

# STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS FEATURES WITHIN S.C. BRICOSTORE S.A. – WORKING POINT: PITEȘTI

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## **Abstract:**

*Organizational communication also provides to employees important information on the position they hold, the organization they work in, external environment or information on other fellow-workers. Communication may help to motivate employees, strengthening trust, creating a joint identity or may increase personal involvement; it gives individuals a way to express their feelings, to share hopes and ambitions and achievements, as well as to celebrate and remember their achievements. Communication is the way by which individuals and groups understand their organization, what it is and what it stands for.*

*Communication is the prerequisite of exercising management activity, of management process functions. Only an effective communication enables planning and scheduling, coordination and control, motivation, consultation and active participation of the organization members in the achievement of goals. Each moment of the organization's work is based on effective communication, as a way of focusing and linking efforts.*

**Keywords:** communication, organizational communication, performance

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## **Introduction**

Communication is like a "thick cloud" that winds continuously "push it and tear it, floating over almost all sciences"<sup>1</sup>.

In the context of a rapid transition from culture to civilization, in a hyper-urbanized and hyper-computerized world, in a world where news, information travels at unimaginable speeds that were impossible only not long ago, and where human contact is increasingly diverse and easier to achieve, communication is the basic component of the contemporary society, a component which is actually the binder, relational structure that gathers the threads of this world, maintaining its cohesion. Communication process has become universal and all-inclusive, as we live in the midst of multiple, intense and quick communications, in a society where everything communicates, the society itself being called "a communication one".

We live in a world of different types of organizations, a world where it is being insisted increasingly on communication and where man has learned that an organization works better when communication is more effective.

### **Importance of organizational communication**

Effective communication is the key to the success of modern organizations. Inside the company, it strengthens the employees' confidence in the vision and mission of organization, connects employees to the reality of such business, feeds the development of the company, facilitates the changes necessary for the progress and helps changing employees' behavior. Outside, the company image, finding out new

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<sup>1</sup> Bounoux Daniel - Introducere în științele comunicării (Introduction to communication sciences) – translation by Violeta Vintilescu, Editura Polirom, Bucharest, 2000, p.17.

business opportunities and relationship with the society mostly depend on how well it is designed and managed this ongoing communication process.

Communication is one of the most important activities inside an organization. Fundamentally, relationships grow out of communication, while operation and survival of organizations are based on effective relationships between individuals and groups. Moreover, organizational capabilities are adopted and developed through extensive communication and social processes. Communication helps individuals and groups to coordinate their activities to achieve their goals and is vital in social processes, decision making, problem solving and management changes.

Organizational communication also provides employees with important information related to the position they hold, organization where they work, external environment or information on other their colleagues. Communication may help to motivate employees, building trust, creating a joint identity or may increase personal involvement; it gives individuals a way to express their feelings, share their hopes and ambitions, as well as celebrate and remember their achievements. Communication is the way by which individuals and groups understand their organization, what it is and what it stands for.

For any organization, communication is a prerequisite in achieving the targets, a critical requirement for its efficient operation, of establishing the most basic human relationships. Communication is the premise of exercising management activity, of management process functions. Only an effective communication enables planning and scheduling, coordination and control, motivation, consultation and active participation of the organization members in the achievement of goals. Each moment of the organization's work is based on an effective communication as a way of focusing and linking efforts.

#### **Analysis of the communication process features within S.C. Bricostore S.A. - Pitesti working point**

Planning objectives and resources, elaboration of strategies, decision making and starting actions are not linear processes. Multitude of objectives, complexity of interests, novelty of situations, unexpected reactions of the people, as well as those of the environment, make the most elaborated decisions and the most organized actions be ridiculous sometimes. Without the intervention of managers to synchronize and harmonize time and space of actions, judgments and facts, desires and realities through coordination function, management process would be deprived of the cohesion, continuity and dynamism allowing it to achieve specific goals. The basic component of the coordination function is **communication**. As a process allowing the exchange of messages between people, it makes it possible, at the same time, to achieve agreement and also occurrence of disagreement, expression and enforcement of power, as well as negotiation and consensus. Further, we shall present the content of coordination function through basic processes, rules, methods and techniques used for achieving it.

For any organization, including Bricostore, communication is an essential requirement in achieving the targets, a sine qua non requirements for its efficient functioning, of establishing the most basic human relationships. Communication is the premise of exercising management, management process functions. Only an effective communication enables planning and scheduling, coordination and control, motivation, consultation and active participation of the organization members in the achievement of goals. Each moment in the organization work is based on an effective communication, as a way of focusing and linking efforts.

