UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE

FAKULTA SOCIÁLNÍCH VĚD

Institut komunikačních studií a žurnalistiky

Bakalářská práce

2017   **Martin Erik Iltis**

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Facing new challenges of digitalization in internal communications

Bakalářská práce

Praha 2017

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Oponent práce:

Datum obhajoby: **2017**

Hodnocení:

Bibliografický záznam

ILTIS, Martin Erik, *Facing new challenges of digitalization in internal communications.* Praha, 2017. 43 s. Bakalářská práce (Bc.) Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta sociálních věd, Institut komunikačních studií a žurnalistiky. Katedra marketingové komunikace a public relations. Vedoucí diplomové práce Ing. Tomáš Poucha.

Anotace (abstrakt)

Jak komunikují komerční organizace směrem k zaměstnancům v době digitalizace? A daří se jim naplňovat specifické potřeby svých zaměstnanců? Tato práce se pokouší zmapovat interní komunikaci jakožto komplexní obor v kontextu se současnými trendy, které mají nepopiratelný vliv na současnou podobu komunikace. Díky technologickému pokroku a novým nástrojům, interní komunikace čelí řadě výzev, jakým jsou například odliv zájmu o informace či schopnost správného zacílení komunikace.

V teoretické části této práce se pokusím vysvětlit obecnou představu komunikace v organizaci, její funkce, cíle a také strategii. V následujících kapitolách představím kanály, které jsou hojně využívány pro komunikaci na zaměstnance. Vzhledem k tomu, že na měření efektivity komunikace je kladen stále větší důraz, vytyčil jsem základní metriky, které by se v interní komunikaci měly sledovat.

Komunikace v éře digitalizace je bezesporu velkým oříškem a je nutné ji nadále přizpůsobovat, aby splňovala potřeby cílové skupiny, k níž komunikujeme. Co když ale výzva nespočívá v nejnovějších výdobytcích moderních technologií, ale ve zpátečnickém uvažování cílové skupiny? V praktické části jsem toto ukázal na názorném příkladu – nadnárodní společnost Siemens AG nedávno představila digitální nástroj k informování svých zaměstnanců, a to mobilní aplikaci. Vzhledem k tomu, že velká část zaměstnanců této společnosti jsou tzv. „modré límečky, informačně těžko dosažitelná skupiny, měla společnost nelehký úkol jak tuto aplikaci mezi zaměstnance rozšířit a implementovat. Na základě zmapování tohoto příkladu jsem navrhl doporučení ke zvážení, jak zajistit informovanost právě tohoto segmentu zaměstnanců.

Abstract

How do organizations communicate to employees in the digital era? And how do they meet their specific needs? This work aims to map the complex knowledge of organizational communication in the context of current trends which have a major impact on organizational communication. Due to technological progress and new digital tools, internal communications are facing new challenges of losing interest and reach of their audience, i.e. employees.

In the theoretical framework of this paper, the attempt was to introduce the general idea of communication within an organization, its functions, objectives and strategy. In the following chapters I have introduced the channels which are widely used when reaching to employees. As evaluation of effectiveness plays an important role in this domain, I have pointed out the key metrics which communicators should focus on when measuring internal communications.

Communication in the digital era is no doubt a challenge and must change in order to meet the specific needs of the target group, however, what if the challenge lays not in the channel but in the target group? In the practical part I have introduced an example – a multinational company Siemens AG recently introduced a digital tool to share information with its employees – a mobile application. As a major part of Siemens employees are so-called blue collars, a hard to reach group, the company had an uneasy task to implement the new tool. Based on these observations I have suggested recommendations to penetrate employees with information even further.

Klíčová slova

Komunikace, komunikace v organizaci, interní komunikace, komunikace na zaměstnance, cíle interní komunikace, kanály interní komunikace, digitalizace, těžko zasažitelné skupiny, Siemens,

Keywords

Communication, organizational communication, internal communication, employee communiation internal communication objectives, internal communication channels, digitalization, hard-to-reach groups, Siemens,

Prohlášení

1. Prohlašuji, že jsem předkládanou práci zpracoval/a samostatně a použil/a jen uvedené prameny a literaturu.

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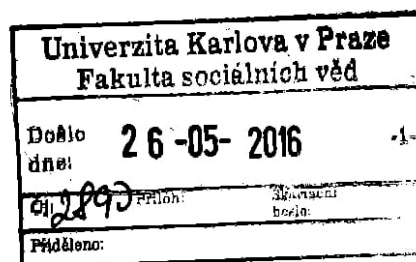V Praze dne **02/01/2017**   Martin Erik Iltis

Institut komunikačních studií a žurnalistiky FSV UK
Teze BAKALÁŘSKÉ diplomové práce

TUTO ČÁST VYPLŇUJE STUDENT/KA:

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Studijní obor/forma studia: Marketingová komunikace a PR, prezenční	Přiděleno:

Předpokládaný název práce v češtině:

–

Předpokládaný název práce v angličtině:
Facing new challenges of digitalization in internal communications

Předpokládaný termín dokončení (semestr, akademický rok – vzor: *ZS 2012/2013*):
(diplomovou práci je možné odevzdat nejdříve po dvou semestrech od schválení tezí)
LS 2016/2017

Základní charakteristika tématu a předpokládaný cíl práce (max. 1000 znaků):

Internal communication plays a major role in the functioning of a corporation. The idea, that communicators simply answer questions or deliver messages is outdated, however, due to technological progress and new online tools, internal communication is facing new issues such as losing interest of their audience, due to information overload.
Employees nowadays multi-task at a level we could not imagine a couple of years back and tools develop and improve as we speak.
   Digital transformation impacts every area of business. Marketing communication has changed, becoming more and more integrated, but since the digitalization trend doesn't only face external publics, communications within an organization have been affected as well, yet at a slightly slower pace. Adjustments to new processes are inevitable, yet the question is, what should be the right approach to this shift and how should organizations react?
   The aim of this paper is to define new ways and possibilities to strengthen the position and establish the need of internal communication in the digital era, attempting to explore how effective different tools and platforms could be, at increasing the core objectives of internal communication, all based on legitimate observations of a multi-national corporation.

Předpokládaná struktura práce (rozdělení do jednotlivých kapitol a podkapitol se stručnou charakteristikou jejich obsahu):

I. Theoretical Framework

1. **Introduction**

2. **Communication**
   a. Communication process
   b. Different approaches towards communication
   c. Organizational communications

3. **Internal communications**
   a. Internal communications objectives
   b. Levels/layers of internal communications
   c. Strategic internal communication

4. **Internal communications channels & tools**
   a. Traditional channels
   b. New channels

5. **New challenges of digitalization**
   a. Acceleration of communication flow
   b. Multichannel communication
   c. Lack of interest due to information overload
   d. Content orientation
   e. Online tools & social media

6. **Evaluating effectiveness**
   a. Measuring internal communications
   b. Data evaluation
   c. Metrics and KPI's (Key performance indicators)

II. Practical part

1. Case study introduction & analysis of the status quo
2. Determining areas for development
3. Implementing changes
4. Results & findings
5. Conclusions

Vymezení zpracovávaného materiálu (např. konkrétní titul periodika a období jeho analýzy):
Specialized publications, articles and case studies; surveys, internal content, media and data

Postup (technika) při zpracování materiálu
Theoretical & empirical research

Základní literatura (nejméně 5 nejdůležitějších titulů k <u>tématu a způsobu jeho zpracování</u>; u všech titulů je nutné uvést stručnou anotaci na 2-5 řádků):

BRIDGES, William. *Character of Organizations*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2000.
→ Bridges explains organizations have characters. An organization's character shapes how decisions get made and new ideas are received, how employees are treated and change is accepted or rejected - all factors that affect company performance. Using examples, Bridges identifies 16 organizational character types using the framework of MBTI© personality types and shows how these influence an organization's growth and development.

BROOKS, Ian. *Organisational behaviour: individuals, groups and organisation* Pearson Education, 2009.
→ This publication provides a concise, selective and rigorous introduction to the subject. With up-to-date reference to contemporary themes and work in the field, the book examines behaviour within the context of the individual, groups and teams, and finally the organisation itself. Regular questions encourage critical reflection on the most important schools of thought, and a wealth of case studies and illustrations in film apply these theories to recognisable practice.

COLLINS, James Charles. *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap... and others don't*. Random House, 2001.
→ This management book by James C. Collins that aims to describe how companies transition from being average companies to great companies and how companies can fail to make the transition. "Greatness" is defined as financial performance several multiples better than the market average over a sustained period. Collins finds the main factor for achieving the transition to be a narrow focusing of the company's resources on their field of competence.

GRUNIG, James E., and Todd Hunt. *Managing public relations*. Vol. 343. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984.
→ This book unifies social science research and management theory with public relations techniques to provide a solid theoretical foundation. Covers the management as well as the techniques of public relations, emphasising decision-making and evaluation.

QUIRKE, Mr Bill. *Making the connections: using internal communication to turn strategy into action*. Gower Publishing, Ltd., 2012.
→ Author demonstrates how businesses use internal communication to achieve differentiation, to improve their quality, customer service, and innovation, and to manage change more effectively. He describes the why, the what and the how of internal communication - why business needs better communication to achieve its objectives, what internal communication needs to deliver to add value, and how organizations need to manage their communication for best results.

MAISTER, David. Practice what you preach. 2001.
→ Author explores the crucial role of the individual manager in promoting high morale among

employees. The book recommends specific actions from the managers of businesses on how to build an energized workplace, enforce standards of excellence, develop people, and have fun. It provides proof that great financial rewards come from living up to the standards that most businesses advocate, but few achieve.

