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System of Market Communication of the Polish Post S.A. with the Internal Environment

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Abstract

Lack of knowledge or skills is the cause of the gap of knowledge and skills, or the asymmetry of knowledge between client and vendor (service provider). That gap may be filled to a large extent through the process of communicating specified values and benefits to the customer and/or worker. This process should, however, be effective and efficient. The process of communicating customer value not only provides buyers with awareness of what products and services they can buy, but also of the benefits of the purchase for them. The goal of the study is to find out whether, in fact, the communication methods used by the Polish Post deliver a sufficient amount of information to workers, who are the most important element of the internal environment, respectfully. In this work, analysis was performed on the effectiveness of communication activities undertaken by the company in terms of services provided and image achieved. An important issue is the appropriate, effective process of communicating value for employees. The results of the research and analyses can be used by managers of the audited company, as well as by the management of other enterprises providing services of a similar nature.

Keywords: Market Communication, Effectiveness, Environment, Worker, Information

Introduction

The high level of effectiveness of the system of communication and its growth will be the deciding factor of a company's ability to achieve competitive advantage. This advantage, as reflected in a more favorable relationship between inputs and outcomes than that of competitors, allows for the continued rapid growth of a company. It is the foundation for increasing a company's share on the market, and thus increasing its competitive strength relative to the strength of competitors. Increasing the level of efficiency of an enterprise's communication system in effect increases the degree of its independence from competitors.

Integrated communication with the market implies that all communication activities in an enterprise are consistent and associated with each other. Its principle is to create a single image of the company and its products to customers and employees (Herman, 2010). The result of such an approach to a company's communication efforts means an increase in its efficiency and effectiveness.

It has been assumed that communication with the environment has yielded results in line with the expectations of management of the Polish Post; acquainting clients with the full

range of services provided and the enterprise itself. In addition, communication impacts the increase in trust and loyalty of customers and employees to the company (Lavie et al., 2012).

Methodology of Research

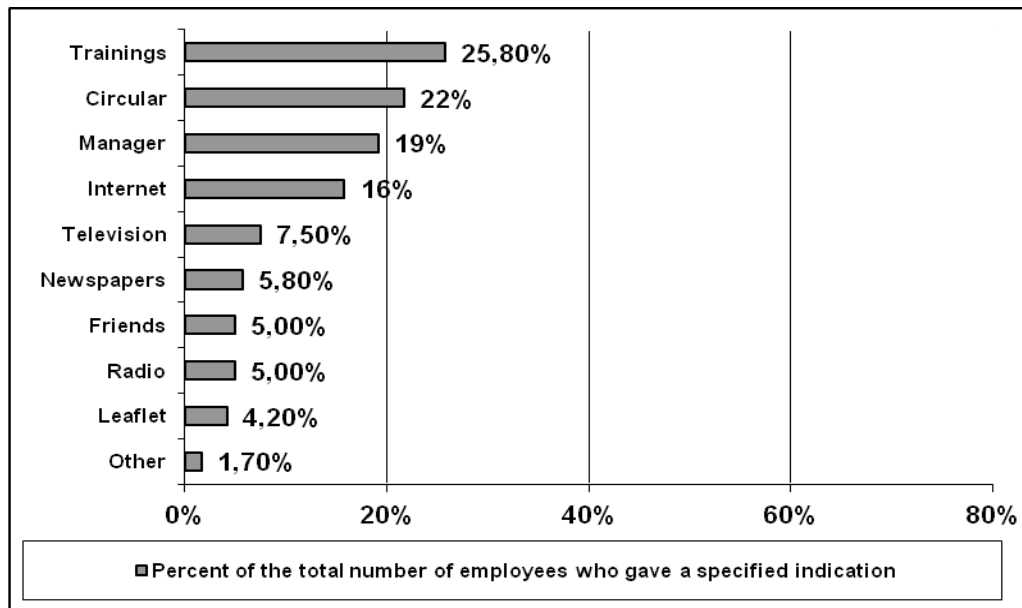
Confrontation of theory and practice - an analysis of the conditions, course and consequences of the process of communicating worker value based on the example of the Polish Postal Service. The study was conducted in 2012 on group of recipients of marketing communication: workers - recipients of the services of the Polish Postal Service. The study was conducted on 120 participants, a representative group of employees of the Polish Postal Service. Sample selection was implemented by the judgmental sampling method, including stratification criteria enabling behavior representativeness of the sample in terms of basic statistical characteristics (gender, age, education, place of residence) in the provinces of Podlasie and Warmia-Mazury (in Poland).

