Internal communication and social performance: The case of Moroccan companies

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ABSTRACT

Internal communication underpins organizational effectiveness as it contributes to positive internal relationships by enabling communication between senior managers and employees. This chapter presents a framework for thinking about structured, well-managed internal communication. It provides strategic communication managers with a new perspective from which to view internal communication on the one hand, and on the other, it addresses employee engagement and its impact on internal communication. Internal communication is regularly reported as a problem in small and medium-sized businesses where employees and managers often complain about poor communication within their organization. The stakeholder approach emphasizes ethical Management behaviors. Employee engagement is a concern for leaders and managers in organizations around the world; they recognize that it is a critical element that affects organizational effectiveness, innovation, and competitiveness. The pre-wave era is characterized by the recognition of the general need for employees to participate in their work and their organization.

INTRODUCTION

The literature has affirmed that there are companies that still underestimate or neglect the effects of internal communication in the organizational Management of the company to achieve social and financial performance. So, what is the definition of internal communication?

Internal communication (IC) is about promoting effective communications between people within an organization. It involves producing and disseminating messages and campaigns on behalf of Management, as well as facilitating a dialogue with the people who make up the organization, and also informing individuals of an upcoming event, conducting an organization-wide engagement or culture audit. It is usually the responsibility of the human resources, Marketing, or public relations departments, but can be done by any department in an organization.
Note: Internal communication is more effective than when it is an interdisciplinary effort, overseen by leaders from multiple departments.

Some companies may not have the resources to invest in planning an internal communications strategy, while others have planned a strategy but may not have the capacity or tools to maintain it. And that's understandable. But if you look at why internal communication is important, you'll soon see that it is imperative to the health of your organization.

Why? Because if your organization has people, you will need to communicate with them clearly and regularly.

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I.   5 essential steps to build your internal communication plan

How do you develop an internal communications plan? These 5 steps will ensure that your plan unites your people with your key business objectives

1.   Review your current internal communication methods

Do your employees avoid reading emails and internal communications because they are long?

and wordy or irrelevant? Do they avoid using the intranet because it seems complicated?

If this is happening in your company, your internal communication method needs to be addressed. And the best way to find out what could be improved is to ask the staff; the people who use the internal communication tools on a daily basis. By finding out what their weaknesses are and what could be improved, you will understand the importance of internal communication.

Workgroups, staff, surveys and focus groups are productive ways to find out what people are thinking.

2.   Analyze the results

Once you have the employee feedback, it's time to determine what needs to be improved, the questions to ask are:

-        Does everyone have access to the information they need?
-        Are some staff members receiving the information they don't need?
-        Is there a recurring problem, e.g. lack of information, not enough contact with Management, people feeling undervalued, communication is unclear, low employee engagement, distractions due to unnecessary communication?

-        Does the company need to improve transparency? And do people feel they are not being kept informed of what they need to know to be part of the company's overall success?

3.   Decide what technology could make things better?

If your company needs better communication tools, now is the time to invest. These don't have to be expensive and can be adapted to your needs. Do you already have an intranet? Would your company benefit from the streamlined internal communication methods an intranet offers? Consider a technology that:

-        Keeps everyone in a group informed
-        Enables project Management and planning
-        Social media offerings for employee interaction
-        Is it easy to use?

Many different tools can be integrated into an intranet to facilitate communication, for example, HR could benefit from Google Calendar and all departments can chat on WhatsApp.

No matter how you communicate with others in your company, the platform should provide a rewarding and unique communication experience. When you send a message, people should want to read it.

Content should be short and engaging, which is why an internal content strategy is also important.

4.   Install NICTs

It is also essential to inform employees of what is happening so that they can be part of the new strategy and new internal communication technologies, after listening to their opinions, so it is time to implement the new communication channels.

1.   Review and improve

For an internal communication strategy to be successful, it needs to be regularly reviewed and should have short- and long-term objectives to measure its success by using dedicated questionnaires to staff on what they think of the changes, and it also creates a feeling of being valued and being an important part of the company.

If the staff likes and shares the messages you communicate to them, the work works, and the improved communication strategy will grow with the company.

Theoretical foundations of internal communication in organizations

As we have said, internal communication is a process where information is distributed to the people whose well-being depends on the social performance of the company. This includes not only employees, but also suppliers, investors, independent contractors and business partnerships Internal communication is primarily about communicating facts to a person or group that directly represents the organization, it is often used in a mobile way with employee relations or organizational communication focus on transmitting values, and on developing effective systems, creating a positive work culture and encouraging collective participation communication theories focus on managing who receives information, what is shared, how that information gets to the right people, when they will receive it, and why communication is necessary to make better decisions.

