

GUIDELINES REGARDING EFFICIENT COMMUNICATION WITHIN MODERN ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract: Efficient communication is one modern organization's key to success, strengthening from within the employees' confidence in the vision and mission of the organization, pinning them down to the reality of their workplace, feeding the development process of that entity, facilitating the necessary amends towards progress and contributing to the change of employees' way of being. On the outside, the image of the organization, the discovery of new opportunities and the relation with the society depend a great deal on how well this continuous process of communication is being conceived and managed.

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Under the influence of the changes in the economic, political and social activities, as well in the info-communicational revolution, today more than ever, managers must undergo a multilateral performance training in order to face the situations related to the overall success of an organization. Experience, outlook, conduct, efficient communication skills in general and persuasion of the entourage in particular, prove to be of essence in spotting out and avoiding the difficulties and inherent risks of a restructuring process, substantiating adequate solutions to the complex issues of Romanian organizations. Or, the economic, functional and structural evolution of the organizations pertaining to the national economy sector mostly depend on the communication methods of managers and on the persuasive strategies enforced in their activity. Holding onto multiple advantages communication is an important strategic resource of maintaining and/or increasing performance.

Communication is that continuous process through which data, information, instructions, ideas and feelings are conveyed from individual to individual and from one group to another. Thus, communication presumes the transfer of the sense and meaning of a certain message sent to the interlocutor, depending on the way the conveyed message is being perceived.

Communication is essential for the efficient coordination of the activities implying such connections; it is a process for the materialization of which it is necessary to build communication channels that may transmit ideas, knowledge and exigencies. The qualitative dimension focuses on the maintenance of a mutual understanding attitude, on creating and developing a motivational climate as well as on assuring the solving of demands and claims in an amicable manner.³¹⁵

In order to achieve its goal communication must be good and efficient. One method of communication is considered good if the message sent to the receiver is understood. The efficient communication is the one that manages to send a relatively short and clear message understandable by the receiver and at the same time prone to assimilation in order to forward it. As a comparison between good and efficient communication, the latter implies motivational related elements meant to positively influence the receiver, to trigger acceptance of the message and its enforcement in life.³¹⁶

Realization of such an efficient communication supposes optimal dosage of data and information conveyed. One too vast, or, on the contrary, too small amount of information influences in a negative way the efficiency of the activity within the organizations. Likewise, forwarding a substantial volume of information in a short period of time has bad consequences on the established target.

Employees of certain organizations with a good communication feel connected to the normal evolution of facts and understand the way in which their actions may support that activity. New comers link themselves more quickly to the culture of the respective organization and face much better the changes that may be demanded of them by the management in certain situations.

In other words, organizations communicate more and more but – considering the technological progress – they prefer the more modern and faster ways to send and receive messages. Measuring up the communication process becomes compulsory to design, apply and modify – where necessary – the communication strategy of a company or of an organization, in order to enhance its profit.

Of course, some may wonder how the separation of the communication process from the organization's development related factors was achieved. And the answer is simple: communication is the foundation for the other company related factors, like investments (shareholders invest more confidently in a transparent organization with a predictable future), a performing management (the true managers are in fact leaders who bring their team to success especially through a motivational internal communication development), human resources and their clever

315 Luminița Gabriela Popescu, *Comunicarea în administrația publică*, Economic Publisher, Bucharest, 2007, p.11.

316 Stancu Șerb, *Relații publice și Comunicare*, Teora Publisher, Bucharest, 2006, p. 36.

use (people give the greatness of success), brilliant ideas (without communication and team effort they cannot be put to practice), tenacity-endurance (communication is the only catalyst for building and maintaining a constantly performing team throughout the years).

In situations when the other factors are approximately equal, efficient communication is the only one to make a difference, being the most important vector influencing radically all the others.