Organizational communication within Bricostore appears at all levels of management, is performed on all hierarchical levels and between them, both horizontally and vertically.

In order to study the characteristics of the communication process within S.C. Bricostore Romania S.A., it resorts to a detailed review on how organizational communication is achieved within one of the units of this organization, namely, S.C. Bricostore Romania S.A.- Pitesti working point.

### **Description of the research process. The purpose and objectives of the research**

Communication is one of the most important activities in an organization. Fundamentally, relationships grow out of communication, while operation and survival of organizations are based on effective relationships between individuals and groups.

In order to discover how communication takes place within the organization and improvement of its climate, a research was conducted within Bricostore Pitesti in order to evaluate the role and importance of communication skills in the company.

Survey sample was represented by five of the nine persons holding a managing position and thirty persons holding an executive position, trade workers within Bricostore Pitesti.

The objectives aimed at following the survey:

- assessing the work background, work environment within the organization;
- studying the communication process starting from human relationships present in any enterprise;
- extent to which information system provides operatively adequate quality information, including knowing by all employees of the organization mission, objectives and strategy;
- extent to which decisional process allow access of the subordinates to decision-making;
- degree to which subordinates accept the manager work style, team spirit existence (nature of relationships between managers and employees);
- organization ability to operate without conflicts and major disruptions of work;
- existence of clearly stated objectives;
- extent to which managerial control allows manager – subordinate communication;
- main character of communication (formal / informal);
- importance that communication participants grant to verbal and non-verbal communication;
- existence of an active, logical, analytical and not emotional communication between members of society, an open communication, as well as feed-back existence.

### **Methods and instruments used**

During the research conducted at Bricostore Pitesti, observation and questionnaire were used as specific instruments.

*Direct*, immediate, premeditated and normalized *observation* was used as a instrument, because it allows recording some elements and aspects which, in order to study the communication process in terms of human relationships, may be omitted from the questionnaire. Also, *direct observation* allows knowledge of the specific features of the position hold by those concerned, as well as how they get involved into perceive communication, both at general organizational and individual level.

Observation took place during the training stage, achieving over a four-month period.

The other instrument used is the *questionnaire*, as it is a fast and efficient way to gather information necessary for the survey. Questionnaires were drawn in such a way that a small number of questions cover as many aspects of communication as possible and the way they are presented should arouse the interest of the surveyed, to be precise and easily understood.

Two questionnaires have been prepared, one of which is addressed both to the executive staff and managers, aiming at researching the organizational communication process and the second questionnaire is intended for the executive staff, represented by trade workers, aiming at establishing management communication characteristics.

Both questionnaires contain 15 questions and the questioned person should choose the answer that believes it fits best.

### **Detailing the results obtained by observation method**

#### **Elements existing within the organization facilitating communication and access to information**

In this company, there are a number of elements whose presence facilitates communication within the organization and correct information through easy access to certain information. Thus, we notice the presence of the following elements necessary for an effective communication within the organization:

- Suggestion box - where employees may express their complaints, they may expose their innovative ideas, make suggestions on certain issues or report some problems;
- The existence of a network between computers that facilitates the transmission of information within the organization;
- Existence of a forum or a debate group among employees forms agreeable connections between them, answers to some questions may be found out, for which the management intervention is not needed;
- Lists of phone numbers – belonging to employees and management, as well as of the departments where emergencies occur in the organization;
- Weekly meetings of the organization or department- to discuss the pluses and minuses of the week;
- Models for completing the documents used by the organization;
- Organization of ideas competitions –stimulating employees' creativity and initiative spirit.

#### **Interpretation of the questionnaire results on organizational communication**

Organizational communication questionnaire was intended for a representative sample of 35 employees within Bricostore Pitesti, five of whom are employed in a managerial position and the other thirty people hold an executive position.

Regarding the answer to the first question on the type of prevalent communication in Bricostore, 21 people, representing 60% of the respondents answered that formal vertical communication is predominant (from the superior to subordinate and vice versa). A percentage of 22.86% (8 employees) believe that formal interdepartmental communication prevails, while 6 people (17.14%) believe that the most common is informal communication. It is worth noting that none of the respondents did not choose the version of diagonal formal communication (from a subordinate of a certain department to a superior of another department).

More than half of the respondents, namely 51.43% (18 people) chose as a response to the second question, concerning the predominant direction within vertical communication, the communication in both directions, while 13 surveyed employees (37.14%) believe that the communication from superiors to subordinates is prevailing and the remaining 11.43% (4 persons believe that communication from the subordinate to superior is major).

