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Applying Internal Communications to Build Organizational Culture in Hanoi Information Technology Enterprises

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Abstract

Internal communication is a fundamental element that helps promote and develop organizational culture. Internal communication is one of the important aspects to operate the organization smoothly, promote the relationship between leaders and employees as well as among employees within the company. In Hanoi's information technology enterprises, internal communication contributes to creating inspiration, attracting and connecting employees with the company; at the same time, it ensures that from the highest leadership level to the lowest staff level, everyone must think and act consistently with the core values and ideas of organizational culture. In the new development phase, to cope with and overcome the predicted challenges, the role of internal communication in building organizational culture becomes increasingly important, especially in conveying messages that help connect employees through non-material factors that become increasingly necessary and urgent.

1. Introduction

Communication is one of the important tools for businesses to get acquainted, approach, and maintain good relationships with employees and customers. When it comes to communication in an organization, there are usually two approaches: internal communication (IC) and external communication. Internal communication is the sharing of information within the company to help all employees understand and immerse themselves in the values of organizational culture. This not only supports employees to do their best job but also enhances team spirit and affection for the organization. Internal communication relates to providing and exchanging information between members of an organization. This communication process directly affects the formation, development, and maintenance of organizational culture. Internal communication is a continuous process of clearly and quickly conveying messages to employees. Effective internal communication will help stories in the organization become more attractive, employees happy and connected to the organization. If an enterprise is considered a body, then internal communication is like a blood vessel. The essence of internal communication is that the organization delivers the necessary content and messages to different employees at the right time; the content is the vision, mission, core values. The goal is to shape, consolidate, and spread organizational culture.

To apply internal communication to build relationships from top to bottom, leaders need to be the ones who orient the messaging, and managers need to consider building important values as something they need to do every day, regularly, and continuously. Thanks to technology, leaders and managers can send information, emails, and notifications on the network system with high speeds to employees. The process of internal communication from employees to leaders needs to be a priority issue to ensure that employees' ideas are valued and play an important role in policy-making and organizational operations.

In addition to the internal communication process such as building communication strategies within the organization to create cohesion between employees, organizing internal events, editing and publishing materials circulated within, external communication also has a significant impact on the organizational culture. After establishing and consolidating internal unity, organizations also need to spread and market the values of the organization outside. In relation to the organizational culture, internal communication and external communication mainly rely on interaction and perception of values. It is necessary to combine internal and external communication, creating multidimensional influence on employees. Through contests, events, and commemorations held widely in enterprises contribute to spreading the values of organizational culture. The content of internal communication is linked to building organizational culture to do well in ideology and reinforce employees' trust, contributing to the strength of the enterprise.

Along with the internal communication process such as building communication strategies within the organization to create cohesion between employees, organizing internal events, editing and publishing materials circulated within, external communication also has a significant impact on the organizational culture. After establishing and consolidating internal unity, organizations also need to spread and market the values of the organization outside. In relation to the organizational culture, internal communication and external communication mainly rely on interaction and perception of values. It is necessary to combine internal and external communication, creating multidimensional influence on employees. Through contests, events, and commemorations held widely in enterprises, they contribute to spreading the values of organizational culture. The content of internal communication is linked to building organizational culture to do well in ideology and reinforce employees' trust, contributing to the strength of the enterprise.

2. Theoretical Basis and Research Methods
2.1 Theoretical Basis
Johnston and Zawawi (2020) [2] argue that internal communication is about establishing and strengthening relationships between members within an organization. The impact of internal communication is manifested primarily in the communication between managers and employees and vice versa. This interaction, according to Tukiainen's study (2001) [7], is "hierarchical communication". In the process of internal communication, besides hierarchical communication between leaders, managers, and employees, horizontal communication (between employees or between managers) also plays a crucial role in which the organization's meanings and values are shared among employees if a cooperative working environment is established. Internal communication is how an organization communicates its message and story to employees. These stories help employees to have a clear direction: who the organization is, why we work here, and why we are proud of what we are doing. Mission, vision, and core values - these are what the organization really needs its employees to know.

