

An ethical organizational communication analysis of mcdonald's essay sample

[Food & Diet](#)



The McDonald's corporation was started in 1940 and has since grown as a fast food entity, with restaurants and supply outlets all over the world. Maurice and Richard McDonald started a Bar-B-Q restaurant in San Bernardino, the United States in 1940(" McDonald's History"). In 1948, they introduced the " Speedee Service System" and the CEO Ray Kroc established the McDonald's System Inc. in Illinois in 1955. In addition, the name " McDonald's System Inc." was changed to McDonald's Corporation in 1960. However, the two brothers later sold the company to Ray Kroc in 1961, who grew its merchandise from hamburgers to all the available fast foods. The Corporation went to public in 1965, and the common shares were offered at \$22. 5 (Brook, n. d.). Nowadays, McDonald's has over 1. 9 million workers and is located in 118 countries in the world, coupled with more than 35, 000 restaurants (" Quick", 2014). Since McDonald's is one of the largest fast food company, how about its communication actions for employees, customers or suppliers or shareholders?

It is interesting for me, thus this paper will explore the McDonald's communication actions based on Steve May's six questions. When it comes to the first point of alignment among " personal, professional, and organizational aspirations and behaviors" (May, 2013), McDonald's aligns its formal procedures with missions, values and ethic code that are set to facilitate the ethical growth of the company. The formal procedures are outlined in a standard business conduct code that stipulates the way employees are supposed to behave (" Standards", 2014). There is a free policy of communication between the employees, customers, stakeholders and the company. There are employee magazines that seek to address the

issue employees' face. Also, there are media tools that have been set up for customers and other external forces for effective communication ("Standards", 2014). For example, they have fostered efforts to improve their food quality through a social media campaign (Passikoff, 2014).

Moreover, there are online programs named "Search" and "Contact Us" in the McDonald website that allows customers to access help. Such communication tools make it easier for the company to follow up on its aspirations and progress. Through the feedback received from its communication tools, McDonald's can have surety that its ethical procedures in the book are practiced and facilitate the development of the corporation. For instance, McDonald's make effort to use "Sustainable beef", which align with the code of "sustainability". Moreover, it is not only in order to make the industry to be more professional but also to ensure the health of product and protect the environment (Norambuena, 2014). Therefore, the methods chosen for communication allow for openness, which renders it easier for a company to facilitate the alignment of ethical values to the procedure put in place and enhance its aspirations.

Even though, McDonald's has experienced critics of its health plans and mission, stakeholders continue to flock the company and further widen its success. It is because McDonald's tries the best to keep the dialogic communication and gain the stakeholders' trust (May, 2013). According to "Standards of Business Conduct", "When McDonald's provides information to the news media, securities analysts and stockholders, we have an obligation to accurately and completely communicate the facts" (2014). Absolutely,

McDonald's company complies with the code. The stakeholders get feedback from the company and its customers through online links, internal conference calls, emails and the website. The communication enables the stakeholders to get updates on the ethical behaviors within the company ("Standards", 2014).

As such, the company does not involve hiding information or news, whether negative or positive to its stakeholders. For example, in July 2014, McDonald's food safety scandal was breakout in China; McDonald's suppliers provide the unhealthy meat for McDonald's restaurants. However, when the scandal revealed, McDonald's pulled all meat products and made a public statement, " We sincerely apologize to customers for the inconvenience and hope to have their understanding" (Riley & Wallace, 2014). The public dialogic communication like that can enhance the trust between stakeholders and the company. Furthermore, communication is kept open, which means anyone can access the company. Shareholders can effectively communicate with employees and management and give ideas that will foster good relationships among the employees, customers, management and the government. I think this is also why the stakeholders can look past the accusations of McDonald's contribution to obesity in America.

Besides the dialogic communication, McDonald's operates under a system of total quality management that is centered on the contribution of internal and external sources in management. In this case, employees, customers and stakeholders are involved in decision-making, whether directly or indirectly. Through available means of communication, employees can give ideas on

what aspects they feel need change or advancement (“ McDonald’s, 2012). For example, employees are allowed to send management an email and express their concerns over issues (“ Standards”, 2014). Especially after the food safety scandal, McDonald’s increase the stakeholders’ participation. For instance, McDonald’s “ create a hotline where employees can report poor food safety practices” and “ sent more employees to meat production facilities to ensure its food is prepared safely” (“ McDonald’s”, 2014). In addition, McDonald’s set up the Twitter page to interact with customers. Customers can express ideas or comments on the Twitter page (“ Meet”, 2014).

