Effective Organizational Communication: in Search of a System

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Abstract

Opening with the discussion of preconditions for an effective organizational communication system development, the article suggests a functional comprehensive communication system model as a tool for supporting effective communication to reach individual and integrated goals at an organization. Research literature results put forward a framework of internal and external forces, impacting upon a communication system at an organization, and produce a unique and grounded, structural and dynamic organizational communication system model, based on the matrix of organizational communication stages. The article singles out the features of the organizational communication system and the effectiveness criteria determining its internal communication sub-system. It concludes with a consideration of communication system development possibilities to practically secure an effective and functional communication system at an organization.

Keywords: organizational communication, communication system model, organizational communication system development.

Introduction

There is a growing evidence that effective communication is the key for keeping an enterprise, as a system of individuals, working together for objectives, successful and integrated. In the 21st century, charged with challenge and change, an organization needs the ability to respond fast. In order to be aware and effective, organization members need clear, pertinent, and full information. Research suggests that effective communication is seen of prime importance at any organization today, since securing open interaction with a free flow of information, managing organizational communication processes, and creating an open and adaptive communication system does bring large-scale organizational benefits (SzuKala, 2001; Zaremba, 2003; Tourish and Hargie, 2004; Eisenberg et al., 2009). As the study of scientific sources (Gibson and Hodgetts, 1986; Schmidt and Gardner, 1995; Conrad and Poole, 2005; Miller, 2006; Stoner et al., 2006; Harris and Nelson, 2008; Papa et al., 2008; etc.) has suggested, a functional system of communication is desired at all organization’s levels not only to guarantee the management of information which brings stability and order in a company but also to empower vital organizational processes which enable adaptation, change, and innovation in its life. A theoretical and practical problem arises – how to develop a thorough communication system at an organization which would allow open and effective interaction with optimal input and would grant enhanced performance to empower any company to reach its major goals?

In spite of the fact that organizational communication research, in general, has been a flourishing field, the examination of a cohesion between the systems view and organizational communication research has been rather limited (Papa et al., 2008). Lee and Jablin (1995, as cited in Papa et al., 2008) used basic system theory concepts to examine maintenance communication in superior-subordinate relationships and Konopaske, Robie and Ivancevich (2005, as cited in Papa et al., 2008) studied the influence of family system dynamics on managers’ willingness to relocate. Eisenberg, Goodall and Trethewey (2009) call the research ‘disappointing’, since scholars have had difficulty to create dynamic systems of communication and often lack the methodological tools needed to analyze complex systems of communication (Eisenberg, Goodall and Trethewey, 2009). It seems relevant to note that though a number of communication scholars, such as Ference (1970), Hickson (1973), Kreps (1990), Schmidt and Gardner (1995), Bovee and Thill (1999), Zaremba (2003), Miller (2006), Harris and Nelson (2008), etc., as specified later in this article, have been involved in the system approach or an open system theory with regard to organizational communication, the majority of works do not aim at producing a structural and comprehensive communication system model. Even though some attempts have been made to create and ground a functional, structured system of communication at an organization, practically most of the recent sources where a mention of a communication system could be found strictly refer to ICT systems (or to other fields, such as biology or medical science).

To ground the ultimate necessity of the present investigation, it would be reasonable to suggest a brief overview of scientific sources which has brought to the discovery of a limited number of instances in the organizational communication research which have aimed at suggesting organizational communication structures, in particular, naming them as systems. The survey follows in a chronological order.
Ference’s (1970) investigation of the organizational decision-making process touches upon the concept of the communication system of an organization but equals it to the process of information exchange between persons, which agrees with a linear model of communication.

Greenbaum’s (1972) organizational communication system has been among the most structured though it presents a constricted view. The author combines management techniques of planning and control with the fundamentals of organizational communication theory as to establish an effective communication system, primarily stressing a coordinative internal communication segment. The model explicates the levels of the communication system and personnel communication activities, and determines the possibilities for a communication system appraisal at an organization.

Hickson (1973), involved in the research of auditing the effectiveness of organizational communication, touches upon the open systems model producing an ‘Ideal Communication Model’. His analysis, based on a broad supposition that ‘the communication system may be synonymous with the organization itself’, is limited to only two components of a system, namely, adaptation, allowing adjusting to changes in the organization’s environment, and production, concerned with the input/output ratio of the products or services offered by the organization.

Schmidt and Gardner (1995) suggest a visual model of organizational communication system, primarily conceptualizing the variables influencing organizational communication and placing organizational communication within a larger context. The communication system is characterized by a communication climate and depends upon interpersonal skills and intergroup relations. The model does not specify essential communication parameters.

Bovee and Thill (1999) view an organizational communication system as five elements, namely, the environment, employees, relationships and interaction, and the aims of the organization as basic elements of such a system. The perspective reveals neither structural variables nor the processes of communication at an organization.

Jaciniene (2008) has developed a model, presented and defended in the framework of an MBA thesis. The theoretical model focuses on the internal sub-system of organizational communication and attempts to outline the basic structure of effective communication at an organization.

### Table 1: Summary of Organizational Communication Systems Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Sphere of Research</th>
<th>Outcome Produced</th>
<th>Depiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ference (1970)</td>
<td>Organizational decision making</td>
<td>Organizational communication system description</td>
<td>Communication system equivalent to the process of information exchange between individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Greenbaum (1972)</td>
<td>Organizational communication</td>
<td>Organizational communication system</td>
<td>Communication system as a fundamental structure to help attain high levels of organizational effectiveness. System levels discerned to investigate internal personnel interaction, communication activities outlined to support internal coordinative communication. Conceptual structure for the appraisal of organizational communication (sub)systems suggested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Hickson (1973)</td>
<td>Organizational communication audit</td>
<td>‘Ideal communication model’</td>
<td>Based on a systems approach, the model relies on two system components, namely, on adaptation and production. Designed to discover organizational malfunctioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Jaciniene (2008)</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Theoretical organizational communication system model, empirically tested at X company</td>
<td>Organizational communication system as a management tool; model designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the internal organizational communication parameters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Blackbourn et al. (2009)</td>
<td>Organizational communication</td>
<td>Two unique organizational communication systems as practices at a university and a local business company</td>
<td>Organizational communication system presented as a practical empowerment of employee-customer feedback. Designed to facilitate effective organizational functioning and improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The grounding of the model was provided by the empirical research carried out in one of the largest telecommunications company in Lithuania.

Blackbourn et al. (2009) present and compare two organizational communication systems: at a university and in a local company. The systems, or practical employee feedback programs, consist of two agents, internal and external customers, and feedback.

In addition to the sources mentioned above, there are a few articles which only mention the ‘organizational communication(s) system’ in their title, but do not specify it in the contents, e.g., Eshraghi and Salehi (2010). It could be summarized (Table 1) that on the conceptual level, the research on the organizational communication system falls short in terms of describing an overall and comprehensive communication system, its characteristics, and development.

