THE MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION - THE LINK BETWEEN THE IDENTITY OF THE ORGANIZATION AND THE REPUTATION OF THE ORGANIZATION

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Abstract

In this paper, we have investigated the link between the identity of the organization and the reputation of the organization and how managerial communication mediates this relationship. The reputation of the organization is the results of the members of the organization to assume an identity. The identity of the organization is manifested through behaviours and communication and it is the result of the culture, history and strategy of the organization. If the identity is recognized by the public then the organization enjoys a good reputation leading to an improved organizational performances. Managerial communication influences both the identity and reputation of the organization and plays a decisive role in mediating the differences between the two concepts.

Key words: managerial communication, identity of the organization, reputation of the organization

JEL classification: M12, M14

1. Introduction

Within the process of realization of management activities, communication has become an indispensable tool. Thus, managerial communication cannot be conceptualized outside management, being inseparable from it [11] An effective managerial communication provides both a good organizational climate for the performance and a good image among the stake holders. Communication is an important element for the time and energy consumption of a manager. Communication issues are at the forefront of management activities, taking into account the changes which organizations must face today. Communication is the means, the effective way the work of a manager who tries to achieve organizational goals [12]. In light of these considerations we consider managerial communication as an essential element of organizational communication. Managerial communication plays a key role in designing corporate identity. Organizations want to project an identity on the market. The market reflects the image and the reputation of the organization. The interest of the managers is that between identity and reputation to be a match. Managerial communication plays the role of mediator between identity and image.

2. Literature review
2.1 The identity and the reputation of the organization

A properly formulated organizational identity is the first step to have a strong reputation. However, these terms - organizational identity, image and reputation - are often used alternately. This is misleading, because each has a cornerstone appropriately defined and a well-established role in developing and maintaining the company's reputation.

Van Riel and Fombrun (2007, p. 61) take into account the identity and identification in the context of questions such as "Who are we?", "What is expected from us?", "What is the purpose of our base?" and "What it means to be involved in this company?" An important question for organizations is this: is the public perception of an organization similar to the story told by the organization itself? If there is an imbalance, then there will be an adverse effect on the reputation of the company. Having a positive reputation the organization will protect itself from an occasional error, but a consistent difference or gap between the two messages (internal identity and external image) will create lasting damage [14].

Organizational identity is how an organization wants to be perceived, how it is presented to internal and external stakeholders. Identity is a means by which an organization is differentiated and positioned in relation to other organizations and in relation to achieving performance objectives. According to Olins (1989), the management of the organization's identity can communicate three key ideas for his audience: what the organization is, what it does and

how [9]. To achieve this, the identity can be regarded as a configuration of three elements: symbolism, planned and unplanned communication and the behaviour of the management and of the employees.

Fombrun (1996) defines reputation as a net perception of capacity of an organization to meet the expectations of all its stakeholders [7]. Chernatony and Harris (2000) agree with the view that all stakeholders' opinion must be taken into account and that reputation is a representative assessment of the identity of a brand [6]. Bromley (2000) defines reputation as an index value of an organization or even the organization's value. Bromley (2000) also emphasizes the importance of different opinions and describes reputation as a distribution of opinion about a person or an organization [2].

Organizational reputation has numerous parts and, often, the reputation is the sum of organizational or brand subdivisions. Indeed, the idea of reputation as a whole means taking into account the reputation as being more than a simple sum of all parts of the organization. Thus, companies should ideally focus on procuring a positive reputation, a total reputation, cultivating intrinsic and extrinsic values of the organization's brand identity and image.

Organizational image is the perception of an audience different from the organization. Image does not exist within the organization, but there is for those who perceive the organization. Images of the stakeholders on an organization are a result of a combination of different elements, but are essentially a distillation of values, beliefs and attitudes. The images held by members of a marketing channel, a regulatory body or employees, for example, can vary depending on their individual experiences, and will almost certainly be different from those projected by the management. This means that an organization does not have a single image, it can have multiple images.

