

INFORMATION - STRATEGIC AIM AND FACTOR FOR AN ORGANIZATION FUNCTIONING

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ABSTRACT: THE CIRCULATION OF INFORMATION STREAMS VITALLY INFLUENCES THE DEVELOPMENT OF EACH ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURAL UNIT. IT IS DIFFICULT EVEN TO IMAGINE A PROSPEROUS ORGANIZATION BEING CLOSED INFORMATION SYSTEM. INFORMATION QUALITY IS A KEY NECESSITY IN CONTEMPORARY INTERRELATIONS AND PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN SELF-AFFIRMATION OF EACH INSTITUTION.

KEY WORDS: INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

EACH effectively functioning organization produces information constantly and that very fact has a potential influence on its positioning in a society. A given organization announces itself as a subject in a communication environment pretending for its own place from the moment of its official registration as a legal entity. The very fact of newly established social unit is of great importance for the rest people though the fact itself is very often ignored by those who actually establish the organization. Each next step of an organization development is measured in *bits of information*. It is the first order issued, all administrative papers, all regulations and licensed issued that are measured in *bits of information*. It is the non-material and the most convertible equivalent in building and maintaining interrelations that ensure the existence of each system available. It is impossible to count the quantity of interdependencies that arose from one sole information unit released. Being a bearer of a practically oriented benefit for a particular organization it has a certainly specified value, and namely: each information that allows both duly reaction to the changes in the environment and adaptation to ongoing internal and external changes actually implicit material value. It is the strategic position in the system of occurred interrelations and information exchange that are of crucial role for certain organization prosperity. Moreover, organization reputation depends mainly on the quality of information channels available and information activity itself. Its presence in information space could be both accidentally and completely controllable. It could be both arranged in accordance with the natural process of development and vice versa – it could be left on the mercy of unpredictable changes. It has to be stated that information world does not rely on accidental existence. It is needed to build interrelations permanently and conceptually oriented in order to create own information models and to take into account the existing ones. It is because stakeholders require information that increases permanently. The constantly increased amount of information allows them to form opinions, make evaluations and have different attitudes towards social environment. If the information is incorrect or does not reach the target group the processes of

recipients` orientation and adequate attitude is violated and compromised. Quality in information is a key necessity in modern interrelations and plays a crucial role in the self-affirmation of each institution.

EACH organization exists in a common information environment full of indefinite number of various legal entities and individuals. Relations between these are also different. Competitors are considered to be in a hostile environment and consumers who are supposed to be pleased with the goods and services offered are considered to be in a friendly environment. Media is considered to act in a neutral environment. There is a mechanism to attract objects from the neutral environment to the favorable one by the means of special technologies. Though, it is very likely to transfer objects from neutral environment to a hostile one. Successful business development implies a smooth transition from the negative part of the spectrum set to the neutral one. Of course, there is no doubt in the fact that media powerful sources of information should be positioned in the area of positive and friendly interrelations environment.

IT all depends on the management of information and communication competences of the organization or institution. Facts reveal that communication becomes a crucial part of the business and it is needed solid knowledge and skills in order to achieve success. "When an organization does not communicate properly and professionally ... with its audiences, then it is inevitably - sooner or later, there will be a conflict - a social process in which the organization aims to achieve its targets by making audience surrender itself " (Raykov 1999 : 23)

MANY scholars, after L. Bertalanffy and his theory of general systems, define organizations as "closed" to the outside environment systems or as "open" ones that offer constant information exchange within it. The availability of such double stream exchange of information defines both the degree of organization development and its ability to survive. The circulation of information streams has a vital effect. There are outgoing, incoming and internal information flows in each open communication system. There are also others that run separately - among all the other people and organizations in community. In nowadays the top management is faced with the necessity to cope with all information streams, especially with those ones which could be influenced directly by them. Reality requires competences in communication flexibility and adaptation to external factors. These skills become extremely important indicators of viability and progress. It is the well organized system of internal and external communication streams that allows maintaining harmony with the environment and making the organization easily manageable and competitive. The well organization ensures sustainability and positive reputation. It is the external communication channels that disseminate information to all stakeholders about social and marketing programs of the organization. Internal communication channels enable those collaborators and employees who are responsible of strategies implementations to be informed about strategic objectives, programs and projects.

