

Synergy of innovation procedures and communication skills as a success predictor in IT supported management

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Abstract - This article is based on communication and its influence on the organization. Through our literature review we found that innovative communication is the strategic ability to plan, execute, coordinate and even evaluate stakeholders of the communication process. Communication also can be used as a mean to spread and redefine comparative advantages in order to achieve a successful business organization. The aim of this research was to determine the importance of communication and find which forms in which ways and types of communication are used by their CEO. Through the Google Forms online questionnaire, 202 respondents were interviewed to confirm the hypothesis: *“only specific forms of communication stimulate innovation and create synergy of innovation processes and communication”*. The research was ongoing for 14 days and it was conducted in Croatian business organizations. The results have shown that the success of business organizations can relate to the level of innovative procedures and communication skills. The hypothesis is confirmed and also described in depth in doctoral thesis by one of the authors.

Key words – communication, idea, innovation, innovative communication, know – how.

I. INTRODUCTION

Creativity and innovation are one of the key components of the vision and mission of business organizations. They are mutually interwoven and create synergy: a) creativity as the creation of new ideas, independent of their usability, b) innovation as a functional use of creative ideas to create new, useful products and services. Creativity is the foundation for innovation, and innovation is the visibility of the applied creative idea. Numerous scholars, with emphasis on the initiator of innovation theory, Peter F. Drucker [1], in his work *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, confirmed that innovation is closely related to creativity and freedom. Similarly, Velimir Srića's [2] approach to the innovativeness and creativity in modern management is described in the book *Creativity and Innovation Management*, in which he analyses creativity and innovation, integrating the global economic, communicational approach. An interesting is the project of the University of Zagreb, financed by the funds of the

Adris Foundation - *"Innovation, Communication and Management in Science: Development of Generic and Transfer Skills of Young Researchers"*, within which generic and transfer skills development workshops have been launched with the aim of training the PhD candidates for the effective inclusion in business and scientific activities with a emphasis on permanent employability. The project was completed within the international conference International Transferable Skills in Doctoral Education. The Republic of Croatia puts innovation in the forefront as a factor of development, business productivity and sustainable/permanent employability. If innovations and communication in the business organization have a systematic approach, supported by science and technology, proactive innovation policies, assertiveness, with leading IT supported management by the principles of innovative communication, proactive climate, stimulating culture and leadership in the market will not be absent. The awareness of innovation culture is questionable and it is again necessary to question the new paradigms of the field of communication as well as job opportunities and worldwide IT industrialization [3]. The task for the tendencies of the 21st century ("opportunity" entrepreneurship) is investing in to the educational policies and encouraging the business environment that brings in the innovation climate and relevant knowledge and skills for the materialization of productive market contribution [4] [5]. Business organizations that recognize knowledge and innovative solutions significantly differ from business organizations that do not recognize such business opportunities as well as the necessity of an entrepreneurship. The guiding principles of the European Union are reflected in the HORIZON 2020 project through which innovative projects are funded, regardless of whether they are technological or social innovations. *"Social innovations"* have contributed to the creation of new socio-economic entities and bring up the importance in the form of changes and advancements in business organizations and society [6]. By joining the European Union, the Republic of Croatia has adopted the Europe Growth Strategy (Europe 2020) with five areas of growth and innovation (the remaining four are employment, climate / energy, education, social inclusion). The *National Strategy for Innovation of the*

Republic of Croatia 2013-2020 is also implemented in Croatia (since May 2012) with long-term orientation on the development and systematic promotion of innovation as the core value of the economy's performance, but also of society. Its aims are to build an effective innovation system that will direct the Croatian economy to society-of-knowledge based activities. Through the activities of the Strategy, the aim is to exploit the potential of the Republic of Croatia at the territorial position, resources and tradition in industrial production, as well as its ability to innovate and create as the basic factors for the economy's launch. In the year 2020., it is expected that it will be improved: innovation, legislative and a fiscal framework, established communication and cooperation models, scientific research and business sector with aims for developing new products, services, business processes and technology, as well as implementing path of how to apply scientific and research work in the economy and society.

II. SYNERGY OF THE INNOVATION PROCEDURES AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Business communication is used within organizations to promote products, services or organizations. It is known that it is a vital part of business, organization and IT support management as they constantly exchange messages and information important for business organization. Creative and innovative business communication significantly helps business organizations to achieve market success and image. Innovative communication between employees, towards the open market, leads to more successful work, and to achieving the desired reputation and earnings, which is the goal of every business organization. Brand managers of many business organizations want to improve business communication and thus improve quality management. It is not enough, for example, that employees only know how to write a business letter or actively use administrative knowledge. For good communication, employees need to be motivated and acquainted with the basics of effective/innovative communication, which helps to expand the vision and mission of the business organization. Therefore, if changes are to be made to increase the performance of a business organization's communication productivity, then business communication needs to improve. An example, the following business segments: lifelong learning, encouraging self-realization of the employees as complete person etc. It is quite certain that it is important to create a stimulating, proactive atmosphere in which it is possible to work in accordance with the values that are self-imposed, with the support of management leadership. It is also important to encourage two-way communication and knowledge sharing as a focus on achieving results that are of major importance for the entire organization. In successful organizations, employees are aware that communication can expand their knowledge and their personal and professional perspectives and create new value of knowledge. For creative innovative and communicative to open, stimulating atmospheres in a