The aim of the study is to attempt to analyze the effectiveness of the communication activities directed at workers. Of interest is the effectiveness of the actions taken by the company to promote services and create a positive image of the company. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine whether The Polish Post S.A., in the opinion of recipients, is actively involved in the process of communicating specific value for the workers. Moreover, the aim of the study is to learn whether employees react to the communication activities initiated by The Polish Post S.A., what rationale they use in the process of product selection, and what benefits they derive from such activities.

This research was carried out by the author. The results of national surveys conducted by the Polish Post S.A. were also used. As a result, it was possible to present the efficiency and effectiveness of the process of communicating specific value for the employees on the example of a large service company (network) that is the Polish Post S.A.

The Real Effects of Communicating Value to Employees (Workers)

Figure 1 shows the channels used to communicate information about changes in product offer for the employees of the Polish Post. Based on research conducted among employees of the Polish Post in 2012, the main channel of communication were trainings. This answer was given by 25.8% of the employees surveyed. In next place-in the opinion of surveyed employees, was an internal communication channel, a written circular. Managers, as sources of information about changes, were third on the list.

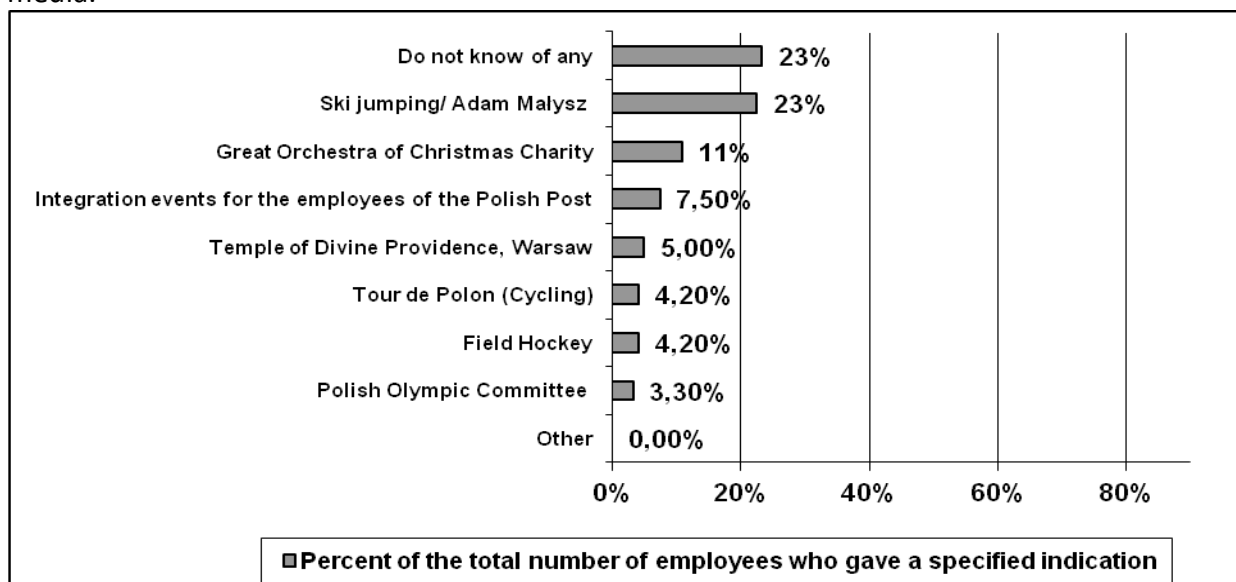


Source: Own research based on surveys conducted among employees of the Polish Post in 2012.

