# MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION

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## *Abstract*

*The article deals with the challenges of managerial communication. The first part focuses on its characteristics. The evolution of management determined the occurrence of a specific form of managerial communication. This type of communication has become a real force, occupying a central place in the work of any manager. In the second part, I outlined the purpose and objectives of managerial communication. Also, managerial communication in any organization is subject to specific ethical rules, contained in the organizational culture, in the organizational policy and obviously in the ethics of employees from top management. Afterwards, I presented its functions and the communication inside the company between manager and employees and also inside a team. The last part focuses on strategies of communication at organisation level. The conclusion of the article is that managerial communication style is mostly influenced by the work style of the leaders with subordinates. The adoption of a particular style of communication depends on several factors such as: leadership skills and personality, competence and subordinates' personality, leadership style practiced by top managers and organizational culture.*

***Keywords*:** managerial communication, companies, managers, employees, organizational culture.

## *1. Preliminary considerations*

In any social organization, people are interdependent. Interdependence requires coordination of all activities to ensure the objectives of the organization. For the purposes of the organization to be fulfilled, it is required to formulate and implement decisions. At their basis, there is different information. But to convey different information, to make known, to inform, to notify mean communication. Managers spend most of their time directly employed in one of the stages of communication. Even when they work alone, i.e studying or preparing reports, they rely on others' attempts to communicate with them or prepare to communicate with others. Accuracy in decision making depends, in particular, on the effectiveness of communication. If the communication process is full of flaws, then the rest can be affected.

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Most people are too optimistic when they consider the accuracy of the communication process. This is true not only for communication within organizations, but also for life in general. Barriers to effective communication are much higher than most people imagine. Effective communication of factual information can be quite difficult, but often one must communicate attitudes and feelings, which is much more complicated. The number and nature of barriers are such, that there is a great need for training in communication qualities to be included in the curricula. Managers differ substantially in their ability to communicate effectively. Hence, the need to develop effective communication skills can become a critical priority for many managers. The communication process is often more complex than people think. "Only when people realize the subtleties of effective communication, do they become aware of the importance of communication and begin to develop their own skills". (Grace, 2013:89) Even a person with a good performance in communication skills can improve them if he/she takes into account and assesses systematically his/her own effectiveness in this area.

## 2. Characteristics of managerial communication

The transition period to market economy, characterized by reconsidering the role of management as the main driver of economic and social efficiency, emphasises communication between manager and subordinates as a stimulating element of managerial processes and, simultaneously, a condition for an appropriate organizational climate and motivation to achieve objectives. A manager forecasts, organizes, coordinates, motivates, controls and evaluates only if he/she has quality information. For this, he/she must constantly communicate with subordinates, collaborators and top positions managers, and the effectiveness of communication depends on the communication system designed, developed and used in the company.

Peculiarities of managerial communication are generated by purpose, goals and the role of communication, framework, organizational structure and context of corporate culture. At the same time, "managerial communication is subject to certain specific ethical rules that are in the organizational culture, political organization, and obviously individual ethics of managers". (Hynes, 2010:73)

Organizational culture represents the behavior of people who are part of an organization. Culture includes the organization values, visions, norms, working language, systems, symbols, beliefs, and habits. Organizational culture affects the way people interact with each other, with customers, and stakeholders. On the other hand, corporate culture refers to those cultures deliberately created by management to accomplish specific strategic goals.

Leadership style means providing direction, motivating people and implementing plans. There are different types of leadership in working environments. The culture and goals of an organization determine which leadership style fits the company best. Leadership styles can affect communication and productivity. Effective leaders communicate clearly to ensure employees understand the message and fulfill the tasks assigned.

Communication is indispensable for the smooth functioning of any human collectivity, regardless of its nature and size. Managerial communication can not be seen outside management. It is a major, fundamental component. Management development gave rise to specific forms of managerial communication at each stage of its development. Due to the difference between its duties and their complexity, managerial communication becomes a real force, occupying a central place in the activity of any manager.

Each manager must develop and promote a policy based on a communication system that would allow continuous adjustment of organizational structure and process to the changing conditions. Also, through his/her role as negotiator, as promoter of organizational policy and transmitter of this policy, the manager must build and maintain a network of contacts with partner organizations in order to achieve foreign policy and, at the same time, a network of information useful in accomplishing the domestic policy of the institution.

