch their words a little more, and I think that we seem to be a
little more assertive, and aggressive to people. And I think that I have seen
that in other merger scenarios.

Interviewer: And do you that caused some of the initial tension?

Interviewee: Um, I think it did… I really think it did. You know, because, I guess, the
further away the colleague was it seemed they weren't used to it. You
know, if it was a male, so you know we had a bunch of females, who were
very assertive, and had been in our jobs for a long time and perceived
ourselves as subject matter experts. So, not only did we think we knew
everything about the job, better than anyone, I think culturally from this
area, you know we do have a tendency to be kind of over the top, speak our
minds, and you know pretty much just lay it out there, so I think was a bit of
an issue, until they got to know us and understand us a little bit better.

Interviewer: And how did you think you worked together initially versus over time?

Interviewee: Um, again initially it was rocky because of the fact that you just… you were

nervous about where you were going to land and who was going to take

over, and who was going to be in charge, um, you know you are hoping the

person you work for at that time is going to handle everything because then,

you know, you have more of an in. I don't remember, really, being nervous

about a RIF or a layoff type of thing, at the time. More so being deployed to

a different position. But it was, yeah, I don't think we worried too much

about layoffs at that moment. But you know, that's evolved, because they

had to do all that downsizing so it was always in the back of your head, but

it wasn't so prevalent as it is today, when you know, just do them every

couple of months, you know.

Interviewer: And what about now, with the former Bell Atlantic people you still work

with, how is that working relationship now?

Interviewee: Um, most of the people that I worked directly with are gone. Still am

working with one of the women from that initial group that I really really

respect, and we have become really close friends. And I supported the

enterprise solutions sales team, and um, my director is from the Mid

Atlantic, she was a sales director in the Mid Atlantic, so now she is my

boss, and we get along famously with all of them, it's a really great working

relationship with all of them, it's like we all started together. It's interesting

how it's evolved.

Interviewer: And how long did that take for that to happen?

Interviewee: Um, it was … I am trying to think… it wasn't too too bad, it really wasn't.

Because they were RBOCs like we were, it was almost like it was a natural

progression, a natural fit, even though we had our little bit of differences,

our little cultural differences, I think, you know the overall … you know

they are selling the same types of products and services that we were, and

we had a real understanding of each other, because of the nature of our

companies that merged. Um, so you know, I would say that once the dust

settled, as with any merger, it takes a good six to twelve months to even,

you know, get through the initial stuff, I mean I really think we did a good

job in briefing each other quickly. You know, the biggest challenge was

their service center, we worked closely with service centers down there, and

they… they did their service order entry very differently than we did and we

totally didn't agree with the way they did it and we always seemed to butt

heads with them because of that difference in philosophy on how to enter an

order, you know. And so we ended up… that took us a good two years or so

to get through, um, understanding why they wanted to do it that way, and

we wanted to do it this way, and to set up a process to kind of help them get

through, you know like they needed a particular code on their order, and we

didn't understand why they needed it that way because we didn't do it that

way here, and so when they needed that particular code we set up a process

where they could come to us and we would provide them that information

and, um, all in all once we rolled out the process everybody was fine, I

mean, we really started to understand each others differences, and if you

couldn't unify and do things exactly the same way then you just embraced, you know, the other and worked through it.

Interviewer: And when the merger with GTE happened how did the employees, how did you feel about the employees of GTE during the merger with Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: That was like a whole different type of merger. They were not a Bell operating company, they were unregulated versus regulated, they were spread out all over the country, um, they um, the perception was they were all really really highly paid versus our side of the house. Which was, I don't know whether it was true or not, still don't to this day, that merger, um, I started talking to some of the GTE folks that did a similar job to what I did pre-merger. So I was on a lot of conference calls with them, and uh, everybody was very, very nice, and um, again, very cautious about, you know, more nerve wracking than the other merger, about who was going to be left standing, who was going to have the responsibility, how is this all going to be structured? So it was interesting.

Interviewer: And why do you think that it was more nerve wracking, like, why do you think the tension around that was more heightened between Bell Atlantic and GTE versus NYNEX and Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: I think that, um, the theory… the layoff theory… kind of grew, you know you felt so much more secure earlier on than you did later on, um, there was duplication of effort, they did their coding and their hierarchy structure very, very different than we did, so it was a big concern that were they going to say, we are going to take this whole thing over or is it going to be a

matter of Bell Atlantic you are going to take this whole thing over, or was it going to be some sort combined effort, so it just seemed, like, um, like it was culturally a different group. I think because they weren't an operating company, and that they weren't regulated and that it was so non-regionalized like we were used to.

Interviewer: It's interesting in the way you phrased it though, do you think that, was there a difference in the perception of who was the winner between Bell Atlantic and NYNEX versus who was the winner between Bell Atlantic and GTE?

Interviewee: Honestly, I think at the end of the day for both, and I can just speak on behalf, obviously, what my groups role, and where I ended up fitting in, is that we really um, we both melded the group together, um, beautifully, so there was a good mix of both Bell Atlantic and NYNEX and then when the GTE merger ultimately occurred it ended up being a really good mix of the GTE people and the Bell Atlantic people. Over time, there was the house cleaning, if you will. Once you got your director in place, and once all the people were together, that did this sort of work, the layoff thing started to occur, and the group started dwindling down, and it seemed that because we were working for a GTE, a former GTE director, that when the layoffs came, it seemed to be hitting on the Bell Atlantic side worse than the GTE side. It was interesting.

Interviewer: So in the early days, when you were first coming together, and maybe I am… just the way you said, you know, is Bell Atlantic going to win or is GTE's procedures going to win, do you think in those early days there was

a perception of a winner or a loser, or was it a perception of two entities coming together?

Interviewee: Because we had known that Bell Atlantic coded, did their hierarchy the same way we did, they used the exact same systems, to us that seemed like, it was very exciting to us, because we were like we are just going to merge all the customers, its going to be great, you know we'll take their data, they'll take our data, we'll merge it, we'll aggregate the customers across the whole Eastern seaboard, we'll be fine. From the calls that we had with GTE, they had a whole different hierarchy structure, so we didn't know what was going to happen, because you couldn't have both. Because you had to merge the customers together. And so you either had to do it the GTE way or you had to, you know, do it the Bell Atlantic way, and it was always well, how… what are we going to do? So, what ended up happening with that is that we ended up using both structures. And that was with, obviously, tons of challenges. Until we ultimately, my director at the time, decided to change the entire structure and went with a whole different approach, and we went started using Dunn & Bradstreet. And then we started bringing all the data together under a whole new structure, so that was kind of an interesting change as well.

Interviewer: And what about like personality-wise, you know you said there was the differences in personality between Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what about between Bell Atlantic and GTE?

Interviewee: Huge, huge difference. I mean because the people we were working with

were, the group that I worked closely with were from Texas, um, again,

they used to joke with us because we would be on the calls and, you know,

we would speak up, and be really loud and talk really fast you know, the

group, and half the time they couldn't understand our Boston accents and

they would say 'say that again…slow down…' [laughs] you know, and it

was really kind of funny. I mean, great group of people but again culturally

the different parts of the country, you know bringing the two groups

together, it was totally different.

Interviewer: And did your perceptions of your former Bell Atlantic folks, the

NYNEX/Bell Atlantic people did the perception change when you were

faced with the GTE merger.

Interviewee: Absolutely. Absolutely. It was almost like we bonded closer together with

the Bell Atlantic folks when the GTE merger was pending. It was like,

because now we are all in the same boat, ya know, and some people joke,

and it's a horrible thing to say, but now we have a common enemy. Nothing

brings two people together, you know, it wasn't like we hated them, it was

like you just didn't know them and you didn't know what was going to

happen, and, you know, what is going to happen to the group, and yourself,

your job, I mean am I secure, you had all those question in your head and

the more it goes on with each merger you know, the more nerve wracking it

gets, again the layoff thing would come up and it was more prevalent. When

you first started with the company, way back when, nobody ever really got

laid off, I mean you just retired after you had 35 years, you know? So, you know, when you started seeing more and more of this, you know the risks, and the risks, your thinking, oh gosh, you know, do I have something to worry about here? But we definitely saw the bond because I was here… this isn't the topic here clearly, but I was New England Telephone and you know we merged with NYNEX. And we, the New Yorkers hated us and we hated the New Yorkers [laughs]. And we merged. And then when the Bell Atlantic one came up, we were kind of like this with the New York people, and then tried to feel our way around the Bell Atlantic people, which ended up being just fine. But then, once the GTE thing came, it was almost like we were like family, ya know, it was just so funny. And again, we had worked together for, you know, we were anyway I think, but um, I think it was something more that we had in common and now that we were all in it together, and now we are going through this another massive merger so, yeah, it was interesting.

Interviewer: So in retrospect, you said that you and the NYNEX and Bell Atlantic folks merged together within 12 to 24 months…

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you see an overlay at all of the timing of GTE, or had the merger happened, and it got strengthened…or the blending had happened and it just got strengthened with GTE, or do you think GTE was the catalyst to it?

Interviewee: That is an interesting question. Uh, I would say that we had a very strong, solid working relationship but I will say that the merger, going though the merger, definitely strengthened the relationship. I really think it did.

Interviewer: And how well integrated do you think you are today with GTE?

Interviewee: I think we are … we are very integrated from my perspective. And from where I sit with regards to customer coding and customer aggregation. Um, there are back end systems that haven't merged yet, we still have our New England system, our New York system, and our Mid Atlantic. Um, but, even with that, you know that costs a lot of money to merge a lot of these, so, but we have reached a point where we understand all of the systems across the whole footprint, uh, and we can work with them. You know, we just deal with it. Its just kind of a way… nature of the beast because you just can't afford to meld the system together, so what we have done is we've been very successful in, you know, working with the systems that are in place and, you know, becoming subject matter experts.

Interviewer: What about your relationships with the GTE folks?

Interviewee: Very, very strong. Very good relationships.

Interviewer: Do you feel that you work as one unit now, there isn't any... there is no longer the feeling 'I am Bell Atlantic' and they're GTE?

Interviewee: Absolutely.

Interviewer: So it's just Verizon now?

Interviewee: Yeah. Yep, yep, definitely.

Interviewer: And how long do you think that took to happen?

Interviewee: Um, I would say, let's see, to get a real, real comfort level. We had a lot of turmoil in my group, that is why I am kind of balking a little bit, because it was difficult for a while there. Um, I would say it took a good 2 to 3 years to really get our arms around… just because it was such a different kind of company, than ours. And really trying to learn how they operate versus the way we operated and you know the in franchise… all different. All different pieces to it. But it did… I would say it took a good 2 to 3 years for us to really get ourselves together.

Interviewer: But now you feel that there is seamless integration.

Interviewee: I do.

Interviewer: Interpersonally.

Interviewee: Absolutely. I really, really do.

Interviewer: Okay. And based on your experience, do you think that there is anything senior leadership could have done to facilitate the blending of the groups, and uh, and improve the speed of the integration? Either across Bell Atlantic and NYNEX or then Bell Atlantic and GTE?

Interviewee: Uh, I think that, my experience with both, I think that the company, senior level executives downward moved relatively quickly to get the groups in place. So to me, I think that, um you know, it was just the human part… of new group, new people to work with, understanding new systems, new challenges. You know, is there any underlying threat? You know, you didn't feel it so much with Bell Atlantic, maybe a little bit more with GTE, from a senior level executive perspective, I really don't think they could

have done anything more that what they did. I mean, they moved, from my perspective, very, very quickly with the [organizational] structure announcements, and, you know, all the way down.

Interviewer: But the blending of the people, you think there is nothing else they could have done?

Interviewee: I, you know, they could have. I think if we had more face time with them, uh, you know, trying to get to know people on the phone, you know, and you're working a lot independently. I think if you got people together more to meet each other, to understand each other, to clearly define the roles makes people feel more comfortable and secure, um, I think that that would have helped.

Interviewer: That's pretty much it for my questions. Is there anything, like in retrospect, or looking back, that you remember or thoughts around the interpersonal relationships across the mergers that you would like to add?

Interviewee: Well, it's funny because, uh, when you start to look back now and now you've gotten, at least I've gotten, into some really close friendships with these people and some of them I have never met, strictly over the phone. But often times I'll have to say if I didn't work directly with certain people, but I started working with them over the last couple years, I'd have to stop and think, even if it crosses my mind to do so, you know, did they work for GTE? I'm not sure if they did or not. You don't… to me… I don't even think about it anymore, but on occasion if it does pop into my head, I have to ask myself the question and I don't often know the answer. Unless I

know their geography, if they are Texas typically they were GTE folks. But

certain parts of the country I wonder were they with us then? But typically I

don't even think about it anymore. It's a whole different…you know, it's

really one now. But mergers are in interesting thing, for sure.

Interviewer: Okay, well that's it. Thank you.

Interview #3 Boston

Interviewer: So, just to establish for the record, you were with NYNEX during the Bell

Atlantic/NYNEX merger?

Interviewee: That's correct.

Interviewer: Okay. So during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX what were your

perceptions of the employees of the merging company? In your case it

would be Bell Atlantic.

Interviewee: Well, as individuals or as a whole collective?

Interviewer: Both

Interviewee: Okay, well I have a stronger opinion of individuals, of course, because um, I

dealt with them individually. Collectively, there wasn't that big of a

difference, they seemed a little bit more reserved then what I had been used

to, you know, in dealing with New England personalities, and then New

York personalities are just different than anywhere else in the country. And

so the folks down in D.C. and other points in Bell Atlantic they seemed

more reserved, um, maybe more professional. Everything was, you know,

by the book and very straightforward. And that may have been a

combination of the people I was working with, and just getting to know new

people, that kind of thing. That was my first reaction. And then individually

I started meeting people, people like [name omitted], and [name omitted], I

don't know if you ever knew [name omitted]?

Interviewer: No, I didn't. I have heard her name, though.

Interviewee: But they were all very buttoned up and professional and no nonsense kind of people, and that was my take on the folks in general. Now, over the course of time, I got to build relationships with different people and they became more like, you know, colleagues and friends, as opposed to just, you know, people I work with in the business. So my initial reaction, and this is probably just me, too, was a little reserved, probably on both our sides, and then when I got to know some of the individuals, there wasn't really as noticeable a difference between somebody who works in Arlington as opposed to someone who works in Boston or New Hampshire.

Interviewer: And during the merger, though, with the people themselves, was there any tension or was there open communication right away? Like, how did the two groups interact with each other stylistically?

Interviewee: There wasn't any tension that I could see, um, because number one, my level doesn't get involved in the politics. I could see some tension between some of the folks in New York, and some of the folks in Arlington on a higher level, like a director for instance with another director, I could see some tension there. But I think in my level, I was a second level, we were just getting our, you know, get in the trenches and get the work done, that kind of thing. So, no, I didn't have any tension. In fact, I remember you know, getting a new director who worked out of Arlington, so she was with Bell Atlantic and she brought us all in and there would be like the Bell Atlantic people over here, and the NYNEX people over there. I remember [name omitted] and [name omitted] and me were over here and [name

omitted] and some other people, what was his name, a guy named [name omitted] were over there, so I mean we were definitely two different groups reporting under one director, and that director was a Bell Atlantic director, um, but I think that is just natural, you just sit with the people you know, but over time I was having lunch with [name omitted] and [name omitted] were chatting up a storm. So, sure, there was this invisible barrier, but then it just came down.

Interviewer: How long, do you think, before it came down?

Interviewee: Uhh. I don't know, not long. Six months. I remember [name omitted] and I used to chat about, you know, these freaking Bell Atlantic people, you know, because things were a little different, but they weren't so drastically different that it was hard to adapt to the situation. But it took some time. Six months, maybe. And again, I'm not so sure it was based on the 'them' and 'us' situation as opposed to the personalities of some individuals versus our personalities. So, I think overall we became one company in a relatively short period of time. [Name omitted] and …what was his name… uh…[name omitted] they were a team right from the get go. Actually not [name omitted]. What was his name… [name omitted] something. I can't remember his name anymore. But anyway, they got together pretty quickly and they were showing this unity from above. And so it didn't take long for us to be one company, you know? But individually it depended on the different personalities.

Interviewer: And do you think that was a function of the group you were in, did you see

different experiences happening across different groups? Or were you pretty

isolated?

Interviewee: I was pretty isolated, um, so I don't know how other groups interacted. But,

you know what we do, our job is to communicate to the customer, and to

use the Agency to do that. So we were both in the same boat, doing the

same thing. A me and a [name omitted] for instance, or a [name omitted]

for instance, there were other names too. So, um, you know when you are in

the trenches together you get closer. So, it… it… wore off relatively quickly

at least from my perspective.

Interviewer: And how do you perceive that they, the opposite team, so Bell Atlantic folks

in this case, um perceived the NYNEX people? Do you think they had the

same experience?

Interviewee: Um, you know it's tough for me to get into their heads, but I would think

they probably perceived New Yorkers differently from the New Englanders.

Because people from New York, generally I mean, its just such a hodge

podge of society, where you know either you speak up and tell people what

you want, or you get kind of lost in the shuffle. So, you know New Yorkers,

from my perspective, is uh, people from New York are much more

aggressive than what you'll see anywhere else in the country. And, I think

the folks in Arlington, and certainly the folks in Dallas, and I know we will

get to that, shortly, but I think there is somewhat, its not like they're

reserved or wall flowers themselves, but I think they did react differently to

the folks in New York as opposed to the folks in New England. In fact, I remember a comment, something to the effect of, you know you guys are more like us, than the New Yorkers are, you know that kind of thing. And you know, I think a lot of it had to do with [name omitted] because of [name omitted]'s very strong personality, and [name omitted]'s very strong personality, you know those two led the charge and so I think they represented, um, NYNEX to the folks in Bell Atlantic and you know, like I said it's a personality thing, and they had very strong personalities.

Interviewer: Did they, um, did you feel like there was any concern from a… or concern in the beginning, in the first six to twelve months around job security, like did that lend to any kind of tension and/or jockeying?

Interviewee: No. Not at all. Not that I could tell. Not from my level. I always got, personally speaking, great evaluations, I was always… I will say that when I had a boss in New England, even before we merged with New York, I felt 100 percent settled in my job, comfortable from a job security perspective because my boss was here every day, and she was seeing what I was doing on a daily basis, and you know, like I said, I was getting positive evaluations all the time. And that… that might have ebbed a little bit when we merged with New York and [name omitted] was my boss, and she wasn't there every day and I really had to sell myself to her on a regular basis. So maybe to a certain extent, you know, just trying to get myself sold to get myself known, so there might have been some reservations about that, but not so much from a job security thing. I wasn't worried that I was

going to lose my job over the Bell Atlantic merger, but I was worried that I

could possibly get lost in the shuffle. Because, again, now I had to go to

more places to sell myself… to get myself known. So it wasn't job security,

it was just growing and moving up in the group, and the… just you know…

getting the plum assignments, or just making sure that, you know, they

knew who I was. You know there was a lot of traveling involved as a result.

Not so much because I had to conduct business… obviously that is the

primary reason for doing it, but also just to get face to face contact with a

[name omitted] or a [name omitted] or somebody like that. Just so they

know I am not just a number up in Boston, that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Okay. Um, so when you first came together initially, how did you work

together. You kind of covered this a little bit… and… and… did that change

over time?

Interviewee: When we first merged, I think it was back in early '97, I'm not exactly sure

what month. But it was in early '97, I want to say the spring. [Name

omitted] was the person in charge of all of consumer. And she had

everybody reporting directly to her. I was reporting to her as a second

level… she had a couple of directors, but I wasn't reporting up through the

directors, I was reporting directly to her. And then things started to get big

for her, uh, and then she assigned a lot of us to a director from Bell Atlantic.

So, there was definitely a change in a lot of things, from reporting directly

to [name omitted] to reporting directly to [name omitted], the director down

there. Um, with a bunch of different people, so I lost a lot of autonomy

because I could go directly to [name omitted] and I had a good one on one relationship with her, but now I had to essentially go through [name omitted] to have any access to [name omitted]. So, I wasn't happy with that. I can't say I was resentful, that's not the right word, but I had lost that one on one relationship with her, so yeah, the merger with Bell Atlantic was somewhat detrimental to me in that I think I lost a little bit of oomph, or authority, because no longer could I go directly to you know, somebody at [name omitted]'s level, I had to go through [name omitted]. [Name omitted] was fine, but you know still, there were more people who were put above me, and so therefore I was essentially lower on the pecking order. So, yeah, there was that. Um, does that answer your question?

Interviewer: I think so. And then over time, did that change? Or just the hierarchy… ?

Interviewee: No, over time, I never lost my relationship with [name omitted] even to this day I still have a good relationship with her even though I only talk to her like once a year. But, I never had a relationship with [name omitted], it was just a pure professional… I was a number, she was… you know I was an employee and she was the boss, and there was no… she had no personality whatsoever; she was kind of robotic, in a way. But, there was some animosity between her and [name omitted], there was, you know – you could tell – there was tension in the air as a result of that. And that is what I was alluding to before, because I think the folks at my level got along together just fine. But, you know, when you get up higher in the organization and you have these personalities attracting and [name omitted]

was certainly the type of personality who would want her own people at the helm, you know, running things. And so, there was that personality clash. They were… they were… they didn't mesh from a personality perspective, and they didn't mesh from a professional perspective either. They had different ways of thinking. And so, that tension, kind of trickled down to the rest of us. And I think [name omitted] was more comfortable with the people she had brought in, and the Bell Atlantic people, then she was with people like me and [name omitted] and [name omitted], who were quote [name omitted]'s people. So, I think that tension definitely existed but it was up at that level. It wasn't like, like I said me and [name omitted] got along, [name omitted] and I got along, [name omitted] and I got along. There was definitely a clash above us, but I don't think there was any clash with us, the folks in the trenches.

Interviewer: Okay. When the merger with GTE happened, how did you feel about the employees of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic? Was there any sort of conflict there?

Interviewee: Well, there was definitely a difference – a big difference – between, uh, that merger and the one we had gone through two or three years earlier. Because, you know, even though, you know, one's in D.C., ones in New York, one's in New England, we're still all East Coast people. And there is a big difference between East Coast people and you know, Dallas people. And that is all I was dealing with. I wasn't dealing with anybody in Tampa, or, well maybe occasionally people in the Midwest, I would deal with. But I

am talking about the Dallas people, because that is who I almost exclusively worked with. And there were very different, so uh, I remember … when did you join the team?

Interviewer: Right before the Bell Atlantic/GTE merger. I joined in 1999.

Interviewee: So do you remember this sort of um, get together we had? It was right after the 9/11, we were asked to fly down to Dallas and we went to this like hoe down thing? And it was just like totally different from anything I had ever done before. It was like this country western atmosphere. It was just a totally different atmosphere, and so, uh, the people were different. They were, you know, maybe more laid back. But I think they were also a bit more, you see the Easterners, they are a bit more open, they just speak their minds and I think the folks in Dallas are just the opposite. The, you know, the wheels are turning up there too, but they're not showing their cards, so it was touchy to build relationships with people because you didn't know, well, who wants to have a relationship with you and who doesn't. And… and so I think there was a little more tension there because people were losing their jobs at that time, you know. And I think there was a big question on who… who… who was running the company? Was it a GTE run company or was it a Bell Atlantic run company, you know? But we had [name omitted] so we felt like we were in the power, the cat bird seat. We were the ones who were kind of leading the merger, and that they were coming along. They were being absorbed by us. And so that kind of played into the dynamic, too.

Interviewer: In what way? In terms of your day to day, you know, interactions with people, how did that manifest itself?

Interviewee: It's tough to say. You know, again, like for instance we would have these… maybe even in this room, we would have these broadcasts where [name omitted] would be leading the charge from New York and then you would have the people in Dallas on one TV screen and us on another TV screen, and it was just like, I don't know they just were never [name omitted] or [name omitted]. I don't have to tell you what strong personalities they have. It was almost like these people cowered to those personalities. I don't want to get into specifics, but you know [name omitted] has worked his way up the ladder, and God Bless him, but I don't think he could hold a candle to [name omitted] because [she] would chew you up and spit you out in a heartbeat. And you know, they were asked to, you know those people who were big players were asked to come to New York, you know they had to move, so I... I just think they kind of felt they had been absorbed by us, and on a day to day basis there would be things like 'oh, my God, who is this woman? And what is she doing?' You know, that kind of thing. So, I think that they were really shocked by the way things are done around here. Just you know, [name omitted] would shoot first and ask questions later. And they were always very methodical, very… you know, methodical is the best word, the best way to say it. They did a certain thing, they did it at a certain pace, and trying to get them to accommodate, you know, timelines and that kind of thing was very difficult. So I just think that it was a different culture

there. Not that it wasn't as productive as us, because it was, but it was

productive in a more laid back way. And if there was a crisis, they would

deal with it as just another situation, you know there wasn't necessarily that

urgency – you know that emotional rush that comes with meeting a deadline

– you know that kind of a thing. I didn't see it coming out of that shop. So,

that is how I think it manifested itself on a day to day basis.

Interviewer: And did that different work style lead to tension between the groups?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think so. Definitely.

Interviewer: In what way?

Interviewee: You know, there wasn't that camaraderie. It was, unlike Bell Atlantic, even

at my level, kind of like us against them. You know, there were people

down there who were like x#%# this, this isn't the way we do business, you

know? It's like, I've got my job, and my job ends at 5:00, and I am going to

go home and I am going to come back the next day. And I am not saying

everyone was like this, I can't say it was a cultural thing there, but there

were individuals who were like 'I know it's a crisis, but we'll deal with it

tomorrow. Tomorrow's another day', that kind of thing. And we're like,

hey, let's get this done while we can. There was a lot of that. And then

personality-wise – it just didn't – we were just different, you know? We

didn't have hoe downs, and go to Texas Lil's, or whatever it was, and uh, it

was just a clash of personalities. And a clash of cultures. Much different

than it was with Bell Atlantic.

Interviewer: Do you think after the merger that your feelings about your NYNEX and

Bell Atlantic – or in your case Bell Atlantic co-workers from the old Bell

Atlantic/NYNEX merger – did it change the way you related to them?

Interviewee: I think by that point we had already bonded, and had a pretty good

relationship. It wasn't like Bell Atlantic and NYNEX anymore. It was Bell

Atlantic. And so, just like my relationship grew with people like [name

omitted] and [name omitted] and [name omitted], and those kind of people,

when we merged with New York, the same thing happened when we

merged with Bell Atlantic. And so, I didn't really think it was so much we

are more bonded now, we are closer now because you know, we have a new

entity to deal with. I think by that time, the Bell Atlantic merger had settled.

Interviewer: So you didn't think it changed?

Interviewee: I don't think the merger…and I think this is what you are asking… did the

merger with GTE change my relationship, or my perspective or my dealings

with Bell Atlantic folk? It didn't. Because by then it had already bonded. I

had already made great relationships with tons of people and, uh, quite

frankly [name omitted] who was a big component, at least from my

perspective, in this merger with Bell Atlantic, she was long gone by then.

You know, it was still [name omitted] calling the shots, [name omitted] was

the leader of the team, reporting up to [name omitted] and so, we had

essentially merged Bell Atlantic folks into our team – that was my

perspective. And those who were comfortable with doing that stayed on,

and those who weren't moved on. So, by that time, by 2000, I had great

relationships with a bunch of different people.

Interviewer: Okay. And how well integrated do you think the employees are overall

today, between Bell Atlantic and GTE?

Interviewee: It's still a very big difference. I mean, we are talking a huge geographic

area. We're talking California, we're talking Florida, we're talking Indiana,

I mean, we've got people all over the map. So, number one, you don't get to

see these people every day, obviously, and number two, there is just clashes

of culture all over the place. So, you know, uh, I personally have a great

relationship with tons of people from Dallas, but I had to go down there. No

kidding, I have flown to Dallas at least sixty times since the merger. And so,

spend two or three days down there each time, so I've built a lot of great

relationships with the people in Dallas, so the cultural difference isn't so –

I'm still not going to ride electric bulls or anything – but the cultural

difference isn't so great. I mean when you are sitting across a table from

someone and you are having a beer, now I am obviously not talking about a

work situation, umm the cultural barriers kind of fall down. So, it's

definitely improved a lot. And then again, just like anything else those

people who couldn't make it work have moved on. I mean there were

people down there who were like, like I said earlier, they just couldn't cope,

they just couldn't deal, with what was being demanded of them. And so,

they were either sent packing or they found something that was more

accommodating to them. So, I think things have improved dramatically. I

think Verizon in a lot of sense is one company. But there are still huge differences. I don't know people in Tampa and you know, they are different than the people in Fort Wayne. And they are different than the people in Arlington. So, you know, um, obviously as you expand you are going to become less of an entity that is just natural. I'll never have that unity that I had with New England Telephone, when you dealt with the same people day after day. All of the marketing people were essentially on the same floor, in the same building at least. You… you had that camaraderie, that unity. And so as you expand you're going to lose that. In order to do your job, you want to build relationships and to develop unity on your own. But collectively it's obviously not the same. It couldn't be the same, you know? Thank God for… you know, I shouldn't even say that anymore, I was going to talk about the electronic development, you know the technological development, because without that, how in God's name could we interact, with the folks from Dallas and the folks from Tampa? But, really when you come right down to it, the only way you can build relationships is face to face. And so, it forced me to fly, you know, dozens and dozens of times. Which is a drag. But, uh, you got to do it in order to thrive and grow and build these relationships.

Interviewer: So, based on your experiences, is there anything you think the leadership of the organization could have done to improve or speed up integration?

Interviewee: Yeah, um, to me, integration is all about getting to know one another so you can work better and grow as an organization. And, things are so crazy and

so hectic around here that I don't think enough time is given to team building. And I know that is considered kind of fluff, you know team building is great, but you know we have deadlines and ARPU [average revenue per customer] commitments, and so forth… umm… we'll get to team building. But there is not enough team building. And as you become more and more geographically dispersed it becomes more and more difficult to have that team building exercise. But um [name omitted] used to bring people from D.C. to New York and people from New England to New York. Even when we first merged with Bell Atlantic, I mean with GTE, we had the hoe down stuff; there was a gathering in Tampa, when [name omitted] had his entire organization there. So there were these team building get together, these meet and greets kind of thing. So we pretty much merged everything into Basking Ridge, that is the center of the world there, and if you are not in Basking Ridge then you are kind of in some satellite office somewhere. So, it doesn't seem from the corporate perspective that there hasn't been any team building. [Name omitted], since I have been reporting to [name omitted], up through whomever, he hasn't had one team building. There may be a call, like every six months, or something, but that is the extent of getting the team together. And so you don't get to know the personalities unless you hop in a plane and go to Tampa, go to Dallas. So… I… I… I think that what the corporation needs to do… I know it costs money to fly everyone to Tampa or fly everybody to New York, and I know we don't have that kind of dollars and cents but then

again, you gotta sacrifice something if you can't spend the money to do that

and I think you have sacrificed unity and camaraderie and the sense of team.