According to Keyton and Stallworth's (2005) [3] cultural approach, communication is a complex and continuous interaction process among members of the organization and through which aspects of culture are perceived and shared. According to Cấn Hữu Dạn (2020) [1], "Organizational culture includes a system of dominant values, beliefs shared by employees and broadly influenced by management practices within the organization," meaning that organizational culture establishes a system of values expressed through behavior, practical management activities, and certain policies of the organization that employees share and act consistently with the core values and beliefs of the organization. According to Tuorish and Hargie (2004) [6], to ensure a healthy collaborative environment and effective communication between leaders and employees, leaders need to change their traditional views of subordinates (leaders and managers often refuse to communicate openly with employees because they believe that employees' perception is limited, and discussing and working with subordinates are synonymous with ineffective management). Internal communication only guides organizational culture values to employees and supports them to maintain it but does not originate the organization's

culture. Employees in the organization should be seen as an important asset and a factor that creates the organization's difference. The internal communication channel is the "touchpoint" between leadership and employees and must serve to share information aimed at organizational culture. This communication process directly affects the formation, maintenance, and control of organizational culture.

Therefore, internal communication is the activity of building, maintaining, and strengthening good relationships between members in the same organization; it involves interactions between the management team and employees, between departments, as well as between employees. Internal communication helps convey the message and vision of the leadership to employees. Internal communication is always part of human resource management and organizational culture development. Ultimately, human resources management still centers on employees and connects them to the organization. To be able to do internal communication well, the business should choose an employee who understands internal issues in the business and has a certain influence on other employees to contribute to the decision-making process of the entire organization from the outset. The internal communication officer is a mediator to help the parties understand each other and aim for the most harmonious choice that ensures both the organization's and employees' goals. However, the key is to build an internal communication strategy involving all members of the organization: top-level management, managers, and employees.

Through internal communication, information will be disseminated from top to bottom, from bottom to top, and horizontally across departments, contributing to linking departments, promoting the development of positive values, reducing negative aspects, outdated ideas, and unclear information. Effective internal communication is like a connecting adhesive, tightening the relationship between employees and the organization, creating a complete and strong block of strength. If internal communication is ineffective, unclear, employees will not be aware of the importance of contributing their efforts to help the company achieve its goals.

2.2 Research Method
- To have data serving the study, the authors relied on data collection methods from secondary sources: first, secondary data from scientific research on organizational culture and HR management, internet, newspapers, and relevant magazines. Second, primary data sources, surveying employees through questionnaires and observing from practical HR management activities in businesses.
- Statistical, analytical, synthesis, comparison, and data processing methods from the information collection sources and questionnaire research methods.

3. Research results
3.1 Overview of ICT Businesses in Hanoi and Survey Sample
According to the Ministry of Information and Communications, the revenue of the information and communication technology (ICT) industry is expected to reach $148 billion in 2022, a growth rate of 8.7% compared to 2021. The contribution to the GDP of the ICT industry is expected to reach $34.336 trillion, an increase of 8.7%

compared to 2021. The Ministry of Information and Communications aims to have 100,000 digital and start-up businesses by 2025 and to launch the Make in Vietnam program, considering it as the foundation for developing the digital business force. Accordingly, from 2020 to 2025, Vietnam will have about 6,000 new digital businesses every year. The number of registered digital businesses in 2022 is expected to reach 70,000, an increase of 9.5% compared to 2021 and reaching the plan set for 2022. The number of active digital businesses is currently 44,000 (Quynh Nga, 2023) [4].