Considering the fact that organizational communication research, in general, has provided only remote and incomplete views in the systems field and neither of the above-mentioned organizational communication system models could serve research purposes of contemporary organizations or the present article, the given work makes an effort to bridge the existing gap. This research reviews scientific sources, including Kreps (1990), Schmidt and Gardner (1995), Bovee and Thill (1999), Zaremba (2003), Harris and Nelson (2008), Jaciniene (2008), Papa et al. (2008), and others, to suggest a complete and overall theoretical model of an organizational communication system.

Having singled out an organizational communication system as a research object, the present article brings out the aim to inquire into the creation and delineation of development possibilities of an overall organizational communication system through projecting a consistent, integrated, and unambiguous design of an organizational communication system. The model applies the structure and functions of communication stages and relies on an authentic classification of communication categories. This aim is to be achieved by implementing the following tasks: 1) delineating the impacting forces through scientific literature research and meta-analysis, to produce a comprehensive model of an organizational communication system, with the emphasis on its internal section, depicting major sub-systems, agents, and processes, 2) on the basis of theoretical research results, to single out the criteria which condition the effectiveness and development processes of the organizational communication system, limiting the investigation to the internal communication segment of the communication system, 3) to point out means to overpass challenges in the successful organizational communication system development.

It is important to stress the limitations of research the article bears.

Basically, the paper relies on a view that organizations are dynamic and living entities which act in purposeful ways. They have been put together to accomplish some type of purpose – they are goal oriented (Harris and Nelson, 2008). Thus, an organization has been viewed in this article from a functionalist perspective which sees a communication process as a means to get the right information to the right people at the right time (Pace and Faules, 1989, as cited in Shelby, 1993). Organizational functioning is described in terms of an input-transformations-output process. In the research, organizational outputs are operationalized in terms of organizational culture and climate, employee satisfaction, etc. (Church, 1994).

Then, the theoretical research has been carried out and the analysis strictly limited to the field of organizational communication. It is not concerned with other fields, where organizational communication systems could be applied. It does not investigate specific aspects of human resource management, or knowledge management, or other fields of social sciences. The article does not deal with the issues of corporate communication, which is the set of activities involved in managing all internal and external communications aimed at creating favorable starting points with stakeholders on which the company depends (Shelby, 1993; Riel and Fombrun, 2007; Christensen and Cornelissen, 2010). Then, the present investigation does not derive from business communication, a traditional interpersonally-focused domain which involves correct letter style, writing style, grammatical use, and report form as structural components which intend to help a business achieve a fundamental goal - to maximize a shareholder wealth (Locker and Kaczmarek, 2001; Penrose et al., 2001; Bienvenu and Timm, 2002). It also does not stick to managerial or management communication which, viewed as an integration of theory with skills, reflects a strategic choice activity, a process, and managerial roles, and which specifically includes managerial writing, managerial presentations, interpersonal writing and communication, organizational and corporate communication (Suchan, 1991, as cited in Shelby, 1993).

Finally, in spite of the fact that companies have been putting their information into the hands of technology, ICT in particular, the article has not been considering any pieces of communication research specifically related to human-machine interaction, any technological systems or ICT systems, information and software systems, and the like. However, it does touch upon the aspect of technology-mediated communication which, for obvious reasons, has been very popular among the researchers recently.

In terms of approach, the current research has been based on the following three methodological stances.

1) The system approach has been chosen as an underlying methodological position, since organizations themselves are open, dynamic, and living systems, where the behavior of each element influences the behavior of the whole. Organizations are composed of a number of subsystems interacting with the external forces (Johnson, 1973; Harris and Nelson, 2008). A systemic viewpoint (Zakarevicius, 2002; Charlton and Andras, 2003; Boulding, 2004) is greatly beneficial for investigating organizational communication since it enables the linking of communication activities and elements into a single whole. It allows communication to be seen in relation to the social system in which it occurs and to the particular function it performs in that system (Katz and Kahn, 1966, as cited in Church, 1994). In the context of the given
article, this approach also provides a framework for visualizing the impacting factors, both internal and external, as an integrated whole. It also allows synergy in the phenomenon and enables to investigate people behave in and manage organizations. Finally, it offers tools for studying organizational processes.

This approach is especially relevant, since interdependence has been especially apparent in today’s highly connected global economy (Shetler and Browning, 2000; Miller, 2006). Besides, the systems competence in communication has been marked among five major workplace competencies for the 21st century (Locke and Kaczmarek, 2001).

2) The structure within a communication system has been based on the levels approach adapted from Howard Greenbaum (1972). It allows a division and coordination among seven stages discerned in the organizational communication system model. Along the levels, a special communication categories division has been employed, which was developed as a result of the authors’ long-term theoretical research and its practical application. It has already been used as a methodological foundation for empirical investigation of effective communication of organizations.

3) The structural approach has been employed not exactly as a hard methodology but rather as a metaphor, as Wellman (1997) puts it. According to it, any communication system at an organization functions in relation to its other systems and within the networks of numerous ties, not as a separate entity or unit. The emphasis here lies on the relationships between system units. Within the system, all the ties are reciprocal, direct and indirect. Specifically, this approach enables the analysis of organizational structure’s impact on formal and informal communication system networks, of the relation between the internal and external communication, the interaction between the general system and the sub-system of barriers, and more.

The method employed for the aims of the present work is research literature analysis.

The article consists of three parts. The first part reviews the factors which determine a communication system at an organization and outlines a structural dynamic communication system model. The second part lists the organizational communication system effectiveness criteria which can be treated as a conceptual background for researching the development of an effective communication system at an organization. The third part points out possibilities and challenges for practical communication system development under the current circumstances and suggests some considerations for further empirical investigation.

This article may serve as a methodological basis for analyzing the development of effective communication and a communication system at an organization, especially the internal communication sub-system, and contributes to the investigation of the communication system development.

1. Organizational Communication System Model

Communication is central to organizational existence. All organizations are dependent on the many voices of its individual speakers, and the research in organizational communication has been emphasizing the ‘scaling up’ from communication between individuals (micro) to the organization (macro) (Christensen and Cornelissen, 2010); therefore, the given research considers the input of an individual communicator. Then, a functional approach towards organizational communication, adopted in this article, allows a broader view on organizational communication and it places emphasis on structure and communication systems.

An overview of sources suggests that organizational communication is a social process which provides contact and information exchange between both departments and units of organization and organization’s environment for the purpose of organization’s operation and accomplishment of its objectives. Specifically, members gather pertinent information about their organization and the changes occurring within it, they discuss critical organizational experiences to reach the goals of individuals, collective groups, and the organization (Kreps, 1990; Shelby, 1993; Miller, 2006; Christensen and Cornelissen, 2010; Kocabas, 2011, as cited in Ince and Gull, 2011). As a matter of fact, a communication system of an organization is a number of related units that operate together to create and shape organizational events, and information processing is the primary function of the units (Shelby, 1993; Leipzig and More, Witkin and Stephens, as cited in Shelby, 1993).

Thus, organizational communication is a comprehensive and systematic treatment of measurable communication variables and relationships. It focuses on those interdependencies and interactions among and within subsystems through the act of communication, which serve the purposes of organization (Shelby, 1993). It covers decision-making and conflict management at a company. It enables the creation and maintaining of organizational images, missions, and values as well as power and politics within organizations. It includes human interaction with technologies and studies how communication socializes and supports employees and team members. It can be inferred that information is the resource which directs organizational activities and it is a communication system that can make the gathering, interpretation, retention, and availability of the relevant information effective in organizations.

