

## **Organizational Communication and Change Management. National Challenges and European Perspectives.**

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### **Abstract**

*Performance management can no longer be the only option for organizations in competitive or changing contexts. When customers have a choice, organizations must do their best to become better, closer to the target audience.*

*The specialized studies, whether nationally or at European level, reveal that the climate of organizational communication is particularly significant. It is closely related to the top management style and not the type of organization. So, an intelligent managerial approach means concrete analysis, the investigation of reality, both by making a coherent picture of the organization and by the detailed knowledge of the external atmosphere .*

*Through this paper we intend to emphasize that as change is a law of life, so change management becomes a law of organizational management. The change needs to be properly managed, and communication is one of the key elements in this process and one of the most important levers to success.*

**Key words:** Personnel Management, Communication, Corporate Culture, Organizational Behavior  
**J.E.L. classification:** M12, D83, M14, D23

### **1. Introduction**

Employee insecurity regarding what will happen in perspective in their profession and implicitly in their personal lives, often leads to a refractory attitude towards change. In this situation, the manager needs to be aware of the moments of transforming the organization, using both inborn communication skills and knowledge of body language, transactional analysis, language, rhetoric and neuro-linguistic programming.

In the context of change, oversight of the internal and external environment is a fundamental activity of managers, so that they can prevent potential crises that may arise with the process of change.

In fact, if it is to judge things in their depth, in fact, safety lies in the ability of all of us (either managers or subordinates) to adapt and cope with changes. The success of an organization consists not only in eliminating resistance to change and adaptation to the new, but especially in the ability to have the ability to change faster than the competition. The manager and team members must be proactive, have analysis, synthesis, and response capabilities when continuous adaptation is required to the external environment, which is in a continuous process of change.

Although at first glance the daily routine is an area of balance (especially for conservative people), and change is a disruption of personal comfort, however, change is not a negative issue, on the contrary, it is the key element of the birth of progress in any field and in any activity.

The success or failure of an organizational transformation also depends to a large extent on how communication is managed, making communication more effective as a managerial challenge. In this situation, managers need to escape the trap of excessive formalizations and communicate

tailored to the crisis situation, as well as the types of personalities involved, so that they can determine the level of engagement and resilience that still persists.

## 2. Current Literature Review

Communication is an indispensable tool in the management process and we can use it more easily if we know its mechanisms, strengths, weaknesses and subtleties (Brătan, 2008).

Within an organization, the manager has to follow the communication process so that: to ensure an optimal climate for doing business; to develop communication techniques adapted to the implementation of the change strategy and to increase the organizational perfection; to reflect the positive image of the organization in front of collaborators, target audiences and the general public.

Both Romanian authors and European authors, who approach management from a modern perspective, give a very important role to communication, which it considers to be a vital component of the management system of any organization (regardless of whether it belongs to private management or public management).

Each manager has to develop and promote a policy based on a communication system that allows the adjustment of the internal organizational process in a changing environment.

The policy adopted by the manager depends on his perception of the organization as a whole, but also of its perception of each employee and collaborator. "By creating our own mental maps of the world, each of us sees the world in a unique way. We see the world through perceptions. When we communicate, we create bridges between our perceptions of reality and the perceptions or mental maps of other people" (Green, 2009).

Effective organizational communication covers both formal and informal records. If informal is properly encouraged, it can become a source of formal innovation, which is very profitable for the organization, especially in the context of major changes or the crisis. The formal has its limits, however, we still consider that it represents a sufficiently large proportion of organizational communication.

Certainly, we can say that it is not possible to promote exclusively formal or informal communication, leading to disorder, disorganization, inability to formulate long-term goals. Under these conditions, it is clear that firstly formal communication frameworks must be created, yet sufficiently adaptable, in order to allow the informal flows relevant to the attached feedback and the novelty elements introduced into the organizational culture.

In the context of a broad discussion of managerial communication, we emphasize that the manager is the link between the organization and its external environment (in general) and the specific public (in particular). In this capacity, the manager says there are two professional areas that almost every organization leader believes he knows as well as professionals: human resources and public relations, which is not always true (Leinemann & Baikalteva, 2007).

It is, therefore, about what communication means with the outside of the organization and which, according to the literature, is of three categories: operational, strategic and promotion. Thus, in order to maximize the effects of good communication with the outside, the manager has to make an exact radiography to know who is communicating with and what is the atmosphere created by the way communication is addressed.

As regards internal communication, we must emphasize that it is closely linked to the personalities of the members of the organization and the specific organizational culture. The manager should be aware of the fact that in each organization there are certain "profiles" of employees: the expert, the fake expert, the interventionist, the mute, the one outside the subject, the saboteur, the continuous writer, the critic, the late, the conservative- to change, chatter, aggressive, intolerant, and so on (Weisz, 2010). (Weisz, 2010).

It is well known that most of our time we spend at work where we work within a group (smaller or larger) inside which we have sympathies and antipathy, we feel the rivalry of the other groups, we have one or more bosses, information or rumors circulate quickly, and we do not know their veracity. Within this framework, it is very easy to reach conflicts, disagreements, tensions, antithetical positions.

