

Internal Communication Crunch And Its Impact On Organization's Performance

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to study how internal communication inefficiency can, if at all, lead to organizational crisis. An answer to this question was found by studying theory and previous empirical research on internal communication and organizational crisis. For the purpose of this paper, a case study of one particular organizational crisis was carried out by applying a combined research methodology – in-depth interviews and a survey. As a result of a detailed analysis of theory and a study of a real life case, a new concept – „internal communication crisis” – was identified in the master's thesis. Also it was established that an internal communication crisis is a result of asymmetrical formal internal communication, a lack of leadership, weak organizational culture and a lack of values, as well as active grapevine communication. This research study found that an internal communication crisis is directly related to an organizational crisis because there is a big possibility that in the alternative decision-making process, established as a result of an internal communication crisis, employees try to solve organizational problems by involving external stakeholders. Such attempts to involve external stakeholders lead to a very high risk of negative publicity and damages to reputation, which gives the national policy decision-makers an opportunity to expose an organization to threats of liquidation or resource reduction.

Key concepts considered in this research include formal internal communication, leadership, organizational culture, informal internal communication, organizational crisis, internal communication crisis.

Introduction

The 21st century has come with essential changes in communication between organisations and audiences important thereto. In communication context, open space of communication, which becomes more open and uncontrollable, is being increasingly discussed. Organisations are working hard to fulfil their communication programmes which would correspond to the desires of external stakeholders and newest communication channels.

Equally important role in communication programmes should be taken by the division of internal communication, which, to a great extent, is based on the engagement of employees in defining organisational targets, tasks and values and building of internal culture. Although communication scientists and researchers have big discussions about the role and importance of internal communication in overall organizational programme of public relations, still there is a big number of organisations which do not have a clear understanding about the meaning of internal communication and the importance of it as a component in the creation of mutual understanding between the management and employees. Also, when regarding crisis situations, managers do not relate them to internal factors.

The aim of the research was to establish the role of internal communication in the context of organisational crisis, namely, in what way inefficient internal communication can bring an organisation to a crisis situation. Having regarded historical development of internal communication theory and modern research schools, it may be concluded that internal communication practically has not been viewed as a factor causing a crisis. Therefore the author, on a basis of a case study of a particular organisation, explains the impact of internal communication on the origin of crisis in an organisation. Tasks of the research were (1) to study the conclusions made in the platform of internal communication to date, (2) to develop an innovative concept regarding internal communication crisis, and (3) carry out a research in order to verify the theoretical model that has been formed. During the research, the author looked for the answers to the following questions: What causes internal communication crisis? How does internal communication crisis influence organisation's activity?

Theoretical frame

Both researchers and practitioners in the field of communication have already indicated that in the 20th century organisation's internal communication determines how efficient, successful and performance-orientated an organisation is. Yet, this position to internal communication quite often is related to such notions as "employee information", "raising the efficiency of employees" and "one-way communication". These notions, which are factually directed towards unilateral benefit for an organisation, indicate on the application of the notion "internal communication" in practice. Accordingly, internal communication is considered rather as a tool affecting employees than a tool for employee involvement in a dialogue in order to achieve mutual understanding between the management and employees.

Two communication researchers Lyn Smith and Pamela Mounter thinks that the role has been described as still an immature one... Top managers continue to have different views on the role of internal communication, some seeing it as a little more than 'a message service' with no particular place in a wider scheme of things, while others regard it as an essential change agent (Smith, Mounter, 2008).

Researcher Pamela Mounter defines internal communication as follows: Effective communication means telling people where they are going (horizontal message) by welding different organisational divisions into one team and gaining information on how well the communication has been delivered (feedback from ground to top) (Gregory, 2007).

Pamela Mounter calls internal communication corporate glue that helps build teams, reinforce pride in working for a company and encourages people to work that bit harder to beat the competition (Gregory, 2004).

Professor at Thames Valley University in London Sandra Oliver speaks about internal communication by emphasizing its complex nature. Internal communication as a core function of corporate strategy is no longer a simple question of efficient bottom-up or top-down communication via line management (Olivera, 2009).

Symmetrical systems of internal communication

Most systems of internal communication are asymmetrical, however, and they do not increase morale or organisational effectiveness. A symmetrical communication system is one in which employees are provided mechanisms for dialogue with each

other and with supervisors. Interpersonal communication is crucial in a symmetrical system, although employee media can complement it (Grunig, 1992).

