

# A challenge for the Romanian management companies - The communication specialist

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**Abstract.** In this paper, the authors' goal was to analyze the importance of managerial communication in Hunedoara county companies. The authors carry out a research using the survey method through a short questionnaire, ensuring that it does not take more than 5 minutes for the respondents to complete. The questionnaire was composed of 14 questions, was distributed online and applied to a group of over 500 companies from Hunedoara County, between 13th September 2020 and 30th September 2020. The authors received 34 answers, and these answers consist the basis of the research. The authors were interested in whether there are managerial communication procedures at the company level, and also, they have focused on the characteristics of managerial communication in these companies. They analyzed if in these companies it is used a task-centered or a human-centered communication, whether the communication used is formal or informal, or what method of communication is mainly used - bottom-up or top-down. Even if the present research was limited to the borders of Hunedoara county, the authors demonstrate the necessity of the existence of communication specialists especially in the area of organization management.

## 1. Introduction

The authors researched whether there are managerial communication procedures at the company level and also focused on the characteristics of managerial communication in Hunedoara companies. They have analyzed whether these companies use task-centered communication or human-centered communication, whether the communication used is formal or informal, or what direction the communication were mainly used - bottom-up or top-down. Even if the research was limited to the borders of Hunedoara county, the authors tried to demonstrate the need for the existence of communication specialists in the organization's management.

## 2. Research problem

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Almost everything one might list in the same breath as the word business involves, or is a form of communication. The implication is clear: to be effective in business, someone must be a good communicator. Lord Gormley was seeing: "You impress folks that little bit more with what you're saying if you say it nicely. People don't hear your ideas if you just stand there shouting out words." [1]

In business, like other areas of life, the best idea can fail if it is not communicated effectively. How clearly and convincingly you present the information and recommendations matters as much as how well you analyzed your data or how sensitive you pointed out a course of action.

Another dominant school argues that effective business communication requires mastery of writing and speaking techniques. Many books explain how to avoid complicated language, grammatical errors, passive expressions or technical jargon. This approach is based on a rhetorical tradition that comes from the ancient Greeks and is based on the connection between clear thinking and clear communication. It also encourages the writer or speaker to take advantage of logic, evidence, and beliefs. [2]

Managerial communication is different from other types of communication. This is because in a business or management setting, a well-written message is the only downside: you only succeed if the message gets the desired response from the audience. To get the desired response from the audience, you need to think about all your communications and communicate in a reliable, meaningful, and compact way. To communicate more strategically, you need to choose effective communication. For this, you need a simple way of thinking. An easy way is to divide communication activities into three groups of activities: interpersonal communication, communication of company employees and external communication of the company.

You need all three and you probably have a leadership position in at least the first two. For each of the three communication activities, there is a three-step model that you can apply. The primary purpose of management communications is to get people to take action. In fact, management is about getting things done or getting people to do things. Managerial communication is a convincing campaign - similar to a political campaign, although you follow results, not votes.

If you ask a room full of managers, "What's in your opinion management opinion?" you will receive all kinds of answers: business communication, public relations, marketing communication, corporate communication, management communication, management teams, e-mail and others. These answers are a reflection of the uncertainty about these terms and functions, both in companies and in inter-organizational communication.

Years ago, everything was much simpler. Managers recognized a need for business communication: business communication was about bringing products and services to market. So, managerial communication is in the company's communication: from top to bottom, externally focused, customer-oriented and one-way. Then came technology and globalization. And business has accelerated and rapid change has become a constant. Commitment has replaced compliance in the world of work.

Since then, managers have been responsible for communication.

