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Corporate Communication: New Trends

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Corporate Communication: New Trends

ABSTRACT

Corporate communication is all communication actions that aim to promote the image of the company towards its customers and its various partners. It is carried out both internally and externally and relies on the same media and non-media tools as advertising. But in the age of digital, corporate communication is called more than ever to reinvent itself. Indeed, customers did not have many ways to access to the information and communication. That is because the media was merely the main option for transmission, understanding and mobilization of public opinion. What is business communication? What are its goals and ambitions? How can a company make use of communication? How it can continue to exist and sustain in a highly competitive environment? What are the new trends in communication? What are the new ways of research in communication? What about Moroccan companies and how do they adapt to the demands of digital? What is the profile of today's Moroccan communicator? These are the questions that this study attempts to answer.

Keywords: Corporate Communications, Emerging Trends, Digital, Social Media, Moroccan Enterprises, Internal Communication.

Introduction

Corporate communication is all communication actions that aim to promote the image of the company towards its customers and its various partners. It is carried out both internally and externally and relies on the same media and non-media tools as advertising.

But in the age of digital, corporate communication is called more than ever to reinvent itself. Indeed, although the digital landscape varies from one continent to another and from one generation of Internet users to another, customers did not have many ways to access to the information and communication. That is because the media was merely the main option for transmission, understanding and mobilization of public opinion.

It is therefore notorious to change minds knowing that the corporate reputation is no longer the exclusive prerogative of the company and its official spokespersons. From there, companies must seize new opportunities to build trust and protect their reputations.

What is business communication? What are its goals and ambitions? How can a company make use of communication? How it can continue to exist and sustain in a highly competitive environment? What are the new trends in communication? What are the new ways of research in communication? What about Moroccan companies and how do they adapt to the demands of digital? What is the profile of today's Moroccan communicator?

These are the questions that this study attempts to answer; the objective would be to take an analytical look at the new communication trends of organizations. It will focus on the presentation and discussion of the results of a study conducted in 2016 by the Moroccan Association of Internal Communication (MACOM'IN) in collaboration with the Opinion Center of Inergie[1]. This is an inventory of the "internal communication" function in Morocco.

Corporate Communication

Corporate communication is different from brand communication in the sense of promoting and giving more value to the organization than to the products or services. We can also talk about "communication function", that is institutional communication or corporate communication.

Corporate Communication: The Goals

Corporate communication covers a set of structures and procedures that allow is to:

- To situate itself and within its environment,

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[1] 2016 MACOM'IN - INERGIE barometer of the internal communication function in Morocco, March 2016, see https://macomin.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/marc_function_bar_bar_2016.pdf, accessed March 12, 2018.

- To ensure a role of sending, listening and exchanging messages,
- To adapt the company's project, products and procedures to opportunities, constraints, crises and threats emanating from its environment,
- To influence the representations and behaviours of its internal and external partners.

At present, the communication function is part of the corporate structure which is the same as commercial function. It is a key factor in organizational development.

Corporate Communication: New Trends

In the digital era, a company is not responsible for its own reputation. With the development of new information and communication technologies (NICT) and the emergence of social networks, a company is called more than ever to innovate, seize opportunities to satisfy the needs of its customers and continue to sustain.

The Digital Era

The Digital communication is not only limited to the digitization of information media, but also extends to corporate communication and considers it as an entire ecosystem, an environment that encompasses and acts on the three dimensions of digital, to know: the web, social media, and mobile devices.

Figure 1. *The Dimensions of the Digital*

The Digital				
The Web	+	Social media	+	Mobile devices
Company Website		Facebook, Twitter, YouTube…		Smartphones, Tablets…
Dematerialization		Interaction		Tactile
The information is available online		The information is alive		The information is easy to access

In the digital era, corporate communication, and especially event communication, is reinventing itself. Currently, for each event is created a Digital Event (literally "digital event"), which is an online space dedicated to an event. This platform pools all the necessary tools for an event in one and the same space.

The Digital Event makes it possible to overcome geographical barriers, federate employees through a dedicated discussion area and raise awareness of events around various contents (Videos, articles, quizzes ...).

