

Strategic Planning for Organizational Communication in Institutions and Organizations

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Abstract:

Organizational communication within any institution or organization functions as the central nervous system through which all information is transmitted among the various components of the organizational structure. This communication manifests in several forms depending on the direction of information flow. Each of these forms possesses distinct advantages and limitations. The significance of organizational communication, in all its manifestations, is indisputable for any institution or organization. Organizations depend on it not only to disseminate concepts, ideas, and information but also to foster cohesion among their components, facilitate decision-making processes, and strengthen inter-employee relationships. Consequently, it constitutes a critical mechanism for achieving an organization's objectives. Institutions that implement rigorous strategic planning for organizational communication, invest in effective communication skills, and establish standards for successful communication are better positioned to attain their goals and ensure their ongoing development and sustainability.

key words: Organizational communication, organization, strategic planning, objectives.

Introduction:

Communication is an age-old phenomenon intrinsic to human existence. Individuals have long engaged in communication with themselves and with others, employing a diverse array of methods and techniques. With the advent of modern advancements, the imperative for effective communication has become increasingly pronounced across all sectors. Notably, in the realm of organizational management and administration, communication assumes a critical role. In this context, the concept of organizational communication emerges as the internal process aimed primarily at facilitating the achievement of an organization's objectives.

Given its paramount importance, organizational communication has attracted considerable scholarly attention, with researchers exploring it from multiple perspectives. It is widely acknowledged as one of the foundational components upon which any institution or organization is built. However, the distinctive characteristic among organizations lies in their method of deploying organizational communication in its various forms and dimensions. This deployment is achieved through the adept utilization of communication

competencies to establish the requisite conditions and standards for successful communication, thereby enabling the fulfillment of organizational goals.

Perhaps the most crucial factor in ensuring the optimal employment and exploitation of organizational communication, maximizing its benefits while mitigating its limitations—is the strategic planning of such communication. Strategic planning is indispensable for ensuring both the efficacy and quality of communication within an organization or any analogous entity. Given the above, the following question arises:

How can strategic planning be utilized to establish a robust framework for organizational communication within an institution or organization?

Research Questions:

- 1- How is organizational communication defined?
- 2- What are the types and forms of organizational communication?
- 3- What is strategic planning?
- 4- What are the primary functions of organizational communication?
- 5- What are the principal advantages of strategic planning?
- 6- What are the main obstacles to organizational communication?
- 7- What are the essential criteria and prerequisites for successful organizational communication?

Objectives of the Study:

- 1- To examine the primary definitions of organizational communication.
- 2- To expound upon the various types and forms of organizational communication.
- 3- To examine the definition of strategic planning.
- 4- To present the principal functions of organizational communication.
- 5- To elucidate the key advantages of strategic planning.
- 6- To highlight the most significant obstacles to organizational communication.
- 7- To present the essential criteria and prerequisites for successful organizational communication.

Significance of the Study:

The significance of our research topic lies in the fact that organizational communication is regarded as the nervous system of any organization or institution; it connects its various departments and units, ensuring coordination and integration among them. Furthermore, if strategic planning for organizational communication is implemented and this communication is employed in all its forms, types, and strategies in an appropriate manner, it will effectively contribute to the success of the organization by enabling it to achieve its objectives, and consequently, its development and continuity. Strategic planning provides the approach that assists the institution's leadership in decision-making, crisis management, and in capitalizing on future opportunities for the advancement and development of the institution.

Definition of Concepts and Terms:

1- Organizational Communication: There are several definitions of organizational communication; the most important of which are listed below:

- Organizational communication is the communication that occurs within an institution or organization and constitutes an intentional means among the primary methods employed by the organization to achieve its objectives. All individuals working within the organization interact with one another through various communication channels to manage activities and accomplish the organization's goals. Communication is regarded as the social medium through which individuals within the organization achieve mutual understanding and constructive interaction in order to attain the intended objectives (Bouatit, 2008/2009, p. 97).
- Organizational communication is the communication that takes place within companies and institutions, playing a role in fostering a sense of belonging to the organization and ensuring job stability. This, in turn, elevates employee morale, instills team spirit, enhances cohesion and enthusiasm for work, and increases resilience against discouragement (Elkalliny, 2006, p. 30).
- Organizational communication is the interaction that occurs both within institutions and between them and their internal and external publics. Essentially, it refers to the internal communication within institutions through the dissemination of information among the members of the institution and its publics (ELmashaqba, 2015, p. 103).
- De Fleer and his colleagues define organizational communication as the transmission of messages through both formal and informal channels to a relatively large and precisely structured group, thereby constructing meanings that affect the members of the group either individually or collectively. Goldhaber presents a series of definitions, including (AbuAl-Ela, 2016, p. 32):
 - Organizational communication is a system for transmitting and receiving information within the context of a large and complex business organization.
 - Organizational communication is an integrated system encompassing both external and internal communication, concerned with the communicative competence of the business organization.

2- Strategic Planning:

Strategic planning is defined as "the deliberate and disciplined approach adopted by an institution (or another entity) to produce decisions and to plan the critical actions that guide its operations and indicate how these actions should be executed." Arooj AlRaei and James Rajasekar (2014) maintain that the difference between traditional planning and strategic planning is that the former seeks solutions to problems as they arise based on the current understanding of these issues, whereas the latter focuses on how to exploit future opportunities. Strategic planning does not merely concern itself with the management of daily activities but rather aims to achieve long-term objectives and prevent problems from occurring. Consequently, the strategic plan should encompass every component of the institution, including both human and material resources (Al-Bakri and others, 2019, p. 20).

Significance of Organizational Communication:

Organizational communication holds considerable importance, particularly in our contemporary era, owing to the modern society being essentially a society of business

organizations. Various forms of these organizations have emerged to meet the diverse needs of individuals, and these organizations may be economic, educational, or social (AbuAl-Ela, 2016, p. 32). The significance of organizational communication can be summarized as follows (Bouatit, 2008/2009, p. 40):

1. The transmission of concepts, opinions, and ideas to create cohesion among the components of the organization in order to achieve its objectives.
2. Formal organizational communication is considered an essential necessity for directing and modifying the individual and collective behavior of employees.
3. It is relied upon in the decision-making process, which constitutes the central axis upon which any organization is founded.
4. It consolidates trust between the organization and its employees, thereby serving common interests and guiding the organization toward the achievement of its objectives.

Types of Organizational Communication: Organizational communication is divided into:

A. Formal Communication:

This refers to the communication that occurs through the official channels established by the management of an organization or institution for the dissemination of information. It exists within the organizational structure of the entity and is subject, in its channels and pathways, to the considerations dictated by the laws, regulations, and general guidelines adopted by the organization. This type of communication relies on memoranda, reports, and formal meetings, and it eschews personal elements by adhering to specific protocols (Bouatit, 2008/2009, pp. 39-40).

B. Informal Communication:

This denotes the communication that takes place between individuals or employees within the organization without being governed by specific, formally established rules or guidelines. It is an unregulated and non-mandatory form of communication that transcends the formal channels within the organization and occurs in an oral manner. Informal communication is exemplified by spontaneous encounters between colleagues within the organization or by dialogues that occur among individuals in offices or corridors of the institution, conducted orally (Bouatit, 2008/2009, pp. 47-48) .

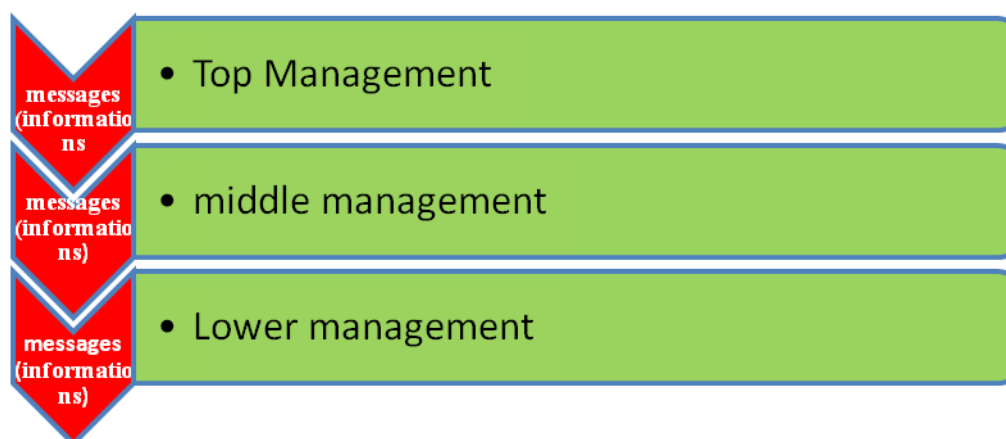
Forms of Formal Organizational Communication:

Organizational communication within the organization takes several directions; there are upward, horizontal, downward, and central communications, depending on the flow and dissemination of information across the various levels of the administrative hierarchy within the organization.