From this perspective, the role of the manager is very important because he has to master the situation, know how to handle the difficult personalities. At the same time, they must know their subordinates so well that they know when to intervene and when to stay away, based on automatic solving. It is all the manager who has to lead by example, because it is well known that in any organization there is a certain degree of mimetism. It also has to respect the biorhythm of employees and know how to speculate it in the interest of the organization.

Effective change of communication is based on the following core principles: not communicating is communicating something; change is about energy, and energy is emotion; communicate through words, symbols and behaviours; conversation is the smallest unit of change; communication is the drumbeat of change; trust is the currency of change (TM & ©, 2015). The truth is, nothing can change without communications. The truth is that nothing can change without communication. And communication means relationships, means opportunities, means discipline, adaptability, spontaneity and, last but not least, fair play.

Life forces us to relate to all sorts of personalities, especially in the organizational framework. The interpersonal relationships imposed by the organizational environment, the organizational structure (reproduced by the organigram) must be developed harmoniously, whether we like it or not. Relationships appear as invisible connections, beyond words spoken out loud and by the technical-informational content of communication (depending on the specific field of activity). Even if it is not something that is easy to accomplish, each of us in the organization in which we operate must censor and contribute to organizational harmony, regardless of the invisible connections established in the context of inter-human relations (which transmit unconscious signals or dissonance, comfort or discomfort, friendship or hostility, dominance or obedience, attraction or rejection, consideration or contempt, and so on) (Prutianu, 2008).

### **3. Collection of Data**

To accomplish this case study, we contacted a total of 10 respondents, taking a structured interview based on 10 questions (using the qualitative method of the interview). Of these, 7 questions were conceived, two questions were open, and one of the questions contained both variants of answers, but also gave the opportunity to formulate a separate opinion.

The opinion interview technique involved oral information, with the advantage of flexibility, the ability to obtain specific answers to each question as well as the observation of non-verbal behaviors and the standardization of response conditions.

Overall, each interview gave very interesting qualitative data and the average time it spent was about 47 minutes.

As mentioned above, a total of 10 people were interviewed, of which 5 belonging to the public environment, and the other 5 belonging to private sector organizations. The mean age of the subjects was approximately 46 years, and their average work experience was approximately 32 years. Please note that all interviewees have senior management positions, some of top management, while others have intermediate management positions, in the private or public organization they are part of.

### **4. Data Analysis and Results**

Taking into account all the aspects mentioned in the first part of the paper, we applied only to the persons with leading positions, a series of questions with which we can emphasize the aspects related to the managerial personality and the perceptions of the managers regarding the managerial style of each of them, to highlight how the relationship of power and influence is affected, but also formal and informal communication, in the context of the ongoing changes that any organization faces today. At the same time, we add that elements related to organizational conflicts, communication crises, public relations, all the elements listed are addressed in the context of the change management.

Using as a research method the content analysis and highlighting the trend analysis, we exemplify the following points:

Figure no.1: The trend analysis

$$AT = \frac{F-D}{L}$$

AT - the trend analysis index  
F -number of favorable units  
D- number of unfavorable units  
L-the number of units related to the theme  
T-total number of units

Source: Ștefănel, A., Analiza de conținut, slide nr.17

Study hypothesis number 1: The most appropriate managerial approach is the democratic-consultative type.

Figure no. 2: The situation of the responses reflected by the analysis performed

Total number of units - responses ticked by respondent : T = 47  
Number of favorable units : F = 26  
Number of unfavorable units : D = 10  
The number of units related to the theme :L = 11  
So, AT (alternative 1) = (26-10) / 11 = 1.45  
AT (alternative 2) = (26-10) / 47 = 0.34

Source: Own research of the authors

Thus, as a result of the application of the method, it is evident that *in the consciousness of the studied group the hypothesis is confirmed*, the dominant point being that the respondents are considered managers adopting the democratic consultative style, who communicates preferring dialogue and exchange of opinions in accomplishing the tasks, by proposing alternative solutions and the employees being able to opt, making changes in the workplace, but assuming their responsibility. However, the group of interviewed persons also opposes permissiveness in the managerial approach, being even friendly with the employees in some situations. In other situations, the authoritarian approach is advisable, which is why it is in favor of a smart managerial approach, based on the democratic-consultative style (labeled by some respondents as the equivalent of the permissive style), with the possibility of resorting to the authoritarian style when the situation so requires.

Using the specific qualitative thematic-categorical content analysis method and focusing on predominantly linguistic elements, we assessed the degree of targeted intensity. Thus, we have had the opportunity to account for the direction of (neutral, favorable or unfavorable) attitudes towards crisis situations and the management of crisis and change.

In this respect, *study hypothesis number 2: Crisis management is closely linked to change management, crisis situations are very unpleasant and can be anticipated in extreme cases (usually crises due to organizational conflicts can be anticipated)*.