Communication is situational. It is shaped by the profile of the manager and the profile of the employees, by the situation in which the communication takes place, by the public and by the culture of the company in which the communication takes place. [3]

For a more accurate picture, we searched for information related to the state of managerial communication in other countries in the vicinity of Romania.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, many companies use managerial communication in their business, even if it is not well understood or applied. The reasons are many, but the most important cause is the lack of knowledge, but also the low awareness of the importance of

the public and the lack of awareness of the importance of the company's stakeholders. The main objectives of the identified managerial communication are the increase of sales and the market share. In other words, there is more emphasis on immediate and short-term goals, and less on building a relationship with stakeholders. Attempts to influence public opinion are negligible, which may show that the basic concepts of managerial communication are not yet well understood. Bosnia and Herzegovina companies do not make much use of the services of specialized public relations agencies. At the time of the study, there was only one local specialized agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and several advertising agencies offered a limited range of profile services. There are no professional associations in this sector. Several international agencies, mostly Slovenian, then entered the Bosnian market. [4]

In Croatia, the field of managerial communication was characterized by a growing demand for professionalism, but at the same time the necessary infrastructure was not complete. Managerial communication needs to be (re) defined and (re) positioned in the educational system, in the structure of organizations and through codes of ethics and conduct. However, the future of communication managers in Croatia seemed bright at the time of the study, and the profession was evolving. From the initial phase in the 1990s and the emergence of a market economy in Croatia, managerial communication has developed under the umbrella of marketing.

Then there was a growing demand in the financial sector, which was largely due to the privatization of banks, the growth of the insurance industry and the reform of the pension system and private pension funds. These trends, combined with the globalization process, have already brought many foreign agencies (and with them increased competition and know-how), will certainly prove beneficial to the development of managerial communication. [4]

For an even better understanding of the importance of managerial communication, as well as its development in crisis conditions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, we also looked for papers on this topic. James K. C. Chen and Thitima Sriphon investigated how teleworking negatively influenced the relationship between managers and employees. They found that a lack of trust was created between managers and employees. Managers dislike employees working remotely and compensate for the lack of control and monitor them more. This situation has created an uncomfortable situation for employees. Excessive control of managers affects the collaboration between them and employees, but also teamwork. Lack of trust leads to a decrease in the performance of their organization. [5]

### **3. Research methodology**

The authors carry out a research using the survey method through a short questionnaire, ensuring that it does not take more than 5 minutes for the respondents to complete. The questionnaire was composed of 14 questions, applied to over 500 companies from Hunedoara County, respecting the national structure in terms of the division into small, medium and large companies, as presented in the White Paper on SMEs in Romania 2020 [6], between 13th September 2020 and 30th September 2020.

The study is representative and can provide an image of managerial communication in the vast majority of Romanian companies. The structure of the respondents also respects the characteristics of the economy of the whole country in terms of their division according to their size.

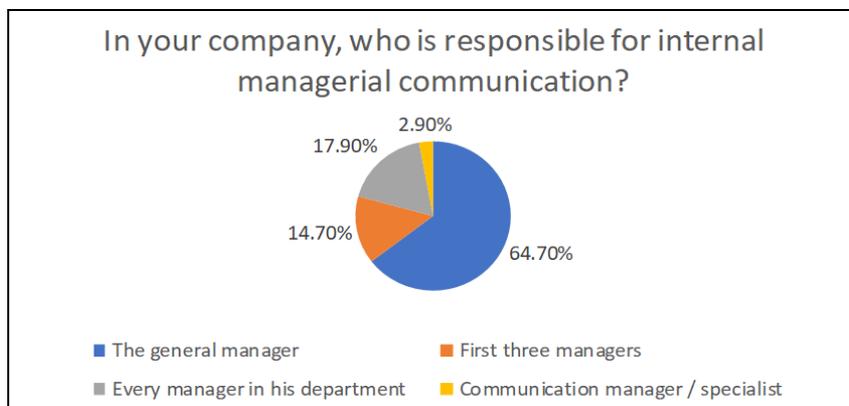
### **4. Research results and Discussions**

In the study, authors analyse the managerial communication in companies from Hunedoara county, in terms of few important elements. We have researched who is responsible for managerial communication, both internal and external communication, about the existence of managerial communication procedures, as well as about the communication directions and its formality.