In such a setup, it becomes easy to establish ethical values such as trust, reliability and commitment. Loyalty is also established from stakeholders because they are involved in every process that the company takes. All these are fostered through a communication system that is open to criticism and positive reinforcement. Employees get motivated to perform better, and customers get inspired when they know that their opinions have been put to consideration. Furthermore, the issue of transparency was brought to light in McDonald’s by an Internet incident that accused the company of making its chicken nuggets from pink slime (“ Our”, n. d.). McDonald’s has always appreciated the use of video as a means to enhance the transparency of communication. Therefore, On McDonald’s main website, it shows a video that went viral, which filmed the steps that are involved in the preparation of its products. Such transparency exhibited ethical values like honesty, which renewed the consumer’s trust in the company.

The means the company uses to communicate with its employees, customers, and stakeholders leave little secrecy since all aspects of its activities are made available to these parties. The procedures that involve promotion and hiring are very clearly outlined in the company's constitution and only qualified candidates are considered. Means of production, income and expenditure are also available for everybody to see. The company releases an annual report that reviews all its operations and requires reexamination of ethical conduct ("Annual", n. d.). The report is made accessible in the company's website and hence gives it some form of transparency. Transparency facilitates feelings of fairness and provides confidence on the part of stakeholders. It embraces honesty and openness that is good for creating rapports with the employees, management, stakeholders and customers. The system makes customers loyal. Some feedback on social media has had customers testifying that they have faith in McDonald's and believes they are getting the best fast food in America.

McDonald's is constantly faced with accusations of introducing people to diet deficient food and cause various diseases. For example, there are various complaints from health professionals about McDonald's promoting unhealthy eating lifestyles and make people fat (Parab, n. d.). However, McDonald's did not keep silence or avoid the responsibilities, the company post the calories of all products and provide more healthful options for Happy Meal (Strom, 2012). Such communication serves the perfect way to be accountable.

McDonald's is, therefore, accountable to parents, the general public, the government and its stakeholders and responsible for the code of ethics in the organization ("Standards", 2014). Another point is that communicating

the responsibility offers McDonald's a chance to give an explanation and avoid many scandals. McDonald's communication of the responsibility for an ethical crisis be offered to consumers through the website, online social sites and annual magazine.

Also, employees in McDonald's also partake in taking responsibility for ethical practices in their departments through communication with the management ("Standards", 2014). Accountability not only ensures the company learns how to solve problems and work towards good ethical behaviors, but also ensure all the stakeholders to take the ethical communication. According to the aforementioned, McDonald's communication methods enable employees to identify ethical disasters, and every aspect is involved with McDonald's has a chance to give their thoughts ("Code", 2014). Even though employees can be able to identify the problems and help the organization to counter the ethical issue, McDonald's does not avoid taking responsibility for any crisis that they have encountered. For example, the food scandal happened in China, they had the courage to admit it and take actions to resolve rather than pass the responsibility to the Chinese suppliers or employees completely (Riley & Wallace, 2014).

Also, McDonald's has courage to post Calorie on the food menu to confront the criticism of food (Strom, 2012). In addition, the identification part is very effective for employees, who can access various forms of information that will enable them to identify problems. For example, after McDonald's identified the scandal problem, more and more employees were active to

ensure food safety, and provided more feedback to the company (“McDonald’s”, 2014). Therefore, McDonald’s is a courageous organization to resolve ethical dilemmas and its employees also can identify problems and communicate to the relevant authority about them. Even though McDonald’s always take ethical actions according to its code of conduct, I think McDonald’s should focus much more on nutrition; most products in McDonald’s restaurant are fast foods. Therefore, McDonald’s should employ more high-level nutritionists in the company and adopt a healthy diet. The nutritionists can find a balance between fast foods and a healthy diet and merge the two together.

The information on the new diet can be communicated through catalogues that will show the ingredients in their products as having improved. It is because the company has an ethics code, they are expected to care about their customer’s health. Even though establishing a fast food enterprise that incorporates healthy aspects of its meals is a challenge, nutritionists and health professionals can help strike a balance. In addition, the company can create an ethical hotline where people call to complain about any problems they have. Such a scenario can be managed by a communication department, which will handle all the issues that external respondents might have. A hotline is a faster way to relay a message than when they rely on emails and magazine subscriptions. The most crucial origin of information is the customers. They are the consumers of the product, and their feedback should be accessed immediately. It will give a room for a quick response for solutions of the problems.

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