Interviewer: Anything else you would like to add? Anything in particular about the

merger you think would be helpful?

Interviewee: Umm… No.

Interviewer: No?

Interviewee: No, I think that … I guess I would end up saying that I was with New

England Telephone originally, and that lasted for a long time, about seven

or eight years, and that was like a family by the way, because you were

working with these people every day. And then we merged with New York,

and then it was, you know, two hundred miles away, and it became a little

difficult to build those relationships, but you did, because you know, you

had to, but you know, I could go to New York in a heartbeat. People were

on the shuttle all the time. So that was something you got accustomed to.

And then we merged with Bell Atlantic. And now you have to go even

further in order to build these relationships. I guess as I get older, and we

continue to expand, and merge with other companies, I find myself being

more involved with politics than I ever have before, being more involved

with the personalities, just to make sure I am known then I ever have

before. And, uh, not that I focus any less on the work, because the work is

extremely demanding, you gotta get things done, you got to get them done

now, but… uh… it's just a different world. It's more, you know, dog eat

dog. It's not just do your job, do it well, and you will be compensated and

you'll be fine. Its now, you know, do your job, do it well, and make sure that the people who are above you know who you are. And, you know, so they can speak to you, or for you, when time comes to cut staff. Because – I don't have to tell you this – the more we expand, the more we cut the people who are there. So, you know, its 20 percent today, next year it's going to be another 20 percent, and I don't want to be in that 20 percent, obviously, I gotta make it a point to show myself, and uh, get to know the [senior executives]. Back in the day, I only needed to know [name omitted]'s and the [name omitted]'s and sell myself to them, and now I have to sell myself to, whenever the opportunity arises, to a bunch more people. Which is well and good, but you know it makes it more difficult to survive in today's environment. But, you know, that's not exclusive to Verizon, its anywhere you are. You know, we've become… obviously we have become a global company, but right now I see myself as a national employee, an employee on a national scale, whereas, you know, I was a Boston guy for the first six or seven years. Then I was a New England guy, and then I was a Northeast guy, then I was an East Coast guy. It's challenging. That's about it.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Interview #4 Boston

Interviewer: Okay, so just to establish for the tape recorder, you were with NYNEX

during the NYNEX/Bell Atlantic merger, is that correct?

Interviewee: Yes, yes I was, and even before that I was an AT&T guy, one nine eighty-

four, and came over to New England Tel, and from there NYNEX, BA…

Interviewer: And then Verizon?

Interviewee: And then Verizon.

Interviewer: Okay, Great. So, during the merger of Bell Atlantic, Bell Atlantic and

NYNEX, what were your perceptions of the employees of the merging

company? So, the folks from Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Well, I think the difference, or the aspect of that merger that stands out is

that it is the same DNA, the same pedigree. I mean we are both vestiges of

the old Bell system. There were clearly geographical issues, um, you know,

I think Patricia, even within that merger, if you go back to the NYNEX

merger, there were New York and New England distinctions that are still

palpable, they are almost gone, but you can still feel them in terms of New

York is where the headquarters was, NY is where the revenue came from,

we kowtowed to the New York PUC [public utilities commission] more

than any of the other state PUCs, so I think with that, but I think by the time

we got to the NYNEX/Bell Atlantic merger, its kind of like the common

enemy approach. I think the NYNEX people kind of solidified and said we

need to stick together as we go with Bell Atlantic. My impression at the

time was that there were so many common issues that it wasn't a horrific

merger. And it was, I know [NYNEX's president] was furious at how public that merger was before it was announced. I mean, I can literally remember joking with people, on the phone, oh, Bell Atlantic…I mean NYNEX, because it was so planned and anticipated, um, but my perception of the people was the same, that they were solid, they had the training, they had the skills, um there was definitely a regional issue that we weren't familiar with, I mean maybe there is a New York arrogance, or a Boston arrogance that we talk really fast, and we're smarter than you Yankees, and you're not, uh, but then again there is always just the fear of who is going to get what. And at the time I was actually with Yellow Pages, and the feeling was oh, we Yellow… NYNEX did better in the Yellow pages in that merger than the BA folks did, 'cause you had the BA folks down in like the Chesapeake area, the Yellow Pages, and we were up in Middleton, Mass., and the headquarters was announced Middleton, Mass, so as soon as the headquarters were announced, it was like well, I have a job. I might not have the right job, and there might be salary grade changes, whatever, but I have a job. And I can remember talking with the BA folks, who were understandably concerned. Because they lost their headquarters and how was that … were they just going to become just a satellite office?

Interviewer: And how did those feelings manifest themselves in the day to day interactions? Like when you actually dealt with people from Bell Atlantic? How were those personal interactions?

Interviewee: I think at the second level and first level there was almost a commonality of empathy. That it could have gone the other way. I think that for the most part, um, you know there was some competition; you know there were a few director slots, and who was going to get the director slots? And it became evident that the best people weren't necessarily going to get the director jobs, because if the two best people were BA, and there were two slots, there was going to be some sharing of the director slots. So what I did… I found … that you almost created a first and second level union… that's the wrong term, but you had the Unions, you had director level and above, who were doing their own thing, processes and stuff, and really the first and second levels still trying to move things forward. And I felt that just the workload made them kind of come together.

Interviewer: There wasn't any tension, or …

Interviewee: Not really, no, again this was a Yellow Pages environment, um, you know so much of the… I'll tell you where the tensions were, a lot of the production was the same, a lot of the industry terms were the same, you know a double quarter column… a DQC is a DQC in New York or it is in Philly.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Where the tensions came was the marketing philosophy in the old NYNEX was more of an emphasis on color, and content in the ads. And in the BA world it was size. And I can remember the BA team, and [name omitted] was a big wig at the time down there, we don't sell color. We sell size.

Which is the bigger ad, the heading more prominent, and we were like oh, no, we had done a lot of work with RR Donnelly the publisher, in terms of process color ads, which were pretty sharp, I mean you could argue its still shitty paper, but still, they were pretty sharp ads, and we had a lot of artists… type… folks right out of art school to draw the ads, so it was the aesthetics of the books in New England… in NYNEX… we felt were superior to the aesthetics of the books in BA, but BA was like, we sell size, so who cares about color. So that was a real strategic tension between what was going to happen.

Interviewer: But the personal relationships between the two teams was fine, it was more of a philosophical conflict?

Interviewee: Yes, it was a philosophical conflict. Now on the sales side, though, I can tell you there were a lot more strains. Because the sales approach was "best in class", whatever, so there were some really high flying BA, um like, executives sales directors, you know, you know, real good looking guys in suits kind of… some of them were priceless, some were very talented too. And some of these guys were brought up into New York and New England. Well, New England had a unionized sales force, these guys didn't know whether to poop or wind their watch, they came in and thought … in the BA world you tell a rep you are going to work until 7 o'clock at night and you need the ad in the morning, they did it. Union guys were 'you gotta be kidding me'. They were all CWA [Communications Workers of America]. In New York, we had a relationship with RH Donnelly, which was an

authorized sales agent, so it was almost like having a union, so these guys came up and they just couldn't make any headway. They… you know, all the best practices and policies they had about time in front of the customer, in terms of you know, you get your package of accounts as a rep, you know a salesperson, and there was a methodology of who to call first, which account had potential, you know it… it was all, it was a little bit scientific, the philosophy. And the New England and New York reps were like, I'm not going to listen to you guys, so that…there was a lot of strain on the sales side. But on the marketing side, it was really just a philosophical, strategic difference in how… what to market… and I almost felt like at that level, I remember some of the people really well, and I am still … occasionally send them emails, at second level – I can't speak at Director level – it was like, hey we are kind of in this together, we gotta kind of work together because there was a certain loyalty – I know it almost sounds naïve – to the customer, to the advertiser. We had to keep getting the books out, we had to keep at least pricing, and those things have to be done. You know with telephone, or PUC [Public Utilities Commission] pricing, you need the price. And a lot of the marketing was price-based, and you had to get rates and tables, so the reps had the knowledge of how to sell to a customer.

Interviewer: And how integrated did the two teams… were the two teams, basically?

Interviewee: Well, that's interesting, because when I get to the Verizon merger its going to be a little bit different. Um, the teams were very geographically displaced, with the exception of those sales folks that came up at you know,

VP [Vice President] level. We had our operations and it was still…you

know… they made a real mistake, I remember talking to my director… they

took like the NYNEX people, we had two functions, we had like product

line management, which spanned the entire new Bell Atlantic. So, product

line management spanned those groups, but market management was

geographically focused. So rather than saying, you know, here is a market

management team for New York, and we're going to put some Virginia

people on it, and we're going to put some New York people on it, they

made the market management folks were still New York, so the New York

sales folks, their market management folks is still the team they knew in

New York. With the institutional bias', with the favoritism, with… and the

Virginia folks, who might have benefited from a guy like me coming down

and saying no, you need to look at this differently, were all the old Virginia

crowd. On the PLM [product line management] side there was a little more

cross-pollenization, but there was still that adage that in the North, those

books are different. And in the old BA, we sell size. Yet, the books were

still going to the same production house. They had the same covers, I mean,

we did integrate the covers, to make the marketing at least on the external

side the same, but there was very much a sense of BA vs. NYNEX.

Interviewer: So the books didn't actually change, except for the covers.

Interviewee: The… right… if you looked at the cover of the book you would say, oh this

is one company. But if you were, if you had a little bit of knowledge of the

industry, when you open up the books… in fact, we never integrated the

schematics. Just, and this is minutia, but a quarter column ad is 1/16th of a page. And in the NYNEX world, it was 1/16th of a page. In the BA world, because of the production nuances, as I understand, it was actually 1/17th of a page. There was just slightly more space, the headings had a different font, so we never moved to a common look inside the book. And it was always, well, it would cost too much to do that.

Interviewer: So when you say that the teams integrated really well, did they actually integrate, or did they work cross-functionally in their own silos, but still had representatives…

Interviewee: Representatives and would talk to each other.

Interviewer: Okay, but they didn't actually mingle the groups?

Interviewee: The only time we mingled was in the post-merger… merger's been announced, and we're not sure on the structures yet. So, I remember the meeting, my little team, you know with five people, we get on the shuttle and we flew to Washington, and we took – we rented a car actually – and we went out to, I forget where the facility was exactly, and we met with the closest representative PLM team. You know, it wasn't apples to apples, but it was pretty close, and we sat down, and we exchanged business cards, and said 'here's what I work on, and here's what you work on' and there is a gal… I haven't talked to her in a long time… an attractive blonde, I don't mean that to be… she could be a gross brunette, it was in MarCom somewhere, she is still with the company.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And she was a wonderful person… ah! About my age, but I remember we

traded cards, and she and I, for whatever reason, formed a relationship at

that meeting, and we were buddies after that. I'm sure there were other,

similar situations where, for whatever personal reasons – maybe because

she was an attractive blonde and I was single at the time, who knows, but

she and I kind of became buddies. And we would vent to each other and try

to work together to do the right thing. I'm sure there were other people in

the room who were doing similarly with the people they aligned with. But it

was very much, um, a micro relationship issue, where you would find a

person or two with whom you were close to. There was a guy named [name

omitted], who was a great guy, he made director, and he and I, about the

same age group, same education, same kind of socio-economic, we really

hit it off. But that was all, I think, because we had certain traits outside the

business that we just kind of hit it off. And I think that's the alliances that

were made. But, there was no encouragement from senior management,

there was no team building, there was no, you know, it was all kind of… we

had a meeting, and then we formed alliances or didn't form alliances.

Interviewer: But you essentially worked the way you had always worked, and where the

integration was occurring was at a higher level?

Interviewee: The integration was at a higher level and a little bit at the product level.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: But we didn't – again, covers were changed to reflect – we introduced

process color into their markets, the availability of that printing technology

but it really never took off because the sales folks didn't buy into it. Now, but the perception though, was that Middleton was running the show. Because when we get to talking about the Verizon merger, the quid pro quo was that BA got hosed on the Yellow Pages side in the Verizon merger, and that GTE got everything. And, I'll talk about that, the philosophy was that because, for whatever the reason, the perception was BA/NYNEX merger didn't work correctly, two geographies that were never integrated, they made the decision, and they said everyone is either going to move to Dallas/Ft. Worth, or go away. And that is when I came back into telecom. Because the edict was we… we… the perception was we didn't do it right last time, and we are going to do it right this time. And we're going to do it right by forcing people to work together.

Interviewer: And why do you think the perception was that they didn't do it right? Because it wasn't integrated?

Interviewee: I think it was two fold. Um, I think it really wasn't integrated the way it should have been. I remember talking to an executive director about this, and saying, you know, we're mucking around with… you know the fricking book isn't even the same, how can we call this from the same company, its not even the same spec's. I mean it would be like having POTS [plain old telephone service] service in Philly, but not having POTS service in New England, and saying gee, maybe we should put POTS service. Or it would be like having copper before … you know before the fiber… but it would be like having copper in the south and chicken wire in the north, and

someone saying, you know, I bet it would make sense to do that. The other

thing, and not to be personal, a guy named [name omitted], he was the

president of our Yellow Pages, very bright guy, he just had a certain veneer.

And I just think that people didn't warm to him. And so, it became very

much oh, you guys are up in Middleton, Middleton is just about twenty

miles north of here, that's where the corporate headquarters were for

Yellow Pages, and it was very much uh, Middleton.

Interviewer: What about…

Interviewee: In fact… quick story… across the street from Middleton. It's on 95, and it's

very suburban now, but across the street is an alfalfa farm on the other side

of 95. And it's got a little silo. Now, it's really… its incongruous, because

when I think of Middleton, I don't think of alfalfa farms. It's really a

suburb. But it happens to have an alfalfa farm. And I think that kind of

image ... yeah, up in Middleton, across from the alfalfa farm. Bunch of New

England… literally we're in D.C., we're in Philly, oh, we're across from the

alfalfa farm.

Interviewer: Okay, so the area you saw a little bit of integration was the PLM area. Did

you have a lot of exposure to that? Did… if they were truly being integrated

under similar managers, or single managers, was there any difference in the

way they were interacting with each other versus how you guys interacted

in the Yellow Pages area? Or did you stay within your silos?

Interviewee: Can you try that… rephrase that for me.

Interviewer: In some cases they merged the people a little bit more.

Interviewee: Right, right, on the product management side, we tried… the people at least

were merged…

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I actually had a direct report from the BA area.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: So at least there was that notion. On the market management side…

Interviewer: They did not.

Interviewee: They did not.

Interviewer: So, on the PLM side was the interaction different than what you saw on the

market management side?

Interviewee: I think it was better, because it wasn't as institutionalized. At least, the mere

fact that I had to occasionally get on a plane and go to Regan National, at

least reminded me, yeah, this is really a merged company. While the

marketing functions, and the sales functions, were still very geographically

focused. Umm… the biggest tensions, though, and I was at some of the

meeting with the fifth levels or so, where the sales VPs in the old Bell

Atlantic who ran the show, I mean you had the Chesapeake and Potomac,

ya had like… there were even like little companies within BA, they just ran

the show. I mean these guys used to pull stuff, I mean… there should have

been sexual harassment suits like lined up outside the door on these folks.

So, then they come up to Middleton and it was just a different game. We

were just not going to play that old boy network as much. And the MarCom

folks were all out of Middleton. That was run… the agency was out of the

Northeast, I don't know if it was Arnold or Mulling at the time, but you know, your Agency, your ad agency, where its located matters, I think. So the ad agency was Northeast, or New England or New York at one time, I don't know it might have been Y&R [advertising agency] at the end, so the MarCom folks who were all NYNEX, stayed MarCom and the agency remained.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: So those guys had like, my God, had like no input. So that kind of created a problem where, again, Yellow Pages is tough because you're advertising to the advertiser to buy copy, and you're advertising to the say, Patricia, to pick up the book and use it because there is the value back to the advertiser. So, the advertising was the NYNEX brand – 'If it's out there, it's in here', you know 'it's the most comprehensive book in the world', 'its got 380 sections' blah blah blah. But the BA book, the actual physical book, in the old BA territory didn't necessarily reflect that branding. So, there was a lot of… I can remember… tension on that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: You guys are controlling the advertising, you don't know our markets. And you might hear… you get that in every merger. You don't know our market. And maybe that is a defense mechanism, Patricia, where maybe you realize that in a merger your worth is pretty skeletal or flimsy to begin with. So, I try to protect my psychology by saying, well… even NYNEX, in the New York and New England Tel, only New York would know how to deal with

a New York customer. How could a New England CAM [corporate account

manager] ever talk to a New York customer? It's New York. So I think

there was… you know, in any merger, and I've gone through a lot, the first

sense is 'do I have a job'? And the second sense is 'why did she get that

job? I was slated for that job?'

Interviewer: Yep, Okay.

Interviewee: And now we're seeing this now with the vacation policy now. Next year.

Where you have to earn it? Remember… have you seen the new note from

[name omitted]?

Interviewer: Someone told me about it.

Interviewee: Hypothetically, let's say you took all of your vacation in January and

February. And you leave voluntarily in July…

Interviewer: I have heard this, you have to pay them back.

Interviewee: Yeah. For 28 years, I earned my '09 vacation in '08. So it's almost like you

are going … I think the merger, you are always looking at what's the worst

case they are going to implement. Is my pay going to be affected? Um, one

thing that did happen that I can recall is … were you old NYNEX?

Interviewer: I came in after the merger.

Interviewee: Okay. The NYNEX/BA merger, at second level there were actually three

salary grades – 12, 13 and 14. The 13 was like the old 21. But they created

like a super 14 salary grade. So you made a few more bucks. And I was a 14

at NYNEX. And at the merger, that just went away. And I was like… well,

it's not a demotion, but you know… I was… no, we just don't have it, that

salary grade anymore. Okay. So, there was those personal issues, you kind of got... it was weird. I also remember…now it's all coming back… we had these weird staff director titles at second level. Now, we don't have those. So they stole little stuff like that that made it challenging.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: But I'm thinking there were certain personal lines, as you kind of figured out and tried to work things. 'Cause I really believe, you know, at the heart of it, you come to work, you try to do a good job, and want to move things forward.

Interviewer: Okay, when… when… how do you perceive your co-workers from Bell Atlantic viewed you guys? The NYNEX folks.

Interviewee: Uh, um, I think they were intimidated because they saw we were getting the corporate headquarters, even, you see, it was interesting because it was a BA/NYNEX merger, okay? And [name omitted] got the CEO job, but it was really, BA was the bigger company. I forget the guy's name, he had really architected the merger and yet, it seemed like BA got most of the stuff, I mean the headquarters had to be in New York, but again Yellow Pages was kind of a sop thrown to NYNEX, oh, you guys can run the Yellow Pages business.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: So, I think there was – a little bit of conjecture here – the telco folks were like... ah… in the old BA they're in charge. A lot of the executives came from the old BA world. But Yellow Pages was clearly run at the senior

levels, at the marketing strategy level by the old NYNEX folks. And I am

sure there was a feeling that you know, my buddy who is working in Philly

for the telco, he feels better about his existence today then the Yellow Pages

people did in the old BA.

Interviewer: And … uh, you kind of answered this… but how well do you think you

worked together initially and then over time?

Interviewee: Again, I think for the most part, I personally tried… I worked very well with

the BA/NYNEX people. Because I think over time, the merger becomes

less important to the manager level, perhaps. I don't start tied in… any of

that paraphernalia, and I think there was kind of a… maybe it's a military

analogy, where you know the generals and captains are making all the

decisions, and they really don't care if you are BA or NYNEX, they just

really don't care maybe that much?

Interviewer: Yep.

Interviewee: And you kind of solidify with just your salary grade, and it really, at least to

me, seem to matter where the folks came from. And one of the thing I

quickly learned was they were just as smart as I was, they knew their stuff.

They were bright people. Now their MBAs, and had worked in different

marketing and pricing functions, they're smart people. And at the end of the

day, they were just trying to eek out a living like the rest of us, and maybe

hope for some upward career mobility, and just keep their jobs.

Interviewer: So, when the merger with GTE happened, how did you feel about the

employees of GTE that were…

Interviewee: [interrupting]: Totally different. And I thought about this, I was thinking of this driving in today, the difference I felt… GTE was not a Bell System company. And they… they evinced… maybe arrogance is the wrong word, but they are an entrepreneurial company. And they weren't encumbered by all the bullshit that the telcos do, and as a result, they really were… they knew how to market. They weren't rate of return based and all that stuff. They were going to show us how to run the business. That they had better systems, they didn't have, you know they didn't have the legacy systems issues, they were more flexible, they were speedier to market, that they knew customers better, you know they were GTE which was so highly … GTE, look at the sign outside their building 'World Headquarters'. Not "Headquarters'…. "World headquarters", you know we're a world company. That was the feeling I got.

Interviewer: And how did that manifest itself in your day to day interactions with…

Interviewee: [interrupting] It was more difficult, because there was a feeling that you know, they were the acquiree clearly. It was a merger of equals, but why would equals merge, why would you merge equals, there was no benefit there, but anyway. They were clearly the acquired, smaller company. But they positioned themselves, at least in my work functions, that they were going to be smarter and brighter, and they were going to help us move out of this telco mentality cause they knew how to market.

Interviewer: Um hmm. And in your day to day interactions with the GTE folks, what was that like, because of that… that attitude?

Interviewee: It got bad very quickly. Um, originally the plan was that, again on the

Yellow Pages side, that headquarters would be in Dallas/Fort Worth, but

that Middleton would have a very strong employee presence. And, don't

you know, everything is going to be kind of the same. We are going to

integrate more, we are going to cross-pollinate more at the executive level,

folks are going to have to move to Middleton, I mean folks are going to

have to move to Dallas/Fort Worth, but second level and below don't

worry. So that was kind of the guiding mantra at first, and about six weeks

later the bombshell came out. Non-union, you have a job, but you have to

go to Dallas/Fort Worth. You know, they flew us down to show us around,

show us how great it was, the standard of living, blah blah blah. There were

like 180 marketing people in Middleton… and New York. There were still

some in New York. Three people… three… one was a newly promoted

director… went.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee: It stunned them. They couldn't believe it, Patricia. Because they're like

'what'? Because what they did, and again – this might have been a cultural

issue – they were incredulous. What? You can join country clubs. You

know what you can get for a quarter million home in Dallas/Ft. Worth? You

live like a queen. I mean, you have a director's salary down there you're

doing okay. You're doing real well. They couldn't believe, and a lot of us

were offered director jobs to go, and a lot said 'no'. The math, I mean as

great as its going to be, they didn't, especially the New England contingent,

they didn't understand the provinciality. Dallas? What would I f--king want to move there for? I'm a Red Sox fan, you know? No one went. And that created huge issues. Because you had this institutional dearth of knowledge that went out the door.

Interviewer: When you say huge issues, like even in the six weeks leading up to that decision, when you met with people from GTE, what were those interactions like?

Interviewee: The interactions were a lot more tense than the BA/NYNEX. And again it might be because the legacy companies were not the same DNA. Because I've always thought, you know, even New York/New England Telephone merger, BA/NYNEX, its still AT&T/Bell System DNA. I mean, the binders are still kinda… you are going to Lisle and you learn stuff, so, you know, its the same copper and pair, you know, but I just felt that the GTE folks, they felt that they ran a different kind of operation.

Interviewer: So when you had conference calls, or when you would exchange email, um what was the tone like?

Interviewee: The tone, you know the tone was, I can think of an instance where, um, we had to provide titles, book titles to GTE, so we knew what we had. At the time we had 300 different titles in the BA area. Or 500 titles. You know, Philadelphia would be a title, West Plains… White Plains would be a title. So actual, unique books of which you would print thousands and thousands copies, but there were like 500 titles. And I remember this well, I had to deal with one of the finance guys down there and I was sending her a list of

titles, and the revenue for each title. So Boston was worth $30 million, and

Manhattan was worth $70 million, that would be just the annual billed

revenue from the ads in the book. And I sent her a list, and she goes, oh,

you sent me a list of three titles that don't exist. And I said what do you

mean, they don't exist? Oh we don't have them on our list, we don't show

that these are books that you guys publish. I was like, no, trust me, we

publish them. No. Just would not believe me. So we literally had fights

about this in terms of the press release, you know the boiler plate… newly

combined company publishes 800 or whatever books. There was a three

book dispute. You got people pissing and moaning over… you know make

it up, round up. But that – 'no it's not on my list'. So you must be wrong.

Because we run… oh, you know they had just won, not ISO 9000 but what

are those ridiculous awards they used to give out for quality engineering?

Interviewer: I think that is ISO 9000?

Interviewee: But it was the precursor to ISO 9000…. But they had just won…

Interviewer [interrupts]: The Baldridge award?

Interviewee: The Baldridge award. Thank you… thank you. They had just won the

Baldridge award for yellow pages publishing. They thought that they peed

ice cream. They won the Baldridge award. Therefore their processes,

people, everything was better. They won the Baldridge award.

Interviewer: Did you see that changing over time? Did it get better?

Interviewee: Actually, I think it got worse with the relo. And then people just bailed.

Interviewer: And what about …

Interviewee [interrupting]: I'll tell you what I think a manifestation of that is. That company, which was hugely profitable, was headquartered in Dallas/Fort Worth, and run by a woman named [name omitted], who apparently was friends with George Bush. From the state of Texas. So [name omitted], or whomever, thought, you know it's probably not bad to have someone running one of our companies – Yellow Pages was like an $8 billion company – whose friendly with George Bush. That doesn't hurt. She was a disaster. I mean she was just not a good company president. So everyone gets moved to um, Dallas/Ft. Worth. All the books, and maybe this was just a function of the books moving to online, but all of a sudden revenue starts to tank. And now that company is called Idearc. We spun it off. The stocks like $1.14. It is a disaster. I still have friends who work there. It is a disaster. The company might fail.

Interviewer: The people that are still there now, do they still have tension between the former…

Interviewee: No, because they had to drink the Kool-Aid. I am still friendly with that great girl [name omitted], because, oh my God, when they want down there they had to drink the Kool-Aid to survive.

Interviewer: Okay. And what about the relationships during the course of the – it sounds like it was a fairly short time before it basically went away – did you see a change in your relationship with your former Bell Atlantic…?

Interviewee [interrupting]: Absolutely. It was now, you know, the common enemy. We need to solidify, and we need to stick together, because we're going to get hosed.

Interviewer: So you said that …

Interviewee: [interrupting] But, interesting, but my buddy, the blonde – I can't think of her name – said [name omitted] now you know how we felt. When you got, original merger, headquarters in Middleton, I'm working out of Reston, or something, Virginia, now you know how we felt. And I probably, in that merger, wasn't as perceptive to how badly they felt that. That sense of betrayal, isolation, that their core value has been diminished, just intrinsically. I mean, once everyone went to Basking Ridge, if your not going to decide to go to Basking Ridge, then you are not as valuable as the people who do decide to go to Basking Ridge. So these people then said, now you know how we felt. 'Cause I was devastated. Because you know, I had turned… my job was an asterisk. I had turned down a director's job, but was told, that's okay, your one of the few jobs that are staying in Middleton. There was just a handful. And then that went away. I was like…. And then the director job that I had turned down was gone, so now if I want to go, I am going as a manager. I was like, you know, who did I piss off? So… but you know, there was clearly a case of 'wow, the GTE folks are taking over'. So it didn't matter if you were New England Tel, New York Tel, PA/Delaware, Chesapeake, you know we were all Bell Atlantic now, and we were taking – being taken over.

Interviewer: So you said the relationship strengthened, but you said earlier the relationship got very good fast, so in retrospect, how did it get better? You already thought you were integrated so what did you see, how did it manifest itself, that you said that it strengthened?

Interviewee: I think what it did is that it made us think that we were finally… maybe it … it… um… it coalesced the original merger. Maybe, maybe it made us think of ourselves as truly Bell Atlantic.

Interviewer: Whereas before, even though you were integrated, and you worked well together, you were still thinking of yourselves as NYNEX and Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Absolutely. Especially from the union world. People showed up to work every day in NYNEX tee-shirts. You know, so, your still driving … you don't see very much of this anymore, but you would see NYNEX on the Cos [central offices]. It took a long time to change all the lettering, and all the trucks said NYNEX, but that made us think a lot, we really are BA now. This is a different world. And that merger, you may remember, was really quiet. Because apparently [name omitted] was so furious that the BA/NYNEX merger was so public, and so common knowledge… this one really took people by surprise. And, yeah, there was definitely the sense that we are in it together, we need to be together. It was like the French and the Brits finally get together when the Germans attack. You know, the bigger enemy makes you come together.

Interviewer: Okay. And how do you feel that um… how do you feel…how well integrated do you feel Bell Atlantic and GTE is today? I mean, you're in a different role…

Interviewee [interrupting]: No, no I … but I've been in this role now, again once this hit in 2000 I came back to the telco in 2000. So I've been in telco, in the merged world, in telco, you know BSG, FiOS space for eight years now. [Sighs]. You know, Patricia, I'll be honest with ya, when I look up a number in eweb, and I see the 972 area code, there is a reaction. And I… I don't know what the reaction is. But its not the same reaction is see when I see 301 or 703 or 212 or 908. I don't know what it is, and its almost visceral. And I don't know where it comes from, I'm like aw f--k. They are just not going to get it the way I do. I'm thinking maybe it's the Boston/New York mentality, we really know what we are doing, we move really fast, and you guys are going to sit and talk about well… if we did this, and put these PowerPoint's together, we're not playing Baldridge stuff anymore. We need to keep moving. And I just... ahhh… and yet, some of the most talented people that I really love, are, work out of GTE…Bright, smart people. But I see that 972 and I … its interesting, well not interesting, but a lot of times I'll get on a call and people will say oh, [name omitted] you must be from Texas. What? My accent is atrocious. My area code in [town omitted] is 978.