Figure 1. Channels emitting information about changes in product offer for the employees of the

Polish Post

Subsequent studies indicate that employees have very little knowledge about issues related to the activities of the company in terms of sponsorship. Over 23% of surveyed employees stated that they did not know of any projects sponsored by the Polish Post (figure 2). The obtained results lead to the conclusion that the company does not inform employees about its actions in a satisfactory manner, and does not make proper use of communication media.

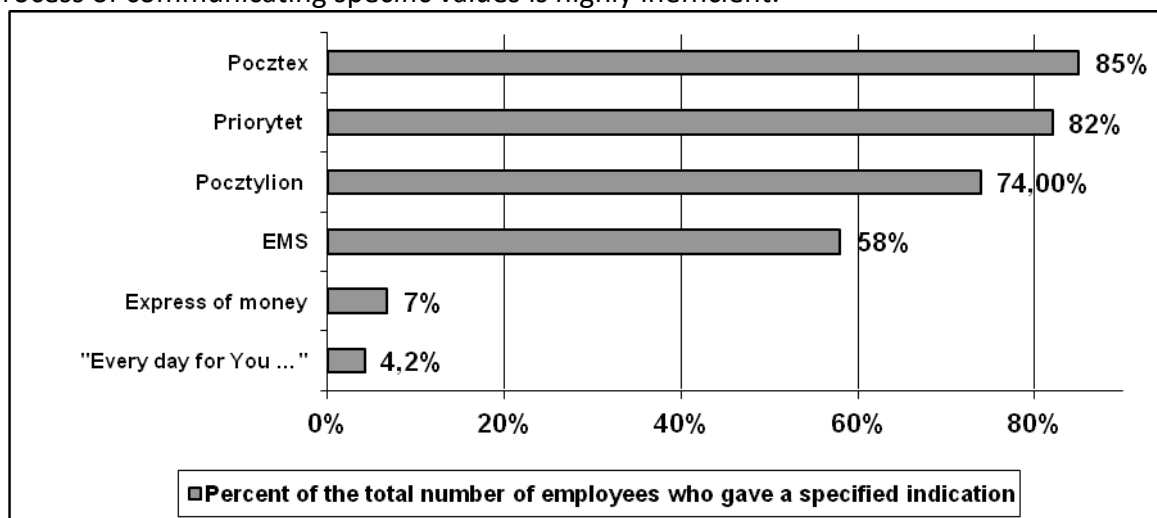


Source: Own research based on surveys conducted among employees of the Polish Post in 2012.

Figure 2. Knowledge among employees of projects sponsored by the Polish Post

In addition, a review of business publications was conducted in search of articles related to sponsorship activities of the Polish Post. Only a few references on the subject were found, mainly appeals to support the needy in the weekly "Polish Post" publication, which all employees of the Polish Post receive. Figure 3 presents the results of research on knowledge among employees of various terms and postal categories used by the Polish Post. The results show that 85% of employees recognized the term *Pocztex* (domestic courier); 81.7% knew what *Priority* was (the delivery of packages on the second day after they were mailed); and an expected 74.2% of surveyed employees knew what *Pocztylion* (a pension fund) was. Thus, employees seem to have quite a good understanding of basic terminology and postal categories used by the Polish Post. The main problem here is knowledge about new services. Only 6.7% of employees surveyed were aware of a new service called *Ekspres pieniędzy* (*Fast cash*).