Although the digital landscape varies from one continent to another or between generations of Internet users, citizens have never had many means of

information and expression since the media has been the main transmission, understanding and mobilization of public opinion.

Today, more than one in two peoplehave a mobile phone with Internet access. It is therefore notorious to change the mind sets of who knows that the corporate reputation is no longer the exclusive prerogative of the company and its official spokespersons. Thence, companies must seize new opportunities to build trust and protect reputation.

The Reputation of the Company

The reputation can be associated with the "perceived image" defined by J-J Lambin[2]. "The true image" would be then the reputation of an organization as perceived by its members while "The desired image" would be the image projected by the organization to its audience. "Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room,"[3] said Jeff Bezos, Founder and President of Amazon.

Potential causes of risk that affect the reputation of a company include the so-called "classic" factors such as: embezzlement, fraud, corruption, industrial accidents, computer security failures or still sometimes conflicting relationships with third parties.

At present, the company is no longer 100% responsible for its own reputation. Several examples confirm this, just to mention the serious crisis that the Volkswagen group is going through lately.

In September 2015, the group finally confessed to having cheated on the actual rates of emission of gaseous pollutants. In the space of a few days, the myth of "green" diesel and German quality is under suspicion. Many online petitions, consumer complaints and dealer events have proliferated around the world.

With the emergence of the social Web, the e-reputation of the company is gradually facing a multiplication of speeches from actors previously deprived of means to be heard, in a discordant manner, if not resolutely opposed.

Social Media

The role of traditional communication tools has become increasingly obsolete. Social media now occupies our daily lives to varying degrees. Having a Facebook or Twitter account is not fashionable at the moment. There are more than 2 billion active users around the world.

In addition to ensuring the availability of information at all times to consumers, the real benefits of social media are perceived in the applications

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[2]Jean Jacques Lambin, Quoted in "Reputation, Branding and Notoriety: What Meanings?", 2009, See http://caddereputation.over-blog.com/article-36423098.html, accessed March 10, 2018.

[3]Jeff Bezos, quoted in "8 tendencies communication 2016 - between trust to (re) build and reputation to protect: issue n ° 1 communicators", see https://fr.linkedin.com/pulse/tendances-communication-2016 -between-trust-% C3% A0-and-n1-olivier, Accessed March 10, 2018.

they offer. Internal ads are often made on social media as we continue to apply NICTs. And these apps are all accessible on mobile devices.

Internal Communication

Internal communication encompasses all acts of communication that occur within a company. It performs multiple functions: expose (results, balance sheet), transmit (information, knowledge, a job ...) and explain (a new direction, the safety instructions ...).

Communicate within the company is to inform the employees of the different tasks to be performed, inform them of the economic situation of the company, Cooperate to solve problems, collaborate to ensure a high profit margin, guarantee the dissemination of information, create a climate of mutual understanding and trust and accompany effectively a change in the life of the company.

Recently, the role of internal communication has become more complex. It can no longer be content to be the tool for transmitting information from the hierarchy to all employees. Its real stake is that of the adhesion of the collaborators to the company and its values. The objective: to encourage them to invest and therefore motivate them.

The main specificity of the internal communication is not in the technique used but in the target of it. It is not a matter of convincing a customer but of giving an employee the desire and the means to work well. The objective is to satisfy the employee so that he appreciates his work, feels integrated and is fully aware of his need at the heart of a structure.

Companies are increasingly considering their employees as their first customers; not because they are consumers but also because through them the image of the entire company is reflected. Isn't it said that in IBM a satisfied employee gives a satisfied customer?

Moroccan Research in Communication of Organizations

In Morocco, research in communication organizations remains embryonic. It still lags behind the scientific advances observed in the West.

Apart some Masters, research axes defined by the scientific research laboratories and electronic journals like those of IMIST (SLC, LCS, RI ...), few studies have been conducted around and on corporate communication.

To take stock of what the research in Morocco in communication of organizations refers to, we will present and discuss the results of a reference study is conducted at the end of 2015, beginning of 2016 by the Moroccan Association of Internal Communication (MACOM'IN) in collaboration with the Opinion Center of Inergie. This is an inventory of the internal communication function in Morocco.