When meeting a difficulty in the work done, 17 people (48.57%) obtain the necessary information from the manager and 31.43% of the respondents appeals to their colleagues. Only 3 people (8.57%) obtain the necessary information from sources provided by the company, while the rest appeal to other persons within Bricostore.

A majority of 85.71% (21 people) of those surveyed believe that participation in group meetings of the department to which they belong are constructive, because they find out new information, while the rest do not think these meetings are beneficial for them.

A significant percentage of 80% of employees consider that the organization encourages the exchange of information between departments, only 7 people disagreeing with this statement, given that 74.29% of those surveyed believe that such interdepartmental meetings offer them new information and only the remaining 9 people think that they do not get any benefit as a result of such information exchanges.

Regarding the answer to the question on obstacles met in the communication process, 15 persons (42.86%) perceive language barriers as the main disadvantage, 31.43% of them noticed concept barriers and 9 employees considered a constraint in the path of an effective communication, barriers caused by the position of the other speaker. It is worth noting that no one is affected by environmental barriers.

While 21 persons of the respondents addresses themselves to the direct manager to send information to the top management, while the remaining 40% do not use this means of sending information, 80% of the surveyed employees believe that there isn't any communication manager within Bricostore and only 7 of them noticed the existence of such a person.

Among the surveyed employees, 12 are of the opinion that the information received unofficially are not authentic, while 65, 71% of them disagree with this information, because more than half of the questionnaire respondents (51.43%) consider that they receive the most detailed and accurate information from their colleagues and 17 of them (37.14%) receive such information from the direct manager. Only 4 people declare that they are informed by the top management, while no one considers that he/she receives detailed information from other departments.

There were situations where Bricostore employees had to interrupt their work because of lack of information, 16 persons of the respondents (45.71%) facing with such a situation.

The main route of transmission of fulfilling tasks is considered, by more than half of the respondents (51.43%) face-to-face communication, while 10 people (28.57%) have opted for the meeting version and small percentages are granted to communication through written documents-11.43% and Intranet communication- 8.57%.

Of those surveyed, 17 persons (48.57%) believe that the most effective way of communication is face- to- face interaction with the direct manager, while 14 people (40%) are opting for direct communication with their colleagues and only 4 employees choose the communication by e-mail or intranet, none of the respondents choosing the version of written requests.

### **Interpretation of the results of the questionnaire on managerial communication**

Management communication questionnaire (Annex 2) was intended to a representative sample of 30 employees from Bricostore Pitesti holding an executive position and has as main objective the diagnostic of how management communication takes place.

Regarding the answer to the first two questions of this questionnaire, on how employees perceive the department they belong to, 26 of the respondents (86.66%) believe that the department they belong to is a "team", the rest disagreeing with this statement, while 24 of the 30 employees surveyed (80%) consider themselves even integrated into this "team".

When asked about communication between employees and direct superiors on the general activity of Bricostore, 36.66% of respondents said they had such discussions all the time, while half of them discussed it just occasionally and 4 people said they never discussed with their superiors about the overall activity of the organization.

Regarding the interest that superiors grant to the employees' points of view and suggestions, an equal percentage is found out (36.66%), 11 person believe the superiors are always interested in their suggestions, other 11 employees believe that only sometimes they are paid attention and 26.66% of the respondents believe that their superiors do not lay emphasis on their views.

Among the respondents, 46.66% (16 people) believe that, within the communication process, managers have a balanced behaviour, 30% characterize their behavior as being calm, 5 persons label the behavior of their superiors as being indifferent and employment relations with managers are perceived as normal by 43.33% of the employees surveyed, while 11 of them (36.66%) believe that they are strictly limited to labor problems and 6 people characterize employment relations as cold and impersonal.

As regards the clarity with which respondents perceive information received from superiors, 60% always consider clear information received, 26.66% say they sometimes do not fully understand them, while 4 persons often do not understand the messages sent, and as regards those who believe they did not understand the message correctly, 50% of the respondents may require additional information without any problem, 23.33% of them do so only occasionally and 26.66% never dare require further explanation.

Among those who answered the questionnaire on management communication, only 26.66% deem themselves able to provide the managers a solution contrary to their opinions directly, even if they will have troubles, while half of the respondents believe that will be able to do so, but with caution and 7 people would not dare to express their opinion, considering their superiors are intolerant.

As regards the interest that managers show towards the problems of the executive staff, 40% of those surveyed believe that attention is paid only to work problems, 23.33% believe that managers are not interested in their problems, but this happens because of lack of time, while 6 people (20%) believe that their superiors are interested in any problems they face, regardless of its nature, contrary to them being 5 people who consider that managers pay noattention to problems they face, thinking that employees should handle it on your own.

