

**КОМУНИКАЦИЯТА КАТО УПРАВЛЕНСКИ ИНСТРУМЕНТ
ЗА ПРОЦЕСИТЕ В ОРГАНИЗАЦИИТЕ**

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**COMMUNICATION AS A MANAGERIAL TOOL FOR THE
PROCESSES IN ORGANIZATIONS**

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Abstract

Managers have to be able to communicate effectively in organizations among many different functions. Managerial abilities depend on a great extent to how leaders perform communication practices within the organizations. Organizational success to a large scale is connected with horizontal or vertical communication. Thus, communication is seen as a tool to convey messages and at the same time as a tool that provokes organizational change. Not only can the lack of communication prevent an organization from achieving its business goals but also not appropriately addressing the employees as well. Last but not least, organizations are expected to improve their communication flows. Taking these main issues into account, the presented work outlines the role communication plays in organizations. The crucial ability to transmit messages taken out of business purposes is a central focus viewed not only in the present paper but it is expected to become more and more influential, as it can be further seen through social communication, communicative values and communicative practices in organizations.

Keywords: *communication, organization, management, communication change in organizations*

JEL Codes: *D23, D83, L20*

INTRODUCTION

The challenging question to investigate the communication as an effective tool within organizations could take some specific directions. One of the undoubtedly true perspectives in this regard is the one that estimates communication as interaction and information exchange. One of the most

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important functions that marks human interaction is expressed exactly through the process of communication. Communication can appeal not only among humans, but also among all living beings in general, between electronic devices and artificial intelligent agents as well. The application of communication theory is of deep concern for the progress of information theory, communication studies and even medicine and biosemiotics.

In order to adequately answer the research question it is necessary firstly consider the nature of communication and then to answer the research question how organizations use communication as a strategic managerial resource.

A simple way to answer the question of “what is communication” is the definition given in The Oxford Dictionary of English where communication is described as “the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing or using other medium” (ODE 2010, p. 352). According to a further reference from the Encyclopedia of Communication theory, the term communication is commonly used “in both broad and narrow sense, from simple human contact to technical uses as in information theory” (2009, p. 295). Littlejohn and Foss (2009) give additional insight in the abstract nature of communication by distinguishing human from non-human communication. They state: “Human communication occurs through the use of at least some mutually understood symbols” (2009, p. 296).

According the well-known Shannon-Weaver model (1949) communication has some basic elements. In general, they are described as sender, message, encoding, transmission, noise, channel, receiver, decoding, decoded message and feedback. The process starts by the *sender* and ends with the *feedback* from the receiver. The first step is made in the *encoding* phase, when message is conceptualized. *Messages* can take different forms, they can be *written, verbal* or *non-verbal*, which are transmitted through the *channel*. For example, when people meet and talk, the message is transmitted through the conversation; when people do not meet, sms, mails or letters are used. Gestures can also be a channel for submitting messages. The next stage is when the receiver gets the sender’s message. After that stage follows the *decoding* stage. The last stage is performed by the *feedback* transmitted to the sender of the initial message. Avoiding misunderstandings depends on how messages are encoded, transferred and decoded, that’s why every single stage of communication is extremely important. It can be argued that effective

communication can occur only if both the sender and the receiver use the same meanings to the same message. The process of exchanging messages may be accompanied by some barriers, which may occur at any stage of the communication. In general, the use of jargon, lack of intention, cultural difference can prevent new messages from being processed. Some examples of concrete barriers for communication in organizations are given by L. Hill. In her opinion (Hill, 2014, p. 142), physical separation (lack of contact among team members), differences in values and beliefs, gender or language differences, information overload or lack of trust disturb effective team communication as well.

The purpose of this work is to give an outline of the communication process and to provide an explanation about ways in which managers might be able to improve communications within organizations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Huczynski and Buchman (2013, p. 222) the central role of communication in organizations is due to the reasons such as communication affects organizational performance and individual career prospects; very few people work alone, and the job of most managers involves interacting with other people, often for more than 90 per cent of their time; communication is seen as a problem in many organizations; in an increasingly diverse multicultural society, sensitivity to the norms and expectations of other cultures is vital to effective cross-cultural communication and new technology is radically changing our patterns of communication”.

Additionally, if we would like to survey the types of communication we will inevitably reach the well known conclusion that they comprise verbal, written and non-verbal communication. Other main categories of non-verbal communication according are body language, paralanguage, etc. Communication is also a factor in terms of existence and development of an organization since “without communication organizations cannot exist” (Martin and Fellenz, 2010, p. 264). In view of the aims of the communication process communication will be additional settings as an interpersonal communication, where the key problem according to Mumby (2013) is to be associated with large numbers of people who work in different work settings. Along these

lines, Bratton and Gold (2012) state that the types of communication written, oral, non-verbal in organizations can be characterized as face-to-face, department meetings, briefing groups, consulting /negotiating, videoconferencing (verbal communication), gesture and facial expression (non-verbal communication) and internal memos, notice board, newsletter and email (written communication).

Good communication is significant of any organizational performance, because communication and organizations are in many aspects equal. Hedman and Valo (2015, p. 1073) interpret communication as “the ongoing process by which people construct their understanding and actions in collaboration with others”. In this line, the association of communication with cooperation, partnership and group effort reveals the interpersonal role of communication in organizations. In his work Pearce (2007) argues that communication is the process of creating social worlds rather than simply the transmitting of information. Underlying Pearce’s view, more relevance to his claims is to be found in different approaches to communication in social sciences. From the behavioral perspective communication is equaled to the exchange of symbols. Byers (1997) gives much support to this view.