Cultural perspective in internal communication

Organisational values determine how employees and management implements objectives, what are principles which are clear and understandable and help employees in the fulfilment of their tasks. According to researchers of organisational values Randolph A. Polhman and Gareth S. Gardiner, organisation itself cannot be a value. Values are brought by specific people working for these organisations. Major challenge for managers is to balance organisational values, vision, targets and tasks with individual values represented by employees of organisations (Polhman, Gardiner, Heffes, 2000).

The role of leadership in internal communication

Researchers of organisational management have discovered and analysed various styles of leadership and indicated on characteristics of the leader. Yet, according to Daniel Goleman, Richard E. Boyatzis and Annie McKee, the leader has been the one whom others follow and continuously view as an example. This group of others also indicates that the leader acts as the group's emotional guide. In the modern organization, this primordial emotional task – though by now largely invisible – remains foremost among the many jobs of leadership: driving the collective emotions in the positive direction. The leader is also the one to whom others look for assurance and clarity on their job (Boyatzis, McKee, Goleman, 2002).

Christine M. Pearson and Judith A. Clair in a publication “Reframing Crisis Management” reveal various crisis aspects by indicating that in all cases a crisis is related to losing faith in leadership and confidence in organisational culture. Organizational members are likely to question the organization's cultural beliefs and to feel a need for a transformation of the culture. Finally, the social-political perspective suggests that crisis management is unlikely to be successful without a reformation of organizational leadership and culture (Pearson, Clair, 1998).

Informal communication as a crisis agent

A group of American communication theoreticians Scott Cutlip, Allen Center and Glen Broom speaking about internal communication and its role in the organisation have paid great attention to the notion “grapevine”. Grapevine is neither formal, nor controllable means of communication, but a word expressed in direct contact quite often is the fastest means for obtaining and receiving information. “Grapevine” is a powerful channel of information. Sometimes it is really dangerous or may become dangerous (Cutlip, Center, Broom, 2002). Fearn-Banks says that rumours can be positive or negative. They can be absolutely false or partly false. They can also be undeniably true or premature facts. There is an expression “There's a ring of truth in every rumour” (Fearn-Banks, 1996) because people tend to believe rumour. Kimmel says that if rumour adequately explains unanswered questions of sufficiently fills in gaps in people's understanding about what is going on, this may serve to reduce their anxieties and eliminate their fears (Kimmel, 2004).

Organisational crisis

When communication theoreticians discuss the cause of organisational crisis, basically they relate to external setting of the organisation which, under specific

conditions, may paralyse company's or organisation's activity. Nonetheless, it is important to indicate that external setting is closely linked to the internal setting – the structure, management, communication and people working in the organisation.

Yet, theoreticians Elizabeth L. Toth, Kathleen Fearn-Banks, Matthew Wayne Seeger, Timothy Lester Sellnow, Robert R. Ulmer, Robert L. Heath and Timothy Coombs, who have studied crisis communication, have had little insight into the influence of imperfection of internal communication on organisational crisis. This means that research of crisis communication has a wide innovation potential which is directly related not with organisation's external setting but with processes inside the organisation.

Elizabeth L. Toth defines organizational crisis as an unpleasant condition, a critical state, an accident, a huge disaster, a calamity or a catastrophe (Toth, 2007).

Crisis management expert Kathleen Fearn-Banks describes that "crisis is a major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome effecting an organization, company, or industry as well as its publics, products, services, or good name. It interrupts normal business transactions as can sometimes threaten the existence of the organization" (Fearn-Banks, 1996).

Seeger defines organizational crisis as "a specific, unexpected and non-routine organizationally based event or series of events which creates high levels of uncertainty and threats or perceived threat to an organization's high priority goals" (Seeger, Sellnow, Ulmer, 2003).