Organizations themselves are comprised of smaller interconnected systems, called sub-systems, such as technological, managerial, formal and informal communication sub-system, etc. Primary providers of relevant information are the two communication sub-systems, internal and external, both of which, being inseparable, perform important, distinct, yet interrelated functions in organizational processes. When communicating with its external environment, the organization coordinates its internal system elements. That is, interacting with economic, political, legal, technological, and cultural agents, negotiating with competitors, partners, or clients, an enterprise adopts its
goals, develops a strong organizational culture, adjusts its management style, and regulates the organizational structure.

**1.1. Determinants of the Organizational Communication System**

Prior to structuring a system model, it is important to single out the factors which determine the communication system of an organization. Further, external and internal agents will be pointed out and their interconnection emphasized. As the current paper puts the emphasis on the processes within the internal organizational communication system, the primal representatives of the external sub-system of communication will be just designated.

*External factors influencing communication at an organization*

Organizations reside in a changing external environment and are affected by it. The external environment hosts the agents that directly influence the decision-making and problem-solving apparatus of the internal organizational system. Economic, social, cultural, and ecological interface of an organization is strengthened by the factors of direct and indirect impact which are: clients, competitors, suppliers, partners, freelancers, resources, legal and governmental regulations, together with political and technological aspects (Schmidt and Gardner, 1995; Stoner et al., 2006; Papa et al., 2008). This distribution has been reflected in Figure 1. Since the complete analysis of external system elements lies outside the scope of the present work, only two most powerful external determinants or aspects, influencing the organization, that is, culture and economy, will be further touched upon.

*Culture* as symbolic communication refers to a way of life, including such aspects as knowledge, beliefs, values, customs, practices, and socially prescribed roles, distinguishing the members of one category of people from another (Hofstede, 1984; Schmidt and Gardner, 1995). Schein (2010) sees culture as an emergent and developmental process. For our purposes we actually refer to two levels of culture here: society culture and business culture (Zostautiene, 2010). Society values, as an intrinsic part of culture, make a huge impact on the ways and means people communicate, and business culture directly shapes behaviors at an organization, including communication as well as organizational culture and organization’s values. Culture determines organization’s role and operations within society, including the functioning of its external communication. It particularizes what technologies are available for use in the organization, what rewards are used, what specific objectives are sought, or what leadership, management styles, or communication are acceptable. This all has grand direct effects on the internal structure of an organization, on its agents, and on its communication processes. Indeed, all the above play a particular role in the development and operation of an organizational communication system.

*Economic conditions influence business organizations in the levels of employment and unemployment, competition in the marketplace, salary levels, interest rates, tax structure, consumers (Schmidt and Gardner, 1995), and many more. Any organizational communication system must be tuned in to receiving and sending information, relative to these economic influences. Organization members should, for instance, develop their communication skills to be attuned to receiving and sending relevant information. Communication with the economic environment determines issuing orders, seeking innovation, or informing about any amendments. For instance, customer tastes, communicated from the outside of an organization, may leave a company with no market which would appear as a huge barrier to all organizational processes, including communication. Thus, culture and economy, as external influences, are the critical aspects significantly affecting not only the development and innovativeness of an organization itself, but the expansion of its processes, including the communication process, and the communication system structure in particular.

As it has been inferred, communication can be viewed as an organization-making function (Shelby, 1993; Christensen and Cornelissen, 2010). When communicating with economic, social, political, technological, ecological, legal, and cultural agents, dealing and negotiating with competitors, partners, suppliers, freelancers, or clients, an enterprise adopts its goals, develops a relevant organizational culture and values, matches technology standards, harmonizes managerial philosophy, adjusts a management style, and regulates the organizational structure. External organizational communication plays a double role. On the one hand, through external communication processes, an organization creates its positive image, advertises its activities and products, implements orders, exchanges information with its partners, presents itself to competitors, interacts with clients and suppliers, gives account for the results to stakeholders, or deals with legal and governmental institutions. On the other hand, information from the extrinsic representatives mirrors organization’s activities and helps estimate its products or services.

The overall system structure is unbreakable, that is, while communicating with its external environment, an organization at the same time coordinates its internal system elements. Nevertheless, research shows that numerous organizations more willingly maintain relationships with external figures, and they overlook the significance of internal agents, forces, or influences (Szukala, 2001). How does it affect the organization and its communication? A survey of internal organizational elements and the structure of the internal communication system at an organization might provide some insights.

*Internal agents affecting organizational communication system*

The most powerful organization’s internal components conditioning the communication system are: the prevailing organizational culture, organizational objectives, managerial philosophy, leadership or management style,
Organizational structure, technology, a reward system, and the people who make up the organization, in our case, communicators. These agents are delineated next.

Organizational culture stands at the frontier of the internal and external communication sub-systems. Strong and supportive, it is the only route to success in the business world (Schmidt and Gardner, 1995; Miller, 2006; Robbins, 2007). It arises from and can be changed by a number of complex economic, technological, and social forces, as inferred in Figure 1. The cohesion between culture and communication is complex. Basically, communication permeates, creates and sustains all the three levels of organizational culture: basic assumptions, espoused values, and artifacts and creations (Schein, 2010). It promotes the values encouraging, for instance, member cooperation or participation which, at the same time, foster effective communication and hit almost the entire communication system process and elements.