IT is the open model of communication that is of ultimate necessity for modern realities. Its characteristics are defined by the specifics of globalization and integration. The communication process takes place in a horizontal plane and the generator and receiver of information are loaded with active and basic communicative functions. It is a well-known fact that any information intended only for outgoing stream is manipulative and "one-sided". It is the pursuit to achieve a reverse communication flow that implies fair and open policy-oriented stakeholders. It also enables improving of information stream and exchange of

information in order to enhance the influence people have in a certain organization. The process itself implies also conditions created for exchange of opinions on decisions taken. It is required to provide a better understanding of the roles that are needed to fulfill common goals. The process itself needs to be of a balanced and symmetrical nature. It means that opinions and attitudes of external group members should be changed to the degree that will be the same to change attitudes, knowledge and ideals of o overcome the imbalance and ensure symmetry of the process - in any degree is expected to change the view views and attitudes of external groups to the extent to change attitudes, knowledge and ideals of internal audiences.

INFORMATION is considered to lose its meaning if it does not fit adequately in the information area. If this happens information could not be interpreted and multiply in that very information area. According to N. Palashev information area is a 'dynamic set of characteristics and conditions that guarantee the reliability of transmission and reception information. It guarantees also adequacy and effectiveness of communication channels modeled by the methods and the means of modern corporate communications.'" (Palashev 2006:58). Its characteristics that are: free information flow; enablement of information database exchange; cultivated communicative adequacy audience and ensured feedback communication link for the movement of information, are presupposed and required conditions for its creation and existence.

IN order to interpret correctly the social communication today when it is loaded more than ever with the severity of the strategic goals and objectives, it should be pointed out that the classical formula is valid for communication process itself. The process initially is understood as mediated interrelation that takes place by the exchange of information between different social groups within a common information area. Proper positioning of the organization allows the construction of a comprehensive system of appropriate relationships and interactions with all its stakeholders. The process itself includes: communication modeling of organizational goals and ideas and turning them into realistic facts; overcome of the communication and information distortions; overcome of different crisis; formation of conditions for sustainability of information environment; creation and enhancement of universal values. Communication undergoes a qualitative transformation once it acquires the above-mentioned characteristics. Thus, it turns into an instrument for implementation of policy reputation. In this aspect it requires the following characteristics:

- ⇒ to be understandable and of a direct nature. Managers who are supposed to express themselves clearly and accurately have more chances to be understood by people. Thus, they limits the opportunities their words to be quoted out of the context. The impression they left is that they say what they think and believe in what they say;
- ⇒ to be intentionally directed to inform employees. All suggestions and conclusions are based on facts;
- ⇒ to emphasize on the essential facts rather than on details. Communication that refers to reputation is limited in terms of superlatives and adjectives. Reputational management is oriented to research and study the exact boundary between reality and present
- ⇒ Reputational management to be oriented to study the exact boundaries between reality and existed notions;
- ⇒ to be directly interrelated to the interests of people and to set agreements that will allow less exaggeration of achievements;

- ⇒ to involve directly auditory and visual perceptions of recipients. What people see, hear and understand themselves is much more important than what is presented to them by the means of marketing or advertising.

