Corporate Communication Management. A Management Approach

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Abstract
Managerial communication assumes the analyses of the managers’ communicational behaviour, which has as aim fulfilling of tasks and organizational objectives, by working with people. A major objective is: to develop and share the necessary knowledge for growing managerial efficiency - (Smeltzer, 1996). As some of the specialists have noticed, (Smeltzer 1983), The management sees communication as tool for achieving the aim, something that is needs to be used in relation with the objectives organization has, taking in consideration the issues related with the analysis of costs and benefits. Various studies have searched to look into this domain within the frames of social responsibility, which does not ignore the responsibility to have respect for the people as well as for the planet. Managers are people which have responsibilities for taking decisions, for the organization as well as for their subsidiaries (Hill, 2003). Those people are spending a large part of their time interacting with various types of public, with the structuring of the problems which appear on the various processes, as well as with the establishing of the strategic and main financial decisions and company objectives. The company success assumes the development, motivation and in the very end keeping close well performing employees. It is also necessary that managers are keeping themselves extremely connected to the informational sources in order to be able to react as soon as possible and eventually adjust the objectives and the strategy (Suchan2006).

Keywords: management communication, communication efficiency, corporate communication, organizational performance

Classification JEL: M12, M14

Introduction

Corporate communication domain develops a large interest in the scientific community as well as the business practices, especially in the last 40 years, due to the global changes of the world business environment. Many specialists do agree upon the fact that exists a great influence of the corporate management communication over the organization performance. That is the reason why it is a big try in getting the interest of the top management for the corporate communication, even thaw, sometimes, the
communication specialists are having the problem of justifying their role and value within the company. The recent economic crises have affected the jobs related to the PR and communication not only by cutting down the budgets but also by cutting down the job positions (Moreno et al 2010).

Top managers are not seeing the corporate communication programs as major factor in increasing the business figures, but there are studies; especially some made by Forman and Angenti, which states exactly the opposite. They are underlining the effect that a proper communication program developed at the level of the organization, has a direct and pretty precise effect over the increasing of the sales volume (Forman & Argenti, 2005).

Goodman, (2000), considers that managers should take strategic actions to maintain and develop positive communicational schemes and practises. The strategy needs to include all of the internal interested groups, but also it has to be applied to the external environment. The main aim of the strategic communication is to create an efficient internal environment and also to sustain a positive feeling between the employees.

The management of the corporate communication can be considered the key of the managerial strategy, due to the fact that his role implies selection of the messages related to company’s objective and various point of views, and then transmitting them to the interested parties. Communicators, as specialists of the domain, have to be prepared to handle complex communication actions. They have to be always informed about the internal activities of the different departments and all other related divisions of the organization, but more important is to have a close contact with the PR of the company: marketing, advertising, research and informational systems, in order to be able to handle successfully the existing pressure issued by the different category of public –mass media, stock-holders, economical analysts, etc.

A manager with decision power, plays a key role in development and maintaining corporate communication for supervising and coordinating the activity in different fields such as: public affairs, relationship with mass-media, internal communication. In business practice, the communication specialist has to lead the perception of the targeted public into the area of convenience asked and needed by the company strategy, even more, to be able to create a competitive advantaged. To be in a position to play a role in defining and implementing a strategy, the communicator has to be placed in the top management of the company. This enables him to have an active role in the process of decision making. In this way, all of the elements of internal and external communication can emerge creating an extremely efficient communication effect.

The functions of the corporate communication management, contain the handling of the public relation, internal communication, share-holder’s interaction, corporative advertising. All of this functions implies the communication with the internal public (employees) as well as external public (mass media, customers, public administration) which can be handled and controlled directly. Normally, the functions of the communication can be easily driven and controlled. The incontrollable communication, such as informal communication between the employees and between the employees and the external environment or reports send to third parties cannot be controlled directly, but it can be influenced if the management implements an efficient corporate management communication program.
The responsibility of the corporate communication management

The gap between the continuously growing importance of the communication for the organizations and the slow advancement of the professional communication functions, can be explained through a running analyses over the splitting of the communication responsibilities inside the organization. The communication requests of various types of public refers, usually to an entity as a whole one, such as a specific brand or a specific company. The organizations act normally knowing their own environment, market typology and the categories of public they usually interact, by defining the visions and the business models. So, the main responsibility for communication, and for all of the managerial strategic decisions are subject of the internal managerial meetings. Based on the juridical structure of the organization, manager, president, general manager, or members of the board are the first persons who are in charge of the communication activity. With other words, the general manager has to take the role of the main communicator and creator of the communication strategy, as well as the main supplier for coherent messages towards people interested. (Argenti, 2013, p.54). Therefore, executive managers are deciding about designing of the communication plan, by establishing the priorities and the main structure and resources needed.