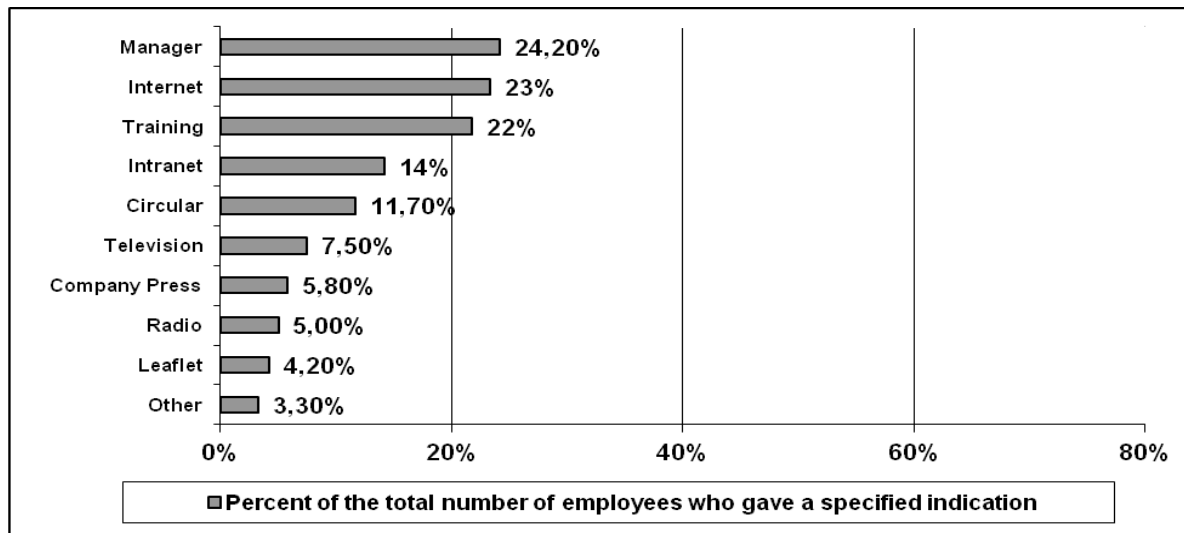
The slogan "Every day for you ..." was identified as the mission statement of the company by only 4.2% of all surveyed employees. Having only 4.2% of the workforce be aware of the mission statement of the company is not a good thing. This may indicate that the postal process of communicating specific values is highly inefficient.



Source: Own research based on surveys conducted among employees of the Polish Post in 2012.

Figure 3. Knowledge among employees of basic terms and categories used by the Polish Post

Figure 4 presents the channels of communication emitting information about changes in the company for the employees of the Polish Post. The highest percentage of employees surveyed (24.2% of all respondents) indicated that their superiors were their primary source/channel of information. In next place respondents indicated the internet (23.3% of surveyed employees), trainings (21.7% of respondents) and Intranet (14.2% of surveyed employees). The results of the research in this area clearly indicate that the primary and thus the most important channels of communication about changes in the company are centered around the human factor and electronic communication.



Source: Own research based on surveys conducted among employees of the Polish Post in 2012.

Figure 4. Channels emitting information about changes in the company for the employees of the Post

Figure 5 presents the results of research concerning the timeliness of communication within the enterprise. Most of the employees surveyed (58.3%) claimed that information reaches them at the last moment, just before the time of their application. Such a situation means that there is little time to get acquainted with and think through the changes. Moreover, 17.5% of all respondents claimed that information about changes reached them after the changes had been put into effect. Only 24.2% of surveyed employees claimed that they receive information in a timely manner. The results show clear evidence of internal disturbances occurring in the process of emission and transmission of information in the company. Another research question dealt with inconsistencies and/or contradictions in the transmission of information. The idea was to determine the scale of the phenomenon, i.e. the monthly frequency of inconsistencies and/or contradictions in the process of internal communication of specific values for employees.



Source: Own research based on surveys conducted among employees of the Polish Post in 2012.

Figure 5. Timeliness in receiving communication within the company

Figure 6 presents the frequency of inconsistencies (contradictions) in the transmission of information within the Polish Post. A total of 74.4% of employees surveyed said they

receive inconsistent or contradictory information at least once per month from various levels of management. On the other hand, nearly 26% of employees claimed that inconsistencies in the transmission of information within their company did not occur. The results of research in this area indicate a large scale problem of inconsistencies and contradictions in the internal communication of information.



