



## REVIEW ARTICLE

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# Internal communication and its relationship with job satisfaction

## Comunicación interna y su relación con la satisfacción laboral

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This literature review aims to explore the historical evolution and strategic role of internal communication within organizations, with a special focus on its impact on job satisfaction. Through a narrative review, it investigates the sociocultural and technological transformations that have influenced internal communication, highlighting the importance of integrating it into organizational strategy to enhance planning and execution of actions. It examines the flow of information and the effectiveness of different types of communication, along with the tools and channels used to convey key messages. Additionally, it emphasizes the relevance of feedback as a mechanism to improve mutual understanding and facilitate more effective communication in the future. Finally, it concludes that internal communication plays a crucial role in creating a positive work environment, significantly affecting employees' perceptions and, consequently, their job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** *Internal communication, organizations, feedback, job satisfaction.*

**Resumen**

Esta revisión de la literatura tiene como objetivo explorar la evolución histórica y el papel estratégico de la comunicación interna en las organizaciones, con un enfoque especial en su impacto en la satisfacción laboral. Mediante una revisión narrativa, se investigan las transformaciones socioculturales y tecnológicas que han influido en la comunicación interna, subrayando la importancia de integrarla en la estrategia organizacional para mejorar la planificación y ejecución de acciones. Se examina la fluidez de la información y la efectividad de los distintos tipos de comunicación, junto con las herramientas y canales empleados para transmitir mensajes clave. Además, se destaca la relevancia del feedback como un mecanismo para mejorar la comprensión mutua y facilitar una comunicación más efectiva en el futuro. Finalmente, se concluye que la comunicación interna desempeña un papel crucial en la creación de un entorno laboral positivo, afectando significativamente la percepción de los empleados y, por ende, su satisfacción en el trabajo.

**Palabras clave:** *Comunicación interna, organizaciones, feedback, satisfacción laboral.*

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## Introduction

Throughout history, internal communication has played a key role in the structure of organizations. Its nature encompasses a complex network of interactions that affect the work environment and, consequently, employee satisfaction. Within this context, a thorough review of publications was conducted, focusing on understanding internal communication and its relationship with job satisfaction.

The aim of this literature review is to explore the historical evolution and strategic role of internal communication in organizations, with a special focus on its impact on employee satisfaction.

Through this narrative review, the goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of internal communication, highlighting its relevance in the workplace and its influence on achieving organizational objectives. In doing so, the review identifies the key factors that can determine the success or failure of internal communication plans, offering a complete perspective on this essential dimension within the business environment.

## Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is the narrative review, an approach that enables a thorough and contextualized exploration of the research topic through a qualitative synthesis of the available literature. Following the model proposed by Polkinghorne (1995), the narrative review focuses on constructing a comprehensive account based on multiple studies, providing a detailed understanding of the relationship between internal communication and job satisfaction. Google Scholar, a recognized source of academic literature, was used to conduct the search.

## Scope and Objectives

The narrative review aims to examine the historical evolution and strategic role of internal communication within organizations, with particular emphasis on its impact on job satisfaction. This approach makes it possible to explore how internal communication has developed over time and how it shapes employees'

perceptions and levels of engagement. Specific criteria were established for selecting relevant studies addressing internal communication and job satisfaction, thereby ensuring that the reviewed literature is both pertinent and of high quality.

## Criteria for Data Identification in Google Scholar

The selection criteria focused on articles in which internal communication was the primary variable and job satisfaction the secondary one. The search was limited to articles and documents published between 2008 and 2022, prioritizing studies that addressed internal communication as the central variable and job satisfaction as the secondary variable.

## Development

Dueñas and García García (2013) note that, in the 1990s, internal communication was conceived primarily as a process of information transmission with limited feedback. It was defined as a set of actions aimed at establishing and maintaining connections with members of an organization, using various communication channels to keep them informed, united, and motivated.

At present, internal communication plays a crucial role in fostering employee commitment, participation, and engagement in achieving organizational objectives. This is accomplished through participatory two-way communication, which encourages the active exchange of information and opinions across different areas and departments of the organization (Vora & Patra, 2017).

