VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION, ORGANIZATIONAL REPUTATION – A STUDY

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Abstract: *In the present time are managing and decision making highly influenced by Information-Communication Technologies, which are by usage of the specific information systems securing necessary, early and relevant information as inextricable outputs to decision-making activities within individual managing processes. A constant improvement of information-communication technologies and systems are bringing many opportunities in the field of gathering information and monitoring a company, as well as the relation of public to a company and its products. This paper is closely aimed to importance of the influence of information-communication systems to a management of reputation of a company. The management of reputation is very important for a company. It is process for monitoring activities, processes, products, as well as services of company, opinions about it and further endeavour to improve areas with negative feedback. When it comes to organizational communication, landing on the right strategy is no mean feat. In a digital world that is constantly shifting and growing, trying to keep up as a business requires agility and adaptability, as well as an understanding of the latest developments in the corporate communications arena. In an increasingly virtual world, corporate communications look a little different, with an increased emphasis on different mediums like video. This article walks you through how to keep your business' corporate communication up to speed in a digital world.*
Key Words: *COVID-19, Virtual Communication, Technology, Organisation, ICT*

INTRODUCTION

Much has been said about virtual communication, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic when the world faced lockdown and turned towards virtual communication using technology to work and stay in touch. In the Corporate Communications. An International Journal (CCIJ), we had a special issue this year on digital transformation with papers showing the effects of lockdown and remote work on employee satisfaction, interpersonal communication and the world of work generally. In previous issues, we also tackled the issue of interpersonal communication and social listening as well as listening in the context of listening to the public and their concerns. These issues argued that we need to listen to one another to communicate effectively and build relationships as well as that digital transformation needs to be run by humans, for the humans and it needs a heart. Issue 28.4 particularly focused on the notion of interpersonal communication and social listening arguing that interpersonal communication is a distinctive form of human communication involving elements such as relationship management, which can be done both

online and face-to-face. However, one issue that is hotly debated, albeit not always in the CCIJ, is the issue of trust, which becomes particularly relevant with the rise of virtual communication where everyone can share any information, at any time. Truth and post-truth became much-debated topics because claims have been made that we live in a post-truth society and in a society where virtual communication can influence people's careers and livelihoods because many organisations are willing to dismiss people who communicate something on social media that goes against organisational values. COVID-19 happened suddenly in December 2019 and quickly spread across the world, with January 2020 bringing a health emergency declaration by the World Health Organization (WHO).

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ENABLING VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION

Throughout this blog, we talked multiple times about the role of technology in enabling virtual communication in
organizations. Moreover, without the right set of communication tools, it is impossible to make remote work *work*. Creating a virtual working environment in which employees are connected, well-informed, engaged, and productive is challenging but absolutely necessary for ensuring business continuity and company success.

Employee engagement platforms like Haiilo can help you

- ❖ Create and distribute hyper-personalized content your people will want to read
- ❖ Send timely information while avoiding information overload
- ❖ Reach every worker with critical information regardless of their

nature of work (mobile-first communication)
- ❖ Provide a central collaboration hub where people can create, store, and access critical documents in a matter of seconds
- ❖ Enable everyone to stay connected via intuitive chat
- ❖ Integrate with other workplace tech stack
- ❖ Help managers and leaders collect critical feedback from their employees and get valuable insights for improvement

Main channels of corporate communication

This comes down to *who* you're communicating with. In this social media age, major platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are serious players within external corporate communication. Other media outlets and publications are also important considerations, especially if you're trying to nurture a strong relationship with the media and press. On an internal scale, you'll probably be using email to communicate with your employees. From a COVID perspective, in a world where remote working is becoming the norm rather than the exception, digital and online channels have a newly pronounced importance too.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION
Social media

The social media channels are an essential avenue for your external communications. Not only is a strong social media presence necessary for reaching a wider audience, but you're able to engage closely and instantly with your community in a way that just wasn't possible before.

Advertisements & marketing campaigns

Advertisement and marketing campaigns are exemplary of external corporate communication. You'll see some overlap nowadays with social media, since most brands run their campaigns and marketing across the major platforms for maximum exposure. Ad and marketing campaigns can consist of anything and everything, from traditional billboards, marketing emails and newsletters, to TikToks and Instagram reels. Although different, all of these marketing materials come under the umbrella of corporate communication.

CONFERENCES & EVENTS (in person and online)

Running branded conferences and events builds traction around your business and helps you to connect directly with your audiences. Whether you're running an online webinar, conference, or an in-person event, this helps reinforce your industry expertise, build chatter around your latest news, and reach new audiences.

Website copy

Believe it or not, the copy on your website is a huge part of your external communications. This is how visitors to your website build their first impression of your business, who you are, and what you do.

Press releases & press conferences

Press releases provide media outlets and the press with the key facts surrounding a recent development within your business. This could be a product launch or an achievement of some sort. These aren't intended for the 'general public', but rather media professionals who will rework it into something of interest for their respective publications.