Source: Own research based on surveys conducted among employees of the Polish Post in 2012.

Figure 6. Frequency (per month) of inconsistencies and/or contradictions in the transmission of information within the Polish Post

Table 1 presents the most effective channels of communication within the company, as indicated by the employees of the Polish Post. In the opinion of surveyed employees, the best channel of communication, in terms of effectiveness, is the Internet. This communication channel was indicated by 23.3% of all surveyed employees. In second place, respondents placed managers, and in third, trainings. Again, the human factor, in the form of a manager or a person leading the training, is indicated as one of the most effective channels of communicating certain values /information.

Table 1

The effectiveness of communication channels, in the opinion of surveyed employees

The best channel of communicating information within the company	Rank of the most important channels, in the opinion of employees surveyed	The number of employees who gave a certain indication	Percentage of all employees	Average importance of the channel/on a scale of 1-5, where 1 - very low, 5 - very high/in the opinion of employees surveyed
Internet	1	28	23,3	1,17
Superiors	2	26	21,7	1,09
Trainings	3	25	20,8	1,04
Circulars	4	19	15,8	0,79
Intranet	5	18	15,0	0,75
Company Press	6	10	8,3	0,42
Television	6	10	8,3	0,42
Radio	7	4	3,3	0,17
Leaflet	8	3	2,5	0,13
Other	9	2	1,7	0,09

Source: Own research based on surveys conducted among employees of the Polish Post in 2012.

Table 2 presents the factors (communication elements) affecting the reception of postal communication messages. The aim of the research in this area was to establish what Polish Post employees thought were the most important factors influencing the reception of communication messages. In the opinion of employees surveyed, the most important factor in the reception of communication was the price of the postal product. This aspect of communication was indicated by 38.3% of all surveyed employees. In second place, in terms of importance, was the quality of the postal product. This element of communication was mentioned by 22.5% of all surveyed employees. Humorous elements in the transmission of the communication was located third in terms of importance among respondents- indicated by 21.7% of all respondents. Communication elements such as competitions and prize draws also occupied a prominent place of importance-these were indicated by 18.3% of all surveyed employees of the Polish Post.

Table 2

Factors influencing recipients of postal communication

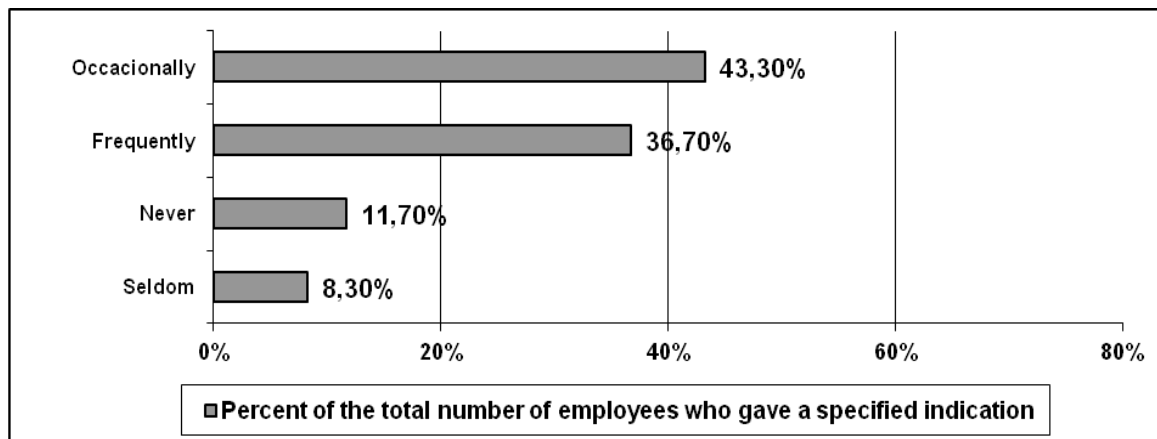
Factors influencing recipients of postal communication	Rank of the most important factors, in the opinion of employees surveyed	The number of employees who gave a certain indication	Percentage of all employees	Average importance of the factor/on a scale of 1-5, where 1 - very low, 5 - very high/in the opinion of employees surveyed
Information about the favorable price of the postal product	1	46	38,3	1,92
Assurance concerning the quality of the product	2	27	22,5	1,13
Humorous elements in communication message	3	26	21,7	1,09
Information about competitions and prize draws	4	22	18,3	0,92
Involvement of celebrities in advertising	5	16	13,3	0,67
Shocking and surprising scenes (images, passwords, etc.)	6	15	12,5	0,63
Beautiful female model (models); erotic elements	7	13	10,8	0,54
Advertised news (new postal products)	8	12	10,0	0,50
Splendor and vision of luxury	9	9	7,5	0,38
Other	10	7	5,8	0,29