### Values of an organization supporting the organizational communication system (based on Lee, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Organization’s Values</th>
<th>Characterization</th>
<th>Relevance to 7 Communication Stages (as outlined in Figure 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Strategic orientation and imperative</td>
<td>The communication function must be orientated to organization’s strategic priorities</td>
<td>Shape overall aims of OCS, frame organizational, managerial, and group level communication. Employ relevant kinds and means of communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Integrity and integration</td>
<td>Communication must be credible and strive to defend complete consistency between communication and conduct</td>
<td>Ground ethical communication on all levels (esp. interpersonal, group, and managerial), including internal and external, formal and informal communication sub-systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Dignity and respect</td>
<td>The essential qualities of an organizational culture to be at the backbone of communication</td>
<td>Decide the quality of vertical communication and induce usage of formal communication means. Privilege of managers as well as staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Flow of strategic information</td>
<td>A two-way communication, ensuring the flow of information, enriches and empowers an organization</td>
<td>Elicits vertical communication feedback, facilitates effective managerial communication (Stage 3 of the exhibit).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Clarity and power of messages</td>
<td>Coherent, consistent, and complete messages address the concerns and needs of listeners</td>
<td>Determine the quality of feedback and communication means, circulating written, spoken, and technology-based channels of OCS along and across all stages. Important for management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>External perspective</td>
<td>Internal communication needs are to be considered within the context of an external perspective and orientation; very few internal messages can afford to ignore the external perspective</td>
<td>Promotes and develops formal external communication means - verbal, non-verbal, and technology-based. Strengthens vertical communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>Individual responsibilities for communication (vertical and horizontal directions) must be defined at all levels, addressing both receiving and sending information</td>
<td>Distribute communication load for interpersonal, group, managerial, and organizational interaction along the components of Stage 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Listening and visible presence</td>
<td>Listening, genuine receptivity, and an inclination to act in response are demanded when reaching for a welcoming rapport that builds relationships</td>
<td>Directly stimulate feedback on all stages and networks of OCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Training and support</td>
<td>All employees must have the competence, tools, and support to fulfill their communication responsibilities</td>
<td>Raise communication effectiveness on organizational, hierarchical, group and interpersonal levels. Broaden usage of communication means. Esp important for managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Structure and process</td>
<td>Decentralizing communication to establish contacts among managers and staff; distributing communication throughout the organization, so that each employee is an integral part of the process.</td>
<td>Facilitate effective vertical and horizontal communication throughout the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Measurement systems</td>
<td>Communication assessment must concentrate on its effectiveness with respect to strategic direction, so as to adapt it to changing circumstances, to engage management in the essential tasks of leadership communication, to establish a basis for accountability, and to chart progress.</td>
<td>Require managers and leaders’ communication competence and other specific skills. Facilitate feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Continuous improvement</td>
<td>The process adopted needs to be constantly reviewed and continuously improved</td>
<td>Challenges effective communication on hierarchical, group, and interpersonal levels. Also manifests itself in external communication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A strong organizational culture and its organic constituents—values, beliefs, assumptions, rules or goals—not only nurture organization members and activities, encouraging, for example, entrepreneurial risk-taking or conservative attitudes but also help integrate employees into communication processes and induce effective communication supporting, for instance, formal or informal communication styles, modes or networks (Bienvenu and Timm, 2002). Consequently, employees may be expected to follow standard communication procedures, may be exposed to routine communication means, or may have much more latitude to interact informally, or interact around usually accepted communication directions.

Values underpin organization’s effective operation in general and the system of organizational communication in particular. Research proves that the presence or lack of such intangibles in organization’s culture as, for instance, innovation and risk-taking, attention to detail, team orientation, stability, outcome orientation, etc. directly influence the quality of communication at an organization. For instance, there is little doubt that customer service organizations will be more successful if they gear decisions and actions based on the values of openness or people orientation (Papa et al., 2008).

The awareness of the essential rapport between the organizational culture, a forceful system element, and communication suggests a more detailed elaboration on a list of values which, in the opinion of J.A. Lee, underpin an effective internal communication sub-system and provide support to the elements of the whole organizational communication system (Usunier and Lee, 2001). Thus, the article proceeds with the introduction of values the presence and quality of which, in the opinion of Szukala (2001), provide a rigorous standard for the establishment and benchmarking of organizational communication systems. Specifically, these particular concepts or ideas constitute an important part of the communication system research methodology, tingeing information flow on all the seven levels, or stages (Figure 2), of the organizational communication system (further in the table referred as OCS).

It could be seen in Table 2 that if properly considered, values greatly contribute to the structure and operation of a communication system at an organization, supporting the backbone of organization’s internal (and external) communication. This stand is supported by scholarly research. For instance, the presence or lack of inclination to innovation and risk-taking, attention to detail, people or team orientation, stability, outcome orientation (Robbins, 2007) directly influence the load and contents of organizational communication. A set of meanings, communicated in a group of employees, may convey attitudes such as ‘don’t disagree with your boss’, ‘don’t make waves’, or ‘don’t take chances’, which exerts influence upon employee motivation and ability to communicate. Or artifacts, such as a slogan ‘play hard, work hard’, may serve as foundational planks supporting how and why the company communicates as it does (Zaremba, 2003).

The analysis of the following communication system model elements, organization’s internal environment agents, is based on a number of scientific views, generalized by Schmidt and Gardner (1995), Tourish and Hargie (2004), Miller (2006), Stoner et al. (2006), Harris and Nelson (2008), Charteris-Black (2010), Papa et al. (2008) and adapted from them.

Organizational objectives, briefly speaking, are the end results any organization seeks to obtain in order to achieve its mission. The purposes and goals of an organization or its units, established through administrative processes, become (and are communicated as) the focus of company activities. As missions, they affect organization’s communication system, influence its structural design, categories, and effectiveness. Circulating through the internal sub-system of communication, organizational objectives supply hierarchic communicators with appropriate information and provide employees with the necessary knowledge and understanding of organization’s mission.

Managerial philosophy directly relates to certain dimensions of organizational culture and refers to basic values and beliefs about the nature of people, organizations, and managing which, naturally, shape the character of other internal system elements. Most of the writers on management philosophy first of all stress its inseparable pertinence to communication. Managerial philosophy, be it classical or based on human relations approach, or teamwork-oriented, directly conditions organization’s structure and operations: distinct organizational objectives, organizational structures, leadership and communication styles, technologies used, reward systems, and a particular organizational culture. It supports the company by relevant communication when the organization is undergoing change and structures communication when company members communicate resistance to change. Most importantly, it influences the whole communication system effectiveness by controlling feedback and ethically tingeing managerial, or hierarchical, organizational, and interpersonal levels of communication.

Leadership style as a manner of and approach to providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people to achieve common goals affects decision making at an organization. It rests on socio-cultural values and the existent managerial philosophy. Modern scholars view leadership styles as means to build relationships through interaction and communication. The dominating leadership style directly influences the structure and development of the whole communication system at an institution, channeling the feedback. It determines the use made of information and has significant effects on employee motivation and possibilities to convey information, on their ethical and skilled communication. A particular leader’s style especially affects the discourse. The right timing, strong delivery styles, appropriate use of verbal, para-verbal, and non-verbal means as well as exploitation of leader’s own communication competence parameters compile a great input into the whole communication system structure and contents.

Organizational structure is one of the principal system components and it defines the passages for the flow of
information or structured messages along the lines of authority. Organizational structure channels communication along the vertical and/or horizontal directions of communication and determines the load of information that formal and informal networks filter. Hierarchical ordering stimulates or hinders the relationships along the lines of authority which in itself constitutes a large part of the communication system. According to the dominant structure of an organization, formal organizational communication networks develop and specific sub-systems of organizational barriers are delineated.

Technology at an organization is influenced by economic conditions and a managerial philosophy. Those determine what technology is used to achieve organizational objectives. Technology itself affects the way things are done, regulating communication process agents and partially designing communication means. Since technological advance is usually associated with innovation, it serves as a means for shaping the communication system itself under modified circumstances. Structurally, within the communication system, technology creates a “thin membrane” between internal and external communication sub-systems (Boone, 2000). Also, in the age of e-economy, e-commerce, and e-communication, any organization has to be aware of the information that formal and informal networks filter. Directions of communication and determines the load of authority. Organization structure channels, networks, and specific means. Even the communication system functioning. In terms of definition, communication competence is the ability to choose communication behavior that is both appropriate and effective in a given situation. A competent communicator possesses his/her own communication style, which shows in interaction and scales the goal attainment, and the integrity, which allows one to achieve his/her communication goals without causing the other party to lose face. Communication competence is confined to three building blocs: 1) knowledge, 2) skill, and 3) motivation (Spitzberg and Cupach, 1984). Knowledge simply means knowing what communication behavior is best suited for a given situation. Skill is having the ability to apply that behavior in the given communication context. Motivation is having the desire to communicate in a competent manner encompassing the wish to interact with ingroup/outgroup members (Helsby, 2002; Smith, 2005). Specific personal qualities and personal values are joined to the concept of competence by most scholars, for instance, Boyatzis, Spencer and Spencer, Spitzberg, and others. Considering communication competence, those could partially be implied as adjunct to the concept of motivation, when underlying individual’s interest, commitment, and actions (Barbuto and Scholl, 1998).

