

Relationship between Communication Effectiveness and the Extent of Communication among Organizational Units

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Abstract—This contribution deals with the relationship between communication effectiveness and the extent of communication among organizational units. To facilitate communication between employees and to increase the level of understanding, the knowledge of communication tools is necessary. Recent experience has shown that personal communication is critical for smooth running of companies and cannot be fully replaced by any form of technical communication devices.

Below are presented the outcomes of the research on the relationship between the extent of communication among organisational units and its efficiency.

Keywords—Company meetings, corporate culture, efficiency, effective communication, form of communication, information, organizational units, quality of communication, strategy, subordinates, superiors.

I. INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATION plays an important role in the management of professional organizations and their achievement of success. Communication, corporate culture and human resources are the key factors that significantly determine the management of the company as well as the development of its strategy, its achievements and position on the market.

In terms of organisational structures, we distinguish between the process of internal communication carried out through internal communication systems and external communication ensured by external communication systems. Internal communication systems enable conveying information within the company and are therefore an essential prerequisite for its existence, while external communication systems permit communication between the company and its surroundings and are a prerequisite for interaction between the company and its surroundings and thus for the operation of the company as such.

II. GOALS AND METHODS

The goal of the research was to determine the impact of the form and quality of communication on its effectiveness.

The research was based on a questionnaire study, which is a quite common form of investigation in this social field and

also provides opportunities for determining whether the form and quality of communication has impact on the effectiveness of communication. The respondents for the research were selected in the regions of Hradec Kralove and Usti nad Labem. The group comprised 389 persons, out of which 114 respondents completed the questionnaire.

III. OUTCOMES AND DISCUSSION

A. Background of the Research

Communication means transmission of information from the sender to the recipient provided the recipient understands the information [6]. Although communication is associated with all the areas of management, it is of the greatest importance for the managerial function of leadership.

Effective communication is intentional and deliberate. Its characteristic features include: openness, directness, respect, responsibility and aim [4].

Another factor determining organisation efficiency is employee identification.

Formal and Informal Communication

Formal communication channels depend on the organisational structure of the company and organisational and management links. Communication through formal channels may be horizontal, vertical or diagonal.

The content of formal communication consists of standards, manuals, delegated assignments, instructions, rules, directives, regulations, corporate information (downward communication) and information on performance (upward communication).

Informal communication consists of hearsays, slanders, rumours, etc. Surveys have shown that informal communication helps to relieve emotional stress in uncertain conditions. It has also been found that ineffective and inadequate downward communication creates an information vacuum that brings about worries and dissatisfaction and is therefore filled with speculations professionally called "informal communication". Informal communication takes place in various segments of the corporate communication chain.

According to research, rumours can fulfil three different roles.

Balancing, i.e. some pieces of information are intentionally omitted.

Overstatement, i.e. some parts of the information conveyed is exaggerated.

Adaptation, i.e. the information is completely distorted [8].

Davis states that informal communication is the fastest method of in-company communication, is rather precise and represents almost 90% of communication as it enables transmission of a large amount of information. It follows from the above said that employees consider informal communication to be an important, however, not always favoured communication channel [1].

As the classification of formal communication and the above reasons for informal communication show, every company should take into account both kinds of communication.

B. Research Findings

The research has revealed that the perception and the assessment of the quality of communication by employees are clearly dependent on the length of service with the company. Maximum trust as well as its greatest decline (to less than 50%) are typical of the first year of employment, the trust of employees with longer engagements is around 75% until the fourth year with the company, which is another milestone marked by drop in trust.

The findings show that to ensure a higher level of trust in the quality of communication, it is necessary to acquaint new employees, as soon as possible after their recruitment, with communication rules and standards they may comment on. In this respect it is indispensable to outline the system of selection and development of newly recruited employees providing for higher stability, quality of communication of individual employees and competence as regards desired skills and abilities.

The research suggested that half of the respondents do not distinguish and is not familiar with the principles of communication or are unable to use them correctly. The knowledge of communication can therefore be characterised as poor.

The primary reason for poor quality of communication is the low competence of employees and underdeveloped skills and abilities that have no link to the motivational and evaluation system. Observations have shown that in the majority of companies having conditions for the systematic development of employees the development was more or less accidental. It lacked continuity and the impact of acquired competence on outcomes was not monitored. This can be attributed to the lack of clear responsibility for new employee plans as well as of any control that would facilitate the development of the system, make it professional and ensure its observance. The research has not clearly confirmed the principle of direct proportion between the extent of communication and the effectiveness of co-operation of individual departments. It has been, however, observed that inefficiency in companies can partly be attributed to certain

reluctance of these departments to communicate and discuss issues.