Interviewer: Oh, Okay.

Interviewee: And people are like, I am almost, not defensive, not… but I didn't kill

Kennedy, you know? I'm… I'm from the Northeast. We don't leave, I don't

leave, you know, route 128 unless I am on a … you know… this is the

Northeast.

Interviewer: So, do you think that is a geographic reaction or do you the difference

between the companies?

Interviewee: I think its both. I think its both. But I think for me its more the companies,

because if you look at Texas, half the people there are from Boston, and

New York, and Philly. It's a city of transplants. So, I think its the company.

And again, maybe it goes back to that 'we'll teach you guys'. And, you

know, we are seeing it a little bit now with the wireless guys coming over.

You got to be kidding me. I mean, that's our … that company is like 'oh,

you don't know how to market, we'll show you how to market'. Yeah, play

around with SSP and Coffe and then come back and tell me about

marketing. Then you tell me how well you can market to these customers.

Interviewer: So you still think there is a divide between…

Interviewee: [interrupting] Little bit, yeah.

Interviewer: GTE and Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Little bit, yeah. And, yeah. But those guys must feel, I gotta believe,

alienated. Because at least, Basking Ridge, its East Coast, I can get to the

headquarters and back, I am going there next week, it's a shuttle, or I'm

going to Newark on the Continental, the quasi shuttle, right? Those guys are

1300 miles away. The only director level and above, you know there is only

a handful of them, that RMO [regional marketing organization] crowd. So at least my director, or executive director, is in New York. You know, its one of us. I have to believe there is no one out there to support them. So they must be worried at some point that that facility is just kind of… and even the facility, I don't know if you have been out there recently, its getting a little rough around the edges. And that used to be a beautiful… eight years ago I was like… wow… these people get treated so well. It's a little rough around the edges now. You know, they are only emptying the trash every other day, and the grass isn't what it used to be. And more and more people there are starting to work at home. You used to never see that down there. You go in that … I think GTE had for whatever reason, a very good employee camaraderie and morale. You know, people felt good, and again, I'm sure it was a great job down there, but now you go down and it's a bunch of empty cubes.

Interviewee: Yeah, it's definitely changed.

Interviewee: Yeah, but again, um, worked with some great people there but I just can't help thinking, oh, the market, that isn't where the market is.

Interviewer: Do you still think there are philosophical differences between the two teams?

Interviewee: [Sigh. Hesitates.] Yeah, I do think there still is this sense that the GTE folks think we act too much like a phone company. And that we are not market based. I get into this issue sometimes with New York and the LFA [local franchise agreement] and the LATA [local access and transport area]; now

GTE could care less about a LATA. Well, the fact is the PUC [public utilities commission] cases if LATA 132 is different than the rest of the state. And again, why do you guys price differently downstate New York from upstate New York. Well, its really a LATA issue more than anything, and they don't, you know, they don't, they never had to really worry about that. I mean, they did I guess against the competitors down there, oh, that was another thing they were going to do. Because GTE competed, and this is getting… because GTE competed against Bell South at the time. They were the CLEC [competitive local exchange carrier] if you will. They could help us learn how they competed against CLECs and be more competitive. Because they had actually done it. They were the ones who, day in and day out, were battling Bell South, or whomever was there at the time. And that could help us learn how we, as the new company, could then market against the CLECs. But, that being said, I was invited down by the RMO, the Texas RMO, a couple of months ago to talk about FiOS roadmap in '09. And the people, there was maybe about about a little bigger than this conference room, you know managers and a couple of directors who were really just trying to run the marketing side of the RMO there for consumer. Unbelievably appreciative, of my time and energy, unbelievably attentive and supportive. A number of people that I had never met but had talked to on IM came up after the meeting, introduced themselves. I mean much friendlier in a sense, you know, on a personal level than I would have expected in a New York or a Philly meeting. I mean people were, and

maybe that is part of the culture, people were genuinely nice. They might

think they know more marketing but when the meeting was over they were

just like, wow, great – personal relationship was really nice. [Name

omitted] who I deal with a lot – [name omitted] is a handful, but I have a

strong personality too, maybe that is why I like him. I have never met him,

the guy like hugged me. It was really nice. I mean its like, he's not some

shrew, he is a talented lawyer with too much work on his desk, and if he

comes off a little glib sometimes, that is because he has too much work.

What a nice guy. And I respected him before, but now I respect him even

more. And that again, one of the things that has failed with all the mergers,

we've lost that touch. We say things in IM with a tone that I would never

use on the phone. Never use in person. And we've lost that. I've worked

with [name omitted] for two years, I finally met the guy. I mean, we

don't… we've lost that personal stuff. Maybe that is a manifestation of the

way companies are run now. But it's sad.

Interviewer: That actually leads me to my next question… based on your experience is

there anything that the leadership of the different organizations could have

done to improve or speed up the integration.

Interviewee: Get people in a room together. And let them just get to know each other.

Buy them theatre tickets. Send us to Broadway for a Friday night. Just so

people get to know each other. Because that's where…whatever success I

have as a FiOS PLM, yeah I have a lot of institutional knowledge, that's

great, but it's the relationships I've formed… I know who to call. I know

[name omitted] is my buddy, she'll take care of me. [Name omitted] in Texas, I know where to go. And those are all relationships formed through IM's, but when I met these people, it took it to a different level. You know, I actually sent [name omitted], you know I watch TV shows on DVD, I can't be bothered, so I've turned her onto all these shows on DVD. The Shield, one of the best shows on TV, so I sent her like the year after I watch it. You know, we are like friends now. You know, we actually share vacation photos and stuff. But those are just relationships I've formed with people, because again, unique, she's married with no kids, I'm married with no kids, she likes to travel, I like to travel, so, those are all relationships I've formed because we had some personal connection. And we just didn't do enough of that. I mean, I've dealt with – there is a person [name omitted] – I just found out yesterday she is a girl. I never, you know it's a girl. And we've lost all that. I'm not saying we ought to rent out the Boston Garden and do rah rah. We're so, God, the travel budget, you know, God forbid you travel now. We just don't have any… and you know, you are right, you know I sit at my office at home, and I am on 3 or 4 IMs at a time, I'm on a conference call, I'm on my cell phone, and if I came into High Street, I would do the same thing. People could be two cubes away from me, and I am on the… you mentioned the BA phenomenon, we have so become, we have so isolated the work function that it's collaborative, but not personally collaborative. I mean I actually glad you said let's do a face-to-face, ah I

can actually go meet a human being. Actually see someone. We just don't

do that.

Interviewer: Yes, it's not the culture anymore.

Interviewee: I'm meeting um, with my new group manager and a FiOS business TV guy

in Reston, we have to take over [unintelligible] and my boss wants a face-

to-face with this guy in Reston next week, and I was like we can get

together, and he is like why do you need to do a face-to-face? First reaction

is why do we need to do a face-to-face? And I agree, it's a pain in the ass to

go down there, but its probably going to be productive. 'Cause for three

hours we are going to have to look at each other and pay attention. And I'm

not going to be… I mean, how many calls have you been on and you'll say

'oh, ah, could you repeat that because I missed that', they just asked me a

question and I have no frigging idea what they asked me, they could have

said 'are you naked in the room' and I would say yeah. Completely

blindsided. And that is the experience that is shared among everyone. And

that is not GTE, NYNEX, PacTel. That is just the culture now. It's awful,

Patricia. It's so, um, I don't know what the word is… impersonal.

Dispersonal. Impersonal. It's like… I mean I literally write IM's, hit send,

and do you know what you wrote?

Interviewer: Sometimes you write the wrong thing to the wrong people.

Interviewee: It reminds me of the phenomenon … you ever drive twenty miles, and you

don't remember driving? And you're just [raps the table repeatedly] so right

now, and your making decisions on the fly, in IM's. If it were in person you

might give a little more thought to it, but your just trying to get it off your

desk. Things are clicking, blinking, I gotta help this person. And then the

next thing you know, your IM is pasted into an email now, and it's like 'oh

my God', 'cause in my little pathetic world there is a hierarchy. And I might

say something in an IM that I wouldn't say in an email, and I'm thinking

'oh my God, they put my IM in an email'. And I can be glib and poetic, and

I am like… I wish you hadn't done that. But we've lost that whole get

together.

Interviewer: Is there anything else, looking back, overall, about the merger, specifically

about the relationships, that you would want to add?

Interviewee: Well… I'm thinking that, I remember one of the first discussions with the

original BA/NYNEX merger…what's your salary grade range, what are

your benefits, I forget what we used to call it at the time, how many weeks

vacation do you get? Very protective. In the room… oh, I remember, GTE

used to have, and I think it's gone, that if you lateraled, which isn't even a

word, but if you took a lateral move, you could get a small bump. Just for

the experience. Two or three percent. So, over time, the rumor was, that the

GTE folks made more money than the BA folks. Because in taking, think of

all your lateral moves, if you are getting two or three percent bump every

time, you know, and that was the rumor that they made more money. And…

personal relationships, this is quirky, but this at the time was true, the GTE

folks would always take a travel day. Remember that phenomenon?

Interviewer: No, I don't but I know what you mean.

Interviewee: They would always have an extra cushion travel day if they had to go anywhere. Whereas, I am a shuttle guy, we grew up on the shuttle. So, if I needed to be in Dallas for an eleven o'clock meeting, take the six o'clock flight out of Logan, fight the clock, you're there in time. They would come up, not the night before, the day before. No laptops, no cell phones, hang out in Boston, go out to a nice restaurant, then go to the meeting the next day. They always did a travel day. That was a big cultural thing. But maybe some of the employees there were kind of give a little more freedom, a little bit more spiffs or whatever the word is, but they get travel day. So, how much money did you make, telecommuting … do you telecommute…

Interviewer: Job share…

Interviewee: Job share. Yep, part time. All the, so a lot of it I think was very Maslovian. Are my basic functions going to be underlined? Maybe, you know, I am not going to get the promotion now, I was in line for the directors slot, now they have this other guy [name omitted], now are they going to … but you know, am I going to have the basic stuff? Pay, vacation, is any of that going to erode? Any privilege that I might have. And for me, you know, a lot of it was, and you might have gone through this, re-establishing your reputation. Even after, you know, because of the mess of the Yellow Pages merger, where everyone had to go to Middleton, okay. I came back to the telco, which I had left the telco in '88, went to Yellow Pages twelve years, and came back to the telco in 2000. So I came back to the telco with 19 years of service. But I started over. I mean I was literally like I was quote – God

forbid – off the street. No reputation, you know, I think he's going to be a [unintelligible], he's going to get twelve percent, no equity came with you. And I think in a lot of the mergers, you didn't carry much equity unless you happened to be in the same reporting function of someone up the food chain that thought highly of you. You lost a lot of your personal equity. I think rebuilding that is tough, because your trying to rebuild your personal equity, which isn't always what is in the best interest of what you need to do in your job. If I can be so bold. Now, I am talking … thinking about it… how do I reestablish myself. I can be… I am thinking… there are a couple of New York folks that probably didn't do as well in the GTE world because either the GTE folks saw them as New York folks, or the New York folks carried themselves a little bit differently. Even in terms of dress, style, and stuff. I also remember this, the GTE world was more diverse than the BA world. In the BA world, it was diverse in terms of African American, but you went to Dallas and it was like much more, you know, Hispanic, which I didn't feel, at least in the management ranks, that BA and NYNEX had a lot of Hispanic. Down in, and maybe its just a function of Texas, there were just a lot more Hispanics. So I felt that those guys were more diverse, at different levels of the business than we were. And there was a sense that we didn't respect that diversity, maybe. As I reflect on it.

Interviewer: Okay, great.

Interviewee: Is this helpful at all?

Interviewer: Yes, it was very helpful. Thank you.

Interview #6 Boston

Interviewer: Okay, so just for the record, just to establish you were with NYNEX at the time of the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what were your perceptions of the employees of the merging company, so in your case Bell Atlantic.

Interviewee: Uh, I'm not sure when you say my perceptions of the employees?

Interviewer: Like, did you have preconceived notions in your initial interactions with them, did you form certain impressions, did those impressions indicate that the people from Bell Atlantic were any different than the people from NYNEX, that kind of thing.

Interviewee: Well, it think it goes back to when we first merged, actually, with New York, you know, Telephone, and became NYNEX. I remember the impressions there being how sort of combative those relationships were earlier between Boston and New York. And then I think when the Bell Atlantic it was almost the opposite, so much calmer an environment, I mean I think the Bell Atlantic employees in general weren't as, I don't know, as hectic, I think as crazed as sort of the Northeast part of the country really was. I am sort of remembering, like I said, not necessarily in a bad way, just all the head banging with the NYNEX merger, just to get to common ground, and not that people, you know, I thought people had the right interest at heart, but there was more of a cultural difference. So, from my

perspective, when it was the Bell Atlantic merger, it was just meeting, quite

honestly a lot of nice people, not people that were in your face, so to speak,

and they tended to seem to work in a, you know, even pace if you will, and

things weren't quite as hectic or as stressful is kind of my general… my

overall impression was that things felt good.

Interviewer: During the merger, though, if you felt like that about the Northeast, or the

NYNEX, I guess the New England Tel and the New York Tel, had a

different type of personality then the Bell Atlantic people. Did that bring in

any kind of tension or conflict at all? In their work style? Expectations?

Anything like that?

Interviewee: I think the only sense that it did bring in tension, or conflict, is that we did

move at a different pace. So, I would just get the general sense that they

didn't have the same urgency that we had. I think that also, their results

were generally better than our results, and I think a lot of that was the

culture. We're in a brutally competitive environment in the Northeast, so

those things, I think the urgency wasn't always there, but I think as you dug

into it a little deeper it wasn't always there because it didn't always have to

be there. That it was more of the old Bell system, if you will, rather than the

environment we were living in today, so I think the real tension was they

could get things done a lot easier than we could get things done. So, a lot of

times they look like they could be doing better, but my view would be the

degree of difficulty was a lot greater here than it was there, so you know, to

your point, to your question, I think that would be an area of conflict, of tension.

Interviewer: And what particular area did you work in at the time?

Interviewee: Sure, I've been in external affairs for some time. So, it would be dealing with my other external affairs counterparts. So, in other words, we might be doing something on the philanthropic side of the equation and we do a similar grant here and get new attention. They do a similar grant down in Texas or whatever, and they get all kinds of credit for it. Its just a different culture of being easier…being able to get the governor out there, easier to maybe get the attorney general out there. It's just more of an environment, a friendlier environment. So, I think in that sense sometimes… I think that carries on even to today quite honestly, that each state has its own culture, and that the culture is more business friendly there. They are just a friendlier climate sometimes that…that even today I think some of that tension still exists.

Interviewer: So… so when you came together, were your groups merged or did you work independently of each other?

Interviewee: Kind of merged. Um, worked independently of each other, it wasn't … um, going back to the NYNEX merger, it was much…. you know at that time, our work forces were merged. You know, two sales organizations, I was a sales manager, and so there was a lot of tension around who has what accounts? So there was a real merging of stuff then. But the end of the business I was in, uh when the Bell Atlantic merger happened, I really…it

wasn't so much that, so some of the conflict, you know conflict might be too strong of a word, but that was off in different states. So it wasn't as if, I mean, you'd be on calls together. Philanthropy is done on a national basis, although you spend your own budget locally, so there would be comparisons of things like results others were getting, uh, but not really at the level I was at were there really mergers of employees. Clearly at the senior levels there were a lot more merging, and who stayed and who went, all those typical types of things.

Interviewer: So, from a cultural perspective you didn't really… or do you find that even though you were somewhat integrated, and their styles were certainly different, did…did you feel anything in terms of like your day to day working relationships, were they easier or harder… was there conflict … was there tension in terms of getting things done, at the pace you needed them done, anything like that?

Interviewee: No… no I don't think so, I think it was just more like I said, it was just easier to get things done in a Texas or a Florida, or something than it is up in the Boston area, so I think its just sort of a comparison of work sometimes. You just sort of felt at a disadvantage, of it's just harder to get things done here. But like I said, and I think that exists today, that there are different cultures in different states. So, when you are in a bigger company, and you have merged, and you look at other states and other results, a lot of time there is a lot of conflict then. Then the other dynamic that was different was that not in all those states were we the dominant carrier, so it creates a

different environment. I mean if you're in Massachusetts, New York, or whatever, and you're the dominant carrier, the company everyone is looking at, everyone's regulating, that's where the pressure points are. You go down into Florida or Texas, and its AT&T or SBC at the time, you are really the dominant carrier so at some level you are at ….

Interviewer: So going back, I guess, a little bit more, it sounds like the integration you experienced happened more in the New York/New England merger, which sounded very different than what you experienced with the NYNEX/Bell Atlantic merger. So, in the New York/New England merger, um, I know you said there was a lot of tension, was there co-mingling of the groups that caused the tension?

Interviewee: Yes, I mean the way we had it, you would have sales, I was a sales manager at the time, so you would have a set of account here in New England, you'd have a set of accounts in New York, so then the two groups got together. So, now let's say the Marriott chain, there's Marriott's in Boston, there are Marriott's in New York, well who is now going to handle the Marriott account? We both used to handle the Marriott account, so then you're really getting into real tension 'cause it's… because it's, well was my relationship better, where was the client located, are they located in, where is corporate headquarters, is it New York, is it Boston, is some other part of the country? So then I think that really gets in to losing work, losing responsibility, if you think you have… losing opportunity. I mean if you think that Marriott chain is about to sign a contract with you in two months, three months, four

months down the road then you lose the account, then it could have a direct revenue, you know an income impact to you. So, I found that a much more difficult merger because I was directly involved in work that I was doing going elsewhere, not necessarily, I didn't think getting the support of upper management in the department to really make logical decisions, I think that in the end a lot of those decisions are made internally politically versus who is the right person. I mean you can demonstrate that Suzy has the best relationships, the accounts here, but it goes elsewhere for some internal political reason. I do think that then, New York… I guess it's always true, New York is always bigger, so if you go to that fundamental we're bigger, well every discussion can't be decided on we're bigger. Yet, that's obviously what New York wanted to do, is to decide everything based on size. I mean, there's twenty Marriott's in New York, and there's only two in Boston. So, of course, we're going to handle the Marriott. So, I mean just all of that. But I just found that, not to be generalizing, but I think the people in New York are just more… like conflict, I mean it's a rat race. I think its just the nature of the culture, probably if you lived in New York, or I lived in New York, I think over time you would became that more, the pace is just hectic, its frantic, it was incredibly competitive, it is incredibly competitive today, so I just found that merger you know a lot more difficult. The gentleman who ran the department was New York based, versus Boston based, so you know you lose that kind of control. So the general manager I was reporting to had been in Boston, now I am reporting to

someone in New York, so just a lot of that. That was just more real to me than some of the other mergers, the Bell Atlantic merger, the GTE merger, it seemed different.

Interviewer: When that happened, the NYNEX… the New England and New York Tel, how long did it take – or did it ever happen– that the two teams integrated?

Interviewee: I don't think it ever happened. You know, I mean… and … and I sort of do blame that on a lack of decisive decision making at senior levels within the department to just… you know, I remember going to the general manager and just saying… you know he wanted me to straighten it out at a point, you know he said, okay he got to know and like me, and I remember saying to him I can straighten this out, if you can just make decisions, but you gotta tell people that the decisions I make are the decisions, or… or it will go on and go on. And he was never willing to do this. I want you to fix this, but I am not going to really give you the support to fix it. So I'm not… not going to go out and say… [name omitted] is going to work on the new account system, and in two months he is going to kick it out, and whatever it is it is. And he is going to work with me, and I am going to sign off on what he ultimately… you know, we've got it work it out, and then… and… and it's blessed so please give him the information he needs. And that's the stuff you couldn't get. So, one you couldn't get real straight answers from people because you had no authority. So, I recognized that sometimes you have to… I've worked here for 29 years, so I understand how things work, and you have to work back room, and to weave your way to get information, but

sometimes it just has to be sanctioned too, to say I have asked so and so to do this project, and when this person comes to you looking for information, you gotta believe it's the same as if I came to you looking for this information. And that never happens, I think a lack of decisive decision making, and so if I was ever involved in a merger and it was my job to integrate things, that's one thing I would do early, I would do… decisive decision making. Direction of how this all ought to happen. And whose in place, and whose in charge. And I think that, when I observe it from a distance, I think Verizon has done a good job of that over the years. You know, some is out of the necessity of the competitive nature of our business now, but you're seeing internally a lot more of that where there is one decision maker for something, whether its for marketing, or network or engineering. At some point you just need one person that makes all the decisions and then I think that dissipates a lot of the cultural conflicts.

Interviewer: When the merger with Bell Atlantic happened, did you see any change in the behavior, or the attitudes, of the former New England Tel and New York Tel change at all?

Interviewee: I don't think the attitudes changed. I don't think people were as happy, because at that time, um, you know [name omitted] – not that we knew him, and obviously he was a brilliant guy and a senior guy, so I don't mean anything disparaging there. He was in charge, and it wasn't our guy [name omitted], and I think for most of us who have worked here for a long time think very highly of [name omitted], and think he's done a tremendous job,

and we're grateful we have jobs, and you know all the good things. So, I think that was kind of difficult when you had [name omitted] there, and then when you did the GTE merger, you had …

Interviewer: [Name omitted]

Interviewee: [Name omitted]. So I don't think here, in the Boston area, we had a belief in the most senior leadership. We thought we're just marking time until [name omitted] gets back in charge again, and takes over, and really starts running this business the way it needs to be run. I think that there was a difference, I think that you know [the previous chairman] was respected nationally, and in the industry as a… clearly a leader, but that didn't change our local belief that it still ought to be [name omitted], and that with [name omitted], and they were co-chairman, I don't know, so I think we felt culturally here that the company isn't going to be on truly the right path until this really happens.

Interviewer: And how do you think the people at Bell Atlantic – the employees of Bell Atlantic – perceived the people from NYNEX?

Interviewee: If I was guessing, I would say they probably perceived us like we perceived the people from New York, that we were the more aggressive, and… and… and… you know they had better results, so its kind of us feeling like we know everything. And we know the right way to do it, and them feeling 'no you don't, our results are better'. So, I think a lot goes to results. Now, we look at it and say, yeah, its one thing to do it in some southern town somewhere with no competition, or southern city, or New York City, or

Boston, you know, or Providence, you know, places where there is real hard core competition. So, I think in that sense, they probably didn't view us all that well, and I don't think they all necessarily thought that [name omitted] was the one that was ultimately going to lead these companies, and that [name omitted] was only going to be here for a period of time. And that [name omitted] was only going to be here for a period of time. I mean it was… but I think over time I like to think it became clear that [name omitted] and his senior leadership team really did know what they were doing.

Interviewer: So, when you say that they thought their results were better, and that you thought you had the right way to do things, I know you were sort of in silos, but did that attitude manifest itself when you did have to interact?

Interviewee: You know, I can't think of really specific examples of that to be honest with you.

Interviewer: That's okay.

Interviewee: You know, only because I wasn't in a line function, like I said, you know going back to the other merger where I was part of a group that was getting integrated, you know?

Interviewer: And what about when, um, when the GTE merger happened? Was that different at all?

Interviewee: Um… I guess I kind of in my own mind, without thinking… being able to get specifics, I almost think the GTE merger and the Bell Atlantic merger were kind of the same culturally. They felt the same. I think Bell Atlantic

might have been a little more traumatic, in the sense that we had been

NYNEX, that was a logical merger from divestiture, and you know how all

that stuff, you know the cause to all that, but then when you really got into

the Bell Atlantic merger, that was a big deal, then you kind of felt like

NYNEX was going away is what's really happening, so I think at that point

there was a lot of personal worry of like, what does this all mean? And that

was sort of, in my mind, the first real merger in some ways. And then, kind

of when you rolled into the GTE merger, you had already been through it

once, and if you really didn't feel like you were in a large group that was

truly going to be integrated, it was an argument that it was relatively

transparent to you day to day. And then I remember they came out with the

Verizon name, after the Bell Atlantic name, and I think a lot of us, at least

personally, we like the Bell Atlantic name, you know we thought it made

sense from a geographical perspective. It still had Bell in it, so you're, if

you are a long time employee you want to hang onto the Bell name, so I

think in that sense, after we got through the initial pain, you were

comfortable where you were. And then when we got to GTE, I don't think

the merger like I said was that big of a deal. But then, when they changed

the name, and it became Verizon, I remember that being a little bit of a….

So there were waves of things that would cause you pause, um, but like I

said, I just wasn't at the time in an organization that was truly getting

banged together. We have 25 people over here that do this, and we have 25

people over here, and in the end we are going to have 30.

Interviewer: So, when you had the merger with GTE, you still remained fairly silo'd.

Interviewee: Yes…Yes…. At my level, and I am in a state-based organization so, even though I was second or third level at different times in this, if you're state based… above you its getting merged, and… and so maybe the higher ups up in the business, clearly the merger of organizations is happening, the integration or whatever word you want to use, but when you are really on a state team, it didn't matter that much, you know I couldn't….

Interviewer: And when you look across other teams do you see that same phenomenon, or do you see other people are experiencing the mergers differently?

Interviewee: Oh, I think others are experiencing the mergers differently. I mean if you are in finance, or your in marketing, and you say, hey, lets face it there is only going to be one set of marketing, you know. And I think if you look at what eventually did happen, that's why Basking Ridge. I…I… to me its just we need to have one company, we need to get people co-located. I mean if I was observing, or thinking what I think I saw, that's why Basking Ridge exists today. It's to take geographies, to take companies, to take wireless and landline and then bang them all together and say, look it, we need to have one company. We can look at them differently, how we want to market, but we gotta be ready to integrate this company better, because it's a matter of multiple entities, multiple companies that came together, and then we built companies like Verizon Wireless, while we were merging with these other landline business if you will, or the old RBOCs… putting those together. So, I do think at some levels, we clearly had too many piece

parts and the idea was put this all together. And I think that probably today we are more one company than I ever have felt before. Even though you have Verizon Business, Verizon Wireless and Verizon Telecom, I do feel that as you go into the senior levels, they are silo'd for the right reasons, but then they are clearly integrated at the top, also for all the right reasons. Culturally now, I think we have done a good job of bringing all of this together.

Interviewer: Do you feel that, um, during the merger with GTE, did you see a change in the way the NYNEX and Bell Atlantic people worked together?

Interviewee: I don't think so, no. The NYNEX and Bell Atlantic as a result of the GTE merger? Not that I can… no…. why did others say they did?

Interviewer: I didn't say that. But do you think that is a function of the way you were organized? That you were state based, so there was no impact?

Interviewer: I would say that probably yes. I mean the biggest impact to me in mergers in the short run is 'what happens to me?' I mean I … I really believe you have two reactions to a merger in my mind is, if you can be intellectual and not emotional, is this good for the company? And you hope that answer is yes. So now you, as my memory serves me, I've always felt that it was a good thing. As I look at these things, you can't survive in this industry being small, you have to get bigger and bigger and bigger. So as we got bigger and bigger and bigger, I think intellectually I always felt good about it. So that is kind of question one or two depending on how you look at it. Then the other question is emotionally, what does this mean for me? And most of

the times in these mergers, it didn't mean anything to me, day to day. As I

looked at this I said, well, unless they elimin… unless this merger results in

somebody at a senior level saying we don't need state based functions, or

we don't need employees doing these functions, we're going to outsource

this. I think clearly that would cause concern, personally you might have a

different reaction, but I've always felt the mergers, as I said, were a good

thing. You need it to grow, you need it to get bigger. Um, and then just

personally, I never saw a risk in the merger. I do think as senior managers

are getting appointed, and as some are leaving the business, if that is

someone who liked you or you were friendly with, there is that

apprehension, but once again that reverts back to personally, am I

impacted? It was very different in the New York merger, going back to that

one, where we really started integrating things, because that I did feel

personally impacted that over time, if I lose all these accounts, they really…

back then it wasn't a culture of losing your job, so it wasn't really, at that

point a fear of getting fired or laid off, because we were still very big, and

the business was still enormous, and it just wasn't our culture to lay people

off like we do today just because of the nature of the business – the nature

of the economy and the business. So, it was just sort of losing what you had,

and what you liked, and what you thought you did well at, so um, I guess

that is why I would feel different if its really not going to impact you

personally.

Interviewer: Okay, um, how well integrated do you think the employees are today?

Interviewee: I think very well. Like I said earlier, its multiple things that have been

integrated, integrating the NYNEX and the Bell Atlantic and the GTE, so

that's all been one integration. And I think the integration of wireless and

landline, and trying to integrate that. That is still an area that the business is

trying to work and our products and services, so in many ways we appear as

one company to the outside world, um, I think that's why, as I said earlier,

that we did create Basking Ridge, that we bought Basking Ridge. Because I

believe that [the chairman] and senior leaders in the business felt that we

weren't as integrated as we could be and should be and would need to be as

we go down the road. I believe strongly in that, that we just are going to

have to be one company to people, so the business had many options and

many products, I mean you want that, you want to have a diversity of

products, but as a company we have to be very integrated, and I think we

are the most integrated we have ever been, and marching… I don't think

there are many people in this business who don't think that we're doing a

great job in our wireless business, that FiOS was the right move. There are

clearly issues and challenges, but all in all, for just rolling out something

new, in the last four or five years it has been very successful. And that is the

end of the business I work on a lot now, FiOS, and its been very exciting

and very positive. So.. .I would be hard pressed to think there are many

people who think we are not following the right direction at this point. Now,

once again, if you are in a shrinking end of the business, you probably don't

quite feel as strongly as I was just saying because its back down to the

personal level. But in general, I got to believe people feel we're moving in

the right direction.

Interviewer: So, based on your experience, is there anything the leadership could have

done differently to facilitate, or improve or speed up the integration

between the companies? In either of the mergers. Or any of the mergers you

have been through.