Modern management grants a critical role to communication, which is considered a vital component of any organization's management system, whether belonging to private management or public management. "Managerial communication is a form of interpersonal communication, a management tool with which the manager may exercise specific responsibilities: forecasting, training, organization, coordination, control, evaluation". (Liang, 2013:59)  The importance of communication in organizations is also due to the complex nature of this process at this level. Thus, in any organizational framework, there are numerous communication networks, namely communication channels that make up the communication system.

Its important role in ensuring the functionality and effectiveness of activities in an organization is generated mainly by:
- the volume, complexity and considerable diversity of existing targets in the subsystems of an organization, due to the impact of national environment variables as well as the international one;
- profound changes occurring at the same time with social and economic development, and having a particularly strong impact at the level of each organization in its dimensional and functional characteristics;
- the activity of an organization' members that have leadership positions.

Managers fulfill three roles: interpersonal, informational and decisional. Among these, informational roles, i.e, monitor, speaker and spokesperson, are those that define communication, but information flow can also be identified in other roles.

Depending on the hierarchical level that a person occupies, "communication can mean up to 80% of the time spent" (Coman, 2000:66).

## 3. Purpose, objectives and roles of managerial communication

One of the major components of business management is the exchange of information and messages made between manager and subordinates as well as between employees on the same level, without any leading positions. Managerial communication peculiarities related to other kinds of communication are generated by the goals, objectives and functions (roles) of this communication, by the framework and structure of the organizations and the context of organizational culture. Also, managerial communication of any organization is subject to specific ethical standards that are found in the organizational culture, in the organizational policy and, of course, in the individual ethics of employees in management positions.

Competent employees communicate according to a certain strategy, both in terms of the act of communication itself, as well as the organization's existing strategy (strategy that aims to create a positive image of the company). Any employee with managerial position controls the extent to which decisions were made, only if he/she can communicate with those who execute them. In organizations, especially those in the public sector, communication is done poorly due to excessive bureaucratization that often makes information go through a lot of hierarchical levels to reach the recipient. Often, managers at higher levels (top management) are deprived of real information, being saturated by endless reports that say nothing. Effective communication would consider precisely to avoid such situations by giving up all kinds of ways unnecessary and costly (in terms of time), which hamper decision making and problem solving.

Sometimes poor communication is achieved through a rigid communication system. Communication system must be designed as a dynamic organism, "capable at any time to adjust the information needs of employees from the system". (Coman, 2001:78) The purpose of managerial communication in any organization is to make correct and effective information, both vertically and horizontally in order to achieve the optimal conditions to internal and external requests in accordance with established managerial and organizational objectives.

To do this, in the managerial communication process of any organization, a number of basic communicative needs of any employee must be met:
- *the need to know* - professional knowledge necessary to carry out tasks;
- *the need to understand* - it is not enough to know how to do something, but one has to do it and know why it has to be done;
- *the need to express yourself* - to bring your opinion to the attention of the senior management at hierarchical levels.

Satisfying these needs of any individual involved in an organization should be linked to meeting certain conditions: the concise and exact wording of the message that should ensure its correct understanding; fast and unaltered transmission of the message; fluency and reversibility of communication; decentralization of decision making; flexible communication system that should allow him/her to adapt to any new situation created.

"A very high percentage of activities that a manager carries out in an organization is communication activities". (Bertrand, 2000:89) This percentage varies according to hierarchical positions at which the activity takes place; the higher in hierarchy an individual is, the greater the proportion of communication activities. There are several types of roles that can be fulfilled by individuals in leadership positions: interpersonal, informational or decision roles.

*Interpersonal roles* refer to the ability of managers to represent a particular department, division or specific direction in front of other employees, to motivate and influence employees to create and maintain connections inside and outside an organization.

*Informational roles* refer to the ability of managers to collect, monitor, process, summarize and convey the information inside and outside the organization, and between him/her and other organizations (are usually made by the Public Relations Department within the organizations).