We have appealed to a very simple scale about the attitude manifested in this affirmation by combining the answers to three different questions (especially formulated without an apparent link between them):

Figure no.3: The attitude regarding the crisis management under hypothesis number 2

very favorable      +3    +2    +1    0    -1    -2    -3      very unfavorable  
The zero point (0) -the neutral attitude to the hypothesis assertion

Source: Own research of the authors

All recording units were evaluated through this scale, the algebraic sum being calculated at the end. *The calculations resulted in a confirmation of the hypothesis* from which it was gone, and the final score of the degree of intensity was:  $\Sigma = + 2$ .

From the point of view of this point-based research, regarding the management of changes, conflicts and organizational crises, part of the respondents reported with sincerity also examples of crisis situations that they experienced in managerial activity (lack of competent personnel crisis - currently confronted with insufficiently prepared staff and unjustified financial claims, bankruptcy, spread of negative rumors about the company and image impairment, and leakage of information), while others preferred to mention only that they had successfully escaped the crises they had they crossed, but prefer to keep confidentiality on crises.

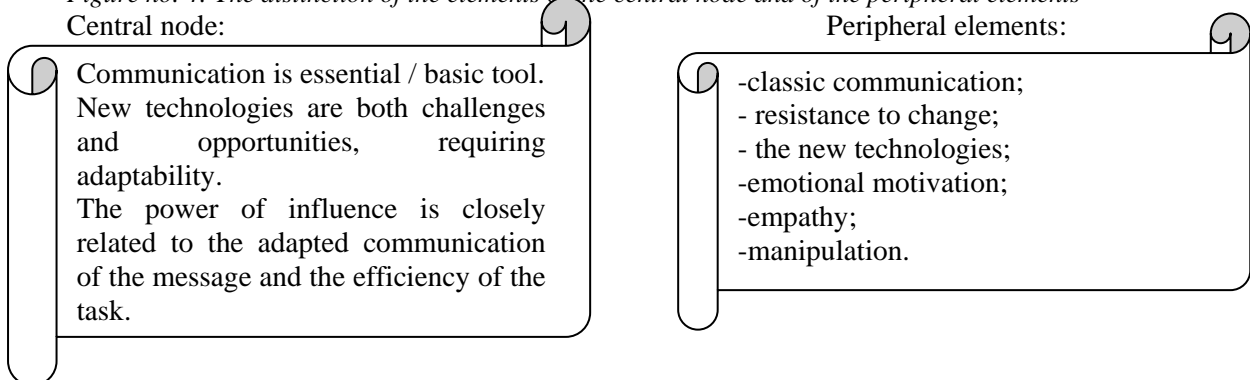
Another method of research used is derived from one of Jean Claude Abric's methods and uses the analysis of socio-linguistic-cognitive constructions revealed by respondents' expression. This places emphasis on the central node of the communicated constructions, while emphasizing the peripheral elements.

Concerning *study hypothesis number 3: Communication is the basic tool in the relationship of power and influence, and the explosive development of new communication technologies causes new concerns in the analysis of organizational communication*, we highlight the following aspects:

The analysis carried out generated key words / phrases used by the respondents as a result of the analysis of the prominence-frequency of occurrence in the set of words used by each subject studied (and which were highlighted based on a hierarchy of majority / minority terms, but also as a result of the importance or lack of importance of their evocation), the characteristics of the consciousness of the studied group being established. At the same time, the peripheral system, which supports group heterogeneity, contradictions, adaptations to the concrete realities of each organization is highlighted.

In this respect, we mention that *the hypothesis has been confirmed by both the frequency of the terms and the extent of the importance given by the subject to terms in relation to others* (this adding qualitative properties, even if presented in numerical form). From our analysis, the following features of the central system have emerged, which support the hypothesis and the following features of the peripheral system:

Figure no. 4: The distinction of the elements of the central node and of the peripheral elements



Source: Own research of the authors

*The 4th hypothesis analyzed : Communication in Romanian organizations is similar to the communication process within the European organizations.*

Figure no. 5: The result of item score analysis

Item 1	Score :-2
Item 2	Score :-1
Item 3	Score: +2
Item 4	Score :+1
Item 5	Score :0

Using the successive election method by Jean Claude Abric blocks and wishing to highlight the relevance effect on the assertion of the hypothesis, it was sufficient to calculate the average score of each chosen item (because the scores vary between -2 and +2 and the most relevant items have the highest scores).

Source: Own research of the authors

Thus, *the hypothesis was confirmed by the average score of the item, which states that there are no differences*. Respondents believe that communication is rather different from one field of activity to another, not necessarily from one country to another.

At the same time, it is also worth mentioning the items with the next score in the ranking hierarchy, where the subjects specify that the Romanian PR has certainly copied external elements, while also considering that the legislation outside the country is more convincing and easier to apply.

## 5. Conclusions

Given that our country as well as the other European countries are in an ample context dominated by both competitive intensification and consumerist maturity, advanced organizational communication represents a real managerial challenge in all areas of activity, especially since there is currently a declared crisis of qualified staff. The natural consequence of this is that a smart manager needs to pay special attention to human resources management, but also to change management. At the same time, it must also take into account other challenges such as: the existing gaps between the practice and the science of communication, the accelerated changes induced by the modernizations specific to each field of activity, as well as the technical progress.

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