One of the main theories developed on internal communication was that of Downs and Hazen (1977), which explores the impact of internal communication on employee job satisfaction. The research reveals that efficient internal communication, encompassing both vertical communication (between managers and employees) and horizontal communication (among colleagues), is essential for increasing job satisfaction. It highlights that the clarity, relevance, and frequency of information have a direct effect on employees' perception of their work environment and their level of satisfaction.

## Approaches to the Concept of Internal Communication

According to Arizcuren (2008), internal communication consists of informing all members of an organization about its activities, and more importantly, involving them in the organization's initiatives.

Brum (2010) argues that internal communication encompasses a set of activities aimed at reconciling the interests of employees and the organization through integrative practices such as the exchange of experiences, mutual collaboration, and internal dialogue. He further notes that endomarketing represents a more striking and appealing form of internal communication, characterized by impactful images, memorable phrases, and the use of other marketing techniques and resources.

Claro Montes et al. (2022) emphasize that internal communication focuses on exploring the connections among culture, communication, and organizational change. In practice, it is defined as an integrative function that disseminates information and operates across areas such as communication, human resources, and marketing. Within this framework, employees are regarded as internal clients.

### The Importance of Internal Communication

Any discussion of internal communication must begin with the importance of employee training as a starting point. Communication cannot be fully addressed without first considering adequate training within organizations. In small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), greater importance is often placed on trust in individuals rather than on individual evaluation. By contrast, in large corporations, organizational culture tends to prioritize roles and hierarchical positions, placing greater emphasis on function and authority (Iurcovich, 2012).

According to Zapata et al. (2017), internal communication plays a fundamental role in aligning employees with the strategic objectives of the organization. Similarly, Pizzolante Negrón (2006) asserts that "a well-communicated internal environment strengthens training plans, evaluation,

and team thinking" (p. 217), while also fostering a sense of belonging within the organization.

The significance of internal communication in organizations became evident in the late 1990s, largely through the research of Australian sociologist and psychologist Elton Mayo. He demonstrated that achieving high productivity required recognizing that individuals could not merely be regarded as extensions of machines at work. His findings underscored that when individuals feel motivated, encouraged, and listened to, they perceive themselves as an essential part of the organization—which, in fact, they are (De Araujo Pereira, 2022). In the same article, he cites Matos (2009), who states: "The importance of internal communication must be highlighted as a strategic factor in the ongoing pursuit of improving quality of work life" (p. 94).

### Internal Communication in Organizations

Internal communication can be conceptualized in two complementary ways. On the one hand, it is an exchange of messages among the members of an organization and its external audiences, being a social process. On the other hand, it is considered a set of techniques and activities based on the study of the communication process and aimed at developing an effective strategy to facilitate and streamline the flow of messages (Andrade, 2005).

For their part, Eka and Anik (2020) mention organizational communication, which involves the patterns, networks, and systems of communication within an organization. As organizations grow and become more complex, communication programs are required to ensure that the team can work effectively to achieve organizational objectives. As Arribas (2018) states, internal communication contributes mainly to the value of a company through interaction and personal relationships.

### Strategy and Its Relationship with Internal Communication

Strategic communication has undergone significant changes with the arrival of the Internet (Oscco et al., 2022). The strategic aspect is of utmost importance for reconciling the interests of employees and the company through the promotion of dialogue, the

exchange of information and experiences, the participation of all levels, and the generation of greater commitment aligned with the organization's values (Kunsch, 1997).

Strategic communication is key to projecting the organization effectively, both internally and externally, encouraging constant reflection on stability and change (Fernández Hernández & Batista Quintero, 2016).

Rhee and Moon (2009) proposed a measurement tool designed to evaluate internal communication strategies for employees (ECS). This tool aims to measure the effectiveness of internal organizational communication. The ECS construct is composed of three key dimensions: the adequacy of information, support for interaction, and the flow of information.

