

JCIBook.net

Internal Communication



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Communication is the result of human need to “tell”, to transmit information to those around. According to some field specialists, there are five fundamental “relational” needs that are at the same time objectives of every communication process: the need to be understood, the need to be known, the need to be valued, the need to influence and the need to be intimate with others. Therefore, we permanently feel the need to say something, to show, to explain and to make known our thoughts and intentions.

If we feel the need to say something that we consider to be of significance and we don't do it, we will start to express ourselves involuntarily, in a hidden way, through obvious anxiety, perceivable inner tension or even aggression. Whatever we do, we can not stop to communicate (according to Palo Alto representatives). It is not proven yet if the human is the most communicative being on Earth, but it is scientifically proven that for us communication is vital and it stays as a fundament to any social structures.

Basic organizational activities, such as: objective and resource planning, development of different strategies, decision making and implementing actions are not simple, linear process. The complexity of interests involved, the unexpected situations, peoples uncanny reactions can make even the most organized actions seem ridiculous. **Without management's intervention to coordinate, to synchronize and harmonize the time and space of action, judgments and facts, the entire process would lack the cohesion, continuity and dynamism that allow goals to be achieved. And the fundamental component of coordination is, in fact, communication.**

Any organization implies two directions of communication: internal and external. Internal communication represents the exchange of information between different hierarchical levels or on the same level, with the purpose to assure a good internal relation and understanding, and to achieve organizational goals.

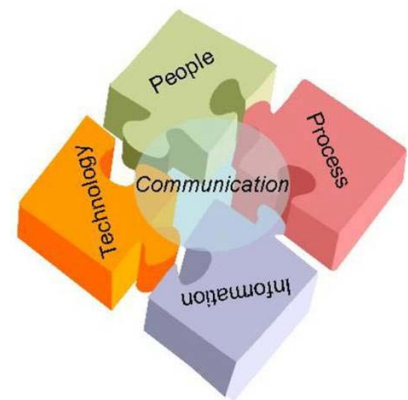


This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



In the american journal *PR News* is presented a study that **analyses the connection between efficient communication and business performance**. The core idea of the study is that everything in an organization starts and ends with an efficient internal communication strategy that has the fundamental role to create a feeling of community and participation that lead to a positive grow of the company. There are presented a series of guiding lines for a good internal communication:

- Follow a formal procedure: the study revealed that the most effective companies build for themselves proactive communication plans, coordinate internal and external communication, have a strategy for documenting communication, organize polls to verify employees level of understanding key messages, grow an organizational culture that supports sharing of information inside the company;
- Use employee's feedback;
- Develop different forms of rewarding;
- Use communication technology;
- Develop a bidirectional "open line" for employees.¹



Well informed employees usually display greater enthusiasm and relaxation when it comes to their work. The fact that they are content being a part of the big family of employees often extends in favorable external communication: they become free will ambassadors, promoting a good image while sharing their benefits with their families and friends. On the other hand, **frustrated employees**, unhappy with the internal communication in their company, multiply and transfer their frustration to those who they interact with.

¹ Cf. *Internal Communication: Tying Employee Motivation to Organizational Goals*, in *PR News*, Potomac, January 29, 2007, Vol. 63, Iss. 4, p. 1

While the company grows and its needs amplify, the competition also is developing. So, a company's advantages compared to its competition can manifest in three different fields:

- the use of the ultimate and most efficient technology;
- the use of the most successful work and presenting systems;
- having efficient employees.

As the first two can be bought and used by the competitors also, management's attention must be directed to the third one: the quality of the employees. Well prepared people will be able to use technology most efficient, will find and develop efficient systems and equipment.

The ability to learn faster than the competitors can be the only real advantage. The efficiency of any company grows with the efficiency of its team. And studies show that the key element for the unity and success of any team is good communication.

English author Pam Jones considers communication as the vital ingredient of success, especially for complex teams where the feeling of belonging and common goals are not as easily understood and lacks face-to-face communication. The mentioned author reveals some suggestions for a positive and productive working environment:

- *creating a clear communication strategy* – it is important to determine who needs, what kind of information and it what timeframe and form;
- *developing a sharing responsibilities network* – sharing responsibilities creates new communication ways and allows interdependent relations to develop;



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



- *building the feeling of trust and belonging* – the trust we have in our colleagues and the feeling that our work is of use in the current activities helps the growth in teams efficiency;
- *developing together* – in any team, the members have the need to learn and grow together in order to consolidate their relations and ease their activities.²

In her article *Go team: Five steps to building a peak communications team*, author Rebecca Hart talks about **the connection between internal communication and human resources**. In her opinion, big, successful companies recognize the importance of internal communication in transmitting managerial messages through human resources, marketing, training or other means. Communication influences all business aspects and it requires a **strategic system for efficient communication** within the teams. This involves five steps:

- to be aware of the fact that a bad employee costs more;
- to hire competent people;
- to build a team;
- to establish key indicators to measure communication;
- to give time – it takes time for a new employee to accommodate and understand it's responsibilities.

² Cf. Pam Jones, *International*, în *Training Journal*, Ely: August 2006, p. 15



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Internal communication is addressed to management, employees, unions, shareholders, branches and different formal or informal groups within the organization. **The person that is responsible for internal communication knows all these audiences and has the mission to elaborate communication strategies suitable for each of them.** Only in this way there can be developed messages according to their expectations, wishes, social beliefs, ways of understanding, knowing that all employees are surely different in competence and motivation.

Regarding to the different styles of internal communication, we can take a look at Josh Smythe's classification: the "**Tell, Sell, Consult, Involve**" spectrum (or in Smythe's terminology "telling, selling, inclusion, co-creation"). Nothing new here. But the argument is strongly put that:

"...internal communicationis in danger of becoming an overused and corrupted tool of the command-and-control leadership style. Many internal communicators find themselves to be little more than post hoc sense makers running behind their bosses trying to craft coherent messages." (p.173)

On the basis of his research with McKinsey, Smythe argues that:

"...employee engagement is significantly driven by the degree to which people are usefully included in the decision-making process both day-to-day and in big-ticket change, crisis and transformation. (p.5) The underlying discipline which influences the practice of employee communication needs to shift from mass marketing to individual and collective learning. (p.11) ...Such a shift will require a complete rewrite of the way organizations communicate and engage with leaders and employees. (p.12)³

³ John Smythe, *The CEO: The Chief Engagement Officer – turning hierarchy upside down to drive performance*, Gower, 2007



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- *Internal Communication: Tying Employee Motivation to Organizational Goals*, în *PR News*, Potomac, January 29, 2007, Vol. 63, Iss. 4, p. 1
- Pam Jones, *International*, în *Training Journal*, Ely: August 2006, p. 15
- John Smythe, *The CEO: The Chief Engagement Officer – turning hierarchy upside down to drive performance*, Gower, 2007
- Rebecca Hart, *Go Team: Five Steps to Building a Peak Communications Team*, în *Public Relations Tactics*, New-York: September 2005, Vol. 12, Iss. 9, p. 14
- Nancy Hatch Woodward, *Make the Most of Team building*, în *HRMagazine*, Alexandria: September 2006, Vol. 51, Iss. 9, pp. 72-76
- Nelda Spinks, Barron Wells, *What makes a good leader? The role of communication*, Executive Development, Bradford, 1993, Vol. 6, Iss. 2, p. 25

Ioana Nicușan

Trainer at **Development Training Consulting**



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

