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Lea Dostanić¹

Faculty of Business, Belgrade, Singidunum University, Serbia

CONTEMPORARY BUSINESS: WHEN COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE MEET

ABSTRACT: As cultures in contact are inevitable, we tried to emphasise that the readiness to maintain intercultural communication is essential for survival in a world as globalised as it is today. Due to the inevitable changes that have taken place in the field of modern business, the application of information and communication technologies contributes significantly in areas such as competitive advantages, quality of services and products, and overall corporate activities. In this regard, it is necessary to completely reset attitudes and mentality from the past and change how companies communicate inside and outside their walls with employees, clients, suppliers, and interested parties. As essential for achieving a fruitful outcome, willingness and motivation to understand and get to know the culture with which one cooperates is almost indispensable. To promote a true spirit of collaboration, companies must first recognise communication's strategic role in their management, implementing a well-defined global communication plan that includes external and internal communication strategies. This approach is vital to establish genuine cooperation between the associates who make up and give life to the organisation. Above all, it is crucial to have a relationship between them and create an effective and efficient communication channel. Therefore, organisations must take an active role in collaboration and knowledge management.

¹ lea.dostanic.16@singimail.rs

Key words: Information and Communication Technology, Intercultural Communication, External Communication, Internal Communication

INTRODUCTION

As a consequence of modern globalisation, we are witnessing the meeting of different cultures in modern intercultural business, that is the meeting of different people from different cultures and identities, both organisational management styles and communication. In this connection, questions concerning intercultural patterns of behaviour and business, as an imperative of communication, were raised. In a modern successful business, knowledge of intercultural communication is necessary for a fruitful and efficient outcome of negotiations and nurturing good business relations (Thomas et al., 2010). Undoubtedly, we live in the communication era, and knowing how to manage it can contribute to the company's progress towards intentionality regarding its services or products.

In today's market, it is undeniably essential for businesses to manage communication with the various stakeholders they interact with, directly and indirectly. However, this attempt to be more open to the environment and form relationships that will bear fruit in the medium- and long-term needs to be revised to achieve the planned success and the proposed goals. Regardless of their position in the hierarchy or the variety of functional areas in which they work, every employee in the organisation should be on the same page, have similar values, and strive for the same goals. Organisations must undertake various internal communication initiatives to achieve this. Communication plays a crucial role in encouraging workers' cooperation and exchanging information.

Through interaction and the creation of information flows, organisational communication has enabled companies to enter the market and properly develop their various activities. The trend of communication in companies and the use of new technologies facilitates the creation of new work organisations following the business needs of the 21st century. It contributes to the achievement of organisational goals and the creation of new forms of cooperation

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND MODERN TECHNOLOGIES: THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN BUSINESS

Organisational communication is a field of human knowledge that studies how the process occurs within and between organisations. (Jokanović et al., 2019) The emergence of this discipline is relatively recent, since the first serious and systematic attempts to develop it, as well as the first publications on this topic, date from the 1970s - during those years, even associations of experts in organisational communication, which undoubtedly gave a significant impetus to this field not only in the generation of knowledge through research but also in the application of this knowledge in organisations (Mumby, 1893). Since the 1980s, especially in the 1990s, interculturality has become topical due to various factors, including globalisation and growing immigration in Europe and the United States (Martin et al., 2012). Nevertheless, it is based on shared experience: talking to people of another mother tongue is also talking to people of another culture. The economy is currently one of the most important pillars at the global level, which is why companies strive to internationalise their products and services. To achieve this, organisations must understand the market they want to enter and research the culture and communication in the target country (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). Namely, intercultural communication, as a branch of science, focuses on studying how different cultures communicate using different languages (Teme, 2013).

According to Sahadevan and Sumangala's (2021) research, several key elements contribute to the establishment of effective communication in intercultural business, namely:

1. Adhere to etiquette - adhere to cultural norms and patterns of behaviour characteristic of the target culture.

2. Do not draw conclusions based on the culture from where we are - Managers must understand and differentiate between the personality and the culture from which the employees come. Understanding cultural stereotypes can help prevent conflicts.

3. Understanding transactional analysis so that interlocutors will become more aware of themselves - It helps to determine the interlocutor's ego state. It contributes to the understanding of behaviour in different situations and conflict management. Eric Berne developed this method and contributed to adapting and understanding communication styles.

4. Understanding the thoughts, feelings and experiences of other people and gradually assimilating another culture, way of life and language into one's own - Social cognition involves understanding the mental states and experiences of others, overcoming misunderstandings and stereotypes.

