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The Internal Communication -
The Road to a Performing Organization

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Abstract: In the context of growing interdependency in the world, the organizations have to resist to the challenges they are confronted. Our assumption is that a performing organization has to develop an effective internal communication base on the leadership style and on the cultural organization. As a method, we used a questionnaire survey applied to some employees from a public organization, on a random selection. We measured their perceptions (self perceptions) upon the relation manager-employees and between employees, with focus on internal communication.

Keywords: communication; management; leadership; efficiency; effective; performance

1. Introduction

For the success of an organization, communication and management are elementary and complementary disciplines.

Specific forms of managerial communication have been driven by management evolution since this type of communication is a fundamental component of management. Thus, for modern management, communication is very important because it is regarded as a vital part of the management system for any organization.

As stated some authors, manager "is represented by the person who performs the functions of the management in view of the objectives, tasks, competences and responsibilities specific to the function he/ she occupies." (Burduş & Căprărescu, 1999, p. 84). Management functions are exercised by the manager, which means she/he controls , exercises leadership and takes certain decisions that influence the activity of others.

Members of an organization spend most of their time communicating in one form or another, regardless of their position in the hierarchy. The ways and practices of communication have become increasingly important for all types of organizations.

In the present paper, we started from the assumption that the internal communication is influenced by leadership style and organizational culture. The research objectives can be synthesized as follows:

- to identify the relationship between internal communication and organizational culture;

- to identify the relationship between internal communication and leadership style.

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Based on the above stated objectives, the following working hypotheses were formulated:

H1. Constant and good internal horizontal communication between the employees has a positive impact on the efficiency of the organization.

H2. Good vertical internal communication depends on the leadership style and has a positive impact on the efficiency of work teams, leading to the performance of the organization.

2. The Internal Communication, Organizational Culture and Leadership Style

2.1. Internal Communication and Team Roles

The purpose of this study is to investigate, in an empirical manner, how communication, in general and internal communication, in particular, affects the organization's culture and how the leadership style affects the efficiency of an organization.

The definitions given to the communication are varied. In fact, communication means a simple fact: by practicing it, man tries to establish with others a relationship through which ideas, information, attitudes and opinions can be disseminated.

Each organization, in part, builds its own model of communication based on organizational culture, the organization's specificity and the organization's perception of communication. Internally, there are teams of people who have created their own style of communication, including a specific communication style that is circumscribed to the organization's integrated communication strategy, purpose and goals.

Because we are talking about an organization, the internal communication is one part of the organizational communication and refers to the relationship between the managers and the employees and between employees in order to exchange opinions, values, means and organizational culture.

Fayol considered that the operational efficiency could be improved through managerial practices and defined the five elements of management: planning, organization, authority, coordination and control. He introduces the so called ""the scalar Chain" that represent the organizational hierarchy and stated that in order to avoid the conflict both the communication has to follow this hierarchic chain.

Beside the fulfillment of certain objectives, the internal communication will lead to a better understanding of the employees, to a culture of communication at all levels and this will contribute in building trust, and stimulation of employees' involvement and in encouraging the diversity.[1]

In respect with communication, we also speak about public relations. From public relations point of view the internal public is as important as the external public. We have to have in mind that the employees of an organization are image carriers. That's why, when somebody realize an internal communication, the programmer must not forget the aspects regarding the efficiency of messages and the direct relational with the employees.

Also, the internal communication is a team work and it needs creativity as much as the external one.

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[1] *Apud* Adina Tudor (Translater): *Forum for International Communications*. În original, Bruce Berger, "Employee and Organizational Communication". Copyright Institute for Public Relations. November 2008 (accessed on 12.01. 2018)

A common sense definition states that a team is a small number of people with complementary abilities that pursue a goal, achievement goals and a common approach that they consider to be mutually responsible.

An important contribuition to the development of the studies of teams inside the organisation was brought by doctor Meredith Belbin who, for many years, work with a team at Henley Management din MB, studying the activity of managers. She evaluate their behaviour, the personality and the style of thinking and ended with identified what she defined as team roles.[1]

An overwhelming role is the tendency to behave, contribute and interact with others in a certain way (www.belbin.com).

