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THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT OF MANAGERS IN EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT

Abstract:

Communication process is one of the principal factors that exert influence upon the success of an entire organization. An extremely important role is that which is played by the management of the team. For that very reason, specialists in organizations organize managers in this area by building appropriate relationships, programs, and systems which will assist managers in the management of their objectives efficiently and effectively. In this paper, the results of research conducted amongst senior managers in three fields: in an outsourcing company, in a production company, and also amongst managers who were the attendees of post-graduate studies within the scope of HR management, and also that of audit, are presented. The semi-structured interview method, based upon the interview questionnaire developed by the authoress herself was applied.

Keywords:

Managerial support, Communication, Management of staff teams, Management efficiency

JEL Classification: J21, J24, L29

Introduction

In contemporary times, communication process in organizations is becoming ever more and more rapid thanks to modern technological solutions. The process of communication is a concept of exchange of meanings (human thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and attitudes) using spoken and written words, symbols and body language. It is focused on: agreeing beliefs, values, opinions, attitudes and coordinating the behavior of people undertaking communication activity (Pocztowski, 2018, p. 239). It is of a particular significance in the work of managers, who, in accordance with the opinion of R. W. Griffin, "spend the majority of their working hours communicating" (Griffin, 2002, p.553). These are usually conversations, meetings, consultations, telephone contacts, speeches, interviews, letters, letters, notes, etc. The art of communication consists in:

- forwarding to the right addressees at the right time messages which will be understood as the sender intended and would have the intended effect;
- the ability to properly receive messages broadcast by others, that is to understand why they were sent (Koźmiński, Piotrowski, 2010, p.66).

In the case of those managers, communication is conducted in different directions. On the one hand, they are the creators of communications with which they address employees the work of whom is managed by them, whereas, on the other hand, they are recipients of information originating from their own superior. The communication process and its quality will affect their efficient management. According to the Polish Language Dictionary, efficiency is defined as the body's ability to perform specific activities; practical ability to do something; resource of knowledge, skills in some scope (https://sjp.pwn.pl/szukaj/...). In the organization and management theory, efficiency is used to assess the functioning of an organization. According praxeology, J. Zieleniewski indicated three dimensions of efficiency: effectiveness, advantage and efficiency (Zieleniewski, 1969, p. 232). As A. Mazurkiewicz notes, the efficiency of operation is a complex category, because the process itself, its contractor, result and organization are important in its operation (Mazurkiewicz, 2010, p.11). The efficiency of managing managers will depend on their competence and experience knowledge. The organizational support for managers is of particular importance nowadays. Therefore, it is important to formulate questions about a communication process in the manager's work. These are:

- What kind of modern technological solutions are used for the communication process with managers?
- Is a management information system (SIM) used?
- Is the purpose management system (MBO) used?
- Is there a special helplines dedicated to managers, where you can get quick information, eg regarding labor law, HR processes and procedures in the organization?
- Is the structure of HR Business Partners dedicated to a specific function in a company, providing online help in HR strategies and plans for optimal management of employee competences within a function or enterprise?
- Is there an information system containing data on employment planning and labor costs, indicators (possibility of continuous monitoring)?These questions will form the basis of research in this area.

1. The essence of communication process

At this point, it is worth indicating the definition of communication, looking at it from the point of view of different authors:

- process of the transfer of information from one individual to another one (Griffin, 2002, p. 554);
- Communication is perceived as a proper and termon-like access to relevant information (Ziek, Anderson, 2015)
- "the communications transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialisation that are intended to design and redesign organisations, to implement designs, and to co-ordinate day-to-day activities" (Frank, Brownell, 1989, p. 5-6)
- process the objective of which is to cause, in a recipient of information, a change in consciousness intended by the sender (https://mfiles.pl/pl/index.php/Komunikacja);
- process of the exchange of information between the parties participating in this process (http://jaknegocjowac.com.pl/negocjacje-komunikacja);
- obtaining and receiving and information in a direct contact with another individual (https://sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki/komunikacja.html);
- exchange of mental contents, and that means that what one thinks or feel, between two individuals that commenced interaction between themselves, whilst one of those individuals assumed the function of a sender, and the other one that of a recipient; their roles may be different depending upon the kind of the process in question (https://sites.google.com/site/szostokkomunikacja/wyklady).