business organization, it is necessary to: 1. *Define the problem, see where the business organization is and what it wants to achieve in the open market;* 2. *To appreciate and critically think about possible suggestions of employees or to involve a larger number of employees, which will bring a wider range of possible creative solutions.* One of the preconditions for the synergy of the innovation processes and communication skills is the creative leadership of a business organization, ready for innovative strategies, plans, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of employees who will through the innovative creative communication processes achieve innovative communication (Pfeffermann et al. [7]).

III. METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of the Dvorski doctoral thesis [8] a research was conducted using an adjusted (for business organizations in Croatia) and translated questionnaire of the author: Zerfass and Ernst [3] [9]: *Forschungsprojekt "Kommunikation als Erfolgsfaktor im Innovationsmanagement"*. Survey was done using Google Forms and it was sent via email. The target groups were CEOs of the communication organizational units (N = 202). The questionnaire measures communicational determinants of innovative communication management. In a statistic analysis qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were used. Socio-demographic characteristics (independent variables) were examined: *the number of respondents, gender, age, position in the business organization.* Dependent variables are: *information, opinions and attitudes of respondents about the processes and results of these processes in the field of innovative communication.* The questionnaire, translated from the German language / section related to innovative communication /, was sent to the respondents via e-mail. They were given 14-day fulfillment time. The questionnaire was designed with closed-ended questions (Lickert, yes / no) and analyzed using the SPSS program using the following methods: Pearson correlation coefficient, t-value, HI-square test. The aim of the this research was to determine the importance of communication and find which forms in which ways and types of communication are used by their CEO that their organizations become recognized by innovativeness on the market. It has been set a *Hypothesis*: Only specific forms and types of communication stimulate the innovativeness on behalf of communication IT supported management in a business organization.

IV. FINDINGS

Analyzing demographic data of age and gender of respondents (N = 202), it's obviously that 65.3% of respondents are male. The largest number of respondents is in the age group 41 to 50 y.o., i.e., almost half of the respondents are in that age group, which points to the greater part of the CEOs responsible for innovative communication work. The employees have a rich business experience and business excellence, so younger employees can learn from their business experience in the field of innovative communication.

TABLE 1. THE MOST IMPORTANT INNOVATIVE PROCEDURES FOR A BUSINESS ORGANIZATION (N = 202)

	Total			1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	5,00
	N	M	SD	%	%	%	%	%
Originality and recognition of our products / services on the market	202	3,44	1,39	15,8%	8,9%	17,8%	30,7%	26,7%
Teamwork	202	3,60	1,39	13,4%	9,4%	15,3%	27,7%	34,2%
Possibility of employee interaction (interpersonal relations)	202	3,62	1,31	9,9%	11,9%	16,3%	30,2%	31,7%
Flexible Leadership	202	3,53	1,38	12,4%	14,9%	10,9%	31,2%	30,7%
Mission and vision	202	3,54	1,40	13,9%	9,9%	18,3%	23,8%	34,2%
Reputation / image of a business organization	202	3,54	1,47	16,3%	10,4%	12,4%	24,8%	36,1%
Two-way communication processes	202	3,53	1,38	12,9%	12,9%	12,9%	30,7%	30,7%
Processes that "Bring" Innovation	202	3,48	1,34	10,9%	14,9%	18,3%	27,2%	28,7%
Awarding	202	3,11	1,31	13,9%	20,3%	25,2%	22,3%	18,3%
Availability of information	202	3,33	1,19	7,9%	16,3%	29,2%	27,7%	18,8%
Risk capability	202	3,00	1,14	9,9%	22,3%	38,6%	16,8%	12,4%

Also, 35.6% examined CEOs think that *innovation of any kind is of great importance in their workplace*, suggesting that all business organizations have to put innovation as their main goal and recognition in their basic postulates (vision, mission).

The strategic importance of innovation has been tested by association terms of providing key words to respondents about innovative activities of their business organization (proactivity, change, market competition, imagination, innovation, creativity): What associates you in the innovative actions in your business organization? "Creativity", was the most important term chosen by 71.78% of the respondents, then followed by term "proactivity" 54.46% (Figure 1) which means that creativity and proactiveness directly contribute to innovation processes and the advancement of these processes through communication.