About Virtual Communication and Its Emergence

Virtual communication is any communication that happens over technology rather than in person. Such communication can happen in real-time (synchronously) and asynchronously. Today, there are plenty of ways to communicate virtually in the workplace. Via video conferencing tools, emails, instant messaging solutions, or using other employee communication and collaboration apps. With the emergence of remote and hybrid work, virtual communication has become the main mean of communication for many organizations and employees across the world. Moreover, this number is projected to keep growing in the future as most employees prefer working remotely. According to the latest research by Buffer, an astonishing 97% of people would recommend remote work to others, 90% of people rate their remote working experience as positive, and 72% are already a part of a fully remote or remote-first work environment.

Virtual Teams and Remote Working

According to the author Linack and Stamps, a virtual team is a group of people working across time and space and organizational boundaries using technology to communicate and collaborate. As such, virtual teams allow organizations to bring together people with the best expertise, regardless of where they live.

The number of people engaged in virtual work continues to rise each year:

➢ In their 2018 survey, Flexjobs found that there had been a 22 percent increase in telecommuting from 2017 to 2018.

- Owl Labs' 2019 remote workers report found that 54 percent of U.S. workers work remotely at least once a month, 48 percent work remotely at least once a week, and 30 percent work remotely full-time.
- Global Workplace Analytics claims that remote working grew 173 percent between 2005 and 2018.

Virtual teams can consist of professionals who work from home full-time or part-time, others who take part in mobile work or people who work at a remote location.

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

Corporate communication is an umbrella term that covers all communications carried out, shared, and published by a business. These communications can be aimed at either an internal or external audience, and can range from mundane company memos, everyday social media posts to big-scale, big-investment corporate advertising campaigns.

Internal corporate communications are generally aimed at an organization's employees and existing personnel. By contrast**,** external corporate communication is designed for stakeholders and audiences outside of the business. This means customers, the general public, the media, and even regulatory bodies such as government agencies.

In a virtual world, corporate communication strategies look a little bit different. The proliferation of social media means that most companies now have a serious presence across the major platforms and this is shifting the emphasis from conventional formats to more 'digital friendly' mediums like video.

CHALLENGES FOR VIRTUAL TEAMS

Working in a virtual team presents many challenges. When you can't see your colleagues face-to-face, and you don't have the social interactions that build relationships and rapport, it can be difficult to establish trust.If it isn't managed correctly, this lack of trust can undermine everything that the team is trying to achieve. Another major challenge is communication, especially when a remote team includes members from different countries and cultures. It can also be harder to pick up the visual cues that make communication flow, even when you're using video. Finally, it can be more difficult to voice your opinion in a virtual team, and it can be harder to resolve team conflict.

Relationship Building in Virtual Teams

When you work in a virtual team, it's important to make an extra effort with relationships. An important part of establishing relationships with teammates is building and maintaining trust. Trust evolves differently in virtual teams. In an office setting, colleagues build relationships and trust through social interaction and collaborative work. Researchers call this benevolent or interpersonal trust. However, in a virtual team, colleagues build trust through reliability, consistency, and responsiveness – this is called ability-based, or task-based trust. To build trust, start by keeping your word. If you agree on a deadline, or you make a promise to call a teammate, follow it up. When you demonstrate your integrity and work ethic, your team members will learn that they can rely on you.

Finally, be sensitive to your colleagues in different time zones. If a meeting is scheduled early or late in their

region, keep in mind that they might be less vocal or engaged than other team members. Try to schedule a meeting that suits everyone or, at least, causes the least amount of disruption.

KEY POINTS

➢ Virtual teams are increasingly common. Although this form of work can be productive and efficient, it may also present challenges.

➢ Communication barriers, feelings of isolation, and a lack of rapport are all common in virtual teams.

➢ You can work successfully within a virtual team by communicating clearly and honestly with your colleagues. Keep your promises, and respond promptly to their requests or needs.

➢ Connect with colleagues through social media and other remote working tools. If you feel isolated, try to make time to socialize with your team on videoconferencing platforms, or meet with friends if possible.

CONCLUSSION

The results showed that new hires wanted more basic details about their upcoming virtual on boarding experience, such as when the training will start, how they receive their work communicate on social media something perceived as against organisational values and/or reputational risk. We know that even not mentioning the organisation on the social media profile and having a disclaimer can still get employees dismissed if they communicate something an organisation does not agree with, which again brings back the issue that digital communication must work for humans. Communicating for the sake of promotion and reputation of management leads to mistrust, and with public opinion already showing anti-business orientation and attitudes,

accompanied by the rise of populist factions who try to exploit people's emotions, this means we need virtual communication led by humans that also works for humans, and thus, organisations should communicate with their public sincerely and consistently. Ultimately, COVID-19 may have not been a reputational risk for organisations as they did not cause the pandemic, but it impacted the lives of the public in more ways imaginable; thus, organisations should pay attention to what matters to the public and communicate regardless of whether there is a reputation increase from the communication happening or not. In other words, organisations should communicate consistently, genuinely and sincerely if they want to (re) gain the trust of their public.

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