SCHOLES, Eileen. *Gower handbook of internal communication*. Gower Publishing, Ltd., 1997.
→ A comprehensive guide to managing communication within organizations, the handbook recognises Internal Communication's continued growth as a management discipline. It is aimed at leaders who want insight into IC techniques for use in both day-to-day operational and change situations, for example, and also at the communication specialist seeking shared wisdom and new ideas.

Diplomové práce k tématu (seznam bakalářských, magisterských a doktorských prací, které byly k tématu obhájeny na UK, případně dalších oborově blízkých fakultách či vysokých školách za posledních pět let)

HOŘÍNKOVÁ Adéla. *Interní komunikace ve společnosti Agropodnik, a.s. Velké Meziříčí*. Jihlava, 2013. Bakalářská práce. Vysoká škola polytechnická Jihlava, Katedra ekonomických studií

KVARDOVÁ Daniela. *Analýza systému interní komunikace v konkrétní organizaci*. Brno, 2011. Magisterská diplomová práce. Masarykova Univerzita, Fakulta sociálních studií

MALAKHOVA Ekaterina. *Audit interní komunikace vybrané firmy*. Praha, 2012. Bakalářská práce. Bankovní institut vysoká škola, Katedra podnikání a oceňování
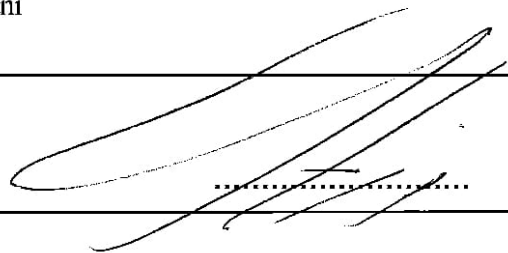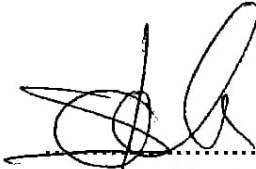
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TUTO ČÁST VYPLŇUJE PEDAGOG/PEDAGOŽKA:
Doporučení k tématu, struktuře a technice zpracování materiálu:
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INTRODUCTION

Internal communication plays an important role in the functioning of a modern company. The vehicles used to communicate tasks and visions of the company have great impact on the effectiveness of the operation and employees' loyalty and performance, as well as the speed of the company's ability to react on the quick changes on the market caused by the globalization of the world's businesses, technological progress and changes in society and demography. The aspects of internal organizational communication provide a very broad area of interest and are a significant part of company structure and policy.

Nowadays, with the development of technological tools for communication, the managers and company owners stand in front of an important task to create a communication structure within their business. Such structure should feature complex system that simplifies and streamlines the internal organizational information flow and thereby joins all company employees in time and tasks. The ideal tools for such communication structures are digital communication tools that provide in-time information exchange without the boundaries of space.

The aim of the study of digital communication issues and aspects considering the organizational information flow is to discuss its advantages and disadvantages and, moreover, to evaluate its impact on company operation effectiveness and performance. The study will be divided into two parts – the theoretical basis and the case study. The theoretical basis will be targeted on the description of complex issue of interpersonal communication focusing particularly on the organizational communication. Within this part, the main aspects and types of communication – face-to-face or digital – will be determined in order to provide complex information background of the issue.

The second – practical – part aims on the case study of selected company's internal communication structure, its development and features. The study is provided via descriptive analysis and focuses on the influence of respective digital communication tool which has been recently implemented into the company's common operation. Within the analysis, the implementation of the communication tool, utilized for the purposes of a specific target group within the company, is described and advantages and disadvantages are highlighted. As digitalization mainly

focuses on the technological advances of communication channels which, in order to reach the target audience must be adjusted to their specific needs, the aim of this work is to turn over the concept and explain the current challenges of digitalization from a different perspective. The selected company has, based on research and exploration, created and implemented a tool which has met all the criteria of the target group, yet the target group – in this case the so-called blue collars, which is a term referring to factory workers – had a rather milder reaction and the spread of the tool has not been as wide as expected. Based on this knowledge, I have given recommendation as to what may be considered to fulfill the company's expectations.

I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Communication

Communication is a very important element which permeates through all aspects of persons' lives, whether personal of professional. Therefore the power of communication should not be underestimated. Nowadays, people and organizations tend to understand the importance of communication and the focus on its providing increases continuously. *"The study of communication is of particular interest today because of rapid developments in new technologies for producing and transmitting (sending) information"* (Steinberg, 2007, p. 1). The main aspects, functions and forms of communication currently utilized and studied, as well as the types of communication vehicles, are described in following subchapters.

1.1 Aspects, functions and forms of communication

The history of communication goes back to the origins of speech and language which are dated to 40 000 years ago. From this point, the vehicles for communication underwent significant development to its up-to-date form, including various tools for the communication execution. During the ages of communication development, the respected tools for providing or recording the information spread on, the mutual face-to-face information transmitting had grown to the need of providing a durable record in writing (and later printing). With the requirements stated in the 20th century, growing population and formation of intra and interstate organization in many countries, as well as with the results of industrial revolution, the technological progress provided the possibility corresponding with the needs to address and inform greater amount of people. These factors enabled the development of mass communication vehicles which were the first step to information age, we are facing today. (Steinberg, 2007, p. 2-18)

Nevertheless, all these vehicles work with the basic element of interpersonal communication, which can be characterized as sign. *"All communication takes place by means of sign"* (Rosengren, 2000, p. 29), which in form of symbols (icons) or words provide the building units of the information flow. The creation of signs and the

stabilization of their meanings have been cause by the specific purposes of communication. The purposes of communication are guided by actual needs of human beings and their involvement in the society (their social roles). From this point of view, several functions of communication can be derived, as follows: (Steinberg, 2007, p. 19-21)

- physical and psychological needs – comprising the communication leading to ensuring the basic physiological needs of living (food, water, air, shelter, etc.), and the satisfaction of psychological needs for contact with other people,

- developing and maintaining relationships – among various social roles of a person in his own social groups, such as family, work colleagues, friends, etc.,

- understanding of oneself – through the *"communication with others and the way they respond to us, we develop the sense of who we are (a self-concept) and how other people react to how we behave"* (Steinberg, 2007, p. 20). The acceptance by the society and complying with its standards is a key part of up-to-date normal life which cannot be acquired otherwise than by the interpersonal communication,

- gaining necessary information – concerning especially the basis for providing tasks or educating oneself, which is important in order to improving personal skills and accomplishing common everyday responsibilities, as well as the preparation for the upcoming social, political and economic events,

- decision making – in decision making process is the cooperation with other persons mostly necessary, as the decision predominantly involve more than one person. The communication is in this case highly required,

- persuasion – the interpersonal interactions in many cases involve relations that function on the uneven mutual level. The persuasive purpose of communication can be seen in two ways – personal and professional. Besides the personal persuasion, the professional persuasive communication targets especially on the area of sales, marketing and consumer behaviour.

The function of communication can be therefore stated as the base for a person to create, maintain and develop interpersonal relations that are connected to his everyday life. For these purposes, various types of communication vehicles are utilized which are the subject of next subchapter.

The forms of communication are distinguished according to the way the message is transferred between the communicating partners. The basic dividing of the communication forms is to verbal and non-verbal. Verbal communication uses words for the information transfer and can be further divided to two subforms depending on the manner in which the message or information is expressed. These subforms are oral (provided via mouth) and written (provided using the language symbols on a medium for record). The oral communication includes *"face-to-face conversation, dialogue, meetings, conferences"* (Seghal, 2006, p. 38) etc. The written communication includes reports, letters, mails and other readable ways of communication, such as digital records or networks.

Verbal communication, however, does not include the utilization symbols, colours, signs, etc. that are not considered language symbols. This kind of communication is considered to be an expression of non-verbal communication, as well as the appearance of a communicating person, when the communication is provided face to face, such as gestures, pose or attitude.

1.2   Types of communication and approaches to communication

Communication among people is provided on specific levels, usually in accordance with the society group a person is actually involved in during the conversation. From this point of view, following types of communication can be distinguished: (West and Turner, 2009, p. 8-9)

- **intrapersonal –** which is related to the internal world of a person, i.e. this type of communication is provided with oneself. *"Intrapersonal communication includes imagining, perceiving, or solving problems"* (West and Turner, 2009, p. 8) in person's head. It can occur when considering the advantages and disadvantages of an action before it is taken, or during the conversation with other person as well,

- **interpersonal –** this type of communication takes commonly place between two (but also more) persons. It can be defined as *"the process of message transaction between people (usually two) who work toward creating and sustaining shared meaning"* (West and Turner, 2009, p. 8),

- **small group** – presents a type of communication between (among) small group of persons who *"meet for a common purpose or goal"* (West and Turner, 2009, p. 8). Communication in small groups occur commonly in classrooms, workplaces and teams, such as sport, musical groups etc.,

- **organizational** – is provided among large groups of persons and is characterized by hierarchy, such as companies or groups devoted to specific area of interest. *"Organizational communication may involve other communication types, such as interpersonal communication (for example, supervisor/subordinate relationships), small group communication (for example, a task group preparing a report) and intrapersonal communication (for example, daydreaming at work)"* (West and Turner, 2009, p. 9),

- **mass communication** – which is used to address large amount of people (audience) and utilizes a mediated channel, usually a sort of technology, such as *"television, radio, the Internet, or newspapers"* (West and Turner, 2009, p. 9),

- **public communication** – involving a speech to large audience in person. *"Public speakers have predetermined goals in mind, such as informing, persuading, or entertaining"* (West and Turner, 2009, p. 9).