Most of top managers have experience in business administration, so it can be assumed that they have the same expertise in communication. Most researchers conceptualize communication management in a traditional way, as simply transmitting information. Organizations transmit information through media objectives to stakeholders, leading to the transfer of meanings, and getting/induce desired reactions such as knowledge transfer, change of attitude and behavior. Communication specialists, however, support the idea that communication is a two-way process, interaction perceptions and guidelines are modelled subjectively to social level.

According to empirical studies, organization managers spend much of their time (up to 50%) communicating (Argenti, 2012, pp 53-54). Developing their interpersonal skills and small groups’ interactions and interaction with the media or large segments of public, contribute to organizational success (Zerfass et al., 2013, pp. 16-18). This also means that top managers will always have direct experiences and perceptions of communication that are not necessarily related to the concepts and practices of communication professionals.

In large organizations, it requires communication professionals’ departments to support top managers in their responsibility for corporate communication (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007, p. 16). From a theoretical standpoint, they are professionals working on behalf of top managers (Zerfass et al., 2014). As such, corporate communication is "indissolubly linked, by nature and necessity to senior management, he will have all the support from his staff in regard of public relations, which shall provide advice and give support to his communication" (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2006, p. 56). Communicators are specialized on the one hand, the development of public debates and messaging (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007, p. 16) and, on the other hand, monitoring public opinion and stakeholder interests, which allow them to support decision-making processes (White & Dozier, 1992). This duality of internal and external communication activities, has been proven in empirical studies of communication professionals. External communication, such as capturing public attention, influence customer preferences, motivating employees and building goodwill (reputation, brand, organizational culture) are typically more prevalent than internal communications, such as identifying opportunities and concerns,
managing public relations, adjustment of corporate strategies (Verhoeven, Zerfass, & Tench, 2011).

From this point of view, understandings, experiences and expectations of top managers of organizations are key factors in explaining corporate communication practices. New visions and models cannot be put into action if the company managers, board members, leaders of business units (ex. human resources, sales), and regional managers do not support such developments.

This can be achieved by the application of neo-institutional theories (Scott, 2001). The new institutionalism offers many opportunities to analyses organizations and communication interfaces. Scott (2001) and argues that organizational practices (ex corporate communication) is based on cognitive institutions, legal and regulatory. Pillar regulator includes rules, laws and penalties that constrain and govern organizational behavior (Scott, 2001, p. 51). Formal arrangements, such as a place in board, communication manager, reporting lines, or involvement in certain decision-making processes, are examples of this size. Empirical studies show that this is often influenced by general strategies and structure of the company, such as market concentration (business-to-business (B2B), business-to-consumer (B2C)), to mobilize international and situational factors/historical.

This means also that the general knowledge of various theories of communication within organizations makes sense, which is a strong argument against the idea that the struggle to join the dominant coalition is an appropriate and sufficient to achieve excellence in communication. Regulatory pillar relates to values and norms that influence behaviour (Scott, 2001, p. 54). The third pillar, the pillar of cultural-cognitive “is the distinguishing feature neo-institutionalism major in sociology” (Scott, 2001, p. 57). It describes common scenarios and beliefs that constitute social reality and are understood as such in most organizations. All three pillars are connected to each other as a product of the symbolic world (Sandhu, 2009, p. 100). More specifically, regulatory and normative pillars depend on cultural-cognitive pillar. Rules and regulations can create interactions in organizations where these rules, sanctions, values and expectations are known by their members. Meanwhile, makers “soft”, such as understanding basic concepts (ex communication) and expectations of organizational functions (ex, corporate communication) are usually limited to one organization alone, and common visions are divided equally among the various groups. General Managers and other top managers form a social class that differs from other managers (eg accountants, marketing experts, salespeople, IT staff, professional communication) in various ways. Although it is difficult to identify all the factors that influence (education, mentoring, networking, use of media), social scientists have been able to demonstrate remarkable patterns and attitudes consistent top managers.

Management of corporate communication and organizational performance

According to Nickson and Siddons (1996), lack of communication is the main cause of failures in inter-organizational relationships. Empirical evidence reveals a positive correlation between communication and variables of organizational performance, such as performance at work, job satisfaction (Petit et al. 1997), and work productivity of employees, in addition to variables such as individual performance, organizational performance and productivity of organizational. In addition, in terms of strategic,
management and marketing, organizational performance is of particular interest because it is important for organizations to gain a competitive advantage (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990).

We share organizational performance in two sets of performance: a variable for measuring financial performance (level, growth, variability profit reported either assets or to invest or to contribution of equity) and varying nonfinancial (achieving the organization's mission, performance at employment, professional performance, employee productivity, environmental factors, strategic, organizational factors formal and informal). For the measurement of financial performance of an organization, imposes measures, such as return on assets, return on investment, return on equity, sales, market value.

Measuring organizational performance, it can be made also from three perspectives: Management (innovativeness), human resources (performance and productivity at work) and marketing (achieving the organization's mission, market share, product quality, source to obtain advantages competitive structure of the industry).