After gathering and analysing several research works and published theoretical discoveries conducted by professionals and researchers in the field of communications (Joseph W. Weiss, 1996; Anne H. Reilly, 2008; Joanne E. Hale, Ronald E. Dulek, David P. Hale, 2005; Rusaw A. Carol, Rusaw F. Michael, 2008; W. Tomothy Coombs, Sherry J. Holladay, 2005; Jim Suchan, 2006; Heiner Minssen, 2006; Cláudia Simões, Sally Dibb, and Raymond P. Fisk, 2005; Joseph Eric Massey, Ph.D., 2001; J. Suzanne Horsley, Randolph T. Barker, 2002; Mary E. Vielhaber, 2008; Denis Smith, 1990; Dwane Hal Dean, 2004, Sandra L. Christensen and John Kohls, 2003), it should be concluded that researchers in most cases have focused on crisis as a situation prescribed by external setting. If referring to causes of a crisis, then they are related to accidents, non-quality goods or services or bad name deliberately created in external audiences. During studying of bibliography, great attention was paid to crisis definitions and the causes of the crisis in organisation's internal setting which allowed making a conclusion that crisis communication experts display only some crisis situations related to internal setting: deliberate breach of organisation's rules and regulations, employee strikes or different types of violence in an organisation. This finding leads to thinking that crisis communication researchers should look for new research perspectives directed specifically towards research of internal setting as the cause of the crisis.

Under crisis conditions, organisation's problems will always come to light. Yet, organisations and communication researchers should be aware of a set of crisis agents which traditionally are not considered as the causes of the crisis, such as:

- a) non-existence of organisational values or disagreement in the organisation;
- b) asymmetrical communication in the organisation;
- c) lack of leadership, vision and task disallowing employees to understand the organisation's direction;
- d) predominance of informal internal communication over formal in the organisation.

Internal Communication Crisis

On a basis of the afore-mentioned theory, the author has created a concept in the internal communication theory to date “internal communication crisis” (see Image 1) and verified this concept by applying a case study method. Internal communication crisis should be understood as a situation in an organization when there is a lack of active exchange of information, attitudes and opinions via formal information channels among organizational groups, instead a stable role is played by informal communication (grapevine) where various gossip is circulating making such a big communicative buzz so, in effect, official information cannot be heard and quality internal discussions are disturbed. If, in fact, there is no formal internal communication at all, it allows informal communication to develop an alternative setting for decision-making and the direction of decisions to be implemented outside the circle of influence of organizational control. Alternative setting for decision-making of this kind specifically threatens most the existence of an organization because in such a situation it is characteristic to have autonomous leaders, internal decision-making process, communication setting, creation of a strategy and its implementation for the sake of attaining a definite aim. Internal communication crisis also establishes that employees do not trust their formal (actual) manager any more. Manager is no more capable of controlling communication with employees, therefore a manager loses authority and the opportunity to attain the organizational objectives.



Image 1.

Research methodology

Organisation which was chosen as the object of a case study is a public authority founded after 2002. This institution is state-funded and its objectives and tasks have been prescribed by the law. At the point when the case study research was conducted, the organisation employed approximately 50 people. Mission of the organisation according to the principles of Western democracy is to ensure efficient cooperation between the government and population.

The organisation started its operation on a basis of objectives and tasks set forth under the law, however, in the long run multiple problems crystallized which were identified by employees of the organisation – poor management, lack of manager's understanding about the field of operation, and insufficient communication with employees.

At the time when management of the institution had to implement the governmental decisions regarding public authority budget cuts, the organisation suffered a serious internal communication crisis. Trade union of the organisation prepared and published an open letter, signed by employees of the organisation, describing negative situations and examples disallowing the organisation to be efficient and work according to its mission.

This letter was addressed to the state's high ranking officials. The letter reached the media and initiated a public communication on the efficiency of the organisation's efficiency and importance which lasted for several months.

Negative publicity and negotiations in the *Saeima* and the Cabinet of Ministers was a significant obstacle for providing quality defence to the already decreased budget of the organisation and prevent even greater budget cuts for the next year. Discussion resulted in that opponents of this little known institution appeared in society who pointed out that if there are conflicts inside the institution then such institution in general is not necessary. One of Latvia's leading media in Latvia described the necessity for liquidation of the organisation. A high ranking state official with decision-making powers with regard to the existence of the organisation indicated that this institution should be closed, thus saving a significant amount of resources from state budget.

Eventually, the institution was not wind up, however, as a result of negative publicity, the organisation's budget was reduced by half.

For gathering the research data, a case study, based on a combined research methodology, was carried out. As emphasized by Christine Daymon and Immy Holloway, case study differs from other methodological approaches by intensive examination of a single entity which is bounded by time and place. The purpose of case study research is to increase knowledge about real, contemporary communications events in their context (Daymon, Holloway, 2002). Daymon and Holloway continue that a case study is suitable for building up theories or verifying them.

