

PECULIARITIES OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT IN THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CONTEXT

MUNGIU-PUPĂZAN MARIANA CLAUDIA

ASSOC. PROF. PHD, “CONSTANTIN BRÂNCUȘI” UNIVERSITY OF TG-JIU

e-mail:claudia.mungiu@gmail.com

Abstract

In the context of globalization and economic interdependence, organizations are frequently exposed to major disruptions, such as economic crises. These generate financial instability, decision-making uncertainty and pressures on human resources. In this context, organizational communication becomes an essential strategic tool for maintaining internal balance and adapting to the external environment. This paper aims to analyze how organizational communication management contributes to the efficient management of economic crisis situations. It also highlights the main communication strategies, the challenges encountered and the impact on organizational performance. In times of economic uncertainty, effective communication becomes a strategic tool through which management can reduce employee anxiety, maintain partner trust and support the organization's image. It becomes important to analyze the role of internal and external communication in managing crisis situations, highlighting the importance of transparency, message coherence and speed in transmitting information. It also addresses communication strategies adapted to the unstable economic environment, such as the use of digital channels, continuous feedback and the active involvement of employees in the decision-making process. The study emphasizes that effective communication management contributes to increasing organizational resilience and reducing the negative impact of economic crises on organizational performance and culture.

Keywords: organizational communication, economic crisis, management, organizational communication strategies, transparency

Classification JEL: M40, M41

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization and economic interdependencies, organizations are increasingly exposed to major economic fluctuations. Economic crises, such as recessions or financial instability, profoundly affect the structure and functioning of organizations. In this context, organizational communication becomes an essential strategic element for managing uncertainty and maintaining internal cohesion.

Organizational communication management involves the efficient coordination of information flows to support the achievement of institutional objectives. In times of economic crisis, this process gains increased importance, as organizations must react quickly and coherently to changes. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the role of organizational communication management in the context of the economic crisis, highlighting its strategies, challenges and impact on organizational performance.

Internally, communication is essential to maintain employee cohesion and morale. In the absence of clear information, rumors, anxiety, and decreased productivity arise. Management must adopt transparent communication, explaining the causes of difficult decisions (cost reductions, reorganizations, layoffs) and offering realistic perspectives on the evolution of the organization. At the same time, it is essential to promote a two-way dialogue, in which employees can express concerns and contribute solutions. Thus, communication becomes a tool for involvement and empowerment, not just for information.

Externally, organizational communication directly influences reputation and relationships with stakeholders – customers, partners, investors and the general public. In times of economic

crisis, trust becomes a critical resource. The messages transmitted must be consistent and aligned with the organization's actions, avoiding contradictions or unrealistic promises. Crisis communication must be fast, empathetic and solution-oriented, demonstrating responsibility and ability to manage the situation.

2. The concept of organizational communication

Organizational communication is the set of processes by which information is generated, transmitted, and interpreted within an organization. It includes both formal communication, regulated by hierarchical structures, and informal communication, which occurs spontaneously between organizational members [5].

From a functional perspective, organizational communication fulfills several roles: informative, motivational, control and emotional. It facilitates the coordination of activities, supports the decision-making process and contributes to the creation of a solid organizational culture [1].

In times of economic stability, communication is predominantly operational in nature. However, in times of crisis, it becomes a strategic tool, essential for managing change and reducing uncertainty.

The impact of the economic crisis on organizations

Economic crises cause significant changes in the organizational environment, affecting both financial resources and human capital. Among the most common consequences are cost reduction, staff restructuring, and decreased investment levels [3].

These transformations can generate a climate of insecurity and anxiety among employees, which negatively influences organizational performance. The lack of effective communication can amplify these effects, leading to the emergence of rumors and a decrease in trust in management [2].

Economic crises also affect an organization's external relations, including its public image and relationships with business partners. In this context, communication becomes a crucial tool for protecting organizational reputation.

The role of communication management in a crisis context.

Organizational communication management involves the planning, implementation, and evaluation of communication strategies. In times of economic crisis, it plays a crucial role in maintaining organizational stability.

A first essential role is to reduce uncertainty by providing clear and transparent information. Employees need explanations regarding managerial decisions, and the lack of them can lead to misinterpretations [5].

Another important role is maintaining trust. Open and honest communication helps strengthen the relationship between management and employees, which is essential in difficult times [1].

Communication management also facilitates the implementation of organizational changes. By effectively transmitting messages, organizations can reduce resistance to change and ensure a smoother transition to new economic conditions [3].

Organizational communication strategies in times of crisis.

To face the challenges posed by the economic crisis, organizations must adopt well-structured communication strategies. Among the most effective strategies are:

- **Information transparency**

Transparency is a fundamental element in crisis management. Honest communication about economic difficulties and the measures adopted helps reduce uncertainty and increase trust [2].

- **Two-way communication**

Involving employees in the communication process, through feedback and dialogue, allows for the identification of problems and the finding of effective solutions. This approach contributes to the creation of a positive organizational climate [5].

