

Business Communication Plan of Sony Group Corporation

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Introduction

Sony Group Corporation, famously referred to as SONY, is a Japanese conglomerate whose central office is in Tokyo, Japan. It was established in 1958 by Masaru Ibuka and Akio Morita. As a major technological company, it operates as one of the macroscale manufacturers of electronic products. The company's total revenue for the year ending 2021 was approximately 2 trillion Japanese Yen (SONY 21). SONY intends to expand its product line and has signed a new large client. Thus, as the manager of SONY Japan, a communication strategy needs to be created for the organization to inform its 200 employees of the incoming new client and garner support for the client from the employees. This report talks about the purpose and context of communication, the company's managerial approach, issues regarding communication as a whole, and the technological factors to be considered.

Expansion is the fundamental objective of any business that intends to gain a competitive advantage. The introduction of a new stakeholder to SONY Japan will have innumerable consequences on the existing stakeholders, both external and internal. This report will concentrate on the essential stakeholders- the employees. Stakeholders are "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman 1985). Primary and secondary stakeholders are affected by the introduction of a new client. The employees have the greatest interest, as they can directly determine the attainment of the company's objectives. Different managerial approaches and communication strategies will be employed, and a communication plan will be executed. Good communication is the base that holds any business relationship together. The exchange of thoughts, actions, and considerations through authentic channels needs to be developed. Introducing a new client into any business can introduce issues into the company, i.e., contrasts in doing business, communication barriers, moral issues, and even legitimate administrative issues, thus the need to develop a communication plan.

Communication Purpose and Context

In scope, a decision has to be made on which stakeholders to communicate with regarding the new contract signed and the entrance of the new client. It is crucial that employees, especially the employees at the forefront of the company's business decisions, be the first to be communicated to concerning this issue. In this communication plan, secondary stakeholders are not included because

they do not directly affect the company's business plan and have less interest in SONY Japan's communication plan.

The main purpose of this communication plan includes, but is not limited to:

- Communication can be used as an advantage to diffuse the barrier between employees and new clients.
- To keep employees informed about the new contract.
- To create an open channel of communication with the employees.
- To communicate effectively with the employees to make sure that knowledge regarding the new client is shared.

Managerial Approach

The foundation of successful leadership is fortified by the strength of an effective communication strategy. Most of the time, many managers are entrusted with disseminating new objectives. Most of the time, they are weighed down with the duty of distributing critical information regarding new changes in the company. However, to be able to deliver effective communications, a manager should develop an outline of an all-inclusive and deliberate approach to managerial communications. SONY Japan has approximately 200 employees. For any managerial communication strategy to succeed, group dynamics need to be given great attention. These dynamics are characteristically established by arranging a meeting between the manager and the employees (Hynes 2016). Depending on how the meetings are planned, whether with a plan or spontaneously, they can be formal or informal, and quality is measured depending on the number of attendees and their investment through participation.

Most of the time, the group might fail to accomplish the communication expectations, thus requiring the next level of meeting to be set up. This leads to a structural level of explicit and precise communication by linking a large group of company personnel within diverse divisions and occasionally across other companies (Hynes 2016). There exist times when diversity rises, and there is a broader array within management, communication, and collaboration. The best managerial approach to employ here is a managerial communications strategy tilting towards the intercultural, where different aspects are harnessed (Bharadwaj 2014). With technological advances and with a whole spectrum including voice, video, and collaboration, gathering differentiating thoughts across different spectrums and environments has become easy. It is possible to offer perspectives on different issues across diverse clusters.

The inventiveness of instant messaging, video conferencing, collaborative virtual meetings, and sending emails has positively involved a multicultural audience from all around the world in meetings, and their specific social standards are paid attention to (Crano and Selnow 2016). The cross-cultural level invariably needs additional training to grasp diverse values and ideals existing across different

cultures. This is endorsed by ensuring effective communication.

The Strategic Managerial Communication Model

To clearly comprehend the communication approach at SONY Japan, it's beneficial to equate this representation to the structure of an onion. In the Figure below, the strategic communication model shows the extensive system that makes up the interaction between managers and employees. Likened to the onion layers, every single layer existing within the model implies another mobile part that impacts and is impacted by others within the unified communications design.