1.3 Organizational communication

Organizational communication, as it has been indicated in the previous subchapter, occurs in the hierarchical structure of an environment and commonly is provided according to specific rules arising from the position in the hierarchy. There are altogether four factors that influence the way organizational communication is conducted. These factors are following: (Seghal, 2006, p. 42)

- **formal channels of communications** – is specialized communication that commonly utilize written forms and recorded, as it is controlled by managers. Therefore, *"it is mostly directive and restrictive in nature and does not leave much scope for free flow of information"* (Seghal, 2006, p. 42),

- **authority structure** – concern especially the position of communicating partners. The actual status and power of the communicating partner then

influences the way the information is exchanged, and also the speed, content and accuracy of transferred message,

- **job specialization ownership –** this factor is related to the actual content of the group goal and occurs especially in the workplaces, as it comprises a specific professional language used in the respected area. The job specialization ownership limits the flow of information,

- **information ownership –** this factor concerns information that is possessed by a hierarchically higher person and is not shared because of probably insecurity of the information spread.

The functions of internal communication are predominantly related to the general function of the communication. However, in the terms of organizational communication, sharing information and conversing provides another important function – motivation, which can be provided via the recognition of well-done task or constructive feedback from the manager to the employee. (Brooks, 2009, p. 101)

The organizational communication can be therefore considered as the main type of communication utilized within an organization, company or business entity. The factors mentioned above influence especially the way people involved in such social group talk to each other. The organizational communication comprises other types of communication as well, not only the intra- and interpersonal, but also the communication in small groups, public communication and often the mass media communication too. The issue of organizational communication will be further described in the next chapter.

2 Internal communication within an organization

The communication that serves as an information transfer within a company or similar organization, is considered to be the organizational type of communication. The actual approaches to the internal communication within a company are characterized by several aspects that are shaped by the relationships and positions among the employees of the company and their participation on the purposes and goals of the business.

2.1 Organization as a living organism

Organization can be seen from various points of view, its character is predominantly dependent on the specific way it conducts its business. One of the approach of organization characterization works with the dichotomies of personality as they are defined in the psychological praxis. In this case, the organizations can possess following characters: (Bridges, 2000)

- Extraversion or Introversion – this category states whether the organization is predominantly oriented on the external factors (market, competition, customers) or on the internal factors (the employees, the technologies, etc.),
- Sensing or Intuition – this category states how the organization gains the information, whether the management focuses on the present, actualities and details (sensing organization); or on the future, potential and possibilities (intuiting organization),
- Thinking or Feeling – this category states how the organization processes the information, on the way, how it judges the current situation and whether the decision making process is based on the impersonal approach conducted according to the principles as consistency, competence, and efficiency; or through a personal process depending on the values of creativity, individuality and common good,
- Judging or Perceiving – this category states the approaches of the organization to deal with the external world. The judging organization reaches firm decisions, defines things clearly and gets closer to the issues, the perceiving organization on the other hand seeks more the input and prefers to keep things loose and options open.

The type of organization defines also its approaches to the internal organizational communication and its tools, as the main carriers of the communication are the employees. Therefore, to identify the aspects of internal communication and define and create its strategy can vary between two companies of very similar target and product or services portfolio. The internal organizational communication, its systems and structure relates due to this fact especially to the type of organization which translates to its goals.

2.2 Internal communication aspects and levels

The internal (or inter-company) communication ensures the specific functions within the company. Historically, the objectives and forms of internal communication within a company have slightly changed in accordance with its purpose. However, before evaluating its objectives, it is firstly necessary to determine the main aspects of it.

The first aspect of the internal communication is its channel. The channel can possess two natures – formal and informal. Formal channel of internal communication is commonly controlled by employees with higher positions (managers, teamleaders, etc.) and *"ensures that the information flows orderly, in a timely and accurate manner"* (Seghal, 2006, p. 25). The informal channel for communication is commonly oral. This type of internal organizational communication relates to the interpersonal and small group communication and is also called grapevine phenomenon, as it is predominantly provided among the group of employee on the same or very similar position. Grapevine communication can be conducted in a structure of chains, predominantly as follows: (Seghal, 2006, p. 29)

- single-strain chain – the information flows from one person to another in a strain line (from A to B, from B to C, etc.),
- gossip chain –the information is transmitted from one person to a larger amount of other persons, the main characteristic is that the information does not possess a job-related nature,
- probability chain – occurs when the information does not really concern the communicating persons and they are just randomly exchanging not job-related news,

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- cluster chain – the information flows in clusters – one person gives the information to selected group of other persons and one person from this group give the information to another selected group of persons.

Besides the information (communication) channel aspect, there is another important aspect that describes the way the internal communication is provided – the direction. The main flow is predominantly provided vertically or horizontally. The basic schema of the internal communication is given on Figure 1.
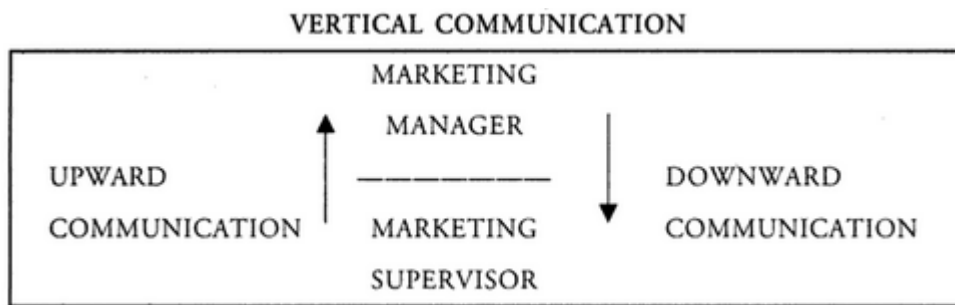

Figure 1 Basic schema of internal communication within a company (Seghal, 2006, p. 32)

The direction of internal communication can be provided in following dimensions: (Seghal, 2006, p. 32-37)

- **downward** – is communication or information flowing from top to bottom of the hierarchical structure of the organization. This type of communication flow arose historically from the opinion that *"the people operating at higher levels have the authority to communicate to people at lower levels"* (Seghal, 2006, p. 32). The downward communication within the company commonly possess a verbal form, the written flow is usually ensured by instructions, memoranda, letters, handbooks, policy statements, procedures and standards in paper or electronic form, etc.; the oral flow is represented by instructions, speeches, meetings, phonecalls, loudspeaker messages, etc. The issue of solely downward communication is the time-consuming nature as it can cross many levels depending on the hierarchical structure of the company. The disadvantage of downward communication is that it is *"likely to be filtered, modified or distorted at any level since managers decide what should be passed down to their employees"* (Seghal, 2006, p. 33),

- **upward** – is communication provided from the bottom to the top of the hierarchical structure of the company, i.e. from the employees to the managers. *"the main function of upward communication is to supply*

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information to the upper levels about what is happening in the lower levels" (Seghal, 2006, p. 34). The disadvantage of upward communication is the actual cropping of the whole information, as the persons at higher position do not like to hear and put further the unsuitable information,

- **lateral or horizontal –** this direction is followed, when the communication occurs among subordinate employees who are led by the same person or working at the same level. The horizontal communication is required especially among the functioning managers and *"mostly takes place during committee meetings or conferences where all members of the group, (mostly peers) interact"* (Seghal, 2006, p. 35),

- **diagonal or crosswise –** this type of internal communication *"includes flow of information among persons at a different levels who have no direct reporting relationships"* (Seghal, 2006, p. 35). The example of diagonal communication is given in following Figure 2. The diagonal communication is used to *"speed up the information flow, improve understanding, and co-ordinate for the achievement of organizational objectives"* (Seghal, 2006, p. 35)

DIAGONAL COMMUNICATION

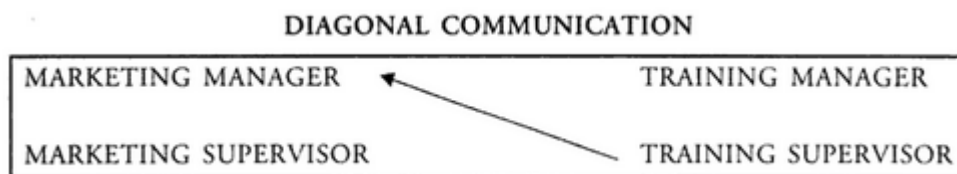| MARKETING MANAGER	TRAINING MANAGER
MARKETING SUPERVISOR	TRAINING SUPERVISOR

-

Figure 2 The example of diagonal communication within the company (Seghal, 2006, p. 35)

As the vertical kind of internal communication, the diagonal communication can be provided through oral or written form. While oral form includes informal meetings, lunch conversation, formal conferences, project organization meetings, advisory authority interactions, etc.; written form includes company newspaper, bulletin boards and in-house journal or communique. To prevent the inappropriate results of diagonal communication, these aspects have to be precluded: (Seghal, 2006, p. 36)

- building inappropriate crosswise relationships that would lead to unwanted cooperation,

- subordinates making commitments to other authorities than their own.

The wanted advantage of the diagonal communication can be seen in fact that subordinates can keep their superiors informed about the activities outside their department.

In previous types of communication directions, only the in-house communication has been discussed. As a company is a living organism that has two cooperate with other subjects (suppliers, subcontractors, customers), the important part of internal communication comprise the communication provided from the inside into outside area of the company, i.e. the internal and external communication. At this point, the further two directions are related to the external communication and they are: (Seghal, 2006, p. 36-37)

- **inward** – the communication received by the company from outside sources, especially agencies, such as other organizations, government, suppliers, customers, competitors, shareholders or media, and can be provided via letters, e-mails, offers, orders, requests, suggestions, complaints, etc.,

- **outward** – is a type of communication kept with the outside entities by the company initiative and includes advertisements, media interaction, public relations, negotiations, mails, tenders, notices, etc.