The nine roles can also be related to the preferences of individuals when they act, think, or focus on others (see Table 1). The table should be seen as a set of guiding lines for the component of a group, as employees need to be able to play different roles, depending on the situation. and move from one role to another within the group (Rees. W. D.&Porter, C., 2005, p.90).

Table 1. The Belbin Roles

Action-oriented roles	People-oriented roles	Thought-oriented roles
Draftsman	Coordinator	Source of ideas
Implementer	Team worker	Evaluator monitor
The one who finishes	Researcher of resources	Specialist

Source: www.belbin.com

Team role describes the typical pattern of behavior of a team member over others, which can help or hinder team efficiency.

Identifying the role a person can play is important because it allows:

•the person who forms the team to make better choices as to the composition of the team;

• to know the individual better so that they can organize their strengths and weaknesses and work more efficiently in the team, and

•team to adapt the way it responds to the requirements of the proposed task.

The major factor that leads to achievements under expectations or lack of effectiveness in team work is the faulty communication.

An effective team accepts and recognizes the strengths and weaknesses of its members and harnesses the strengths of each member. Members recognize that each person's contribution is important (www.belbin.com/belbin-team-roles.htm).

So, we can summarise that a good communication through good public relations give us a good image for the organization.

On one side, through the internal communication could be realized the fundamental of a good functioning of the organization and that's mean the elements that lead to progress such as: the construction and promotion of the organization identity, the organizational culture (values, traditions, ways of life).

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[1]www.belbin.com.

On the other side, the internal communication is also a way of implementing the managerial strategy, of solving the need of belonging of the employees and a key of passing without great losses in the difficult periods. So, internal communication is also playing a social binder.

The specialists in communication refer to G. Hofstede, who uses an interesting metaphor: "internal communication is like a organizational software." (Ardusatan & et all, 2003, p. 20).

In the view of some romanian authors, the internal communication is also important for the multitude of objectives it can accomplished through this: information, motivation, loyalty, concerted efforts, team building support, building and strengthening of organizational culture, socialization, integration of new employee (Ardusatan, M. et all, 2003, p. 118).

The organization does not make the most of its full human potential because it does not give a high priority to effective, bi-directional internal communication that, according to Scott M Cutlip (Cutlip, 2010, p. 245), is the basis for the relationship between management and employees and overall performance in the fulfillment of tasks on duty.

Joe Marconi (Marconi, 2007, p. 129) states that employees and employers should want to work together well, to support each other's interests and to avoid any relationship of adversity or "we against them". Communications that occur within the organization are all internal communications.

Internal communication within an organization is important for its cohesive functioning and ensuring transparency across multiple departments. Lack of coordination and internal information deficit can be a major source of internal friction and embarrassment for an organization.

Internal communication doesn't just serve to bring different departments in unison, it also works to bind employees to their organization. Internal communication plays a vital role in helping employees understand the values and priorities of the organization.

2.2. Leadership Style and Organizational Culture

Internal organizational communication is an important determinant of performance for any organization. Internal organizational communication has the potential to contribute to the development of internal relationships in the organization, to motivate employees, to facilitate all the process of the organization.

From the perspective of the organizational phenomenon, people communicate through interaction, which leads to the development of organizations. Internal organizational communication is the result of the interaction between organizational culture and leadership that manifests within that organization.

Internal communication refers to the process of social interaction between employees of an organization. Any professional, formal or informal contact between members of an organization is likely to be analyzed by internal communication.

Speaking about internal communication we also discuss the organizational culture and the leadership styles. In the opinion of Nicolescu & Verboncu, the leadership styles are organically connected with the managerial styles (Nicolescu & Verboncu, 2007, p. 514).

Organizational culture is the interference between the individual and the community, which includes collective thinking standards that differentiate members of a particular group from others. These are values, norms, beliefs and habits that individuals share with members of the community (Ogbonna, 1996, p. 149). The organizational culture can have a deep effect upon the organizational performance

Cheney and Christensen (2001, p. 231) appreciate that we are currently talking about integrated organizational communication, including external organizational communication (public relations, marketing, crisis management) and internal organizational communication (relations between employees, mission communication and implementation of the organizational development strategy).