*Decisional roles* take into account the quality of entrepreneur, the ability to solve failures, the responsibility to allocate resources and the capacity to negotiate, which is achieved by initiating activities, strategies and tactics that should lead to change (these roles are accomplished by all employees in management positions at different hierarchical levels, from the head of department to senior management).

## 4. Functions of managerial communication

Managerial communication should consider performing permanent managerial objectives, other than those imposed by the policy of each organization. These objectives must be related to management functions that take place in a specific form at the level of each organization. It is about planning and forecasting functions, organization, coordination, training and evaluation-control functions.

To understand the place and role of communication in the performance of these functions, it is important to know the significance of the functions in the general management. "Understanding and knowledge of management functions through communication is a major prerequisite for deciphering mechanisms of any organization's structures". (Kunczik, 1999:44)

The functions of managerial communication are the following:

a) At the level of general management, *planning or forecasting function* is to work through all the processes which determine the main objectives of the firm and its components and the major resources and means necessary to achieve them. The role of this function is to determine what should be done, by what means, in what circumstances and in what timeframe. These objectives are achieved by the results of the planning function according to the following criteria: level of detail, forecasts, plans and programs. It is obvious that in the preparation of these forecasts, plans and programs, there is an extensive information gathering, documentation, and information processing. In other words, communication is an essential component of planning and forecasting function.

In an organization, the planning function has the role of establishing objectives, on the basis of specific policies and characteristics of the organization. Only through communication, can action plans and policies be effectively prepared, information transmitted at different hierarchical levels and subordinates trained in the decision process.

b) The second *function, organization*, means at the level of general management, all management processes through which are established and delimited the physical and intellectual work processes and components, and grouping them into jobs, work groups, departments and their staff allocation, according to certain managerial, economic, technical and social criteria, to achieve the expected objectives in the best possible conditions. The role of organization function is to achieve its objectives established in the previous stage, by exercising planning or forecasting, by combining efficiently the human, material, financial and information resources through a fair employment, both at the departments' level, as well as the entire organization.

Thus, we notice that the organization function has a double meaning: an organization of the whole company and the organization of each department, or office. At the organizational level, this function refers to those specific ways in which the institution will carry out plans and programs prepared in the previous stage. It involves establishing and assigning tasks, grouping them into sections, allocating resources and determining organizational structure. At the same time, the organization function involves accomplishing an important number of tasks characteristic to communication process; it also involves building a relational framework with formal nature, of the internal and external information system, involves receiving, request and use of feed-back.

c) *Coordination function* in the general management consists in "all work processes harmonizing the decisions and actions of company staff and its subsystems, in the framework of forecasts and previously established organizational system".(Peretti, 2001:65) In the specialized literature, coordination is regarded as a dynamic organization: the economic agent and the environment is

constantly changing which is impossible to be fully reflected in forecasts and organizational system; staff reactions, as well as the complexity and diversity of subsystems require a permanent feedback.

In organizations, coordination function means cooperation of activities and resources optimally allocated in order to achieve those objectives proposed by organizational policies. To ensure effective coordination it is essential to have a proper communication at all levels to achieve management in an organization. This communication has to primarily concern the transmission of information, the full understanding of the message. In turn, to be effective, communication depends on a number of factors, among which there are: quality of management fulfilled by persons in management positions (the management, realistic objectives through specific policies, the preparation of managers), quality of those in board position (level of training, skills, interest in solving problems, the degree of openness).

d) *Training* "incorporates all work processes which determine the company staff to help and achieve goals predicted, based on factors that motivate them". (Popescu, 1999:35) In other words, the training function in an organization aims to achieve, through collaboration and motivation, the engagement of employees in order to achieve their respective goals, goals that are derived from elements established by organizational policies and programs in general. Therefore, accomplishing this function requires, on the one hand, creating a climate of cooperation, and on the other hand, adequate motivation of staff.

e) The *evaluation-control function* - can be defined as "the process by which the overall performance of the company, its subsystems and components are measured and compared with the objectives and standards set initially to eliminate shortcomings and integration of positive deviations".(Johns, 1998:26) The evaluation-control function involves the existence of four phases: measuring the achievements, comparing achievements with the objectives and standards set initially, highlighting deviations, determining the causes that generated the errors found; performance of corrections, including acting as much as possible, over the causes that generated negative deviations.