2.3   Objectives of internal communication

As other activities provided to reach the purpose and goals of the company, the internal communication follows the objectives that have to be met in order to ensure the fluent operation of the company. The objective can be defined as *"objectively and subjectively future desired state or outcome of an organization's activities, possible and expected to be achieved at a time or over a period of time within the time frame of a long-term or short-term action plan"* (Krzyžanowski in Rogala and Bialowas, 2016, p. 66). The set of objectives of internal communication should fulfil following four basic functions: (Rogala and Bialowas, 2016, p. 66)

- constitution *"of guidelines for the activities of an organization's members since they help them understand where the company is going and how the realization of specific objectives contributes to its progress"* (Rogala and Bialowas, 2016, p. 66),

- the support enabling and facilitating the planning and coordination of the business activities,

- the directing of the *"attention of lower-level employees to the implementation of the company's principal objective"* (Rogala and Bialowas, 2016, p. 66),

- firming the basis for formulating and wide-spreading the standards and measurement tools for evaluating and maintaining or increasing the operation efficiency.

To achieve the goals of the company, the internal communication should support all the actions and its structure should be well-distributed. The definition of specific internal communication objectives can be considered a reflection of the company needs and therefore, they can be related to various areas in terms of *"business strategy (e.g. supporting the implementation of corporate strategy or building commitment); in terms of processes (informing, educating employees); and/or in term of activities (integrating, creating an open information flow)"* (Rogala and Bialowas, 2016, p. 66). However, the objectives of the internal communication in a company (organization) can be divided into two groups – related to informing and related to communicating. (Rogala and Bialowas, 2016, p. 67)

The theorists in organizational communication are persuaded that its *"main aim is to convey to the personnel any information that is necessary for both the smooth functioning of the organization and the proper fulfilment of the employees' duties"* (Rogala and Bialowas, 2016, p. 67). But it should also help the employee to gain the sense of his responsibilities and his place in the company. Specific objectives of internal communication can be therefore defined as follows: (Rogala and Bialowas, 2016, p. 67)

- *"developing the so-called spirit of an organization,*
- *motivating workers,*
- *developing organizational culture and values,*
- *promoting cooperation,*
- *creating a positive image of a company among the employees,*
- *increasing employee integration."*

On the other hand, the approach of theorist is mainly related to the study of the internal communication phenomenon from the outside. The resulted set of objectives is therefore more focused on the impact on employees from the behavioural point of view

that actually influences the functioning and operation of the company. Communication practitioners and strategists state that the main specific objectives of the internal communication are as follows: (Rogala and Bialowas, 2016, p. 68)

- *"explaining the mission and goals of a company,*
- *building organizational identity and culture,*
- *addressing the information needs of employees,*
- *developing employees' sensitivity to company's goals."*

Aside from the actual purpose, the objectives of internal communication can be either cognitive or pragmatic. *"The cognitive goal is considered to be the identical understanding of the message by the sender and the recipient"* (Rogala and Bialowas, 2016, p. 71), the pragmatic goal is related to the requirement of result stated in the message. Therefore, the specific internal communication objectives should include following sub-objectives: (Rogala and Bialowas, 2016, p. 72)

- *"providing employees with the up-to-date information necessary for their proper functioning in the organization,*
- *preparing employees for upcoming changes,*
- *uniting employees around the missions,*
- *creating positive atmosphere in the workplace,*
- *building a positive image about the company among the employees,*
- *motivating the employees to work for the benefit of the company".*

2.4   Internal communication strategy

Modern internal communication strategies are approaching three basic pillars of the company goals. These pillars can be characterized as: (Rogala and Bialowas, 2016, p. 71)

- *"information, education and development;*
- *motivation through enriching the culture of an organization and creating bonds between its members;*
- *offering the possibility of obtaining and transmitting information necessary for achieving objectives."*

The communication strategy should comply with the company strategy in many ways. The creation of communication strategy can be considered a process consisting of

stating a goal of internal communication, choosing the adequate tools and measuring their impact which leads to its modifications that best suit the needs and requirements of the company. The bearers of internal communication strategy are commonly the managers who decide how the communication will be provided, which tools will be applied and inform and communicate on this basis with the employees. Nowadays, the companies all over the world utilize three specific approaches to internal communication strategy that ca be defined as follows: (Wright, 2009, p. 23)

- information openness,

- the supportive climate,

- performance-based communication.

The strategy of information openness is an approach to internal communication strategy that is based on the demystification and clarification of information around the organization to gain as transparent development of the organization to all of its members as possible. This kind of strategy allows all the employees to participate ad receive all the information about the company, its functions and operation. However, as the amount of information can be very big, there is a need of creating the systematic structure to the communication that will help the employees to better orient in the information and their importance.

The strategy of supportive climate focuses on the micro-climates of the company which should be harmonized and considered when selecting the information that should be communicated. The application of this strategy is predominantly targeted on the communication process and involves these aspects: (Wright, 2009, p. 24)

- ensuring the message that has been sent is received,

- gain a feedback from the message receivers,

- ensuring the audience has been influenced by the message and the message does influence the specific target audience,

- making the target audience exhibit desired kind of behaviour in connection to the message,

- making the target audience to take the actions desired by the message.

The performance-based communication strategy is targeted on the effectivity of the operation. At this point, the main requirements of this approach to internal communication strategy is to *go out into the business and find areas in the operation*

that will benefit from better communication; and, having identified these areas, to introduce better communication practises alongside these particular elements of the business" (Wright, 2009, p. 25). The performance-based strategy of internal communication focuses on evaluation of the communication tools, channels and forms that are mostly effective in the respected area of the company operation and provide the best performance of the department.

3   Digital tools for organizational communication

With the development of modern information and communication technologies, the shape and structure of the internal organizational communication has significantly changed. The connection of entities and persons that is provided via new communication tools have made the message receiving and feedback giving quicker and more systematic and, moreover, enables to store the information on a higher level of availability.

The general tools or systems utilized for the purpose of internal organizational communication can be divided into two groups which comply with the historical development of informative media used. These groups comprise the traditional tools and the modern digital tools. In this chapter, the tools that are commonly used for the purpose of internal organizational communication are defined and described in order to assess their main advantages and disadvantages.

3.1   Traditional tools of organizational communication

Among the traditional tools for organizational communication, the face-to-face oral and paper-written tools are dominating. The variety of information sources (mediums) for the employees in the area of traditional communication tools, the main of them are as follows: (Wright, 2009, p. 33-34)

- newsletters – is the typical representative of the reading-on-the-way kind of medium that servers well for gaining the general information needed for every employee in the company. The advantage of the newsletter is the simplicity of its distribution, but, as the informative content has to be limited and well-structured to communicate a clear message, there is a high demand on its design and execution. The newsletter can be transformed to the digital form, but there can be achieved the lower impact of the information spreading,

- noticeboards – are the boards with various information that are located in the easy-to-access areas with high potential of the around-going people. The maintaining and updating of the noticeboards is however very time-consuming activity, therefore, this kind of information tool is no longer very popular and is continuously pushed away by the digitalized alternative (especially screens),

- team meetings - are the strongest and most influencing tools among the group of traditional information tools. Meetings are an essential part of organizational communication which enables employees to gain important information. Given the time employees spent in meetings it is necessary to ensure that internal meetings are held efficiently. Several types of meetings take place in the business organizations. The most common are the following: (meetingsift.com, 2016)

- status update meetings – are one of the most common meeting types. This category includes regular team and project meetings, where the primary goal is to align the team via updates on progress, challenges, and next steps,

- information sharing meetings – the primary goal of these meeting is for the speakers to share information with the attendees. This could be information about things such as upcoming changes or in depth knowledge of a domain. Visual communication tools, for instance slides and videos, are powerful tools for making the shared information more memorable,

- decision making meetings – the vast majority of business decisions are made by groups in meetings. While small decisions are made in all kinds of meetings, the more important decisions often get their own dedicated meetings. There are different types of group decision making processes, and care should be taken to choose a process that best matches the situation. A decision making process can include group processes such as information gathering and sharing, brainstorming solutions, evaluating options, ranking preferences, and voting,

- problem solving meetings – are probably the most complex and varied type of meetings. Whether the meeting is addressing an identified problem, or it is focusing on creating strategies and plans to navigate the future, there is a rich arsenal of group processes that can be used. Scopes and priorities need to be defined, opportunities and threats need to be identified, and possible solutions should be brainstormed, evaluated, and agreed upon,

- innovation meetings – by brainstorming, associating, and sharing ideas in a broad scope, employees can trigger new ideas. Meeting participants can use various techniques and processes to reduce the diverse pool of ideas to a more focused short list. Through ranking, evaluations, and decision making the most suitable idea, or ideas, are identified, and recommendations and tasks can be assigned based on this.

- team building meetings – all meetings contribute to team building, strengthening relationships and corporate culture. However, team building activities should be the main focus for such meeting. This category include meetings like all-hands meetings, kick-off meetings, team building outings, and corporate events. Have participants feel like essential parts of their unit, team, department, branch, and company has all kinds of positive impact on their engagement, performance, and satisfaction.

- town hall meetings – a town hall meeting can be used to give information or to get information. You can schedule and conduct a meeting with a specific purpose in mind. For example, a meeting can be used to announce a new benefit, or describe a new policy, or clarify an issue of concern. The objective of town hall meetings is to give as many people as possible an opportunity to speak, then the attendees can be broken down into smaller discussion groups. Each smaller group, in that case, appoints someone to summarize discussion of their group. Many companies also have such meetings.