The communication process can be presented using the diagram shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Model of the communication process of two people
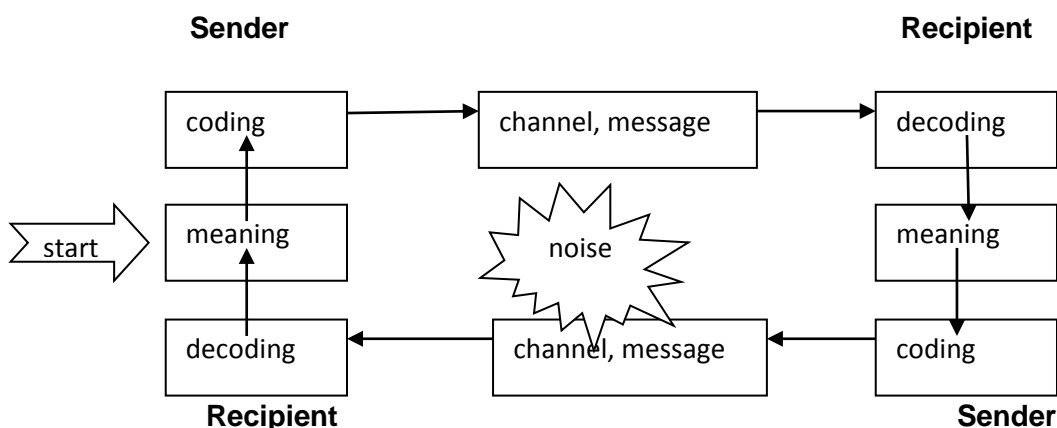
Source: Pocztowski, 2018, p. 242

The presented communication process may be disturbed by the so-called noise, caused by various factors related to the characteristics of the person transmitting the information and the

person receiving it. The content of the information itself, the transmission channel and the conditions in which this transmission takes place also affect. Identifying these factors is the first step in improving the way we communicate with other people. The most important are: selective message, low motivation, selective reception, emotions, language, excess content, non-verbal factors, cultural factors, time limits and technology (Pocztowski, 2018, p. 242).

According to the opinion of managers, the goal of communication is to send clear, unambiguous and complete information (Ziek, Anderson, 2015). Effective communicating is the process of sending messages in such a manner that a message which is received is as identical with the one which is intended as it is possible (Griffin, 2002). Effective internal communication is crucial for successful organisations as it affects the ability of strategic managers to engage employees and achieve objectives (Welch, Jackson, 2007). The problem of communication, in particular, contemporary communication in multi-cultural organizations, is researched by: W. Barner-Rasmussen, I. Björkman (Barner-Rasmussen, Björkman, 2005), P. Caernarven-Smith (P. Caernarven-Smith, 1993), the latter of whom pays a particular attention to communication amongst managers. Appropriately acquired information assist in performing managerial functions, and that means in appropriate:

- planning activities which were assigned for the purpose of conducting them, and which result from the objectives of organizations for a longer period of time, or for a shorter one;

- organizing the work of oneself and the team of the employees who are managed by a given manager; selection of the employees possessing appropriate professional competences;

- providing motivation – the application of appropriate methods and techniques which will make it possible to accomplish the intended objectives;

- controlling, and that means, conducting the assessment of completing tasks by a managed team.

There is also evidence of lack of understanding by users of the proper use of tools, lack of training, poor management competences to stimulate correct use. There is also evidence that the competition of tools rather hampered rather than improved the effectiveness of communication (Otter, Emmitt, 2007).

The efficiency of managers is associated with ussing of modern technological solutions such as Business Intelligence (Rouhani, Ashrafi, Zare Ravasan, Afshari, 2016).

