Available online at www.sserr.ro
Social Sciences and Education Research Review

(5) 1 162-168 (2018) ISSN 2392-9683

Internal Communication Campaigns And Employees' Motivation

Elena Rodica OPRAN
Assistant Professor, PhD, CCSCMOP, University of Craiova, Romania

ABSTRACT

Internal communication is a complex vital process for the organizational success in a dynamic global market. At the beginning of the paper we will take into account the defining of the concept of internal communication, summarizing its importance, because internal communication solves problems as important as the need to increase the awareness about a product, such as the motivation of the employees and the creation of a work environment in which they really want to be in. Afterwards we will focus on the internal communication campaign and the presentation of the stages that must be followed in order to accomplish an internal communication campaign. For establishing the stages, we will follow a plan which represents a summary of the different presentations models present in specialized literature, adjusted though for internal audiences. Further we will discuss about the importance of such a campaign at the employee level and we will exemplify a few internal communication campaigns awarded within different PR international competitions from the recent years.

Keywords: employees, campaign, communication, internal, motivation

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The 20th century is known as the era of internal communication. Stephen Windsor-Lewis in his speech from October 2002, from the release of Internal Communication Alliance (known today under the name of CIPR Inside), affirmed that "this study subject has advanced very much" and that this is "an essential element in the business environment". He is the one who added a new item on the phrase list which refer to internal communication – "communication of the organizational leadership" (Smith, Mounter 2008: 9).

Internal communication or *organizational communication is a process, usually intentional, of message exchange between people, groups and organizational levels within the organization with the purpose of the achievement of both individual and collective goals* (Cornescu, Mihăilescu, Stanciu, 2003: 239).

Another definition of internal communication comes from the business environment: *internal communication represents all the communication interactions which take place within an organization/company between the general manager and the owner or co-associates of the company, between the manager and the employees of the enterprise, as well as between employees at different levels* (Pálfi 2013: 13).

An important part of an organization is internal communication or communication with the employees, representing the vital flux that makes possible the accomplishments of an organization. Moreover, the majority of the leaders from the entire world have come to admit the fact that a good communication strategy is a key element which determines the success of an organization. People have become more and more aware of the fact that successful organizations communicate with their employees, and a way of communicating with the employees is through internal communication campaigns.

The internal communication campaigns can stimulate the employees, motivating them to do all that they possibly can at the work place and, in their turn to help the company where they work to remain relevant and flourishing.

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The communication campaign is an activity which includes certain training stages, research and conceptions work, for the elaboration of the programme, the implementation into practice and a permanent assessment of the steps taken.

In order to make an internal communication campaign and the establishment of the stages, we will follow the plan presented by Diana-Maria Cismaru (Cismaru 2008: 139), plan which follows the algorithm realised by Cristina Coman (Coman 2001: 81), which represents a summary of the different models presented in specialized literature, adjusted though for internal audiences.

The stages of internal communication campaigns:

The definition of the problem. The term of "problem" does not represent only the negative aspects which can appear in an organization, such as the increase or decrease of the number of employees, but also aspects that can appear on certain favourable occasions of which the organization can take advantage for fulfilling its objectives, such as the possibility of developing the organization or to set up a new company. This stage does not suppose the blame of certain people or people categories, and the identification of the problem, does not have to also include the way to solve it.

The analysis of the situation supposes the stage in which in a work file are collected all the known data regarding the problem at hands, and for the analysis to be correct appropriate research methods are used according to the determined purpose.

Establishing objectives. The objectives of a company can be divided into two main categories: informational objectives, which can represent a product, a service or an organization, and what concerns the internal audience, are easily to be attained in the case in which the organisation has a well-designed information system, and motivational objectives, which follow to determine certain actions of the audience, being necessary the collaboration with the human resources department and even with external organizational consultancy companies, but the product of these campaigns

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with motivational objectives may be unexpectedly effective in finding solutions to some chronic internal problems.

Identification of audience categories. For establishing a subordination system of the audience segments in order of their importance for realising the campaign objectives, it starts from the identification of the values, interests and expectations of the internal audiences and according to this classification, the resources and structure of the messages will be allocated.

Establishing strategies. Within the strategy there should be realised the correspondence with: the objectives set, the audiences chosen as the target of the campaign, the available resources, the already existing internal style of communication. The strategy is concretized in the "communication axis", a single phase that releases the essence of the campaign and which will then generate the key messages transmitted.