In organizations, the activity of control permits higher authorities to determine whether the institution as a whole has met its objectives or not by the developed activity. This is done by conducting a relevant and well formulated assessment based on specific criteria. Notification of deficiencies, of stages' breach in achieving organizational programs and specific policies, causes such decisions necessary to correct the facts. This control based on evaluation and correction can be carried only if there is communication: employee performance evaluation based on formal tests systems and/or interviews, writing activity reports, formulating appropriate measures to be taken. Every manager in an organization communicates by pursuing specific goals. These goals result from the roles that the manager has in the organizational structure where he/she belongs.

f) *The information function* refers to the fact that the manager will receive two types of information: external information - sent and received through specially designed structures - and inside information - which flows through formal and informal channels within that organization. The existence of these two types of information flows is because any organization is the result of an accumulation of external interactions – with the external and internal environment, among subdivisions of the organization and among members.

g) Using the *control and training function*, the manager ensures convergence of action for the other employees and departments, in accomplishing the policies of the organization. Decisions and instructions ensure alignment with organizational policies, uniformity in practices and procedures, accuracy and fulfillment of tasks.

h) The *function of influence, persuasion, guidance and counseling* allows any manager to achieve control over the information conveyed, as well as the behavior of other employees who are in relationships of various types within that structure.

i) The *function of integration and maintenance* offers the employee in superior hierarchical structures the possibility to provide functional operability of the department/ division/office he/she leads through: information flow, optimal use of information channels so as to avoid unnecessary duplication of data or useless information, sorting, verifying and transmitting data according to their specificity.

This orientation of communication through performance of communication functions in order to achieve goals, determines the existence of managerial communication's characteristics generally available for all organizations.

## 5. Communication manager – subordinate and within the work group

Communication manager-subordinate is a key element in vertical upward or downward communication in organizations. Ideally, this exchange should give the manager the opportunity to direct his subordinates to perform properly their duties, to clarify the context of reward and to provide social and emotional support. At the same time, it should allow subordinates to ask questions about their work roles and to make proposals to enable the optimal achievement of objectives proposed by the plans and policies of the organization. But, as always, this model remains an ideal, at the level of organizations, in the communication between manager and subordinate, with a number of shortcomings, of communicative barriers. Among these, the most common effect is the function status. Function status represents "the managers' tendency of appreciating less the communication with their subordinates because they have the status that makes them show a clear desire to communicate more with people with the same status as their status". (Lochard, 1999:97) Often, this tendency has no connection with the training of subordinates.

Incorrect assessments generate discontent. As psychosocial element, outcome of multiple determinations, there is a direct relationship between the image the team has and individual members, about the manager' power and the degree to which they normally accept his authority. It is very effective that each subordinate trust his manager and accept unconditionally his authority. Subordinates wish to feel their manager sensitive to their aspirations and feelings, receptive to ideas and suggestions.

There is also the natural desire of subordinates to receive critical comments, but relevant, in places and at appropriate times; breaking this desire can lead to a poor working environment. If this desire is not met, subordinates will think their manager does not trust them, becoming intimidated, deprived of initiative - simple performers who wait approval on any matter, not trusting in themselves. Subordinates can not be long misled; they get pretty fast to know their managers and to appreciate the real value. They find easy the weaknesses of their managers and will not hesitate to use them to their advantage. In this way, we talk about a double judgment: on the one hand, the appreciation made by the manager to his subordinates, which has direct consequences on promotions, rewards and so on, and on the other hand, the assessment made by their subordinate to the manager, which has an indirect impact and structures the interpersonal relationship from subordinates.

Subordinates appreciate managers that make their life easier at work; they will consider more the managers that respect them; subordinates appreciate managers through their own interests; they want intelligent leaders that speak their language. They consider that a boss must be well prepared professionally, otherwise conflicts can occur which distort the relationship between manager and subordinate. Interpersonal relationships may be affected.

The manager is the one who needs to create a pleasant working environment in which subordinates should work effectively. The subordinate is bound to sell his labor in exchange for wages. Even if the logic is simple, he/she is not obliged to have the big picture of what is happening in the organization; "he/she must execute orders or fulfill the tasks specified in the job description". (Pop, 2008:102) Obviously, it is desirable that subordinates are open, take initiative and be able to create work environments. But this is not mandatory for them; this requirement belongs to the manager.

