



IN THE SPHERE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION: DAILY INSTRUMENTS, AND THE PROMOTION OF INTERNAL EVENTS

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Abstract:

For Sebastião (2009), communication is a process of interaction between individuals with common content that seek to lead others to act according to their values and pretensions. At the same time, it can be seen as an exchange of experiences between different generations and/or different ideals, which become a collective heritage. As in communication between human beings, in an organizational context, the subsistence and organization of any company or entity is based on communication, that is, any organization aims to maintain a common objective within a coherent group or structure, in which exchange is allowed. From internal points of view, with rules in order to avoid conflicts between groups. In the last decades, human resources management strategies began to assume as one of their priorities the communicational aspects within the institution. In fact, *“from the mid-1970s onwards, internal communication established itself as a discipline of human resources management, first, and a strategic part in the global management of the organization, afterwards.”* (Santos, 1998). Those responsible tend to adopt more humanitarian values, which facilitate the integration of workers in the company. A slow but irreversible mental revolution is therefore underway, renewing the ideologies of the leaders, but also their personalities and attitudes. This may result in a better rationalization of relations between management and other employees. (Marchese, in Nassar, 2005). Internal communication is therefore a means of providing the information and understanding necessary for the efforts of individuals, through tools of different nature, translated into appropriate attitudes for motivation, cooperation and satisfaction at work, which allow for the improvement of performance.

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1. Introduction

For those who work in Public Relations, the institution's internal public is the most important. The first action programs should focus on it, as it is impossible to project a favorable image to the outside if it is not positive internally; to achieve such a result, everyone has to feel fully integrated. A sense of responsibility towards the entire organization must be conveyed to each of them, as it is not possible to ask an employee to participate in a collective work when he is totally unaware of its objectives and contents. The feeling of belonging is essential, and to participate fully in the organization, the worker has to feel part of a whole in which the objectives are common. For this, it is absolutely necessary that you are informed; hence the importance of effective internal communication. The greater the size of the structure, the greater the need for a communication network, with the disciplined passage of relevant information in a bidirectional logic, being essential to inform them of the progress achieved, the new products, the corporate policy, and other data that to better understand what they do and why they do it. Likewise, employees must be able to raise questions or express personal points of view, as they often have knowledge of the facts from perspectives that are somewhat different from those of those who manage or head (Bueno, 2007). Lupetti (2008) argues that organizational communication is based on the concept of integrated communication - internal and external -, which converge on the same objective, or guided by coherent strategies in order to guide plans to achieve the desired results by organizations. In order for an organization to act strategically, it is necessary to establish a well-defined mission, vision and values that comply with the objectives and lines of action of the entity or organization. Thus, integrated communication emerges as a way to bring together the contents of the various sectors of an organization and is responsible for the dialogue between the organization and its internal and external audiences (Du Preez, 2015; Karanges et al., 2015; Sriyothin, 2016).

The oral form is, in this context, the most natural and immediate for the exchange of impressions: this is a privileged means for communication, through formalized processes to a greater or lesser degree. It is essential for cohesion in the work environment, as it represents an affective and cognitive dimension: by enabling interaction, it allows the socialization of human beings, insofar as it facilitates knowledge of the organization, personalizes contacts between individuals, allows interactivity in the communication and facilitates the emergence of a common language (Sriyothin, 2016). However, the fact that it has these advantages does not allow us to underestimate its inherent disadvantages: the relative imprecision and volatility: *"Imprecision because in the pretense of transmitting any message there is a risk of information deformation. Volatile because it is neither customary nor practical to carefully record all messages transmitted orally."* (Almeida, 2000: 76). This idea is reinforced by Ozaeta & Na, (2014: 21), when they state: *"Listeners tend to forget much of what they hear, especially if the topic does not interest them. Another common problem is the lack of clarity in delivering information due to usage of jargons or poor speaking skills"*.