5. Paying attention to non-verbal communication - It plays a critical role in intercultural communication because, in the research conducted, 94% of respondents answered that non-verbal communication is an essential link in the business world (Gerald et al., 1991 in Ibrahim et al., 2022). Likewise, it is worth noting that 75% of communication is non-verbal communication (Razak et al., 2019).

6. Accepting the stress factor in the context of intercultural communication - Employees should also accept this attitude and not take all reactions personally; in this regard, experience teaches them to adapt and manage effectively, have realistic expectations and equip themselves with fundamental intercultural skills.

7. Mutual respect and promotions based on merit - Companies that foster a multicultural work environment focus on conflict resolution and respect among employees, including them in decision-making and involvement in the company's processes.

8. The importance of training on interculturality - Contributing to employees to broaden their horizons, adapting to a multicultural environment, cultural empathy, communication skills, avoiding misunderstandings and developing an effective and healthier environment.

9. The importance of creative thinking in multicultural corporations - This way of thinking, fostered by companies like *Apple* and *Microsoft*, contributes to overcoming traditional thinking patterns and promotes innovation to solve more complex problems.

10. Being an inclusive communicator. It means respecting the interlocutor's background, i.e. cultural origin, avoiding assumptions and promoting diversity.

11. Interpersonal interaction to build relationships - Detachment from conversation contributes to a better understanding of intercultural perspectives, fostering group roles. Share stories, use the "echo effect", and learn about different cultures to start new conversations.

12. Ethical communication in different cultures - Companies need to decide how to deal with the ethical attitudes of different cultures. However, it should be done in a way that does not reinforce the patterns of discrimination that prevail in that country. It is called the "moral minimum" of the ethical standard (Thomas Donaldson, 1991). (Sahadevan & Sumangala 2021).

It is known that we live in the age of relationships and communications. Therefore, this topic is of great importance both personally and professionally. The work is done between two interested parties and can only be done if these two parties understand each other. The topic of communication is vast because all human activities take place through communication, whether written, verbal or non-verbal. A company must at least train in intercultural business communication if it wants to

internationalise its products or services because the success of its business depends on it. Any company trying to enter a foreign market must educate its employees about the culture of the country in question. In order to gain advantages in negotiations, it is essential to pay attention not only to the culture from where we are, language and traditions but also to the culture of the interlocutor. Recognition of intercultural communication has been increasing in recent years, which has led to organisations, companies, and institutions training managers and employees in intercultural communication skills to be able to manage business relationships successfully.

Due to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), most of the activities carried out in organisations have experienced a gradual and profound change because "a high level of information technologies also increases the satisfaction of employees whose nature of work is such that they depend on information technologies.", and above all, the interlocutors are more satisfied with the outcome of the communication (Mitić, 2016). The application of ICT contributes to achieving competitive advantage, staying on the market, strategically focusing on business activities, redefining the scope of business activities and strengthening competitiveness (Parida et al., 2019). However, each company uses such technologies differently based on its characteristics, considering several factors, such as the organisation's culture, leadership, mission or shared vision. It is worth noting that the use of ICT in itself enables significant benefits for the reason that "the application of ICT alone enables large savings in the business, improves the quality of products and services provided, shortens the time required for the execution of work and reduces administration, and there are already several used for the transformation of internal and external business processes for decades." (Stankić & Stojković, 2019) In this regard, the work of managers should be aimed at eliminating errors and introducing ICT in the company. Moreover, there must be a complete reset of the attitudes and mentality of the past: changing how companies communicate inside and outside their walls with employees, customers, suppliers and stakeholders in general. Ultimately, it is a question of cultural change in the company, which is achieved by modifying the habits of the people who are part of it (Shachaf, 2008). The "network company", whose terminology is a consequence of the application of Baran's theory (1962), was created due to the introduction and use of the Internet in all areas and at all levels of the organisation. Therefore, a network company is one that, using the Internet for information processing, works on its proper adaptation to the environment. In this way, it can be concluded that the network company is a flexible organisation of economic activity constituted around specific business projects implemented by networks of different compositions and origins (Mrđa, 2008). The use of the network in the company has multiple functionalities such as creativity, innovation and

space for greater efficiency of communication and collaboration in the 21st-century company and better coordination between the different components of the value chain (ibid). We live in a time where to survive, it is necessary to communicate faster, increasingly effectively, which will contribute to not being left out. "It is reasonable to assume that the impact of IT on how companies communicate will, in turn, affect the nature of relationships. Therefore, social exchange is important for establishing long-term relationships of trust." (Leek et al., 2003).