Source: Own research based on surveys conducted among employees of the Polish Post in 2012.

Another research issue was to determine whether the recipient of postal communication messages makes an attempt to confirm the information using other sources. Figure 7 presents the results of research in this area. A significant proportion of employees (43.3% of all respondents), make occasional attempts to confirm information about

advertised postal products through other sources before making a purchase, while 36.7% of all surveyed employees frequently confirm information about products from other sources before buying. The results of research in this area indicate that confidence in the postal communication process is greatly limited.

The last research question was to determine what forms of communication will dominate the postal market in the coming years. Figure 8 shows the future of the postal communication market, in the opinion of employees surveyed. The form of communication which will dominate the postal market in the coming years - as indicated by respondents - is direct and interactive marketing. This form of communicating customer value was selected by 34.2% of respondents. The second most important form of market communication, as indicated by 21.2% of respondents, will be direct sales in post offices and on the premises of companies. Other important projected forms of communication include: sales promotion, traditional communication, public relations and sponsorship. The results of research in this area clearly point out specific trends and changes in the system of communicating customer value. It should be noted that widely understood direct and interactive marketing is beginning to dominate, while traditional market communication/ advertising is losing importance.



Source: Own research based on surveys conducted among employees of the Polish Post in 2012.

Figure 7. Attempts to confirm information about advertised postal products in other sources before making a purchase

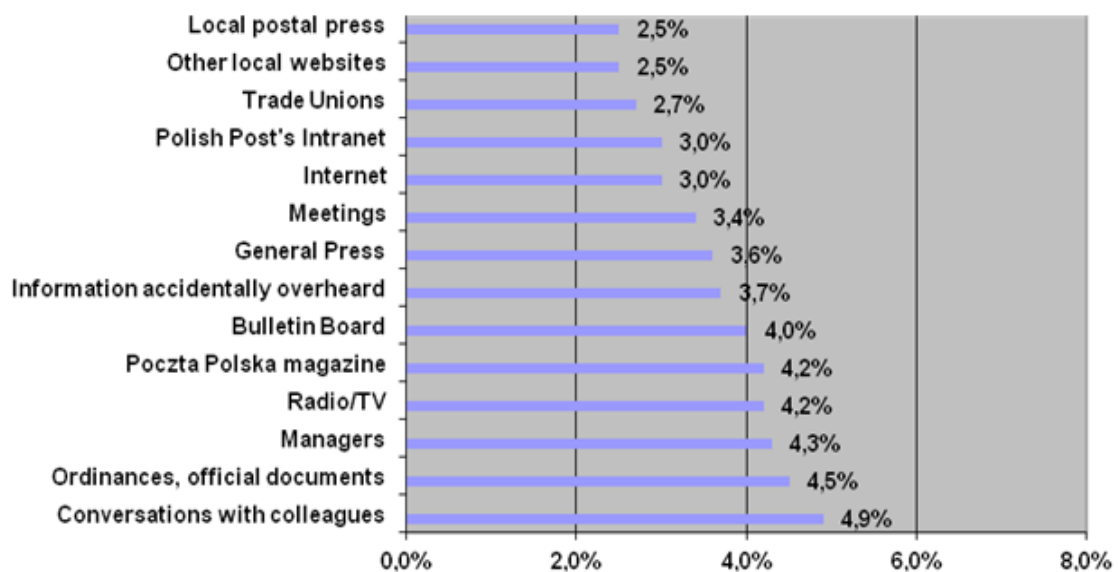


Source: Own research based on surveys conducted among employees of the Polish Post in 2012.