Interviewee: Only what I highlighted before. I think you have to be very decisive in your

leadership, and Verizon just finished up the Alltel purchase, or is in the

middle of the process of finalizing the Alltel purchase on the wireless side,

and already they were talking… you know I was listening to a conference

call before I came down here, and uh, they were talking about the

employees, and integrating employees. So, I think we already know you

gotta do that, you gotta do it well, gotta do it quickly, and you can't assume

that all of us have…that what's here in Verizon are the best employees.

Maybe not. There's some people over there that are very talented. And you

go into when Verizon purchased MCI. I mean that was a purchase, but in

the end, I think there everybody felt that we were purchasing MCI and

therefore it would be the Verizon people running MCI. When in reality

what I think happened … from a little bit of a distance… was that we

purchased a company with good people and they knew what they were

doing. I mean you got all the MCI scandals and all the crap, but you get all

the stuff out of the way, it wasn't the people working at MCI at the time

Verizon bought it. All those people were long gone, if they were part of the

ethical issues, so in that case it was just the opposite, a lot Verizon people who were selling business services lost their jobs over time, because we purchased an entity. That entity was a better entity than I think we thought we had ourselves. Once again, no reflection necessarily on the people, but that's why we went out and did that. So, I don't know if that is a direct answer to your question about what senior managers can do better. I think just has to be decisive, it has to be quick. And just get on with it. I mean, if you are going to lose your job over it, you might as well just get on with it. So, you as a person can move on and the business can move on. I think that stuff just has to be done quickly and done decisively. You have to put senior leadership in their early, you know who is going to run this new entity, this new business, whatever it is, and that person has to set clear direction and clear expectations. And lay out timelines, and when things are going to happen, and then do it quickly and… and decisively. I just think indecision is a killer in how… when you're merging.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you can think of about the interaction between the interpersonal relationships that stands out across the multiple mergers?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: No? Okay. Thank you.

Interview #8 Boston

Interviewer: Okay, just to establish, for the record, so you were former NYNEX before

any of the mergers, correct?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: During the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what were your

perceptions of the employees of the merging company? In your case it

would be Bell Atlantic. What did you perceive of the people?

Interviewee: Uhh. As I recall, the overall perception of the people at Bell Atlantic was a

little bit more rigid than we were going to be used to, and we were the

old…we were the company that was being taken over, so it was a little bit,

um, I guess it was a little bit different than…. We had been through the

New York/New England merger, and New York, by its reputation and its

size, was also taking over in some way. So we had already sort of been

through that once, so we figured … and we had gotten through that pretty

well, and gotten over all of our preconceived notions, and began to

understand people who talked like Long Islanders… ah, so we had

overcome that already, we had that in our back pocket of experience, so

when we took on the Bell Atlantic merger, day to day we had… my

expectation was that we would be just fine, it was just going to be we're

human beings, we're people, we have relationships, and we just needed to

be able to get to know one another. And I had, almost from the get go, a

Bell Atlantic boss, so my opportunity to both work with and have a staff

from Bell Atlantic, you know, the expectations from the beginning was that

this was going to be another run through the grist mill, you know? Another tough time, but um…

Interviewer: And was it?

Interviewee: Uhhh… Yes, it was a tough time. I think because it was tough to… at the time the leadership was from Bell Atlantic. From the top. [Name omitted] had stepped aside in a gracious act, and was going to come back into power after two or three years, the guy with the, you know, the operations guy, was all… they were all from Bell Atlantic. And it was hard because it was really a… the conversations really began from a position of… you knew you were in a subordinate position. And whenever that happens, ya know, it's always I gotta prove myself yet again. Yet again. But that is just life, so it was hard at the beginning, but I think once they understood who we were, or who I was, and what was happening, people appreciate the fact that you're still smart or committed or have experience and we all got over it. But the initial, first few months were tough.

Interviewer: Can you describe some of those interactions, like what was the tone, any particular instances that stand out, that exemplify that time?

Interviewee: Uh, at the time of the Bell Atlantic merger, when did that happen? '91?

Interviewer: It was like '96 or '97.

Interviewee: '96, '97? Umm. I'm trying to remember. I was back in Boston, I was working business marketing, I'm trying to remember because there were so many jobs. So many mergers. Um, I guess the things that I remember were that, um, we were merging advertising groups, 'cause I was working in that.

And the go to market strategy…we had different agencies…different ways in which we promoted our products, and I remember having real, uh, strategic differences with the folks about how to go to market. And uh, Bell Atlantic states had not had the same level of competition as New York and New England had had, and so they were kind of behind us a little bit, and didn't want to think they were behind us at all. So there was some regional, um, discussions, about why we did what we did and I think that… that was the cause of a lot of things. They just didn't… we didn't understand the lang… what they had been up against, and why they went down a particular path. And we had a lot more competition, and frankly we had a lot more customers – in the NYNEX area – that we had some fundamental differences and stuff… go to market strategies. And we had fundamental differences on what agencies to use. So it was… we had to get over, we had to come to a common place, so that you could direct the agencies, or choose the agency that was going to help you move forward. So, from a… you know my specific remembrance is those kind of conversations, and those kind of … you know, and at the end of the day. I'm trying to remember who quote unquote won. I mean… I mean we still had a stable of people where we hadn't gone to a… you know we had a master brand, I think, or we were trying to get there with Bell Atlantic, ah, for all the right reasons. But it was not… that took a lot of time, and was a great deal of struggle getting to market, as I recall.

Interviewer: And your one to one relationships with the people that you worked with –

you said there was a lot of struggle – what was the tone of the meetings

like?

Interviewee: You know, its always this sort of controlled… um, though, to be… when I

think of a particular person I worked with, who was very volatile, and was

prone to screaming, but most of the time, if I was to talk about it as an

overall cultural thing, the Bell Atlantic culture was more of a… more stoic,

methodical, practiced… um… disciplined approach. Not a lot of emotion,

not a lot of, you know, and frankly the New York and New England team

were prone to a tad more emotional outbursts, and more passionate

articulation, with lots of hand motions, and when you got to the folks who

worked with Bell Atlantic, you didn't necessarily really get to that, you had

to sort of temper your sort of natural tendencies to flail about [laughs]. I

found them to be much more conservative in their approach.

Interviewer: And how do you think they perceived the people they were working with

from NYNEX? The Bell Atlantic people?

Interviewee: You know, I think that there was some appreciation for you know… coming

from a region of the world that had so many customers, and such a tough,

competitive environment, legislative environment, regulatory environment.

I mean, when they took on the bit of NYNEX, I think they sort of had an

eye opening experience of just how crazy it was to do business in this part

of the world. But I also think that they thought that we were a little boorish,

had a little bit of… you know… you get that swagger. You know the New

York/New England swagger that comes from having to make it, and be successful in such a competitive environment. And, uh, I think that they thought they could do it better. And so, it took them a while to understand that frankly, we were doing pretty well, but there were some best… certainly some best practices that came out of Bell Atlantic, that were overlaid nicely, frankly. And vice versa. And I think that was surprising to them.

Interviewer: How long do you think it took before you started to see integration?

Interviewee: Uh… I'm going to say [pauses] … probably six to twelve months. It took a little shorter than I think everyone...um, you know, I don't remember it being a lengthy process, I remember it being very rocky at the front end but then, frankly, there was so much going on, and so much that needed to be done, and the objectives were so… I mean, not like today, but they were pretty, you know the put some real goals on the table of things that needed to get done, and we were starting to launch long distance, and we had a lot of things that sort of galvanized people together. So, I recall that being… you know we had a common purpose, and once you give somebody a common purpose, it helps to break down a lot of gaps. And we travelled a lot, between and among to…to… you know to see people and I was in Philadelphia, and I would go down to Arlington, and there was a lot more, you know, freedom to travel, to meet people face to face, and to have these dialogues face to face, which I think helped a lot. For me, anyway. And we also had the common agency environment, so once you were in that

environment, it was sort of a neutral place, and you could actually start to

have a conversation like human beings, without territory, so…. I didn't

think it took that long for the Bell Atlantic piece.

Interviewer: How well did you think you worked together initially and then over time?

You kind of answered a little bit of this, but…

Interviewee: You know, my thought was, we actually, as I said, started of kind of bumpy.

I say very bumpy. Um, because nobody likes to be in a subordinate

position, and you also feel very defensive, and you have to like reestablish

who you are, and the experience you have and the value that you bring, was

just…

Interviewer: Why did you feel that you had to do that? Like what made you feel that

way? Was it the relationships, the way the conversations were going, or was

it just…?

Interviewee: You know, structurally the people, who were in positions of power, the

place and positions of power, were not from the… not who I would

normally have gone up through the chain on. So, whenever you have,

whether you change bosses or whatever, there is always an opportunity to

reprove the value that you bring. So it was just layered on top of that that

there was this whole other culture, you know, this uh… um… what was it

called? Winning Ways. Did anyone talk about Winning Ways?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: Winning Ways was uh, if I remember correctly was a Verizon… I mean

NYNEX thing where … it was shadow of a leader, it was how you are

supposed to lead in the world, and the Bell Atlantic Way was how they –

that group – that had been their motto. And even all the way down to how

we talked about our culture and how we were going to lead… it was just

trying to get used to each others jargon, and the way in which they did ….

You know, they were very, like I said, very methodical. Not very… very

dispassionate, and it was an uh… uh… odd thing, it was just a whole

different way or approach that I had not seen with New England or [laughs]

with New York. It was this whole other third way to approach the world.

Now, granted, they were much more data driven, which was probably a

good thing for us. Which is why I think there was earned respect quicker,

because they sort of let you know exactly what you needed to do, and when,

and what needed to be done, and how they were going to measure you. And

frankly, when they set up those kinds of boundaries, or clarity around what

it is you need to accomplish, you say, well at least they telling me what it is

I am going to be judged on. So, as I recall, it was a… it started out bumpy

but it get better quicker because we got… we were very focused on, you

know, achieving some real keen goals.

Interviewer: And you said it took six to twelve months before you started working

together. Would you say at the end of that six to twelve months you were

one team?

Interviewee: We were on our way. You know, I think there is always, you know, people

who… as a company we weren't quite there yet. Where I was in the

company, I think we moved along a little quicker, only because I think we

had the ability to have a mixed team, that we were able to fly and see one another, or take a train, and have meetings together. That we shared a common purpose. And some of the other folks, who were in say network engineering, or other places that remained very regionally focused, without that kind of interaction all they had was a boss, that said, they don't understand what I am doing. Or they come here once every four months, and I have only seen them once, what good are they? Right? I think from a corporation we didn't do all that well from the get go. I mean within six to twelve months. But from where I sat in the organization at that time, I think we made some good headway in a … what I would consider to be a decent… at a decent speed.

Interviewer: What happened when the merger with GTE happened? How did you feel about the employees of GTE? Was there any sort of conflict?

Interviewee: Well, you know, there are always regional bias' that come with it, and also we were at a point where we were the acquiring company, which is a different – a whole different – confidence level that you come to a merger with. Right? It really does matter. No matter… there is no such thing as a merger of equals. And uh, I totally agree with that. The folks that I worked with primarily were down in Texas. And my boss was in Texas, but I had a team, of which eight of them were in Texas, so I had, uh, at the time, um, I had to figure out who was, what were the skill sets that we had, and so, uh, I remember thinking that they are all rich, they all live well, because the quality of life. They had huge homes, country club memberships; everyone

drove a Mercedes or a really big SUV. I remember being amazed by the quality of their haircuts and the quality of their clothes. Everybody had, you know, was married; everybody had children nearly, or was very involved with their church. So I remember thinking, wow this is really, if you needed to test something this is probably not a bad place to go. But, I remember thinking this is not exactly how I have grown up. So, I remember thinking… okay, I have to stop thinking about big oil rigs and big hair, you know? And go and actually meet these people, you know, sort of face to face. And I was delighted, actually, with the quality of the people that I met there. You know there was a lot of graciousness. You know, they are all steel magnolias there, the women, they all have soft around the edges, and backbones of steel. I found that too, from the people with Bell Atlantic as well, that there was always that sense that um, in some cases anyway, that part of that more stoic attitude was always surrounded by graciousness. Um, I found that even more so down there. That they could smile really sweetly while they told you to go off yourself, you know. So, it was a different way. They're attitude, their culture, their upbringing. The region had an influence on that.

Interviewer: What about in the actual working relationships? Like the day-to-day working relationships.

Interviewee: I think there was a little trouble at the beginning because they… they needed to understand… they wanted to understand more… they were more keen on the relationship portion. And, uh, really wanted to share where they worked

and what they did. So, it was important to be present. And that was difficult

when you were working remotely. You know, particularly as the merger

took place. It was hard if you worked in New York or Boston, and you had

a team down in Texas, the relationship was really important. Far more

important than I think it was for the Bell Atlantic people. And I think part of

that was just the proximity. Everybody was all together, it was very family

oriented, the GTE family. They had little… you know when you think about

it, the company itself was pockets of places. So the collegiality, the focus on

a particular place was very important. And they didn't want to change that.

And they were used to having all their power concentrated in one big place.

And be the big cheese, so um, the relationship was more important… um…

they wanted to do their jobs certainly, and I think they were open to that but

I think there was a little hesitancy. You know, these big Easterners who

don't really understand anything, and they talk too fast, and move too fast,

and tell you what's going on, and I think we just had to sort of overcome

that. I think the thing that helped … um … was that at the time of the GTE

merger I was going through a pretty difficult family situation, and that the

first time that I met my team that I was working with down there, I just told

them the truth about what was going on. That my brother was very ill, and

that it was going to be difficult for me to be always available. And so, I

think they appreciated the fact that I was just upfront with them and I think

that a lot of the things that would have made my life miserable, they just felt

sorry for me, and they didn't make it as miserable as they could. And they

felt … I just think that they appreciated the human part of that. And I don't

normally, wouldn't normally bring that up to a team when you first meet

somebody, you know, but it was impacting how I was living my life at the

time, and my ability to be probably as accessible as I would have been

normally to fly all over. And… and so I think part of it is I didn't have a

real negative experience with the folks there. They wanted to have a

relationship, they expected one, they wanted to have clear objectives. They

needed even more reassurance of their capabilities. I found I needed to

praise more than I am probably used to in order to continue to have

extended amounts of that, and I found that was what I was getting from my

GTE original boss. That there was, at the time anyway, it wasn't that

business wasn't that important, but the relationship that you had with

people, that… I remember in … uh… it depended on the boss you had, but

it's also the culture you are in. And some people want to say so, how was

your weekend, how are your kids, how was the play, whatever you did,

right, and other people say I just want to know what it is you want here. So I

come in, say look, I've got three things for you, I need your approval on

this, I got this, I've got this, and don't really want to talk about your outside,

who you are and what you do outside of the business. I found that with

the… at least at the beginning of the GTE merger that was a very important

part of how we began to get along with each other, was their need to have

this relationship. At least that was my experience.

Interviewer: Do you feel that your relationships with your former people – co-workers –
changed when GTE came in?

Interviewee: Um… no, not so much. What I recall is that by that point in time we had sort
of coalesced into Bell Atlantic. It wasn't very long – we weren't long Bell
Atlantic – before the merger, but you know, it's sort of like a game, where
suddenly you guys are on the same team, now there is another team, so
you're on the team, we're on the team. Suddenly it even galvanizes you
even more to be part of that, so I don't believe it changed necessarily,
because we actually felt that we were on the position of power in that one,
and uh, I think we thought of it as a position of strength. That the
corporation was buying another company that was going to help us grow
again and be larger. We were thrilled about that actually. It was tough to be
just on the Eastern seaboard when we had been such a… you know part of
AT&T so many years ago, you were the whole thing, so we actually thought
it was a good thing. It was just trying to figure out how they all fit together.
But no, I didn't think it made any… well I guess it… no I don't think so. I
mean, I just think it galvanized us even more together as being the team.
And we had to do well with each other.

Interviewer: So, you thought you were a team before, and with the GTE merger the team
feeling just strengthened…

Interviewee: I would say yes. I mean suddenly it wasn't us and them – because it used to
be north and south – you know there was a lot of that going on. And then
suddenly there was no north and south, there was just East and West, you

know. So the north and south became not as important anymore. We became one again; we became the East again, all right? And then there was everything that was west – that was GTE. It was an interesting time, I think it didn't diminish us in any way, actually I think it actually strengthened us to get over that.

Interviewer: How well integrated do you think they are today? Between GTE and Bell Atlantic.

Interviewee: You know, I think we're still coming together, I think. You know, we never integrated our networks, which I think is a primary thing, at least from a local point. I mean I think we have done a better job of the international backbone, kind of business network, but the challenges of having very regional clumps of service, as opposed to state-wide service requires that you look at things a little bit differently. And just the investment. It'll be, I think, as FiOS becomes more widespread, everywhere, and share that common network as well as this other, copper, network. That we'll get to be more integrated on that side. 'Cause that's what really… you know… there are so many parts of our company. There's core and there's FiOS. And FiOS is really the marquis product. And if you're on the core side, it's almost as if you are less. If you are in an area of the East where you have mostly core, right, it just becomes another division, you know. And then … uh… uh… the people have done a good job, most of it, you know, on the national teams to integrate them. I think it's a little bit harder now, you know, because the GTE leadership, what was looking to be leaders of our

company. And I think that was a little surprising to people, and that started

to happen when the old East guard started to retire and move away and the

people came on were sort of the… they all fit that particular mold, of the

GTE way. And I think that's even now migrating into the wireless mold,

and they are taking more responsibility. I think it's more now a Verizon

Telecom/Verizon Wireless challenge of integration than we ever had with

the GTE/Bell Atlantic world [laughs].

Interviewer: And then, uh, based on your experience, is there anything you think the

leadership could have done differently to speed up or improve the

integration?

Interviewee: I don't know if there is anything more they could have done except what

always helps is when they put… when a company comes together, when

they put out some kind of a mandate. You know, when Kennedy said I want

to be on the moon, everyone galvanized to meet that goal. I think the same

thing kind of held true when they said, OK, we are going to launch long

distance, or we are going to launch FiOS, we are going to launch whatever,

if there could be some common goal, because people want to… they want

to be able to talk to you about something. And have a critical role. They

tried to communicate, and I give them credit for that, uh, sometimes it just

takes time. Everybody has to meet everybody. Everybody has to trust

everybody. Everybody has to realize everybody is not a pea brain, you

know, which is always the assumption is that I've been doing it this way

and it's been just fine. God, are they going to shift what is working to not

working, if they can. There is just that period of uncertainty and doubt then.

All you can do is communicate, communicate, and communicate. Let

people know. And they did try to do that, I would say, to plus and minus

degrees. Certain people are born communicators, and some people are not. I

mean I've watched [name omitted] go from a …frankly he was awful in the

beginning. He was my VP for external affairs, this was a few years ago, and

he was still pretty rough around the edges. He would look at the camera,

just kind of stoic. Now he's natural, it's just experience, age, time, the titles

he's had, and the number of years he's been here. But that wasn't always

the case. Not all of our leaders have been the most photogenic, or the most,

you know, eloquent but overall I think we've done a pretty good job. I don't

know what else I would have done differently.

Interviewer: Is there anything you would like to add that you can recall, that

I haven't covered, around the integration and the personal relationships –

and interpersonal relationships?

Interviewee: Uhh… you know it always comes down to, it… it… it just always comes

down to your relationship with another person, right? And then how they…

both as an employee and then as a boss and as a worker, right? And its one

person at a time… one event at a time. Uh, and we had, we were lucky in

many ways, or I was lucky, that most of the actual mergers occurred I had

the opportunity to put together the briefs to do the name change, which is a

very big deal, because it's an identity question, right? So there was a lot of

data gathering at the front end, you had to talk to people about what is it…

you know it was a name change and then it was how do you launch the

brand? Right? Whatever that new brand was. And the conversations you

had with people who were hanging on to things like... in the good news/bad

news story nobody liked the NYNEX name, so everybody was ready to

deep six it to go to Bell Atlantic. There was not a lot of angst over that. The

Bell Atlantic to Verizon thing, and the GTE to Verizon was deathly… that

was tough. And I think that also goes to the people because GTE struggled,

they didn't want to give that up at all. They didn't know from Verizon, they

didn't want it… it was their first merger, you know? For us, it was kind of

old hat, it was our third, you know? So there was less… it wasn't tolerance

its just that at the time you knew because of all of our experience with this

that we had to give them more time at GTE to be able to understand and to

move toward a unified Verizon. And so I think that is where the relationship

became so important, and an understanding. And I think that the people

who came from the Bell Atlantic side understood that, they didn't have the

experience we had, and so I think that it was some good learning on how

people react to losing their identify. And at Bell Atlantic, everyone knew

why it the name had to change totally, but there were some people,

particularly in the old Bell Atlantic, who pouted for many, many a day that

it was gone and that they weren't going to be that. They just liked it, they

liked the fact that they had James Earl Jones, and that he was well familiar

with… and this is Bell Atlantic. This is how he ended everything. They had

great pride in it. And how they… they didn't want to lose it. It wasn't so

much the integration part; it's just mergers by their nature are difficult times for people and loss. That you don't really understand what you have gained, all you can deal with is the loss. So you dealt with that. And I think Verizon, because we had dealt with it so many times on the East side that the last one was not as difficult, at least from an Eastern perspective. If you talk to people in the west, they might have a different story. But no, nothing else, really.

Interviewer: All right. Thank you.

Interview #9 Philadelphia

Interviewer: Okay, just for the record, you were with Bell Atlantic during the merger of

Bell Atlantic and NYNEX?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. During the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what were your

perceptions of the employees of the merging company?

Interviewee: We merged with a similar group. Umm… however, we didn't merge into

doing a lot of the same work, so there was a little bit of… it was a little bit

of a transition because our jobs changed. I mean the people were fine. I

wasn't very happy about the direction the work took.

Interviewer: In what way?

Interviewee: Well, we went from being a modeling group, to a group that did a lot of list

development for campaigns, and that really wasn't a strong interest of mine.

Nor do I think it was a strong interest of many of the people.

Interviewer: And why did that happen?

Interviewee: I guess somebody decided that would be a good fit.

Interviewer: So was it during the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger, the NYNEX folks had

more list functions and that sort of…

Interviewee: [interrupting] They seemed to be far more involved in what I'll call

marketing functions then we ever had been. Umm….and that made the …

uh…that made the transition not the most pleasant. Again, not from a

personality perspective, or any sort of cultural perspective, it was just a

work redirection that didn't sit well.

Interviewer: And the folks that were coming in from NYNEX, they were used to doing more list development? Or modeling?

Interviewee: They had been more involved in analysis of direct marketing campaigns. We basically didn't know that function existed.

Interviewer: Okay. And then when the two groups were put together, you said that the interpersonal relationships were fine, but the direction that the group went in, was that a function of Bell Atlantic direction or NYNEX direction? Who became, if you will, the winner in that merger between the two groups?

Interviewee: Well, we technically went under a director from Bell Atlantic, but a director whose function had been that. It was somebody we had never interacted with in the past.

Interviewer: Okay. And were there people that came in from the NYNEX group that had trouble fitting into the group?

Interviewee: Yep, we had to merge… we probably picked up six or seven people. Largely from New York, a couple from Boston – mostly New York.

Interviewer: And that interaction, during the incorporation of those people, there was … that went fine, smoothly…?

Interviewee: Very smoothly.

Interviewer: No cultural differences?

Interviewee: No… No.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Some of them remain my friend to this day [laughs].

Interviewer: Okay. How do you perceive your co-workers viewed the employees of the

merging company? So the folks coming out of NYNEX how do you think

they viewed Bell Atlantic people?

Interviewee: I think for the most part it was fine, I mean, it was a meeting of equals…

so… with the one exception being that they had a familiarity with the work

and we were coming into it and we didn't. Um, but other than that it was

extremely smooth transition. And I think a lot of that had to do… well, I'm

speaking as a person that has a, you know, a Philadelphia background, and

… uh… I kind of blended well with New York. You know, you might get a

different impression than someone who was in Maryland.

Interviewer: So you say you blended well with New York, was that more of a personality

thing than a work thing?

Interviewee: Yeah, it was a personality thing. It was very easy to align with them.

Interviewer: Do you think other people might have felt differently? Did you see any kind

of interpersonal differences between the groups depending on where people

were from?

Interviewee: Umm… it's just the majority of us were Philadelphia located, or New Jersey

located. See, there were a bunch of people in Newark. So to that, it was just

over the river. And the one person who was, I guess technically out of our

Arlington office, but he had worked very closely in the past with the

director who we went under, so I think that probably ameliorated some of

the potential problems that could have occurred.

Interviewer: Okay. So… you kind of answered this question, but how well did you work

together initially and then over time?

Interviewee: Oh, I think initially it was very, very good. Umm… a very, very good, quick

blend. And again, it got better over time. 'Cause we continued to work with

most of those people through the GTE merger.

Interviewer: So, when it got better over time, was that merely a function of people getting

used to each other, or was it that the two cultures were blending?

Interviewee: Oh, I think it was a combination of both of those things, I can't really say if

it was one versus the other. I think part of the thing that eased it was that we

got comfortable with the work itself, which we never really ended up loving

it, we still don't love it. In fact, if I loved that work I wouldn't be leaving.

Interviewer: Oh, I can imagine. Going from modeling to list development that would be a

big change. But, um, culturally did you see differences between the two

groups initially? And did you see that cultural difference change over time?

Or was it just that fact you were Philadelphia versus New York, there

wasn't that much of a difference?

Interviewee: Yeah, I didn't see that much of a difference. Umm… the uh… I'm trying

to… I am thinking back now [long pause] most of the people I had to deal

with out of New York were uh, rather easy to deal with.

Interviewer: Do you think that is at all a function of the companies themselves being a

Bell company or anything like that?

Interviewee: Um, not necessarily, because I know of other instances where things didn't

go well. But I think it just happened to be we were lucky.

Interviewer: Can you elaborate on the instances where things didn't go well?

Interviewee: Um… again, this is through the rumor mill, but there seemed to be an emphasis on 'its going to be done the New York way'. That didn't really enter into what we did. I've had enough conversations with people that did not gel well with the New York way. Essentially the function really sat there.

Interviewer: Okay. When the merger…

Interviewee: [interrupting] I applied for a job there. I don't know if this is going to be helpful, I did apply – not wanting the job I was being put into, I did apply for a job that found its way to New York – and actually two jobs – and did not get either job even though I knew that, frankly, I was better at those jobs than anybody who was being put in them.

Interviewer: And you think that was a function of the fact that you were Bell Atlantic vs. NYNEX?

Interviewee: I think it was … well… I don't think it was a Bell Atlantic thing, I think it was that they wanted the people involved in that function to be sitting in New York. You know, if they could have, if there was a possibility of – and there really wasn't – bringing people up to New York that would have changed. But I think certain functions – the decision was made that those functions would be physically located in New York. And I certainly wouldn't have gone there.

Interviewer: What about when the building, you know the headquarters, changed and it was no longer 1717 Arch Street and became 1095 was there any…?

Interviewee: [interrupting] Well, you know, technically it wasn't 1717 for a long time.

     Well, it had been for those of us who went through the '84 change, the

     headquarters was in Arlington.

Interviewer: Oh, Okay. I thought it was really here.

Interviewee: No. No, the headquarters was really Arlington. This building went up in '89,

     but from '84 to '89 Bell Atlantic was headquartered in Arlington. Even after

     this building was completed, I still believe that there was, technically, the

     headquarters' location Arlington.

Interviewer: Hmm. I thought it was here. Okay.

Interviewee: The only thing that changed here, you know, was that [name omitted] was

     located here, so when he became CEO, you kind of thought of Philadelphia

     as headquarters, but it really wasn't. But once New York came in, I mean,

     Arlington emptied out overnight. In 1997 was it? That was a quick change

     to New York.

Interviewer: People migrated up to New York. Did they typically move, or …

Interviewee: They physically moved, oh yeah. Physically moved. And that made our life

     easier, because my trip to New York, which I would have to take about

     every two weeks, was a lot easier than going to Washington.

Interviewer: What about when the merger with GTE happened? How did you feel about

     the employees of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Ummm… that one was a little bit more, uh, difficult. And, it had some built

     in problems, 'cause I believe – I think I have the sequence right – I think the

     merger technically occurred while we were on strike.

Interviewer: Or right before, yeah.

Interviewee: So, things were happening but we were doing strike duty so we didn't really know what was happening. We came back and found ourselves aligned with, you know, some groups in, uh... As an example, I am going to step back. I'm going to step back as something just occurred now. I mentioned that we were shifted into jobs that were not necessarily the best fit when we went with NYNEX. But we were also, at that point, arbitrarily assigned, I think, somewhat, to business units that didn't make sense to me. For example I was just declared I was going to take care of small business. I had that much [gestures indicating very little] familiarity with small business. I had hoped that at the end, going into the GTE merger, I had hoped that that could be revisited, but it never was. So I became small business. And… lets see… I think the problem with the GTE merger – the initial problem was there was nobody close by. You know… you know… you were reporting to people and dealing with people who… the chances of meeting them were pretty slim initially, so you probably were dealing with… you know… an unknown entity for quite a while. And… and again we were kind of assigned to various directors. In fact, our group was split a little bit, now that I think about it. The initial alignment with GTE found a number of us, who had always been together, being assigned to different directors for no… I didn't understand why, I think it was just a matter of, you know, each director had to have X number of people according to... so we were split apart. I didn't see any good rationale for that.

Interviewer: And were, when you were getting split apart, were they bringing people in from GTE and mixing up the groups?

Interviewee: Yeah, they were mixing up the groups. And… uh… I was largely assigned to a group that I uh, I didn't have too many compatriots [laughs] from Bell Atlantic with me. And then, it was also a change… not only was that a change, but there was a change in, I'll call it data responsibility. When we went to NYNEX, we were still doing some analysis and we were getting our data from programmers. That was not the way things were done at GTE. At GTE they got their own data. And they were very good mainframe and server programmers. That became a responsibility of ours then. Again, that was something I didn't want to do – still don't want to do but I've gotten really good at it [laughs].

Interviewer: And what about when the two people came in, the mainframe responsibilities came into your team, how did you act… how did you interact with each other?

Interviewee: We… it... it… was a good interaction, except they simply were setting all the standards. Umm… they used… you may or may not be familiar with SAS, they were SAS programmers. The only programming I had done of any consequence at that was in SPSS. They wanted no part of that; it was going to be SAS. So, I had to become a SAS programmer.