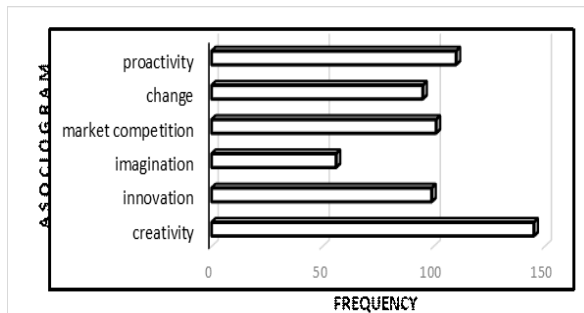


Figure 1. Asociogram innovation and creativity (N = 202)

Table 1 shows that "team work" and "mission and vision" (34.2%) and "reputation of a business organization" (36.1%) were selected as the most important forms of innovation procedures for a business organization. Other offered statements were: originality and recognition of our products on the market (26.7%), employee interaction possibilities (interpersonal relations) 31.7%, flexible leadership (30.7%), two-way communication (30.7%), innovation-generating processes (28.7%), awarding (18.3%), availability of information (18.8%), risk capability (12.4%).

Table 2 shows the attitude of the respondents towards the goals of innovative communication. Cost reduction (66, 83%) and customer satisfaction (45.54) were statistically significantly selected, which does not surprise, because respondents were from the five major Croatian business organizations (telecommunications, energetic).

TABLE 2. GOALS THAT BUSINESS ORGANIZATION WANTS TO ACHIEVE THROUGH SYNERGY OF THE INNOVATIVE PROCESS AND COMMUNICATION WITH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS (N = 202)

Goals	f	%
expense reduction	135	66,83%
career guidance (specialization)	32	15,84%
speed and strategic flexibility	66	32,67%
traffic growth	75	37,13%
risk reduction	46	22,77%
higher quality	83	41,09%
faster way to market	37	18,32%
customer satisfaction	92	45,54%
reduction of investment costs	36	17,82%
employee satisfaction	17	8,42%

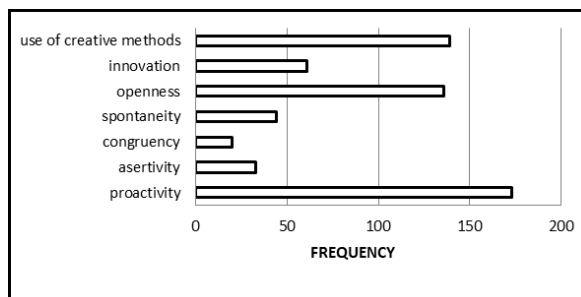


Figure 2. The most important terms describing innovative communication procedures (N = 202)

In order to get a closer look of the thinking direction of respondents (N = 202), they were offered with terms which in their opinion most described innovative communications (Figure 2). The majority of respondents (f = 173, 85.64%) opted for proactiveness, and at least for congruency (9.90%).

It is good to point out that the notion of using innovative approach give a high degree of consistency ($f = 139, 68, 81\%$) selected as far as possible by the definition of innovative communication. As tested business organizations are trying to invest in strategic activities where innovative communication is an essential factor, a proactive approach (opposite to reactive) is fully consistent with respondents' responses. Proactivity carries the dimension of responsibility for taking risks. Respondents ($N = 202$) also estimate how "...innovative communication in the future will gain importance" (85.6% , $M = 1.14$, $SD = 352$). It also describes readiness of the business organizations involved in the survey to think about the future in a positive and optimistic way. Returning to the basic human ability postulates - thinking of the ability to communicate, respondents believe that innovative communication, as one of the core human activities, through the encouragement of creativity and expressiveness in the working place, with the goal of realizing themselves as a complete person, will greatly contribute to create an image of the successful business organization.

V. CONCLUSION

This article gives a brief insight into innovative communication skills and the impact that it has on their organizations. Data gathering, on 202 participants in 14-day period, was made on the basis of Zerfass and Ernst survey, which was adopted for the purpose of our experiment. Data analysis of dependent variables was made with SPSS in order to determine the importance of communication and find which forms in which ways and types of communication are used by their CEO.

The results can be summarized as follows. Only specific forms and types of communication stimulate the innovativeness on behalf of communication IT supported management in a business organization - i. e. innovative communication (professional, proactive, creativity, innovation, imagination, market competition, development, change) was the initial hypothesis statement which is confirmed. Creativity and proactivity is of great importance to all respondents in order to create inspirational climate and thus create an atmosphere for innovative communication. The innovation procedures and communication skills have to be in synergy in order to design innovative communication at work. Team work, clear mission and vision of the business organization, reputation / image of the business organization, are closely related in order to achieve the main goal: customer satisfaction, cost reduction and market recognition.

The visible effects of the synergy of the innovation procedures and communication skills are reflected in the new form of business organization, efficient and indivisible communication within and outside the business organization, raising reputation and public trust, and introducing new ideas and knowledge. The synergy of innovation and communication is a unique source for business organization efficiency. Innovation can be learned and nurtured as knowledge, skill, encouragement of critical thinking, finding ways and strategies for

innovative communication, creating an inexhaustible source of ideas and creating a positive working environment.

The perception of innovative business organization which were involved in this research, continuously have to improve clearly-defined and market-oriented policies which are supported by all interested stakeholders in society, so they are able to have an image of a successful business organization at the global market. Symbiosis between the innovation procedures and communication skills in a business organization should reflect the organization's strategy and recognition at the market, and in that sense, it is necessary to provide certain resources (communication education), human potential, define strategic knowledge which is essential for success on+ the global market.

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