

# Strategic communication and inside communication management essay

[Business](#), [Management](#)



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The aim of this paper is to explore the nature of the strategic internal communication system within Conectys Serv Telecom (hereinafter referred to as Conectys). The first part of the paper shall analyse basic concepts concerning strategic communication, connecting it with the concept of inside communication within the company. Furthermore, the study shall attempt to provide an academic insight into the current practices in what the organizational communication of the company is concerned. Based on a theoretical background which aims at clarifying the required concepts, the communication strategy within Conectys has been analyzed through the classification of the organizational communication. The paper has provided insight into the development of an organizational communication system in order to satisfy the communication needs of the company, as well as its employees. While communication is relevant for the management of a company, the human behaviour perspective is also important when referring to cooperation, participation and interpersonal relationships among workers. Lastly, the final section of the paper suggests a set of directions for the improvement of the communication strategy within the examined company.

Strategic Communication and Inside Communication  
Upon a first glance, the word "strategy" might be associated with business related matters rather than communication. However, the concept of strategic communication is used in many other fields of activity, such as public diplomacy, propaganda or even public relations[1](Nye,

2008). As the borders between the above-mentioned disciplines and communication tend to blur, the activities cannot be examined separately, without taking into account the communication dimension. Thus, Hallahan et al. (2007) provide a general definition for the concept of strategic communication as a "unifying framework to analyze communications by organizations"[2]. To further elaborate the discussion, according to Clampitt et al. (2001), strategy involves a choice as companies decide which market to pursue and which opportunities to ignore[3]. It is the same situation when referring to the executives' agenda since the way it is shaped can have a profound impact on the organization. Thus, managing the agenda is a critical issue. By elaborating a set of basic questions (such as with whom will executives communicate, how, when and where will employees and executives communicate), the communication strategy emerges. Moreover, strategy also involves establishing the objectives of communication systems as many executives do not consider this aspect explicitly. In fact, the central question should revolve around the purpose of communication, which inevitably leads to the development of communication priorities.

Furthermore, Clampitt et al. also mention the anticipation of the employees' reactions. The authors claim that the relationship between the initiated act of communication and the response is the element which creates the dialogue that determines the effectiveness of the strategy. Lastly, the same authors appeal to the human nature of the employees as strategic planning is not solely an "intellectual activity". Consequently, the process is used as a basis for structuring, executing and evaluating communication practices.

However, a clearly defined purpose of the communication strategy can

influence the organizational performance. Further elaborating on the subject, closely related to strategic communication lies internal communication, which has been defined by various scholars in multiple ways, hinting at the relationship between stakeholders, the process of communication or the approach. Thus, Welch and Jackson (2007) define the concept as the "strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels within organizations across a number of interrelated dimensions, including internal line management, communications, internal team peer communication, internal project peer communication and internal corporate communication"[4]. Consequently, we may infer that it is designed to improve organizational commitment and build a sense of belonging among employees. Considering the current climate of the business environment, there are few organizations that can operate without an effective strategic internal communication. Yet in some organizations, the management position does not necessarily consider the relevance of a strategic internal public relations department. In this respect, Conectys displays a weak point. Within the company that I work for, usually the human resources department handles the internal communication notifications. However, internal communication activities frequently have a lower priority task over external communication strategies. Still, not all companies implement the same strategies. The management of a company is responsible to select the information that needs to be communicated to the staff, the moment in which it should be communicated and, more importantly, how it should be communicated. In other words, internal communication strategies are developed as a result of a crisis situation that

requires communication. In what the planned communication is concerned, it usually occurs as a result of a major corporation or organization change. However, once the element of change has become acknowledged by the staff members, the communication tends to follow the old patterns. Additionally, modern technologies should also be taken into account as they compel executives to reconsider the traditional communication strategies. Along with the rapid development of the internet, employees can easily and quickly gain access to information from sources both inside and outside the company. These various communication tools can have a deep impact on the staff members' thoughts, motivations and future actions. Given the fact that organizations have a wide range of communication strategies and tools for communicating at all levels, individuals can understand their organizational role[5](Mersham & Skinner, 2005). The same theoreticians claim that the selected communication tools are influenced by several factors, such as the subject matter that needs to be communicated. Within Conectys, it appears that among the many available communication techniques, internal e-mail notifications and printed graphic communication appear to be more commonly used. In what the collective e-mails are concerned, they either contain general information regarding recent management changes, while others are intended to motivate staff or to increase their morale. For instance, depending on the specificity of a project, team leaders inform the agents on a weekly or daily basis a statistic with the agents' performance. However, the e-mail has been standardized and the information available can be quite useful for new employees as it contains instructions regarding the average handling time for a call or an e-mail. Moreover, it contains

statistics related to the work of each agent assigned on the project such as the average talk time, the workload and the number of calls/e-mails handled. For the purpose of transparency, the e-mail is visible for all of the agents, as well as the high management positions. Another element of internal communication within the company is a monthly newsletter called "Conectys Times". In fact, it is an on-line magazine created by the employees of the company for its staff members and it is aimed at familiarizing the employees with the ongoing activity and specificity of the company. Structured as a typical magazine, it presents various pieces of information regarding the activity of the company and new acquired clients. Additionally, regarding the appeal to the human nature mentioned above, Conectys organizes charity events for Christmas and Easter, attempting to involve the employees to join a cause and thus bringing them together outside the confines of the business environment. An event that falls under the same umbrella is the annual Christmas party. Organizational communication