The research has confirmed that essential information, such as goals, standards, company successes and failures, changes, etc. should be communicated in various ways. It has also confirmed the importance of personal communication and revealed that oral communication is likely to be more effective if followed by a written notice. The majority of respondents perceive face-to-face communication as having the biggest impact and also the biggest effect when it comes to remembering information. Unless the communication of information has a clear order and certain periodicity, depending on the type of information conveyed, employees characterise the communication as occasional and incomplete even if the company exploits more communication channels, both oral and written, to convey its information. Communication by e-mail turned out to be inefficient when it started to outweigh personal communication. Spreading of information may be supported by engaging employees in the compilation of information that is then forwarded to other colleagues involved. The research has confirmed that it is necessary to combine various communication channels and to respect an appropriate ratio and frequency.

If this is not observed and meetings are held on a random basis or exceptionally and employees are not familiar with the schedule of meetings, it is possible to say that the management fails to use the communication tools for meetings efficiently and decreases the efficiency of in-company communication. A unilateral or inefficient use of communication channels results in non-functionality of the communication system.

TABLE I
TREATMENT OF CONVEYED INFORMATION BY EMPLOYEES

| Treatment of information | From superiors (in %) | From meetings (in %) | Written communications (in %) | Answers in total (in %) |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Applied if possible | 46 | 21 | 33 | 100 |
| Taken into account; if necessary, retrieved | 43 | 27 | 30 | 100 |
| Applied in full | 26 | 18 | 56 | 100 |

Source: Own research

TABLE II
INFORMATION ON COMPANY SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

| Employees learn the information on company successes and failures as follows: | Median |
|---|--------|
| I ask my superior | Often |
| From colleagues | Often |
| From regular communications of top management | Rarely |
| From written memos | Rarely |
| From customers | Often |
| From my closest colleagues | Often |

Note: Possible answers: never, rarely, often, always

Source: Own research

To convey information, instructions and explanations may seem easy, however, in practice the most common problem is understanding. Efficient communication does not lie in

conveying information, but rather in correct creation and formulation of the information and understanding of its former meaning as intended by the communicator and sender. In order to make communication efficient, it must be a two-way process ensuring, among others, correct understanding and transmission. Communication is a human ability and skill and as such can be trained, practised and improved [5].

This implies that the efficiency of communication can be learned, improved and mastered. It is therefore necessary to take a closer look at the essence of communication effectiveness and its determining factors.

To make people and companies communicate efficiently, besides knowledge, we have to be willing to communicate and the participants have to be motivated. As a result, people and entities behave according to their general knowledge, are able to do it and want it to be that way. Only when communication follows certain preset rules, it is likely to be efficient as well as measurable.

IV. CONCLUSION

The research has proven that there is a relationship between the effectiveness and the extent of communication among organisational units. It has also confirmed that knowledge and the acquired skills in using communication tools facilitate communication and have a positive impact not only on understanding, but also on results.

Furthermore, the research has revealed that employees learn about the successes and failures of their company from their superiors and other employees (see table no. II). Their communication, however, does not meet their expectations and often lacks motivation. A suitable, but underestimated form of communication of this kind of information is regular written memos accessible to everyone and supported by regular oral communications, e.g. at regular meetings and in personal discussions. The frequency of meetings, reports and notices as well as the rules applicable to each of the company positions should form part of corporate standards and systems. This information was usually communicated and forwarded orally. The "conditions" can be considered efficient if standards and information on systems are conveyed by the manager (superior), through printed manuals and also by way of development training where the instructor helps employees to master the standards by employees' involvement in their development. This method also permits checking and regular reviewing of standards as well as their updating, where necessary, according to the changing corporate and market conditions.

Therefore it is not sufficient to paraphrase the theory that the combination of written and oral communication improves effectiveness, but it is also necessary to precisely define the types of recurring communication flows in the company, the process to be followed and the form of conveying at specified time intervals and communication flows. If the information is communicated both orally and in writing, there is a higher likelihood of initiating the required action which is

subsequently easier to request.

Regular communication of specific information, a common way of communication and the use of two or more forms of communication with prevalence of personal communication will, in the long run, ensure more effective communication in terms of information recollection and remembering and higher effectiveness of the communication systems in terms of company prosperity.

For an organisation to communicate efficiently, it is necessary to make the communication flexible, open and progressive. An efficiently communicating organisation therefore accepts that it is managed as an institution of people presenting themselves as independent units responsible for their performance where success, mutual co-operation and relations are also based on communication.

The above-presented research, carried out in two regions of the Czech Republic, has also shown that it is indispensable to further examine, in more detail and more profoundly, the relationship between the effectiveness and the extent of communication among organisational units as it also determines the efficiency of the company.

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