2. Means of internal communication

Some of the most representative means of internal communication in organizations are:

a) Annual speech - being a social act, it is also an instrument of downward communication. Despite not having a frequency character, it allows clarifying certain questions, explaining current facts and possible future achievements. The possibility of assistance from family members and friends of the staff at this time should be considered, as it facilitates the increase of the organization's notoriety and credibility.

b) Meetings - formal or informal, are also essential tools of modern management. They allow people to meet, providing the opportunity to speak and to listen, in two-way communication. In the field of work, they are carried out to explain and discuss action policies, define future programs and train employees. They can be carried out at all levels, constituting direct means of exchange of information, which make it possible to correct incorrect ideas, or provide workers with solid elements to clarify certain opinions formed. Avoiding the tendency towards abundance, anarchy, poor preparation and poor management of these meetings, as they can cause participants to feel that they have wasted their time and generate disinterest, demotivation and absenteeism. They can even create a bad image abroad, as the employees are often unreachable. (Hairstyle, 1993).

c) Training - not only in the specific area of activity of each employee, but also in general training in languages and digital literacy. It can be provided through conferences, the aim of which should be to inform, train and teach. For this to happen, the type and level of the presentations must be directly related to the cultural level of the recipients, while also considering the currents of opinion existing in the company at any given moment.

d) Individual/group interview – translated into a formal conversation between a person in charge and one or more employees, it is often used when welcoming new employees, changing roles or promotions, evaluating performance or leaving the organization. Despite requiring some time for its implementation, it has the advantages of enabling direct communication between the parties involved, and allowing for feedback.

e) Conference – used for the presentation of general or specific subjects related to the life of the organization, it can apply to all its staff or only to particular groups. It is presented as a useful complement to the professional training provided to employees.

f) Expression groups – periodic meetings of groups of employees, responsible for the approach and improvement proposals regarding specific problems. Despite taking some time from the organizational elements involved, they allow them to create a sense of responsibility, creativity and the search for solutions to concrete issues.

At the same time, information technologies - whose exponential growth has changed our conception of the world and our personal and professional daily lives - have gained the support of millions of individuals and organizations, who understand information as the most precious asset in the present and in the near future.

These networks for high-speed flows made it possible to overcome the era of univocal communication, providing new opportunities for human beings; as technologies are redefined, new means become available, with obvious advantages also

with regard to communication in organizations: instant contact, the flexibility of messages (which can be quickly adapted to different types of employees), interactivity. (Cádima, 1996). Recent possibilities tend to profoundly modify the dialogue between men, in the traditional sense of the term. However, they will not eliminate the communication means and supports that we have always known: the new technologies have simply expanded the reach and possibilities of communication, and accelerated the distribution process. Almeida (2000: 98) refers that *“the new information technologies result from the combination of computer, audio, visual and telecommunications techniques. Crossing information technology with image and sound techniques, and with the development of new communication materials, allowed a vast field of solutions in communication modes”*, facilitating the processes of knowledge sharing already within the scope of a new virtual reality, where digital communication becomes essential for organizations.

In this context, technology is seen as a facilitating object of communication, disseminating in the organizational context the concept of connectivity, creation and sharing (Mateus, 2013). This gives rise to a new notion of a company or organization in which they are defined through new approaches and concepts such as decentralization, leveling of hierarchies, quality management, telework, e-business, e-commerce, etc. (Mendes & Pereira, 2006).

In the context of information and communication technologies, there is a need to devise a global policy, an integrated strategy that allows establishing priorities in the choice of targets, messages and means, and also ensuring the coherence and effectiveness of messages (Dionísio & Rodrigues, 2018). This is why integration has to be ensured so that the organization creates the same experience internally across all sectors, using the diversity of available means for real-time communication used in organizational environments: blogs, wikis, social networking sites, intranets or YouTube, just to name a few (Krishan, 2011).

At the same time, the area of the construction of events has been gaining prominence and translates, in fact, communication support that can group all the others: oral, written, audiovisual or new information technologies. It consists of the gathering of groups of people around the same theme or subject. The objective to be achieved with this type of initiative is the loyalty of the individuals involved, contributing to their adherence to the organization's key values (Morsi, 2016); to this aim, the specific culture of the institution must always be taken into account, since the event will only perform its function effectively if it is credible and coherent with the general philosophy of the institution. According to Almeida (2000), it is necessary to consider three temporal phases in the realization of events: preparation, animation, and evaluation.