Organizational image is what perceive internal and external interested parties about the organization. Organizational reputation is a collective term that refers to the views of all stakeholders' reputation management including identity and image. Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) argue that in order to build a favourable reputation, must be developed four attributes: credibility, trust, reliability and responsibility. While choosing these four specific criteria can be challenging, it is important to appreciate that organizational reputation refers to the views of all internal and external interested parties, and not just customers [14].

2.2 Characteristics of managerial communication

In the field of organizational communication, managerial communication is the binder between the internal and external communication. Organizations cannot communicate with external audiences without the manager being aware of that, even as internal communication is no stranger to him. Communication management is a tool that organizations use to respond to multiple challenges, among which [5]:

➢ unprecedented increase of the complexity of organizational activities;
➢ development and widespread use of new technologies;
➢ emphasizing the roles of representation of managers;
➢ interdependence of the interpersonal relations within organizations, now in a multicultural environment;
➢ emphasizing the importance of communication for a manager in personal and organizational matters;
➢ requirements for effective communication.

The specialized literature was devoted to the idea that the basic function of communication is to influence the perceptions and behaviours of the receiver by informing, manipulation, coordination, motivation, socialization or persuasion. Thus, we have shown that the communication process is essential for managers as there is no managerial position where it is not necessary to inform, influence or change someone's behavior in a certain sense.

Myers and Myers (1982) consider that the managerial communication functions relate to coordination and regulation, socialization and innovation [8]. Coordinating and regulation function requires constant adaptation to changes in the environment. Managers must take into account, adapt and use for the benefit of their organizations the new technological developments. Communication, in a turbulent environment, becomes increasingly complex and difficult to achieve, given the network of interactions. Socialization function springs from the school of human relations which theorizes the manager as being the binder of relationships between people, aiming to develop friendly relations within the organization's staff. Innovation in communication refers to adapt communication to existing technical means to increase efficiency and managerial performance.

Tran and Stănciugelu (2003) note that modern management pays special attention to communication, considering it an essential element of the management system of any organization [11]. Today's managers need to develop and promote a policy based on a communication system allowing the redesign of organizational structure and processes to changing conditions. Managers are obliged to maintain networks of contact with partner organizations in order to be informed and to be able to put their strategies into reality, both externally and internally. Through communication, managers must maintain subordinates aware and interested in the organization's strategy, progress and difficulties, to lead men to find the most appropriate solutions to achieve the objectives. Communication also addresses the issues and conflicts within an organization, influencing the behaviour and attitude of collaborators, ensuring a proper dissemination of information.

Communicative competence is a large part of trading, of negotiation, which occurs between many people. Communication in the negotiations can lead to discussions quite heated in some contexts of communication. Thus,

managers who master communication skills and are proficient in trading maintain long-term professional relationships. Ability to communicate, in the case of successful managers, is a skill that can be mastered from learning. Adler and Roman (2006) showed that systematic learning or practicing intuitive communication techniques can lead to better communication skills [1].

A major challenge is represented by the responsibilities of the manager to communicate with the working team to coordinate its activities. A good manager must show that he masters the working processes and is able to impose innovation and change within the organization. Communication contributes to the establishment of fair and efficient relations, understanding and cooperation between manager and subordinates, people inside and outside the organization [10].

Communication management is fully manifesting in the process of exercising the management functions. Communication management is a tool for operationalization of these features:

➢ within the foresight function, the managerial communication aims, in particular, information gathering and its interpretation to be able to achieve the organization's strategy. It aims to ensure the prospective construction by analyzing and interpreting the phenomena of internal and external environment;

➢ within the organization function, the managerial communication aims at establishing clear principles on which to operate. The manager aims to streamline processes and organization structures, placing in the center of attention the human factor;

➢ within the coordination function, a special attention should be paid to conduct formal and informal channels of communication that allow a good flow of information speed and accuracy of information. In this context, managerial communication will be streamlined even through the use of information technologies and online connectivity;

➢ within the training function, the communication concerns of the manager are moving in the direction of personnel motivation. Staff involvement in the organization's activity is a major desideratum for modern organizations which face challenges in terms of increasing competition and fluid boundaries between organizations;

➢ within the control-evaluation function, the managerial communication is directed to the achieving the objectives and meeting the performance standards. Where irregularities are detected, managerial communication should help to identify the causes and propose remedies.