As it is well-known, in a knowledge-based society, the main assets of an organization are people, information and knowledge created in the interaction between people, therefore internal communication is a central process through which organizations can create value.

We agree with other authors' opinion who writes that being a leader is the special ability of the manager who wants to motivate the employees toward a common goal (Dobrescu, 2010, p. 120).

The leadership style of an organization provides the conditions for a healthy organizational climate and effective internal communication. Different currents of thinking have characterized leadership and its implications on the performance of the organization. Actually, the main effective style is that adopted to the context because the organizations, their leaders, the employees' characteristics, the tasks and the structure are unique.

We take into consideration the presentation made by Huczinsky & Buchanan who refers to a participative style that is more efficient than an authoritarian one. The participative style could improve the efficiency of the organization and stimulates the employees to come with ideas. This style also leads to the elaboration of a better-quality decisions (1996, p.62). The authoritarian style could suffocate the creativity because they do not use the experiences of the employees, but is efficient under pressure of time.

2.3. Research Methodology. Results and Discussion

In order to achieve the research objectives and to test our hypothesis we used a sample of 45 respondents who are employees of a medium public organization in Romania.

The method of sample selection was randomly and the responses were collected in January-March 2018. We succeeded in filling 45 questionnaires applied face to face (the interviewer and interview-respondent). Our sample is consisting of 20 female and 25 males and the age is varying from 18-23 years category which is the most representative (15 respondents), follow by the 24-30 years category (13), 31-36 years (11 respondents) and between 37-45 years are 6 respondents. In the same time, there is a greater ponder in the sample for those who had another job (36 respondents) and 19 who did not have a job. 34 respondents are in position of execution and 11 are managers. Regarding the level of studies, 12 studied the high school, 25 respondents are graduated and 8 respondents declared they have a PhD degree.

In order to test the assumptions, a set of 12 questions were asked, the 12 items are of Likert's scale type going from total disagreement (1) to total agreement (5).

We have made a correlation between the dimensions of leadership and internal communication. Between all dimensions of leadership and internal communication there is a positive association.

Q1. In your opinion, the manager's communication with the employees is often:

Total ineffective	Ineffective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Effective	Very effective
1	2	3	4	5
		1	**25**	**19**

As we can see, 44 respondents appreciate the manager communication with the employees, 19 respondents considering being very effective.

Q2. The manager supports us in reaching our objectives:

Total disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree, nor agree	Agree	Total agree
1	2	3	4	5
		1	**23**	**21**

We have the same results, 44 respondents confirming the manager's support in achieving their goals. We remark that 21 of them are totally agreed and these figures also indicate a supportive leader.

Q3. The communication between manager and the employees is realized frequently in both directions (Both from manager to employees and vice-versa):

Total disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree, nor agree	Agree	Total Agree
1	2	3	4	5
		2	**17**	**26**

At the third question, 43 respondents agree that the mutual communication is satisfactory, total agree being at high rates, 26 respondents.

Q4. How do you appreciate the online communication inside the organization where you work?

Total ineffective	Ineffective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Effective	Very effective
1	2	3	4	5
	1	**23**	**19**	**2**

Regarding the online communication 21 appreciate as being effective but we can remark also some neutral answers given by 23 respondents.

Q5. Do you consider effective the use of the following channels for sending information about the activity in your organization (new decisions, policies, events or services changing)?

Q5.1. The traditional channels (meetings, direct communication, afichages etc.)

Total ineffective	Ineffective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Effective	Very effective
1	2	3	4	5
			20	**25**

Q5.2. The on line channels (e-mail, intranet, Facebook etc.)

Total ineffective	Ineffective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Effective	Very effective
1	2	3	4	5
		13	**30**	**2**

When they receive information about their organization, in respect with the channels use more often for communication, the respondents are in favour of traditional ones, 25 respondents considering them as very effective. Also the online channels are considered effective by 30 respondents. The preference for traditional communication could be explain as a desire to increase the human interaction

Q6. Make an evaluation on a scale from 1 to 5 regarding the importance of organizational culture?

Just a little important	Important	Neither important, nor unimportant	Quite important	Very important
1	2	3	4	5
		2	**21**	**22**

The organizational culture is important and very important for 21, respectively, 22 respondents. This could be linked with the previous question when the traditional channels were better scored.