Almost half of the respondents (14 people) stated that when their hierarchical superior urgently call them in his office are covered with emotion, while 30% are concerned in such a moment and only 7 of the employees surveyed do not worry at all.

Regarding the encouragement received from superiors, 43.33% of those who responded to the questionnaire said they were encouraged and appreciated by managers in front of their colleagues several times, 9 people (30%) experienced such moments once, while the rest of them have not had such an opportunity.

More than half of respondents (60%) believe that the management communication is effective within Bricostore, generally, but they also accept that there are exceptions, 26.66% have a very good opinion, considering that the purpose of management communication to achieve a correct and efficient information is successfully completed, while the remaining 13.33% characterize the managerial communication as a poor one. Also as regards the perception of management communication, almost half of those who answered the questionnaire are of the opinion that, generally, when managers send information, the feed-back is achieved, 26.66% think that the feed-back is always achieved, while the rest think that it is rarely achieved.

### **Conclusions**

Following the analysis carried out through qualitative instruments: observation, the two questionnaires and SWOT analysis, relevant conclusions can be drawn on how organizational and managerial communication within S.C. Bricostore Romania - Pitesti working point.

- Regarding elements whose presence facilitates communication within the organization, as well as correct information through easy access to specific information, it is noted the presence of some necessary elements for an effective communication within the organization such as: the suggestion box (book of complaints)- where employees may express their discontents, may expose their innovative ideas, may make suggestions on certain issues or may report some problems; existence of a computer network facilitating the transmission of information within the organization; existence of a forum or a debate group among employees- forms agreeable connections between employees, answers to some questions may be found out, for which the management intervention is not needed; lists of phone numbers belonging to employees and management, as well as of the departments where emergencies occur in the organization; weekly meetings of the organization or departments- to discuss the pluses and minuses of the week; models for completing the documents used by the organization and organization of ideas competitions, stimulating employees' creativity and initiative spirit.

For a rationalization of communication and for a more clear understanding of work carried out within Bricostore, weekly reports are submitted, but the problem found out is that not everyone who should draw up them, do so. From this point of view, the organization should be more rigorous, given the major importance of the reports for the company activity.

As regards the oral communication, positive issues encountered in Bricostore are represented by the frequent meetings which took place, which are clear, short and concise and organizing team-buildings for employees in order to be able to facilitate oral communication between them, but verbal communication has disadvantages as well, because in case of successive transmission, through hierarchical levels, some information may be lost, because they are filtered by each of them.

Between Bricostore management and employees there is also a formal communication, its advantage being that, a formal communication determines the achievement of tasks assigned. It also saves time and effort of interlocutors, because it does not necessarily require direct contact.

Generally, there is a combination of formal and informal communication within the organization. A balance between these two types of communication leads to an efficient work and a good relationship, formal and informal communication being the key elements for the operation of Bricostore organization. These communication plans produce a network where the members of organization act.

Organizational communication within Bricostore Pitesti, is characterized by the predominance of using formal vertical communication, that is made from superior to the subordinate and vice versa.

Regarding obstacles met in the communication process, most employees perceive as the main inconvenience the language barriers, represented by expression difficulties, confusing phrases or pre-conceived ideas and concept barriers that relate to assumptions, suspicions or hasty conclusions.

The most effective ways of communication are considered the face-to-face interaction with the direct manager and direct communication with colleagues and most Bricostore employees believe that the company management provides a good organizational communication.

Generally, management communication within Bricostore is effective, but the existence of some exceptions is also accepted, the respondents thinking that the purpose of management communication to achieve a correct and effective information is successfully fulfilled. Also, as regards the way in which management communication is perceived, almost half of those who answered the questionnaire are of the opinion that, generally, when managers send information, feed-back is achieved.

For Bricostore Pitesti, a key concern is to provide an open, continuous and accurate communication, resulting from the strategic thinking of the organization and a number of ways to improve and rationalize communication should be taken into account, such as:

- concise and accurate wording of sent messages to be easily and fully understood;
- quick and undistorted transmission of information;
- expansion of active listening techniques, as a means of collecting necessary information for making important management decisions;
- managers should pay more attention to their subordinates' proposals and requests, as far as possible, thus increasing their attachment to the organization;
- it is recommended the application of person, as well as task-oriented organizational management;
- managers must be more flexible in dealing with executive staff and encourage their initiatives;
- it is recommended the use of an organizational communication system, both functionally and clearly;
- differentiation of style used in interpersonal communication, depending on the level of training, experience and understanding of each subordinate;
- adoption of a warm behavior, promoting an open attitude, sincerity, interest and receptivity.

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