Its function is focused on providing relevant, accurate information, focusing on education, awareness, and knowledge sharing about the company's data. Desired outcomes include encouraging feedback, strengthening constructive dialogue, and enhancing the role of stakeholders in activities, issues, and achievements. The internal communications manager integrates information through a variety of media - newsletters, video, conference calls, emails, and personal interactions, to name a few. She may work closely with employees and organizational.

The main priorities of internal communication are to positively influence company participation and to commit to better decisions. Managing the output of information to specific groups is a major factor in the company's social performance.

Dimensions of internal communication:

Internal communication can be seen as organizational communication, between employees within the organization and the various relationships developed internally within the organization, it is associated with an information exchange environment in an practitioner, or even integrate the benefits of these roles. Also, other theories of formal communication include control of vertical and horizontal communication patterns, which means that managers share information with their subordinates through formal conferences, training sessions, or written documents. Companies and managers who encourage this form of communication have the advantage of obtaining valuable advice and encouraging an open flow of information among workers at the same level.

Finally, informal communication theories can govern internal communication. informal networks do not follow hierarchical rules of influence, some people, regardless of their title, can also influence others by making an opinion and sharing information that may be distorted or inaccurate.

Organizational Management process that allows for an interactive flow of communication between the various stakeholders of the organization and is adopted as a responsible process of internal information exchange between stakeholders at all levels within the boundaries of an organization.
The literature has led us to cite the following 12 different dimensions:

1.   Strategic direction and imperative

It is argued that communication is the cornerstone of an organization and, the engine of an organization and its strategy will only succeed if it is properly communicated. Thus, the communication team must be oriented towards achieving the organization's strategic priorities.

2.   Integrity and integration

It is essential that communication be credible and consistent with the conduct of the organization. If rhetoric is not matched with action, the integrity of all communications will be lost. Long-term success in matching rhetoric to action will increase trust within an organization.

3.   Dignity and respect

Two of the fundamental elements of communication are dignity and respect. Lee believes that through the continued use of dignity and respect in all communications, trust, and accountability will be developed on an organizational basis.

4.   Strategic information flow

It is essential that information flows through an organization in a timely manner. Not only through the organization but also upwards. Indeed, a test of an organization's ability to survive is how it handles negative upward communication.

5.   Clarity and power of messages

Clarity is paramount in all communication. When it is absent, confusion and doubt are present. A clear message will be complete, in perspective, recognize any gaps in the information provided and answer the questions raised by the message.

1.   External Perspectives

An organization cannot communicate in a vacuum. All messages must have an external perspective. Therefore, argues that " only a communication system anchored in the external environment of the company can convincingly provide information and place it in a tenable context".

2.   Roles and responsibilities

Every employee in an organization has a responsibility to communicate and should be rewarded. These responsibilities must be clearly defined within the organization.

3.   Listening and visible presence

All communication needs feedback and therefore good listening on both a personal and organizational level is the basis and it is by

listening that people learn and it is a way to unite relationships.

4.   Training and assistance

Since all employees have a responsibility to communicate, appropriate training and support must be provided to ensure that they can fulfill their obligations and support will also include ensuring that all employees are aware of the channels and mechanisms for communication.

5.   Structure and process Internal communication

Is about helping the organization achieve its goals and as such, the structure and processes must be clearly aligned with this objective. The end result is not the communication itself but the impact it has on the recipients. To be successful, the communication department must build alliances with line managers throughout the organization.

6.   Measuring systems

It is critical to the success of any strategic communication system. Without measurement, it is impossible to tell how successful the previous communication was and to plan future messages. Measurement should focus on the outcomes of communication rather than the inputs and outputs of the communication process.

7.   Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is necessary to ensure that the communication process and systems continue to evolve and meet the needs of an organization. Organizations are constantly evolving and the communication system must be able to meet those needs and expectations. It is also useful to regularly benchmark communication best practices elsewhere.

V.   Internal communication and motivation

In order to be most effective, internal communication experts must do several things- from keeping employees informed about everything from the most benign company updates to news that impacts people's lives, their communication channels must be open and dynamic. But at the same time, internal communicators must also assess thoughts and feelings and make sure they are doing everything they can to get staff to access communications and encourage leaders to step away from their regular duties to reach out to the organization for expected performance.

How important is motivation?