Another aspect related to the communication within a company is the organizational communication. As defined by Frost et al. (1985), the concept is related to the transfer and receiving of ideas, feelings and attitudes between management and workers which also involves a deeper understanding of the information[6]. Thus, organizations operate based on three basic modes of communication: upward, downward and horizontal. In what the upward communication is concerned, Barker & Gaut (2007) define it as "any message sent from a subordinate to a supervisor or manager"[7]. Among the variety of functions, it is often used by employees to communicate valuable information to management. In other words, this

type of communication enables the staff members to communicate their concerns or issues to the management. Applying this model for Conectys, employees have the opportunity to contribute with improvement ideas related to a specific project that might improve the future training sessions for new agents. In this situation, there is another factor that intervenes, which is the psychological dimension. In other words, when employees participate in decisions that directly affect their work, they feel as if they are part of the organizational community, "not just individuals collecting a pay check"[8](Reece & Brandt, 1999). Alternatively, upward communication can be a useful tool in case employees encounter difficulties at their workplace. For instance, in the case of Conectys, agents are encouraged to signal any difficulties encountered when handling calls. Beyond signalling the issue, it is the responsibility of the team leader or project manager to act accordingly. Furthermore, Van Staden et al. (2002) consider that the vertical channel of communication is the most important channels of communication in any organization. They also claim that providing the fact that the flow of communication is smooth and maintained at all times, the business environment shall be free of conflict and frustration among employees[9]. This type of communication includes trainings, individual feedback and evaluation sessions, organizational procedures and company-directed propaganda[10](Tubbs & Moss, 1991). In what the vertical communication inside Conectys is concerned, individual feedback sessions should be held monthly with each of the employees' team leader. However, due to the rapid development of the company within the recent months, these types of meetings have been postponed. Additionally, the company should also focus

on the training sessions for new employees. As opposed to experienced agents, it is much more difficult for new ones to assimilate the amount of information required in order to achieve the predefined standards. Thus, additional materials (slide shows or printed material) would prove helpful in this respect. As for the last type of organizational communication, the lateral (or horizontal) communication refers to the communication between people on the same level of authority. Still, this communication might take place during established meetings or various informal contexts. It is important to stress the relevance of the communication between different departments as this will ensure a business relationship based on cooperation, leading to the productivity and success of the organization. Applying the theory in my current workplace, Conectys comprises two departments: CPL (CounterPartyLink) and the Call Centre - during the last month, the leadership for the contact centre operations and CPL operation has been consolidated under a single operations director. Furthermore, the organization structure can be divided in three main categories: management (including junior team leaders, senior team leaders and project managers), functional (including the Human Resources, IT and Financial department) and operational (agents from the call centre and CPL department). As I have stated in the previous paper, my responsibilities pertain to the call centre area. Since all of the employees are quite young and most of them experience the thrill of their first job, employees usually tend to provide support for each other. Thus, in the absence of a project manager, experienced agents provide support for the colleagues. Directions for future development However, the company needs to focus on recruiting and training



employees who understand the mission, goals, values and procedures of Conectys. However, the elements mentioned are not quite clear for the current employees. Therefore, the company should aim at creating a framework based on a set of common goals which needs to be communicated to all of the current employees. In this way, the company achieves coherence and allows a better coordinated action. By eliminating ambiguity, staff members are motivated to act with empowerment as they understand the values and purposes of the organization. Another aspect which requires attention is job satisfaction, which can be defined as a predominantly positive attitude towards the work situation[11](Bergh & Theron, 2000). While an employee may be dissatisfied with certain aspects of his/her work and satisfied with others, the dominant feature is the one that measures the level of job satisfaction. Regarding the business environment in Conectys, I have noticed that after the company has united the two departments under the same management (additionally culminating with the acquisition of many new customers in the last months), the staff members were confused regarding the management of the company. This was caused by the lack of communication with the employees concerning the changes within the company. However, going back to the organization of the company, as stated in the previous paper, the company has a sales and marketing representative, yet Conectys does not have an official public relation department. Thus, one of the way in which the company tackles the public relations dimension is based on employee relations[12]. As highlighted by Botha et al. (2007), while most public relations professionals tend to focus on external stakeholders, Conectys has decided to rely on its

employees to promote their business. Consequently, hinting at an internal public relation strategy, the internal climate has a significant influence on the individual motivation of the employee. According to Skinner et al.(2003), managers have found that they cannot motivate people, they can merely create the appropriate work environment and provide the right tools for individuals to motivate themselves[13]. The present research paper has attempted to illustrate the particularities of the organizational communication applied at my current workplace, highlighting the internal communication segment. Due to the fact that communication is a basic characteristic of the human nature which occurs either planned or spontaneously, the internal communication process requires thorough planning as it is a critical factor to long-term business success. Thus, the internal messages need to be in accordance with the business mission, vision, values and objectives of the company as a coherent strategy should use appropriate methods of communication supported by a consistent message.