Meetings are not only important in managerial downward communication. Workplace meetings are an important element of business management as well, because they enable workers to communicate and share information with each other, solve problems or resolve disputes, improve performance, build teamwork and move projects forward. Workplace meetings can be formal or informal, and the number of participants can range from two to several hundred, depending on the size of a company. Meetings should contribute to productivity; therefore it is crucial that meetings are efficient: (metingshift.com, 2016)

- meetings should be planned ahead. When convening a meeting, the facilitator should be well aware of what the meeting should bring, what is the goal. Is it to inform the employees or to make a decision? The overall objective should be formulated into a sentence. This way attendees can easily assume the meeting met its purpose.

- there are rules for timing a meeting. It is common sense meetings should not take place first thing in the morning as well as right after lunch. Also a meeting should not take longer than 60–90 minutes, and in case it does, breaks are necessary. For shorter meetings it is best to choose a meeting room close to the office, so participants can go back to their work. In case of all-day meetings it is optional to choose an off-site place to ensure participants are not called-off.

- engagement of participants is critical. A meeting should never be a plain monologue. By actively engaging the participants – asking questions, comments or points of view, employees will be able to stay focused. Also, if participants are proactively engaged, there is a bigger chance they will stay focus, because they will anticipate the necessary engagement.

- distribution of roles is necessary. Someone always has to lead the meeting. However, the same person does not necessarily have to take the minutes of the meeting. Meeting minutes are the written or recorded documentation that is used to inform attendees and non-attendees about what was discussed and what happened during a meeting. The meeting minutes are generally taken or recorded during the meeting so that participants have a record of what happened during the meeting. (Heathfield, 2016) Therefore it is important to appoint a facilitator, who will take the minutes and then distribute to other participants. The facilitator could also be the person who will make sure the meeting is running according to time.

- live events – can be considered partially as the team-building activities, however, live events can also comprise out of the company events that are related to the work or educative activities that the employees provide in

smaller groups. *"Live events have the advantage of getting people together in one place and one time to focus on a particular series of messages"* (Wright, 2009, p. 34).

Besides the traditional oral and written information distribution and communication systems, there are some younger traditional media relating to the area of technological development. This fact is actually caused by the rapid spread of the web-based information technologies and networks that are implemented into company's structure. From this point of view, the traditional technology-based information and communication systems (media) are: (Wright, 2009, p. 35-38)

- videos – is a passive communication media that is utilized by managers to spread the required information in the emotional context as needed. The usefulness of video can be further developed by including many employees into broadcasting their own videos, however, this type of communication is nowadays highly connected with the newly developing tools that enable multimedia content sharing,

- plasma displays – as mentioned previous, the plasma displays can be considered as the better alternative for the noticeboard that does not require such maintaining demands. The plasma displays are versatile and effective in the broadcasting of messages as they can include the infinite loop of information sequences into the broadcast and update the information broadcast on the regular basis,

- telephone conferencing – is a communication tool largely utilized in the companies characterized by the regional (geographical) spread of the impact. Although telephone conferencing cuts out all the visual clues (the great part of non-verbal communication), the advantages of in-time meeting with colleagues far abroad enabling to discuss the current issues are very appreciable,

- video conferencing – brings the visual dimension to the across-the-world conversation. The development of video conferencing is heading to be sub-merged to web-conferencing, which is related to new kinds of internal organizational communication listed under the digital tools,

- phone – is the basic tool for internal and also external organizational communication, as it provides the connection between two (or more) persons in-time and creates the opportunity to discuss respected problem immediately. However, the way phone calls among the employees and with the clients or suppliers has changed, as it is pushed away by e-mail and i-messaging. The phone calls made for the organizational communication purpose are shorter and supplemented by other information richer tools,

- e-mail – is the communication tool that should be listed under digital tools of communication, however, as it is the basic pc-provided communication vehicle, it became the traditional one over time. It is also important to create the rules for making the email conversation, as it has the written form and can be archived in order to present the evidence of statements,

- texting – is provided via text messages on cell phones. *"Texting has become the default medium for sharing less significant news such as: "I'm running late for the meeting". However texting remains a less satisfactory medium for communicating more complex or emotional issues"* (Wright, 2009, p. 37),

- radio broadcasting – can be used as a communication tool in retail stores and factories to broadcast a consistent message to the employees especially via recorded interviews or announcements,

- business television – is very cost demanding medium. This type of internal organizational communication vehicle can be described as push medium, i.e. the message or announcement is delivered to the audience despite the actual need for receiving. *"Business TV succeeds best in an environment where the audience can interact with the material and messages, and where program can be targeted to the specific audiences"* (Wright, 2009, p. 37),

- phone broadcast – is provided via pre-recorded features or interviews that are sent down the line to the target employees, who are able to call the information line and get the message at work or from home. This type of medium is constantly pushed out by intranet sound files and podcasting.

3.2 New channels and tools of organizational communication

The new channels and tools for organizational communication are developing with the digital information and communication technologies. The advantages of these tools and channels are appreciated especially in companies with larger geographical distribution of the localities and requirement for the international cooperation of the divisions. The first specific tools intended to communicate the messages needed for the employees (staff), clients and suppliers, are the web-based technologies. Among this group, following tools can be distinguished: (Wright, 2009, p. 38-42)

- intranet sites – this type of medium allows all the employees to update, i.e. write, edit or monitor, the content of communicated messages, and share and store many important information about the company operations. *"An effective intranet is one that allows staff to do their job as quickly as possible – whether it's filling their expenses, dealing with a supplier or managing a project online"* (Wright, 2009, p. 38),

- web-streaming – uses commonly commercially available platforms that allow to share audio-visual content (such as Youtube), which usually enable to protect the content by a password. However, the public access to these platform can be risky in the fact that everyone can share or see the message intended only for the employees. Another risk of web-streaming can be seen in the possibilities of next generation of mobile phones, the dissemination of video files can happen anywhere and anytime in the organization. That means that *"anything, from a senior management meeting to a complaining customer, can be captured and sent anywhere"* (Wright, 2009, p. 39) inside or outside the organization. Therefore, a strict policy in this issue has to be adopted,

- web-log – or short blog – written texts that can be globally shared. The advantage of blogs is their interactivity, the bloggers *"invite others to respond and comment on what they have just read. It's like a cross between an email and a webpage, a medium for one person to talk to many, but with the many having the opportunity to answer back"* (Wright, 2009, p. 39). Blogs can be utilized also as a tool to communicate and commercialize the product and get it closer to the customer. That is the reason, why they can present a very important part of a communication mix,

- wikis – this is web-based tool that allows the user to add content which can be edited by others. *"The term "wikis" also refers to the collaborative software used to create such a website. A defining characteristic of a wiki technology is the ease with which the pages can be created and updated"* (Wright, 2009, p. 40). In terms of organizational communication, the main purpose of wikis is to *"capture knowledge about products, services and customers within an organization"* (Wright, 2009, p. 41),

- RSS – or Really Simple Syndication – are systems enabling the possibility of including other people's content into the intranet of organization, such as headlines or stock prices. Moreover, the RSS allows the user to choose the displayed content that is automatically updated in the intranet,

- Podcasts – are *"a method of publishing audio broadcasts via the Internet, allowing users to subscribe to a feed of new files"* (Wright, 2009, p. 41). For the purpose of internal organization communication, podcasting enables the employees (staff and also managers) to create self-published broadcast that can be played any time,

- I-messaging – or instant messaging – requires to create an account on the platform of instant messaging service. The conversation is provided in real time and can include more than two persons. *"Most services offer a "presence awareness" feature, indicating whether the people on one's list of contacts are currently online and available to chat"* (Wright, 2009, p. 41). The advantages of instant messaging can be seen in the possibility to see the topic and results of conversation among the employees and search for the information throughout the record not to have to repeat it in case of uncertainty. Moreover, such conversation is silent altogether, so it does not distract the other employees in their tasks as the phone calls do,

- VOIP – or Voice-over Internet Protocol – is the tool for providing phone calls via digital line (such as Skype). The advantage of VOIP services is predominantly the price for the call. In the past, such phone calls required the specific equipment and was able to be provided only via an application in the PC or laptop, nowadays, the applications are available for smart phones as well. The VOIP services commonly include the I-messaging option,

- Web meetings – are provided via various platforms and include combination of more audio-visual tools. The web meeting can include the in-time phone calls, video calls or writing messages supplemented with the interactive or non-interactive presentation or the access to one shared desktop. The web meetings are commonly supported by a collaborative software which offer a total management and conduct of meetings over the Internet. Web meetings or Webinars are commonly featuring following two types: (Wright, 2009, p. 42)

  - presentation style – one-to-many type,

  - agenda driven style – many-to-many type.

  "Webinars are a time-efficient way of disseminating detailed, instructional messages to colleagues in remote sites without them having to leave their desks. All that is required is that they log on and listen to (or watch) a subject expert present on a particular issue" (Wright, 2009, p. 42),

- ERP system – or Enterprise Resource Planning – are systems intended predominantly for tasking, but possess commonly the communicative feature that provides and stores information accessible by the employees. The access to the information can be suitably limited according to the requirements of the management.

The digital web-based communication tools are continuously implemented to the standard traditional communication systems of many companies – small or large – as they increase the efficiency of the information flow and simplify the connection among the employees on the work or private basis. The spread of this type of communication can be designated especially to their advantages related predominantly to the possibility to connect persons on long distances in real time without leaving their locations and the accessibility to the information after the end of conversation or despite the current actions of the receiver.

