

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PROCESS: SUPPORT FOR MEASURING COMPANY PERFORMANCE

Ph.D., Gabriel-Florin MESAROȘ

“Valahia” University of Târgoviște, Romania

E-mail: mesarosfloringabriel@yahoo.com

***Abstract.** This article presents specific features of managerial communication as a management discipline and its evolution in time. It is also justified the dependence of the management functions and communication process. It can be noted an interdependent relationship between managerial and communication functions, concluding that the communication process is central to the management system of any enterprise. Also in the article are reflected several new approaches that aim the roles of the manager, and the importance of communication in exercising this managerial roles.*

***Keywords:** communication, managerial communication, performance.*

***JEL Classification:** D38, M12, L25.*

1. Introduction

Currently, in the conditions of the modern economy, with the increase in complexity and diversity of organizations, their managers can no longer linger on the ground of empiricism and simple intuition. As a result, the modern coneologist tends in his managerial performance to professionalize himself by learning the science of management, but also of other adjacent fields, which would increase his professionalism and managerial skills. In the end of its actions are included a number of activities, including diagnosis, foresight, control of organizational behavior, effective communication, etc.

A leader must be prepared and proactive, to know what and how to communicate, especially incrisissituations, requiring permanent communication with subordinates, investors, partners, creditors, suppliers, customers, banking environment, etc. Thus, in moments of tension or conflict, it is important that through communication the situation is managed in favor of the organization, giving assurances to both employees and partners that thing will evolve in a positive direction, and through the communication process they are informed about the future plans of the organization. The very day-to-day work within an organization is practically impossible to do without communicating, in one way or another.

And if on a personal level communication helps us to formulate and understand adequately the messages transmitted and received, favors cooperation with those around us, allows the de-stressing of tense states, then on the managerial level communication is a tool through which the manager transmits and receives information and decisions, accepts or rejects certain solutions, plans, organizes, trains, controls, prepares and implements change.

All the technological changes and innovations of the last 10 years have completely changed the way we develop business, communicate and live our lives today.

Technology is indispensable in almost all personal and professional aspects, generating new possibilities for connection, communication and innovation. Technological changes have created a real revolution in terms of communication and access to potential markets, anywhere in the world, by any means possible both in the online and off-line environment (Ștefan, Fratila and Radu, 2009).

Augmented reality, technological maximization, artificial intelligence, online communication and off-line experiences made available to us, whether we are consumers of certain goods or services or as we are part of the innovation and production process, generates opportunities and new opportunities to facilitate products and services in the

market. Thus, the company can offer them just a click away, anywhere in the world, at the best price, in the best conditions. Reducing the link between idea, producer, bidder and customer, creates new channels of income generation, new markets, new ideas and possibilities to generate "incremental innovation" and "disruptive innovation" (Stefan, Duica, Coman and Radu, 2010).

The work of an enterprise is unimaginable without communication, since this activity is carried out by people, and the probability of success of an enterprise is higher when we have effective communication between the members of the enterprise. Often, some work tasks are not performed as expected or certain actions, aimed at a change for the better, are not carried out according to the previous planning due to an inefficient communication (Stegaroiu, Radu, Simsek and Tabirca, 2020).

An efficient communication ensures the good development of the activities of an enterprise, and the functions of the enterprise are exercised in tandem and ensure, in our vision, the maximization of the results of its activity. In his daily work, a manager has the difficult task of making decisions, and these decisions are made after analyzing the information, which must be valuable, timely and full. Most of the time, this information is obtained directly in the communication process, whether it is about communicating with subordinates, superiors or partners or even with the company's customers. Following the decision taken, which, in turn, is also communicated, action is taken to turn resources into results. If the decision has been argued well, the results will be as planned.

Institutional theory and institutionalization improve our understanding of strategic communication, but are largely neglected in communication research (Sandhu, 2009).

2. Conceptual aspects of managerial communication

Communication is certainly one of the most important tasks a manager can have. In his daily activity, a manager communicates both with his subordinates and with his superiors within the enterprise, on the one hand, and with the environment external to the enterprise, including with customers, buyers, suppliers, the financial environment, on the other hand. And managerial communication does not reside in the simple ability of the manager to have good communication skills, but in creating a managerial communication system, based on a continuous process of improving both internal and external communication. What a good manager should understand is that effective communication in an enterprise is not a fad, but a categorical necessity, and poor communication can cause serious and costly consequences, including failure to perform work tasks, dismissals, material damage, compromises in relation to partners external to the enterprise and even bankruptcy.