Interviewer: And when you were having those conversations, how was… what was the tonality of those conversation, like how did you…

Interviewee: [interrupting] Like it was a done deal [laughs].

Interviewer: That was the tonality?

Interviewee: Yeah it wasn't open for discussion. I mean, pleasant, but you're going to

learn SAS.

Interviewer: And was that a function of the director you got put under? Were they a GTE

director or a Bell Atlantic director?

Interviewee: We were all placed under GTE directors. And you know I'm trying to think,

a lot of them eventually left. Let's see…. [names omitted], well we ended

up under [name omitted]. Yeah it was largely GTE directors.

Interviewer: And when the team came together under those directors, how were the

interactions?

Interviewee: It was a little cold at first, but it got better, and now it's real good. But it

was… it was really a matter of… again, I think part of the problem was –

had to do with – we really didn't want to do that type of work. And uh, the

GTE counterparts couldn't imagine that we didn't want to do that kind of

work. But we had never done it and never had an interest in doing it, and

when I leave here in two weeks I will never do it again.

Interviewer: Okay. During the merger with GTE, did your perceptions, your feelings

about the employees of the former NYNEX change?

Interviewee: No…no. Well, actually, one of the things that occurred with our

organization is when we merged with GTE a lot of the NYNEX people we

had been dealing with for four years left.

Interviewer: Oh, Okay. Why did they leave?

Interviewee: I think it… at the director and above level, they were essentially told there was no job for you. At my level I think a number of them just decided that there was no future for them. You know, even if they hung around….

Interviewer: What would have made them feel that way?

Interviewee: One possibility was that their directors and above were leaving, they didn't have their defense to protect them.

Interviewer: Why would they have felt that way?

Interviewee: I… that I can't tell you. Because, again, I was dealing with a … um… NYNEX director who left, um, I don't think I got any bad vibe from her, but….

Interviewer: Was it a personal thing? Or was it the work was just going away and they decided to move on.

Interviewee: I think the… I think they recognized the fact that the work was moving to GTE. There wasn't going to be space for two directors doing exactly the same thing.

Interviewer: But at the manager level was there feeling there wasn't going to be room, or was that more of a function that my director was going to leave, so I'm leaving?

Interviewee: I think on their side, their director was leaving, so they were leaving.

Interviewer: Was there a sense there wouldn't be a job for them?

Interviewee: Possibly. Or, maybe not the job that they wanted.

Interviewer: But the actual relationship between the former Bell Atlantic and the former

GTE folks, um… during the GTE merger was there any change in the way

you interacted with each other?

Interviewee: No, I think initially it… the standard thing is we all came from Bell Atlantic,

and we were a bit…highly reliant on each other because we didn't know

what was going on with this GTE thing. I think we kept wondering if we

could get out of being programmers [laughs]. I mean, that eventually

changed…

Interviewer: And that was my next question. How well integrated do you think the

employees are today?

Interviewee: Oh, it's… its really good… it's a good team.

Interviewer: How long did it take to get there?

Interviewee: I think there probably was some some discomfort for at least the first year.

And… uh… eventually things turned around. I'm going to say a lot of it had

to do with the GTE people we dealt with were just genuinely nice. I mean,

again, there was a rather large exodus of those people. And it wasn't just the

NYNEX people leaving. Within that first year, my director, who was a GTE

director, left. Actually, the VP left. Then [name omitted] left, and when

[name omitted] he took with him a bunch of, um, managers. It was a big

exodus. And they just walked across the street and went to work for Sprint I

believe. Literally across the street. The buildings are right next to each

other, like here with Comcast. And, uh, you know at that point, things

seemed to get better, so obviously there were some people who weren't

happy on the GTE side either. They left… I think they left when they

realized that they weren't going to quite get their way with some of the

plans. I'd say it was roughly a good year – I'm not going to call it dissention

– it was just a breaking in period. Much... much… a significantly longer

breaking in period than with NYNEX.

Interviewer: Now, when you say a year for the dissention or breaking in period how did

you see that … what was occurring over the course of that year? Was it

meetings, emails, discussions, conference calls? Where were you seeing

that interaction?

Interviewee: I have to think on this one [long pause]. I think the problem was that there

were expectations of us, maybe rightfully so, that weren't being met,

because I don't think the GTE people realized how long the breaking... the

learning of SAS, and the learning of all of the systems that we had to

become familiar with would take. They… you had people there who had

been doing that work for twenty years. And, um, they could very well have

forgotten that it's not learned in a day. So there may have been some

impatience on their part that we weren't holding up our end. And they may

have been right.

Interviewer: And why would they have been right? Was it just a learning curve?

Interviewee: Yes, the learning curve was a lot steeper than they figured, but that doesn't

help when you have to get the work out the door. Um… as I said, we got

past it. And now we're SAS programmers. Not something I ever expected,

but… nothing I am even particularly proud of…

Interviewer: Well, you can put it on your resume.

Interviewee: Yeah [laughs].

Interviewer: Now, my last question based your experience, was there anything you think the leadership of the company could have done, or the organization could have done to improve or speed up the integration?

Interviewee: [Pause] I don't know. That's one… I'd really have to think on that. It's too long ago now, its seven years.

Interviewer: Okay. Anything else that you can think of to add about… specifically around interpersonal relationships… when Bell Atlantic and NYNEX merged, or subsequently between Bell Atlantic and GTE?

Interviewee: No, now I just feel that it's basically all one company, but… there is a transition going on now that I don't know if this transition is being handled particularly well.

Interviewer: What particular transition?

Interviewee: I mean we are losing a lot of people now, including me… I mean I am going by choice, but there are a bunch of us who aren't going by choice. But, as of today, we still don't have a director. [Name omitted] is not our director. And I … for those who are remaining that's a little bit of a… it's a bone of contention. And I can understand that. I… it's not even clear where they are going to fit. There are so many rumors. I… I think that could be handled better. For the people who are leaving, there is not a good feeling of their chances of surviving the next RIF. I mean they have got down to a point that it's so thin that it's just numbers. And I think they have gotten to a

point where there isn't anyone going to be raising their hand anymore, so

somebody's got to go. I don't think that is a comfortable position to be in.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you.

Interviewee: Okey Doke.

Interview #10 Philadelphia

Interviewer: Okay, just for the record, you were with Bell Atlantic prior to the Bell

Atlantic merger, correct?

Interviewee: Yes, I was.

Interviewer: So, during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what were your

perceptions of the employees of the merging company, in this case

NYNEX?

Interviewee: Okay, um, my perceptions of NYNEX were not all together positive. I, um,

we knew from a brand perspective that that NYNEX brand had been

destroyed by the poor service [laughs] that they were providing up in New

York. Um, and although it was called a merger of two equals, we've always

felt that Bell Atlantic bought them. Um, when we were thinking about the

name for the new company, it was pretty simple because there was so much

negative association with NYNEX. Um, so it was a hands down decision to

go with the name of Bell Atlantic, or our company, and extend that into

their footprint. And similarly, on the mobile side, which had already been

done, they became Bell Atlantic Mobile. And that happened prior to the

landline business. Um, we found, I think we were operating from a base of

stereotypes about New Yorkers, so they were rude, they were pushy, they

were arrogant, they thought they had all the answers and they knew

everything, and there was nothing that anybody – and our corporate

headquarters had been operating from Arlington, VA – there was nothing

that anyone from Arlington was going to tell them about how to do anything.

Interviewer: So that was your stereotype or that was actually what you were experiencing?

Interviewee: It was my stereotype and a lot of my experiences unfortunately proved that out. Um, and they also were very narcissistic in their thinking because they sort of though New York was all there was and all there is. Um, and like Philadelphia became a… relegated to… is that a city, kind of, oh we actually have people there? Where prior to the Bell Atlantic headquarters being in Arlington it was actually in Philadelphia and a lot of the top leadership of Bell Atlantic came out of Pennsylvania and out of Philadelphia, up to and including [name omitted]. Um, and a lot of the top folks. So… but they thought if you weren't in New York and you weren't from New York that you could add no value, and they kind of extended that thinking to employees as well as partners, like agencies.

Interviewer: What about… like how integrated were the two groups in your experience during the merger – the group you were in?

Interviewee: At that time we were doing large business marketing communications, and we were uh… let see, that would have been, I think it was 1997 that we merged with NYNEX, and at that point we had a very nice little team here located in Pennsylvania that supported our large business group. And we were doing integrated MarCom, I mean it was before integration, 360 marketing and all of that got really hot, and it was right in the – my team

hates when I say this – in the early days of the internet, so we had ba.com, you know Bell Atlantic dot com, which we very quickly sold for a nice premium to British Airways. And so we went with bellatlantic.com. Um, and we were doing work for the large business group that included public relations, so we worked with Hill and Knowlton to do press releases, we did collateral, we did videos, uh, sales tools, direct mail, print ads, all of that but targeted at the corporate end of the business. Um, when we merged with NYNEX, we were folded into a centralized MarCom team, and that was the first time – that had [unintelligible] than Bell Atlantic but it was pretty separate. There was someone in charge of large biz, and someone in charge of consumer, and each of those organizations had their own, um, MarCom staff, which [name omitted] was over in consumer and, um, we didn't interact with them much. As we were merging with NYNEX we took that opportunity because the NYNEX model was a single MarCom team to support all the business units, we went with that.

Interviewer: And did that cause problems?

Interviewee: I don't think so. None that stand out in my memory. Um, I think because we saw we were bringing to the table the large biz perspective. There was more conflict for the people on [name omitted] former team that were doing consumer marketing – consumer MarCom – with the former NYNEX people. They – we were sort of in a space out to the side, they weren't really doing anything to support biz they way we were. So, we didn't really feel

that, that same kind of um, conflict that we saw happening on the consumer side.

Interviewer: And how do you think they… how did your co-workers perceived the employees of the merging companies. So in other words, the NYNEX employees, how do you perceive the NYNEX employees perceived Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: I think they thought we were a little bit of bump… like we were country bumpkins. Again, from that New York perspective. Um, they… they thought that because we weren't in New York, and we weren't them, that everything we did was not considered a best practice, and that was pretty consistent that we had to really more than earn our way to the table with an opinion or a thought or and idea. Um the leadership of the team was [name omitted] and so, at the time, she was also very New York, [names omitted] were very New York-centric and NYNEX-centric in their thinking, so that shadow cast down and therefore a lot of those directors and managers at the worker bee level kind of had the same approach to things. The difference was over top of [name omitted] was [name omitted] who came from Bell Atlantic, so you have this weird dynamic of the two of them going at it. And him from Bell Atlantic and her from NYNEX, him knowing that down in the trenches a bunch of his people were not being heard, recognized, valued, any of that. So, I think he kept us in the game to the extent that he could.

Interviewer: So, how well did you work together when you were merged together? How well did you work together initially and then over time?

Interviewee: I think it's always hard initially because you're trying to get to know the other organization and you're trying to get to know the people. And that was the first really big merger we went through as a company, so we didn't really have any experience at how to do a merger either. Um, which made it harder and when you build transition teams what do you do? How do you prioritize, how do you bring things together, how do you take an inventory of current practices to determine what best practices are. None of us had really ever done that before. And so, we just sort of jumped in and started. We had a pretty sharp boss at the time, [name omitted] was our boss – our director – and he was very brilliant and um, I'm trying to think, we were using Draft and Saatchi even then. You didn't start with us until after the merger, right?

Interviewer: I was at Draft.

Interviewee: I think we were using them even before that. I forget. Oh, you know when we had some smaller, local agencies. Um, it was hard at first, but you know, you pick a place and you start and then – and even through the transition you start to do the team building. And you start to have conversations, and so, little by little we got to know them, and they got to know us, we weren't so stupid, they weren't so arrogant. And so, we knew there was no option but to move forward together, so we did.

Interviewer: What was the tonality of the early interactions? So, you know, when you first started to come together was their conflict? Was there…

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Interviewee: [interrupting] Oh, there was conflict. But [name omitted] was very amiable,

um, in his interactions, but there were definitely some heated debates and

I'm trying to think of some of the people that were in them. Um, I can't

remember as much the NYNEX ones, as I do with the GTE, but even, the

first time I ran across [name omitted] I remember her from way back then.

And [name omitted] would get really frustrated because they would just…

he was a very smart guy, and they wanted to minimize anything he said,

anything our team said, and they… they would talk right over top of you.

Like, at Bell Atlantic we had this whole culture called the Bell Atlantic

way. And it was a cultural transformation that was ahead of its time, and it

had some basic premises of innovative thinking, out of the box thinking,

and thinking outside the nine dots, and shadow of the leader, and about

empowerment. At NYNEX they couldn't make a decision to save their life.

Only the people at the top could make a decision. And anything you wanted

to get done, I have to check with my boss. Even the directors would say

that. So it was very slow, because we were very empowered and we were

used to, hey, I'm here, I'm authorized to make a decision. Um, they didn't

have anything like the Bell Atlantic way up there, and therefore we had

tools for developing teaming relationships, we had team agreements, we

had some things that had been using in our corporate culture for a few years

and they had nothing like that. So there was a lot of conflict. Um, so you

didn't have any choice other than to storm out of the room, go to your

separate corners, calm down and come back again for the next day and try and figure out where to go from there.

Interviewer: Okay. When the merger with GTE happened, how did you feel about the employees of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic? Was there any sort of conflict?

Interviewee: Yes. And that one happened a couple of years later, and I think [name omitted] said it best when he said the best thing that ever happened to the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger was the merger of GTE, was the acquisition of GTE, because it united us against a common enemy. And all of a sudden we shifted from 'we' being a Bell Atlantic definition to 'we' being a Bell Atlantic plus NYNEX. And 'they' were not NYNEX anymore, 'they' were GTE. And, uh, we were confused and puzzled by them, because we had lived for years under the umbrella of best cost, um, and we had that in Bell Atlantic, it was something – but NYNEX was also there for different reasons, where spending had been cut, um, we had not had nice things – office supplies, tissue, coffee in the break rooms, water, um, what used to be considered staples of an employees environment, um, for years. And we merged with GTE and we went to a place that had water fountains that were turned on. Big, beautiful leather chairs for managers. Um, really over the top branded giveaways, and money just thrown around and given to the employees which was wonderful, but we just sort of laughed at them and said you have no idea what is in store for you, hang onto that chair, because it will be the last one like that you will ever get. And we thought that they

were very spoiled and wasteful, um, and we knew that they didn't know…
we knew that we knew how to stretch a dollar. And it didn't seem like they
really had had much hardship. The markets they had were nowhere near as
competitive as the Northeast market, um, the footprint wasn't as big. Um,
they didn't have… we tended to have older, more experienced people, they
had younger people. But they had moved their corporate headquarters down
to Dallas a couple of years prior from Connecticut. Everybody was in one
place, which was a joke to us because we had been used to – both in Bell
Atlantic and then for NYNEX, we spread to them some advanced business
practices at the time which included job sharing and work at home. And
when we merged with GTE, everybody was in one or two buildings in the
same location and no one worked at home, nobody job shared. Most people
were young, most people were newer to the company, um, their footprints
were very dispersed. But the corporate headquarters, there was only one,
and we had not only – we had more concentrated footprint, but also several
dispersed, big large locations.

Interviewer: And what about the actual personal interaction in terms of your day to day
job?

Interviewee: Now we are to where you remember, too. Um, it got complicated because at
the top there was not one leader that was picked, unlike the previous merger
where a leader was designated early on. And this is just my recollection, so
I could be wrong, but we knew [name omitted] was going to be in charge.
And I think it was either [name omitted] or [name omitted], that the two of

them were up for the job, but [name omitted] was picked early on. So it

gave us clear direction. When we acquired, or merged with GTE, it was her

and [name omitted] that were both vying for the same job. And you didn't

know who was going to end up with it. And I think there was some back

and forth. They were still trying to fit people into the senior level seats too.

So, more happened I would say simultaneously after with the GTE merger.

We were just coming off of the merger with NYNEX, so I think we maybe

learned some lessons and tough, oh, we know how to do this. So rather than

tops down it, serial process it, we parallel processed many things to try to

get to the end result that much faster. Um, the day to day interactions, it was

funny because we… even though we were one company, Bell Atlantic, we

still had those sub personalities. We had the Bell Atlantic the original 'Dr.

Pepper' region as I called it, the original Bell Atlantic, we didn't want to be

categorized like those NYNEX people were. We still – for all intents and

purposes – still thought of them as being different than us, and they thought

of us as being different. They said that we would smile at your face and

backstab you in the back. And we just said they were rude, and in your face

about everything. There was probably some truth to both of those

stereotypes. When we met the GTE people they seemed… a lot of them had

sort of a Texas sort of drawl and you could see where a cultural thing like

that, when a lot of the interactions were taking place on the phone because

of being Texas and then the Northeast. We had time zone differences and

you had some of those cultural differences, because they spoke more slowly

it sort of led to the perception that they thought more slowly and that they weren't that sharp. That they a little dumb… that's not the right word but not as sophisticated. We thought we were much more sophisticated in our thinking and in the practices we had. Um, and I think the unfortunate thing about that is there were some very sharp people there. And had the merger taken place in a different direction. And in a different order – Bell Atlantic with GTE and then with NYNEX, I think it would have been very interesting to see how things came about because at the end of the day when we really looked, we felt like in a way the GTE people we could identify with a little bit more. Because they weren't so abrasive and in your face as the New Yorkers were. On the other hand, we even thought of them, that they would say one thing to your face, and they also were not very empowered. So, you know, they were as bad or worse as NYNEX in terms of 'I gotta get my bosses approval to do this'. And it was very hierarchical, and the single location of the headquarters lent itself to that because they all sat on floors and the boss was in the corner office. And none of us from Bell Atlantic had worked in that environment for… probably a decade. So we were used to bosses in remote places and not being… you know a work group that was just you and who knew where the rest of the people were. So they seemed kind of old fashioned to us.

Interviewer: Okay… during the… um, and after the merger with GTE did your perceptions or feelings about the employees of the former NYNEX change?

Interviewee: Yes. Because I had more in common with them. And, um, we would then

commiserate. The guy in charge of GTE was this like renegade cowboy

guy, he wore cowboy boots and he was really tall and thin. And then our

chairman was kind of small, and to see them… and our chairman was very

polished, and kind of soft spoken, but smart, worked his way up in the

company, and just thoughtful in everything that he said. Whether you

agreed with him or not, he was thoughtful in the things that he said and he

did. And he was not our Bell Atlantic person. Our Bell Atlantic person had

been gone from the mix for about a year, and we all thought we hated him

but in the end we really loved him. And he was only around for a year of

the transition, and then he sort of ceded the torch to the young guy. Now it

was this young guy up against this cowboy guy, who no sooner seemed to

give any thought to what came out of his mouth because usually his foot

went into it, and that foot was wearing cowboy boots. And that was just too

typical for us. It sort of said we are smart and thoughtful, and they shoot

from the hip and ask questions later. Does that… I forget what the question

was?

Interviewer: During the merger with GTE, did your perceptions for feelings about the

employees of the former NYNEX change?

Interviewee: So, from the word go that was the guy that we saw as the leader of them. So

you tended to, it created a perception right away that that was what they

were all going to be like. And, of course that wasn't the case. Some were

like that, some weren't, but I think because, as they started to fill in the

names of the top senior people, and as they said one of them, one of us, but

some of us now had to be some Bell Atlantic, some NYNEX people, so it

was an interesting juggling plan, and you would count up how many people

from the original Bell Atlantic were in senior positions, how many people

form NYNEX, how many from GTE. Our senior team didn't really do that.

They sort of said original Bell Atlantic… Bell Atlantic and GTE. We felt

like they got more seats at the table than they should have because we

acquired them. They were demoralized because they didn't think, they

thought they were smarter, and more on the ball, that they had better results.

If you look just at the face of their results, what had happened, [name

omitted] and I disagree on this, but they were not in the competitive intense

areas. They were in the outlying and little pockets not even all of LA but

little pieces of LA, pieces of Oregon, pieces of Washington, parts of Tampa,

parts but not all of Dallas. Um, parts of the Midwest, where we had Virginia

to Maine pretty much uninterrupted and for all intents and purposes the free

market capitals of the world in New York, Boston, Philly and D.C. and

we'd been there forever. And they were more… GTE grew out of

acquisitions and cobbled together a little hodge podge that was in no way as

big as we were. So.

Interviewer: How well integrated do you think the employees are today?

Interviewee: I think enough has happened since then… what year was that?

Interviewer: 2000… yeah 2000.

Interviewee: At this point – eight years later – um, I think enough has happened to us,

where we have been through so much together that you think less about

that. I have to admit, though, that there are times when it still creeps into my

mind. Um, when you look at someone's phone number and you see 972 or

214 you know that's Texas. Um, so it does creep in but its been a hard time

to be in the business from 2000 to 2008. We've taken our knocks. I think

it's harder on them because as time went by many more of those senior

GTE people have been pulled out of the mix. And I don't think… there is

very, very few of them left … could be one hand, couple of fingers, that are

left and that's it. Um… so…. and I think the only… the other thing that

changed that dynamic was [Verizon CEO] mandating, and the whole

situation which was Basking Ridge. Because short of anyone living in

northern New Jersey, everyone universally hates that decision. And hates

the reality of what that has meant to us for our careers. Um, that kind of

gives us a bond. But other than that, I can't say that I really think about it.

We've had some discussion, you know, especially with [name omitted] and

[name omitted] about what I used to think of them. What I have come to

appreciate is that they are much smarter in general than I thought that they

were at the beginning. Um, and they had done a better job of hiring from the

outside. I think their growth – they still were growing – and the growth gave

them – and the relocation of the corporate headquarters – gave them an

opportunity to bring youth and some fresh blood and some fresh

perspective, and some people from other industries, and people from just

other places came into the business. Where here in the Northeast, and Bell

Atlantic and NYNEX, we have a lot of people like me who have grown up

in the business. And I'd like to think I've kept my skills fresh and have

done enough different things that I don't necessarily think like a lifer, but at

the end of the day I am, I came here when I was twenty-one and I am still

here, so I think to their credit, they had done a better job of bringing in more

people who had other kinds of experience. And we had been… we had been

best cost trimming people for such a long time that we had very little fresh

blood.

Interviewer: So, based on your experience, is there anything you think the leadership of

the organization could have done differently to improve or speed up the

integration?

Interviewee: I think that the key thing is to, um, rip the band aid off. I think, um, and

make it happen as quickly as possible. I think it happened faster with the

merger with GTE than it did the merger of NYNEX. Um, I think that idea

of parallel processing is the right way to go. I think the idea of putting key

leaders, almost like co-leader, one from them one from us, and forming the

organization that way, you don't leave anyone out the way we felt left out in

the merger with NYNEX. So with [name omitted] being there gave the GTE

people a person to look to and a person to go to with ideas and suggestions,

and a familiarity with the GTE way of doing things. [Name omitted] had

that from Bell Atlantic. But when we merged with NYNEX we had no

advocate, I mean we had [name omitted] that was above [name omitted] but

there was no way we were getting to him. It was a very limited as to who was going to have access to him past her. And so by having those co-leaders, I think you do a better job of flushing out – there are always going to be best practices on both sides, and without that your tendency is go with what is safe, what is expected, what is known I think is greater. So, on the other hand, there comes a point when you have to pick your leader, and you also find leaders that are comfortable in embracing the unknown. And if the mandate for the organization is that this is a hybrid team, and it will include people from both teams, you need to make sure you staff accordingly. I think, you know, we did do that. Um, over time, we've lost a lot of GTE people. Again, they were younger, they are in geographically – many of them have roots now in that Dallas area, that is not consistent with the future of the company. And with advancing of a career here, which includes a trip to Basking Ridge. Um, however, GTE moved people all over the country. Like anyone who grew up in GTE, they were much like what I always thought of as IBMers, or people from Scott Paper, they never stayed any place very long, their families always moved. Um, and at Bell Atlantic we didn't have that sort of culture. So, I think having co-leaders, one from each team, um, making sure to flush out best practices, using that co-leader structure, then pick your leader, and then quickly have the team selected would be the things that I would say. I… I… I can't say that there is anything that we did wrong. It's harder when you are in different geographies, but the team building comes from spending time together. And

when you are geographically dispersed that can be more difficult. And

when you feel like you don't like each other that can be difficult but its all

part of the process.

Interviewer: Anything else, just remembering back, about the interpersonal relationships

that you can recall either through Bell Atlantic and NYNEX or Bell Atlantic

and GTE that I haven't covered?

Interviewee: I would say in a nutshell more than anything else, and maybe this flies in the

face of research or what other people are saying, it's less about the culture

of the organization, and more about finding the right leaders. Plural. You

can't have just one, 'cause it's a big job and not just one person can do this.

So, you need like a group of leaders that are committed to making it

happen. Um, and to seeing change. Not living in the past when they were

their own entity, but moving forward and doing that together.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you.

Interview #12 Philadelphia

Interviewer: Okay, just for the record, I assume you were with Bell Atlantic when the

merger with NYNEX and Bell Atlantic occurred?

Interviewee: That is correct.

Interviewer: Okay, so during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what were your

perceptions of the employees of the merging company? In other words,

what were your perceptions of the NYNEX employees?

Interviewee: I didn't have any preconceived perceptions, um, there were some issues

where we had pennsyl…I should say the Bell Atlantic territory was always

used to much longer hours, working longer days, coming in very early,

working late, um, with huge workloads. That was just the culture here. The

first time I became aware that there was a total difference between the

NYNEX – and I don't mean the NYNEX New England, mainly NYNEX

New York – was when our people went up, like our executive directors

went up and were stationed in New York, and they scheduled a meeting,

saying you have a meeting at – one executive director for example –

scheduled a meeting at seven o'clock in the morning and said you will all

be here, and they said oh, we don't start before eight thirty. So that was like

– okay – and then another one scheduled a meeting at like five thirty, and

that was just norm here, and they said, oh no, we are gone long before that,

we don't stay in the city. And it was like … you could – the tension was

there because our directors and our people were used to working those

hours, but it was very different there, they were different mentality,

different values I guess you could say. That, I think, is the first time you

because aware that there really was a difference in the culture from up there,

which was a shock, because I thought New York – the intensity – would be

much different but it was more down here because our people were used to

that environment, working hard, working on long hours, taking on excessive

work load, it was just the nature of the business. But we didn't see that

when we merged with NYNEX. They were more, uh, they do this function

and they do that function, you would go to one person to do three different

things where we were doing it all. So that was a difference in that culture

the way we were going. You could see the change in the culture when you

see the way the leadership is assigned. When you look at, for example, they

might give at the operations, or the people who are the financials, if you

have, like if you have Bell Atlantic and NYNEX – I think at the time the

finance was assigned from the Bell Atlantic, HR was assigned from the

NYNEX, so you could sit back and see who was going to be in the power

seats by who they assigned in the leadership.

Interviewer: And at that time were you in HR?

Interviewee: I was in HR and I could just see the difference in the chain, in how things

were. If it was our – if Bell Atlantic was in charge of finance and the

operations environment you could see it was more the former Bell Atlantic

mentality and the culture. If you were in the NYNEX, where you had your

vice… your presidency of HR or communications or, um, public relations,

and it was the former NYNEX territory, it took on that culture. And that

was very… it was an obvious culture change. You could see that. But for

most of the part it was just a … that we didn't blend right at first because it

wasn't…there wasn't a whole lot of preparation, we just merged and your

all mushed together and it was very difficult trying to get used to that

environment. Even though our business was the same.

Interviewer: So you were a Bell Atlantic person who was reporting up into NYNEX

leadership now.

Interviewee: That's correct.

Interviewer: And I am sure that there were managers that were on the NYNEX team?

Interviewee: That's correct.

Interviewer: Okay, so how did you interact with those managers, like what was the

tonality of the interaction…?

Interviewee: In my function, because I had finance at the time – finance, treasury and the

operating telephone companies. The operating telephone companies I gave

up because I picked up the New England and New York territory because

my counterparts left the business. It was very different than dealing with the

environment down here, which was one in which you got what you needed

right away, they knew what your function was, and they understood it, and

they, um, more that happy to meet our needs as an HR person. When you go

to the New England and New York leadership, yeah, I'll get to it when I

can. It wasn't that sense of urgency. Whether it was the sense of urgency

was different with them, or they didn't have the respect for HR, that I don't

know. But it was very difficult trying to get the information. Especially

when the leadership is maybe a former Bell Atlantic person you didn't get

the sense they were cooperating as much as they could have. But we don't

know what was going on there on their side. But you could feel the tension

and the environment. It took a long time before you felt that blend. And

they came around they said, hey, I'm not here to tell you your doing

something wrong, I just need the information. I need to get back to them.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: But you could feel it, I mean that happens with any merger, but it blended

out, it was an easier transition cause we eventually got to where we needed

to go. It took time.

Interviewer: And what were … what are your perception to how the NYNEX people

perceived the Bell Atlantic people?

Interviewee: I don't know how they perceived. I know that I think they assumed we were

taking over because we got the name, we did the Bell Atlantic name, so that

was… I don't think we took over, at least from my perception. Um, you

could see where we started looking at different policies and procedures

trying to take the best of both. It was difficult – and we had the same thing

when Bell Atlantic merged with all the states. Their policies were one way,

our policies were different, and they were still working on – if you as

manager or director you had people all over and you had to think, okay,

New England has this policy this is what you have to go by, New York has

this, and then down here you have a different one. So, provided that gets in

the leadership view point it had to be difficult to manage, because

depending on, even as an HR person you say, okay, the policy in New England says this, and were still living with that and in New York it's another one, but here we do this, it was difficult because you had to – they weren't merged – it was very uncomfortable. I don't know how they perceived us. I think they perceived us as aggressive and taking over and it could have been a little bit of that.

Interviewer: How does that manifest itself in the day to day interaction? Could you see that?

Interviewee: I couldn't see it so much because I always try, when I approach the people it isn't like give me this, give me that. I'm trying to do this, I'm trying to do that, and use that bridge so they understood we are all in this together. Its really not us against you, or you against us, we're all in this together, and all we are trying to do is just get the work done and move forward. But I never heard anyone who actually complained to me that you are taking over, I think it was more or less the sense, you got the feeling when you heard things, they were more or less rumors going on.