Managerial communication is an important component of organizational communication, influencing the organizational communication and creating a context where the organizational communication is manifesting. Managers need to master management communication tools and how to apply them. A good manager is a good communicator and always seeks to impose on his organization the traits of the communicative organization.

3. The role of managerial communication in mediating the relationship between the identity of the organization and the organization's reputation

The objectives of managerial communication strategy subsume to the objectives of the organization's overall strategy. Managers need to ensure harmonization of communication and ways of carrying out the strategy.

Managerial communication can be seen as a formalized or unofficial activity. Formalized managerial communication implies the existence of a communications plan that includes the categories of audience to whom the communication is addressed, communication objectives and communication tools. The target audience of managerial communication may be represented by internal or external audience. In the first case, communication is performed with the employees of the organization. The principles of an effective communication require a small sphere of authority. Communication with external audiences is adapted to the categories of audience: sale to customers, buying from suppliers, communication within public relations events.

Managerial communication becomes effective in all subsystems of an organization and at all the hierarchical levels. Managerial communication is based on intertwining of formal communication (relations regulated by laws) and the informal one. Managerial communication is a physical and functional component, brokering the relationship between the management elements of an organization [4].

Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) state that the whole set of organizational identity includes communication, behaviour and symbolism. The organizational image is how interested parties and the external ones interpret the identity of the organization [14].

Between the identity of the organization, the organization's reputation, organizational performance and organizational communication there are multiple links (Figure 1). The reputation of the organization depends on the identity of the organization and the performance of the organization. Organization's reputation connects the organization's identity and organizational performance. As the organization's reputation is bigger, the organization's performance will be higher.
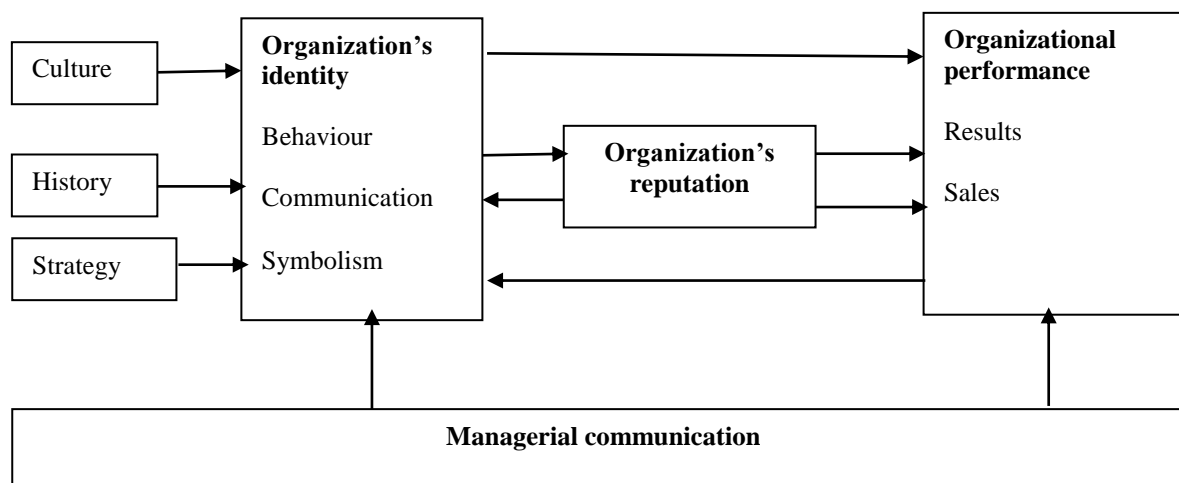
Figure 1. Identity of the organization and its relationship with the organization's reputation and managerial communication.
Source: adapted from Van Riel, C., Balmer, J., „Corporate identity: the concept, its measurement and management", European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 31 No. 5/6, 1997, p. 342

Managerial communication must strengthen this identity internally for employees and externally for its stakeholders. Many managers consider communication as targeting only the external audiences, mainly customers, but things should be regarded more nuanced. Developing a corporate brand should be carried out first on the communication with its employees. Managerial communication allows links between blocks and supports the process of creating organizational identity and its reflection, the organizational image.