4 New challenges in internal communications

The challenges for the internal communication within an organization are related to the fact that each employee should be able to obtain just the right amount and type of information he needs to be effectively working. Therefore, to create an appropriate internal communication matrix that will be suitable for each employee. The internal communication matrix is dependent on the goals the company intends to achieve, so it should comply the global business strategy of the company. In following subchapters, the new challenges of internal communication are described that are in accordance with the up-to-date studies of organizational communication. They can be considered the key aspects of the contemporary and effective internal organizational communication to overcome.

4.1 Multichannel communication

Multichannel communication is one of the most important factors in implementing a relevant internal communication strategy. Nowadays, the multichannel communication is used for the internal and for the external communication either. The internal communication can be provided using various tools and is based on several aspects that have to be considered when selecting them and creating the matrix of the communication system and strategy.

First of these aspects is the identification of audience that will receive the respected messages. This fact is caused by the different preferences of specific audiences (employees with various hierarchical position in the company) arising from their actual tasks and methods to fulfil them. For example, there are many differences between the preferences of office workers that utilize various communication devices to conduct their work and the factory workers working with the machines. For each target group in the company a specific basic communication channel should be assigned.

The multichannel approach, however, offers the possibility of addressing the employees on more levels. In these terms, the multichannel communication can be seen as a great approach which has to be implemented on the basis of analyses. The analysis is commonly provided via a survey that should result in a list of the most preferences

channels by each group of the employees, but also be supported by the analysis of environment.

4.2 Lack of interest

The main purpose of the internal communication within the company is to get all the employees as informed as they need to be. The lack of information about the goals, tasks and supporting technologies can result in the decreasing in the effectivity and productivity of the company which can be damaging. Therefore, the engagement of the employees in the company's functioning requires specific focus.

New tools utilized for the purpose of internal communication commonly possess a verbal form but are not provided via face-to-face communication. The increase of employees' interest in the utilization of internal communication and gaining the specific information can be reached in various ways. The most important factor is their motivation to participate on the internal communication. This can be reached by series of actions that are predominantly conducted in a form of face-to-face meetings.

4.3 Acceleration of communication flow

The acceleration of the communication flow within the company can be achieved by the filtration of the information. As mentioned in the previous chapters, there are various types of information designated to only some employees in the hierarchical structure of a company. Therefore, the internal communication matrix should be functional in all of the directions and for each of these direction, a proper tool should be selected. The selection of the tools should be provided on the basis of analysis focused on the speed of the information getting from the owner to the receiver. For this purpose, the digital and online tools are appropriate, as they enable to connect people in real time, but also to store the information and alarm the receiver as soon as possible.

4.4 Social media

The spread of online tools and social media in the private sphere has had an impact on their utilization for the business purposes. The advantages for the external communication with the customers and suppliers are seen especially in the possibilities of viral marketing and tracking and targeting the specific groups of followers.

In the terms of internal communication, the social media provide especially the possibility of bringing persons together on an informal level. The employees connected via social media can discuss out-of-the-work topics that support the building of a work team. The advantages of social media can be seen in following aspects: (Lee, 2013)

- social networking sites help employees remain focused on and aligned with corporate objectives,
- employees can share resources and information easily and effectively and commonly from various places,
- these communication tools flatten the corporate hierarchy, and moreover, can empower individual employees at all levels and provide a direct path to decision-makers and executors,
- internal social networking encourages people to connect and communicate with each other, cross pollinate ideas and thereby to develop valuable insights,
- the ability to communicate issues, insights and solutions simplifies generating new ideas,
- the employers can more easily and effectively search for and consolidate employee skill-sets to match specific project requirements.

However, it is quite risky as frequent use of social platforms might lead to the reduction of employees' productivity. The disadvantages of social media utilization can be described as follows: (Lee, 2013)

- social media can open up the possibility for hackers to commit fraud and launch spam and/or virus attacks,
- the risk of people to result in data and identity theft can be increased,
- negative comments from employees about the company or potential legal consequences can occur if the employees use these sites to view objectionable or offensive material,
- potential result in lost productivity, especially if employees are busy updating profiles, etc.

The commonly utilized social media can not only provide the improvement to the communication among the employees, but also create the environment for highlighting the company's profile among the potential customers or in the hiring process. These are

the most typical social media utilized for the purposes of internal communication: (Taurasi, 2015)

- Facebook – which is a suitable tool especially for the employees in HR division. Not only specific information can be provided via this tool in bulk to all employees (such as notices about meetings, teambuilding or special events), but also can be used for gaining more information about current or future employees. Moreover, Facebook offers the opportunity to exchange messages individually to the topic or address the target group of employees,

- Yammer – is a specific tool for enterprise chat that is usually utilized „*as an internal communications module that allows the sharing of information socially through anything from a company wide board to a localized team board or even for individualized project groups*" (Taurasi, 2015). The service includes an online forum and offers an application for mobile devices, so it enables the advantageous real-time communication among the employees,

- Twitter – provides the opportunity to share short messages to wide group of people (followers) publicly or privately. *"Big brands, like Google and Starbucks, use Twitter to engage and inspire employees, and provide a glimpse of what it's like to work at these companies. Other employers, like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, through its @MITWorkLife handle, promotes work-life content and professional development events and more on Twitter"* (Taurasi, 2015),

- LinkedIn – is a tool used especially for the hiring process. However, the businesses can create own internal communication system on the LinkedIn platform *"allowing them to manage the group for employees, where they can share internal event information and announcements, as well as building employee pride, managing employee issues and more"* (Taurasi, 2015).

The four mentioned social media services are predominantly targeted on the one-to-one or one-to-many communication provided especially in the verbal form of short messages sent to individuals or shared with others. The longer messages or other shared content (especially audio-visual) can be spread by following commonly utilized tools: (Taurasi, 2015)

- Company blogs – are less interactive than the communication social media platforms and intended to provide complex information about a topic or issue that commonly concerns more employees (it is a one-to-many tool). *"HR can post updates on information regarding benefits is a very useful tool to get the word out. By using the blog as an internal mechanism, employees can gain access to and encourage communication, as well. Besides posting about the latest benefits or tools available to employees, it's also a great tool to conduct Q&A sessions with employees, and share employee surveys, as well as survey results"* (Taurasi, 2015),

- Remote access platforms – like Periscope or Meerkat, are platforms used for web-based training of the employees in various areas. *"With both platforms, employees can watch video live as it's happening, just make sure you select the option to create private broadcasts. Viewing saved videos later isn't so easy as that wasn't built into the original plan for both platforms"* (Taurasi, 2015),

- Youtube – can be used to save the broadcasts utilized within the remote access platforms for further use in the future. The videos can be archived on the private channel of the platform, where they can be supplemented with another interesting videos from other vendors. Using the public channel can be commercially advantageous for the company as well, as it can provide the opportunity for the outsiders to build a good name for the company.

5   Evaluating effectiveness

The implementation of effective internal communication is a continuous process which is based on the cycle of analysis, selecting proper tools, integrating them into the company's structure and evaluating their impact on the business functioning and results. The measurement of the impact of internal communication system is provided using the stated KPI (key performance indicator) factors which comply with the business strategy of the company. In following subchapters, the aspects of internal communication system performance evaluation are discussed.

5.1   Measuring internal communications

Effective internal communication has one key purpose – *"to align people in the organization in order to deliver the organization's strategy"* (Ruck, 2015, p. 96). The assessment of effectiveness of the internal communication strategy should therefore be related to more areas of the company's focus and provided at several levels in accordance to defined goals of the communication.

The measurement of internal communication system impact utilizes the research methods that are based on the standard procedures related to the management strategy changes impact assessment. It is important to know that the effective internal communication includes three specific elements, i.e.: (Quirke, 2008, p. 332)

- the internal communication has to be based on the business objectives,
- the internal communication has to be based on clear set of expectations about what will change with the new system of communication,
- the internal communication has to be focused on the conversion of information into understanding and then into actions.

The evaluation of the impact of changes made to internal communication system should comprise following features: (Quirke, 2008, p. 332)

- the impact should be assessed on at a range of communication levels,
- the measurement should be provided from the start to the finish point of communication,
- the measurement should focus on outcomes – changes in attitudes and behaviour,

- the measurement should be also focused on drivers – the aspects and tools contributing to successful change,
- the measurement should be linked to accountability and measurement systems,
- the research should measure success of changes provided and link to the bottom lines,
- the evaluation should be based on clear set of communication standards.

The evaluation of communication system performance needs, however, more complex approach than a basic survey among the employees that usually results in the report of poor level. This fact is caused by the tendency of the employees to express their unsatisfaction, therefore, the measurement should focus more on the needs of the company than the employees. For these purposes are commonly defined the communication standards that are set by the senior managers.

5.2 KPI's (Key performance indicators)

The measurement of the internal communication system impact is provided by stating and evaluating the KPI (key performance indicator) and recommended to be provided in three areas. These areas are as follows: (Mazour, 2015)
- employees' awareness,
- changes in behaviour,
- business impact.

Employees' awareness is the simplest area to be measured as it covers predominantly the research of information spread among the employees. The first step in this focus is to measure the actual participation of the employees on the multichannel communication, e.g. the subscription to the company's blog, the activity on the platforms for sharing, etc.

The second KPI is the employees' interest in using communication channels. For this purpose, some metrics can be utilized, such as the percentage of e-mails opened, the number of click-throughs, content consumption metrics or number of blog visits. Another KPI is related to this factors that can be evaluated within the internal communication system impact on the company's functioning is the engagement of employees in the communication. The indicators for engagement can be than the total number of subscription of the employees to the communication tool, especially when it

includes the social media element. In that case, the created connections among the employees can be also measured.