Interviewer: Did you see any difference in… like the difference in the treatment of NYNEX co-workers to NYNEX co-workers vs. NYNEX co-workers to Bell Atlantic, or Bell Atlantic to Bell Atlantic vs. Bell Atlantic to NYNEX?

Interviewee: I think I saw more of it as the people started to blend. Like we had – I don't know too many about people who moved to New York, we had some people who moved to New York and uh, took over some of the leadership roles, but I saw when people moved from New York to down here, they had

a different uh… they didn't understand our policies and procedures, and that was difficult. The people who worked for them, I think there was that tension because they didn't know the person, they knew nothing about them, the policies and procedures were different, and many times it was like, you are not doing it right. And that is not always the case; you have to understand some history. I mean history is a lot of reason why we do things. And eventually, you know, maybe we can eliminate some things, but you got to do a whole lot a head of time, before you just assume it's wrong. And they had to really – I think even from the NYNEX people coming down it was difficult trying to get used to the environment. I believe they were probably used to some of it from the NYNEX territory, but there is also a lot of history down here that you have to be comfortable with and understand because every region is different. Ours is the PUC, it regulates what we do if you are an associate environment. Our union contracts also create a culture that you have to get used to and even if you're in New York, and you deal with the union, and you come down here its entirely different. So you feel that a little bit. And it takes a while for that transition. I think it's probably more difficult because you're used to one environment.

Interviewer: Okay. And how well do you think you worked together initially, and then how did it change over time?

Interviewee: I think initially it was uncomfortable for me with my peers in New York. Because in some cases these people had elected to take the buyout that NYNEX had, and nobody told me that they were leaving. Because they

would take the buyout but they didn't leave for months later. So we're

going and all of a sudden you find out – I am trying to learn the policies and

procedures to help them and they were really nice people, I didn't have a

problem with them, then I find out on a Friday, well you know I am leaving

next week. It was like ooohhhh [facial gesture of shock]. And you want me

to take this over? I don't understand it yet. Because the policies, I was doing

Bell Atlantic policies and process, NYNEX had a different policy and

process, and you had to keep in your mind, based on where it is, which

policy or process you used in order just to make a simple payroll change.

That communication wasn't given to us upfront. And I was happy for the

individual, but I was like oh, my God. But they were really great to work

with. They understood we were in the same boat. Nobody liked how we had

to work; we just had to deal with it. The other person was actually director

level, doing the same type of work, and he was retiring as well, and he was

one I weighed heavily on because he knew everything, and I knew I could

go to him and say, okay, help me understand, tell me what I need to do, I'll

do it. Not a problem. Tell me where to go. And when he announced he was

finally taking the offer, probably had decided months ago, I only had like a

week with him to get up to speed. And I'm saying oh, my God, now I have

to do all of it, New England, New York plus ours and every policy was

different. And I was glad for them; I wish I had known sooner because it

would have given me more opportunity to learn everything I could from

them. I got rained on, so to speak. But they were great people to work with,

they were really nice in my own organization, I can't complain, and they

had a great opportunity to leave with a wonderful package.

Interviewer: So, over time, as people faded off with the package, did you see the

relationship between the Bell Atlantic and NYNEX people changing at all?

Interviewee: I saw it changing as the policies and procedures started to become one.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Because it was easier to manage, easier to deal with people. I think, um, as

some of the people who were familiar … you start to blend the

organizations, then you could see the difference. I mean, it wasn't

necessarily whose right and whose wrong, had the best process and practice

to get it done. And then once they started blending, you didn't feel that

tension as much. You could see it took too long to merger the groups, and

that's because it's difficult to take organizations this large and combine

them into one and assume that policies and procedures are the same and you

can just mesh them together. They're working at the bigger things, and the

smaller things, just simple things like your vacation, your days off, how do I

do this, and how do I do that. Even payroll, that was so different, that was

the biggest issue because it was so complicated to transfer a person from

one end to another and remember all the steps. And you didn't want

anything to go wrong with someone's paycheck. After the started merging

things together and you knew what was going on, it got easier over time. It

could have been done a lot faster, they could have done maybe something

more on the culture, rather than having their culture, which I think was

Winning Ways and ours was… [pauses] Bell Atlantic Way. They were very

similar, but they should have blended them together a lot faster. And I know

they had bigger issues to resolve than to worry about that, but you could see

it – it actually got to the point before our latest merger, I don't think we had

an issue whether it was NYNEX or whatever, we were all the same.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Because the work was the same. And we did make some improvements in

that. That makes the biggest difference.

Interviewer: Yep, I agree. So when the merger with GTE happened, how did you feel

about the employees of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic?

Was there any sort of conflict?

Interviewee: I didn't deal too much with the people from the GTE side because I had

region operations and they were kind of separate. My first contact with

them was when I left the staffing group and went into being…back to being

an HR business partner. I was taking region ops [operations] Pennsylvania,

Delaware, West Virginia and Maryland, the upper part of Maryland. My

executive director was from Texas and I had applied for the job because I

just couldn't take staffing anymore, I wanted to go back into my normal

role. And I waited forever, and then finally the manager called me, uh, it

was a former Bell Atlantic and offered me the job and I said absolutely. She

told me later that the reason it had held so long was that the executive

director from Texas didn't want somebody from Bell Atlantic. And I

automatically developed this attitude then, and saying you know, he doesn't

have to like me so I am not going to try and impress him because you know

what? I am what I am. So when he asked for something I would give him

the answer and move on. I didn't worry about it. And I found out later he

wanted someone who was in like the Hershey area, the Harrisburg area that

was in his group to take the job, but she didn't have the background. As I

started dealing with my peers, who were um, my manger was Verizon East

of West Virginia; my peers were in Erie, Pennsylvania and Marion, Ohio.

When I started dealing with them – and I would call them just to make the

contact and all – it was such an easy transition, because thing is 'oh, my

God, we're so glad you're here, we don't know anything about the East'. It

was a nice blend, because we had somebody in Erie that I would love to

have her knowledge of GTE, because the business partners on the West

side, they didn't do just to HR stuff we did, they also did the union, and the

negotiation. They did everything. The knowledge that the person in Erie had

I could not match. I mean she was wonderful. So there was many times,

since we blended together, good as a team, and we got along together, it

wasn't like you against us, we felt that really we were cohesive, we really

worked very well. There was many times that she would be on the phone

and she would say can I conference this person on, I need you to… you

need to go over… she was learning. It wasn't like she was checking on…

she was learning. And I could do the same thing. So we got along very well

as a group. In fact when they both retired I was really surprised, because

they were wonderful people to work with. And you know they were

really… they did everything they could to transition so that I wasn't uncomfortable. And I have to say I was… I learned a tremendous amount from them. And that I appreciate because with out that I would never have been able to do what I did.

Interviewer: Okay, and what about with the executive director, and other people within Bell …

Interviewee: [interrupting] The executive director after a while didn't have a problem with me.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: It was kind of like he started to realize that this is what I know and what I don't know, and I am not going to blow… I am not going to make up anything. This is the way it is. And when he left, I have to say that I actually miss him. And I made that comment to my director at the time, I said 'boy, I have to say it, I miss [name omitted]'. And he said 'I'll tell him that'. And he went on to laugh and said 'you know, he actually wasn't as bad as you thought'. I mean really he was just a different mentality. When you got to work with him after a while it wasn't a big deal. Because it got to the point where they said I'm not going to be here, just send it right to [name omitted]. And that was fine. I didn't have a problem with that. And then he started realizing that if he didn't have an answer, he could pick up the phone and he'd ask me directly. And that really made the biggest difference in how we got along. We actually got along very well together.

Interviewer: So when you actually started to interact with each other you got along just fine.

Interviewee: It made the biggest difference. There was really no problem at all. We all got along very well with the group. We worked hard, we worked long hours, but we did the job.

Interviewer: And did you see your relationship with the former NYNEX folks change when the merger with GTE happened?

Interviewee: I didn't notice too much of a difference, because by that time we were really… we had Mid Atlantic, and Mid Atlantic didn't include the NYNEX people. The biggest difference I saw was with the changes were when we started transitioning people from NYNEX to Mid… I guess, I don't even know what territory that is, the Northeast, combined down here, we would bring some people down here, whether it was the associate or the management, there was a different – I saw more in the associate ranks because they were a different environment. They came from a different, uh, world. We were under the impression that the union was very strong in New York, and they had very strict requirements. But when we brought them down here, they were not doing very well at all. They had an entitlement mentality – now our people down here have an entitlement mentality big time, but it doesn't light a match to the people who came down from New York. And we would see their attendance policies were much more lax than ours was, it was like 'holy crap, this person would have been fired' you know? A long time ago. We saw that. And people who transitioned to

managers jobs down here with the union environment. And that's because
they were different up there. I know we also had people from here that went
up there, I am not sure how they transitioned there, how that went, some
people were very successful who went to the New England area, say like
Rhode Island – never heard a problem, never heard a complaint. But in New
York, it was just a totally different, um, way of doing business there. We
did have some managers who came down here on loan, who we were told
walked on water – I hate to use that expression. They fell flat on their face
down here. And they were on loan down here. We gave them every
opportunity to pick the job that the want. We finally had to send them back
because you know it was an extra hand, but you are really not going to meet
the requirements. Because our requirements were apparently much more
stringent.

Interviewer: So you think... you still saw more disparity between Bell Atlantic and
NYNEX then necessarily Bell Atlantic and GTE even after the merger?

Interviewee: Even after the merger. And I think it was more work ethic than anything.
The ethic was different in one environment than as opposed to us.

Interviewer: Okay. How integrated do you think the employees are today between Bell
Atlantic, NYNEX and GTE?

Interviewee: I think they are probably more integrated now than ever before. I think
before we did the last merger, you don't feel the difference anymore. Its
kind of like we're all one company, we're all Verizon. It doesn't matter
where you were. It felt like, if you had to get something from somebody, I

still don't know all of Verizon East, but I knew who to go to. I know who

the labor people were to give me all of the information, and a lot of them

are gone too, because my person in Erie took the package. They did all the

work that labor was picking up. I don't feel the difference in the mentality

between the environments now, um, because it's like we are all one. And

we work together. Systems are the biggest issue, because they don't talk to

each other. And that took an awful long time to get things like that done. I

don't feel the difference or any kind of tension between the groups now.

Interviewer: Do you feel like they are all one now?

Interviewee: I feel like we are all one now. It took a long time, but I think we have finally

gotten to that point.

Interviewer: Okay, I was going to ask you how long you thought it took. So, it took a

while?

Interviewee: Oh, it took a long time to really – I think that, um, I think our leadership had

to prove that they weren't here to take over and to tell you you are doing it

all wrong, and to work out the kinks at the top, and have it go down further.

I think it helped us because we were used to a tight… we were used to a

very, uh, fast paced environment, 'cause that was just our culture. Work

early… come in early, stay late… [name omitted] used to come in early,

before six, in her jogging stuff, drop her stuff off, and leave. Go to the gym,

come back later on all dressed up for work, and she would be here late at

night. She was on my floor, so you knew how she was; you knew how

demanding she was. And you did what you had to do.

Interviewer: Based on your experience, is there anything you think the leadership of the company could have done differently to have improved or speed up the integration?

Interviewee: I think the biggest thing is that they really need to do more about the culture. Um, we were dealing with several different cultures at once. Just New England and New York aren't the same. And then you would have different things that would come through…. I think that there was a better way to do some announcements and maybe merge some of the groups, have some more meetings to get to know each other. And to share, you know, who the people were that were going to take over. I don't think they did a good job of that because they were worrying on the big things. There were many people who were put in different jobs – I know some of our people who were really good people went to New York, and then they were put into another area, and then all of a sudden they are off the payroll. So there was a lot of that going on, that's nature, but they needed to do more about talking about the culture and more communications to the company about this is what we are trying to do… it's not a secret. Tell them what we are going to be doing. We are going to be merging these groups and doing things… and they didn't do that. They also needed to work faster to get some of the policies and procedures more consistent. Or not have them hidden, because it was very difficult trying to find out what is your policy and procedure in this geographic area as opposed to us.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that I haven't asked that, or any thoughts that you had,

looking back on the integration of the cultures or the groups between Bell

Atlantic and NYNEX or Bell Atlantic and GTE that you would want to

share?

Interviewee: I think, for the most part, when we merged with NYNEX it made sense

because they were… our business was very similar. While we had different

policies and procedures we all had a common goal. And you felt that you

knew what was going on even if you didn't. I felt that … I felt that we were

more successful when we were just Bell Atlantic or Verizon or whatever.

Because we worked together, we knew what we were doing. I think since

we have merged with MCI we've gotten into different areas of the business

now, you see it's a lot more cut throat. It's a lot more, you know, you're just

a name and a number. There's no employee – there's no human in

resources. It's just a number. They don't care as much about the employees.

We've felt that more since we have new leadership at the top that have

come over from the wireless side and I think that has lent more tension and

discomfort to the business. And it all stems from the leadership. And I don't

mean from [CEO of Verizon], it's that level underneath. Now there is so

much micro management in different areas, you feel almost like your

paralyzed and you can't do simple things. For example, I can't terminate a

management employee without going to a vice president for approval. Now,

why? If you have the documentation and you know what you are doing, and

you're ready to go, why do you need VP approval? That's the kind of stuff

that makes no sense. But that's becoming even more and more prevalent and every day it's yet another layer of approval you need for something, and that's not going to help the business flow, and… and we're going to end up being paralyzed. All because one person needs some approval. Other than that, you know, the main thing I think when we merged there really should have been a lot more communications and updates on what was going on. We didn't see that as much as we could have.

Interviewer: All right, cool. Thank you.

Interview #12 Philadelphia

Interviewer: Okay just for the record, I assume you were Bell Atlantic prior to the Bell

Atlantic NYNEX merger? You are former Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Yes, I started work with the company in 1985.

Interviewer: So you were Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Yes, Bell of Pennsylvania.

Interviewer: Okay, during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX what were your

perceptions of the employees of the merging company, in your case it

would be NYNEX.

Interviewee: Okay, um, when we merged with NYNEX, generally everyone I dealt with

was at a higher level than me, and uh, they were… New York people were

difficult to work with.

Interviewer: How?

Interviewee: Um, very guarded in giving information. I mean I was in a role where… I

was in the corporate economist office at that point and my job was to give

people information. And, uh, they were not very forthcoming at all. I think

part of that was that, um, our Bell Atlantic office was chosen as the

corporate economist, so the person who did that function for NYNEX was

kind of… was PO'd about losing the function. Um, I recall somebody from

Boston – the Boston people were actually OK to work with – it was the

New York people that were difficult to work with. Um, I got a call from one

of the regulatory people up there and they were surprised I was willing to

share the information I had so easily. Apparently that was not an easy thing

to do in NYNEX, to get the corporate economist to actually give them any information, but that was not the way we worked down here.

Interviewer: And, uh, just in general, I mean, was that typical of your interactions with the New England, I mean the New York/Boston people?

Interviewee: Pretty much. I mean I had a lot of contact with some of the Boston people that were local area forecasters and they were nice to deal with. No more protective of their own functions than my experience at Bell Atlantic had been. The New York people were just a little…

Interviewer: And how inter… how much were the two groups intermingled. I mean, were you in a group that got merged with multiple people from NYNEX? Or were your functions still remaining… your coworkers still in the Bell Atlantic world vs. a mixture of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX?

Interviewee: Um, pretty much stayed separate. Um, we had some, you know, NYNEX people eventually move into the function, but not very many. It stayed pretty separate. There wasn't really a very good blending of them…the functions. I was in the business research group back then, and uh… well actually, that's not really, I am misspeaking. When the merger happened I was in the business research group, and I got peeled off and put into the finance group, so our corporate economist function… the business research group was disbanded at that time. And the survey research people and the statistical modeling people went to Marketing, and corporate economists went to the finance group. In fact [name omitted] wanted us in her group.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: At that time I started working more with NYNEX people.

Interviewer: And how were those initial interactions?

Interviewee: I… uh… kind of rocky at first, but I think they got better as things went along.

Interviewer: And what exactly does 'rocky' mean? Can you be more explicit?

Interviewee: Well, as I said before, I think there was a lot of difficulty sharing information. I mean, in my particular background in the economics group was I pretty easily… I readily shared what I had because that was my function. And uh… but I didn't find that to be the case with the NYNEX folks.

Interviewer: And do you think that's a culture thing, or do you think that was a function of the merger – job protectiveness or anything like that?

Interviewee: Umm… good question. I think it was more of the culture but I am not 100% sure of that. There was a lot of job jealousy, too, even now. I mean, I'm not… coming from that background where I was in the corporate economist office and my job was to collect and share information. Now I am in more of a line job, and I still have to adjust my thinking. Like things are secret and you don't share. And secret's probably too strong of a word, but I have to think a little bit about what I can share and what I can't share.

Interviewer: And what do you think your coworkers felt about you or the people from Bell Atlantic in general? What were their perceptions of them?

Interviewee: I… I really don't know. I am not sure I have any kind of comment to make about that.

Interviewer: Okay. So… you kind of answered this now, but how well did you work together initially and did that change over time?

Interviewee: Well… I… like I said, the local area forecasters, where I was a data provider to them, and a presentation provider, they… we got along pretty well. I mean after we got to know each other a little bit. But they had a problem where they had to merge the two groups together. Where they had Pennsylvania, Delaware, southern people merging in with their groups, so, uh, I guess I was kind of part of that mix of just merging their two functions together.

Interviewer: And during the course of that merger, was it easy to merge? Did the two teams get along fairly well or was there still some of that guardedness?

Interviewee: As far as I could tell they got along pretty well. I think most of the supervisory people were from Boston, with one exception.

Interviewer: Do you think that it made a difference if your management was former Bell Atlantic or former NYNEX depending on where you sat? Like if you were a Bell Atlantic person and you're management remained Bell Atlantic, did that make a difference vs. if you were a Bell Atlantic person and your new management during the merger became NYNEX? Did that change the way the groups interacted at all? Did you see any of that?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think so. Yeah, uh, I think that even though it was advertised as a merger of equals, and we kept the Bell Atlantic name, the NYNEX people clearly thought they bought us. And I think that showed in the upper management and in the attitudes of the emerged groups.

Interviewer: When the merger with GTE happened, how did you feel about the

           employees of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic? Was there

           any kind of conflict?

Interviewee: My experience with the GTE people was they were always very easy to

           work with. I mean it was a totally different kind of thing than the Bell

           Atlantic/NYNEX merger. And maybe… maybe part of that was we kind of

           decided to get a new name, and stuff like that, but I kind of doubt that. I

           think it's just… a lot of it was just personal culture. People from Texas vs.

           people from New York. They were just a lot easier to deal with.

Interviewer: Like, what specifically with the people from Texas… in terms of culture?

Interviewee: I mean in their friendly, willing to share things. You know they didn't feel

           threatened by the merger, not the people I dealt with anyway.

Interviewer: And were you dealing with… during that merger did your management

           change at all? Or did you remain sort of the same?

Interviewee: Uh, I remained the same then, so yeah, and that was in 2000.

Interviewer: And did they integrate people from GTE into your group? Or were your

           interactions with them across groups?

Interviewee: Um, we wound up integrating some people in the end. I wound up leaving

           that group in the end, in 2005, so yeah, we had several GTE people. Still it

           was mostly Bell Atlantic people.

Interviewer: And the people from GTE that came in they just got blended effortlessly and

           there was no conflict or anything there?

Interviewee: Pretty much. As far as I could tell, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, um, how about after the merger with GTE, did your feelings or perceptions change at all about the former NYNEX people. Like, what was Bell Atlantic, if you will, the grouping that were Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, did you view your NYNEX counterparts differently at all when the GTE merger… when you were faced with the GTE merger?

Interviewee: So it became us vs. them, with us being defined differently? No, not really.

Interviewer: No?

Interviewee: Well, I guess by that time it was just personal relationships, either good or bad based on how you got along with the person. I don't anything, any cultural thing happened.

Interviewer: Okay. How integrated do you think the employees are today?

Interviewee: Um, I guess pretty good. Although I think there's enough legacy stuff around that it's a problem. I'm thinking in my own job now we have billing systems and programming, we still have legacy things we have to deal with. The ordering systems are still separate, you can tell where they came from, things like that. And, uh, as far as persons dealing with each other, I don't think that there are any issues with that at all.

Interviewer: How long do you think before it was just seamless, that there was just all one Verizon?

Interviewee: It probably didn't take much more than a year or so after the merger. I guess the merger was 2000, and then we were on strike duty, and GTE people didn't have to go on strike duty.

Interviewer: So you think after that it didn't take long?

Interviewee: Nah, no that wasn't my impression at all. It didn't take long at all.

Interviewer: Okay. Based on your experience, is there anything you think that the leadership of the company could have done differently, um, to improve or speed up the integration?

Interviewee: Improve or speed up the integration… um, not that I can think of. Um, no I think it was pretty clear that we were all supposed to get along, so I, uh, I don't think that there were any issues about that at all. Um, they made a big deal about we're all one and that teleconference stuff with [name omitted] on the television with [name omitted], that kind of stuff, so it was pretty clear we were supposed to all get integrated and it seemed to all work out.

Interviewer: It flowed through okay… Okay, well that was kind of all my questions so … that was quick [laughs]. Can you think of anything in, when you look across the mergers, the cultures, the interpersonal relationships that I haven't touched on? Anything that stands out that you would want to add?

Interviewee: Well, it's hard to really tell… to separate personal personalities issues, you know on an individual level, from okay, that means the company is kind of a problem, and I don't know if even with my NYNEX experience it was just that New Yorkers are tough to deal with or if it was the company. I mean my guess is it's the company, you know it was the company culture and certain types of people fit in with the company culture and that's the way they are. But uh, I … what was the question again?

Interviewer: Is there anything that stands out from an interpersonal standpoint across the mergers that I haven't touched upon that you wanted to share?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: No? Okay. Thank you.

Interview #21 New York

Interviewer: So, for the record, you with Bell Atlantic at the time of the merger, correct?

Interviewee: I was with…

Interviewer: Bell Atlantic at the time of the merger?

Interviewee: We're talking about this…

Interviewer: Oh, you were with NYNEX

Interviewee: I was with NYNEX.

Interviewer: I'm sorry, you were with NYNEX, see, that's why I needed it for the record.

So alright, during the merger… I've been doing all Bell Atlantic people so

I've got that in my head. So, during the merger of Bell Atlantic and

NYNEX, what were your perceptions of the employees of the merging

company, in your case it would be Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Peers or supervisors, or…?

Interviewer: It doesn't matter, all the people you were interacting with during the course

of the merger.

Interviewee: Um, well, it was another Bell company, so I thought it was uh, you know a

lot of the culture, I thought it was, there were differences in the culture, but

the skill set, the focus, the relationship that you have organizationally, I

would say was very similar. Um, uh, and, ask me, what was the question?

Interviewer: So, what were your perceptions of the employees?

Interviewee: Of the employees…?

Interviewer: Like basically, when you started to come together, um, Bell Atlantic and

NYNEX employees, in meetings, on teams, etc. What were you, what were

your preconceived notions about what those people were like, and what were your actual experiences of what they were like?

Interviewee: Well, I think we perceived that… that a merger where, that, the Bell Atlantic folks were going to be in charge, and um I think was working in the now Live Source organization, previously Operator Services at the time and uh, it was a very formal relationship with the other organization, they seemed to be very reserved, close mouthed, professional, seemed to have a higher level of self esteem, that may not be right, self importance, you know, so, dealing with directors, I was a director, dealing with directors they seemed to feel like their directorships were, you know, of a higher quality or more important and more critical with management, uh, I mean they were, they were polite enough, they were personal enough, but it was very professional, at least during the merger.

Interviewer: And then after the merger?

Interviewee: Well, that's so much that they put the two organizations together, there was some restructure on roles and responsibilities so the peer teams I think got along pretty well, uh the officers went out of their way to try to uh team build and um, you know personally, I think I'm a pretty personable guy, and so I uh didn't have that many issues with and I kinda, uh rode with it and tried to get as friendly, and I think we did, I think the groups merged pretty well, and you know, whatever issues there were faded away pretty quickly, pretty quickly.

Interviewer: And did you observe anybody else within your group having any issues or what those issues were?

Interviewee: No, I really didn't, I don't think so. Um, I think the… the management style was different, I think my group remained, see, I had an integration, some people came over from the Bell Atlantic side to work for me, they were in Silver Spring, Maryland, I was in Manhattan, you know I made trips down there, I think my team assimilated pretty well. Um, so I say, I think the one thing was that it was still a Bell culture and wasn't all that different, the functions that we were dealing with were pretty consistent. So, but further up the line, at least that organization, most of the leadership was Bell Atlantic leadership, and they were, they seemed to be less tolerant, more demanding not with good cause, I mean a lot of times I would scratch my head and say, 'What's bugging her?' All the bosses happened to be females so there wasn't any reference there. I didn't, I think you felt that there was still a lot of judgment going on from the management team about whether or not your team was qualified to continue to function, whether you needed to be rounded into shape or rounded out.

Interviewer: So that was actually going to be my second question, how do you perceive that the co-workers or the employees of Bell Atlantic perceived the NYNEX employees?

Interviewee: The employees perceived employees? So on a peer to peer relationship?

Interviewer: Peer to peer or you know, subordinate, it doesn't matter. Basically, what do you think Bell Atlantic people thought of NYNEX people?

Interviewee: I think they felt they were the superior organization, the superior company, and had been more successful and that's why the merger was taking effect, because they were in a better position to manage the overall region then were the NYNEX guys who were being less successful. So they'd been less successful financially, and you know even, even from a competitive perspective because it's like 1997 and the New York region especially, really was already under fire from CLECs [competitive local exchange carriers], we were… we were in the process of building wholesale arrangements, agreements, and tarriffing, and they were already starting to eat into the… into your share pretty significantly, whereas a lot of that hadn't happened in the Bell Atlantic world yet. So perhaps because of some of that stuff, so subsequently, when you talk about GTE, had the same type of failure to recognize the competitive environment – that certainly would be um typical of what I experienced at Bell Atlantic and NYNEX.

Interviewer: And that attitude, how did that manifest itself in your day to day relationships with people?

Interviewee: Um, I think if you were dealing with NYNEX folks, the perception was common, if you were dealing with BA folks, in my, um, in my contacts, my organization, there were a lot of, you, uh, you had to defend what you were doing and why a lot more. And there was a lot of accusation tied to, you know, the results, you could have done better if, um, but you know, I think, it might have been just a little more intense that it is in any normal reorganization and you're got to win their confidence in what you're doing.

But it was certainly more intense than that, and I think I worked for a woman that was from Pittsburgh, and she was very curious and she didn't understand most things North, you know, even to the extent where, when we had Columbus Day off as a holiday, she had no expectation that there was a holiday called Columbus Day and I remember her saying that "what is that, like a New York itlow holiday" – what! No, he discovered the New World, you know, Christopher Columbus? So, uh, she thought that we should be working and was a little astounded that we weren't. There's that kind of um, cultural bias that I think, that I saw a lot of, I remember, I think that's when we started calling, if you took a half day off, everybody made a reference to that being, so you were on vacation, which in my previous experience that would have just been I'm taking the afternoon off, you know, so you were on vacation Monday, well, um, ok. You know, but it was just the way they addressed, it just seemed to be a lot more formal than uh, the way I looked at the workplace.

Interviewer: Ok, how well did you work together initially and then over time? You kind of touched on this but…

Interviewee: Yeah, I think that initially it was um, uh, a lot more formal, obviously, you know, we were not NYNEX, the, uh, most of the leadership was in the South, um so, there was uh, a lot of reporting requirements that were new, there were a lot of um, you know meeting structure, the… and we always came to them, they never came to us, which was fine, I don't like to fly. Um, but you know the, I think it was very formal and uh, the uh

accountability, nothing wrong with that, but it seemed to be excessive, but

over time, you know, it was – it melted away. I didn't… I do recall talking

to others who felt that that bias remained in place for a long period of time,

I didn't find that, I felt that bias melt away within a year, you know, but

there were others, that still felt there was a North and there was a South.

Interviewer: Was that within your own group or other groups?

Interviewee: Both, probably both. Um, it seemed to be a little worse if you were from

New England, because there was, you were from New York, right, were

you NYNEX?

Interviewer: I started after the merger.

Interviewee: Ok, so the uh, New York/New England there was always a… a bias

perceived from the people in New England, I think, you know, that New

York was running the show and that they were second class citizens. It… it

seemed that the further away the center of power moved, the New

Englanders I think felt even more and more divorced from… from the

center. But uh, I didn't really have a problem with that, I just thought New

York was the center. So, I was like, oh, I'm working at headquarters, what

do you mean? So….

Interviewer: So you um, when the merger with GTE happened, how did you feel about

the employees of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: That felt like a different culture, it really did, I mean the way that they

approached the business world, seemed far more relaxed, far less structured,

even to the extent of being on conference calls and listening to the level of

detail that they were dealing with, I mean, they were smaller, franchise areas, in the Bell Atlantic world, that was 2000, you know we were the dominant carrier, they for the most part were not, and so they seemed to deal with things as the non-dominant carrier, I guess that's appropriate. But they uh, you know they'd ride the coattails of Southwest Bell if that was the right company, everything had to be in the context, well, what was the other guy doing? Um, or, they dealt with issues from a perspective exclusively of their little franchise area and kind of ignored what the other guy was doing. I'd say, well these are issues that have, that have already been solved you know, why struggle with them? You know what I mean? There's the answer, its right next door. So, and this might be my bias, I don't know. Um, they, it just didn't seem as well run a company. Seemed to deal with, made a lot of big problems out of little ones, um and spent an inordinate amount of time on issues that didn't have to be dealt with. Um, I mean they were certainly capable enough, but didn't seem as professional. If you were to visit, um, Texas, everybody was way laid back, you know what I mean? They had a waterfall there at the headquarters building, I had uh Radio City, you know, so it just didn't seem like the same scope and again, talking about it now, maybe that does reflect my bias more than it did theirs, but that's kind of the way I perceived it. And when we started reorganizing, um, it just didn't… it seemed like the people that were part of the Bell Atlantic merger were much more capable in dealing with broader

scope things than they were. I think the reorganization started to reflect that, you know, fewer and fewer people from the… from the GTE environment.