THE communication area that is formed today is characterized by its multilayered impact on people and organizational systems and by a high degree of communication phenomena uncertainty. It is very difficult to analyze new communication realities that have to be reported in communication business and practice. According to R. Marinov communication paradigms in the 21st century are "radically different from their info-oriented predecessors from the 20th century." The strategic position of the institution depends on the ability of managers and communication experts to analyze adequately the new communication context, "to define clearly the outlined fields of competence and successfully pass trans-cultural barriers caused by the lack of understanding of other cultures and civilization and the difficulty in understanding the languages used". (Marinov 2005: 7) The new communication realities implies this very complicated operation that requires a global approach, strategic orientation, deep analysis of complex communication problems, as well as management of communications-oriented knowledge, creativity and interactivity.

IN modern interpretations communication management is considered to focus on communication to improve the context of ever-changing interactions between organizations and the external environment. It is developed in recent years and is mainly applied in innovative Western companies, where a new type of integrated communication strategy is built and different forms of corporate communication are combined. The model is applied in modern companies, institutions, government departments, universities and colleges in more technologically advanced countries. Yet, in Bulgaria it has not been applied as practice and business. It is a new high-tech orientation of modern business that enhances competitiveness, communication competence and legitimacy of the business from the communication point of view. The main aim is to formulate new communication standards, to define a clear vision and communication strategy of the organization so that it will become part of the modern info-society. Communication takes a central role in this process. It is oriented to adapt the organization to the environment through interactive interrelation and to improve communication activities.

THE chances of an institution (or a social community) to fit into the existing realities and to be sustainable and competitive are as greater as the level of communication culture in the institution is higher. If modern organizations would strive for result-oriented communication behavior and would develop communication systems that would be adequate to the reality, they need to take into account the basic principles of strategic communication:

- ⇒ Honesty, openness to the world and built trust (not to conceal the truth with negative or false information);
- ⇒ bond between communication and strategic goal/direction, accent on the potential benefits and applications;
- ⇒ providing opportunities to stakeholders to ask real questions;
- ⇒ multiplication of communication channels – the fact increases the chances of understanding;
- ⇒ critical attitude to the accuracy of information and setting of realistic expectations;
- ⇒ active use of proactive and not of reactive actions; start of communication before the conflict itself; avoidance of defensive (protective) position;

- ⇒ increased attention to work with internal multi stakeholder - they need to understand the basic needs of community and have stimulus to generate ideas for development;
- ⇒ activity and high frequency communication (people need to perceive words constantly before they internalize (to become part of their vocabulary).

PRACTICE in Bulgaria shows that most organizations and institutions consider the development of communication and formation of information area as a last commitment, without realizing that it affects directly their success and viability. One of the main problems in modern institutions is the level of communication competence. According to R. Marinov "research conducted in Bulgaria show that the administration and business have a very low communication culture as their backwardness in terms of innovation, the use of the accumulated knowledge in the field of communications is dated back decades ago." <http://commanagement.blogspot.com/archive/>

EVEN without thorough research we have enough reason to state that the typical Bulgarian organization today represents totally closed information system. In this case the communication model of information is let "down" from the top. The information data are manipulated in advance and in a way to serve narrow organizational and (vey often personal) interests. The model does not allow compromises and leads often to crisis situations. This means that the higher management does consider the public opinion formed as a tool for feedback and as a criterion for assessing the business reputation. In the initial stage of establishment of the organization such model provides certain advantages for an independent policy but later it inevitably leads to greater gaps between all of the surrounding environment (business partners, shareholders, government bodies, the media, public, and so on.).

IN nowadays, it is evident that the management of a typical Bulgarian organization in its strategy is oriented towards results based on confidential agreements which - in the absence of information and communication - inevitably become sources of further sharp conflicts. To avoid them, it is enough to prepare in advance public opinion and convince of the need for future actions. Otherwise, any such organization remains on the border of serious crisis of information the consequences of which can lead to crisis and bad reputation arising from problems in the development and its survival. It requires adequate reactions and concentrated efforts to create different options in order to solve the problems aroused in a concrete situation.

THE contemporary context requires a constant dialogue between society itself and its each single organizational and structural unit. The most effective form of this very interaction is the process of communication in which both parties are willing to cooperate in order to achieve common goals.

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