As the political and administrative center of the country, Hanoi is a major hub for culture, science, education, economics, and international trade; it is the location of central Party and State agencies, political and social organizations, diplomatic representative offices, international organizations, and is the site for the most important domestic and foreign activities of the country. By the end of 2020, there were 29,361 businesses operating in the ICT industry in Hanoi (Kim Oanh – Truong Son, 2020) [5] The growth in the number of ICT businesses in the period from 2016 to 2020 is shown in Chart 1 below:
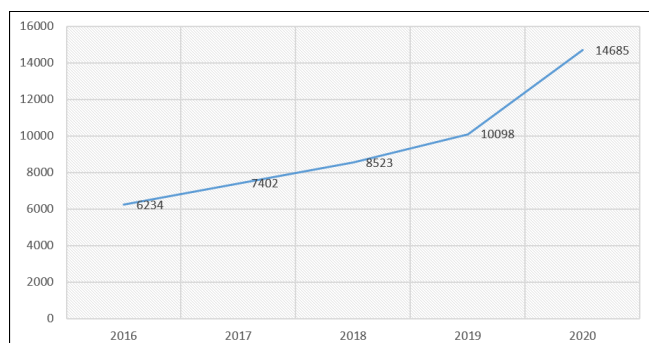
Source: Research group compiled from Hanoi Statistical Yearbook 2021

Chart 1: The number of ICT businesses in Hanoi

The author group conducted a survey on employees in ICT businesses in Hanoi. The study selected a sample based on the multi-stage random sampling method. The author group obtained 268 qualified survey responses for analysis.

Table 1: Information about the survey sample

|	Percentage (%)	Standard deviation	Smallest	Biggest
Female gender	26,0	0,4448	0	1
Age	28,0	6,42	20	54
Kinh ethnic group	97,1	0,1362	0	1
Education				
High school and below	1,0	0,1708	0	1
Intermediate and college	8,0	0,3847	0	1
University	85,8	0,4406	0	1
Postgraduate	5,2	0,2233	0	1
Job position				
Senior management	3,3	0,1808	0	1
Middle management	25,4	0,4365	0	1
Employee/worker	71,3	0,4539	0	1
Length of employment in the company				
Less than 3 years	22,4	0,5003	0	1
From 3-5 years	54,3	0,4300	0	1
From 5-10 years	19,0	0,3847	0	1
Over 10 years	4,2	0,2233	0	1

Source: Calculated from survey data

The survey results show that the majority of respondents were male, accounting for 73%, which is also in line with the technology companies, typically having a higher proportion of male employees. The Kinh ethnic group accounted for 97.1%, with an average age of 28. The majority of respondents had a university or postgraduate degree, accounting for 91% of the respondents. 7.31% of the respondents were employees, while 3.3% were senior management. The respondents mainly worked in companies for less than 5 years, accounting for 76.7% of the total respondents.

3.2 Analysis of the Current Situation of Internal Cultural Communication in IT Companies in Hanoi

Currently, some IT companies in Hanoi have not fully developed and strengthened internal communication. They are still using traditional communication methods such as paper announcements, SMS messages, emails, and direct meetings to share information and make decisions. However, many companies have started to apply modern information technology such as project management software, internal communication systems via internal networks, and software applications and platforms to improve internal communication, management, and information sharing. In parallel with the adoption of new technologies, companies are also enhancing training and development programs for their employees in internal communication skills, as well as improving relationships between departments and individuals within the company.

According to survey results, IT companies in Hanoi have started to have internal communication strategies, but mainly activities are still small-scale and lack comprehensive and clear planning and evaluation methods.

* Employees' Awareness of the Role of Internal Cultural Communication within the Company

Their awareness of the role of internal cultural communication within the organization for the overall development of the company.
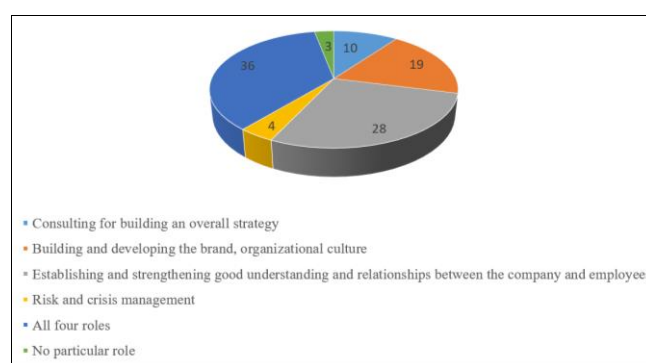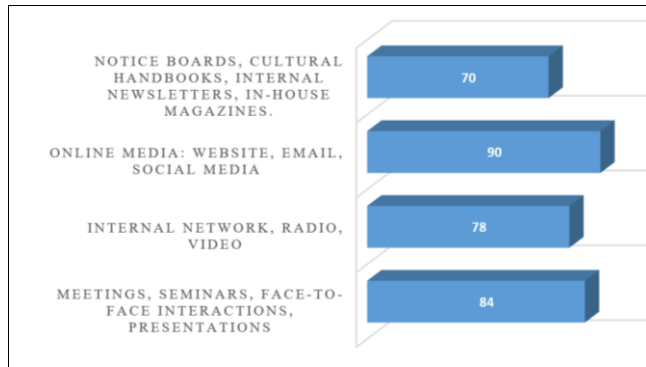