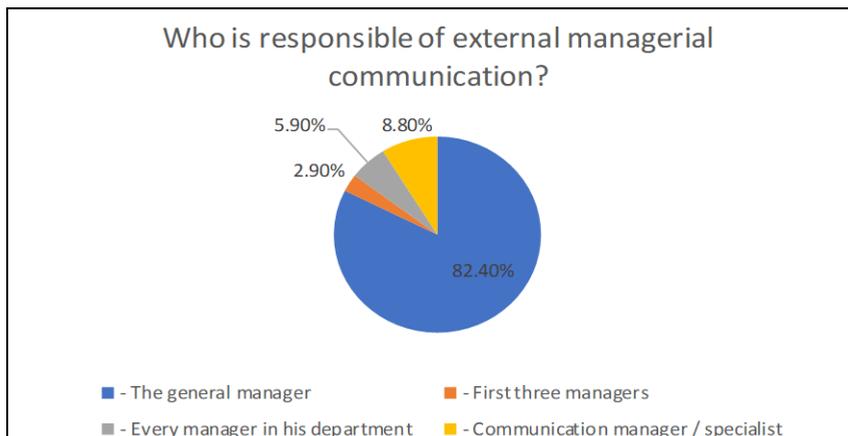
**Fig. 1.** Managerial communication in companies is it largely exercised by general managers

For almost 80% of the respondents, the managerial communication is exercised by the general manager. Only 5.9% say that the first three managers exercise managerial communication, and 14.7% claim that each manager exercises communication in his department. No respondent leaves the exercise of managerial communication to the manager or communication specialist.



**Fig. 2.** More than two thirds of respondents claim that internal managerial communication is the responsibility of the general manager

Regarding the internal managerial communication, it remains in proportion of over 60% in the responsibility of the general manager (64.7%), but it is also divided to the first three managers (14.7%) and to each manager in his department (17.9%). Almost 3% of respondents claim that it is the responsibility of the manager or communication specialist.



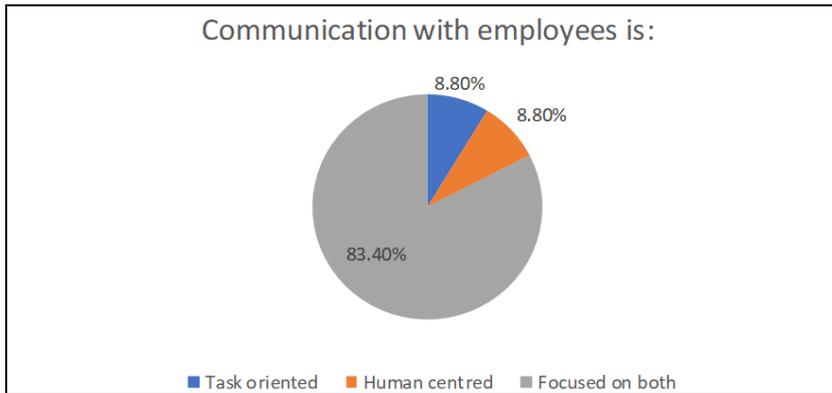
**Fig. 3.** Over 80% of respondents claim that external managerial communication is the responsibility of the general manager

Regarding external communication (including public communication), the responsibility is shared between the general manager (82.4%), with an even higher percentage than when asked about the exercise of managerial communication. It should be noted that the communication manager/specialist now has a greater responsibility (8.8%). The role of the first three managers in external managerial communication is recognized by only 2.9%, and of department managers by just almost 6%.



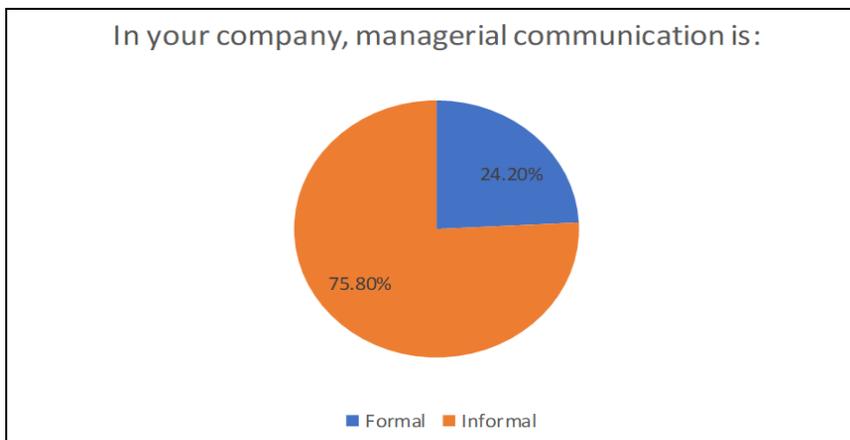
**Fig. 4.** Almost half of the companies do not have managerial communication procedures