Without motivation, the workplace is simply a mass of individuals who have no desire or willingness to do things better, to seek solutions, to work together, and to get things done as well and as quickly as possible.

Whatever your business, you will be providing a service or creating a product for a customer, client, or consumer. But many times, employees lose sight of the end goal. Reminding your employees of the real difference their work makes in people's lives is critical to keeping the big picture in mind. This perspective allows them to see a purpose in

their work, motivation provides a range of positive feelings learning a sense of pride in their work, a push to develop their role, increased satisfaction, and a desire to do things better. In short, motivated employees improve organizational effectiveness and results.

What is motivating our employees right now?

Clearly, the last few years have been difficult so far. Confinement, health scares, and isolation have given way to loss of staff due to layoffs and a down economy. It may seem impossible to think of anything that would inspire our staff at this time. But there are a number of motivational factors that are currently helping to boost morale, and as researchers, we have synthesized that the body of scientific research in internal communication suggests the importance of being aware of these factors in terms of:

Communication channels: i.e. the link between our homes, and workplaces, our instant messaging platforms, our intranet, and our video software have never been more important in connecting us to "normalcy.

Our leaders: Walking around our offices, we can be aware of the exciting presence of our leaders ,and working from home, the visibility of leadership needs to be increased via blogs, hands-on meetings ,and interaction on intranet publications and emails.

Rewards and recognition: Much of our work can easily be overlooked by the rest of the organization. Therefore, implementing

employee recognition programs help highlight exceptional work and help workers feel seen and valued. Our individual teams: with the shared experience of containment, many teams may feel like they have grown closer together. It is these small communities within our organization that help keeps workers energized.

Collective purpose: People like to feel part of a larger whole, so a corporate mission statement is essential to give employees purpose, direction and motivation.

Creating a company that works for the employee: Offering flexible work schedules, employee benefits and other perks makes the employee feel valued and more able to do their job better and how internal communicators capitalize on these critical areas varies from organization to organization these results are based on the following questions addressed during our field research.

Are you choosing the right communication channels?

Not all employees use the same digital tools. The platforms used by office workers will be different from those used by frontline workers, for example. Therefore, an analysis needs to be done to see if your communications are being picked up by everyone. Without good internal communication in place, employees will feel left in the dark, uninformed, and directionless. It is essential that everyone in your organization has access to all important messages. It is recommended to develop audience segmentation for each communication platform.

Internal Communication Tip: Find out which communication channels your employees use, when, and where. Your messages need to work with the times individuals are working, whether it's late or a different time zone.

Do your leaders communicate?

Leadership communications are critical to motivating staff. While internal communications play an important role in keeping employees informed, top-level messages have a real impact on motivation. When people work from home, a business can easily become anonymous as individual workers clear task lists, and try to stay ahead of the curve. For remote employees, communication is more important than ever. We need to feel part of a community, we need to be kept in the loop and we need to know that those at the top are aware of the rest of us.

Hearing from those in charge of your organization can not only inform but also reduce feelings of anxiety or dissatisfaction. When senior Management provides employees with news or updates, it can boost morale, productivity, and employee satisfaction. This is especially vital for remote or dispersed workers, who face a higher risk of isolation, loneliness, and disconnection from their organization.

Encourage senior leaders to regularly address a variety of topics. In times of crisis, let these escalations become empathetic, and direct messages to staff about the plan ahead.

Do you use a rewards and recognition program?

How do your employees know if they are doing a good job, and are appreciated?

When it comes to motivating staff, the role of an effective reward, and recognition program should not be underestimated. When employees understand that they are valued, and that hard work is rewarded, it can contribute significantly to motivation, satisfaction, and engagement.

Developing an employee reward and recognition program on your company's intranet, and providing access to every individual in your workforce is key to its success.

Do you encourage team leaders to foster a positive culture?

As we continue to work with dispersed employees, it has never been more important to create, and maintain a strong team culture. Team leaders should be encouraged to go beyond their regular duties to ensure that their team spirit is not hindered by their different work locations.

There are countless digital tools that enable instant messaging, virtual meetings, video chats, and team meetings. Managers need to find software that works to bring their teams together. Daily chats need to be initiated, not just for updates on projects or deadlines. To create the culture needed for teams working from home, it's important to encourage conversation that touches on everything. Prescribe a set time each day for a catch-up and get your team talking. That camaraderie seen in the office comes as much from friendly banter as from your collective successes.

To allow the different departments to present the objectives or action plan, and to discuss, and analyze together recent achievements during regular company-wide meetings.
Do you link employees to a goal?

