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# COULD EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION BE INCREASED BY A BETTER ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION? A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract:** This article is presenting the results of a sociological research among employees of private organizations to see how internal communication works and how works the relationship between employee's communication and motivation. Although the theoretical framework falls within a broad field, in the first part of the article we have chosen to present only those perspectives that refer to internal organizational communication and the way in which it influences employee motivation. For the research part of the article, we have presented the results of some questions from an applied opinion questionnaire, which may be useful for explaining the fundamental idea of this article, namely that in any organization, the development of employee motivation is very important as it contributes to the realization of a dynamic and efficient professional community, based on a common objective - achieving the goals of the organization.

**Keywords**: *organization; internal communication; needs; motivation; strategy.*

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## INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

In every organization, the internal communication plays a very important role in promoting the various ethical initiatives undertaken by the organization (managing emotions, motivation, employees' socialization, promoting leadership etc.). When it circulates efficiently, information favours communication, and therefore cohesion, motivation, creativity, and making effective decisions. Therefore, identifying informational corporate systems is a force for the employees, allowing them to position themselves within the organization and to hold useful information at the right time.

At the same time, in any type of organization, "managerial positions can be described as communication centres" (Longenecker, 1969, p. 461), managerial communication being subject to specific ethical rules, that can be found in organizational culture, organization policy and, obviously, in the individual ethics of managers. In any organization, "the manager must understand and use well the language, both verbal and nonverbal one, for efficient management of its company. Without understanding the power and effects of the language, he cannot operate optimally to adjust and synchronize individual efforts of his subordinates" (Voinea, Busu, Opran, Vlăduțescu, 2015, p. 174)

The process and the products of managerial communication are based on concepts, principles, standards and rules, and take different forms. Managerial communication can be defined as "the form of communication used by managers and leaders during their working activity. In order to successfully accomplish this task, companies hire communications specialists as counsellors of the leadership team, who train them in communicating with all types of audiences, including the internal ones" (Iacob, 2001, p. 10).

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The efficient organizational communication that appears "when the right people receive timely the adequate information" (Cândea, 1996, p. 182) represents an important part of communication management, if we consider the fact that nowadays the motivation and management style applied in businesses are closely linked. Moreover, management has evolved greatly, moving from a vision focused on authority and constraint to a more human vision, based on interpersonal relationships and communication. In many specialized studies, we find the issue of *participatory management*, that type of management whose main objective is to correlate the objectives of the employees with the company's objectives. And this correlation can be done very easily through the transmitted messages, because "a second objective of the communication, after the communication itself, is to configure a message and this message to have an interpersonal, group, organizational, social effect" (Vlăduțescu, 2013, p. 277).

This article analyses the results of a quantitative research, starting from the hypothesis that in any organization there is a strong link between communication and motivation, managers needing to know how to transmit and present certain situations (issues) in such a way as to motivate and maximize results. Being motivated, employees will never have the feeling that they are just plain executives within the organization, developing, therefore, a "proactive motivation" (Parker, Wall, Jackson, 1997, p. 902)

## SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE CONTEXT OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Although the concept of communication has been approached from many perspectives (Dragan, 2007, McQuail, 1999, Marinescu, 2003) in many specialized papers, with many schools and currents of thought (Palo Alto

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Communication School, School of Frankfurt, School of Chicago), it basically refers to "a process of communicating intelligent information, ideas, between individuals or groups; any social activity from simple to complex cannot function outside this basic concept" (Tran, Stănciugelu, 2001, p. 4).

In order to be considered as organized, "communication must have the following characteristics: (1) being goal-oriented, that is to say, reflect an overall plan and the objectives of the organization; (2) being multidirectional, that is to say from top to bottom, horizontally, vertically, etc.; (3) being instrumental, to rely on a variety of media according to the objective; (4) being adapted, i.e. to use the information systems specific to each sector of activity and to be consistent with the promoted organizational culture; (5) being flexible, to integrate informal communication and create structures that favour it" (Iacob, 2001, p. 51).

If we take into account the neo-durkheimist perspective of organizational analysis, then we will consider that any organization is reduced to a division of labour and to a process of coordination-integration. According to this perspective, in the defining characteristics of organizations, there are elements that refer either to the process of division of labour - division and distribution of tasks), or elements that refer to the coordination-integration process - communication, payroll, control systems etc (Bernoux, 1985, p. 108).