Efficient communication begins with listening to the other. Listening is not a behavior. Listening is a status of availability to the others and to what they have to say. It means to give the others all the importance and to unconditionally recognize them in the moment of communication. To really listen doesn't mean to nod, to utter sounds like "aha", "hmm" while staring in their eyes. Listening means to do one's best to understand the point of view of one's discussion partner. It is indicated, especially for business men, to listen at least as much as they talk. Many don't realize that an efficient communication is a double process: we send information and receive information. Thus, while their interlocutor speaks they often think about other things that distract them. It is commonly known that during a conversation, besides listening to the other, thinking is also functioning. Meaning that we get distracted by a thought that has nothing to do with the subject of conversation or we think about how to respond to the other and what advice to give our partner in conversation. In both cases, attention is diminished. We can reach the highest point of attention (thus of real listening) if we are able to stop the flux of thoughts and try to just listen. Studies show that employees who are not listened to by their managers would lose motivation, would feel unappreciated, missing more hours from work, facts that would lead to a great fluctuation within the organization.

Communication is one of the most difficult tasks of a manager. The source of most communication problems is the difference between the content of the message or its intended impact and the way the other organization members receive it.

One of the most appropriate methods for the manager to be more efficient is for him to check the impact of his words and actions on those around him. So the key is to trigger their reaction, the feed-back, which is risky. In intimate relationships, the more trust they gain in one another the more open they get. But in an organized context things change, on one hand because the manager has the power and, on the other hand, because information is distorted as it passes through informal communication channels. There are methods to develop an efficient communication strategy which gives managers the certainty of a correct reception of the conveyed message as method to obtain the needed feed back.

In order to increase the performances linked to the organizational communication, the majority of managers develop their ability to process the information obtained from their subordinated employees and to transmit a quick and concrete feed-back. Such feed-back assures a good reception and understanding of the message, adjusting the information to the receptors' characteristics, social balancing by flexibility of roles and functions held by the receptors as well as increasing the work satisfaction. Organizations are more and more interested in implementing such instruments, because the productivity rate of every employee depends greatly on them.

Beside a good salary package, bonuses and benefits, for a worker will always count the working environment, the way his access to information and development is or not facilitated; he needs to understand his own role in applying a strategy and the impact he will have at a certain point on him and the others, the way he relates to his colleagues and other teams, the managerial practices, or, in other words, the culture of the organization. All of these are key factors for keeping a good employee and, through informal communication, to attract new ones. The bases of an efficient communication always start with establishing the targeted audience.

Developing a community the employee feels he is part of, is crucial for preserving the talents. Communication inside the organization becomes an essential weapon for any entity that wants to exist on an ever competitive labor market.

Based on the organization developing such practices, the way of communication differs from one entity to another. Some of them developed own tactics, specific to their field of activity, other chose to implement some Western "rules" that worked on other markets. Internal communication started to find its way up on the Romanian company managers' agenda, especially on the multinational ones.

One organization having internal marketing is more interested in the faith of the employee beyond the professional stiffness. Internal communication channels are as important as they may become at any time the conversation subject between friends, increasing its notoriety.

While the Romanian organizations use mainly vertical formal communication, the Western ones and the multinationals passed on to more complex techniques, meant to keep the employee closer as an individual.

Maintaining a steady control over the conveyed information but also assuring the understanding, receiving and fulfillment of obligations, objectives and tasks is much better controlled by using the vertical formal way of communication. Such an organizational communication proved to be efficient especially with the organizations having multiple employees as long as it is backed up by other types of inter/intra departments communication.

In order to have an efficient communication one must firstly know one's audience. That's why an important phase is audience segmentation in order to set up the tactics. Dialogue openness is the first change in attitude; employees are more available to presenting their opinions about what works and what needs amending, about their

expectations and problems, these having a major impact on the results, many times helping the simplification/improvement of some processes, technologies and services destined to clients/citizens.

At present, internal communication lies in constructing the correct relations types, with no regard to status, hierarchy, politics, personalities and technologies meant to contribute to the consolidation of the image of one's organization because image is a way of communicating. Practically, it is the way the internal communication may add to its value.