- **Adapting messages**

Messages need to be tailored to the target audience. For example, employees need detailed information on workplace safety, while external partners are interested in the stability of the organization [1].

- **Use of technology**

Digital platforms and online communication tools allow for the rapid transmission of information and facilitate interaction between organizational members. In the current context, the digitalization of communication is essential [3].

- **Communicative leadership**

Organizational leaders must be actively involved in the communication process. Their constant presence and ability to convey clear messages contribute to maintaining trust and motivating employees [2].

Interpersonal trust and resistance to delegation.

These are two closely related psychological and organizational dynamics that directly influence management effectiveness, company culture, and team performance. When trust decreases, resistance to delegation increases directly proportionally, becoming a major obstacle to employee development and business scaling.

Interpersonal trust in the organizational environment is built on three pillars: competence (the belief that the other has the necessary skills), benevolence (the belief that the other wants to do good) and integrity (respect for ethical principles).

Trust level	Manager's behavior	Impact on the team
High trust	Total delegation, autonomy, mentoring role.	Increasing motivation, taking responsibility, innovation.
Low trust	Micromanagement, information retention, centralization.	Demotivation, capping, culture based on fear of making mistakes.

Why does resistance to delegation occur? (Main causes)

Resistance to delegation does not always come from a bad intention on the part of the manager, but often from psychological barriers or system dysfunctions.

Psychological barriers of the manager

- “I can do it better myself” syndrome -the belief that explaining the task takes longer than executing it yourself.

- Fear of losing control - the neurotic need to monitor every detail (micromanagement) for fear of losing the big picture.

- Fear of becoming dispensable - the manager fears that if the team manages alone, his usefulness will be questioned.

- Fear of assuming the mistakes of subordinates: Ultimately, the manager is responsible to upper management for the team's failure.

Team-related factors (Lack of perceived trust)

- Lack of technical competence - employees lack the necessary training to take on complex tasks.

- Lack of previous responsibility - if employees have failed in the past without taking responsibility, the manager will be hesitant to delegate again.

Organizational culture factors

- Severe Penalization of Mistakes: In a culture where mistakes are punished (not viewed as a learning opportunity), managers will avoid taking risks by delegating.
- Departmental Silos: Lack of transparency and communication between teams destroys overall interpersonal trust.

How to increase trust to reduce resistance

To unblock the delegation process, the organization must strategically act on the mindset of leaders and the skills of teams.

- Progressive Delegation: Do not delegate critical projects from the first interaction. Start with small, low-risk tasks, increasing complexity as the employee demonstrates competence.
- Establishing Clear Expectations (Work Frameworks): Define the exact desired outcome (what needs to be done), while providing freedom over the method (how it is done).
- Culture of “Psychological Safety” (Psychological Safety): Leaders must create an environment in which employees can ask questions, report risks, and make mistakes without fear of humiliation.
- Establishing Non-Intrusive Control Mechanisms: Instead of unannounced daily checks (which destroy trust), mutually agreed-upon milestones and short status meetings are established.

Impact on the organization.

When resistance to delegation becomes chronic due to lack of trust, severe negative consequences occur: Micro-management: The manager excessively monitors every detail, stifling the team's autonomy. Leader burnout -the accumulation of operational tasks blocks the time needed for strategic decisions. Team demotivation - employees feel that they are not valued or that their capabilities are not trusted, which leads to professional ceiling. Operational blockages (Bottlenecks) - all decisions and workflows depend on a single person, slowing down the pace of the organization.

Strategies for overcoming resistance by building trust

To reduce resistance to delegation, leaders must go through a gradual process of cultivating trust: Progressive delegation: Start with low-risk tasks to test and build cognitive trust. Clearly defining outcomes, not processes: The manager must specify what needs to be achieved (the goal) and provide freedom over how to get there (the how). Accepting a “margin of error”: Trust increases when mistakes are treated as learning opportunities, not as reasons for punishment. Establishing check-ins: Instead of continuous monitoring, fixed moments of feedback are established, providing safety to the manager and autonomy to the employee

Challenges in crisis communication management

Designing and operationalizing a communication strategy in times of macroeconomic instability places organizational management in front of a set of asymmetric challenges, where the margin of decisional error is minimal, and the impact on human and reputational capital is immediate. A first and acute barrier lies in managing the paradox between radical transparency and strategic confidentiality. While the specialized literature [2] posits that honesty and openness are imperative for reserving trust capital, managers face systemic pressure not to spread panic and not prematurely disclose sensitive financial data. This ethical and operational tension often generates fragmented or ambiguous communication, which, counterproductively, leaves room for speculation and amplifies informal communication networks [5], fueling collective anxiety and gossip.

A challenge with a strong emotional and structural impact is the discursive management of personnel restructuring and collective layoffs. In this crisis scenario, the manager must abandon the rigid corporate language and adopt a deeply empathetic approach, but anchored in economic reality. The major difficulty lies in the ability to communicate difficult decisions not only to those directly affected (who must be given clear arguments and respect), but especially to the organizational "survivors". The latter frequently show drastic decreases in productivity and morale

due to guilt syndrome or fear of successive waves of layoffs. Therefore, the internal communication strategy must be quickly reconfigured to restore psychological safety and redefine the redistributed workload, avoiding the phenomenon of burnout.

