

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

Georgeta-Mădălina MEGHIȘAN, Assistant Prof., PhD Student
University of Craiova

Keywords: internal communication, oral communication, direct communication, media communication

Abstract: The internal communication is a very important step in the enterprises' and organizations' life. This permits the facilitation of their functioning. Everyone has to know to whom she/he has to address to, for the needed information acquirement. The internal communication has to contribute to the collaborators' motivation improvement assembling them around values and commitment. Moreover, the internal communication has to make the enterprise attractive for the interested potential candidates and students. Three types of techniques can be used to conceive an internal communication plan: oral techniques, direct and media communication techniques. Among them, the enterprise journal, printed, audio-video or electronic one, is a fundamental and essential tool of all the internal communication strategy. The internal communication responsible, in general, the human resources headmaster has to determine a calendar for putting into practice the entire communication actions and follow the budget to avoid any deviation from the engaged costs.

1. Oral Communication

Technique used in enterprise, the oral communication represents a proximity approach adapted to the very personal and individual messages. Used for informational, motivational, as well as, reuniting objectives, the oral communication can take different forms: individual meeting, meetings for information, meetings for dialogue, telemeetings, visioconference, webconference, seminary and convention.

a. Individual Meeting

This technique is used when the communicational message is very personalized. Put into practice to individually motivate the employees, give responsibilities to a frame from a particular project, evaluate an employee's work, the individual meeting is needed in every communication plan.

b. Informational Meetings: Services Meetings, Intraservices Meetings

Hierarchical communication is regularly used to inform, unite a team reported to a particular theme and erase reactions from the employees. It has to be completed by a written material to avoid the dilution of its content in time. The meetings' management depends on their quality: data chosen and well equipped classroom (video projector, retro projector...), duration fixation (choosing the beginning and ending hour of the meeting), definition and classification of the meeting's themes, time management and delimitation of roles within the meeting. [Kotler Ph, 1997]. The participants' disposal has to be effective. The intraservices reunions' interest is to open the enterprise there where, the commercials don't communicate very often with the Finances, and the Accountants don't communicate with the persons from Human Resources.

c. Dialogue Meetings

Generally induced by the hierarchy, this type of meetings has as main objective the exchange of the employees' own opinion regarding a specific question. The dialogue meetings can be used as „pretests” of a future internal communication, permitting the

employees' reaction evaluation and the dialogue regarding this reaction towards, for instance, an internal journal model or any other document taken into consideration. We find here the same limits of putting into practice, specific to the meeting for information, with the difference that the whole organization is under the rules of exchanges facilitation service and dialogue between the participants.

d. Telemeetings, Visio conferences and Web conferences

The technological and Internet telephony evolutions, permit putting into practice information and dialogue meetings, even though the focused employees are not in the same place. If the enterprise is not well equipped to make a Visio conference, it can borrow equipped studios. At the same time, the web conference solution develops very fast, due to the easiness of its use and the very low cost compared to other technical solutions. It is obvious that, the physical contact is an essential factor for the communication quality; however, the appeal to these technical solutions permits the economy of expenses.

e. Conventions and Seminaries

These two elements are used for the same technique regarding the participants' number. In other terms, a convention is a seminary followed by many members. These events, often organized in the moment of some important strategically decisions for the enterprise (a new product launching, a new market attack etc), leave place to the group motivation and emotion sharing [Kotler Ph., 2004]. Their role is less the employees' information and more to persuade them of their choice pertinence and determine them to adhere to the defined measure. This is the reason why, their conceiving and realization are very important to succeed.