The basic instrument for the employees' awareness comprising all three KPIs research is the survey. Most intranet and communication tools provide the digital metrics automatically, but the separate survey can be conducted on regular basis as well, to be used for statistical assessment.

The second area intended for the internal communication system impact measurement is the employees' behaviour changes area. In this case, the methodology of assessment is predominantly based on the comparison of respected goals of the system implementation before and after it. For example, if there is an invitation to take an action included in the communicated content, the measurement can be provided in terms of the amount of employees provide this action (for example subscribing to receiving a newsletter).

The third area of the internal communication system implementation KPIs measurement is focused on the impact on the business. This area is mostly challenging, as the KPIs usually relate to the actions that are connected with the profit of the company. In the terms of evaluating the impact in this area, the KPIs have to comply with the business goals of the company, therefore, it is needed to translate the target of the communication to the company structure. For example, when there is a new tool for communicating the labour safety, the KPI will compare some of the aspect of this area (accidents, damage to the property, etc.). Following aspects are the most common in the evaluation of the impact of internal communication system changes to the company business: (Mazour, 2015)

- retention rate evolution – *"it is generally accepted that **employee engagement increases the employee retention rate**. Even though the retention rate is an indicator owned and measured by human resources, internal communications can claim a portion of the credit for any positive evolution (or a portion of the blame)"* (Mazour, 2015). The focus in this case is targeted to job satisfaction of the employees,

- employee performance and productivity – is the most commonly used KPI. This can be related especially to the knowledge management implemented to the communication system. Therefore, the KPI can be focused on measuring the

time employees actually spend on searching for information. With a couple of well-chosen examples, a percentage of the overall **employee productivity** gain can be estimated and claimed to justify a budget for a new communications system,

- customer satisfaction and revenue evolution – if a salesperson in the company can find relevant information more quickly, he or she will be more efficient in selling. If a customer service person finds helpful information internally, he or she can satisfy customer requests more quickly and with a higher quality of response. *"If employees at all levels in the organization, but in particular customer-facing people, understand the company's global goals and messages, they will act according to those goals. As in the previous example, the best way to claim credit for a portion of the growth of the company's revenues is by finding precise examples where efficient communications helped customer-facing people do their jobs better.* (Mazour, 2015) The KPIs related to this area can therefore arise from the comparison of time-consumption in information seeking or rate of successfully conducted sales.

II. PRACTICAL PART

6 Case study overview

The case study of the issue of implementation of internal communication tools has been conducted in the global company Siemens AG. The research targeted on specific tool that has been integrated into overall communication system of the company. A new digital tool – a mobile application – was intended to be implemented into location of hard-to-reach group – so called blue collars (the workers in the bottom level of the communication system) in the pilot factory.

The specific goals of the implementation were as follows: (Siemens internal documentation)

- to bridge the digital divide: equal-opportunity information for office employees and factory workers,
- to reach employees in real time: Quick communication of relevant news to factories worldwide,
- to communicate local factory/location news to factory workers more effectively and attractively,
- to deliver news via smartphone, internet, intranet, monitors, and bulletin boards.

7 Analysis of the current state

The Czech branch of Siemens has been continuously focusing on the improvement of the internal communication within the globally operating company. As the locations of specific divisions are very distanced, there has to be created a good communication strategy that would agglutinate the employees and persuaded them that they are a part of the global team. In The Czech Republic, there are seven plants distributed around the country. To this date, the Czech branch has 9814 employees of which a total number of 5087 are blue collars.

7.1   The internal communication strategies in the company

Siemens conducts the measurement of the internal communication tools impact on the company development on annual basis. In order to reach the maximal effectiveness, the company have set the goals for communication approaches and analysed the running state of the internal communication. The overall goals of the internal communication in the company are as follows: (Siemens internal documentation)

- fluent receiving of the information in the horizontal dimension – top-bottom,
- increasing the loyalty and engagement of the employees and simultaneously increasing their active approach to the company's actions,
- connecting the divisions and sectors of the company using proper tools of communication,
- achieving the interest of employees to communicate with each other,
- reducing the costs.

The target groups of the developing communication strategy were regular employees, middle and top management and former employees including the parents on maternity leaves and the retired employees. The basic principles of the communications strategy continuously implemented in the company are as follows:

- an open communication – that should be trustworthy, true and fair,
- timely informing – the information should be received in time it is needed,
- the responsibility of communicating problem lies on the person responsible for the project – the responsible person is required to implement the issue in the project to the communication tool as it arises,
- the topics communicated continuously are implemented via responsible person that is required to implement them regularly into the communication tool (e-mail newsletter, intranet, etc.),
- one-time topics are communicated via internal campaigns,
- the responsibility for utilization of the communication tools lies on the communication department,
- the communication for the company is provided by communication department, HR and CEO's – the internal communication is always personal,

- the internal communication is connected to other activities and the interests of employees,
- the internal communication is connected to other located divisions,
- measurability – the effectivity of communication has to be measured via feedbacks and regularly evaluated.

The specific tools for communication within the internal communication system of the company are distributed according to the communicating persons and their hierarchy. Moreover, the company sees the increase of employees' engagement in the communication and information transfer, as well as the building of the strong team, in the activities that are conducted within and outside the workplace. The actual digital tools used for communication within the company are graphically displayed on the Figure 3.
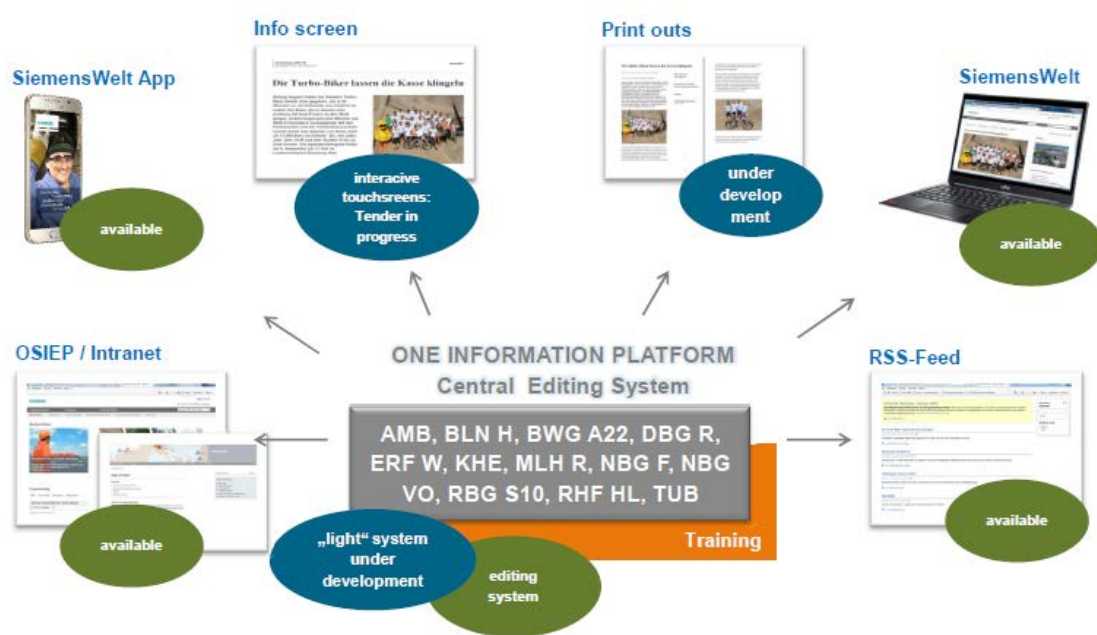

Figure 3 The digital tools utilized for the internal communication in selected company (Siemens internal documentation)

7.2   The implementation of a new tool for target employees group

The separated implementation of a new digital tool for the target employee group – the blue collars – was intended to increase their awareness of the company actions. In previous years, a survey among the workers in the factory included into the group of blue collars has been provided in order to evaluate their influencing by the communication tools utilized within the company.

From this survey which has been attended by the predominant part of the blue collar workers in all Siemens factories around the world, following results has been gained: (Siemens internal documentation)

- the main utilized communication tool among the blue collars to gain the information about the company's actions are posters,
- in Czech Republic, the main utilized tools are monitors, posters and wall newspapers,
- the most commonly digital tools utilized in the factory are monitors, free accessible desktops and kiosk systems.

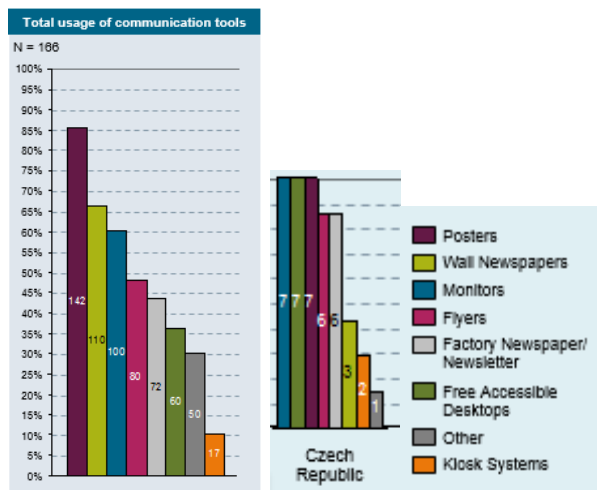The actual utilization of the communication tools of the company among the blue collars are given in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Utilization of communication tools (Siemens internal documentation)

The second key result of the survey has comprised the area of awareness of the target group of company employees of the global state and actions of the company. From this point, a poor knowledge of the contemporary information about the company among this group has been recognized.