Figure 1: Strategic Managerial Communication Model

Source: Geraldine Hynes 2016

The manager must link their communication strategy to an already existing strategic plan aligned with the company's overall vision (SPHR 2018). To ensure the presence of an effective strategic plan for managerial communications, the common objectives should be to ensure that it creates awareness, enlightens, includes stakeholders, inspires engagement, nurtures passion, and pledges positive outcomes (Weaver 2020). Additionally, the manager should integrate other strategies into attaining strategic communications. These include simplifying messages but ensuring the message has a deep connotation, inducing interest, coaching, strengthening important points, and intensifying the available technology (Everse 2011). It is paramount to ensure that a positive impact is reaped and mitigate the potential for the failure of managerial communication, provision of time, concept, analysis, and an all-inclusive effort to exploit the biggest outcome on investment. Furthermore, this will be authenticated by utilizing the quality of feedback obtained from the employees and accomplishing the manager's desired goal.

Sony Japan's communication plan will be based on the following three (3) guidelines:

- **Efficiency, Transparency, and Accountability:** The communication plan will seek ways to break existing communication barriers and increase accountability and transparency.
- **Clarity in Understanding:** The communication plan will seek to break the information gap and improve knowledge and understanding of the key issues.
- **Inclusivity:** The communication plan will pursue all avenues to disseminate key information on business decisions and achievements to the staff.

Communication Factors

Within any communication environment, elements such as diversity, drive for competitive advantage, and ethical considerations impact the variability of communications, refined information reception,

and overall positive outcomes. Information dissemination inside a society enables a harmonious means for joining the various employees by sharing values and ideals. These will lay the ground for information absorption, adaptation, distribution, and dissemination of ideas and thoughts (Lillis and Tian 2009). The manager must consider the employees and the sender of the information. He must also include the intended objective for sharing the information with the employees.

Onboarding a new client to SONY Japan through a good marketing strategy might bring to the surface the underlying cultural differences, which will play a role in influencing the sensitivity of how the message will be received. The manager must be mindful of the employees' feelings while staying aligned with the general communication objective (Aggerholm & Asmuß, 2016). The manager will be responsible for encoding the overall intentions of taking on a new client and, in simple terms, explaining why the employees' support is paramount to mitigate any misinterpretation. In ensuring that the collaboration of the employees and the manager remains tethered to the distinct purpose, there must be a successful transmission of this information. This will rely on some key factors such as the existing relationship between the employees and the manager, status quo, employees' interest in the issue, employees' emotional state at that moment, the knowledge possessed by employees on the new agreement, and employees' ability to communicate (Aggerholm & Asmuß, 2016). These factors offer analysis for the employees and, if not addressed in the right manner, can cause irreversible distortion of information. Paying attention to employees' demographics, personalities, and general behaviour will ensure the successful delivery of the information.

The key ethical issues that will need to be addressed are as follows:

- **Language barrier:** The critical issue that would be addressed is the communication challenge that would happen because of the difference in the language spoken by the new client, the different employees, and the manager. Smooth communication will take place if all the parties understand the same language.
- **Cultural differences:** In cases where the new client hails from a different culture, the cultural differences will be evident and impact the company's actions and operations. All these factors should be communicated to the employees and any other stakeholders, if need be, like ethics, beliefs, dialects spoken, and societal frameworks.
- **Ethical challenges:** These ethical complications include issues arising from work, such as human rights, natural contamination, moral responsibilities, or commitments.
- **Legal issues:** Every country has its laws, and introducing a new client might require educating the client and the staff on each party's legal framework. Different countries uphold different laws about the welfare of employees, taking care of the environment, addressing issues related to corruption, and addressing the challenges faced when sourcing raw materials.

Types of Communication to Use

The biggest challenge faced when coming up with and implementing a communication plan is to

come up with the most appropriate vehicles for distributing any given message to and from employees. With so many choices, the manager needs to select the best communication suited for this information.

It is beneficial to use face-to-face communication since signing a contract with a new client is a sensitive issue. Engaging the employees in the company's new endeavour will portray a good managerial image to the employees, indicating that their views are valued and respected. If some employees are located out of the office, virtual team meetings may need to be relied on. It is important to set expectations and establish protocols to ensure effective communication.