Source: Calculated from survey data

Chart 2: Perception of the role of internal cultural communication in the overall development of the company

Employees in IT companies in Hanoi have recognized the importance of using internal communication in building and developing the organizational culture. The results show that internal communication has been noticed but it is still unclear and unprofessional, lacking in systematic and long-term planning. Only 36% of leaders and employees rated the role of internal communication as an important tool that contributes to all aspects of business development. Among

the given roles, the role of a bridge between the company and employees was rated the highest (28%), followed by the role of building the brand and developing the organizational culture (19%), and the role of consulting for building an overall strategy (9%). Only 4% of respondents rated the role of risk management and crisis handling highly, and 3% believed that internal communication had no particular role in the company.

* Perception and Evaluation of the Importance of Internal Communication Tools and Methods in Developing the Organizational Culture
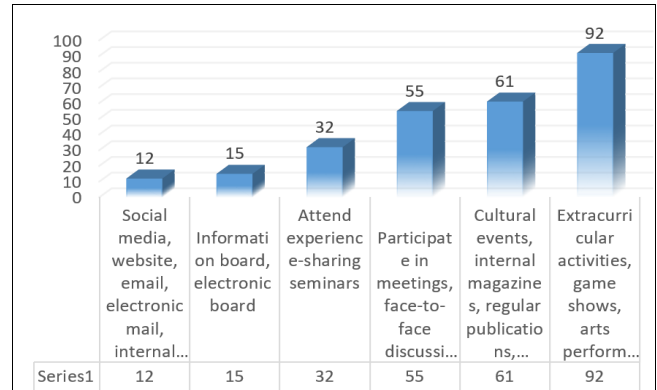
Source: Calculated from survey data

Chart 3: Perception and evaluation of the importance of internal communication tools and methods in developing the organizational culture

Internal communication helps strengthen the connection between members of an organization. By using internal communication channels such as those listed above, information about the organization's activities, achievements, and new objectives can be shared and disseminated, helping employees feel proud and more invested in the development of their organization. According to a survey, online media was considered to be very important in the development of organizational culture by 90% of respondents, followed by meetings, seminars, face-to-face interactions, and presentations by leaders, which were acknowledged by 84%. The internal communication channels in IT companies in Hanoi have helped direct employees' actions. With detailed information about the organization's objectives, strategies, and plans, employees can better understand the importance of their work in achieving the organization's overall goals. Thanks to internal communication tools, IT companies in Hanoi have been able to save time and increase efficiency at work. With just a few simple clicks, information can be shared with all employees in the organization. This can save time by avoiding the need to call, discuss or send emails to multiple people at once.

* Frequency of Participation in Internal Communication Activities in the Company
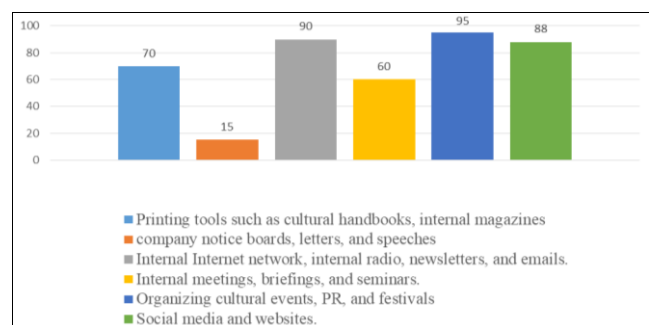
Source: Calculated from survey data

Chart 4: Frequency of participation in internal communication activities in the company

These internal communication channels are mainly managed by a group of employees, with inputs and ideas from some managers and leaders in the company. Therefore, the percentage of employees who regularly participate and give feedback on these internal communication channels in IT companies in Hanoi is only 12%.