Electronic communication has transformed the workplace into a workspace (Brame, 1996). IT has become an intergrated part of operations at the workplace. It improves organizational capacity to obtain current and archived information and provides a sense of mutual connections with people and information (Morton, 1991). In enterprises, managers can take advantage of various system solutions that help them make accurate decisions. Examples of such solutions include:

- management information system (SIM);

- a specially prepared internal information system for the company;

- the Internet;

- intranet;

- system for assessing employees' professional competences;

- information system containing data on employment planning and labor costs, indicators (the possibility of continuous monitoring);

- management by objectives system (MBO);
- tool boxes on intranet sites;
- special helplines dedicated to managers, where you can get quick information, eg regarding labor law, HR processes and procedures in the organization;
- the structure of HR Business Partners dedicated to a specific function in the company, providing on-line help regarding HR strategy and plans for optimal management of employees' competencies as part of a function or enterprise;
- special Business Intelligence solutions for managers;
- quality assurance systems, e.g. ISO;
- strategic scorecard;
- risk management;
- SAP - an ERP business software provider for enterprises;
- business continuity management.

The use of web systems supporting the work of teams (eg Trello, Jira, Dropbox, Google Drive) significantly improves communication and document management and ensures continuous monitoring for the manager. Also, the use of mobile applications supports the work of the manager through easy access to employees and allows them to be managed remotely. These include CRM systems (Customer Relationship Management), business analytics (Business Intelligence, BI), approval and authorization of accounting documents. Communication technology, cloud computing, is becoming increasingly important in the sphere of communication. Knowledge storage in the form of virtual solutions has also simplified access to it (Kobis, 2015). In addition, the effectiveness of BI systems reflects the impact of organizational strategy, structure, process and culture on organizational performance (Arefin, Hoque, Bao, 2015). As emphasized by Chalupa, Harris, it is important to properly determine the communication channel that uses various communication tools to ensure optimal distribution or collection of information (Chalupa, Harris, 1998).

2. The essence of organizational support for managers

For the purpose of completing these tasks, support of specialists representing different fields in organization is indispensable. In the literature (Stańczyk, 2017), it is possible to come across the research conducted by: L. McFarlane, S. and S. J. Wayne, who indicate the significance of perceived organizational support (POS) as a measure of the behaviour of an employee in an enterprise. The research in question gives rise to the conclusion that it is a crucial issue to research the influence exerted by the perception of organizational support by employees (McFarlane, Wayne & Wayne, 1993). Research devoted to this subject-matter was conducted as well by: R. Eisenberger, R. Huntington, S. Hutchinson and D. Sowa, who paid attention to the importance of organizational support for employees, increasing, *ipso facto*, involvement in, and satisfaction from, work (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson & Sowa, 1986). In the domestic science, this field is researched by: D. Turek and I. Czaplińska, who research this support, first and foremost, from the point of view of a manager, and as the action directed towards employees (Turek, Czaplińska, 2014). Managers need support in the processes of communication so that they could in a more effective manner cope with

accomplishing objectives, and also with the appropriate management of the team of their employees.

It is significant in an organization to have specialists from different fields in the organization prepare appropriate tools for managers, for instance, such as applied for determining objectives for particular positions, the assessment of conducted activities in a particular period of time, or the tools of motivating employees in the form of financial incentives, both the short-period, and the long-period alike, and also the package of fringe benefits. The application of those particular components of managerial work requires the appropriate level of communication in an organization, which may have the oral form, for instance, such as training events, workshops, or one-to-one meetings, or, alternatively, with the application of the electronic forms of communication with the application of modern technological solutions.