At the same time, calibrating and personalizing messages for audiences with divergent interests is an extremely complex discursive balancing act [1]. The manager is pressured to simultaneously deliver messages focused on macroeconomic stability, solvency and continuity to external stakeholders (investors, banks, customers), while internally he is called upon to provide concrete answers related to job security. Aligning these information flows without falling into terminological contradictions is a test of managerial maturity. Finally, strategy implementation is severely hampered by the psychological wear and tear of the leaders themselves, who, under the pressure of cost reduction, can fall into the trap of decision-making centralization and reluctance to delegate. Faced with their own vulnerability, many managers tend to reduce two-way dialogue and isolate themselves behind purely administrative directives, transforming organizational communication from a strategic facilitation tool into a rigid monologue, incapable of generating cohesion.

Managing communication during economic crises involves a number of significant challenges. One of these is information overload, which can lead to confusion and difficulty processing messages. Maintaining message consistency is also a major challenge, especially in large organizations where there are multiple communication channels. Inconsistency can affect the credibility of the organization [1]. Another important obstacle is combating rumors and misinformation. In the absence of clear information, employees may resort to unofficial sources, which can amplify uncertainty [2]. In addition, adapting quickly to economic changes requires flexibility and the ability to adjust communication strategies in real time.

For a manager in the midst of a learning process, the transition from the role of excellent executor to that of a coordinating leader represents an eminently psychological barrier. From your perspective, delegation is not just a management technique, but a direct test of your own interpersonal trust.

Manager action plan and how to reduce your resistance.

To build your delegation muscle, approach the process as a risk management project, building trust gradually. Testing Phase (Low-Risk Tasks) - delegate tasks whose failure won't destabilize the department. This allows you to assess the employee's actual competence (cognitive trust) without overwhelming anxiety. Autonomy Contracting (Traffic Light System) - clearly establish where the employee's decision ends and yours begins.

Disconnection from the process means resistance to micromanagement. This requires the manager to replace unscheduled daily updates with a single short synchronization session per week. If he constantly intervenes, he sends the implicit message: "I don't trust you," which will also destroy the employee's motivation.

3. Conclusions

This paper has highlighted the fact that organizational communication management is not just a set of operational processes, but a fundamental strategic vector in preserving stability, internal cohesion and institutional reputation in times of economic crisis. In a global context marked by complex financial fluctuations and interdependencies, the dynamics of information flows directly determine the resilience of organizational structures.

Theoretical and conceptual analysis has demonstrated that the shift from predominantly informative to strategic, two-way, and empathetic communication is essential for alleviating generalized anxiety and uncertainty among human capital. The strategies identified – such as radical transparency, contextual adaptation of messages, communicative leadership, and the use of digital technologies – converge towards a central objective: rebuilding and maintaining trust.

In this context of economic instability, the inversely proportional relationship between interpersonal trust and resistance to delegation takes on critical valences. Research reveals that the degradation of the pillars of trust (competence, goodwill, integrity) fuels the psychological barriers of managers, precipitating dysfunctional phenomena such as micromanagement and information retention. In a culture marked by the fear of failure and lack of psychological safety, resistance to delegation blocks the scaling of processes and demotivates the team, deepening the negative effects of the crisis.

In conclusion, the success of overcoming an economic crisis depends on the ability of leaders to establish a communication management based on dialogue and transparency. Only by reducing resistance to delegation and empowering subordinates can the organization transform its internal structure from a defensive environment into an agile apparatus, capable of innovation and sustainable performance in market adversity.

Organizational communication management plays an essential role in the context of economic crises. Effective communication helps reduce uncertainty, maintain trust, and facilitate organizational change.

Organizations that adopt transparent, interactive and context-adapted communication strategies have a greater chance of overcoming difficult times and strengthening their position in the long term. In this sense, communication must be considered a strategic tool, integrated into the management process.

4. Bibliography

- [1] Cornelissen, J. (2020) *Corporate Communication: A Guide to Theory and Practice*. 6th edn. London: Sage.
- [2] Coombs, W.T. (2015) *Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding*. 4th edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- [3] Kotler, P. and Keller, K.L. (2016) *Marketing Management*. 15th edn. Harlow: Pearson.
- [4] Oláh, J., Bai, A., Karmazin, G., Balogh, P., & Popp, J. (2019). *HR Practices for Supporting Interpersonal Trust and Its Consequences for Teamwork*. MDPI - Sustainability, 11(16), 4423.
- [5] Robbins, S.P. and Judge, T.A. (2017) *Organizational Behavior*. 17th edn. Harlow: Pearson.
- [6] World Economic Forum (2023). *The Future of Jobs Report 2023*. Geneva: World Economic Forum.
- [7] United Nations (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York: United Nations.
- [8] <https://academiadehr.ro/delegare-eficienta-momentul-in-care-un-manager-inceteaza-sa-faca-totul-singur/>