In the first phase, the aim is to attract attention, create impatience in the public and arouse their interest. For the design of the program, it is useful to launch surveys in advance: through the analysis of the results obtained, it is possible to choose themes and modalities of action, taking into account the interests or desires expressed by the respondents. In the animation phase, that is, during the course of the event, there must be, on the part of those responsible, the concern to fulfill the program that has been

established, so as not to frustrate expectations. After the event, and in order for participants to retain the memory of what happened longer, it is customary to distribute video cassettes or dossiers, or even - days or weeks later - the reference of key moments in the internal newspaper or in an information leaflet. On the other hand, conducting surveys will make it possible to assess the reactions of the participants; it is thus possible to verify if the messages were adhered to, and if the initial objectives were achieved. In this case too, it is necessary that the results, whatever their nature, be made public; otherwise, a climate of mistrust could be established, with negative repercussions on internal communication.

Concrete cases of events to be considered are, for example: a) "Open-door" days – event for employees and their families; this is an operation that has not yet been publicized, but which strongly contributes to the improvement of the social climate. This type of event has an essential objective: to make the workplace less complex, to make it more familiar. It also works to develop a sense of belonging, reinforce relationships between employees (in the sense that, on that day, formal hierarchies will not be observed), and value the organization, presenting it as a place open to the public and to innovation. When preparing for an open day, some aspects should be observed, such as: paying attention to the choice of date, avoiding days that coincide with sports competitions or any other local events; no presentation of solemn speeches, as this is a moment that should take place under the sign of relaxation and informality; organization of a lunch or a cocktail party, as these are circumstances that enhance communication and social interaction; finally, keep a memory of the event, providing a photo or video report; such instrument will materialize the organization's culture. b) Cultural, recreational and sports activities - aimed at all the institution's employees, they can be translated into sports clubs, theater or ballet groups, cinema clubs... with these initiatives, the aim is to make the institution not only a working community, but a human community in a broader sense. c) Attribution of prizes for productivity, creativity or human relations - facilitators of integration through stimulation, should be used with care, as they constitute a manifestation of power, and can easily create feelings of injustice within the labor community. d) Christmas parties – one of the most widely used instruments for the involvement and mobilization of all employees. e) Scholarship Plans – study funding for all employees who demonstrate exceptional qualifications. This Public Relations instrument may also materialize in the offer of Scholarships for the children of employees. f) Inauguration of benefits – the term "benefits" covers a large number of initiatives that the organization can carry out in favor of its staff: living rooms, daycare centers, nursing centers, cafeterias or libraries, for example. g) Internal exposures – any individual, in addition to their professional skills, has more or less unsuspected talents. The exhibitions of handicrafts, photographs, private collections, open wide perspectives in the field of Public Relations to the personal appreciation of the employee, colleagues and the organization itself. h) Commemorations - usually translate into the celebration of the institution's anniversary or other important dates, and also in the annual banquets offered to veterans, to which former employees are also invited, who

thus have the opportunity to remember together moments of their past personal and professional. i) Excursions and holiday camps – towards places that are pleasant for their culture, surroundings, heritage or gastronomy, it is common for employees to take collective trips, offered by the organization in which they provide service.

3. Conclusions

In parallel with a set of traditional instruments, which still maintain their relevance and timeliness, new Public Relations tools are continuously provided by the dizzying rise of the Internet. Professionals are constantly faced with new possibilities, which increases the range of options that do not respect the tools used to achieve the PR objectives. One of the resulting consequences is the dynamic and interactive communication between organizations and internal audiences (Aktan & Ozupek, 2015). This new way of communicating the anticipation of behaviors and the deep construction of employees, a deep construction of targeted communication and deeper knowledge.

Internal Communication encompasses all the communicative practices and processes of a specific organization with its internal public, such as employees, collaborators or shareholders. When defining a strategy, standardizing its means of communication, the organization of important information in an organized, clear and objective way for its internal public (FitzPatrick & Valskov, 2014; Verghese, 2017). In this way, it avoids the way of subjecting its comments and evaluations, keeping employees safe and motivated, establishing a harmonious and clear image that conveys reliability and reliability.

In this process, there are several resources that an organization can use, “*aiming to provide means of promoting greater integration within the organization through dialogue, the exchange of information, experiences and participation at all levels*” (Scroferneker, 2006, 47), including oral, written, audiovisual instruments or the construction of events that contribute to aggregate around the mission, vision and public values of an institution are used here.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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