Dan and Rodica Căndea, Romanian researchers, who have studied the communication phenomenon within the enterprise both at a theoretical and applicative level, are of the opinion that "effective and efficient managerial communication is a factor of competitiveness, a strategic advantage of the organization" (Căndea and Căndea, 1996). They also argue that the specificity of managerial communication, in relation to other existing types of communication, is generated by the purpose, objectives and functions of this communication, by the framework and structure of organizations, as well as by the context of organizational culture. At the same time, the managerial communication in the organization is subject to specific ethical norms that can be found in the organizational culture, the organizational policy and, obviously, in the individual ethics of the employees in the management positions.

Managerial communication is a special type of organizational communication, it is an essential component of it and helps both internally (i.e. everything related to the

company's employees) and externally, in relations with suppliers, investors, etc., which ultimately leads to the achievement of the management objectives of a company.

Managerial communication has several peculiarities, determined by the complexity of communication, its goals, objectives and implications, peculiarities that must comply with a series of norms imposed by the managerial culture and the organization's policy.

Studying the specialized literature focused on the issue of organizational communication, I identified a large number of definitions of the notion of managerial communication. Analyzing the multitude of definitions of the respective concept, we have identified some characteristics, according to us relevant, of the notion of managerial communication, including:

- programmed and permanent informational activity;
- process performed between a transmitter and receiver through specific channels;
- management tool, means of coordination;
- way of achieving a common goal by changing the mentality;
- an exchange of messages at the level of individual, subdivision, group;
- a fundamental process of interaction based on feedback.

Reflecting on these distinctive characteristics, we will try to define the managerial communication as a permanent, conscious process, in which an exchange of information takes place, at different levels, through the most appropriate channels, in order to succeed in the maximal understanding of the messages, in order to achieve a synergy of efforts to achieve a common goal and the achievement of the organizational objectives.

Managerial communication appeared as a discipline of management from the need to make available to the manager the optimal means of interaction in order to fulfill his functions and duties, being a factor of competitiveness, a strategic advantage of the organization.

In the period when the emphasis was on the development of technology, but not on people, and management was a "car management" and it started from the premise that in order to achieve goods, it was necessary primarily to make goods, the autocratic style of management was characteristic, and the decisions were taken by the chiefs and transmitted to subordinates.

The role of communication in this context was only to distribute the necessary information and instructions, from top to bottom, and the communication had to be clear, precise and authoritative, being called prescriptive communication.

Gradually, however, the accents changed, starting to appear the unions, which, in addition to concerns about the increase in wages, began to get involved in solving the problems of the organization. The concern for people, for driving cars is becoming bigger and bigger, and management is becoming a humanistic management. Thus, the concept of "chief manager" is added to the concept of "leader manager", along with the concept of group and employees. Specific to this period is the fact that communication gradually becomes an instrument of harmony in human resources management, a basic tool of the manager in fulfilling his functions and in achieving the organization's objectives. As a result, at the beginning of the XXth century communication is transformed from a series of mechanical measures and actions into a philosophy of management.

3. The communication process, an important pillar in the development of the company

In order to better plan the internal and external communication processes, companies and specialists innovate various forms of strategic planning to support the management processes, from vision to implementation and evaluation of concretely obtained results.

For example, the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) model, one of the best performing management systems and strategic planning tools, spread in the international business environment, improves external and internal communication and also monitors the performance of an organization based on its strategic objectives to the analysis of the impact of actions taken with resonance for the future. The BSC model developed by Norton and Kaplan is in fact a global and complex management tool suitable for the concretization, implementation and control of the company's strategies (Oliveira, Martins, Camilleri and Jayantilal, 2021).

Within the BSC, the managers' attention is mainly directed to the non-financial indicators with the role of evaluating the degree of satisfaction of customers, employees and partners, the duration of the processes and the quality of the results that are to be obtained. The respective indicators, also called "early indicators", help and facilitate the anticipation of the future financial performance of the company, because only with a motivated team, which acts according to efficient processes, oriented towards the customer, on a market with satisfied consumers, offering performing products made in conditions of economic efficiency, sustainable development can be achieved in conditions of profitability.

The translation of the mission into the expected results thought by Robert Kaplan and David Norton through BSC starts from the company's mission, which must answer a simple question: "Why do we exist?" and then translate to the vision (what do we want to do), the values in which the company believes, the strategy that proposes it as an action plan, the implementation process and the strategic action and innovation initiatives that can generate certain strategic material and immaterial results.