In order to be sure that in the entities they work in, communication goes on in good conditions and the feed back is at its optimal range, many managers rely on certain ways and procedures through which they find out if what they conveyed is properly received by employees. Also, by these methods they may find out about opinions, problems and other suggestions the employees may have about their tasks. According to the study results performed by HR in Romania³¹⁷, among the most popular ways to improve organizational communication are the following:

- Open meetings;
- Inter-departments meetings;
- A more correct adaptation of the organization chart to an efficient communication, both horizontally and vertically;
- Realization of an internal newsletter;
- Mail messages to the entire organization;
- INTRANET;
- Preservation of contact with the employees. Maintaining permanent communication channels.

Those organizations which manage to effectively communicate with their employees have a four time bigger probability to report an increased level of employees' commitment as opposed to less efficient communicative companies.

Also, there is the feed back not only between manager and subordinates but also between managers themselves. When talking with their superiors from a hierarchy point of view, managers face many of their subordinates' problems when they are given the possibility of feed back. When they speak with their underlings they must know about the standards the underlings must reach, the degree to which an employee must improve its performances and the consequences of an alleged failure. Having as main subject the manager's expectations of performances, communication should begin before the actual hiring of the underling.

There are within organizations types of communication in a horizontal plan or on a diagonal/oblique one, as methods to improve coordination between different departments. It also may be the case that people from technical departments coordinate their activities and exchange information with the engineers, creating the need to communicate horizontally (communication between equal titles holders within the hierarchy of the organization). Oblique communication is the least used modality because it crosses the traditional authority hierarchy lines. Employees situated on uneven hierarchy positions from different departments may still feel the need to directly communicate among themselves especially when that means avoiding time loss.

Due to the fact that it links directly the emitting party to the receiver, oblique communication may prove to be more efficient and precise in certain situations than the traditional ways of communication.

Communication may follow several directions: from top to bottom, from bottom to top, and sideways. The up-downwards communication is used to convey messages to superiors and may take up different shapes like *memos*, organization politics manuals, bulletins, direct orders and statements regarding the mission. This type of communication is essential to the proper functioning of an organization, but harms its survival if it becomes the only acceptable way to transmit information. This type of unilateral communication may halt innovation causing increasing dissatisfaction among the organization's employees.

There must be a balance established between the up-downwards communication and the down-upwards one because messages conveyed from up downwards lose their true meaning and their motivational power due to the distortions introduced while crossing the hierarchy levels.

The down-upwards communication permits a free informational flux in the organization. Free circulation of information may be improved by putting in practice by managers of certain communication policies (the policy of "open doors", free discussion sessions between managers and employees, and so on)³¹⁸.

The employees are being eased into the different aspects of the organization environment and need a communicational channel through which to share their knowledge with their superiors. Recent practice showed that managers who receive feed back from their underlings are more efficient in fulfilling their tasks as the others. There are certain aspects that may cause failure of the communication process. Usually managers communicate personally by direct impersonal contact, but also formally by memos, orders, speeches and other.

*"At the core of most managerial communication problems are the issues of perception or credibility. None of us sees the world as it is but as we or our reference systems or "maps" describe the territory. And our experience owed perceptions influence to a large extent our feelings, convictions and behavior."*³¹⁹

317 www.hr-romania.ro.

318 Luminița Gabriela Popescu, *Comunicarea în administrația publică*, Economic Publisher, Bucharest, 2007, p. 210.

We find in communication the explanations of misunderstandings, disapprovals and even conflicts; in the barriers people – managers and executives - put up more or less intentionally in the way of communication.

Thus, every organization, public or private, must develop a communication strategy built on the organization's objectives and attributions as an essential part of the overall strategy.

Communication means teamwork and the department of communication cannot function efficiently without the support of all colleagues and without their expertise in different fields.

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