A. Downward Communication:

Downward communication is the form of communication in which information and messages flow from the highest levels of the organization to its lower levels, such as when information flows from top management to middle management, from middle

management to lower management, or directly from top management to lower management.

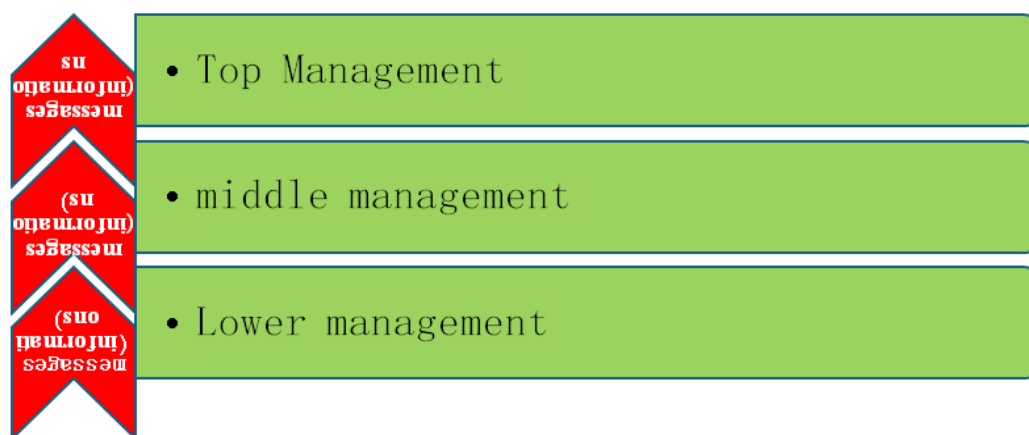


Source: MAIZA salim 2025.

Figure 1 represents downward communication in the organization.

B. Upward Communication:

Upward communication is that form of communication in which information and messages move from the lower levels of the organization to its higher levels, such as when an employee contacts the head of the department in which he works, or when the head of the department contacts the manager.



Source: MAIZA salim 2025

Figure 2 represents upward communication in the organization.

C. Horizontal Communication:

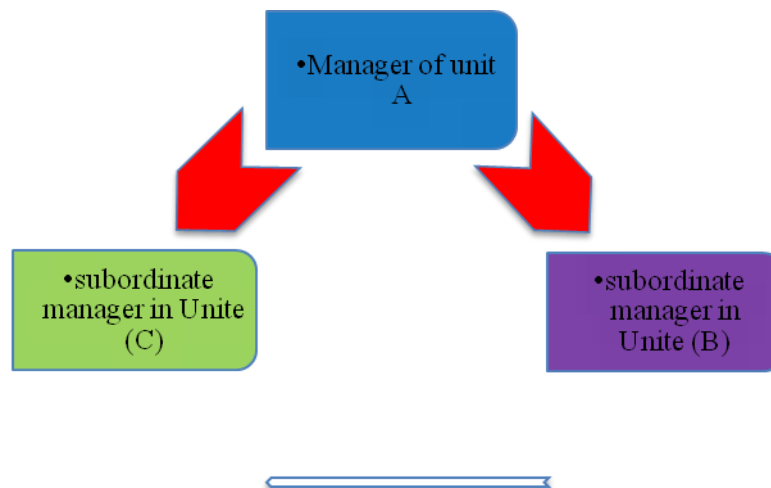
Horizontal communication is that form of communication in which messages and information are transmitted among individuals at the same administrative or functional level, such as when the head of Department A contacts the head of department B.



Source: MAIZA salim 2025

Figure 3 represents horizontal communication in the organization.