2. Direct Communication

Taken from the direct marketing, the direct communication techniques permit a personalized and individualized approach. [McCarthy J., 1993] These can be put into practice only with the condition that the internal communication responsible person disposes of a complete and actualized employees' data base: professional coordinates, personal coordinates, telephone numbers, e-mail etc. Used mainly to inform, these techniques are essential in a direct communication plan authorizing the message transmission adapted to every targeted person. The telephone is used in a descending, ascending and transversal communication. The SMS often serves to the information transmission of some commercials far away from the enterprises' social center. The delivered courier to the working place is less personal than the courier delivered to the place of residence. Often, the enterprise has the tendency to deliver the same courier to all the members. The e-mail found its place in the internal communication. It offers the possibility to personalize the interesting messages and, moreover, a rapidity often essential to the internal communication development.

3. Communication throughout Media Means

The internal communication can take 4 forms to reach its target: written media that is the most traditional; audio-video media whose use is often limited because of its costs; electronic media, whose development is very important; and the communication throughout an event that can be also used in this context.

a. Enterprise Journal

At its base, the project has to be defined in terms of audience and objectives. It is not about to create a document that allows the leadership to express its opinion without a strategic speech. A journal's project is based on the study of the employees'

expectations due to the qualitative and quantitative studies elaborated on the different categories of targeted persons. The leadership confrontation of expectations and objectives permits the definition of an electoral book. The following graphical scheme presents a journal, page with page [Maval P., 2005].

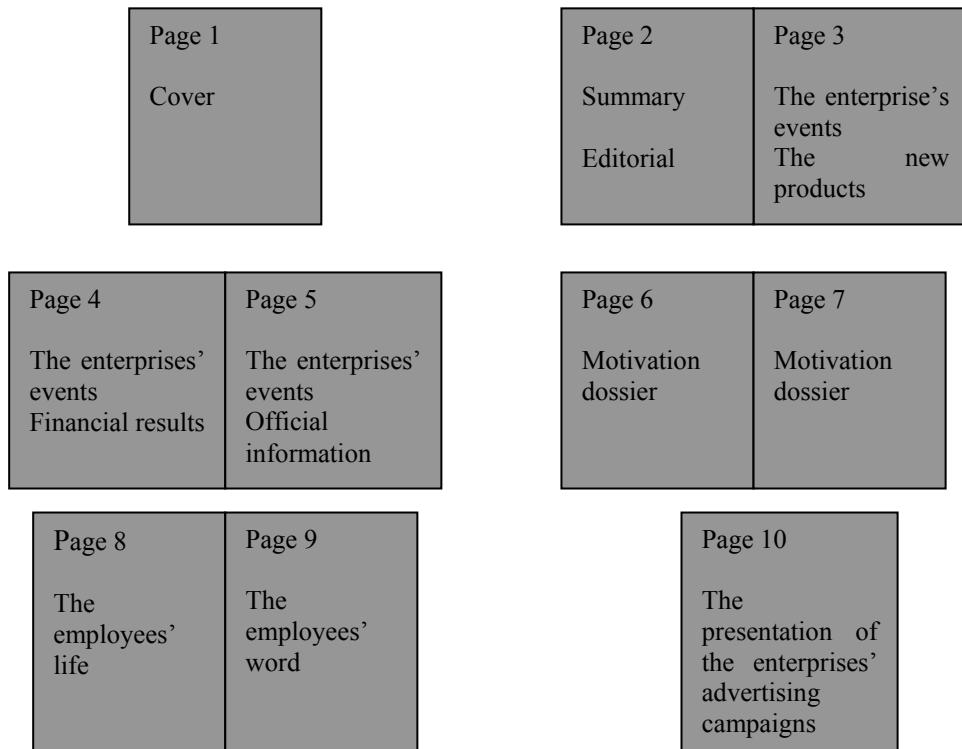


Fig. 1: Graphical scheme for an enterprises' journal

Source: Maval, P. and J.-M., Decaudin (2005) - "Pentacom", Pearson Education, Paris

The chief editor will guarantee the quality and articles' spirit, choosing editors and validating their work. For security, he will keep in reserve some articles and dossiers that can be used in case of some editor's absence. It is essential to preview interactivity between employees that are the journal's recipients and the editorial team. The readers' courier, free page for the employees are examples of the journal' opening towards its readers. The enterprises' journal delivery is better to be done to the working place by post or to the employees' residence.

b. Audio-Video Media

Some enterprises decided to exploit the audio-video for the internal communication. This choice needs the equipment of the rooms with televisions permitting the access of the employees. The enterprise journal, in particular, can become a true audio-video journal with a superior cost to the written journal. The audio-video is very often used in two very precise cases: the integration of new employees and seminars and conventions' fulfillment.