The communication process is one of the dimensions of organizational support proposed by I. Stańczyk. These include psychological support, relational, controlling, structural and educational support, support systems for managerial decisions. The existing communication possibilities in the organization are the basis for building the last-mentioned dimension of organizational support and, in the end, support for systems supporting managerial decisions (Stańczyk, 2018). Applied manager support systems should be easy to use and should not require specific technical knowledge. Managers should also be able to modify the information obtained or they should have an influence on their construction. Such a situation is possible at the time of continuous cooperation of specialists in the organization with managers. Systemic management is also important, which defines as a comprehensive approach that enables managers to operate in a complex environment, navigating in strategic uncertainty and effectively implementing changes in enterprises. An information system is an example of support systems. According to R. N. Anthony, an enterprise information system should provide information needed in management decision-making processes by management on three levels of responsibility: strategic planning, managerial control and operational control (Turyna, 2012:499). According to studies conducted by M. Zhang, support with information systems has improved the profitability and productivity of senior managers in a dynamic external environment. According to the author of the research, enterprises that provide technical support in the form of building tailored information systems for senior managers can enjoy competitive advantage and high efficiency (Zhang, 2007).

3. Research relevant to the level of communication concerning managers

The following research methods were used to design the data collection and verification protocol:

- − analysis of literature using the methodology of a systematic review of literature (Czakon, 2015:124);
- − surveys of senior managers,

This paper uses qualitative research that analyzes and interprets the meaning that an individual or group assigns to the problems studied (Creswell, 2013).

The research tool was the use of an interview. It is one of the basic methods of data collection. Interviews are actively used by representatives of various scientific traditions. (Gudkova, 2012: 111-113). Interview is defined as "a specific form of conversation, during which knowledge is created in the course of interaction between the person conducting the interview and the respondent" (Kvale, 2010, p. 19-20). The interview has a targeted character and is

subordinated to a specific goal, designated by the researcher. interviews, however, are a reflection of the respondents' subtle feelings. the interlocutor's answers will always be to some extent the result of the influence of external conditions, so in different situations we can get different answers from the respondent (Gudkova, 2012, p. 112).

The structured interview was the chosen method of research.

These interviews are part of the conducted surveys among senior managers in enterprises. The project of a comprehensive study was presented in the monograph I. Stańczyk Organizational support for managers (2018).

In order to depict the problem of communication in an organization in relation to managers, interviews were conducted with 40 senior managers. They represented companies in Poland from the sectors of production, outsourcing (IT, HR) , and also different other ones, in which managers were the attendees of post-graduate studies organized at the Institute of Economics, Finance and Management of Jagiellonian University. That research is a part of the project relevant to investigating the level of support in an organization in management provided for managers. The interviews were conducted in the period since March until April of 2017. The researched problem of communication in particular organizations is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Opinions of the researched managers concerning the level of the transfer of information

Level of the transfer of information	Production company	Outsourcing company	Remaining managers
Very good; information indispensable for effective team management is received on an ongoing basis	22.5%	50%	23.1%
Information reach with a delay, which results in making it difficult to take decisions, or delaying it	34.5%	42%	38.5%
System of communication needs to be reorganized; there is a huge delay in, or the absence of, receiving information, which has adverse results in relations with my team	40.2%	8.3%	30.7%
Different answer	2.8%	0%	8%

Source: own elaboration based on (Stańczyk, 2018)

In accordance with the opinion of managers in an outsourcing company, the processes of the transfer of information reached the level of 50%, and that fact may be resulting from the functioning of the organization of this type upon the basis of processual management with precisely determined capacities in the aspect of communication. Simultaneously, they indicate that some of the information reaches, however, recipients later than it is appropriate, and this field needs to be researched by specialists from particular department in order to support them in the processes of the reliable reception of information, which will exert influence upon taking appropriate decisions. The situation is slightly different in the case of the remaining interviewed managers. In their organizations, the process of the exchange of information

requires reorganizing because information reaches a recipient with a delay, and that is frequently the reason why decisions are taken after a certain time, which will undeniably be connected with effective management and accomplishing the adopted objectives. In addition to that, one of the interlocutors stated that 'there exists an excessive quantity of received information', and, in this case, a communication noise is created, which results as well in disturbing the appropriate process of taking decisions.