From the point of view of organizational sociology, organizational communication refers to "the process through which the exchange of messages takes place in order to achieve the individual and common objectives of its members" (Zorlențan, Burduș, Căprărescu, 1996, p. 153).

In any organization, the internal communication has the primary role of promoting a common goal-building. It is a social dialogue tool that is used to organize and manage the flow of information within the company and to

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disseminate information clearly and efficiently. Through this type of communication, the information is managed, organized, disseminated in every company (Peretti, 2008, p. 20). Most of the time, it is related to the way that organization is structured. For example, in an organization that has a centralized structure (the Taylorist model), communication is often formal and written.

Information is differentiated by compartments and is transmitted downwards - from superiors to employees, and its transmitter is the only competent person in the organization to handle complex issues that he (she) has to decompose into simple elements and to identify specific and clear solutions. Thus, "communication, the discourse and the message are inseparable, especially because they are constituent elements of the same order" (Vlăduțescu, Voinea, 2016, p. 134).

On the other hand, in small organizations, communication is predominantly oral, through direct contacts (face-to-face), both horizontally and vertically, all participants having equal access to information; written communication is more used in relations with the outside organizational environment. From this, we can conclude that the more the number of departments in an organization grows, the more complex is its structure and communication network (Roussel, p. 54).

The aspect that is analysed with in the research part of this article is the relationship between communication and employee motivation, motivation being a cyclical process (Castañeda, Toulson 2013) of "allocating energy to meet the needs of the individual, which is based on the individual-company collaboration, that is the dedication by the individual of his time and energy in return for a reward, mainly a material reward" (Pritchard and Ashwood, 2008, p. 6-8).

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In this sense, the organization's role is to promote and manage the motivation of all employees, and to do this through internal institutional communication.

The employee motivation management (which must include also elements of behavioural psychology – people always choose the behaviours that will bring them the greatest rewards) must take into account several aspects, such as work organization, employee involvement, and the specific objectives of organization, which have to be known and appropriated by each employee.

One of the motivations considered to have a strong force to influence people's behaviour in any organization in order to increase work performances is reportable to material incentives and rewards. It is obvious that "this type of motivation is focused on the work environment or "hygiene factors" (Herzberg), as it is equally obvious that the supposition underlying the adoption of this motivation strategy is based on the economic model of human behaviour" (Vlăsceanu, 2003, p.251).

On the other hand, employees of any company show the need for social relationships (Aldelfer), a need that can be expressed by the desire to integrate into a work team, to have contacts with other employees, to develop congenial conversations other colleagues, to participate in trade union activities etc.; this type of need corresponds to the superior needs that we encounter also to Abraham Maslow - the need for self-esteem and the social need (Roussel, 1996, p. 35).

## METHODOLOGY

The applicative part of this article is presenting the results of a sociological quantitative research among 118 people working in multinational companies from the following fields of activity: banking, insurance, sales, the

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automotive industry, IT. The aim of the research was to highlight the acute need for new organizational communication strategies, in order to increase the sense of belonging to the organization and, implicitly, to increase the productivity of work, but also to emphasize the role of the organizational climate in the labour productivity.

The type of sampling that we have used was non-probabilistic, convenient sampling. Non-probabilistic sampling occurs if "it is not possible to determine the probability of a member of the statistical collectivities to be selected in the sample" (Chelcea, 2009).

We have used as methods of research the sociological survey and the statistical analysis of the resulting data. The research tool was the opinion questionnaire, consisting of 29 questions (22 close-ended and free-form answer questions and also 7 factual questions).

As we may see in Table 1, regarding the structure of the exploratory group by sex and age, this was relatively balanced, the questionnaires being applied to persons aged 18-55 (the highest proportion being in the 26-35 age group), of which 48.3% were women and 51.7% were men.

**Table 1: Structure of the exploratory group, by sex and age category**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Feminine | 48,3% |
| 2. | Masculine | 51,7% |
| | **Total** | **100,0%** |
| 1. | Between 18 and 25 years | 18,3% |
| 2. | Between and 26-35 years | 41,7% |
| 3. | Between and 36-45 years | 18,5% |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4. | Between and 46-55 years | 21,5% |
| | **Total** | **100,0%** |

In order to get a clearer picture of the organizational climate in the companies where we have conducted the research, we have chosen to apply the questionnaires especially to people who have been in the company for more than 1 year. Although, as it can be seen from the table below, the questionnaires were applied to all categories of employees, the highest weights were recorded for the respondents who worked in the company for a period of 5 to 10 years - 41.6%, followed by those from '1-5 years' category - 27.8%. We opted for this stratification of the respondents, starting from the idea that full integration within an organization and, implicitly, assuming its goal is a process that ends after at least 1 year from starting work.