In the scope of the functionalist approach communication is explained as intended or unintended action that are broken down into smaller units. The functionalist approach adopts the Shanon/Wever model and states that for the organizational members there are three methods of transmitting information. In the view of Bratton and Gold (2012) the communication chain is interpreted as a metaphorical pipeline that transmits information between a sender and a receiver. Their claim is seen through the lens of the different channels of communication in organizations. These are represented by the verbal channels in face-to-face department meetings, by consulting or as in many cases of remote communicating in videoconferencing, which are more modern types of communication in organizations. At the same time written communication in the organizations can take different forms such as reports, internal memos, notice boards, newsletters, etc. Information can be also transmitted through non-verbal channels. In essence and falling within the scope of the functionalist approach, communication always has to accomplish specific goals among such as controlling, motivating, informing workers, and even expressing emotions. For this reasons, functionalists accept the Goleman’s view (1996) and describe

communication as “the life-blood of the organization”. In contrast to the functionalist approach in the light of interpretivism, the main features of communication in the organizations are to be interpreted as “the transference and understanding of meaning”. In the view of the interinterpretivist scholars for the construction of meaning there are many factors that play a crucial role: skills, attitudes, knowledge of participants, cultural and sociocultural factors as well. Such additional factors can be identified when bridging the gap between organizations and intercultural communication especially for the needs of management practices (Barmeyer and Mayrhofer, 2008; Kiryakova-Dineva and Lachova, 2017).

Taking into account the stated facts, the communication process in organizations has many aspects, one of which is related to the ways in which managers might be able to use communication in a better way.

COMMUNICATION AND ITS ROLE DURING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Effective interpersonal communication in organizations from a managerial point of view is acknowledged to be “one of the means by which managers ‘get things done’ (as well as in terms of time management). The achievement of good interpersonal communication can undoubtedly be thought of as a managerial advantage, which is subject to numerous factors.

An illustration of the crucial role of communication in business organizations could be observed during times of organizational change. Although the interest in this issue is enduring, the area itself hasn’t been researched extensively.

Based on the empirical research organized by Elving (2005), it can be concluded that the process of organizational change does not only depend on communication but it could either fail or succeed depending on the communication process before, during or after the change.

According to Bennebroek Gravenhort et. al. (1999) “more than half of all the organizational change programs fail, reach a deadlock, or do not reach the results which they initially were aiming at” due to the lack of effective communication. In order to carry out effective communication organizations need to be aware of the characteristics of effective organizational change. There

is an immense amount of research literature (Champy and Nohria, 1996; Kotter, 1996; Heracleous, 2002) which agrees on the following factors which make an effective change:

1. organizations need to encourage participation from as many employees as possible
2. they need to address the employees' concerns – feelings of uncertainty and job insecurity, downsizing, job loss etc.
3. ensure that leaders act as role models for the change.

All these factors are impossible without effective communication which includes both the informative function of communication and its ability to create communities. Organizations are required to find ways of improving their communication in such circumstance i.e. when they decide to make changes. It becomes obvious that companies can improve their communication by asking employees about the quality of the change communication, by reviewing the different messages and media used to inform the employees about the forthcoming change, by asking employees about their knowledge of the objectives to the change and the expected results.

From the point of view of Communication being community creator, organizations could use questionnaires which could help them measure employees commitment to the organization, feelings of trust, uncertainty, job insecurity etc. This is important feedback which will not only improve communication but also lead to effective change. Some samples of questionnaires were proposed by Meyes and Allen (1997) and Schweiger and Denisi (1991).

From another point of view, the importance of communication for organizations is connected with their interest in effective management and the numerous challenges this involves. Organizations exert their managerial role through management teams (MTs) which have been linked to such important areas as decision-making and problem-solving. According to Hambrick (2010) MTs have been linked to organizational performance, strategic processes, leadership, knowledge management and organizational change. To be able to perform all these functions the members of MTs need to possess effective communication competences which go beyond transmitting and understanding information. They need to build the so called Collective Communicative Competence which views communication as a process of creating social worlds

(Pierce, 2007). The interaction in these social worlds includes the ability to act in “turbulent surroundings” (Virany et. al, 1992) to resolve cognitive difference, make decisions, build a communication culture in the organization.

In the research carried out by Hedman and Valo (2014) they adopt the view that the most crucial communication challenges faced by MTs are the following:

1. communication objectives vs. personal objectives
2. equally distributed participation vs. polarized participation
3. leader-centric communication vs. team-centric communication
4. consensus decision-making vs. unilateral decision making
5. formal communication vs. informal communication
6. face-to-face communication vs. ICY assisted communication.

All these challenges need to be addressed and developed into daily routines and practices in order to be able to improve the communication competence in the organizations. The authors of the study recommend two ways to achieve the improvements. Firstly, they believe that more emphases should be put on informal communication as it facilitates trust and communication practices. Secondly, MTs should develop a regular reflective practice on how they communicate and thus improve the way they interact with each other and the employees.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Though the era of technologies and innovation significantly facilitates information exchange the question of how to successfully transmit messages still remains a challenge issue not only for our everyday lives but can contribute to our professional development as well.

Modern research has chosen communication as its priority because experts have discovered its crucial role in the business world and organizations and researchers are trying to find out ways of improving the implementation of the organizational communication in their practices.

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