### **Objectives, Functions, and Planning of Internal Communication**

The main objectives of internal communication focus on establishing a connection between information and motivation, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation, shaping desired work behaviors in terms of performance and conduct, and providing effective feedback for continuous evaluation (Holá, 2012). According to Borca and Baesu (2014), "the primary objective of organizational communication is to inform, disseminate, and convince employees of the organization's goals and policies" (p. 498).

Internal communication fulfills three essential functions: coordination and control, innovation, and socialization. In addition, there are seven functions within the organization: information, integration, feedback, signaling, behavior, promotion of change, and image. These functions are fundamental for establishing strategic internal communication, promoting interaction and cooperation among organization members (Almeida, 2013). According to Oyarvide-Ramírez et al. (2017), internal communication plays a crucial role in the organization by consistently and systematically supporting communication management, regardless of the organization's mission. It also encourages the dissemination of organizational objectives and

policies, as well as the formation of a strong identity through an inspiring and cordial environment.

According to Arizcuren (2008), the internal communication process can be summarized in five key stages: diagnosis of the current situation, definition of strategies and objectives, action planning, execution and development, and monitoring and evaluation. During the diagnosis stage, the communication tools, problems, and needs are analyzed, while the definition stage establishes clear goals for each stakeholder group.

### **General Aspects of Internal Communication**

#### **Types of Internal Communication**

Communication within an organization is divided into two categories: informal communication, which arises spontaneously among members and is based on the need to exchange useful information; and formal communication, which is intentionally designed by the organization to connect different parts of the structure (Sanchis & Bonavía, 2017). Arizcuren (2008) further notes that formal communication is planned and organized in advance and is essential for communication management. However, informal communication, which does not follow a pre-established plan, can be a powerful and valuable tool, as it provides important information and insights that differ from those obtained through formal sources.

#### **Communication Flows in Internal Communication**

Communication flows within an organization refer to the direction followed by the exchange of messages in order to reach the intended recipients and achieve the set objectives. These flows can be downward (from superiors to subordinates), upward (from subordinates to superiors), horizontal (between people at the same level of authority), and diagonal (across different hierarchical levels). These flows enable effective communication, facilitating decision-making, problem-solving, and interaction among members of the organization (Oyarvide-Ramírez et al., 2017).

According to Auz et al. (2021), internal communication can flow vertically or horizontally within an organization, facilitating the exchange of ideas, problems, and opinions.

## **Tools and Channels Used in Internal Communication**

Within an organization, various internal communication tools can be used, such as welcome manuals, internal publications, documents like memos and circulars, bulletin boards, events, meetings, and intranet platforms. These tools are selected according to the needs and characteristics of each organization. Additionally, other options can be considered, such as internal radio, email, newsletters, conferences, informative talks, workshops, letters, and cards, which complement the possibilities for internal communication (Matsumoto et al., 2016). Dioses et al. (2020) propose storytelling as a powerful communication tool that uses sequential narratives to connect with our emotions and senses. Through words, images, and sounds, these stories have been fundamental throughout human history, giving meaning to our lives and generating connections with other people.

Regarding communication channels, there are two types: direct channels, which involve face-to-face interactions, and indirect or mediated channels, which require the use of technology such as telephones, television, or radio. Direct channels are especially effective for obtaining quick responses and capturing nonverbal cues (Oyarvide-Ramírez et al., 2017).

The recent literature classifies new digital communication channels in various ways, such as social networks. In the internal context, collaborative projects, such as wikis and social bookmarking tools, are fundamental. Intranet portals are also popular for the digitalization and integration of internal communication (Sisko Maarit Lipiäinen et al., 2014).

According to Claro Montes et al. (2022), depending on the specific objective, unidirectional channels, such as emails, are useful for transmitting information, whereas bidirectional channels are more suitable when employee participation is desired. It is important to consider the level of digital competence and the organizational culture when using digital channels, but it is also necessary to value the importance of maintaining face-to-face meetings and conversations.