Establishing tactics. This stage includes both the action itself and the communication channel. For each communication instrument the campaign plan must comprise the following information must comprise the following information: the description of the activity, the execution deadline, special requests (space, audio-video equipment), estimated budget, the person responsible for completion.

Fixing schedule and budget. Because internal communication campaigns take place over a shorter timeframe than external communication ones, the easiest way to build the calendar is preferable: the narrative calendar can be a good form of presentation (the short duration of the campaign allows for such an option).

The calendar helps for the calculation of a more advantageous budget variant, is mentioned the fact that in few organizations are allocated large budgets for in-house communication campaigns, so calculations need to be done carefully.

The assessment of the campaign supposes several steps: are established one at a time the number of people who retained the message, the number of people who

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changed their opinions after receiving the message, the number of people who changed their attitude after receiving the messages. Continuing in the ascending order, it is set the number of people who adopt the behaviour suggested by the message, the number of those who promote or repeat this behaviour.

In the internal communication campaigns the assessment raises fewer problems that the assessment of external communication campaigns, because the subjects (employees) can be very easily investigated (they are an accessible audience). Also, if for external target audiences, the survey is mandatory, for internal audiences, methods can be diversified: for behavioural objectives, the observation method or, where appropriate, sociometric analysis can be used to determine the degree of achievement of objectives.

Here are a few examples of internal communication campaigns awarded within different international PR competitions of the last few years, which proves the importance of internal communication campaigns in motivating employees.

We start with a campaign awarded within SABRE 2013, in the category *Best Employee Communications* and silver medallist in the category *Internal Communication* at Cannes Lions 2012. The SABRE Awards have always been about engagement, credibility, and relationship building. *Plumbers without borders* was internally developed for Comfort, a Swedish plumber franchise. The purpose of the campaign was to create a community of plumbers who feel like doing something important, like fire-fighters or policemen: that saves lives. Thus, in partnership with an NGO (SOS-Kinderdorf), Comfort plumbers created a special water purifier that was sent to countries like Bulgaria, Lithuania and Benin. The slogan of the campaign is *Safe water and sanitation are basic human rights!*.

Another awarded campaign, this time within PR Week US Awards 2013, is the one developed by the agency Ruder Finn for the Citi banking group on its anniversary of 200 years from its foundation. Its objective was to celebrate the diversity of its

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260.000 employees, being reached through a series of programmes dedicated to them. They were invited to participate in a video clip, to participate in a sports and photography competition, to volunteer on a global day of the community. Among the results: the music video that celebrated Citi has gathered more than 60.000 views, over 100.000 employees were involved in the photography competition and 43.000 in the sports competition. Thus, at the end of the campaign, 99.75% of the group's employees knew about Citi's 200th anniversary.

The internal communication campaigns for Liverpool Community Health NHS Trust (LCH Trust), developed by the communication department of the company together with the agency Splinter Design, was awarded within PR Week Awards 2013 in London. The campaign aimed to convince employees to vaccinate against influenza through a series of 50s visuals that spoke to them about the importance of the vaccine. To the posters that were glued through the LCH headquarters and shared on the social networks and intranet of the company were added: a video clip that circulated on the intranet of the organization and that showed the heads of several departments vaccinating, invitations for vaccination on employees' payslips and the choice from amongst the employees of some vaccine endorsers. Among the results: 71% of the LCH members were vaccinated against the influenza, 24% more than in the previous year.

We conclude with two awarded Romanian internal communication campaigns. The first of them was awarded within Romanian PR Awards 2013, where it obtained the Golden Award for Excellence in the category Internal Communication. *The bakery of good deeds* is a campaign through which BCR encouraged his employees to volunteer and to get involved in the development of the community. The project represents a competition between employees who have to come up with ideas for solving some community problems which are related to education, environment, social, animal protection or health.

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Another Romanian internal communication campaign which has been awarded is *Play to Win*, developed by Coca-Cola HBC Romania and Image PR. *Play to Win* is an internal communication programme which proposes itself to facilitate changing the organizational culture within Coca-Cola HBC Romania, which was awarded in 2013 within LACP Magellan Awards. The competition is organised by the League of American Communications Professionals (LACP). The Coca-Cola programme was started in 2012 and continued in 2013. In addition to the Platinum Award won, *Play to Win* was also awarded the special distinction of *Most engaging program*.

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