Thus, it could be generalized that for the purposes of creating a comprehensive organizational communication system model, an individual communicator needs to be evaluated according to his/her ability, knowledge, understanding, skill, action, experience, and motivation, specifically to:

- knowledge on the communication process, categories, and methods,
- personality traits and integrity, shaping his/her personal communication style,
- individual values inasmuch as communication,
- verbal and non-verbal communication skills,
- linguistic and pragmatic competencies,
- emotional intelligence skills,
- motivation to communicate, based on ingroup/outgroup interaction
- involvement which manifests itself in communication satisfaction,
- ability to communicate across changing settings and situations,
- capacity to endure for some time.

The above parameters of an individual communicator play an important part in the system development and could serve as a certain frame for analysis. Individual’s position on the scale of organizational hierarchy determines the dynamics of the organizational communication system. Within the investigation of the system, in accordance with the stages, or levels, as denoted in Figure 2, ‘an individual’ might stand for an employee (highlighting an interpersonal level of a communication system) or for a manager (subsuming a hierarchical, or managerial, level of communication). The given research lies outside the scope of manager’s specific communication competencies, or skills, and the investigation of a manager as an individual communicator will be only limited to his/her effective functioning when communicating along/across the stages of the internal communication (sub)system (see section 1.2.).
To sum section 1.1., the review of external and internal factors which influence the communication system at an organization can be finalized by a graphical representation of their relation to that communication system (Figure 1).

External vs internal communication at an organization

Despite the fact that the scope of the given article only covers the analysis of internal communication, it should be emphasized again that both sub-systems of organizational communication are mutually dependent and this immediate connection between the external and internal needs to be understood and coordinated. By a successful coordination of the sub-system interaction, an effective dynamics of the whole communication system can be facilitated.

External communication networks and channels enable organization members to interact with individuals outside the company in an attempt to influence the way environmental representatives behave in regard to the organization. Internal communication networks carry messages which enable formal task development, coordination, and accomplishment. Some of those messages contain the information gathered outside the organization but it helps specifying internal organizational objectives. Inarguably, well managed and targeted internal communication can help individuals understand their company and its direction, it can help gain employee commitment and the success of the organization (Helsby, 2002).

To summarize, each communication sub-system carries a specific function (Papa et al., 2008). Internal communication processes are directed towards the establishment of organizational structure and stability in conducting organizational activities (managers are primarily concerned with this), while effective external communication is directed toward innovation by facilitating identification of directions for ongoing organizational development (leaders or top managers are most effective in using that) (Kreps, 1990).

1.2. Theoretical Model of the Organizational Communication System

As indicated earlier in this article, organizational communication research does not provide a complete view of a communication system. Therefore, the given section of the article offers a detailed presentation of the communication system structure with the emphasis on the internal communication sub-system, investigating its components and, partly, processes as well as a general system dynamics. It concludes with a unique graphical exhibit of a theoretical organizational communication system. Importantly, the model is rooted in both system theory and the organizational communication effectiveness mode. It also relies on the insight of Zaremba who claims that organizational communication is the study of why and how organizations send and receive information in a complex systemic environment (Zaremba, 2003).

System theorists approach a system as a unity of interrelated elements which function independently and can be investigated as distinct units (Bertalanffy, 1969, as cited in Miller, 2006; Zakarevičius, 2002; Charlton and András, 2003; Boulding, 2004). System theory with its basic concepts – wholeness, hierarchy, openness, and feedback – provides a dynamic view of organizations in action and capacitates the creation of a comprehensive model of an organizational communication system. System theory emphasizes the organizing role of communication (Weick, 1987, as cited in Kreps, 1990), which is not
merely an activity that occurs ‘within’ an organization nor is communication merely a tool for managerial control. Rather, all of the human processes that define an organization arise from communication. Relationships among individual organization members are defined through communication. The linkages and interactions among subsystems depend on communication and information flow; all feedback processes involve communication (Papa et al., 2008). This approach allows not only a systemic analysis of phenomena but also the modeling of analysis results.

In spite of the fact that systems are most often defined in terms of processes, this article considers, first, a system as a structure and, second, its communication process. It excludes the study of the external communication segment and does not approach a human-technology interaction view. Thus, the internal organizational communication system sub-structure where members exchange information is analyzed: communication agents and their relationships are identified on all levels, or stages, of the system.

The following four seminal structural components of an organizational communication system are to be distinguished next. They are: the communication process, communication categories, barriers of communication, and stages within the system.

**Communication process.** Systems are characterized by input-throughput-output processes (Farace et al., 1977, as cited in Miller, 2006). Specifically, a system inputs information from the external environment, then works on these inputs with some transformational processes and, finally, returns the transformed output to the environment.

The well-known components in the process of effective communication are:

- **communicator** (he/she serves two parts, being an information sender and receiver at the same time);
- **message**, or structured information, receiver-apprehended, organized by a communicator with pragmatic competencies, or otherwise arranged;
- **channel** of transmitting, by which we mean written, oral, and technology-mediated, and/or kind of transmission (verbal or non-verbal);
- **feedback**, critical to the throughput process of organizational communication, is the information that helps facilitate the functioning of the whole system. Communication feedback can be of two sorts: negative, implying corrective behavior, or positive, indicating a growth-amplifying aspect;
- **environment** of the communication process, if similarly perceived by a sender and a receiver, creates understanding and directly facilitates effectiveness of communication between or among communicators;
- **barriers**, or filters, inhibit a communication process and form separate sub-system(s). In organizations, they basically cluster along the vertical and horizontal directions of communication and can work either vertically or horizontally; some of them, such as information ownership, tend to operate equally in all directions, including diagonal.