During the case study qualitative (in-depth interviews) and quantitative (survey) methods were applied.

Surveying was used to establish co-orientation. Jack MacLeod and Steven Chaffee offer a model of coorientation. Under the concept, the authors present models of a spiral of reciprocal perspectives: a direct perspective is “what I think”; a metaperspective “what I think you think” (Botan, Hazleton, 1989). Accordingly, coorientation allows discovering the viewpoint of two groups on one and the same issue and also representations of one group on viewpoints of the other group concerning the same matter.

Within the framework of qualitative research methodology, structured interviews with eight employees at different levels of the organisation were conducted. The selection of research participants was guided by purposeful sampling, described by Thomas Lindlof and Brian Taylor (Lindlof, Taylor, 2002).

Within the study, three groups have been identified which would allow an in-depth analysis of issues discussed in this paper: management (dominant coalition and

supporters of a manager), employees appearing as opponents of government and employees in neutral positions. Since the head of the organization refused to participate in an interview, the study defined and discussed the overall role of the dominant coalition of the organisation, comprising of a manager, his/her advisors and administrative manager. Larissa Grunig (Larissa A. Grunig), referring to a power-control theory, argues that organisations do what they do because people with the most power in the organisation – the dominant coalition – decide to do it that way (Grunig, 1992).

Results

Both information gained in interviews and factors verified in quantitative research indicate that internal communication crisis of the organisation, as a new concept put forward by the author, is caused by four factors: (1) deficiencies in formal internal communication; (2) undefined and disembodied cultural aspects of an organisation; (3) lack of leadership; and (4) very active and purposeful informal communication which predominates over formal communication and has definite aim – changes in organisation's operations.

Both interviews and surveys revealed that majority of participants consider **internal communication** to be an important precondition for successful activity of the organisation. Yet these data also disclose a significant gap between views of employees and dominant coalition regarding the role of efficient internal communication in providing successful organisational performance. If employees considered that efficient internal communication is a precondition to successful organisational performance than representatives of dominant coalition more likely disagree than agree to this statement. The very same considerations were brought forward by representatives of both groups in interviews.

Considering **organisational culture** in the aspect of values, the qualitative research showed that among employees (with one exception) were convinced that the organisation has no defined values, yet everybody named unwritten rules, based on their inner feeling what they as employees are allowed or not allowed to do. Interviews disclosed that employees consider expressing one's opinion, activity and initiative to be a taboo inside the organisation. Meanwhile the dominant coalition mentioned loyalty towards the manager as an unwritten rule. Results of the quantitative survey supplemented the answers of interviews concerning organisational values.

In section about the role of **leadership** in the context of organisational performance, data of both studies show that the manager of the organisation has not been a leader with personal vision regarding organisational activity, objectives and tasks. Also, the manager has not been an inspirer, allowing employees to work better or activate them to carry out some actions. Instead employees were speaking of passivity, disinterest and conformism. Also in the quantitative survey with the participation of a half of current and former employees it was reflected that the manager was not a leader and employees more disagree than agree to the viewpoint that the manager had a vision guiding organisational activity, objectives and priorities. When evaluating coorientation among viewpoints of employees, the dominant coalition and views of both groups about opinions of the other group it should be noted that this question was one of the rare occasions when opinions of both parties not only regarding the lack of leadership but also regarding opinions of the other group coincided.

Both groups agreed with the statement that **informal communication** plays a significant role in information exchange and in the formation of the mood among employees. This opinion was reflected both in interviews and questionnaires. Yet, opinions of participants of the research differed in questions regarding reasons and consequences of informal communication. If employees both in interviews and questionnaire showed quite an outstanding unanimity that the reason of informal communication was inefficient communication between the management and employees, then the dominant coalition tend to point at historical splitting of the colleagues into "the old" and "the new" ones, and it has nothing to do with the desire of improving organisational activity. More likely, it is the desire to maintain the same operational routine as before when a new manager enters the office.

Having analysed what the employee group, activated in informal communication setting, wanted to achieve, the overall opinion of employees agrees with the opinions said in interviews and information obtained in questionnaire – the desire of improving organisational activity and decision-making model, and listening to employees. The quantitative questionnaire shows that in the aspect of coorientation the statement of employees' desire to improve organisational activity in both groups is valued differently – employees agree that the aim was like that but the dominant coalition disagrees. Employees' views regarding opinion held by the dominant coalition are equivalent, but the management, nonetheless, considered that employees do not think that actions were guided by a desire to improve organisational activity.