**Table 2: How long have you been working in this organization?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Less than 1 year | 18,3% |
| 2. | 1-5 years | 27,8% |
| 3. | 5-10 years | 41,6% |
| 4. | More than 10 years | 12,3% |
| | **Total** | **100,0** |

The first question's goal was to get an image of how respondents perceive the role of internal communication within an organization, mainly from the point of view of the effects it has at the organization level. From the responses we may observe that in the respondents' view, internal communication helps to create an organizational climate, which is beneficial for the development

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of motivation (42.4%) and for increasing the cohesion and belonging of the individuals to the organization - 29.8%. In fact, in our respondents' view, communication cannot be limited to creating an information dissemination network - only 5.1% indicated this response

**Table 3: Generally, what is the role of internal communication within an organization?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Promoting a better organizational climate that is a source of motivation | 42,4% |
| 2. | Increasing cohesion and belonging to the organization | 29,8% |
| 3. | Communicating and explaining the organization's strategy | 14,5% |
| 4. | Encouraging adhesion of external collaborators to the organization's goals | 8,2% |
| 5. | Creating only a network of information dissemination | 5,1% |
| | **Total** | **100,0%** |

The respondents being employed in companies from different areas of activity, of different sizes, the internal communication methods used most often are also different. Thus, as we have shown in the theory of the article, in small organizations, communication is mostly done through the notice, meetings or oral. Oral communication facilitates direct and rapid communication between agencies and departments, but the information is not always reliable and formal. There is a risk of rumours, and the transmission of false information, because the source of the information is not always known. In larger organizations,

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communication is done more through the Internet (Email, Skype), Intranet, fax, or through meetings (within the same department).

As a whole (regardless of the size of the organization), the most commonly used means of communication and, implicitly, the transmission of information are: Internet (29.8%), meetings (27.3%), %), notice board (10.6%), fax (5.2%), oral communication (5.2%).

**Table 4: What are the most common means of internal communication within your organization?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Internet (E-mail, Skype) | 29,8% |
| 2. | Meetings | 27,3% |
| 3. | Phone | 22,1% |
| 4. | Notice board | 10,6% |
| 5. | Oral communication | 5,2% |
| 6. | Others* | 5,0% |
| | **Total** | **100,0%** |

** Under 1%, each: fax, internal mail, service note*

We can say that in the companies in which we conducted the research, internal communication is an efficient one, given that the respondents indicated in a share of 77.7% that they have access to all the information necessary for their activity within the organization. The percentage of those who indicated that they do not have access to all the information is 17.5%, more than three quarters of those who have said this are working in the banking field, where the

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access to some confidential information is only allowed to those who are at a high management level (especially decision-making level).

**Table 5: Do you have access to all the information needed for your activity within the organization?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Yes | 77,7% |
| 2. | No | 17,5% |
| 3. | N/A | 4,8% |
| | **Total** | **100%** |

Thus, access to information is equal; no person in the company has the ability to make information management a source of individual power, which means that in the case of the companies that were part of our research, the communication networks are flexible. The efficiency of communication is also represented by the fact that it operates at all levels, including bottom-up communication, as confirmed by the data presented in the table below, which shows that only 21.8% of respondents' superiors do not take into account the suggestions for improving the activity within the organization.

**Table 6: Does your direct superior take into account your suggestions for improving the activity within the organization?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Yes, sometimes | 38,2% |
| 2. | Yes, but very rarely | 26,7% |
| 3. | No, never | 21,8% |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4. | Yes, always | 13,3% |
| | **Total** | **100,0%** |

Although most of the times a person's selection within a company is a decision of the recruiter/HR specialist and of the director/manager of the company, this decision is brought to the attention of the other persons hired, before the new employee arrives (47.3% of respondents said that this practice is always used in their organization). This practice not only contributes, to some extent, to maintaining effective internal communication, but can also facilitate the organizational integration of newly employed people.

**Table 7: When a person is employed in your organization / service / department, are you informed about this before he (she) arrives?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Yes, always | 47,3 |
| 2. | Yes, sometimes | 38,7 |
| 3. | Yes, but very rarely | 8,8 |
| 4. | No, never | 5,2 |
| | **Total** | **100** |

Because meetings are one of the most important ways of internal communication, we have tried to observe how effective is the vertical way of transmitting information, both from top to bottom (superior-subordinate) and bottom-up (subordinate-superior).