According to the BSC system, mission and values remain stable over time. The organization's vision is a projection that clarifies the direction of the organization and helps individuals understand why and how they should support the organization. The strategy is being developed under unstable conditions imposed by the real world.

The objectives and performance indicators are grouped into four perspectives, linked by cause-and-effect relationships (Malina and Selto, 2001):

- Financial perspective (how do shareholders perceive us?)
- Perspective of customers (how do users perceive us?)
- The perspective of internal processes (in what processes do we need to excel to be successful?)
- Personal perspective and innovation (how do we support our ability to adapt and improve our performance?)

It is the customer perspective that can generate added value and is relevant on the market, can make the company visible and attractive to meet the requirements of its customers.

The recent management philosophy has shown an increase in the importance of user focus and customer satisfaction in any organization. In the development of satisfaction metrics, customers should be analyzed in terms of customer categories and the type of processes for which a product or service is provided.

According to BSC, the Customer & Stakeholders section emphasizes the value that a company offers to its customers and the importance of measuring their degree of

satisfaction in order to make them loyal. From the customer's point of view, a company's performance is measured by how it is available to them, how it meets their requirements and how much it is open to listen to and innovate for them.

As long as a company innovates and meets the demands of its customers, it means that it wants to create a positive impact and generate added value in society. Creating value for customers and prospects will generate profits, new channels of innovation and access to new markets. They must generate Customer Value Proposition (CVP) processes, which specifically highlight the net benefits a consumer obtains from interacting with the company, its products and services. The consumer can thus be impacted at the physical level (product quality, form, price, delivery method, utility, etc.), relational (the interaction that creates it with the employees and the company, the accessibility of the services, etc.) and on an emotional level (how they made him feel and what experiences generated them).

The benefit package that a company can deliver to its customers and consumers is generated by the business philosophy it promotes in the market through its mission and vision.

Thus, the strategic communication process of the company will be strongly based on the principles and values in which it believes, above simple profit and with the desire for social improvement and sustainable development (Bénet, Deville and Naro, 2019).

Unlike ordinary public relations practices, strategic communication focuses on the main practices that generate and control organizational success. Also, strategic communication increases the area of traditional tactics of institutionalized communication in order to be able to manage the messages transmitted in all types of interactions with internal and external stakeholders. Strategic communication is an emerging area of study in the communication and management social sciences (Thomas and Stephens, 2015).

Communication will thus play a new role in promoting the management of innovation that can be acquired through the understanding from a new perspective of leadership communication. Theoretical concepts and experimental discoveries can be integrated into a circular system of leadership communication in terms of innovation, which combines the social, cognitive, affective and conative dimensions of the new role of communication management in the process of innovation.

4. The role of communication in the realization of managerial functions

Managerial communication cannot be viewed outside of management, this being an important and fundamental component of it. As a result of the analysis in the specialized literature of the issue of scientific communication, a relationship of interdependence between managerial functions and communication was identified; moreover, we found that the communication process occupies a central place in the managerial system of any enterprise.

The communication is, according to the Romanian researcher Emilian Dobrescu, the premise for exercising the management activity, the functions of the management process. "Only an efficient communication makes possible the planning and programming, coordination and control, motivation, consultation and active participation of the members of the organization in achieving the proposed goals" (Dobrescu, 2010). The author believes that every moment of the enterprise's activity is based on an efficient communication, as a way of focusing and correlating efforts.

The same idea is shared by the Romanian scientists Rodica M. Căndea and Dan Căndea, who consider communication vital in the exercise of managerial functions. The authors consider that the manager represents the person with authority of an enterprise or of a subunit thereof, who assumes the performance of the managerial functions identified

by the renowned French administrator H. Fayol as those of planning, organization, command, coordination and control (Câdea and Câdea, 1996).

We also rally ourselves to this idea, as we consider that the communication process is present in the exercise of management functions, and the manager performs a multitude of activities achievable through communication. In order to understand the place and role of communication in the realization of managerial functions, we will examine the essence of these functions and we will try to see what is the dependence between them and the communication process.

At the level of the general management, the planning or forecasting function consists of all the work processes through which the main objectives of the company are determined and its components, the resources and the main means necessary to achieve them (Niculae, Gheorghîță and Gheorghîță, 2006).