In organizational communication, it is necessary to plan, monitor and improve the communication process at all times. This requires more time and energy, but the costs of poor communication can be both direct (communication errors lead to wrong decisions) and indirect (low morale, lack of motivation). Therefore, the purpose of communication is to inform all employees. Managers should ask themselves the following questions:
- What information do my subordinates / colleagues need?

- What are the best channels I can convey the information?
- How can I check if they have received and understood them correctly?
- What information do I need from my subordinates / colleagues?
- How can I ensure that they receive timely and accurate information?

*Methods of communication in the organization*
        a) Line management
In any organizational structure, the transmission of information upward/downward the chain of command is an essential method of communication. But it is also the riskiest. "Line managers can distort information; they may be unclear or forget certain people and change the message". (Clampitt, 2012:97) In the best companies, top managers find time to visit employees to check the accuracy of the messages they sent and if they are properly understood.

        b) Information meetings
In many companies, it turned out to be very useful monthly, short time meetings. They do not last more than 30 minutes, are held by top management, the employees are informed on the activities of the previous month and goals and plans for the coming months are outlined.

        c) Common consultations
These meetings have a special feature: they are held when a decision, that involves everybody, has to be taken and refer to the effectiveness of the entire organization; at such meeting both management and employee representatives participate. Willingness to involve employees must be honest and their views should be taken seriously, even if it is normal that ultimately top management makes the final decision. Proponents of joint consultations say they took better decisions, had superior results, increased employee involvement and also increased motivation to work. Usually, sales figures are presented, investment in new equipment, newly arrived employees, exceptional performance, or other topics of common interest. New technology allows the accomplishment of an online newsletter, which reduces costs considerably.

        d) Open door policy
This method of open communication is suitable for large organizations where there are many employees and top managers, especially Chief Executive Director who has the chance to meet each day with everybody. It would be suitable, that three times a week, to announce that the director implements this open door policy. The director may have a lot of interesting discussions helping him/her make better decisions.

        e) Surveys of employee satisfaction
At first glance, it may seem that it has nothing to do with communication; it is also expensive because if you want real relevant results, it requires a specialized company or an external consultant. One such survey highlights employee

motivation and organizational communication style. The results are useful for top management to make correct decisions, consistent with the expectations of employees. Finally, it is essential to send employees at communication courses. "These involve various topics such as presentation skills, report writing, meetings management, stress management, conflict management". (Roebuck, 2012:104)

In order to be an appropriate working group, it is necessary that its members communicate with each other. Communication within the group has the following objectives: accurate and timely information to members of the group, forming opinions about events, discuss them and submitting to those interested, direct and immediate circulation of ideas, suggestions and dicontents among group members; taking decisions and communicating them; assessing performance.

Communication within the working group is of several types: formal, informal, interpersonal. Communication inside the group is influenced by: message, speed and pace of communication, meaning of communication, group size (in larger groups is made more difficult), spatial position of the group members in the communication process (e.g. placing face to face).

Inside the working group, the relationship between managers and subordinates should not rely on command and obedience, but on dialogue, which sometimes can mean reciprocal change of positions. This kind of dialogue is called request and response relationship. By request, the manager will assign tasks to subordinates according to their qualifications, and will control fulfillment. The manager will respond quickly and honestly to questions raised by subordinates. If you practice this request and response systems, communication through dialogue within the group can develop its function of motivation.

Inside the working group there are *vertical, horizontal* and *oblique communications*. The vertical one transmits decisions, guidelines, instructions, in verbal or written form; it is the most common, occurring continuously. The horizontal one "ensures communication between group members situated on the same hierarchical level" (Van, Scholten, Noomen, 2005:12); it is achieved through dialogue and working sessions. And the oblique one allows, for a short time, to avoid the hierarchical way; it leads to conflicts of competence; it is used for solving urgent problems, sometimes informal ones.

