Internal Communications and Electronic Mail

M. Arabshahi
Management Department, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran.

Abstract— There is no doubt that electronic mail has led to commercial transaction improvement through all over the world. And there is general agreement about benefits of it. As an example, by e-mail, it is possible to continuously transfer information to many numbers of recipients; some believe that e-mail can transfer information more quickly and easily to any person and any place. This advantage of e-mail leads to a mass of information and on the other hand relying too much on technology and in contrast with face to face communication, it costs more but face to face communication is more effective. Quirke states that challenges facing organizations are in the field of internal communication. According to him, however production of technology leads to increasing communication, but in practice it has created new problem. In fact, internal communication is a kind of receiving coherent information due to more attention to service culture, customer satisfaction and existing conceptions are paid attention. But is e-mail proportional to this conception? Does e-mail help affective internal communication in modern organizations? Or does e-mail have reciprocal efficiency? It is expected that number of e-mails through all over the world in each year increases to 138% that it shows increasing use of e-mail in internal communication.

Keywords- Internal Communication, Electronic Mail (e-mail).

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature review of communications and marketing services inside an average group from social companies of governmental sectors of England shows that in 1980s e-mail was widely considered. Researches and scientists have narrowed down and focused their studies about e-mail on its two important aspects:

1) E-mail is a kind of linguistics or study of language [1].
2) Studies about how to use e-mail in organizations as parts of a wider study of effects of modern media (internet, intranet and e-mail) and internal marketing.

According to following chart, the relationship between effectiveness and internal communications can be shown:

According to the chart of customer loyalty, one of the triggers of development and profit of the organizations is customer satisfaction [2]. And development of customer-oriented culture leads to improvement of interactions between the customer and staff and finally customer satisfaction [3]. Internal marketing activities include development of organizational culture and customer loyalty [4] and in implementation of internal marketing programs the importance of communication is identified [5] and communicative atmosphere plays an important and central role in staff communications [6]. Internal marketing is the philosophy of behavior with staff like customers, and staff like and play an important role in shaping internal strategies of organization and matching company products with human needs [4]. According to view point of e-mail linguistics, there are subjects whether e-mail is a speech or a word or a combination of both. Nowadays e-mail and its richness is discussed as a media. Panteli, N. and Seeley (2004) state that according to Daft, R.L. and Lengel (1984) criteria, the theory of e-mail richness as a written criterion doesn’t fulfill the factors needed for a rich communication. A lot of researches have been done about quantitative and qualitative methods that how people use e-mail in their work or what purposes they prefer to use e-mail, or whether e-mail increases the diversity of informative media used for commerce. But so far no researches have deeply studied the effects of e-mail on internal communications. Most studies done during the years of 1995 to 2004 are related to Young (1995) and Stevens, G. and McElhil (2000) Yale (2003) Bean, B. and
Cano (2003) and De Bussy (2003) works. Some of these case studies have partial and cursory look at e-mail effects on other communicative media. In fact no studies have been deeply focused on e-mail because researchers usually prefer to study e-mail in the combination of other new media. In some results no relationship has been found between e-mail richness and decreasing face to face communications. Stevens, G. and McElhill (2000) state that written communication is not considered as a correct way of gathering data in any situation and best way of staff motivation. Grunig (2002) believes that internal communications would be effective if it is accompanied with dynamic feedback and in the form of face to face communications. Hallowell (1999) also believes that increasing use of e-mail in the organizations leads to alienation of staff from each other and organization.

II. COMMUNICATIVE ATMOSPHERE

A positive communicative atmosphere is made based on a strong relationship between organization and staff; wherever bilateral communications is common, there is reciprocal respect and honesty and relationships based on respect and sense of conformity and empathy [6]. Line managers in each organization according to communicative needs play an important role in motivation and staff loyalty; these managers should give more priority and importance to face to face communications with staff to effectively stimulate them [7]. If staff get enough and useful information about their roles and functions in the organization, they will get customer interpretation of ideals and organizational objectives and this common image definitely leads to more efficiency and profits for the organization. However face to face is commonly used as an internal communicative tool but e-mail is widely used in internal communications. In a field research done by Parkside (2002) research group, it shows that e-mail is known as the highest internal communicative tool by staff. In this study, participants was using e-mail the average of 74 minutes per day and this rising trend to use e-mail in contrast with Gartner study in 2001 shows that the average of using e-mail was 49 minutes per day.

1- EFFECTS OF E-MAIL ON INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

However according to effects of face to face communications from the aspect of stimulation and creating a dynamic context for feedback to staff, e-mail plays an important role in developing internal communications but the role of e-mail in developing communicative atmosphere is not convincing because we compare it with face to face communications. Studies show that however face to face communications encourage open culture in the organization, but e-mail and its usage encourages honesty and openness. The evidence show that e-mail is a kind of e-mail for reflecting the common atmosphere in the organization and is able to effect directly on it so that in the condition of uncertainty and lack of integrity, people prefer more to use e-mail. E-mail plays a key role in helping staff to say their view points to the organizational hierarchy [8].

The investigations show that using e-mail as a tool is a good way for giving feedback to the manager. And when formal mechanisms are limited, e-mail has an important effect on internal communications. But we shouldn’t ignore the positive correlation and strong relationship between effectiveness of line manager communications, because effects of face to face communications on stimulation and empowerment of staff are much more than e-mail ones.

2- THE EFFECT OF E-MAIL ON OBTAINED EXTERNAL VALIDITY

Using e-mail helps successful organizational communications with staff, and it also helps the organization to share low cost and positive advertisement with staff. Effects of e-mail on creating a positive feeling from the performance of organization and identity of organization on staff are obvious and staff state that they like to hear something about the organizational success and e-mail can help them in this case.

III. CONCLUSION

Behaviorism experts consider face to face communications as the strongest communicative way based on honesty and reciprocal respect and motivational factor [9]. From the view point of behaviorists, e-mail is not considered as a medium which have positive effects on internal communications so that some acknowledge e-mail is a strong tool to reflect the negative communicative atmosphere, especially when it is strategically used in key areas. But according to model 1, e-mail can play a logical role in internal communications and effect on performance of organization. Argenti (2003) states that e-mail is a bilateral communicative tool which is related to its usage. Since nowadays staff demand sophisticated communications accompanied with high technology and want to be in contact with their managers, using a communicative tool like e-mail, as an appropriate tool, can help them send a message. Quirke (1995) considers e-mail as a communicative channel in the organization, but there was a contradiction in his words. He considered e-mail as a concept to create awareness and on the other hand he put e-mail in the lowest level of internal communications in the organization. According to him, e-mail just leads to awareness and it is less considered as a collaborative tool in information, then it has some limitations to develop relationships. So effective internal communications need participation and empowerment of staff, because it leads to positive image of organization and customer satisfaction [10]. Nowadays staff as the biggest and
the most important resources of any organization play an important role in customer satisfaction, organizational image and development and profitability, then developing internal communications can be effective on their motivations and empowerment as the most important property. Nowadays in the age of information technology and extent and complexity of organizations, e-mail is an influential element in communications which leads to development of organization. Organizations should use e-mail as a strategic communicative tool to effect on performance.

REFERENCES


Masomeh Arabshahi received the B. Sc degree in the M. Sc degree in business management from the Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran in 2004 and the M. Sc degree in business management again from the Ferdowsi University of Mashhad in 2007. Currently she has a Ph. D student in organization behavioral management in Ferdowsi University of Mashhad.