Planning, based on foresight, actually defines the purpose and objectives regarding the performance of the enterprise, the decisions regarding the tasks to be performed, but also the resources that will be used to achieve those objectives; in other words, it determines "where" the organization wants to go and "how" to get there. A manager cannot exercise this function without working with internal and external information of the enterprise, without a clear formulation and transmission of objectives and plans at different levels, without discussions and meetings inside and outside the enterprise. So, communication is inevitable in the planning process of a manager.

The organization, the second function at the level of the general management, consists of all the management processes through which the processes of physical and intellectual work and their components (movements, times, operations, etc.) are established and delimited, but also their grouping by positions, work formations, compartments and their assignment to the appropriate staff based on managerial, technical, economic or social, with the aim of achieving the objectives that were planned.

Through the command function, clear and precise instructions and provisions for the achievement of the planned tasks are transmitted to the subordinates, in order to achieve the objectives of the enterprise. The achievement of this managerial function is conditioned by the achievement of an adequate communication, which involves the delegation of responsibilities, establishing a climate of collaboration, motivation of the staff (Dobrescu, 2010).

The coordination function at the level of the general management consists in all the work processes through which the decisions and actions of the company's staff and its subsystems are harmonized, within the forecasts of the organizational system previously established (Niculae, Gheorghîță and Gheorghîță, 2006). The coordination function is an important prerequisite in the harmonization of the activities carried out and the resources used to achieve the common goal – of achieving the objectives of the enterprise. In order to ensure the most effective development of this managerial function, an adequate communication is required at all levels of management within the enterprise.

Thus, we can conclude that due to the character of complementarity that is established between the management functions and their mutual interdependence, but also due to a relationship of interdependence between them and communication, the communication process occupies a central place in the managerial system of any enterprise.

Interpersonal roles are manifested in the correlation of management with those around them; informational roles consist of activities of maintaining and developing an information network; decision-making roles are manifested in those situations where the manager has to make a choice.

5. Conclusions

Communication is an important component in the management of the enterprise, since a significant part of the activities of an enterprise is carried out by people, and the probability of success of an enterprise is higher when we have effective communication between the members of the enterprise.

We believe that the communication process helps to understand the problems faced by employees, ensures the sustainability of the relationships between employees or between them and the manager, the ability of the manager to motivate and lead his team, but also to strengthen the relations with the environment external to the organization. The manager therefore has, in addition to other important roles, the role of negotiator; he must organize and maintain a network of contacts with the organization's partners and sources of information that serve as a support in the orientation of the company.

In this context, we can say that the concern for a better communication with the subordinates, but also with the company's partners, has become a current issue for the modern manager, aware of the effects that a constructive communication or one can have

References

1. Bénet, N., Deville, A. and Naro, G., 2019. BSC inside a strategic management control package. *Journal of applied accounting research*.
2. Căndea, D. and Căndea, R., 1996. *Managerial communication, concepts, skills, strategy*. Bucharest: Expert.
3. Dobrescu, E., 2010. *Managerial communication. Methodology and efficiency*. Bucharest: WoltersKluwer.
4. Malina, M.A. and Selto, F.H., 2001. Communicating and controlling strategy: an empirical study of the effectiveness of the balanced scorecard. *Journal of management accounting research*, 13(1), pp.47-90.
5. Niculae, T., Gheorghîță, I. and Gheorghîță, D., 2006. *Organizational communication and crisis management*. Bucharest: Editura Ministerului Administrației și Internelor.
6. Oliveira, C., Martins, A., Camilleri, M.A. and Jayantilal, S., 2021. Using the Balanced Scorecard for strategic communication and performance management. In: *Strategic corporate communication in the digital age*. Emerald Publishing Limited.
7. Sandhu, S., 2009. Strategic communication: An institutional perspective. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 3(2), pp.72-92.
8. Stefan, V., Duica, M., Coman, M. and Radu, V., 2010. Enterprise performance management with business intelligence solution. *Recent Advances in Business Administration*.
9. Ștefan, V., Fratila, C. and Radu, F., 2009. Development of modern technologies in management. *International Conference "Management Horizons"*. Vytauto Didziojo universitas "Taikomoji ekonomika", Kaunas, Lithuania. September, pp. 24-26.
10. Stegaroiu, I., Radu, V., Simsek, H. and Tabirca, A.I., 2020. Impact of Leadership Team Values and Performance on Organizational Behavior. *Book chapters-LUMEN Proceedings*, 10, pp.241-251.
11. Thomas, G.F. and Stephens, K.J., 2015. An introduction to strategic communication. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 52(1), pp.3-11.