## 6. Strategies of communication at the organisation's level

In terms of organization, communication strategies must integrate into a unified communication strategy, both through direct action and, indirectly, through the generated communication climate. Depending on the specific situation in which the organization is at a time and the direction in which it moves, different types of communication strategies are helpful. The most frequently adopted strategies are the following:

*Control strategy*

The manager constrains and guides. Communication is in one direction and uses feedback, in particular for clarification. Frequently, it relies on individual styles such as blaming, information-guiding. It is recommended for: emergency situations, when time is a critical element and the manager needs uncontested authority on those involved. It is useful in the training of new employees, working with incompetent or not motivated subordinates. „If control strategy is used incorrectly it can cause negative feelings, resistance to change or resistance from those who do not support control directly".(O'Rourke, 2013:26) Therefore, the control strategy is not recommended for cases of change implementation.

*Egalitarian strategy*

It is characterized by a bilateral transfer of information in which the influence is mutual. Decision making is based on consensus. An enviroment of mutual understanding is created. The prevailing individual communication style is problem solving. It is recommended for making and training groups in the implementation of participatory management, in communicating with small groups when time is not a constraint, in the empowerment process of employees. This strategy is well suited to lower resistance, to change and to introduce change, but is not effective in communicating with incompetent people, who lack experience and knowledge, with people lacking initiative in emergency or crisis situations.

*Structuring strategy*

It is a strategy used successfully by managers in determining order, in restructuring the organization, in introducing the organization and planning in complex situations, where clarification and permanent transfer of instructions are needed. As a prevailing individual style, the manager uses the information / guidance or belief by stating the standards and procedures, by establishing objectives and explaining the distribution of tasks, encouraging employees to meet the deadlines. Managers direct communication to support the structure. „Structuring strategy is not recommended in critical or emotional implications, in obvious and simple situations or if the organization operates in a stable environment". (Hamilton, Munter, 2013:101)

*Dynamic strategy*

Communication is direct and to the point, the content of messages is pragmatic and action-oriented. It is based on individual styles of information and persuasion. Communication is not supportive but oriented on immediate activities faced by manager and the organization. Not applicable in situations involving distant future. It is recommended for managers operating in rapidly changing environments. It differs from control strategy i.e the manager, in his communication, presents a brief declaration of position and then delegates the authority to make decisions and act, to his interlocutor that he motivates. Key to the success of this strategy belongs to the performer.

*Acceptance strategy*

It is characterized by the acceptance of the interlocutor's point of view who can be, for example, a team of consultants, an audit committee. It is applied when the purpose of communication is, for example, to request the opinion of experts regarding the internal processes of the organization or the market and competition. This strategy is inappropriate for situations where you want to transfer responsibility or in communicating with people lacking initiative, because they would interpret this mode of communication as a sign of weakness and incompetence.

*Avoidance strategy*

It is used to avoid communication about certain situations, events, states. Generally, it solves fewer problems and is recommended only in cases where it is necessary to avoid providing information or when emotional tension is very high.

## 7. Conclusions

Communication is everything in management, as long as the quality of communication depends on understanding the problems faced by every employee, from manager to the person at the lowest hierarchical level. The manager's ability to motivate and lead subordinates, but also the relationship with the external environment are particularly important in an organization.

Regardless of the manager's line of work and how well he/she is prepared professionally, his/her success is conditioned by the ability to communicate in a relevant and effective way. People, implicitly managers, have different ways to communicate, with different attitudes and experiences, with different strengths and weaknesses. Managers must develop a communication style according to their skills and strengths. If you meet people who communicate in other ways, it is very important to respect their opinions and corporate culture.

By nature of their position, managers' attention is directed to achieve performance. An efficient manager takes into account the interests of his/her subordinates. We must not forget that a leader is appreciated and supported by subordinates, not only by how he/she behaves towards them, but by how their interests are protected.

Peculiarities of communication are required by the purpose, objectives and role within the organizational structure. Stability, cohesion and effectiveness of the organization depend on the reliability and speed of communication. The importance of managerial communication is conditioned by the position in the company.

Managerial communication style is influenced mostly by the working style of leaders with subordinates. So far, one cannot specify which style of communication can be considered the best. Adoption of a particular style of communication

depends on several factors such as leadership skills and personality, competence and personality of subordinates, leadership style practiced by top managers, corporate culture.

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