The focus of the survey results has been translated to the pilot factories in Czech Republic which were the target locations for the new communication strategies, as only almost 20 % of the blue collar employees has had the overview of the global goals of the company and its position in the market sector. Therefore, to increase the awareness of these target employees which comprise and important part of the production, a new tool for communicating the key information and news about the company actions has been designed.

8   Results & findings

The new communication tool for the blue collars that should be implemented into the communication structure of the selected company is a mobile application providing the constant information flow. Prior the actual decision, different options have been considered in order to increase the blue collar awareness of the global company's state and actions.

8.1   Designed changes to the target group increase in communication

For the purpose of increasing the awareness of blue collars in Czech factories of the Siemens company, new options for the new tool have been designed. These options were as follow:

- a new interactive application for the monitors,
- a new application for the smartphones with constant update to the company news,

Both of these options have undergone the consideration and their utilization has been analysed among the blue collar employees. The analyses was conducted via survey and has been focused on two specific areas of interest – the reachability of the employee via the tool (following the content or possessing the tool) and actual utilization of the proposed tool.

The first area of evaluation resulted predominantly in accordance to the overall survey among the blue collars. The greatest reachability of the employees by the specific tool has been achieved by the monitors, the lowest by the smartphones. These results are given in in Figure 5 and Figure 6 below.

The second area of the survey focus, however, resulted in quite different way. This part of the survey researched the actual impact of the tools on the employees from the interest, time and utilization point of view. Although the reachability of the target employees by the monitors has been the greatest, the second part of the survey showed that the employees do not spent a lot of time on gaining the information regularly. The information gained via the e-mail account has a very small impact as well.
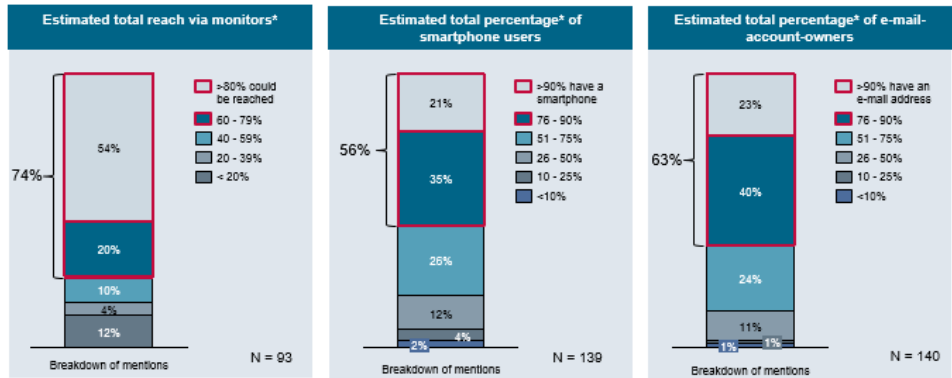
Figure 5 Reachability of the target employees by the selected tool (Siemens internal documentation)
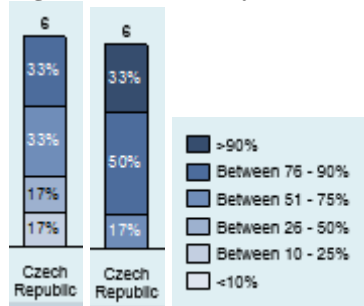

Figure 6 Possession of the tools by target employees (Siemens internal documentation)

According to the results of the survey, it has been decided that the proper communication tool for increasing the blue collar employees' awareness and engagement in the company's goals and actions should be the mobile application for smartphones which would continuously update the news about the company and highlight the important facts.

8.2 The design and implementation of the tool

It has been proposed that the mobile application will be managed by the communication departments and the local management of the factories. The communication department will select and regularly on daily basis update the content of messages intended for the target group of blue collars. The character of the messages can be various; the form can be written, but also audio-visual, including readable and friendly pictures and charts. The application will be available to be downloaded free of charge from the company's intranet and its spreading will be regularly supported on the monthly basis using other already utilized tools (monitors, e-mail newsletters, etc.)

9   Recommendations

To recognize the impact of the implementation of the new communication tool intended to increase the awareness and engagement of the blue collar employees to the company's goals and actions, the specific methodology of evaluation should be accepted. For this purpose, two target areas should be followed, which are:

- the metrics of spreading the application to the target employees' group,
- the actual awareness and engagement of the employees within the target group.

The KPIs for the first area of focus should be measured digitally. The intranet webpage containing the possibility for downloading the application should be supplemented with the counting the amount of downloading the application and also the tracking for the visits (i.e. the feedback of opening the sent message).

The awareness and engagement of the employees should be measured using a short survey regularly sent to the application. The survey should focus on the recapitulation of the received messages and also on the satisfaction of employees with the content and form of the messages. The survey should be prepared by the communication department for each purpose. Based on findings of the survey, regular updates and improvements in content should be made.

CONCLUSION

The internal organizational communication provides many important roles for each company and is necessary for its fluent functioning and operation. The aspects of internal communication and the forms of its conducting, however, can be challenging especially with the constant development of new technologies and the globalization of the markets. Nowadays, many companies act on various international markets and have spread the locations of their divisions and factories all around the world. For the purposes of these companies, the proper strategies and structure of internal communication can be considered to be one of the key elements of their success.

The aim of this work was to describe internal communication as a complex area with focus on new technology which has a major impact on is functioning. Description is necessary in order to understand the practical part – implementing a concrete tool. In the theoretical framework, the characterization of the communication approaches in general and on the organizational level has been provided. The reason why I have taken the time to explain the general level of communication and especially types of interpersonal communication is due to the fact that a very big component of internal communication is not moderated and is of nature informal. In the workplace communications takes place within not only formal established channels but also through word-of-mouth and gossip, which is a very powerful instrument which should not be underestimated, because the impact on employee awareness is tremendous.

The hierarchy and structure of the communication systems of organization have to comply the organization goals, and the strategies that are implemented to support these goals require analysis of the current state and possibilities (technical, technological and financial) of the company. Moreover, the specific channels that are utilized for conducting the internal organizational communication have been identified and described in the categorization of their historical development and contemporary use and the main advantages and disadvantages of each channel have been raised respectively from a recipient's and a communicator's perspective in order to fully understand the impact which may such tools bring. As this general overview proves, personal meetings and managerial cascade are the most effective as they are direct and face to face channels, however, it is not always possible to utilize them and therefore

other means must be used, such as e-mails, electronic newsletters and digital platforms, for which it is crucial to target the audience well.

The main focus of the theoretical basis, however, has been targeted to the challenges of the contemporary internal communication systems that are faced by the companies these days and the approaches to evaluation of their impact on the company's functioning. These two issues have provided the critical basis for the case study conducted in the practical part. I have highlighted several issues, which I consider as the main problems companies are facing nowadays – issues which have arisen mainly because communication today has fastened rapidly compared to just a few years ago. Due to this fact, there are new ways how to deliver information and – to be precise – more integrated ways. Organizational communication has began using various channels simultaneously which led to information overload and therefore indifference and lack of interest of recipients mainly due to the fact that they simply cannot detect what information is important and what is not as important.

One of the new and most influential instruments of today is social media and other online platforms, which more and more affect our daily lives and our interpersonal communication. The same applies to organizational communication. In this work, I have explored the most observed social media platforms which are heavily used in internal communication. All of them, expect one, have one thing in common – they are external platforms. I have mentioned Yammer which is a typical representative of ESN (enterprise social network). Enterprise social networks are a domain which would no doubt deserve more attention in this work as I believe they represent the future of internal communication. However, in order cover such a wide area as internal communication, I have dedicated only limited space to ESN, aspiring to explore this topic further in my diploma thesis.

The case study evaluated the implementation of a new communication tool for the specific hard-to-reach target group of Siemens AG factories – the blue collar employees. According to the surveys provided by the company in previous years, the awareness and engagement of the employees in this target group about the global company goals and actions has been very low. Therefore, a new strategy of increasing these two factors has been created comprising the options of tools. Based on further analysis, from these tools, the one that has reached the greatest impact potential has

been selected to be implemented into the internal communication system structure – a new mobile application.

For this selected tool, a basic strategy of implementation has been designed, which included the recommendation for the further evaluation of the impact of the tool. As it appears however, the target group of employees is quite hesitant to install a mobile application and the spread of it was not as wide as expected. Due to this fact, specific KPIs has been identified which comprised the count of downloading the application by members of the target group of employees and the gaining of the communicated messages measured using digital tools; and the rate of awareness, engagement and satisfaction of the employees assessed through a regular survey. The results of the survey should then be regularly evaluated.

The practical part focused on the implementation of the tool in the global company and not specifically in the Czech Republic, however the global study from 2015 comprised of the factories proved that implementation in Czech conditions has been very similar to the global company, which is why I presented it as a comprehensive overview. I definitely see potential in deepening the research in Czech Siemens factories and intend to conduct a local research in the future which I would present in my future work and which would mainly focus on the actual needs and expectations of the employees, which would stand as the cornerstone for developing and implementing a proper internal communications strategy. In my opinion, Czech companies lack relevant data in the area of internal communication, which are key to establishing good internal communication within a concrete organization.

The internal organizational communication systems should continuously evolve according to the requirements of internal and external factors which not only comprise the company's, needs but also with the technological development and the target market trends. Therefore, it is necessary especially among large global and international companies to keep their employees aware of the goals of their actions and their position on the market. The proper communication strategy is one of the most important aspects for building the loyal and engaged team of employees that are able to work effectively and productively as they are motivated by the knowledge of the company's importance.

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