As we may see also from the table below (*Table 8*), both types of communication are efficient, superiors manage to make themselves understood

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within the meetings 'to a large extent' (57,5%), while 50,8% of our respondents (as subordinates) have indicated the same answer category ('to a large extent')

Thus, within the companies from the research group, downward vertical communication is efficient; the affective and emotional components of the employees are not neglected. This is particularly important aspect because "in situations where the subordinate does not have too much information besides the order to perform certain activities, he applies himself to a position of executioner, which can be frustrating for him and may have a negative organizational impact" (Pâinișoară, 2005, p. 280).

**Table 8: The efficiency of the top-to-bottom and bottom-up communication**

| **To what extent do you think that your superiors manage to be understood by the participants (you, by default) during work sessions?** | % | **To what extent do you consider yourself able to be understood by your superiors when speaking during work sessions?** | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| To a large extent | 57,5 | To a large extent | 50,8 |
| To a small extent | 20,0 | To a small extent | 26,7 |
| To a great extent | 17,5 | To a great extent | 14,2 |
| They fail to be understood | 1,7 | They fail to be understood | 2,5 |
| N/A | 3,3 | N/A | 5,8 |
| **Total** | **100** | **Total** | **100** |

Regarding the level of satisfaction with the job descriptions, we consider that this is a relatively high one, 58.3% of the respondents affirmed that they do not consider that they have too many attributions in the job description. It is

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also interesting to note that among those who appreciated that they have too many attributions in the job post, 64.3% communicated this to their superior. This percentage highlights the fact that there is an efficient communication within the organizations of the respondents, which, in general, has significant effects on both productivity and the working climate.

**Table 9: Attributions in the job description: evaluation and satisfaction**

| **Do you think you have too many job assignments and its should be reduced?** | % | **If so, did you communicate this to your immediate supervisor?** | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 34,0 | Yes | 64,3 |
| No | 58.3 | No | 33,6 |
| N/A | 5,0 | N/A | 2,1 |
| **Total** | **100,0** | **Total** | **100,0** |

Respondents' motivation also arises as a result of the good communication relationships they have with both their immediate superiors and their colleagues with whom they work directly. In assessing communication relations with direct superiors, 89.8% said they were 'good' and 'very good' and only 4.9% considered them 'slightly tense'. At the same time, relationships with colleagues were rated 88.5% as being cordial.

**Table 10: Communication with immediate superiors and colleagues**

| **How do you appreciate the relationship with your immediate superiors?** | % | **How do you appreciate the communication relationships you have with your colleagues whom you** | |
|---|---|---|---|

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| | | work directly? | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Very good | 37,1 | Cordial, in general | 88,5 |
| Good | 52,7 | Tense with some of them | 5,2 |
| Slightly tense | 4,9 | Of indifference | 1,4 |
| Tense | 0,7 | N/A | 4,9 |
| N/A | 4,6 | | |
| **Total** | **100,0** | **Total** | **100,0** |

The data in the above table shows why internal communication should be considered as the engine for the exchange of information between employees, whatever their position or function, in order to better integrate and complement the actions that contribute to the organization's goals. An efficient communication is the source of motivation and therefore a tool for improving performance. At the same time, poorly managed communication is a source of institutional crises, which are very damaging to the development of any organization.

## DISCUSSION

Through this article, we have analysed one of the most important aspects that lead to the achievement of an organization's goals and meet the needs of employees, namely, we wanted to find out what the impact of internal communication on employee motivation is. As a result of our research, we found that organizations have well-defined internal communication strategies in order to influence employees in terms of motivation

We must not forget that any company is an organization, a well-structured set of well-structured interaction systems whose primary objective is profit (in order to survive in an increasingly competitive economic market) and

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therefore any organization must adopt a good internal communication strategy to motivate employees, meet their needs, increase their cohesion, thereby delivering effective and efficient human resources and therefore a plus value to the company.

Thus, as can be seen from the results of our research presented below, the development of intrinsic motivation is very important as it contributes to the realization of a dynamic and efficient professional community in which all have a common goal - the goal of the organization. This goal can be successfully achieved when people in the system feel the need for recognition and self-realization, and they feel professional fulfilled due to the activities they carry out within the organization.

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