Q7. Do you consider that the manager offers you, constantly, the information you needed?

To a very small extent	To a lesser extent	Neither to a small extent or to a great extent	Largely	To a great extent
1	2	3	4	5
	1	**3**	**23**	**18**

41 respondents consider that the manager offers the needed information and we could appreciate that this is also connected with the supportive managerial/leadership style.

Q8. Do you identify yourself with the values and principles of your organization?

To a very small extent	To a lesser extent	Neither to a small extent or to a great extent	Largely	To a great extent
1	2	3	4	5
		2	**25**	**18**

43 respondents are self identifying with the values and principle of the organization, in this way reinforcing the important of cultural organization for them. As we could see 23 express their opinion for a large extent.

Q9. What kind of leadership do you prefer at the top of your organization?

Leadership	To a very small extent	To a lesser extent	Neither to a small extent or to a great extent	Largely	To a great extent
Participative	1	2	3	4	5
	-	**1**	**11**	**31**	**2**
Authoritarist	1	2	3	4	5
	-	**8**	**10**	**14**	**6**

The participative leadership is appreciated largely by 31 and to a great extent by 2 respondents in comparison with the authoritarist leader that is largely appreciated by 14 respondents.

Q10. How effectively communicate among them the members of your organization?

To a very small extent	To a lesser extent	Neither to a small extent or to a great extent	Largely	To a great extent
1	2	3	4	5
-	-	**2**	**28**	**15**

43 respondents consider that they communicate well between them, 28 largely evaluate it.

Q11. Do you consider that is necessary a better internal communication from the manager in order to increase the effectiveness of employees?

To a very small extent	To a lesser extent	Neither to a small extent or to a great extent	Largely	To a great extent
1	2	3	4	5
		15	29	1

For the increasing of the internal communication, 29 respondents evaluate as being necessary.

Q12. Do you consider that you have enough information in order to fulfil your duties in the organization?

To a very small extent	To a lesser extent	Neither to a small extent or to a great extent	Largely	To a great extent
1	2	3	4	5
-	-	1	19	25

44 respondents consider that they have enough information for doing their tasks, 25 of them aprecciate to a great extent the posibbility to fullfill their duty.

The results suggest that the leadership style is very important for internal communication. Our study has shown that there is a positive association between internal communication, and organizational culture and internal communication and leadership.

Internal communication mediates the link between leadership and culture. Communication becomes the mechanism for transmitting and implementing leadership and culture, a decisive element that can influence organizational performance. Thus, our hypotheses are valid.

The present paper has a certain limitation because we use a small sample from one organization, many of respondents being young, with not so much experience. But what we remark, in the sample, is that a great number of respondents are in favour of direct contact with the leader, so agree a direct communication. In the future we have to extend our research in regard with the number of organisations from the same field.

3. Conclusions

As Grunig (1992) also states, communication is now widely recognized as the "key to organizational excellence and effectiveness".

The internal communication is a complex process and is vital for the success of an organization that evolves in a dynamic global environment.

The staff is the most important asset of the organization and the most important category of the organization's internal stakeholders. Employee's perception of internal communication, organizational culture and leadership style is the best diagnosis of organizational health and a barometer for management in order to adopt the necessary measures.

In this paper we used internal communication and not organizational communication because we consider that the last comprises two dimensions: internal and external going in parallel with the process of public relations. In an organization, the employees internalise the values, the habits, the way of

behaviour of their colleagues and in the same time, the way the leader (we used the leader because a manager is also a leader) behave with them, how he is involved in the life of organization, how often they share impression, thoughts, etc.

If the leader propagates a transparent communication this lead to the growth of sympathy and of trust in the organization. They are not alone but they are a team, they are together and have a common purpose. Organizational culture is important because it refers to the way communications are conducted within the organization. Improving organizational culture through appropriate communication practices contributes both to motivate the organization's employees and to improve the performance of the organization. Organizational culture thus has an instrumental role in supporting internal organizational communication.

If the manager encourages horizontal and vertical internal communication within departments and team-building activities, he will lead the organisation to a strong cohesion of employees, will create the feeling of belonging and all these will give the necessary performance. So, we tested our hypothesis and they are confirmed.

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