## **The Importance of Feedback in Internal Communication**

An efficient internal communication process requires an appropriate medium for feedback and strategic management of it. It is important to measure the contributions of communication to the organization and maintain constant feedback. This involves implementing a rigorous information analysis system to objectively evaluate processes and opinions (Martínez Martínez & Fernandez Hurtado, 2018). Oyarvide-Ramírez et al. (2017) note that active feedback is key in internal communication within companies, as it involves effective interaction between senders and receivers. It is essential to encourage a constant flow of feedback to improve internal communication.

## **Main Factors Contributing to the Failure of Internal Communication Plans**

Lack of communication is a significant obstacle in management and must be reduced to avoid errors, as it contributes to failures in the administrative area (Matsumoto et al., 2016). From Holá's (2012) perspective, managers must prevent poor communication to avoid negative consequences, such as decreased motivation, indecision, passivity, and frustration. These problems can lead to high employee turnover, inefficient coordination, ineffective goals and strategies, marketing issues, and difficulties in competing. Costa-Sánchez et al. (2020) note that communication management faces obstacles such as lack of awareness, limited experience, prioritization of external communication, and the absence of resources and specialized professionals.

## **The Relationship Between Internal Communication and Job Satisfaction**

Employee communicative satisfaction at work refers to their perception of the communication environment and its impact on interactions. It can encompass various dimensions, such as the communication climate, communication with superiors, organizational integration, quality of media, informal horizontal communication, and communication with subordinates. These dimensions influence both job satisfaction and overall employee satisfaction.

(Bedoya, 2021). Similarly, Santiago (2020) mentions comparable variables in his research.

Neto (2016) states that evaluating employee satisfaction regarding internal communication is fundamental for understanding organizational well-being. Following Neto (2016), an interesting aspect of his research is that his questionnaire uses the original Downs and Hazen (1977) Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CQS), which covers eight dimensions of internal communication: communication climate, organizational integration, feedback, horizontal communication, organizational information, communication with supervisors, media quality, and relationship with subordinates. Through the CQS scale, researchers can assess different aspects of the organization's communicative activity and its relationship with specific organizational factors.

Regarding the relationship between internal communication and job satisfaction, Salazar et al. (2020) note that internal communication plays a crucial role in increasing both employee satisfaction and productivity by informing them about organizational objectives and aligning them with the corporate culture, with an impact that varies according to different demographic perspectives.

Finally, the study by Trujillo (2019) showed that interventions in communication processes strengthened team integration and trust, highlighting the importance of recognizing and addressing communication problems to resolve job dissatisfaction. Trujillo (2019) also noted that the main factors of dissatisfaction were poor communication, inadequate leadership, and lack of cohesion. Changes in participant behavior were attributed to practical learning and genuine interest in solving the problems.

## Discussion

The research by Dueñas and García García (2013) highlights a significant shift from one-way communication in the 1990s to participatory two-way communication, emphasizing the importance of feedback in organizational communication. Vora and

Patra (2017) reinforce this perspective by stressing that internal communication is crucial for fostering employee commitment and participation, aligning with organizational objectives, and highlighting its strategic role.

Regarding the relationship between internal communication and job satisfaction, the studies by Bedoya (2021), Santiago (2020), and Neto (2016) provide valuable insights, with particular relevance given to the use of the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CQS) by Downs and Hazen (1977), which allows for the evaluation of various aspects of organizational communication. Despite these advances, the review reveals a lack of specific models to quantitatively measure the cause-effect relationship between internal communication and job satisfaction. This gap suggests the need for future research focused on developing and validating models capable of accurately assessing the impact of internal communication on job satisfaction, thereby providing a more robust and detailed evaluation of this fundamental relationship.

## Conclusion

The positive effect that efficient internal communication can have on employee satisfaction and engagement is emphasized, as demonstrated through the analysis of its historical evolution and strategic role in organizations. However, it is important to recognize that this impact may vary depending on the size and specific context of each organization. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct more detailed research to identify the most appropriate communication channels for each type of organization and its particular characteristics. Likewise, it is suggested that future research not only focus on how internal communication influences job satisfaction but also explore other crucial aspects such as productivity and employee retention. This approach will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how internal communication impacts the work environment and contributes to the achievement of organizational objectives.

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