Figure 8. Projected forms of postal market communication

A nationwide survey conducted among employees of the Polish Post in 2008 showed similar results and/or trends as obtained in my research. Employees indicated colleagues, ordinances, official documents, and superiors as the best sources of information (figure 9).

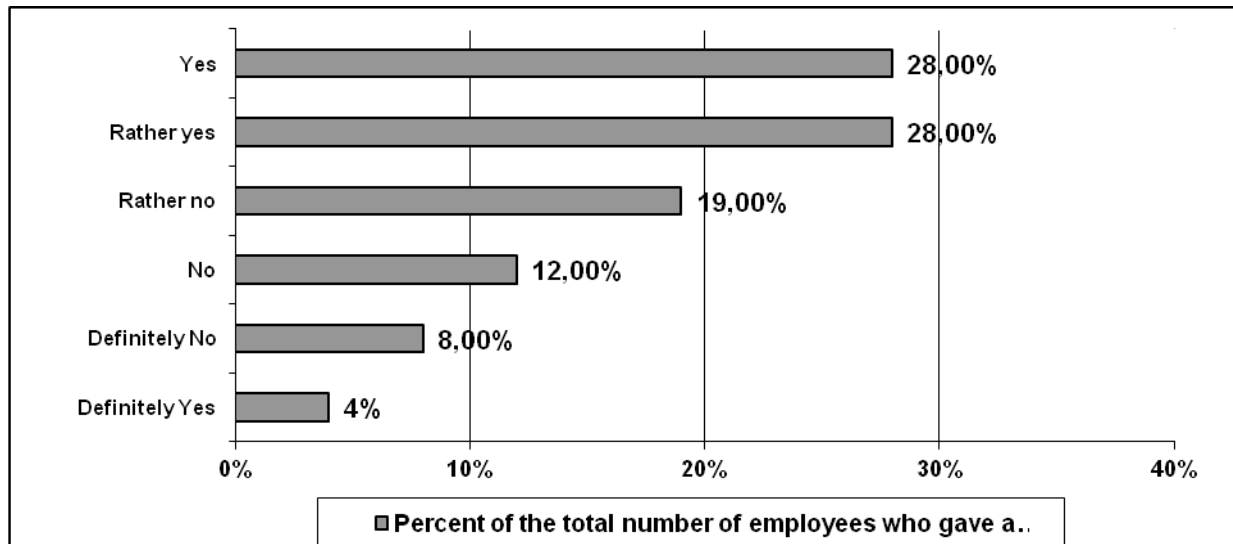
The survey from which this data was taken was carried out at the request of the Directorate-General of the Polish Post, and concerned employee opinion on various aspects of operations and communications of the Polish Post. Based on this research, it was found that none of the 14 listed sources of information was used "very often", and the dominant majority, or 71.4% of the sources indicated, was used on a scale from 3.0 to 4.0 %, that is, at frequencies between "rare" and "sometimes".



Source: Own research based on Grzymis³awska, 2008.

Figure 9. The effectiveness of communication channels, according to nationwide

The most valued source of information turned out to be conversations with colleagues, which were rated higher than ordinances and official documents. The author's commentary on the research indicated that low frequency of the use of the Internet and intranet sources were a result of limited access to computers (Grzymis³awska, 2008).



Source: own research based on data from national surveys conducted for the Directorate-General of the Polish Post.