**Communication categories**, as scientific literature investigation reveals, have been a complex issue. In fact, due to inconsistent treatment of the terms by different scholars, numerous scientific sources designate communication categories ambiguously. That is, individual researchers affix different labels to the same terms or concepts of the communication theory, and vice versa. To mention just a few incoherencies, a ‘channel of communication’ may refer to oral activities, face-to-face communication, written activities, presentation forms (Schmidt and Gardner, 1995), memos, phone calls, meetings, TV ads, etc. (Locker and Katzmarék, 2001), formal or informal processes (Wood, 1999), formal or informal communication (Bovee and Thill, 1999). As a consequence of long-term theoretical investigation and practical application, the categorization which follows has been developed by the authoress of the article. In terms of authenticity, this distribution of terms has been based neither on definite sources nor on particular authors. For the sake of clarity, this classification is notably useful when labeling the concepts within the current communication system model. Thus, suggested for the purposes of the communication system creation in this article are:

- **communication forms**: internal and external. The division depends on the selected point of departure. Forms can refer to intra-organizational and inter-organizational communication, or to in-group and outer-group interaction, or even to intra-personal and inter-personal communication;
- **communication levels** (four of them): organizational (directing organizational activities, or representing an organization as a whole), managerial or hierarchical (divided into: the entry-level, supervisors, middle management, upper management and top management communication), group (referring to communication between 3 or more individuals), and interpersonal (between two communicators);
- **communication directions**: vertical (messages traveling upward or downward), horizontal (between employees), and diagonal (crossing levels and functions of departments within the organization);
- **communication networks** (primarily two of them): formal (prescribed by the organization, official and appropriate) and informal (not prescribed by the organization). Sometimes, depending upon the shade of meaning (esp. with reference to communication quality), those can be referred to as styles or modes of communication;
- **kinds of communication**: verbal (expressed through words, written or spoken) and non-verbal (usually understood as the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless messages);
- **communication channels** (three of them): written, oral/spoken, and technology-mediated (communicative transactions which occur through the use of two or more ITC devices);
- **communication means**, such as newsletters, leaflets, brochures, orders, management accounts or reports, job descriptions, bulletin boards, internet, intranet, e-messages, local or company TV, Web2.0 technologies, meetings, conferences, negotiations, etc.
**Barriers** of communication at an organization (as a separate sub-system, or several separate sub-systems) are the factors, or filters, affecting and inhibiting the flow of information. Two kinds of barriers are considered in this system: individual and organizational.

Since it has been mentioned that managers are important agents of the organizational communication system, a specific set of filters referring to management communication activities or the managerial communication sub-system should be constructed in the future.

**Stages** within the organizational communication system (adapted from Greenbaum, 1972) is the last category, which, in fact, is a crucial one for the purposes of this work. It grounds one of the basic system’s features, its hierarchical character. A communication process, systematized communication categories, and definite sub-systems of communication barriers are all distributed along the matrix of 7 levels, or **stages**. This hierarchy exhibits the ties between communication elements and reveals the dynamics of communication at an organization. An important research limitation should be evoked in this connection: the analysis of the hierarchy within the communication system does not comprise a detailed structure of the external communication, as this is an object of a separate piece of research. Now, the scheme is briefly described and graphically presented below (Figure 2).

On top of the structure, or matrix, an overall organizational communication system (Stage 1) has been enfolding two communication sub-systems, or forms, **internal** and **external** (Stage 2), both performing distinct but connected functions in organizational processes. A further explication of the communication process is divided along organizational, managerial/hierarchical, group, and interpersonal levels of communication (Stage 3). A two-way (or even a multi-directional, provided the feedback performs its function) communication flow, going **vertical**, **horizontal**, and **diagonal** directions (Stage 4), operates **formal** and **informal** networks (Stage 5). Next, organizational communication manifests itself by **verbal** (broken down to written, oral, and technology-mediated channels) and **non-verbal** kinds of communication (Stage 6), with the evidence of selected communication **means** which carry information (Stage 7).

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**Figure 2.** Stages of the Organizational Communication System (internal communication sub-system specified)
The presented dynamic structure reflects the flow of information within the communication system and creates complex reciprocal ties with the system. Each communication stage carries a distinct function within an organization. This logic should be incorporated into the concluding comprehensive model of the organizational communication system. Thus, grounded in 7 stages defined by Greenbaum (1972), Figure 2 depicts the view of information flow within an organizational communication system.

What is peculiar to the above structure? How is it useful for the purposes of the article?

Firstly, the offered structure spurs the flow of information inside the organization, covering all of its segments and hierarchical levels. The figure might suggest an insight into some most typical occurrences. For instance, when persuasively communicating on an organizational level, the company as a whole most often relies on strategic messages sent through formal written or technology-based channels, as producing a long-lasting impact. Or managers are most appreciated when communicating (formally and informally) through most accessible written and spoken channels. In fact, all the constituents of this matrix are so tightly interconnected that it does not allow saying that, e.g., the organizational level does not imply informal or non-verbal communication – it does; this is also not to say that effective managerial communication does not rely on a technology-based channel – it relies a lot.

Secondly, since effectiveness is an indispensable feature of both communication and the organizational communication system, the suggested logic might facilitate overcoming the existing major communication barriers. It could serve as a framework for delineating the structure of a separate sub-system of communication barriers (not included into the present work) and its impact upon all communications levels: organizational, managerial, group, and interpersonal (Stage 3).

Thirdly, the exhibited matrix and its transcript delineate a probable position of an individual communicator in the system, be it an employee or a manager. It can be especially useful for all the levels of management to visualize and comprehend the hierarchy and attributes of the internal communication process and to infer its dynamics within a company. Top managers sometimes underestimate the role of internal communication, not seeing it in a wider scheme and are stuck in delivery rather than planning and thinking mode there. Some do not accept the fact that internal communication has to be planned, coordinated, and linked to business strategy which directly relates to the external communication network. Some speculate that professional knowledge and communication skills are more needed for them than for employees - individual communicators. A careful consideration of the matrix might help choosing adequate verbal and non-verbal kinds of communication (written, spoken, or technology-based) to be used for effective interaction.

Fourthly, the consideration of these stages allows projecting how the influence of the above-mentioned factors (such as culture, organizational culture, managerial philosophy, etc.) could be transmitted in order to facilitate effective communication at an organization. For instance, it could suggest at what stage and how organization’s values (Table 2), important when building an effective organizational communication system, should be transmitted. In fact, the interpretation of processes in Figure 2 bears direct relevance to the gloss of Table 2.

Finally, this structure should serve as a unifying matrix for viewing a two-way or even a multi-directional communication process in the theoretical model, depicted in Figure 3.

Notably, the above scheme of organizational communication stages could be transformed and modified according to the specific goals of organizational research. For instance, when coping with organizational uncertainty, communicating down the given stages agents could procure specific ties and establish peculiar reciprocities.

**Communication system features**

Up to this point, the overriding components of the organizational communication system model have been described. External factors of indirect and direct impact as well as internal components, which condition the system of communication, together with an individual communicator have been presented as the agents which determine any communication system at an organization. Then, the four building blocks have added specificity and links to the structural background of the organizational communication.

The final step before producing a communication system model is outlining system processes and system properties, or the features ensuring its effective functioning.

Considering the above-provided theoretical analysis and modeling results, it could be inferred that the most critical system processes, which apply here, are as follows:

- **coordination** of/among sub-systems, first of all; coordination of the internal and external communication dynamics, which is evidently the case in this research;
- the process of effective **information exchange**, overcoming organizational communication barriers, to answer company needs;
- **feedback** which is perpetual and offering either evaluative or corrective information about a communication action or process.

All the outlined processes do find themselves in the graphical model of a communication system at an organization which follows (Figure 3). They form the basis for the dynamics of the model.