Due to the importance that this field of knowledge has recently acquired, its approaches, perspectives, and all of them can be highlighted: communication business, corporate communication, corporate behaviour, corporate image, company culture, internal communication, external communication, comprehensive communication, where they are team "Information technologies reduced the depth of the organisation, abolished hierarchy, contributed to faster and better functioning of all types of management because it enables faster, but also better communication with colleagues (Martinović, 2012). "In the Internet economy, the highest hierarchical level knows, i.e. knowledge workers." (ibid.) By implementing "technologically more efficient equipment, the number of employees' obligations is reduced, efficiency is increased, which increases the business economy, free time is increased, business processes are humanised, and the satisfaction of employees and other actors who directly or indirectly participate in the business chain is increased." (ibid.). In this regard, it is important to point out that communication in the company is present in all fields of business, which is an indispensable segment of survival and a comprehensive management mechanism. (Mrđa, 2008). Company communication "refers to communication between people whose desires and goals are much more complex than economic interests, and the results of this are that the company strives to achieve financial and non-financial goals, with the fact that their relative importance is different for each company and changes over time." (Mrđa, 2008). Communication in the company can be internal or external (Dobrijević, 2011). External communication analyses the information the organisation exchanges with various interest groups outside it, including competitors, consumers, investors, the media and others (Dobrijević, 2011). Therefore, we can say that it builds its image and its relationship with stakeholders. Internal communication refers to communication within communication, that is, between employees and higher and lower managers, that is, between all members at all levels within the organisation (Dobrijević, 2008). It contributes to strengthening corporate culture, reducing insecurity and motivating employees (ibid.). It thus achieves a favourable climate, better productivity and better cooperation within the organisation. In this regard, modern technologies make various

tools available to organisations to promote collaboration. New technologies for improving business enable organisations to work and collaborate, "in this sense, the right combination of virtual and physical space can lead to increased productivity and reduced costs without losing the uniqueness of the organisation and employee motivation." Innovative leaders have already recognised that information technologies and the Internet enable employees to be mobile, work with colleagues remotely and across time zones, and perform tasks in different forms and outside the traditional office. These opportunities save money, increase work flexibility, make the best use of their assets and improve employee productivity through creativity, knowledge sharing, teamwork and collaboration." (Đorđević Boljanović & Dobrijević, 2014).

HOW TO OVERCOME IMPOSED CHALLENGES IN COMMUNICATION

It is worth mentioning initially that politeness and face are something we must take care of in intercultural business communication. However, it depends on the people and the country we negotiate with. Authors such as Brown and Levinson (1987) propose two categories of politeness: positive: It is associated with sociability and solidarity and negative: refers to freedom of choice, as well as acceptance and expression of diversity. In order to highlight the importance of the politeness strategies used and interpreted by negotiators from different cultures, people in charge of international negotiations must develop intercultural communication skills. A negotiator must understand the interlocutor's language, forms and cultural traditions to succeed in negotiations. Intercultural business communication is crucial because employees have the ability to work with people from different cultures and effectively with partners located anywhere in the world, in addition to building trust with clients and even creating relationships with new clients. It is a beneficial step for any organisation because it maintains business relations with partners anywhere in the world and internationalises the company (Thomas et al., 2010). It takes work to train company employees in intercultural communication. In addition to the employees' will, skills must be acquired to facilitate the training process. Intercultural competence is "the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to act effectively communicatively in accordance with the multiple identities of the participants" (Piršl, 2013). However, it is essential to remember that effective communication does not imply wholly controlled communication without problems of understanding.

According to communication theory, perfect communication is complicated, even between people of the same culture. People interpret messages per their knowledge, that is, their perception, and how successfully they manage the information at their disposal (Schiuma, 2012). Namely, some experts believe that there are two main approaches to the development of intercultural competence: the social skills approach and the holistic approach. The first mentioned, a model of a native speaker, aims to convince a person to behave by the norms and conventions of the respective speech community and become its second member. In this approach, language is considered a barrier to communication between people of different cultures. Another approach, on the other hand, suggests developing certain affective and emotional aspects in the individual. This approach emphasises a unique attitude, sensitivity and empathy towards cultural differences. Only in this way will it be possible to overcome ethnocentrism while preserving one's personality and identity and, by reducing the impact of culture shock, be a mediator between cultures in contact. (Schauer, 2016). In the research conducted by Nardon (2019), three stages were identified in the acquisition of intercultural competence:

1. Monocultural level: A person observes the culture of the object within the limits of his own culture and interprets it according to his own culture.

2. The intercultural level: It implies that a person occupies an intermediate position between his culture and another person's culture, allowing them to compare them.

3. Transcultural level: a person separates himself appropriately from the cultures with which he is in contact in order to act as a mediator between them.