The conducted interview made it possible to acquire information about special tools, which make it possible for managers to perform their managerial functions. The catalogue of such tools is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Tools applied by managers in particular organizations improving the processes of communication (in accordance with the opinion of the researched managers)

Tools	Production company	Outsourcing company	Remaining managers
Managerial Information System	0%	0%	0%
Internal information system dedicated to organizations	7%	7%	27,6%
Internet	24%	7%	17.2%
Intranet	3%	15%	6.9%
System of the assessment of the professional competences of employees	24%	20%	10.3%
System information assisting in employment planning	10%	7%	0%
System of management based on objectives (MBO)	0%	7%	6.9%
Toolboxes on websites	0%	5%	0%
Special customer helpline dedicated to managers, where information, for instance, within the scope of labour law, processes and procedures can be obtained	0%	0%	0%
Structures of HR Business Partner	0%	20%	3.4%
Business Intelligence for managers	0%	0%	3.4%
Quality Assurance Systems (ISO)	14%	2%	6.9%
Strategic scorecard	3%	0%	6.9%

Risk management	14%	2%	10.3%
Business continuity management	0%	7%	0%

Source: own elaboration based on (Stańczyk, 2018)

In response to the research questions posed in this article, it can be stated that only some of the tools indicated in the literature are used in the communication process. In order to streamline the transfer of communications and support for taking decisions by managers, the most frequently applied solution is the system of the assessment of professional competences of employees, quality assurance systems (ISO), and also systems assisting risk management. Such a situation occurs in the case of all three fields of research. The remaining tools are applied to a smaller or greater degree in particular organizations. That difference is connected with the specific character of a given company. The managers, amongst whom the interviews were conducted, claim that the level of communication is satisfying. However, they expect specialists in an organization to provide support in the form of different types of tools assisting in the management of selected tasks and the teams of employees alike.

Such results may surprise, because in the era of access to modern technologies or structural solutions, their use should be much greater.

Conclusion and Discussion

In Table 2, quite a limited assortment of tools in application which are helpful in management is depicted. At this point, there arises a question, whether specialists in an organization put forward such solution, or whether they are aware of the possibility of supporting managers in management. The conducted interviews with managers made it possible to formulate the conclusion that they are open to technological novelties supporting management.

As indicated by the leading interlocutors in the context of management efficiency and making appropriate decisions at the managerial level, introducing modern technological solutions, eg Business Intelligence (S. Rouhani, A. Ashrafi, A. Zare Ravasan, S. Afshari), is sporadically used in the organization, that is why it is worth taking steps to implement such improvements.

Based on the research results presented, suggestions can be made for specialists to take action that will support managers in making decisions by improving communication channels. Belong to them:

- use of Business Intelligence as a support in making decisions by managers - the suggestion is to create better possibilities of using this type of solutions and to train managers in technical service; also indicating the positive aspects of using this type of solutions to make strategic decisions;

- support for modern technologies in the information and communication process (L.P. Martins) - the suggestion is to intensify work on creating or improving Management Information Systems

- there are standard solutions for building relevant information systems (M. Zang) - the suggestion is to build innovative solutions to create a more friendly and competitive work environment.

To sum up the situation in organizations regarding communication processes and tools, one can agree with the definition of A. Koźmiński. He points out that the art of communication is on the one hand, providing the right recipients with the right messages at the right time, which will be understood as the sender intended and would have the intended effect. On the other hand, communication is the ability to properly receive messages broadcast by others.
The selection of appropriate tools and technological solutions for managers becomes important in this context.

The next stage of the research will be focus implementation workshops for managers in the area of indicated tools. We want to know their opinions about these tools so that we can choose a tool for practical tests in the future. This will probably narrow down the tools to selected technical solutions. The question we are asking ourselves is also the speed and willingness on the part of managers to learn new specific solutions. The willingness is often indicated verbally and in implementation practice there is resistance to change.

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