The suggested design brings us to the consideration of the implied determinants which underlie effective organizational communication in general and its communication system in particular. What does an organization get upon the creation of a communication system? **Synergy** becomes a dominant feature of the whole organizational communication system. As a state in which two or more things work together in a particularly fruitful way that produces an effect greater the sum of their individual effects (www.businessdictionary.com), it implies that any communication system secures the most
highly effective communication among organization members. Another seminal system property, holism, opens new possibilities for the communication system development (Miller, 2006). Specifically, a holistic view allows a parallel functioning of two processes, implementation and development, which greatly benefits any organization with an operating communication system. Then, the permeating effectiveness of communication which manifests itself in the system operation, allowing the received information to be properly understood, basically determines business success. In addition to processing information efficiently in the system, effectiveness also implies open communication and commitment to an ethical exchange of ideas at an organization, to mention just a few. Finally, dynamics is a critical feature for any communication system. In the given case, dynamics manifests itself through the stages of communication at an organization and through the interaction of the internal and external communication system segments as well as other sub-systems.

It could be concluded that the communication system at an organization is both a reciprocal, dynamic process and a structural construct, determined by a set of internal and external factors, enabling horizontal, vertical, and diagonal information flow throughout the organization by creating synergy among communicators and also effectively and efficiently operating a number of communication categories with the aim to help individuals reach both their own and organizations’ communication goals.

2. Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of the Internal Communication sub-System at an Organization

Derived from the theoretical analysis and the suggested structural model, a list of factors, which exert huge influence upon the effectiveness of the communication system at an organization, follows.

On the micro level, each individual communicator could and should devote more attention to the following principles when involved in communication activities at an organization:

1. Employee (and every member’s) communication competence is probably the most specific and substantial aspect of any human communication system that, if developed, conditions the effectiveness of interpersonal communication and, consequently, decides the efficiency of major organizational processes. It manifests itself in an ability to choose appropriate and effective communication behavior in every situation and to reach communication results; it implies knowledge, skills, and motivation to communicate. Specifically, at an organization, it heavily relies on adequate presentation skills, negotiation skills, rhetorical skills, linguistic skills, and information organization skills of an individual.

2. Personal communication style of all organization members, determined by the communication strategy of a company and its values, results from the development of their communication competence parameters and serves the effectiveness of communication practices.
3. Relevant message or information perception and an adequate categorization of information as well as feedback allow effective interaction among communicators.

4. Careful structuring and organizing of verbal messages allows fitting an appropriate format for any channel and means of organizational communication and its system.

5. Effective choice of either formal or informal communication network with the participation of communicators from all hierarchical levels of an organization often determines the success of not only communication but other organizational processes as well.

6. Proficient and conscious use of a verbal, non-verbal kind(s) of communication, or both of them, fates interpersonal communication success, especially in sophisticated settings.

7. Relevant organizational communication means, employed by individual communicators, is a crucial factor at all organizational communication stages and in wider applications.

8. Identifying and overcoming personal communication barriers, for instance, differing values, perception peculiarities, attitudes, etc., or semantic, physical, socio-cultural obstacles, is a direct indication of effective communication in any company settings.

On the mezzo level, the management of an organization, which aims at creating an effective system of communication, should be responsible for:

1. Integration of the communication system and its all sub-systems for the goals of the organization, as managers are those individuals who coordinate and control.

2. Leadership and management style (effective distribution and use of information, willingness to communicate, effective vertical communication with feedback, and encouraging employee self-awareness) which directly fosters or inhibits communication, especially nurturing real-time communication, as opposed to technology-mediated communication.

3. Successful selection of a relevant channel (written vs spoken vs technology-mediated) is of prime importance on all the levels of hierarchical communication among the management of the company; it directly facilitates successful reaching of company objectives.

4. Effective conflict management, that is, open exchange of information, tolerance, and empathy, relevant for all communication process participants, as a prerogative of the management.

5. Effective group communication [skills], such as relevant supply of information, effective listening, knowledgeable information analysis, efficient enquiry, and synergy which allow efficient horizontal communication flow at an organization.

On the macro level, the organization as a whole is to mind the following factors, as they enable a successful creation and development of an organizational communication system:

1. Organizational objectives, namely, its mission statements valuing communication and communicators, as well as an overall communication strategy, constitute the baseline of communication at an organization.

2. Organization’s communication values, for instance, openness of the system, providing and getting feedback, cooperation, valuing informal communication, openness to change, risk tolerance, learning and improvement essentially support the backbone of the company.

3. Strong communication ethics, manifesting itself as harmony between organization’s external and internal communication, positive affiliations with all interest groups, etiquette knowledge for employees and management also form a communication system background.

4. Identifying and overcoming organizational communication barriers (lack of motivation, information overload, competition, inadequate management style) may resolve large communication issues, sometimes challenging strategic twists at an organization.

5. Proper feedback in communication processes is of paramount importance when securing the effectiveness and dynamics of all parameters in the communication system, especially along the lines of vertical communication. Being one of the most influential factors of effective communication, it serves as a propellant of a holistic functioning communication system at an organization.

6. Organizational structure needs to be revised as it is to enable the flow of information, allowing the circulation of messages among communicators and prompt feedback on all the levels of interaction.

7. The determination to create of a communication system itself, allowing synergy in interaction, is one of the seminal factors when seeking effective communication.

It is suggested here that the outlined factors serve as criteria for an empirical research methodology, since the categories and processes emphasized above do constitute the very backbone of effective organizational communication.

3. Development of the Organizational Communication System

As seen in parts 1.2. and 2 of the present article, a communication system bears four structural components, namely, the communication process, communication categories, barriers of communication, and stages within the system. Then, the system takes control of three critical processes evoked within an organization which have been delineated, that is, coordination of internal and external communication, effective information exchange, and perpetual feedback. Finally, a communication system at an organization possesses a number of peculiar features, or properties; four of them have been noted: synergy, holism, effectiveness, and dynamics.
How could a communication system with its clear structure balance the processes within it and, at the same time, maintaining the characteristics of synergy, holism, and effectiveness, sustaining constant feedback, help any organization and its employees reach best possible outcomes in their activities? Considering the above and dwelling on the most important factors which influence the effectiveness and development of the organizational communication system and support the development of the organization itself, the following means could be pointed out as essential and practically applicable at an organization.

- Training and development for organization members to enhance their communication skills, knowledge, and motivation to communicate.
- Understanding of the management role in organization’s communication and steering communication density among the management.
- Effective choice of a formal or informal communication network by communicators.
- Fostering of real-time communication and face-to-face contact in vertical interactions.
- Effective use of a verbal and/or non-verbal mode of communication.
- Successful selection of a relevant communication channel (written and/or spoken and/or technology-mediated).
- Proficient employment of relevant organizational communication means.
- Encouragement of a proper feedback throughout the whole communication process among all the actors involved.
- Identification and overcoming of personal and organizational communication barriers.
- Promotion of an adequate leadership and management style to support open and effective communication.
- Continuous broadcasting of organizational objectives.
- Fostering of organization’s communication values.
- Development of strong communication ethics.
- Coordination between the internal and external communication sub-systems.