Interviewer: So when your teams got integrated, how – like was it a 50/50 split, 70/30 initially?

Interviewee: See, initially, um, initially there were best practice activities, right, to take a look and see how things should be structured and organized. Um, I think initially, there were, there was not co-mingling, it was still geographic. Um, and within the first year I think, we, this would be consumer product management at the time, I think we um, everybody applied for the jobs and senior management selected the organization leaders and worked its way down from there, and there was a pretty significant RIF at the time, somewhere around 2001? And um, a lot of the leadership was here in the East, so our leaders were here in the East.

Interviewer: And in your daily interaction with the folks that were coming in from GTE, what were those like, what was the tone, what was the body language, what did you see, or feel yourself and what did you observe?

Interviewee: They didn't get to work as early, they didn't stay as late, they didn't dress as formally, they had a golf course right outside their window. The building shut down for… for the… Sam Snead? Who's – who's the golfer that they had? They had a… the something… something Open, took place every year, like in August and they… they virtually closed the building down and everybody went to the match, and the park, they let the parking under the building uh, be more… uh public parking for the purposes of the golf

match. They just never did that in Manhattan (laughing). It just seemed like not as quite a serious approach to the business as what we'd had. I mean the people were very nice, um, and still are, of course, but uh, it just seemed like a much more, a much more laid back environment. When we merged with Bell Atlantic, the first meeting of senior management, which I did not attend, um, I'm told you could tell who was who because the suits were from NYNEX and the golf shirts were from Bell Atlantic. You know, in these mergers, you know, we started wearing the golf shirts um to Texas, but we were still way overdressed and uh, we were still there before anybody else got there, even though we were coming from the East Coast. Just did not, much smaller scope, much less formal, um, approach to the business, everything didn't need to be done now, much slower pace… the people seemed to be operating at a much slower pace. Ah, some really good people and then some people that you go, well, they can't pick him, how are they going to make it. But friendly, I hope we were friendly as well, but you know I think our expectations were more than theirs were.

Interviewer: After, er, during and after the merger with GTE did your perceptions or feelings about the employees of the former Bell Atlantic change?

Interviewee: We were more homogenous by then I would say. Um, so did my feeling about the employees of the former Bell Atlantic change. I think that I had worked with uh, as on teams that were built, probably with more Bell Atlantic, former Bell Atlantic people than former NYNEX people, that's to say I thought that, I always thought they were very capable, um, a little

more cutthroat, I don't think I mentioned that, but I think a little more

cutthroat, and um, you know, I think that was an accurate perception, some

of those were, but I think I was probably more comfortable professionally

with the people from Bell Atlantic and more comfortable personally with

the people from GTE. Um, so, certainly far more comfortable with the

former Bell Atlantic people subsequent to the merger with GTE than I had

been at the time of the merger with Bell Atlantic, is that the question?

Interviewer: The question is more, did your perceptions about the people at Bell Atlantic,

your working relationships or your conversations, did they change at all

when the GTE merger happened?

Interviewee: Ok, um, yeah, yeah, I mean, at that point, we were, we were the victors, um

and probably there was more empathy along senior row from the East

perception. I'm not sure it was really a corporate thing as much as it was a

geographic thing, you know and the environment where our company in the

East was fully um, we were the dominant company, but that meant that you

know, it was, you had contiguous management stuff, where the people in

the West were just, they were from everywhere, we were from the East and

so, there was I think you had more, more of a relationship with the Eastern

people, so yeah, I think it was, you felt much… professionally certainly

much more comfortable than you had originally with the Bell Atlantic

people.

Interviewer: How well integrated do you think the employees are today?

Interviewee: East and West or GTE and the original Bell Atlantic?

Interviewer: Mmm hmmm.

Interviewee: I think they're pretty well, uh, again, it's reflecting the fact that I'm from the East, but uh, there just aren't as many in the West anymore. I think uh, I think those folks, I'm speaking for them, but I, I think they perceive that we're whittling man numbers down significantly and ultimately why do you need a Texas presence, or a significant Texas presence. Um, but a lot of those people, in this environment, here in beautiful downtown Basking Ridge, those folks have been moved in, you know, so then… I think that they're assimilating more into an Eastern environment, they still complain about it in the gym; they don't like the weather, um…

Interviewer: But do you think even in Basking Ridge is there still a perception that you were either former Bell Atlantic or former GTE?

Interviewee: I don't feel it.

Interviewer: No? Ok.

Interviewee: No, I don't feel it. Um, there might be a reference, you know once in a while to, it's probably more geographic and environmental than anything else, you know, because everybody's working under the same roles here pretty much. Um, and you know, I, my perception is that everybody's lights are on the same length of time, um, although some work at home more than others do, doesn't have anything to do with East/West, I don't think.

Interviewer: And based on your experience, is there anything the leadership of the organization could have done differently to improve or speed up the integration?

Interviewee: Which one? The Bell Atlantic/GTE?

Interviewer: Either one of them.

Interviewee: Either one? Well, you know, I… I think the focus was on the senior

management team rather than on the middle management teams, um, in the

Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger, as I said, I was with an Operator Services

team, which was really channel operational, I mean they had the marketing,

um, it was a vertical organization um and they did, I think, by nature of that

business, they went to some lengths to team build and did a good job on that

and included middle management , you know, middle managers retreats and

whatever it was at the time, it was, which ones were which, but um, I think

the geography became more challenging in the GTE/NYN-uh Bell Atlantic

merger, and so it wasn't, because you, either in Texas or here on the East

Coast, it was hard to get everybody together, I kinda liked the face to face

stuff, you know, it was more difficult to accomplish. In the GTE/NYN-uh

Bell Atlantic merger, we had, we left um, you know GTE folks, we had, co-

chairpersons, right? So if you were if you were looking for visible

leadership, at least at the top, you had it, even though you never believed

that anyone other than [name omitted] counted, you know, making

decisions at least. Um, I don't think teambuilding is overrated, I think it is

important, but you can't have a meeting and accomplish that, it's going to

take time of course. In the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger, it was very clear

that the Bell Atlantic was in charge and it probably was in the other merger

that the Bell Atlantic folks were in charge but… and you know, I can recall

in Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger that uh, we used to fly a lot, we used um, Delta shuttle, it was very economical, um, the US Air Shuttle is a little more, uh, had better presence in the South, so they had a trial, and uh, participated in that and they asked you all kinds of rate the service about before US Air versus Delta and service, on on-time performance, on ease of getting this, on everything, in every single category, uh, the Delta Shuttle, which had been NYNEX, won, except Bell Atlantic, except US Air was about $10 cheaper, and so we chose US Air. And the decisions were being made by Bell Atlantic, and you kinda scratched your head and said, 'why bother?' You know, I mean, it was obvious, whatever you guys wanted is what you were going to get in the first place. So you know, it would have seemed to me that, on decisions that influenced the… the… the majority, and I think HR kind of did the same thing when they started to reduce holidays, right away to make it look like Bell Atlantic South on the decisions that really effected people, there wasn't much sharing, it was pretty much the way the guys in charge had decided it would be, but hey, I mean it was a merger, right? And it was not a merger of equals, and it certainly wasn't in the case of GTE, so it probably reflected the realities of the corporate world a lot more than the comfort of the Bell Atlantic, um, head environment. I don't think that was bad, but, but um, I think… I think it was an evolution. I look at this company now and certainly the way we've got the VZB [Verizon Business] and the VZW [Verizon Wireless], and the VZT [Verizon Telecom] and then everything, I mean it's a very big

corporation and it's a corporation that's getting more and more integrated and there's a lot of different ways to do things and we don't like all of them, but hey, somebody makes the decision you're going to do it this way and that's the way it is. Seems to me that's a lot more like the real world corporate environment than what we probably had in 1996, you know, I wore a shirt and tie to work, except I don't wear the tie right now, but you know, it's kind of, you choose the type of environment you're going to work in and you're going to have to live with it until you find one you like better.

Interviewer: Ok, so just, looking back, is there anything regarding the actual interpersonal relationships between either NYNEX/Bell Atlantic or then subsequently with GTE that I haven't touched on that you wanna share, or recall something that stands out for you?

Interviewee: I'd like to help, give you something good to work with, but I'm not sure that there is anything really.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you.

Interview #23 New York

Interviewer: So, for the record, you with Bell NYNEX during the merger?

Interviewee: Yes, I was.

Interviewer: Okay, during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what were your perceptions of the employees of the merging companies? So in your case, it would be your perceptions of the employees of Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Uh, I worked very closely with a number of them, particularly on changing some of the marketing communications, um, sales collateral that we worked with. I found them to be very knowledgeable, but I also found it to be, uh, a very different corporate culture at Bell Atlantic than it was at NYNEX. I think… at least I felt, that it was more of a takeover sort of a thing. And, uh, they wanted certain things done their way, and uh, that was ultimately how it happened.

Interviewer: So, like, when you were actually going through the process, how integrated was the team you were on with the Bell Atlantic employees?

Interviewee: Actually, it was pretty integrated, and uh, I think that it was really well handled by [name omitted] at the time. He was sort of spearheading everything, he was really… we used to call him the logo police at that point in time, but he certainly was very, very good about integrating the team between NYNEX and Bell Atlantic and and getting that new logo out there. I really… I wasn't in research at that period in time in my career here, but um, it was a well integrated team.

Interviewer: And so, when the teams came together, what were the … especially you mention [unintelligible] what were the personally dynamics between the people?

Interviewee: Well, I think that whenever you are meeting a new group, um, you're sort of on guard to some degree, because, you know, the person I was working with at the time, who is no longer with the company, but I… I… it's like whose going to have this job? You know we basically both had the same position, and she, uh, she kept up with the Bell Atlantic stuff for a while and then I ultimately moved into it. But I think it was more a situation of am I going to keep my job, is this other person going to have it, gee, why did they do something this way, we used to do it that way, uh, particularly with regards to systems, which we had always heard the Bell Atlantic systems were so far superior to our systems. And it turns out, you know, they really weren't. Uh, but I think that it was really walking on egg shells, initially, for both sides.

Interviewer: Okay, how do you think the employees of Bell Atlantic viewed their NYNEX counterparts during the merger – during that integration?

Interviewee: Well, I can really only speculate on that, because I hadn't really formed close relationships with anybody. They were down in Silver Spring, which was really sort of the mother ship at that point, um, because I was in pubcom at that time. Ummm… I don't know that I can really answer that, because I hadn't worked with them for that long.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I really have no idea.

Interviewee: Okay, that's fine. Um, how well did you work together initially – would you say – this you've kind of already answered – and then over time?

Interviewee: Well, over time it got easier and easier, needless to say, I think groups started to regell, uh, the more, I think you have contact with people; the more you get to know them. Some of the more, uh, social or friendlier aspects start coming into play. And I think that takes time to develop, so…. I don't think there was any hostility or fear or backstabbing, no, I never had that impression, but I think it takes time, whenever you have a group of people that are just thrown into one boat, and get told now go row [laughs] that it becomes a question of putting the rowers at the right spot in the boat to get it going. So, I think, with any relationship things like that take time.

Interviewer: So, how long do you think it took before you started to gel as a team?

Interviewee: I would say probably eighteen months.

Interviewer: And during that time, or after the time of the gelling of the team, was there still an impression of NYNEX and Bell Atlantic, was there still a cognizance of that distinction, or had it kind of gone away at that point?

Interviewee: Uh, well, I thought it had kind of gone away at that point. And of course, James Earl Jones did a lot to reinforce that. I mean, we got rid of the poor man's Murphy Brown, I don't know if you remember that campaign, that was Mary Alice Williams going 'And we're NYNEX right now!". Uh, and she had been our spokesperson, and then of course Bell Atlantic had James Earle Jones, who was far more impressive than Mary Alice. You know, as I

said, we used to call her the poor man's Murphy Brown. But, I think that he

did a lot in really bringing the Bell Atlantic brand and name to the forefront.

So that NYNEX just really started to erode. Attrition took place, that's all,

so….

Interviewer: Okay. So, when the merger with GTE happened, how did you feel about the

employees of GTE that were being merged with the employees of Bell

Atlantic?

Interviewee: The wild Texans who are all in my group right now (laughing). Um, I don't

know, I was kind of used to it at that point, uh, because they didn't happen

that far apart for me from each other. You know, I think people are people

and I think that GTE had a very strong – I was in research at that point

already – uh so they had a very strong group of researchers there, um, I

really think the big merger was NYNEX/Bell Atlantic, and it was sort of

like, you know, World War 1, if you will. World War 2 was just … World

War 1 hadn't yet been completed or finished, so we had World War 2. But

basically the big merger for me was Bell Atlantic/NYNEX.

Interviewer: So, basically the interpersonal relationships between GTE and Bell Atlantic,

what were they like during the merger?

Interviewee: I was not that involved at that point, in that …

Interviewer: Was your team integrated?

Interviewee: My team was integrated, yeah, because of course when Bell Atlantic merged

I was doing the MarCom stuff. And then when we merged with GTE, I

wasn't so… you know I don't think I was. Nah, yeah, I don't think I was.

I've had so many… when was that merger I don't remember…

Interviewer: 2000.

Interviewee: 2000? All right, so… yeah, I was in research at that point in time, and I

don't remember it being as big a shakeup.

Interviewer: Okay, and, uh, so during and after the merger with GTE, did your

perceptions of feelings about the employees of the former Bell Atlantic

change? Since you were NYNEX?

Interviewee: Former Bell Atlantic… After the merger with GTE did my impressions of…

Interviewer: Your teammates or other people in the company that were former Bell

Atlantic, since you were former NYNEX, did you have any change in your

perceptions about them at all?

Interviewee: No, not really, I can't say that I did.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Um, no, I think it's… again, the merger between Bell Atlantic and NYNEX

was such that we got used to working up and down the Eastern seaboard, so

to speak. So, the fact that somebody had a regional accent, so to speak, just

kind of disappeared. Um, and so, when we merged with GTE, it was oh,

well, it was just another accent coming into play.

Interviewer: Okay. How well integrated do you think the employees are today?

Interviewee: I think quite well integrated, actually. Um, interesting you should ask that,

because I have spent the last two days in Basking Ridge, because [name

omitted] team has now been moved over to corporate. And so there were

really a lot of people at [name omitted]'s uh, all hands meeting that I had

never, frankly seen before. And interesting enough when we… I mean I got

to meet people who had just been voices on the phone for the longest time.

So, I think that we will gel, very quickly, or at last [name omitted]'s team

with the new reorganization. So I think the more you kind of do this, the

quicker you acclimate to change, and the quicker you learn how to work

with people who perhaps do it differently, or think differently. Or have a

different regional American accent.

Interviewer: Okay, and based on your experience, is there anything the leadership of the

organization could have done differently to speed up or improve the

integration?

Interviewee: Well, you know, to do that takes really a lot of time, and a lot of money,

because you really need to do one-on-ones, face to face, and it doesn't

always work in one massive, huge group, to keep it a little more intimate, so

you actually do get a chance to meet counterparts and to mingle. Um, so I

think that's a very difficult thing for a corporation to achieve. Particularly

now, when you are as big as we are. Look at how many years it's taken us

to meet face to face.

Interviewer: Exactly.

Interviewee: And you're in New England, or used to be…

Interviewer: I was out of New York, actually, so I was in New York.

Interviewee: So, I mean, I just think, it's a very tough thing to do when you are as big as

we are.

Interviewer: Okay. So, is there anything I haven't touched on, as you can recall,

specifically around the interpersonal relationships, the dynamics, or what

went on between people that you can recall during the two mergers?

Interviewee: Again, I think that both side got to… both sides handled themselves

professionally. I mean I got to really like the people I was working with, but

there were others who I think may have felt differently about the people

they were working with, but I think in a corporate environment civility

certainly prevails, and I think that cases of the merger or mergers, that

people tend to conduct themselves in a polite, civilized professional

manner. And if the fur flies, it's generally very controlled over a

conversation and not a knock down, drag out fight. So, not really. I think

that mergers seem to be the way to go, look what's going to happen with

Alltel, but I just [unintelligible].

Interviewer: Okay, thank you.

Interview #24 New York

Interviewer: So, for the record, you with Bell NYNEX during the merger of Bell Atlantic
and NYNEX?

Interviewee: Yep, correct, yes.

Interviewer: So, during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what were your
perceptions of the employees of the merging companies? So in your case, it
would be your perceptions of the employees of Bell Atlantic.

Interviewee: Basically, uh… it seemed like the, uh, like a really different culture in a lot
of ways, even though we were both former Bell Systems companies,
uh…there was a lot of differences, uh… NYNEX seemed to be much more
structured than Bell Atlantic. The main one was in NYNEX; you were
pretty much geographically centered, in certain locations. Especially if you
had a typical staff type of job – most people either worked in Boston or in
Manhattan. And if you worked in one of those locations it was like one of
maybe three buildings in the cities that the majority of people were
clustered in. And, uh, all of a sudden when we merged with Bell Atlantic,
we realized that – it almost seemed like it was several mini-companies over
there. They had a large presence in Philadelphia… uh, they had a large
presence in the Baltimore area, and then of course down in Arlington,
Virginia. And, then as you got to know your counterparts, you found out
that there were people who were working, which was new to us at the time,
remotely. So your boss and your whole team was in Philadelphia, but you
were living in, uh, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and you didn't go to the office

every day, you went to a local CO building or a lot of times people worked

right out of their homes. That was… that was the biggest difference to get

used to, uh, and the other thing too is they were totally casual dress. And we

were just starting to get into, and only if your VP allowed it, casual dress on

Friday. And so the first thing that happened with the merger is that

everybody went to casual dress. So, uh, then the second thing that started to

happen from that merger is that, uh, as they integrated the two companies,

and all of a sudden you were reporting to someone, say like a New Yorker,

and you were reporting to someone down in Arlington, Virginia, there was

nothing about oh, you have to move down here. Because I have ten people

here in my group, and all nine are here in Arlington, you're the only one

going to be in New York. It was everybody just stay where you are. And

then in talking to the Bell Atlantic people you found out that was pretty

much their philosophy. You never had to move anywhere. And that is why

you had a person in Harrisburg reporting to someone in Philadelphia.

Because at one time, they were in a team or a position that was based in

Harrisburg. That's how they got the job. Then as they switched positions

they never had to move. And we started to see a little bit of that in NYNEX,

uh, but for the most part people moved with the job. For example, if you

were in Syracuse… first of all there were now staff people out of what we

called the upstate New York area – but if you were in Syracuse, and you

were doing like an outside plant type of assignment, if you, all of a sudden

even if you went on staff, you were responsible for the Albany area, you

couldn't stay in Syracuse. You had to get to… you had to work out of the Albany area. So, that was the biggest change.

Interviewer: And in the actual merging of the two companies, were you in a team that was integrated? Or were you primarily continuing to work with NYNEX employees.

Interviewee: Uh, well, no, I was in wholesale at the time, and we did integrate, because both companies had a wholesale unit. And we sort of integrated at the highest levels; I want to say the VP level. And then directors started picking up people, but it really didn't affect people at first and second level. People pretty much… like me, it didn't affect me too much, because the director that they chose, was my old director. So, some people got affected because the director they chose was from the other company and so now they had a new reporting structure. And they… everybody picked up new teammates, and some people picked up a new director, and other people like me didn't. But uh, you always have these instances where you are doing work for one director and they move on. I mean, you get used to that, so most of us didn't feel much of a culture shock.

Interviewer: What about the reactions of the employees that came on to your team that were former Bell Atlantic, what were the interactions that you and your co-workers, what was it like, what was the tone?

Interviewee: For the most part, with very few exceptions, it was a very easy merger. There were a few people that, uh, and I am only looking at this from a New Yorker's point to a Bell Atlantic person, there were a few Bell Atlantic

people I ran into who didn't like that they were now reporting to a NYNEX

person. Uh, but that was the exception. For the most part, people just took it

in stride, and uh, just went about doing their work. And uh, when you had

to, uh, meet with someone like, if they were formerly from Bell Atlantic,

and they were on your team, you met with them and you compared notes,

and stuff like that. It was pretty easy. I think one of the reasons it was pretty

easy was that we were both former Bell companies, and the systems were

the same – you talked the same lingo, you talk about a service order or a

billing problem… or if you were rolling out a new product and you had to

get into the billing system, whatever, you were talking the same language, it

was pretty easy, you know, so I didn't see… to me that was a pretty easy

merger.

Interviewer: And do you, uh, this is speculation, but how did you think the employees of

Bell Atlantic perceived the employees of NYNEX?

Interviewee: I would say for the most part, uh, I think the one thing they were probably

surprised at was that it seemed like Bell Atlantic had a lot of processes for

everything, and at NYNEX we went by the seat of our pants. And, I think

they were surprised by that. They would say why don't you have… well,

where is all the documentation for this, and you would say, well you don't

need that, this is just how you do it. So, I think a little bit like that, uh, and

that was because they were really made up of three companies, because at

the time of divestiture it was Jersey Bell, Bell of PA and C&P Telephone.

So, probably they had their first attempt to merge the three companies with

different systems, and uh, different processes, they probably were more structured. Whereas with New York and New England, uh, it was pretty similar to the time of divestiture, not much had changed.

Interviewer: So, those differences in uh… uh… perceptions, they didn't manifest themselves in any type of conflict?

Interviewee: No, not at all.

Interviewer: Okay. And how well did you work together – I kind of asked this – but how well did you work together initially and then over time?

Interviewee: Uh... there was no problem.

Interviewer: So, you were integrated right away?

Interviewee: Oh, ah… I would say it was probably a good year later, because the merger was announced until spring of '96 and we probably didn't start to merge until '98.

Interviewer: So, about a year?

Interviewee: Yeah, about a year, year and a half later, and at our level, first and second levels, you picked up people on your team and it was integrated, but there was no gashing of the teeth or anything. It was pretty easy.

Interviewer: Okay, great. When the merger of GTE happened, how did you feel about the employees of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Uh… that was… that was a little bit different. Felt a little bit… that… a lot of the comments you would hear a lot is 'we bought them, and it seems like they are trying to run the show'. Ummm, it seemed like the people from Tex… well everyone was from Texas when you think of it, mostly, the

people from GTE. It just seemed like there was a very … uh… Texas…. I am trying to think of the right terms, it was very colloquial. They really were, they really were protecting their Texas people. And, uh, they were very turf conscious, and stuff like that. And it really could be that they were being bought up by a much bigger company. And they were afraid of being swallowed up because everything was in the Northeast, and they were in this outpost out west. And the other problem, which I think caused a lot of frustration, was that, since they were never a Bell company, none of their systems matched ours. So, when you tried to integrate and talk to them about things, it just, uh, it was like you had to learn a whole new language. And, uh, that was kind of difficult. And, uh, what really got confusing was they owned territory in two former Bell Atlantic states – Pennsylvania and Virginia – we call it the PAVA states. And that would be really confusing for a lot of people because it was like, they were still on the GTE systems, but they were in Pennsylvania. It was like, when you would talk to someone and they would tell me their problem, it was almost like you had to say to them 'this customer in Pennsylvania, is it a former Bell Atlantic or a former GTE customer?' and when they would say GTE, I'd say I don't know how to help you, I don't know how the systems work. That was a little harder because they weren't a Bell Operating Company, so the systems didn't match, and uh, it just really came to a… it seemed to a lot of people, back in Bell Atlantic, that the GTE people from Texas were very protective of their turf… uh, and they seemed to have processes that were roadblocks.

Everything was a process, and if you didn't follow it, they would use that as an excuse in order not to do something. It was like, you know, Bell Atlantic made that process, and if you didn't follow it, but you picked up the phone and called somebody, uh, it got done. But it seemed like with some of the people you dealt with at GTE, they followed process, and if you didn't they just sat on it, that type of thing.

Interviewer: And the actual interpersonal relationships with GTE were their people at GTE who were merged with your team? Did you become an integrated team?

Interviewee: Yes, yes, and that is when it first really started to feel like, uh, you were being disassociated from your whole team because, uh, the people who were out west, they were concentrating on the west work. And so, uh, they were on your team, but you didn't have much, uh, interaction – you had some interaction but not a lot – because they were really concentrating on their stuff, and uh, you didn't really start to get interaction until you basically took over something that was sold in the west, or a person in the west took over something that was sold in the East. Like a product, like Centrex, that goes by all different names, but it's all over the place. The person that was from GTE that had it, they are sitting down in Texas and they had you know, Centrex West, and somebody else had Centrex East, and you didn't really talk much. Because you are guided by tariffs, and there was really no need to talk. That was the first time where you started to be on a team, and there was very little – you didn't have to interact that

much with the people. In fact, as it went on, sometimes it was like people would say we have to get together, just so that we know the rest of the people whom you've been dealing with. And that is also where, now, with everybody being scattered around… we just moved another layer around, our people were scattered all over the place… it was….. At first, people tried to do some face-to-face meetings to get together as a team, and then between budgets, and no one really loves to travel, especially when you have to go on a three and a half hour flight, and have to stay overnight, and stuff like that, so they became less and less, and so it really just became you know, everybody's in their own little cubical, doing their own little thing.

Interviewer: So the folks… in the early days when you were together, an integrated team, when you were doing East and they were doing West, when you actually had discussions, or email exchanges, those kinds of things, what were the tone? What was the feeling of them?

Interviewee: In the beginning, I just felt a little bit of protecting your turf, but that started to loosen up. And I think that started to loosen up as… I think the big time it really started to loosen up was in 2003, when we had fifteen, sixteen thousand managers leave the company, and they really had to restructure, and the teams really became really diverse, and that is when it sort of disappeared. Uh, I think uh, the other problem too, that caused a little animosity was a lot of times the people at the same level at GTE were making way more money. And I think that was because GTE had a policy that said, uh, every time they asked somebody to move, you got a little

bump up in pay. And it was like, you would talk to somebody, and it was like person was from Missouri, and now they were down in Texas, and you'd say how'd you wind up there, and 'oh, I've been with the company twenty years, I've moved six times'. And you would be like, six times, we think of a move as when you move from one group to another and stayed in the same building. And they…'oh I was in Illinois for a while, then I was in Missouri, then I was in Tampa, and now'… but why? Oh, every time you take a job that requires you to move, they would give you a little bump up in pay. And I think some people found out that people that were reporting to them were making more then them, and that didn't sit right. But most of that disappeared in 2003 when so many people left the business.

Interviewer: Okay, so during the merger with GTE, did your perceptions or feelings about the employees of the former Bell Atlantic change at all?

Interviewee: No, because I think it was, um, once we merged with GTE, it felt… the people of Bell Atlantic, it was like… it was no more NYNEX/Bell Atlantic, we all felt Bell Atlantic, so it was like the East people and then the GTE people, so uh, if anything it strengthens your bond, because we were from the East and everything. So, like I said, it started out a little rocky with uh… with GTE… but after a while it got smoothed over and now you wouldn't even notice the difference.

Interviewer: Okay. But initially when you first merged, it strengthened the bond between Bell Atlantic and NYNEX?

Interviewee: Yes, it did.

Interviewer: And it really kind of gelled you as one company?

Interviewee: Right, it did. Because everything was either former BA or former GTE. And

so a person that was former BA – in fact, it was kind of funny, just as an

example of myself, I was reporting to somebody at the time of the GTE

merger – I was reporting to somebody who physically, the director, was at

1095 here in Manhattan. And I had never heard his name before, but that

was nothing new, because people coming in and out, plus he was younger

than me, and I just assumed he was a former NYNEX person, and uh, one

day we were talking and I was mentioning some names to him, and he said,

I don't know any of those people because I came from Bell Atlantic. I said,

oh you did, and he said, yes, my first job was down in southern Jersey area,

and I had a couple of field jobs in Jersey and then I moved into Newark on

staff, and when I got this job, instead of staying in Newark, I figured I could

just come across the river. So, uh, you didn't even realize it after a while.

Interviewer: Okay. How well integrated do you think the employees are today?

Interviewee: Uh, I think outside Verizon Business – because that really is almost like a

separate company – uh, outside of that we are very well integrated.

Interviewer: So do you think there are any lingering perceptions off former NYNEX,

former GTE, former Bell Atlantic at this point?

Interviewee: No… not at all. Especially after Basking Ridge was announced as the

corporate headquarters. Directors and above all had to go to Basking Ridge,

it was like… uh… you know… in Marketing and all, directors and above

are all in Basking Ridge, you don't even think of it anymore. Uh, it's been

like a few years, and even your teammates that are sitting in Texas, yeah, they are in Texas, but we are so spread out now, that it really doesn't matter anymore.

Interviewer: And based on your experience, is there anything that the leadership of the organization could have done differently to improve, or speed up the integration?

Interviewer: Uh, yeah, the one thing, and a lot of people talked about this, is, um, when they merged – even all the way back to the very first merger, back to Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, why did you leave people just sitting where they were? Uh, so you merge, for example – I'll use the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX one; you merge – make a decision and decide where you want your marketing department to be. And if you want your marketing department to be in New York, then everybody whose in marketing has to work out of New York. Decide your engineering people can be out of Baltimore, because that is where you want your engineering department, and then have all engineering, except obviously field support, in Baltimore. Same thing with Finance, you want 'em in Philadelphia…. The only reason I am using those examples is that it seemed like after the Bell Atlantic merger that's how things gravitated. Most marketing stuff was in New York, uh, Finance, a lot of it was in Philadelphia, and engineering was down in the Baltimore area. And then a lot of government stuff, regulatory, government affairs, was down in Arlington. Uh, and you had marketing too, don't get me wrong, but it did, people … a lot of people said well the downside is if I am

sitting in New York, and you determine that marketing is going to Virginia, uh, oh, I have a decision to make. Quit the company, or I have to sell my house, and move my family, and that's not fun. Obviously if they pick New York, and you're in New York, okay fine. But I think that would have quick… that would have been a quicker way to speed up the integration. And, uh, it may have cost…. math… it may have had some downside, first beginning number one you may lose some employees, because they don't want to relocate, and of course the math costs now for employee costs for relocation, but I think, you know, in the long term… ah… I think the company may benefit by having designated areas. Only because, like, just take marketing, if you have all your marketers… all your marketing in one location, the corporate leadership can see, you know, who's the better performers. It's a little bit easier when everyone has walked the talk, and you see people in the elevator, and the cafeteria, you get a sense of whose who and uh, I think there is more intuitiveness that you can figure out… who you should be promoting, who you should not be promoting, that type of thing. I think unfortunately, with people being so dispersed nowadays, sometimes for a younger person, and that is my reference, because I am more closer to retirement than a younger person, that if you are looking to get ahead, and you are in some remote location, it becomes that much harder because you are remote. Like the example today, if you are a young person, it almost behooves you to be in Basking Ridge, even if you are not a director, because you get noticed more. You can be doing a great job, and

sitting in Virginia, this building, Texas, whatever… and you might get noticed, but all things being equal the person as qualified as you, doing as good as a job as you, if they are sitting in Basking Ridge, they are probably going to get noticed before you do. So… that's where I was going with that. And then, uh, the whole thing when you try to bring teams together, travel, meetings, the ongoing expenses all the time, travel, you run into a lot of that. The downside in the beginning is your forcing people to relocate, and you have expenses with that, but I think the upside long term is you get a better evaluation of your staff, and then you can also save on expenses. That's just, you know, my opinion.