The second question of the study discussed the impact of internal communication crisis on organisational activity. Having concluded the study, it should be regarded that in the presence of conditions when communication symmetry in internal environment of the organisation is not implemented, employees are not led by a leader, and there is a lack of definite value system, and of all preconditions for informal communication to dominate over formal communication there is a justified risk that employees who create an alternative decision-making model through informal communication channels may also use resources available in external setting in order to influence the ongoing in organisation. In this aspect, organisational activity may be threatened by the risk of unfriendliness of external setting, active circulation of negative information in the mass media allowing decision-makers and the society to express negative stand, which, in its turn, could threaten organisation's reputation, existence or the amount of available financial resources.

Data of both qualitative and quantitative research indicate that internal communication crisis is directly related to threats to organisational activity. In interviews employees reveal that specifically asymmetric informal communication, lack of leadership and defined value system facilitated the impact of informal communication in the organisation. Active and symmetrical communication driven employees teamed up in this informal communication setting who decided that external stakeholders like media and politicians should be involved in the struggle for better organisational activity. This step, labelled by employees as "a scream for help", was the one that threatened the existence of the organisation and also was determinant in sharp decrease of funding for the organisation's operation.

Discussion

Results of the research permit discussions about the set of components of internal communication crisis discovered and visualised by the author in the beginning of the paper – asymmetry of communication, lack of leadership and of values, and active informal communication. Further on in the text, the author shall briefly touch each of these concepts in order to discuss whether the four factors may cause internal communication crisis in an organisation and how it affects organisation's operations.

The great importance of symmetry has been marked by Gruning and Hunt, describing symmetric communication as a source and a recipient which cannot be separated but are equal participants of a communication process seeking (striving for) mutual understanding and proportional two-way effect (Grunig, Grunig A.Larissa, 1989). The research work, carried out under the auspices of the paper, points at the lack of symmetric approach in internal communication, which is marked by the research participants (not representing the dominant coalition) as an important cause of the problem and of crisis in the organization. Employees have indicated that a dialogue between the organisation's management and employees was minimal and insufficient. Communication between the dominant coalition and employees has left more unanswered questions than clear answers. During the research it has been established that employees have felt uninvolved, uninformed and unheard. These answers led to the conclusion that the lack of symmetry is one of the factors causing internal communication crisis. Employees, who are not satisfied with communication and who are uninformed, are not perceived as equal team players thus not granted the opportunity to express their opinion, give feedback and participate in the decision-making process on important issues of the organisation, eventually forming grounds for internal crisis situation which cannot be resolved in any other way but by the means of strategic approach to planning and managing of internal communication. However, the devastating power of **asymmetrical communication** could be discussed with regard to the particular case.

Another aspect, which has been brought forward as a crucial one, is **organisational culture**. Under the research, this aspect has been narrowed by analysing only values in the organisation as a possible cause of internal communication crisis.

Randolph Polhman and Gareth Gardiner (Polhman, Gardiner with Ellen M. Heffes, 2000) noted that organisational values determine how employees and the management implement the objectives, what are the principles which are clear and understood by everyone and which help employees in their daily tasks. Research conducted within the framework of the paper suggested that the organisation in question failed to have defined values. Firstly, a rhetoric question could be asked: Should there be any? Regardless, the answer can be found in narratives by the research participants on the organisation's unwritten rules which would not flatter any organisation. Participants in in-depth interviews pointed out that in the organisation, indeed, there have been unwritten rules: every initiative and activity is condemnable, an opinion which is contrary to the management's opinion must not be expressed, and double morality with regard to what is allowed to one person and disallowed to the other. Series of such unwritten rules points at such values as non-transparency, passivity and inequality. Value system of this kind, on its merits, is destructive for any organisation. Internal risk factor for the organisation in question

was hidden in the fact that, although there were undeclared values in the organisation which did not promote activity and initiative, still there worked employees in whose consciousness this organisation had to work according to completely different principles of value: openness, transparency, dialogue, and open decision-making process.