Managerial communication procedures are a reality in the case of 44.1% of respondents, which is a minority, while almost 56% of them admit that they do not have such procedures in their company.



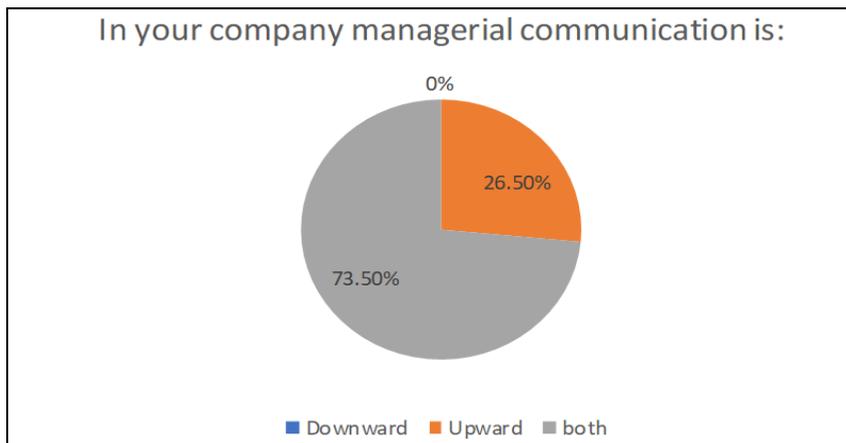
**Fig. 5.** Over 80% say that communication with employees is focused on both people and tasks

Communication with employees is 83.4% focused on both tasks and people. 8.8% of respondents say they are focused only on tasks, and the same percent declares are focus on communication only on people.



**Fig. 6.** More than three quarters claim that in their companies the communication is informal

Business managers, in a proportion of over three quarters, are in favor of informal managerial communication (less rigorous), which shows a modern vision of communication. However, formal managerial communication is appreciated by almost a quarter of the respondents of this research.



**Fig. 7.** Almost three quarters claim that in their companies the communication is two-way

Regarding the direction of managerial communication, more than a quarter of respondents estimate that, in their company, managerial communication is upward. However, almost three quarters of respondents prefer a consultative communication, in both directions, descending and ascending. No respondent chose only bottom-up communication.

## 5. Conclusions

The study concluded that within the companies in Hunedoara County, managerial communication is seen as the attribute and responsibility of the general manager, who in most cases is the same person who owns the company. The manager or communication specialist is a rarity in companies from Hunedoara County. Where it still exists, it plays a role in external managerial communication and public communication.

More than half of the companies from Hunedoara County do not have managerial communication procedures. Most general managers in Hunedoara are open to advisory communication (in both directions) and to informal communication. This situation has its roots in the mentality grounded before 1989, in the communist regime, when centralism was the only form of management. Unfortunately, many aspects of managerial communication are still unknown to these managers. At that time, there was no question of communication procedures or communication specialists. Although more than 30 years have passed, this mentality is still present in society, even though many things have evolved in the meantime.

For many managers, especially in small companies, the existence of managers or communication specialists is relatively new. The vast majority of those who know about their existence, see them as an unnecessary expense and not as a plus, as they see the online and offline promotion of their business. However, it is gratifying that the vast majority of managers are open to communication in both directions (from top to bottom and from bottom to top), but also to informal communication and not to formal communication, much more rigid and distant.

The conclusions of our study can also provide a vision on the fact that Romania is still on the last places in terms of economic performance or Gross Domestic Product, although it is a member of the European Union since 2007 and also why Hunedoara County is not among the counties with an important economic development.

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