Interviewee: Okay, nothing is bad – that is what we are looking for. So, is there anything that I haven't touched upon that you can recall over the multiple mergers, especially around the interpersonal relationships with your teammates or that you observed, that I haven't touched on that you think might shed light on the experience.

Interviewee: The only other thing was that universally – whether it was Bell Atlantic/ NYNEX, GTE/NYNEX, GTE/Bell Atlantic, East/West, whatever, no one likes to travel, and everyone saw that as imposition, whether it was for… I don't think people minded if it was like a once a year, two or three day conference, where you are bringing everybody together. Well, you got…. if you want to bring everybody together, that is fine, ya know, but where its, ya know, your boss is down in Texas, and he wants everybody to come down for a one say staff meeting, or, uh, you have to meet with a vendor,

but you have to go down to Tampa to meet with the vendor, or a couple of people are getting together and they have to do it on site, we're going to do it in Boston. No one likes to travel. The Texas people didn't like to travel, New York… no one likes to travel. And now I think that is the one universal thing…with all of the mergers… that people didn't like. I know people would think about working in certain areas – not so much areas but certain individuals, only because they would look in the… someone told me he did this. He saw a job posting, and it was kind of interesting, and he had the qualifications, and then he looked at the org chart, and he saw the director was in Texas – this was before the Basking Ridge thing – so his director was in Texas, he saw that six of the eight people were in Texas, and he looked at the VP, and some of the other directors, and everybody was in Texas. And he said, aw, forget this, this is a Texas based job. I said what's wrong with it? He said you are going to be flying down to Texas two, three times a month for meetings all the time. He said, I don't want that. So, I think that… people just don't want to travel.

Interviewer: Okay, cool, thank you.

Interview #25 New York

Interviewer: So, for the record, you with NYNEX at the time of the Bell

Atlantic/NYNEX merger, correct?

Interviewee: Correct.

Interviewer: So during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, what were your

perceptions of the merging company? In your case it would be Bell

Atlantic.

Interviewee: My perceptions of the employees, meaning were we looking forward to it,

or…?

Interviewer: What did you… did you have any preconceived notions about what Bell

Atlantic people were like? And during the course of meeting them, what

were your perceptions of them and what were your interactions like?

Interviewee: Okay, you know what… I feel like… before I came to NYNEX, I worked at

public relations agencies for about nine years. And I had gone through one

very memorable merger so I kind of came into the merger with a

preconceived idea of how it was going to be…. Um, I don't know if this is

good for your study or not, um, but my experience previously is that

everybody is nice and lovey dovey in the beginning, all 'we're going to

make this one great company' and then in the end, um, I was with a firm

that was bought by another firm, so I was the acquired firm. And in the end,

one by one, they took our business and let… you know let all of us go. So

my thinking, when I was with NYNEX, even though it was a merger I felt

like we were being bought by Bell Atlantic. All right, so my thinking was…

I was with NYNEX, we were being merged, but to me it was like we were being bought by Bell Atlantic, cause we were taking their name… although [name omitted] was still going to be on top. I think initially it was a shared thing, but eventually, but… okay, to get back, so how were my interactions…. Actually they were very good, I remember being very suspicious, I remember telling people … this was in 1996… the merger was in '96 … in 1996 I remember thinking my job was okay – 1997 I remember thinking I am going to be looking for a job… because I am with the company that was being acquired and even though everything is all lovey dovey, it's not going to turn out that way. But when I think back about what really happened it was really a… a good merger. I worked with this woman, I don't know if you … [name omitted]? Does that name ring a bell? And she was working with [name omitted] and [name omitted] from Bell Atlantic? And they were putting together this whole plan about what's going to happen when, um, I guess there were meetings with both teams. There were meetings with fifth levels at NYNEX about how we were going to I guess everything from the spokespeople – we had Mary Alice Williams, they had James Earle Jones – to I guess the roll out of signage, um, it was…. So the original question was what were…

Interviewer: What were your perceptions of the employees of the merging company, and what were your interactions like?

Interviewee: Okay… my perceptions were, because I was being acquired, I was, I just could say I felt kind of cautious and guarded …. My perceptions were they

definitely seemed knowledgeable, and thinking back to my first meetings
with people, it was… I was always cautious, but we were meeting, we were
talking about different game plans about how we were going to get it done,
so it was good. The communication was open, both teams worked together
to put in plans, it was… you know looking back now I would almost say it
was a healthy merger. That was my experience. So I guess that was….

Interviewer: How do you think the folks from Bell Atlantic viewed the NYNEX folks
during the merger?

Interviewee: This is just my, uh, my perception… and just because I felt they were the
acquirers, I just thought they thought they had the upper hand. Like
nothing… not from anything that was done or said, but um… just my
perception is oh, these people have the… they're from the company that's
um, the buyer, so um, they have the upper hand.

Interviewer: And were you on a team that was heavily integrated between the two
companies?

Interviewee: Um, it was… there were two… I was with [name omitted] with, you know,
branding and signage, you know I remember meeting [name omitted] and
[name omitted] and then there was another… were they on calling card or
something at the time… so I was also meeting like different product
managers, too, you know… I remember being with people from Arnold
Advertising, you know, at some kind of tradeshow or conference, and they
wanted to reach out… talk to the Bell Atlantic people. And ultimately we

did end up working with them. So I guess I was on two… two different teams.

Interviewer: So when you came together, the two teams were integrated together, and you started working day to day with Bell Atlantic employees, what were those interactions like?

Interviewee: [long pause] I am trying to… I am trying to remember… um, one was just kind of a planning team, the one with [name omitted], and then ultimately I want… I want to say it was [name omitted], did she have any… oh, yeah that was…. I am going to say that it was fine, but a lot of that was 'cause… I was in a group, and I think you were in this group Patricia…. no you weren't, now that you know the people, with [name omitted] and [name omitted] – they were bullies. I kind of felt like they were going to, you know, reign supreme, whatever, so when people kind of… there were people from Bell Atlantic kind of coming on board, I feel like they would probably say it wasn't a good experiences for them. I know it wasn't for one person on our team… but um, overall I am thinking about different things I did with different people from Bell Atlantic when I was with NYNEX, and it was okay. A little… like… stumbles, but it was okay, it wasn't, you know, I am not remembering anything horrible. Anything worse than like the current reorg [reorganization] we are going to go through now. Its just kind of… you know this isn't a merger, its just kind of a reshuffle, and that, to some extent, that is just kind of like what is happening now, it's a reshuffling of… it's a reshuffling of players… it just almost like a reorg.

Interviewer: How well…you already kind of answered this, but how well did you work

together initially and then over time did that change? Better/worse?

Interviewee: I'd say, you know I am thinking of all these different people, over time it

was fine, um, there might have been a few personality clashes, you know, in

the beginning, um, it happened to be somebody from NYNEX and

somebody from Bell Atlantic, but I don't know, I think that would have

happened has there not been a merger. It was just part of a regular reorg. It

wasn't like the people from Bell Atlantic weren't getting along with the

people from NYNEX, it was a pretty good… I thought it was a pretty good

merger. The economy was good, you know, people weren't worried about

losing jobs, you know… the economy was good and we had also just gone

through – that was in '97 – three years earlier I was with New York

Telephone, we kind of… it wasn't a merger exactly, but we went through a

name change with NYNEX, and we started working with people from New

England, so in a way this was almost like the follow up to that. That was

kind of a smaller, you know, smaller melding of groups or organizations,

and this, and now this was like two bigger companies were coming

together.

Interviewer: And when the merger with GTE happened, how did you feel about the

employees of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Um… the employees of GTE … um [long pause]… I am just trying to think

back to the merger, you know I feel like I was more involved with merger

stuff with the Bell Atlantic merger. I guess maybe because I was on that

team with [name omitted]. GTE…I guess maybe for me it took place a little more secretive, because we were changing our name to Verizon, and I remember having to do a radio commercial, but nobody could tell me the name because it was top secret…. People… I remember people contacting me from GTE, and talking to [name omitted] and she was like why are they contacting you? I think maybe a little less, I don't know, organized? A little more… my memory of the GTE merger is a little fuzzier…. The only thing I do remember is that when we were kicking off the name change, you know, Verizon and GTE are coming together, we are now going to be… uh, Bell Atlantic and GTE are coming together, we are now going to be Verizon, that was taking place at the same time as the union contract was up, I remember that being kind of bizarre, that there is probably going to be a strike – and there was – and we're saying hey, we're this great new company…. But, um, it felt like the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger was a little more, um, happier, better feelings than the um….

Interviewer: And with the merger with GTE, what were the interactions with the people…first of all, how integrated were you? With GTE people?

Interviewee: I wasn't involved in much… it was a little more secretive… I… I….

Interviewer: I mean post-merger….

Interviewee: Bell Atlantic/GTE was a little more secretive… uh… okay post merger… post merger how was it? Once the merger … um… once the merger was done, again, [name omitted] and [name omitted] were still there, you know they were bullies, they came out on top, um there was something that if you

wanted to work for them, you had to move to New York, so I guess that's probably… I guess people from GTE wouldn't have been too happy about that, so um, I am trying to think how it was working with GTE people…. Over time it became more integrated, but at least in the short term, if I am remembering it correctly, the integration was a little slower, I think, to kick off.

Interviewer: And the integrating in terms of just putting people together? What were the interpersonal discussions like? What was the tone of the discussions, the meetings, the emails, those kind of things?

Interviewee: I would say kind of secretive going into the merger, after the merger – am trying to remember after that merger – um, there was a strike… I am not even remembering a coming together or a meeting, I am just … I know over time, the companies kind of merged, maybe it took like a year or so. So [name omitted] left, [name omitted] from GTE came in, and then I guess, we started – she brought in some people, she brought in some GTE people… I guess maybe it took about a year, maybe longer, to be more of an integrated, you know, more of an integrated group.

Interviewer: And when you started to get more integrated, how were the relationships?

Interviewee: It was okay. It was okay… um… yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. During and after the merger with GTE, did your perceptions or feelings about the employees of the former Bell Atlantic change at all?

Interviewee: Can you read the question again?

Interviewer: Okay. During and after the merger with GTE, did your perceptions or feelings about the employees of the former Bell Atlantic change? So your former Bell Atlantic co-workers, did your attitude or feelings about them change at all?

Interviewee: After the merger with GTE? No.

Interviewer: Okay. How well integrated do you think the employees are today?

Interviewee: Bell Atlantic and GTE? Um…

Interviewer: Or even Bell Atlantic and NYNEX.

Interviewee: Um…. I feel like our systems are not well integrated [laughs] but uh, employees? Bell Atlantic and GTE, I would say it's good. Um… and I guess I am thinking about individual people…oh, she's GTE? She's good. Um, she's good. And Bell Atlantic and NYNEX? Um, I'd say it's….from my little place, I'm sure other people might feel differently, but I think it's… I don't hear people complain about it… I think its fine.

Interviewer: So, like looking back, when you think about Bell Atlantic, at what point did you stop thinking of the companies as Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, and start thinking of them as just Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Ooh… I am trying to think of how long a branding campaign takes place. If I had to throw out a number, I would say six months to a year after the merger 'til you start, you know, by the year point, maybe you start thinking of it at the six months point.

Interviewer: And do you think you felt – the Bell Atlantic and NYNEX folks – felt they were one company at the time of the GTE merger?

Interviewee: Um, yeah, I would say so… I feel like you kind of have to go with the new, you have to kind of go with the new, and its been three years, otherwise … you know… you have to be open to change, yeah, so I would say yeah.

Interviewer: And what about the Bell Atlantic/GTE people? Starting to think of themselves as Verizon?

Interviewee: How long does it take?

Interviewer: How long did it take?

Interviewee: How long did it take? Okay that was 2000?

Interviewer: 2000

Interviewee: Okay, and that was during the strike, I feel like that might have been quicker. And I don't know if it was the strike, or if it was just two different groups creating something new? Um, I feel like it might have been faster. You know, I am going to say it might have been six months. Um, and I guess I am just thinking, during the strike I worked in a garage, and we had to peel the Bell Atlantic signage off the trucks because we didn't want the strikers to attack us, you know, to know that we were management people. And so, um, Verizon seemed to be … and maybe because wireless was part of it… Verizon just seemed to kind of take off. People just kind of seemed to know, and maybe it …it felt like less of a regional company. I guess maybe it had more of a national presence because of GTE. I remember talking to this young girl on an airplane who lived somewhere in the middle of Texas, you know she asked me what I did, and I said I worked for Verizon, and she said 'oh, Verizon'. And it was Verizon Wireless that she

knew, but she was – I'm going to say she was a middle school girl – um, from the middle of Texas, and yet she knew Verizon. Um, whereas like previously from Bell Atlantic someone from the Midwest wouldn't necessarily know Bell Atlantic. So, uh, I am forgetting the question [laughs].

Interviewer: Its okay, I think you already answered it. So, my last question, based on your experience, is there anything you think the leadership of the organization could have done differently to improve or speed up the integration?

Interviewee: Um… I feel like when people are secure, you know there is more sharing, more forthcoming, I feel like if I look back at GTE I feel like it was secretive, and I think maybe it was because the people heading up the department I was in, weren't sure if they were secure in their positions, and they didn't want to divulge too much. But I think that once people are named and they are sure of what they will be doing, there is more of a forthcomingness. There is less… you are dealing with less… you don't have to deal with people's insecurities.

Interviewer: So, you think that naming people quickly or moving quickly is something that would help, is that what you are trying to say?

Interviewee: Um… yeah. Yeah. Because it creates more certainty. I think what makes it hard is the uncertainty. And if you name people quickly, and put together a mixed team, it diminishes that period of uncertainty. So, uh, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So, looking back, is there anything I haven't touched upon, that you would like to add, that sticks out about the interpersonal relationships? Either with Bell Atlantic and NYNEX or then subsequently with Bell Atlantic and GTE?

Interviewee: Interpersonal relationships… I guess I feel like if people – and again this might just be my perception – but I feel like if people know they have jobs, at the end, and they always said don't worry, there's enough work for everybody, I feel like it creates a better atmosphere than if going into it… they are viewing people as competitors, you know, for possible jobs, versus, you know, lets all work together and create something good. So, uh, I guess to make it better, providing some kind of job assurances would make it better. Um… I guess, yeah, that's ….

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interview #26 New York

Interviewer: So, for the record, during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, um, I

um, assume you were with NYNEX.

Interviewee: I was with NYNEX.

Interviewer: Okay, um, during the merger of Bell Atlantic and NYNEX what were your

perceptions of the employees of the merging company, in this case Bell

Atlantic?

Interviewee: Uh, my impressions as a NYNEX employee of the employees from Bell

Atlantic is frankly that they were a step ahead of us, that they did things a

bit more progressively than we did at NYNEX, that they were just a little bit

ahead of the issues than we were at NYNEX. Um, and I don't know

whether that's because, some would argue that well geez you're based in

New York, you're a New York company you should be ahead. But, um, I

have a feeling that it was probably as a result of their more Washington

influence, and that lent them that perception of being a step ahead. Um plus

I think uh, their chairman, from the stories I've heard, a guy named [name

omitted], um, was more of a, lack of good or bad, I can't describe which,

but more of a showman than our chairman [name omitted], well, [name

omitted], and [name omitted] were. And that he would do things and, and

impress upon his staff to do things with a bit more flamboyance, a bit more

um, excitement, um… I'm probably not describing that correctly, than we

here, when we were NYNEX, when we were at NYNEX New York and

New England. Which was, you know, go about your business, you know,

keep shoveling, keep chopping the wood, day to day to day and whatnot…

so I think that was probably my impression of them.

Interviewer: Ok, so that's sort of a collective group but what about one on one

interpersonal dynamics. When you talked with them, met with them, what

were these like?

Interviewee: Um, they kind of reflected that um, I did think that they were probably a

little bit more uh, into their jobs, a little bit more aware of the issues, than

we were at NYNEX. Um, I mean, I kind of include myself in that too

unfortunately, but that's just kind of the way I viewed them.

Interviewer: How did that manifest itself in like, literally like in spoken work, emails,

stuff like that. Did it come across with a tone, an attitude, a demeanor, or

anything like that?

Interviewee: No um, I don't recall email being as big then obviously as it is now, so

maybe not an email, um, but it was more in face to face meetings or group

meetings… um, I wish I could describe it a little better than that, or recall

some particular instances but I can't. But it was just more um, just more of

an awareness that they just seemed to be a step, a half step, ahead of us.

Interviewer: And the group you were in, was it highly integrated with Bell Atlantic or

were you sort of kept separate?

Interviewee: Um, as I recall, I think we were pretty quickly integrated, um, well actually

yeah, actually we did because since we were in the media relations group

and we were planning a lot of activities for the launch, which was in the

summer of 2000… as I recall, I think?

Interviewer: Bell Atlantic/NYNEX was in '97. 2000 was GTE.

Interviewee: '97. Since we were um, planning , um a lot of launch day activities we had

    to plan together going back even several, you know, many months before

    that. So, so there was a lot of integration and then once the launch happened

    we just continued working together. So I think, and keep in mind we're a

    pretty small tight knit group, we're not like one of the network

    organizations where we have 40,000 people, or something like that. I mean,

    you know a group of maybe I dunno, 50 people or so maybe at the time.

    Um so I think, I think we pretty well integrated leading up to then the

    launch and then we just continued our integrated approach after that.

Interviewer: So when you were integrated were you integrated under a single director, or

    an executive director? I'm not sure who your boss was at the time but like,

    were you integrated working together two separate teams? Or did you

    literally combine the two groups and you had a single?

Interviewee: As I recall we integrated the two groups and had one single director and…

Interviewer: And was that director a NYNEX or a Bell Atlantic person?

Interviewee: Um, I believe it was uh, a NYNEX person, but you know, it was just by

    luck of the draw… in other areas there were Bell Atlantic directors so um…

Interviewer: So did you see any issues with that from the Bell Atlantic people at all, or

    was it you guys just got together and you were fine.

Interviewee: I think we just got together and we were fine, um, and we also, I think we

    also felt that um, we were from the same Bell culture. And even though

    keeping in mind I still had that opinion that maybe they were half a step in

front of us um, we were… I'll revert back to what we called ourselves then, we were still the phone company, we were both phone companies, we happened to be in New York and New England, they happened to be in Philadelphia and D.C. and the other states. Um, but we still had the same issues, we knew how things worked around here kind of thing. Um so those kinds of issues we kind of felt that we were on the same level, same kind of thinking, same way to approach things, same way to deal with things.

Interviewer: Okay, how do you perceive the folks coming in, the Bell Atlantic employees, perceived the NYNEX employees?

Interviewee: Uh, it's funny I don't think that they perceived the NYNEX employees… I don't think the Bell Atlantic employees perceived the NYNEX employees as being a half a step behind them, um… I don't know why I say that 'cause um, I wasn't in their shoes, I'm not in their shoes. I don't know what their thinking was but I don't think that they viewed us as being half a step behind them.

Interviewer: That's kind of interesting. So you perceived, your group perceived yourselves as half a step behind but they thought you were on the same level.

Interviewee: Yeah, I think so. That's just my perception. I mean, others at NYNEX you know, may have felt the other way. May have felt that because we were you know, the Northeast and New York and Boston, jeez, we had you know, and advantage on somebody else but personally I didn't think so.

Interviewer: Okay, and um how well did you work together initially and then over time?

Interviewee: Um as I recall, and again keep in mind this is all, you know, several years

ago…

Interviewer: Long time ago

Interviewee: Actually eleven years ago, right? Um as I recall I think we worked pretty

well um… there were a couple of… um… I guess management actually at

the higher management issues within our department where there were two

people at the same job um… so there was kind of, some, I don't know,

weeding out I guess, um, and I know one person at the top of the

department at um, Bell Atlantic retired, and then our vice president became

the vice president of the department. And then even at a Vice President or

an Assistant Vice President I guess maybe we called it at the time. There

again there were two and um, and one person left. So I mean those kinds of

things kind of got settled over the course of the next six months or so. Um

so I guess for a short period of time just by nature of bringing two staffs

together you had maybe two people doing the same job or whatnot. But I

mean as I recall they always got solved fairly quickly and fairly painlessly.

Um, but again keeping in mind they were kind of small…small, roughly

small organization things seemed to work out well as I recall.

Interviewer: So how long do you think it took before you guys were working together as

like a seamless team?

Interviewee: Um… again keeping in mind that we had to do some work in order for the

launch to open, some public events and I remember we hung a banner, a

huge huge banner outside the building um, maybe 3 or 4 months afterward.

Interviewer: Ok, but you've been working together for 3 or 4 months at prior to that so 6 to 8 months, something like that okay?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: When the merger with GTE happened how well or how did you feel about the employees of GTE that were being merged with Bell Atlantic?

Interviewee: Um, well I guess the first thing is they were coming from a more diverse background than we were. Uh, and now when I'm saying we, we were employees from Maine down to Virginia, so that was the new Bell Atlantic. Um, but the GTE employees were from a more diverse probably geographically background. I mean they were from all over the country. Uh, I mean, a lot of the employees had come from the Northeast because GTE had been in Connecticut, um but what I found is that most of the folks that I dealt with in our own department were from California and Texas primarily, but you know Florida and just all over the country. So there's just that different thinking in other places around the country I think than just the kind of the Northeast and Middle Atlantic. Um, and I also, even though they, um, were also a quote phone company as we were, I think they had a bit different issues than we did. We were always the market leader in all of our cities, they weren't the market leaders in all their cities. They were, they certainly knew the technology, in some cases they had better technology I think than we did… um but, um, not quite exactly the same kind of company. Not the same kind of Bell company that NYNEX and Bell Atlantic were when they merged together, um, they were a communications

company, they were a phone company, but they had a little bit different hat

on than we did I think.

Interviewer: And how did the differences, geographic differences, and the mind-set

differences, how did they manifest themselves as the two groups started to

come together and work together?

Interviewee: Um, again I wish I could provide some specific instances, you know, and

anecdotes but I can't, um, I just can't recall. I'd have to come back to that if

I can.

Interviewer: Okay

Interviewee: Probably can't.

Interviewer: No

Interviewer: I mean specifically like the first time when your teams met. If you could

think back to that time, um, did you just have, did you feel like you were

talking the same language, did you feel like you were talking the same

language, did you feel like people were open? And willing to work together

right away? Was there any concern, guardedness, conflict initially?

Interviewee: I think there were some, well again, there was with the launch of Verizon, it

was much like the launch of Bell Atlantic when those two companies

merged, because we were forced into planning things beforehand to be

ready for um, the launch in the summer of 2000. I mean, there were, as you

probably recall, there were, all those things go through the FCC [Federal

Communications Commission], you have to develop statements, you have

to develop message points. And we on the Bell Atlantic side can't do it

alone, they on the GTE side couldn't do it alone, so we had to do it jointly. Um, so there was already that work that had been going on much like the other, and the earlier merger, so there was working together on that. Um, but as far as, and there were also some issues as I recall of people being in the same jobs. Um again, not so much at the lower level, or even at the mid-management level, but really at the top of the house, top of the department. Um… but they did seem to get worked out in a short period of time, either through transfers to other departments or people leaving the business of their own will.

Interviewer: So the issues that got worked out were they, was it conflict, people you know, were there any type of difficulties in terms of just getting the work done initially or not?

Interviewee: I don't recall any... no, no, I think we kind of knew that we were… um… in a different position that other departments. Um… like the operations side of the business, and actually on their side of the business there probably were rules in place that they couldn't work together before the actual merger happened, but we naturally had to because there were things that had to go into development, during the approval process, during the regulatory process leading up to it, then on the launch. And then you know, get the business, at least externally, get it moving, get it, get our name out there.

Interviewer: Do you think the focus on a common goal during those discussions obviously getting the launch, if you will, the merger launched, etc., in the

media, do you think that contributed to the working relationships that you had with the GTE folks?

Interviewee: That we knew we had certain things, we need to get accomplished and there were dates and yeah, I think so, yeah… yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. During and after the merger with GTE did your perceptions or feelings about the employees of the former… um… Bell Atlantic change?

Interviewee: The original Bell Atlantic? Well it's kind of tough to tell because um, they were then us, if that makes sense, it was we.

Interviewer: Had you already started thinking of yourselves as we? Or do you think the merger facilitated that, the merger with GTE?

Interviewee: Um well no. When I say we I then am now describing the combined Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, um, so even though my impression at the beginning was that they were half a step ahead of us, um, we um, after working together for 3 or so years, I think we worked well together. And I don't think I, that feeling of them being half a step ahead of the NYNEX people continued after that because we were working together fine. And I guess now that I'm thinking about it, maybe I, again I never thought about this, but maybe we as the NYNEX people were then brought up to speed to work at the Bell Atlantic level. Does that make sense?

Interviewer: Uh huh. No, it does. Perfect. Um, how well integrated do you think the employees are today?

Interviewee: Um… I think the um, Bell Atlantic and the Verizon people are integrated pretty well…

Interviewer: So the GTE, you mean the GTE people?

Interviewee: I'm sorry I mean and the GTE people are integrated pretty well. Again at least in our media relations, public affairs and communication world I think they're actually very well connected.

Interviewer: So there's no conscious thinking of somebody as a GTE person versus a Verizon person?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: No?

Interviewee: No. I mean you kind of know who are the people you know who are still around who you've known for, you know, twenty years who were NYNEX or New England telephone or whatever. But I mean you may know that as, because you know that person, but uh, and you knew that that person grew up in Boston, or that person grew up in Philly, or something like that, or went to school in Philly or something. But, uh, I mean, but it doesn't enter, I don't think it enters the thinking when we're having a meeting or working on a project or anything of that sort.

Interviewer: Okay. Based on your experience is there anything you think the leadership of the organization could have done differently to improve or speed up the integration?

Interviewee: Between Bell Atlantic and GTE to make Verizon?

Interviewer: Between Bell Atlantic/NYNEX or then Bell Atlantic/GTE?

Interviewee: Um, there's always things you can do differently and probably do things that would improve on the integration. But I think the top of the house of

the company, companies, um, I think that they knew that you need to get these employees working together. You need to. So if it means you know, having a director, or an executive director in Los Angeles have a staff that's in New York and D.C. and Tampa than that's what you have to do. You know, it's awkward, but that's, it's almost like a force fed, but so I do think that that kind of integration was stressed to help the integration happen. If you kept East people working for East people, and you kept Los Angeles people for Los Angeles people I mean, you'd never…

Interviewer: So you think the mixing up or integration of the groups across state geographic company lines helped.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yes I think you have to force it, I mean people naturally I think would stay with something that's comfortable. And you'd be comfortable working you know, with your boss down the hall or uptown or something like that. Um, but I think you have to force it.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And I think they did.

Interviewer: And then um, just looking back is there anything I haven't touched upon that you can recall about the interpersonal relationships across either mergers your dealings with the people day to day, or anything that stands out in your mind?

Interviewee: Uh, I'm going to kind of get into the New England part of it here. Um, I think if you look at the history now thinking of the merger, if you want to call it, the merger of New York telephone and New England telephone, um, those two groups were at odds. And New Yorkers didn't want to be associated with New Englanders, and New Englanders didn't want to be associated with New Yorkers. Um, and we were NYNEX for… I don't know, I forget how many years, whatever, whatever number of years, um, but then when the merger came with Bell Atlantic I think the New York and New England relationships, people relationships, kind of solidified because even though you were in different camps so to speak, you were on the same side. And here's this group of people who were now coming from Philadelphia and D.C. and Charleston and whatnot, and even though going back to what I said before, they still had the same issues, they were still a phone company as we were and what not…. It was now we're on the NYNEX side, we're New York and New England and we're merging with you who are from these other cities and other areas, so I think that kind of solidified that. And I think that kind of grouping, um, together happened each time. So in other words, the Bell Atlantic then while the former Bell Atlantic and the NYNEX people were on different sides. They solidified when Verizon, when GTE came along. Um, and it was then, don't take this the wrong way, it was then us against them, and I don't mean us against them in a bad way. I just mean it was you're on one side, or you're on the other side. So it's kind of like, it's kind of like actually the mergers have

been good, because just for argument's sake, say we were still stuck in the NYNEX world. Um, you'd still have people saying, you know, oh you're in New York, oh you're in New England, and it doesn't matter any more. You know? Um, it I don't know if that matters much, but it's kind of, you've kind of seen those alliances form.

Interviewer: Taken in that perspective when I ask a question about how well integrated do you think the employees are integrated today? If you take it from the New England/New York perspective and then what happened with NYNEX and Bell Atlantic when GTE merged, looking at that employee base today, do you still think that NYNEX, that Bell Atlantic and GTE are completely one?

Interviewee: Yeah I do.

Interviewer: You do?

Interviewee: I do yeah.

Interviewer: You just think time brought that about?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think so. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Anything else?

Interviewee: I mean I do, as I said before there's still a subconscious that a particular person has a GTE background, or has a NYNEX background or whatnot, but I think, and frankly I think we are all consumed with our business and getting our jobs done and moving the company forward. I mean, we're so incredibly busy to be perfectly honest and so much is expected of us that even though you may know that in the back of your mind, that a person has

that kind of background from a geographic area or a company background,

it's kind of like just in the recesses of your thought process. It doesn't enter

into the discussions, the activities you're doing, or anything of that sort.

Interviewer: Okay, great. That's it. Thank you.