The third factor of internal communication crisis is leadership or the lack of it. Researchers Pearson and Clair (Pearson, Clair, 1998), speaking about various aspects of crisis, indicate that in all cases such crisis is related to the loss of faith to the leader and the conviction of organisation's culture. The research work carried out within the framework of the paper to a certain point approves what Pearson and Clair have said because it relates to very deep problems specifically in the managerial style of the organisation. The first conclusion repeated by every single participant in interviews was that the manager was not a leader. Yet, the problem that the manager is not a leader cannot be regarded as the characteristic parameter of the organisation. Still the main problem within the organisation in question is, how employees put it, "managerial style of no shape". Such managerial style is characteristic of passivity, disinterest, avoidance from problem solving, the use of mediated communication channels and the lack of vision and objectives.

The research work reveals that the lack of leadership, unclear managerial style and incomprehension of employees' need for information created a fundamental problem in the organisation's internal communication. If the manager has not got the understanding that communication is a significant stage in the management of employees and that communications prescribes if employees shall be efficient, then the programme on efficient internal communication cannot be implemented. Grunig (Grunig 1992) indicates that public relations must be a management function if it is to make organizations more effective. Example of the research also reflects the managerial responsibility for implementation/lack of implementation of efficient internal communication. Examples of internal communication and management from the organisation in question reveal that the manager and his dominant coalition, most likely, unknowingly activated informal communication in the organisation, thus encouraging the development of horizontal communication between employees and vertical communication between employees and heads of their structural units, which is a success in formal environment. It could be discussed whether the organisation's management implemented asymmetrical communication on purpose or maybe it was incomprehension of the significant role of communication. Regardless of the reasons, such action facilitated informal communication among employees.

The role of **informal communication** and "grape-vine telegraph" in an organisation's communication is viewed as one of crucial factors influencing organisation's operations and may become a threat to an organisation. This idea is discussed by Cutlip, Center and Broom (Cutlip, Center, Broom, 2002). To sum up the above-mentioned subject on the role of communication symmetry, organisational culture and leadership in an organisation in order to implement efficient internal communication, it should be concluded that in a situation where all three factors are not being implemented there is a high risk of activation of informal communication. Frank Laurich indicated that the aim of internal communication is to provide the missing information, soothe nervous emotions and help to orientate (Bērziņš, Klauss, 2006). If the management is not able to prove its employees with facts the necessity of a decision to be made, then rumours are created. Participants of the research work

also have indicated that informal communication activated because there was inefficient communication with the manager and employees. The dominant coalition, however, disagrees with this viewpoint. Yet, this aspect once again proves that there is a huge gap between opinions of employees and the dominant coalition on various matters concerning efficient communication.

Influence of internal communication crisis on the organisation's operation is related to the fact that employees, who are active and represent different values than those offered by the management and internal communication environment, are ready to activate not only the internal setting but also involve the external setting – decision-makers and the society with the aim of receiving help. However, as the example shows, the hope for help in external setting may turn against the organisation both by threatening its funding and existence.

Results gained within the framework of the given case study indicate that organisational crisis may not only be caused by external conditions which are difficult to control for an organisation, but also by internal factors which are closely linked to communication problems in the organisation. Although the case study analysis is based on a separate case, information disseminated in public domain during the course of the research also on other similar cases indicate on the topicality of the problem in organisational operation and should be considered as the problem of not only one organisation.

The gained results allow speaking about new inventions in research of internal communication and organisational crisis. If, until now, researchers of crisis communication only partially have confirmed that organisation's internal factors may be a crucial condition for a crisis to arise in an organisation, then this research fully confirms this assumption, provides definite proof of internal factors which determine whether an organisation experiences or does not experience a crisis. In the same manner, the concept of internal communication is being expanded, which so far has been described only from the point of view of employees' efficiency (Pamela Mounter, Lyn Smith, Bill Kirk, Sandra Oliver) and satisfaction (Pincus, Reifield, Knips, Grunig), but it is impossible to find scientific examples dealing with internal communication crisis as a concept which the organisation must consider if it implements specific internal communication programmes or simply ignores the communication needs of its employees using asymmetrical approach to communication. The results fully answer to the questions put forward in the beginning of the paper. There is an indication of a gap in literature discussing the influence of communication on a crisis. Therefore the author offers to supplement communication literature with a new concept "internal communication crisis". Also, the obtained results add to theoretical concepts containing suggestions to communication practitioners on how to identify possible problems in organisation's internal setting and respond to them in a timely manner.

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