When a person integrates herself to an enterprise, it is essential that she takes knowledge of the working methods that she can find and rapidly understand the organization's philosophy in which she will spend many hours a day. The use of a video film responds to these objectives presenting an interesting communication quality.

The seminars and conventions represent powerful moments of internal communication. True performances orchestrated by the internal communication responsible, these events have to appeal to the entire available communication techniques, and in particular, the most attractive ones.

c. Electronic Media

Informatics and Internet opened new possibilities for the internal communication techniques. All today's enterprises are equipped in Informatics and connected to the Internet. This situation allows, for instance, the current use of e-mail in internal communication, particularly to transmit punctual news as urgent and actual information.

To enrich the internal communication, more and more enterprises appealed to the Intranet. The latter allows the following services:

- Informing, proposing, for instance, an employees' book, an organism that mentions all their responsibilities and, coordinates, corporate information etc;
- The formation throughout the e-learning system integration;
- The communication throughout the placement of the necessary printed forms for the employees' steps facilitation (petitions for holydays, management tools etc), as well as some tools that will make easy the gathering of the ideas, as for instance, the blogs.

d. Newsletter

The management of an enterprise journal can be hard, a recent tendency being its replacement by a newsletter. Sent by e-mail, it is much easier and faster to be conceived. It has to make easy the interactivity in order not to be assimilated with a job note.

e. Communication throughout an Event

This internal communication choice presents the same obligations that the internal communication responsible, as well as the corporate communication responsible, have to follow: the target determination, the choice of a technique and event and the management of the logistics for putting into practice the operation. This type of action has to reflect the enterprise's values for the employees' adhesion and better communication efficiency.

When the internal communication's objectives, its target, messages and techniques were defined, the project responsible has to organize a communication plan, putting into practice the following stages (Figure 2) [Maval P., 2005].

4. Peugeot Citroen Social Report

The social report, annually published by Peugeot Citroen puts into light a social dynamics, organized around 4 axes [Kother Ph, 2006]:

- An active employment politics to encourage the best competences
- Organizations adapted to the enterprise games and a politics to improve the working conditions
- A global remuneration politics linked to the enterprises' results
- A sustained social dialogue and a renewed one in all the countries.

This document has as objective the presentation of the great orientations and of the main realizations of the group's social politics after 1999 that notes into a will of change and adaptation to the social-economical environment. To respond to the growing demand of social information, it is based on a global data base, composed of more than 300 000 indexes related to the entire of the groups' societies.

On the other hand, it follows the realized actions with the title of a social politics, as follows:

- The recruitment of 75 000 persons with an undetermined length of time working contract for 5 years, from which almost 30 000 are new working places;
- The growth of the international effectives within an international politics of human resources management;
- The continuous improvement of the working and ergonomic conditions;
- The competences improvement throughout the formation of the entire employees and the training of the potential employees for leading posts at the Peugeot Citroen Superior Management Institute.

On the other hand, there are mentioned the initiatives taken in view of anticipating the employees' expectations and social evolutions, such as:

- The accord on the development of the women employment and the professional mix;
- The installment of supplementary retirement conditions for all the employees;
- The beneficitation of a system of interest with all the collaborators from all the world's branches;
- Pouring out of the supplementary buying power depending on the expected activity objective;
- The charter on the working conditions and working time modulation of the temporary workers.