Nevertheless, what are the steps to develop a functional communication system which is capable of serving its purpose well, that is, able to secure effective sharing of information along all hierarchical lines of internal communication at an organization so that the organization and its members can reach their goals of innovation and feel secure? The following practical steps could be suggested:

- Creating organization’s communication strategy as an integral part of its philosophy; producing communication strategies on all hierarchical levels of the organization and involving all the levels of management into that process.
- Creating communication culture at an organization to promote communication values which would aid reaching general organizational goals through open and effective communication.
- Strengthening management participation in the informal communication network to foster direct, face-to-face communication.
- Developing employee communication skills and communication competence of all the individuals.
- Choosing relevant means of communication and proficient use of communication technologies to balance the supply of information load upon employees.
- Securing perpetual feedback, especially along the vertical communication direction.

**Conclusions**

The given article has provided an insight into the creation and development of an organizational communication system to satisfy the communication needs of organizations and their members. As the review of scientific sources on organizational communication shows, attempts to create a communication system model are scarce and the concept of then organizational communication system – narrow and often misunderstood.

The present research has reached the aim to design an overall model of the organizational communication system with its interacting sub-systems and structural components, emphasizing the internal communication segment. Having delineated the context (external and internal determinants of the communication system at an organization), the article has pointed out individual communicator’s communication competence as one of the vehicles for the system development, together with the encouragement of relevant organizational values and philosophy, to mention just a few. The investigation has proceeded with a theoretical comprehensive and structural communication system model. The given design, intended to facilitate the development of an effective organizational communication, has been rooted in the system approach. Based on the matrix of seven communication stages which cover all the internal communication at an organization, the structure reveals its dynamics and opens for its development. A coherent classification of communication categories, developed and tested for the purposes of the given research, underlies the structure. The system has been characterized as embodying the processes of coordination, information exchange, and feedback. Featuring synergy and holism, it has been able to exhibit its effectiveness and dynamics. It has been concluded that the communication system at an organization is both a reciprocal, dynamic process and a structural construct, determined by a set of internal and external factors, enabling horizontal, vertical, and diagonal information flow throughout the organization and also effectively and efficiently operating a number of communication categories with the aim to help individuals reach both their own and organizations’ communication goals, creating synergy among communicators.

It is relevant to note in this connection that scientific literature analysis results imply that the above-produced model is unique in its scope, structure, and arrangement.

As a result of the theoretical research, a list of factors which have most power to affect communication at an
organization has been generated. Distributed along three levels (micro, mezzo, and macro), those could serve as criteria for the communication system research methodology to be developed and substantiated for investigating individual communicators, management communication sub-system, and organizational communication at large. Further, practical steps as general guidelines for the organizational communication system development have been considered. Those range from individual measures (such as employee training to develop their communication competence or proficient use of communication channels, modes, or means) to broad concerns of organization’s executives (fostering communication values and communication ethics, or coordinating the sub-systems of a communication system).

For the closing, it is important to admit that the given research on systems of communication aims broad and leaves some aspects not yet fully theoretically developed. It could be considerably supplemented with the investigation of more communication issues which are central to effective organizational functioning and to the organizational communication system, such as the relationship between knowledge management and communication, intelligent emotions management, or communicating about organizational uncertainty.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that some of the aspects currently touched upon in the given article are in the process of elaboration, the applicability and practical value of the given frame of research is envisioned. That is, employing the developed structural model and the suggested criteria, organizational communication systems could be practically developed, audited, their communication parameters evaluated, and improvement possibilities identified.

Thus, the present research suggests certain directions for the future research.

First of all, it should be emphasized that the system approach, though not broadly used in the current organizational communication research, envisages patterns which enable efficient qualitative analysis and comparison of organizational processes. Therefore, a research methodology based on the outlined framework, may and ought to be further developed for the investigation of all parameters of the communication system at organizations. Then, modeling more complex dynamic systems with expanded reciprocity and more elaborately defined connections but serving specific, strictly limited organizational needs could be the next stage of the research on organizational communication systems. Besides, as mentioned, developing the model for effective communication audit and evaluation would be practically useful for organizations and businesses today. Finally, the investigation into the external sub-system of organizational communication system stands out as a broad branch of research.

References

Efektyvi organizacijos komunikacija: sistemos paieškos

Santrauka

Efektyvi komunikacija organizacijoje, kai keičiamasi aukštai, išsamia ir susisteminta informacija, iš dalies lemia sėkmingą organizacijos veiklą (Szkala, 2001; Zaremba, 2003; Tourish ir Hargie, 2004; Eisenberg et al., 2009). Tyrimai rodo, jog stabilumą ir tvarką organizacijai suteikia visuose jos lygmenyse funkcionuojanti komunikacijos sistema. Užtikrintama informacijos valdymą, sistema sąlygoja tapimą adaptyvia, inovatyvia bei kintančia organizacija (Gibson ir Hodggets, 1986; Schmidt ir Gardner, 1995; Conrad ir Poole, 2005; Miller, 2006; Stoner et al., 2006; Harris ir Nelson, 2008; Papa et al., 2008; kt.). Straipsnyje akcentuojama teorinė bei praktinė problema: kaip sukurti organizacijoje visapusiškai tinkamą komunikacijos sistemą, kuri leistų atvairiai ir efektyviai keisti informaciją, tobulinti organizacijos veiklą, pasiekti organizacijos ir jos narių tikslus.

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filosofijos bei organizacijos vertybių svarbą kuriant ir tobulinant komunikacijos sistemą organizacijoje. Modelio dinaminę ir bazinę struktūrą pagrindžia septynių organizacijos komunikacijos lygių klasifikacija bei unikali straipsnio autorei sudaryta ir tyrimais patikrinta koherentiška komunikacijos elementų kategorizacija, leidžiant aiškiai įvardyti ir išdėstyti visas komunikacijos parametrus. Atskleistos modelio veikimą pagrindžiančios komunikacijos sistemos charakteristikos (koordinavimas, keitimasis informacija ir grįžtamas ryšys) ir sistemos savybės (snėrgija, holistiškumas, efektyvumas, dinamika). Organizacijos komunikacijos teoretikų darbuose iki šiol nepavyko aptikti panašaus modelio, todėl galima teigti, jog savo struktūra bei išraiška jis yra originalus.

Antrojoje straipsnio dalyje išskirti ir į tris lygmenis (individo, vadovų ir organizacijos) sukirstyti faktoriai, nuo kurių labiausiai priklauso organizacijos komunikacijos sistemos efektyvumas. Šiuos 20 aspektų, atspindinčių efektyvių organizacijos komunikacijos esmę, galima laikyti baziniais gilinant bei pagrindžiant organizacijos komunikacijos sistemos veikimą pagrindžiančios komunikacijos sistemos (tiek bendros, tiek jos vidinės komunikacijos sistemos įvertinimą) tyrimo metodologiją.

Trečiojoje dalyje akcentuojamos praktinės priemonės, išskirtos atsižvelgiant į organizacijos procesus bei savybes, kuriuos leistų organizacijai ir jos nariams sukurti, įdėti ir palaikyti efektyvią komunikacijos sistemą, padėsianti visiems jos nariams sukurti, įdėti ir palaikyti efektyvius komunikacijos parametrus organizacijoje.

Raktiniai žodžiai: organizacijos komunikacija, komunikacijos sistemos modelis, organizacijos komunikacijos sistemos vystymas.