The Profile of the Moroccan Communicator

It emerges from this study that the profile of the Moroccan communicator is very particular, it is distinguished especially by:

- Its feminization: the function is much feminized. About 3/4 of Moroccan communicators are women against and only 1/4 of men. In fact, the overwhelming majority of professionals who take Master's courses in Corporate Communication Management are female-dominated.
- Its youth: the function is rather young with an average age around 35 years old. The profession is just beginning to set its sights in the Moroccan private sector, especially in large companies and multinationals.
- Its experience: graduate of a Higher School in Communication, Marketing or Business, the Moroccan communicator often has a convincing experience in another function (especially in Marketing).

The Internal Communication Function

According to the same study, the internal communication function is distinguished by the fact that it is:

- A double function: a function usually coupled to the external communication. In other words, the person in charge of the communication manager takes care of the two parts. (More than 50% of Communicators perform the dual mission). This explains the lack of staff and specialization within the Communication Department.
- A Cell attached mostly to the General Management (Nearly half of the cells depend on General Management and nearly a third of the cells are dependent on the HRD), which means that the Communication Department is a transversal unit that works under the auspices of the General Management and who oversees all the Directorates.
- A cell with substantial resources: nearly 2/3 of the cells have a budget for internal communication. Resources that will be used in carrying out the actions of the communication plan.
- A team usually composed of 2 to 4 people. A team that remains understaffed given the missions and tasks assigned to it.
- An objectified function: the majority of communication cells now function by objectives. In fact, the development of communication plans begins with the formulation of general and specific SMART objectives.
- More digital media: beyond the place given to relational and display, a large part of the media used are digital. Thus, 3 out of 4 companies have Intranets or internal blogs. Similarly, more than one in two companies has an internal newsletter. As for the subjects discussed, they are more focused on the activity of the company than on men. Priority is given to internal projects (16%), objectives and strategy (15%) or products and services (15%) to the detriment of the place given to employees (12%) or the HR

policy (9%). %). Finally, 43% of the companies surveyed use agencies for the technical realization of specific media[4].

Results that confirm the weight of centralization that still prevails in large Moroccan companies. The majority of internal communication media (Internal Journal, Newsletter, Briefs ...) focus on the action of the leaders instead of dealing with the social life of the company (arrivals, departures, births ...) and contain a section which gives voice to employees through interviews, open forums, classifieds, testimonials ...

Obstacles and Brakes related to the Development of Communication

Among the obstacles and obstacles that hinder the development of communication within Moroccan companies, we find: the conservation of the information, the partitioning, the difficulty to involve Managers in the decision-making process, the insufficiency of means, and the heaviness of the validation circuits.

As a result, the study's respondents are developing a series of recommendations mainly related to:

- To explore new tools related to digital development,
- To situate the internal communication at the same rank as the external communication,
- To promote a culture of information sharing to be deployed throughout the hierarchy,
- To work for a better social cohesion based on the listening and the implication of the collaborators,
- To train Managers in communication,
- To organize COOCs (Corporate Open Online Course) for the benefit of employees.

Recommendations that remain, in our view, legitimate given the importance that begins to occupy the communication in a national professional environment, more precisely within large and Moroccan SMEs.

Conclusion

The employees are today actors of the company. It is no longer possible to mobilize them without keeping them informed about economic, financial, social, political, ethical and cultural objectives.

The staff's needs have increasingly developed in the field of information. Nowadays, the successful agents make the winning companies and the more the involvement is real, the more the participation is effective. It is therefore

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[4]2016 MACOM'IN – INERGIE, 2016, Op.cit.

very important for employees to have reference points in terms of image. This allows them to integrate easily and give the company an identity of its own.

For its part, external communication plays a fundamental role in the creation and maintenance of image as well as the reputation of a company. It is through external communication actions that partners, customers and prospects forge their opinion and their attitude towards the company.

It is therefore essential that an organization can offer a positive image based on experience, competence and innovation, tools for building awareness.

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