Overall, the mission objective is to communicate organizational direction to the organization's stakeholders. Despite the fact that corporate organizations operating in multiple contexts (non-profit or profit) missions are designed to communicate positive image of an organization by the respective stakeholders. Some specialists suggest addressing specific domain, such as the goals, values and company strategies in order to correlate with the mission of employee satisfaction. As a result, for a successful and lasting mission reflects stakeholder motivations for engaging in the company. In other words, the task of the organization is also a driving force in strategy and, ultimately, its organizational performance (Kaplan & Norton, 2000).

Previous research demonstrates that an organization's mission is holistic in nature and relate directly to stakeholders. The communication of Berlo (1960) explains the role of corporate communication management in the organizational message transmission (mission). The organization can be seen as "sender" creating a mission statement (message) and communicate it to all audiences interested (receivers). In numerous studies, Corporate Communication holds the position of "controller" of the message of the organization. Therefore, achieving the organization's mission and strategic planning depends on communication. Management of corporate communication will help an organization to carry out its mission by developing a clear message sent to all stakeholders, internal and external, thus reducing uncertainty among members in order to continue the mission and vision of organizational, using appropriate communication channels. And unclear messages using a wrong channel of communication can create a misleading picture, sometimes even negative, so the mission of the organization and the organization itself.

**Core activities for communication management**

The literature listed multiple activities that managers generally undertakes in the organization. Of these, we list five most important management activities for corporate communication: audience response intuition, selecting the language used within the organization, identifying and shaping organizational typologies, diagnosis and communication effectiveness using bilateral communication.

Foreseeing how audiences will respond to messages sent by the organization, is a critical aspect of managing communication activities towards achieving the initially planned goals. There are many types of audiences to which managers communicate, and the desired results are various and very different. Managers are overseeing various groups
of employees, reporting to senior management, negotiating with different suppliers and union leaders, interacting frequently with customers and investors, by and with local communities and government officials, informs the media in respect of their achievement or their failures, and more. These audiences have unique needs, views and interests, may converge or even generate conflict and this changes over time. Responsibilities at work, language and communication habits also fluctuate.

Also, the categories of audiences which the manager is interacting during his activity are interdependent. They form informal as well as formal networks and independent to the managers. Effective managers are building also own networks, both inside and outside their organizations. Managers can neither dictate how their messages will be received. If a message has been read, heard or interpreted as intended, depends on many aspects and personal factors, all of them cannot be controlled by the manager.

Regarding the chosen language for communication within an organization where managers are people from countries other than that in which it operates, you must develop a repertoire of options from which to choose and follow protocols Business English Franca Lingua (BELF) when dealing with non-native speakers of English language in certain contexts. (BELF is a "simplified English" without complex phrases, idioms, jargon or unusual words.) Implies the user BELF they understand the content and not on the grammatical or syntactical correctness.

Organizational genres are represented by messages enshrined as they have with a typical content and the actions they generate. They are often associated with the roles they have each member of the organization. Research shows that a true genres include organizational infrastructure for managing communication activities. They channeling, rush orders and recurring work, facilitating the organized interaction between individuals with different responsibilities than (Zachery, 2000). They serve as collaboration tools and documentation.

Moreover, organizational genres draw attention to the types of activities that are important. For example, quarterly financial report standard, expect the numbers to be displayed in tables, rather than developed only in text, not only to make it easier for users to see, but also putting pressure on employees focus on profit.

Also, managers need to monitor diagnostic skills and constantly improve communication skills. Managers must be able to evaluate the effectiveness of messages and delivers them in the light of those realities contextual and discursive (Bhatia, 2008), approaches applicable to a specific context, may not work in another context. Messages must be created for receptors with different expectations and requirements and in continuing changing process.

Another core activity for managers is to use "speech interaction," activity that relates to oral and written discussions on the documents planned, developed and reviewed. These interactions can be face to face, within groups or between groups from different locations. When the persons who are conceiving messages, written concepts, they are discussing their projects with direct managers. When groups collaborate in the project development process or in parallel, they are involved in the interaction of speech. In oral communication, speech interaction occurs especially in moments of debate of the problems. The deputy manager provides then feedback to his subordinates having as aim to focus on possible solutions to the problem. Such interactions, speech on oral and written communication, are omnipresent in the life of a manager.
Conclusions

The research based on the overall impact of communication, on performance, tends to measure overall indicators of productivity, communication efficiency and employee satisfaction. It also requires that financial performance can be a result of corporate communication management, even though a relationship between those areas is not yet established, in other areas of marketing, communication reveals the existence of strong interdependence. Corporate communication has a function of "mediation", the interface between strategic and operational levels of communication management, which supports decision-making processes to ensure that communication processes are in line with the mission, vision and values of an organization.

Communication management is newer than other professional areas of communication. It creates a link between business and corporate communication, with particular interest to write and speak effectively on behalf of organizations. But it differs from other areas and organizational communication, the focus being on its oral and written texts that managers create and receive, and which they are responsible for, in order to achieve objectives with and through people.

References


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