D. Central Communication: Central communication is that form of communication in which information and messages are transmitted among individuals who are not bound by formal relationships, such as when information flows from the manager of a specific unit—information may flow from the manager of Unit (A) to a subordinate manager in Unit(B).



Source: MAIZA salim 2025

Figure 4 represents central communication in the organization

Functions of Organizational Communication: Formal organizational communication within an organization serves several functions that contribute to achieving its objectives. These functions include (Bouatit, 2008/2009, p. 40):

1. Disseminating the organization's goals, values, and philosophy.
2. Informing members about the organization's plans, capabilities, and aspirations.
3. Conveying instructions, directives, and orders to employees.
4. Gathering information, data, inquiries, expectations, suggestions, problems, and complaints.
5. Clarifying changes, innovations, and achievements.
6. Developing ideas, shaping attitudes, and assessing feedback.

Advantages of Strategic Planning for Organizational Communication:

Strategic planning confers several advantages, the most significant of which are as follows:

1. It enables an organization to enhance its performance and respond swiftly and effectively to diverse situations; it provides the organization with a clearer self-concept, offers guidance, and reinforces consistency in the decision-making process.
2. It functions as a roadmap, guiding the organization in defining its vision and the objectives it seeks to achieve in the future, as well as in identifying the most efficient and effective means to accomplish its goals.
3. Strategic planning necessitates the contribution of every individual within the organization to mitigate obstacles and ensure the attainment of objectives, thereby reinforcing the principle of plan ownership—namely, the commitment of individuals to its implementation, which in turn allows them to actualize their own plans and ideas.
4. It facilitates the conservation of time, effort, and resources through the proactive allocation of various resources.
5. It enables the measurement of success in achieving objectives through evaluation, whether via formative evaluation conducted during the implementation of the plan, summative evaluation conducted upon its completion, or goal-free evaluation performed when an unanticipated intervention occurs (Al-Bakri and others, 2019, pp. 21-22).

Obstacles to Organizational Communication:

There are several obstacles that may hinder the success of the communicative process, some of which pertain to communication in general and can be similarly applied to organizational communication. Prior to presenting the principal obstacles to organizational communication within an organization, the most prominent obstacles related to communication in general are outlined below (Al-abdallah, 2006, pp. 74-75):

1. The inability to express the intended meaning of a message clearly due to a lack of a sound educational and cultural background, which is necessary for conveying meaning in a clear and straightforward manner, whether orally or in writing.
2. The psychological state of the message recipient and the extent to which they are prepared to accept the message.
3. The received message may contain errors or elements that reduce the clarity of the subject, resulting in the recipient experiencing a degree of uncertainty; this uncertainty is referred to as "distortion," similar to the obstacles arising from external influences such as noise or extreme temperatures (either high or low) that impede effective communication.
4. The ineffectiveness of the communication media used to transmit the message, in that they do not conform to the surrounding conditions, nor do they take into account the situational factors and the nature of the message.

5. A tendency among individuals to reject new ideas, particularly if these conflict with their pre-existing beliefs; experts note that, in such cases, the communication receptors of individuals function as a finely tuned filter, whereby individuals tend to notice only those ideas that align with their current beliefs and opinions while ignoring or rejecting anything that contradicts them.

6. Feigning comprehension of the information presented by the sender.

7. Poor relationships and a loss of trust among certain levels involved in the communication process.

As for the obstacles specific to organizational communication, these can be categorized according to the form of communication as follows:

1) Obstacles Specific to Downward Communication:

- Excessive reliance on mechanical and written means, and the neglect of oral and face-to-face communication; this diminishes the value and purpose of communication.
- The practice of filtering by some officials, who withhold certain information from lower levels within the organization.
- The failure of subordinates to recognize the extent to which information should be disseminated among all concerned parties; in other words, whether the information they receive is complete or whether they are expected to relay it to others, which ultimately limits the effectiveness of communication.
- The credibility of the sender, the extent of his authority, the degree of trust placed in him, and his previous experiences—all of which are factors that can adversely affect communication.
- The failure to select an appropriate time and place for the recipient to receive the message, as well as the recipient's psychological and emotional state (Bouatit, 2008/2009, pp. 42-43).