People's approach to work is greatly enhanced when they have a goal. when they feel like they are part of the goals to be achieved together, it creates motivation that provides lasting benefits. when leaders associate their employees with a purpose, they are more likely to have a strong sense of purpose, and of course, to be highly engaged, employees see essential value in being part of an organization committed to solving problems, and facilitating situations, and helping people.

When employees are motivated by a sense of purpose, they are motivated to play their part, take more pride in their work, and are more willing to help, and support their colleagues. This sense of purpose is a tremendous asset to a company, which will see improved retention, productivity, and happier work culture as a result, and the use of recognition programs can be reinforced by highlighting behaviors that evoke core values

Are you creating a positive experience for your employees?

Employee interactions throughout the workday have a huge impact on their enjoyment of work. These can cover a range of experiences, from the friendly atmosphere of the office to the social events that the company organizes.

When people enjoy a warm, and positive work environment, it motivates them to do more, and feel motivated in the long run, including the use of flash surveys to check your employees' thoughts, and feelings. This anonymous feedback will provide you with the information you need to make the necessary changes so that work can be a huge boost to performance.

VI.   Internal communication and commitment

What is employee engagement and how does it relate to internal communication?

Our results show that they are more connected than you might think. Employee engagement refers to the relationship between an organization and its employees. It is an umbrella term that encompasses employee well-being, company culture, and overall passion for work.
The survey results show us that the best-performing companies indicated that measuring, and improving employee engagement gave them a competitive advantage in the social performance of their company.

When an employee feels connected to their workplace, amazing things happen they become more engaged, more productive, and more likely to stay in the long run, the word "employee engagement" is not just a "nice to have", it is an essential element of a business that requires continuous attention, and development.

The concept of employee engagement, and its direct relationship to internal communication is exactly what social performance is all about. According to Gallup1, "Employee engagement is often confused with corporate culture, but they are not the same thing! Engagement is about meeting the needs of employees to prepare them for High-Performance, while culture is what makes an organization special or different from others."

Fostering employee engagement is essential to building connectivity, and teamwork in the workplace, as well as maintaining the alignment of goals, and creating a supportive, and welcoming workplace. This is achieved by prioritizing employee engagement through the use of internal communication, which leads to improved employee engagement. It's a continuous loop that never strays off course, and keeps your company's goals in mind.

Employees need to feel appreciated, so companies need to create regular opportunities for employees to be recognized, and for it to boost morale, and help them feel a sense of belonging to the organization. Also, our field studies have allowed us to affirm that it fosters a sense of community within the organization, and employees spend most of their daily life at work. For this reason, it is essential to create a comfortable work environment.

VII. Internal communication and job satisfaction

The availability, and evaluation of information by managers in order to select the most relevant information is capable of generating high personal satisfaction, and thus a successful work environment. Thus, knowledge of the value, quality, and quantity of information needed to stimulate individual action is an important element of internal communication.

Scientific research that has addressed these two explanatory variables of Dennis2 has shown us that using the framework for constructing the internal communication climate within companies are five factors as a predictor variable:

-       perceptions   of   superior-subordinate communication;
-       the   reliability   of   the   organization's information;
-       supervisors' empathy for subordinates.
-       bottom-up communication, and influence;
-       reliability   of   information   from subordinates ,and peers.

1 Luc Cardinal from his series High-PerformanceZone. (November 2017),

2 H. Dennis (1974)

Therefore, job satisfaction through the variable of communication is done through the relevance of the immediate supervisor, the effectiveness of the organization concerning material, and immaterial rewards.

Our results obtained will better explain the communication, and job satisfaction studied allowed us to draw that organizational communication is perceived positively, and significantly related to job satisfaction, and the analysis also revealed a positive relationship between organizational trust, and the influence of workplace decisions.

This study explores from a social capital theory perspective the effect of internal communication, and employee satisfaction on workplace integration, and specific involvement which has elsewhere been linked to improved social performance.

CONCLUSION

Internal communication produces an engaged workforce and, ultimately, healthier work environments with a well- implemented internal communication culture, employee engagement is enhanced through internal communication, with an emphasis on opportunities for interaction with senior management. Managers need to be aware of all available communication channels and ensure that

they select the best channel for each issue. ICT may be perceived as superior to traditional methods, but the best method may depend on the type of message being communicated and also on the target audience. It should be noted, however, that several communication channels are sometimes preferable. It is a reflection for all managers to examine communication methods and ensure that they are using the most effective ones when communicating information to employees.

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