Managerial communication influences the organization's identity by the decisions managers make. Managerial decisions can be taken individually or in groups. Group decisions are those resulting from certain meetings or sessions. Managerial communication within meetings of the group determines a number of negative consequences known as "group think". To avoid "group think" the responsible of the organization must ensure that decisions made are better than individual decisions and that they offer all conditions for an open communication [4]. Individual vulnerabilities of group members fade under the group's umbrella so that members of the group give up caution in making decisions. Their assessments on the development of the environment and on the effects of the decisions are much too optimistic. A negative element within the groups is the desire to please the group leader, the members avoiding to display contradictory positions from those expressed therein. In those circumstances, the decisions of the group are characterized by collective myopia and may prove unfortunate for the organization. Managerial communication within group meetings must contribute to preventing these negative elements.

In terms of communication discourse there are two approaches of the decisions taken within organizations. Firstly, it is about the maximization of the impact of the decision in terms of rationality. But managers do not always take rational decisions - the rational is intertwined with the emotional within decision-making. Thus we can speak of satisfactory decisions for the objectives of the organization [3]

The strategic management of the communication of the organizational identity is the management process oriented towards the knowledge of identity to a wider public and obtaining image synergies to achieve organizational objectives. The communication strategy of organizational identity include: vision, objectives, implementation and evaluation of strategy. Organizational identity management involves establishing clear messages that will be transmitted and the interpretation by the public of such messages. Organizations must ensure that the target audience decoded the message in the manner intended by the organization.

Managerial communication aiming the organization's reputation is based mainly on the extra and bridging role of the manager. Especially in crisis situations, the manger must take responsibility for the leading of the organization. Extra role is played by top-managers. As the official manager, he takes part in ceremonies and meetings of various non-profit associations within the community of the company. There is a communication between top managers and the external environment. The bridging role is to ensure the contact between an organization's managers and the managers of other businesses. In interpreting this role can be involved all managers of an enterprise: top-managers most often, and first-line managers accidently. The bridging role is an expression of involving managers in exercising the positions of management process in the external environment.

The managerial decision is based on the information system, called to provide quality information. Decision-making envisages processing of relevant information for the decision-making situation envisaged. In order to process information, there is a need for an assembly, testing, creation and information management system. The information system consists of people and technology and its goal is entirely subsumed to taking the relevant decisions. The information system allows the organization to continually learn and adapt to the environment.

Regarding the organizational performance, the manager must focus on the future and the lasting development of the organization. In this way, the communication speech aims at the optimal allocation of resources between short-term results and long-term ones.

5. Conclusions

Within the managerial communication plan a special attention should be paid to the effectiveness of communication, i.e. how messages were handled properly understood and put into practice led to the expected results.

The organizations involved in the communication process must configure their external networks particularly flexible and they must be capable to abandon inefficient partners, quickly establishing contacts with other partners who can replace them. In addition, organizations should establish communication systems that allow them the richest flow of information. We state that there are three possible connection levels and three types of information flows. The first situation is when the only available information coming is from the market. In the second plan, the companies exchange information regarding available equipment, operational processes and financial flows held or required. At a third level there are the feedback type of information between suppliers and users regarding the vulnerabilities of the services, necessary improvements, etc. Following these levels of communication, organizations will have to constantly modify their communication networks and the channels through which information flows keep evolving. The organization that teaches is precisely a concept based on developing information systems, aided by the power of processing of computers, to help the organization in its effort to adapt to the environment.

Managerial communication mediates the relationship between the organization's identity and the reputation of the organization. The management should ensure that the market's feedback corresponds to the declared intentions of the organization. In this respect, the internal managerial communication will be oriented mainly towards decision-making and their communication on the creation of organizational identity. External managerial communication will focus on the management relationship with the stakeholders of the organization

Managerial communication does not necessarily determine the increase of the organization's reputation, but it helps the organization to accentuate its strengths. Communication comes in all the components of organizational reputation. Managerial communication does not build reputation where organizational fundamentals are hopelessly compromised, but managerial communication helps honest organizations distinguish and consolidate their reputation.

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