Communication Channels

The company will employ the most appropriate communication mix to ensure that information is passed across and understood clearly by the employees. The most effective channels are:

- Social media tools: Twitter and LinkedIn will be the most utilized channels for promoting new products and the intended results. Over the years, social media has become influential in disseminating information. These channels have made it possible to obtain information anytime and anywhere on any smart device.
- Company website: A company website is important because it informs key stakeholders of important achievements within the company. This will motivate the employees, which will create participation and involvement. The website will also sensitize all involved in the launch of any new products to improve the company's visibility.
- Company Blog: A blog will be created to publish any extra information regarding company's expansion. Blogs are usually considered a one-way communication method and usually represent a non-formal tool, but interaction can occur on the blog discussion boards and forums. The content in the blog will be tailored to fit the targeted audience and use a language that is accessible to all. The client's network will be used to promote the new product line.
- Partner websites and newsletters: The dissemination structures that the new client already has in place will be used to pass vital information in and out of the company. For instance, a regular newsletter and their websites and blogs will be used to disseminate regularly and frequently via these channels.

Technological Considerations

Technology is an important asset to any business communication, and it has a big role to play. However, without proper planning, training, and execution, it can have a negative impact instead of assisting in reaping the rewards of evolving technologies. The technology used incorrectly can obstruct communication, but it can enable clear and efficient communication if used correctly. Technology such as instant messaging and electronic mail is great, but it is paramount to understand

when to call for a face-to-face meeting. Thus, technology plays two important communication roles for SONY Japan:

Linking Employees From All Over the Globe

More people are increasingly working remotely, and applications such as Skype, Slack, Microsoft Teams, and other popular platforms have become a part of the business environment. The ability to start a video conference with a staff member who works on another continent or a client on another continent is incredible. It reduces the chances of miscommunication, which could have a costly impact on money and time. If the company team is large and spread out, managers must offer the appropriate technology to enable their employees to connect efficiently.

Detailing Conversations

Conversations and chat logs can be used as a reference later, enabling great documentation for companies. In the past, past information was referenced through the memory of phone calls or minutes from meetings. Teams can now scroll up to access what was discussed in previous meetings. The most important factor is to ensure that the communication tools used are well-segmented so that information overload does not bury what needs to be referred to in the future. It is the work of managers to ensure effective documentation is done by providing guidelines for each tool used for communicating.

Workplace Environment

SONY Japan enjoys a hybrid kind of work environment. Some days, the employees choose to work from home or the office. Not all businesses are the same, and the choice of the hybrid work model should depend on the company's size, setup, and specific needs. SONY Japan utilizes synchronous communication, which means that communication has to happen in real time to get immediate responses. To inform the employees about onboarding a new client, the company will utilize face-to-face conversations, phone calls, video conferencing, and instant messaging. Nevertheless, the main issue with this communication is the added scheduling moment, which can be problematic when time zones separate teams.

Monitoring Metrics

The success of the communication will be monitored using qualitative and quantitative measures. The communication evaluation results will ascertain the extent to which the communication goals and objectives were attained and will clearly outline the connection between the results and the input (effort) made to attain the goals. This monitoring analysis will assist the company in better

comprehending what works and what factors act as barriers to positive communication, and will polish the communication procedures at SONY Japan.

Conclusion

This report has been prepared with one objective in mind- to create effective communication between the manager and the employees concerning informing the employees of the entrance of a new client, which will have a positive outcome in terms of extending the product line. Thus, it is paramount for the employees to be on board and support the client. As it is understood that communication and management are cojoined, both are crucial for ensuring that the company can achieve its objectives and goals. An effective communication plan is the driving force among the employees to ensure continuous correspondence in matters related to the company and passing on vital information. The focus of this report was an attempt to detail a viable strategic communication plan that SONY Japan managers can use to communicate to employees about the company's intentions to expand and bring in a new client. The challenges encountered while using modern technological communication tools were also discussed. This communication plan serves as a framework that needs to be implemented by SONY Japan as a communication strategy. Ensuring the success of the detailed strategies requires a committed effort from each SONY employee. Such commitment from the staff will enable accurate and consistent information regarding any developments within the company.

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