Experience-sharing seminars have a higher participation rate, with 32% of employees participating, depending on the topic related to their work responsibilities. For extracurricular activities such as game shows, arts performances, commemorative events, travel, and festivals, the participation rate of employees is quite high, with 92% of respondents having attended such activities.

The use of communication tools such as cultural events, internal magazines, regular publications, and cultural handbooks in IT companies in Hanoi attracts a regular participation rate of 61% of employees.

* Surveying the Effectiveness of Cultural Internal Communication Tools in IT Companies in Hanoi

Source: Calculated from survey data

Chart 5: Internal communication tools are evaluated to be effective

Cultural events, exchange activities, and movement activities are often organized on occasions such as holidays, commemorations, summer breaks, new product launches, and competitions. These activities have been received with enthusiasm by the workers in Hanoi's IT companies, and have been evaluated highly for their effectiveness in building organizational culture, especially in connecting leaders with employees. 95% of workers evaluated the internal communication tools - internal internet network, internal radio, newsletters, and emails - positively, indicating that these tools are being used effectively by Hanoi's IT companies. This is understandable as IT workers have greater accessibility, familiarity, and understanding of technology. Online communication, such as social media and websites, were rated positively by 88% of workers, indicating that the trend of online communication is spreading rapidly and becoming a regular tool for internal cultural organization communication, effectively saving costs. From the standpoint of cultural organizational communication, each tool plays a specific role. Notice boards, letters, and speeches represent only 15%, but are still an essential tool for conveying information from leaders to employees.

The reality is that in Hanoi's IT companies, employees often work on different projects or departments, and have few opportunities to communicate, discuss, and share experiences with each other. The lack of unity and cohesion between departments prevents the development of a unified mindset within the company. As IT employees often work on computers, phones, emails, and other online communication software, it is not always easy to search for internal information. In many IT companies in Hanoi, internal communication is not managed strictly or clearly directed, resulting in employees lacking motivation to participate in internal communication activities. Because technology and the market change rapidly, much of the information typically has short-term value and will not be effective in the future. Therefore, Hanoi's IT companies need to ensure that internal communication is continuously updated and meets both current and future requirements of the company.

In conclusion, to ensure effective internal communication in Hanoi's IT companies, there needs to be clear management and direction, effective communication tools, and opportunities for communication and discussion between departments, while ensuring that information is fully and continuously updated.

4. Some Solutions for Using Internal Communication to Build Organizational Culture in Hanoi's IT Companies

To build organizational culture using internal communication in IT companies, the following solutions can be applied:

+ Using project management software and internal communication platforms on the internal network to facilitate information sharing between departments and individuals. Internal communication platforms on the internal network allow members within the business to exchange information, communicate with each other and share knowledge in a convenient and efficient manner. Some internal communication platforms that can be used include an intranet, an internal email system, chat tools, online forums, internal message boards or a project management application with internal communication features. Using these internal communication platforms allows businesses to convey information quickly and cost-effectively. Additionally, employees can easily access information and share their knowledge conveniently, thus enhancing work efficiency and ensuring synchronized information transmission. To maximize the effectiveness of using these internal communication platforms, businesses need to carry out certain activities such as: (1) Setting up and building a simple, easy-to-use and highly interactive internal communication platform. (2) Creating processes and policies to determine which messages need to be conveyed and how to convey them. (3) Ensuring the safety and security of information for members within the business. (4) Using appropriate media such as images, videos, and articles to send messages and stimulate interaction between members. Properly managed and developed internal communication platforms can enhance organizational culture, create consensus, and boost motivation in business operations.