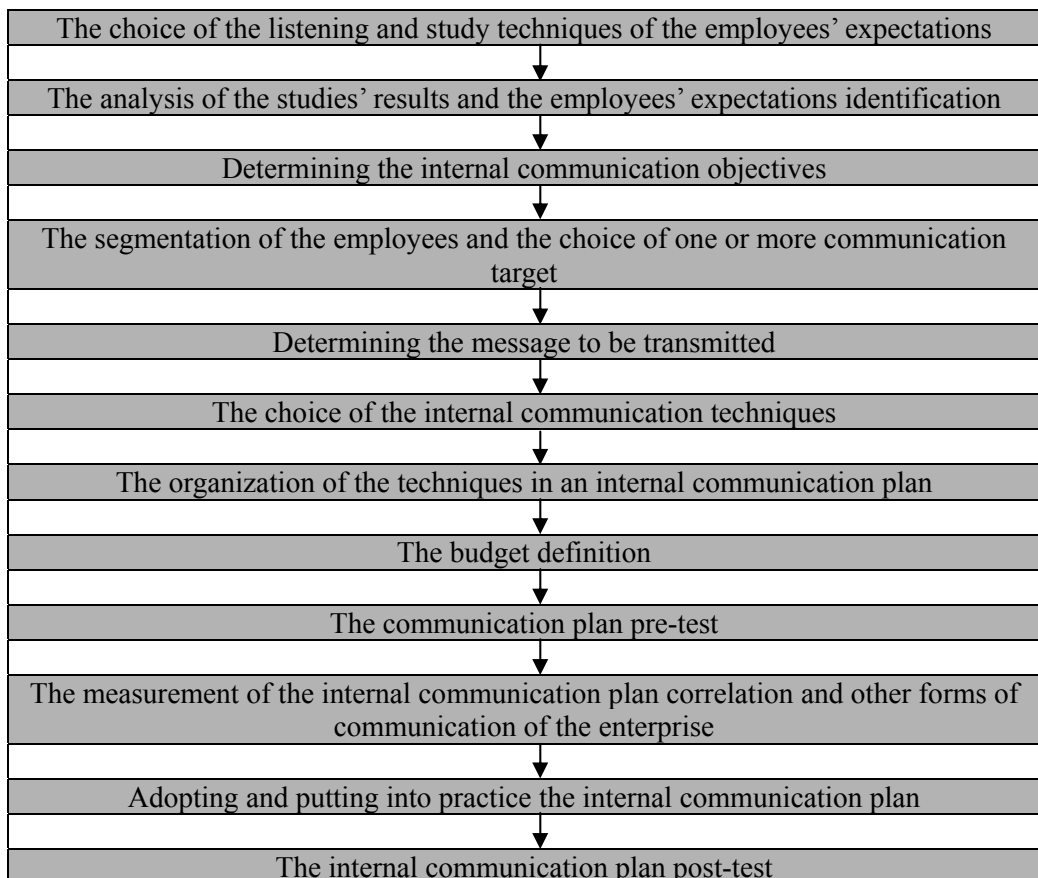


Fig. 2: Putting into practice an internal communication strategy

Source: Maval, P. and J.-M., Decaudin (2005) - "Pentacom", Pearson Education, Paris

Many graphics and tables illustrate and strengthen the announced results, permitting the studied parameters' evolution visualization, on a five years' period of time.

Regarding the internal opinion surveys for a better knowledge of the employees' aspirations, these are made every year after 1998. Thus, these prove the pertinence and efficiency of the internal communication strategy put into practice at the group's level.

The internal communication has to be evaluated as any other communication type of the enterprise: the measurement of the notoriety and image of different used techniques, the measurement of the message understanding, its acceptance and capacity to generate the targeted employees' adhesion, the global satisfaction measurement of the employees reported to the internal communication, perceived weaknesses identification and the employees' needs. These represent qualitative studies over a sample, as well as quantitative studies over the whole employees that the internal communication responsible has to done to make its decisions and budget evolves in a efficient optics for optimization.

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