Success in intercultural communication is increasingly important. Escoffier (1991) defined what is necessary for intercultural dialogue to be successful. Namely, when we start the conversation, we must be ready to accept the change. There are no universal positions. Everything is subject to change. It would help if we learned to deal with conflict and the possibility of hurt feelings. Our identities are different from others. Any problem can be solved at any time. Interculturally competent individuals must be able to communicate and connect in interactive and social activities, in which three main areas stand out:

1. Negotiation
2. Communication
3. Joint work.

It facilitates the application of norms and rules that regulate the activity of the country in question. Since we work with people from different

cultures and companies, we will also be able to respond to different needs and situations that may arise. At this point, the acquisition and development of intercultural competence are processes that include learning and development (Deardorff, 2009). Intercultural business communication is crucial because it is a fascinating topic for development in organisations, especially when the main goal is the internationalisation of products or services. For successful negotiation and expansion of the company we represent on a global level, it is necessary to understand the culture of other countries.

Removing barriers, open exchange of information, respect for the professionals who make them, promotion of individual freedom and fair recognition of the merits of each subject are some practices and attitudes that help manage collaboration at work (Glaser, 2007). When information flows in a company in different directions, such as vertical communication up and down, horizontal communication between teams, people or departments of similar rank, and diagonal communication, they encourage collaboration. In order to encourage cooperation in a specific team, it is necessary to analyse its structure and characteristics because teams are different from people. They quickly develop a group personality after joining (Adair, 2008).

CONCLUSION

Edward Hall said that communication is necessary for culture, and culture is communication (1990). In this regard, communication is such a broad topic that it manages to connect with almost everything related to individuals, so every human act must be accompanied by it. The statement that started this paragraph shows that intercultural communication is crucial for business people and anyone who wants to establish and expand business in an intercultural world and tends to internationalise their services. In today's global society, information flows at remarkable celerity, travelling with the click of a mouse from one point to another on the planet. As technologies and the use of the Internet shorten distances and lead to simultaneous events, companies and ways of working undergo changes to enable them to adapt to the new demands of the environment. In this context, when information and knowledge exert such powerful influence and produce significant economic and social changes in short periods, the ability to collaborate in the day-to-day management of work becomes a skill highly valued by organisations and fundamental to the 21st-century worker. It forces companies to keep up with modern changes in business and requires them to implement new platforms and tools that enable collaboration and knowledge management within them. First, we should value and help improve the communication skills of all

employees, especially those in leadership positions. Second, it must recognise and promote collaboration and knowledge sharing so that employees feel motivated to share what they know and what it took them to acquire many years of training and professional experience. However, it must be borne in mind that more than introducing these solutions alone is required to stimulate an actual change in the work of the entities that are part of the organisation nor encourage cooperation.

Moreover, within internal communication, the necessary strategies must be used to create a culture change in which people are placed at the organisation's centre. It is about improving the communication skills of every employed individual who is part of its structure. Ultimately, in the company of the 21st century, communication is the main subject of improving cooperation, thus becoming the key that opens the door to meetings and exchange of ideas and knowledge.

REZIME

KOMUNIKACIJA U SUSRETU KULTURA I TEHNOLOGIJA U SAVREMENOM POSLOVNOM OKRUŽENJU 21. VEKA

Kako su kulture u kontaktu neizbežne, nastojali smo da ukažemo da je spremnost na održavanje interkulturalne komunikacije od suštinskog značaja za opstanak u svetu tako globalizovanom kao što je današnji. Zbog neminovnih promena koje su se desile na polju savremenog poslovanja, primena informaciono-komunikacionih tehnologija doprinose boljitke u polju konkurentске prednosti, kvaliteta usluga i proizvoda, i sveobuhvatnog efikasnijeg i efektivnijeg poslovanja. S tim u vezi, neophodno je potpuno resetovanje stavova i mentaliteta iz prošlosti, promena načina na koji kompanije komuniciraju unutar i izvan svojih zidova, sa zaposlenima, klijentima, dobavljačima i zainteresovanim stranama uopšte. Kako je za plodonosan ishod gotovo neizostavna spremnost i motivisanost da se razume i upozna kultura sa kojom se sarađuje - da bi promovisali istinski duh saradnje, kompanije prvo moraju prepoznati stratešku ulogu koju komunikacija igra u njihovom menadžmentu, sprovodeći dobro definisan globalni komunikacioni plan koji uključuju strategije eksterne i interne komunikacije. Ovaj pristup je neophodan jer, da bi postojala prava saradnja između saradnika koji čine i daju život organizaciji, prva i osnovna stvar je da postoji odnos između svih njih i da se stvaraju efektivan i efikasan kanal komunikacije. Iz tog razloga, organizacije moraju preuzeti aktivnu ulogu kada je u pitanju saradnja i upravljanje znanjem.

Ključne reči: Informaciona i komunikaciona tehnologija, interkulturalna komunikacija, eksterna komunikacija, interna komunikacija

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