+ Creating a clear communication plan that focuses on specific objectives and strategies to achieve these objectives. At the same time, specific steps should be taken to build a professional working environment that meets the needs of employees. A clear internal communication strategy put into operation helps to restructure the approach to information and enhance management efficiency. Building an intranet system, which is an internal network dedicated solely to the business, allows employees to access shared information, documents, policies, and libraries related to the business. With the intranet system, employees can access the regulations, plans and internal reports of the business, enhancing cooperation and exchange of information between different departments. To create a clear organizational communication plan, the following steps can be taken: (1) Identify goals and the main purpose of the organizational communication plan: This is the first and most important step to orient and focus on the activities of the plan to achieve the desired end results. (2) Research and survey the current organizational culture: This is the next step to evaluate the overall organizational culture. The survey helps to identify the weaknesses and difficulties in implementing organizational communication activities. (3) Analyze the relationship between members within the organization: Analyzing the relationship between departments, individuals in the organization can help to understand more about relationships and discover trends in the working environment. (4) Identify the target and message that needs to be conveyed: Identify the message recipients, message content, and how the message will be conveyed. (5) Select communication methods and channels: Depending on the target audience, message content and purpose of the plan, select effective and popular communication forms and methods. (6) Carry out and monitor the plan: Implement organizational communication activities according to the plan and monitor the effectiveness and feedback from message recipients. (7) Evaluate and improve the organizational communication plan: Evaluate the results of communication activities, draw experience and improve the organizational communication plan to achieve maximum efficiency. Through these steps, businesses can create a clear organizational communication plan, achieve high efficiency, and contribute to building a good organizational culture.

+ Training and improving internal communication skills for employees, especially soft skills to handle relationship situations within the business. Organizing training sessions on internal communication for both employees and leaders to explain the basic concepts, values of internal communication, and business strategies. Training employees on internal communication can help them understand the communication tools and effective communication methods in the business. Activities and training programs can be carried out as follows: (1) Basic communication skills training: Training employees on basic communication skills, including information on how to express their opinions, listen, use body language and conflict resolution skills. (2) Effective communication skills training: Training employees on effective communication skills, including how to communicate messages correctly, how to interact positively, how to ensure mutual understandding, and how to create a healthy working environment. (3) Focusing on specific communication skills: Depending on job requirements, training employees on specific communication skills, such as conflict resolution skills, communication with customers or employee management skills. (4) Practice and experience: Design games, interactive activities, and real-world situations for employees to practice and experience communication skills. (5) Support counseling and evaluation: Provide advice and support on personal development for employees. Evaluate and provide feedback on training results to improve training programs in the future. (6) Enhance practical application: Create conditions for employees to practice such as holding meetings, discussions, and projects. Create a set of rules for employees to refer to as the focus for practicing communication skills. All of these activities will help achieve the required training objectives, enhance internal communication skills and convey a dynamic organizational culture within the organization. Additionally, employees can freely communicate seamlessly within the increasingly improved organization, enhancing the path for business development.

+ Identifying and promoting the development of organizational culture, creating an environment for members within the business to have a good working environment, a professional working culture that is connected. Encouraging employees to share, contribute their opinions and collaborate in their work. This culture also needs to ensure transparency, feedback, and constructive criticism between employees and management. Businesses can hold group meetings, departmental meetings, and all-staff meetings to enhance interaction, promote cooperation, and share knowledge among employees. Organizing exchange programs and connections between departments to create consensus in implementing activities and enhancing relationships between employees.

+ Using effective and interactive communication methods such as organizing regular meetings, using video calls, and online communication tools to make internal communication more effective. Businesses can use internal communication channels such as email, chat applications like Slack, or Skype to help employees communicate, share information and experiences in a convenient, fast, and efficient manner.

5. Conclusion
Through the above solutions, Hanoi's IT companies can address internal communication issues and promote the exchange of knowledge among employees, enhance consensus, and promote relationships at all levels. These solutions need to be comprehensively and continuously applied to create a competitive, creative, and innovative work environment, while improving the reputation and maximizing the strength and potential of individuals and departments in Hanoi's IT companies.

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