Figure 10. Postal employees' level of awareness about what is happening within the company

Figure 10 shows how well informed employees of the Polish Post feel (Grzymis³awska, 2008). The results of the study indicate that 39% of workers do not feel sufficiently well informed about the situation of the company, and about what is happening within it.

The Main Aspects System of Postal Communication

According to The Polish Post, the company has a communication system that sends information, signals, and certain values to its internal and external environment. According to the company, it uses a full range of tools and channels to communicate value to the customer. For the purpose of this work, research was carried out to verify how these methods were used. It turned out that not all information necessary for the proper functioning and shaping of the enterprise's image in its environment reaches their recipients. It was concluded that the target group was unaware, or aware to a negligible degree, of a range of important information about the enterprise (Ferrel et al., 2013).

The results of the study indicate that there is disruption in the process of information transmission in the Polish Post. This occurs in communication with the internal environment, with its employees. The system of internal communication of the Polish Post does not produce the desired results and is thus not very effective. The need to build a clear and efficient communication system was postulated much earlier, especially in providing employees with greater access to information about the operations of the Polish Post Council, about decisions made and actions taken (Michalik and Michalik, 2008). However, these demands were not fully met, which is confirmed by the results of the research.

In the current situation, when the postal market is constantly enriched by entities interested in providing postal services, Polish Post S.A. cannot confine itself to the narrow

channels of communicating information based mainly on human capital. The competition has, to some extent, an easier route to commercial success (Morris, 2006). They are not burdened with past decisions and current obligations, and decisions about the future can be made by taking much greater risk.

An important issue for the Polish Post is the development of coherent and uniform administrative procedures. An effective information system that supports various processes in a company does not only concern ICT, but also information concerning the shipment from sender to recipient, as well as unexpected events, such as a cancellation of a planned flight (Michalski, 2007). Acquiring knowledge in advance of a planned shipment of a significant volume, which affects the subsequent work of those receiving and expediting the shipment, would make planning much easier for the individual cells involved in the delivery process (Czarniewski, 2014). Having an efficient system of communicating specific value for its customers is one of the core capabilities of modern enterprises (Raich and Dolan, 2008). That is why it is very important to develop skills in interpersonal communication, improve qualifications, provide opportunities for the use of new technology, and improve relationships and the communication process with the internal environment (Bhatt, 2001).

Development of services, constant expansion of the range of products available due to increasing differentiation of preferences; customer expectations causing an increase in the amount of information being transferred within the company and issued to its external environment; these factors determine the need for the use of increasingly complex solutions characterized by the use of specialized technology by the Polish Post.

Conclusions

1. On the basis of research and analysis, the hypothesis made at the beginning of the study, claiming that communication with the environment gave the expected results as predicted by management, was not confirmed.

2. The Polish Post should use all available market communication tools and channels it has access to. Research shows that some of the available means of communication are used by the company and others not at all.

3. The study also showed that the Polish Post S.A., despite having access to a full range of communication tools, only uses a select few. Its internal communication system is mainly based on human capital.

4. The effectiveness of communication in the company being researched is not as high as it should be. The size of the company and the multitude of services provided require the use of a full range of communication tools. As is clear from the research, the Polish Post does not use means of communication that are tailored to the needs of the company and to its recipients. It is necessary to use additional means of communication in order to fill the gaps in shaping the image of the company, as well as communicating the services it renders.

5. Research results show that most information reaches the environment through a human factor. This happens during direct contact between an employee with another employee, either a co-worker or a supervisor. The study showed that the human factor is the main tool of communication in this company.

6. The observed low level of information being passed on to the environment on issues and matters relevant to the relationship between the company and its environment may be the result of the significant reduction in the number of channels used for emitting information and little use of communication tools other than the human factor.

7. Considering the fact that the market communication of the researched company relies mainly on human resources, inefficiencies in internal communication cause significant disruption in the transfer of information, knowledge, and value to the external environment of the company. The result is that the external environment is poorly informed, if at all. Thus, the effectiveness of communicating specific value in many areas of the company is rather low.

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