2) Obstacles Specific to Upward Communication:

- The subordinate's attempt to dominate the factors influencing the superior's perception of him, and his effort to leave a positive impression, which may compel him to modify, distort, or even falsify some messages in certain instances.
- The spatial and administrative distance between superiors and subordinates, which may hinder effective communication; although this obstacle can be mitigated through the use of technological communication means, such methods cannot invariably replace face-to-face interaction.
- Administrative traditions that regard upward communications as exceptional, whereas downward communications are considered fundamental—in other words, the notion that superiors are always the initiators (sources) of messages and information, while subordinates are merely recipients.
- The tendency of some superiors to isolate themselves by adopting a "closeddoor" policy and avoiding direct communication with subordinates,

resulting in barriers between the two parties and leading to significant amounts of information remaining inaccessible to the superior (Bouatit, 2008/2009, p. 44).

3) *Obstacles Specific to Horizontal Communication:*

- The application of the principles of specialization, task distribution, and division of labor within the organization sometimes creates a form of loyalty that hinders effective horizontal organizational communication.
- When this form of communication does occur, it is not executed with the required speed, perhaps due to an insistence on adhering to formalities and an exaggeration in prolonging procedures (Bouatit, 2008/2009, p. 46).

Criteria for Successful Organizational Communication:

For communication to succeed in general and to overcome all the obstacles and difficulties that confront it, a set of conditions and criteria must be met, the most important of which are (Elkalliny, 2006, pp. 43-45):

1. **Source Credibility:** The high level of trust the audience places in the source is fundamental to the reception of the message and is the influencing factor in the effectiveness of persuasion. This trust arises from the source's expertise, its ability to address the subject, its communicative skills, and its social standing.
2. **Experiencing Reality:** The communicative message must be completely consistent with the reality in which the audience lives, so that when the audience is exposed to these messages, they feel as if they are truly experiencing reality.
3. **Accuracy:** It is imperative to ensure accuracy in the formulation of the communicative message, especially if it carries information. This necessitates consulting more than one source to verify the accuracy of the information contained therein; the more accurate the communicative message is, the more credible it becomes.
4. **Clarity:** The communicative message must be formulated with utmost clarity so that it does not give rise to any ambiguity in the recipient's understanding; thus, it should be phrased in simple terms that convey to the recipient precisely what the source intends, in addition to simplifying the information contained in the message to facilitate comprehension.
5. **Presentation Style:** It is essential to always choose the appropriate format in which to present the informational message, ensuring that it is displayed in an attractive manner that suits the receiving audience and the content of the message.
6. **Continuity:** Communication is an ongoing, continuous process, and repetition plays a crucial role in ensuring that the largest possible number of target audience members is reached and that the communicative message is perceived as required. In this regard, it is important to avoid communication saturation, which may lead to a counterproductive outcome, and to vary repetition to enhance impact.

7. Objectivity: The communicative message must convey facts impartially to the audience without bias or subjectivity.

8. Target Audience: The target audience is the ultimate focus of any communicative process; hence, the source must study this audience meticulously before directing any communicative message to them, taking into account the audience's level of comprehension, their skills in receiving the message, their communicative habits, and incorporating the needs and desires of this audience into the message.

9. Appropriate Media Selection: It is always necessary to choose the appropriate mass communication media to which the audience is exposed, based on criteria regarding the suitability of those media for the content of the message—both in terms of exposure and circulation. Furthermore, Kamal Abu Ghali contends that the effectiveness of formal organizational communication is based on several factors, the most important of which are (BenDaoud, 2007/2008, p. 152):

1. That the communication channels are clear and organized for all employees in the organization.
2. The accuracy of the information and messages transmitted through formal communication, along with efforts to avoid dubious information.
3. The necessity to adhere to and respect the administrative or authoritative hierarchy, except in extraordinary cases.
4. Ensuring the continuity of the information flow.

Conclusion:

Based on the details presented regarding strategic planning for organizational communication, it can be concluded that when organizational communication is well-planned, it serves as a compass and roadmap that guides any institution or organization toward the most appropriate solutions, procedures, and plans necessary to achieve its objectives and ensure its development. It drives the institution to fully leverage its material and human capabilities through effective investment, thereby facilitating the attainment of its goals. Furthermore, it enables the institution to enhance its performance, manage the various crises it encounters, and anticipate future opportunities for optimal exploitation.

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