Communication Processes and Organizational Change in Post-Industrial Society

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	The objective of this short essay is to highlight the role of communication in drawing new courses of organizational management, through an analysis of the tools and of the communicative modes, which have brought about the new forms characterizing the current organizational scenario, as well as social interactions more generally. In the light of the radical changes that have marked both structure and practice of most organizations, we discuss the increasing complexity of the relationship between organizational models and communication technologies, so as to take into consideration the function that these latter play in the strategy and in the whole governance of the company, through a description of the characteristics and the modes of construction and management of the articulated systems of relations and communication exchanges, which allow the development and guarantee the success of the organization. From this perspective, the knowledge and the community of practice based on such knowledge constitute the privileged tools to fuel those communication processes that guarantee the efficacy of organizations, in that they represent the best way to create and increase cooperation, therefore, a major key to development. At the same time it is crucial the ability of those who govern the company to identify and use the tools and forms of communication that suit the needs and the structural features of the company.

Introduction

Today's increased social complexity, resulting from the progressive technological development and the related acceleration of social dynamics, has long assigned a predominant function to the communicative dimension of social reality. The organizational setting constitutes a privileged sphere for the expression of present-day communication dynamics, within which the features, as well as the modes and pervasiveness of their employment, are better understood. Their enactment and their constant development crisscross and sustain the web of relations and mutual interactions, which contribute to the makeup of the whole society. Since communication expresses either the transmission of symbolic information and content, or the constitution and re-modulation of the relations that mutually link the individuals (Paccagnella 2004; Livolsi 2000), allowing them to relate with one another in any context of social living, we can clearly understand how and to what extent the modes and the tools that mediate communication exchanges are by now capable of conditioning the different processes and contexts of daily life, therefore affecting our very existences (Thompson, 1995; Meyrowitz, 1985).

Starting from the already widely theorized role played by communication in the construction of identity processes (Mantovani, 1995), and moving to the role played in political, economic and financial dimensions, the incidence of communication is such that we can say that it actually controls and directs almost all aspects of social life, affecting even the management of intimate relations. This is attested by the very intensity with which nowadays we talk about it, to the point that it equals the way in which people used to talk only of God (Volli, 2007). Communication, in fact, has become the dominant category used to describe and interpret today's behaviours and dynamics, as well as the most efficient medium to act instrumentally in view of the most varied objectives. This is extremely true in the area of organizational reality, which in the present – late or post-modern or whatever – phase, has witnessed the transformation of the level of the

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communicative function from an accessory function to a cornerstone of the operation and of the whole governance of businesses (Trabucchi, 1993).

The objective of this short study is to outline the main cultural and communicative tracts that have redrawn the present scenario of organizational praxis, by focusing on the role of communication in the strategy of governance of companies, therefore the modes of construction and management of the forms of communication that characterize organizational exchanges and processes.

Communication and knowledge management in organizational processes

For some time now, there has been a nearly general consensus among scholars on the idea that, for organizations, creating and maintaining efficiency are connected to their ability to comply with the continuous changes, which enable them to adapt the organizational structure to the complexity and the turbulence that characterize the environmental contexts with which they have to establish a relation (De Michelis, 2005). More controversial is the debate on the factors capable of maintaining the organization's success while going through the continuous succession of changes in the life of each organization.

The point we intend to make here, underpinned by research and several studies, is that the major factor capable of ensuring the efficacy of organizations is the organization's learning ability, that is, the support provided by the organizations to their members' learning, which is translated into the production and acquisition of knowledge. Learning must be regarded as a necessary prerequisite for any organizational policy which may foster or cope with the change in order to confront the growing complexity of the market, as recognized by those who, while believing in other decisive elements in organizational change (Hammer-Stanton, 1995), acknowledge, nonetheless, the relevance of the human factor in the pursuit of efficacy.

In this perspective, we may believe that knowledge and community of practice founded on communicative exchanges sustain and foster those processes that guarantee the efficacy of organizations, in that they can ensure cooperation. Thus, we can say that the development and the spread of information and communication technologies, by granting the best support to the production of knowledge, through the creation of shared spaces and practices which foster its flows and exchanges, represent the major cornerstone for development and change within organizations.

Therefore, communication – through the new modes and sophisticate tools brought about by the development of electronic and information technology – has been and continues to be a key player, rather than a mere instrument in shaping the transformations that characterize the interaction modes within society, as well as the current changes in organizational praxis (Paccagnella, 2000; Lievrouw-Livingstone, 2006).

Communication has always played a fundamental role in the dynamic processes of organizational life, to the extent that each form of organization has worked out specific communication modes, privileging specific tools and channels, according to the objectives and the addressees of the messages conveyed, as well as expressing its communication needs related to its own level of complexity and development, to the turbulence of the environment in which it operates or with which it interacts, and to the technologies employed or the level of autonomy or dependence on external resources (Invernizzi, 2000).

On the basis of the already preeminent role communication has always played within organizational procedures, such function has been differentiated – according to the direction of the messages conveyed and exchanged as well as to relevant stakeholders – between the two areas of internal and external communication (Romano-Felicioli, 1992; Cocco, 2008), widely theorized in its functioning and specific objectives.

More recently, the trend – both theoretical and of managerial praxis – has gradually moved towards a more functional integration of communication levels (Fiocca, 1994), all directed to the development and the success of the company as a whole. In this sense, the new communication technologies and the new role of information have marked a revolution in the practice and in the charts of most organizational bodies, both in public and entrepreneurial sectors, thus more or less completely redrawing work interactions and processes.

Such a change has been occurring in the wider scenario that, since the late 20th century, has seen the transformation of companies not only in their structure, but in the very way of working, moving from a prevailing production of material goods to an increasing production of immaterial goods, in the form of services, information, and symbols, thus affecting the social and economic structure of the most developed countries. The actual revolution has been triggered by the emergence of knowledge as a new resource in the mechanisms of production, besides the traditional resources of labour and capital. With the development of specific procedures and systems for knowledge management – which has become a new factor of production and an unavoidable resource for entrepreneurial activities (Alessandrini 1996) – a number of innovative practices and procedures of shared management have been introduced, requiring consequent competences and learning practices, in view of a radical transformation of work environments and operational practices that are at the basis of organizations.

Communication, cooperation and organizational change

In such a scenario we can easily understand how communication has provided an ideal support and a privileged tool for the necessary development of organizations, based on a grater possibility to share and manage knowledge, which is now the major resource for organization development, vis-à-vis a constant communicative need and a likewise communicative deficit – the weak point in most traditional organizational realities (Bonazzi, 2002). Therefore, the persistent communicative 'injection' introduced into the most recent theory and practice of organizations has filled the physiological gap in the old mode of structuring and managing organizations, thus re-discovering in communication apparatuses and technologies the new strategic key to achieve the change that is necessary in order to adjust structures and procedures to the new demands imposed by the legislations and by the market.

In order to achieve specific goals more easily, besides optimizing relations and performance, communication has fostered wider spaces and better tools for the construction of that cohesion needed to guarantee, through the managers who perform this function, the achievement of selected goals and targets. Far from being easily manageable apparatuses, organizations are rather complex social systems, due to the plurality of dimensions that engender their dynamics and behaviours. Whereas structural setups, with their modes of differentiation and integration, can be easily known and therefore managed, it is more difficult to understand and manage cultural setups – encompassing both organizational and environmental contexts – even if they define the nature and affect the multiple inter-dependences of organizations (Ferrante-Zan, 2003). Surely, the operational use of mechanisms for constructing and sharing an identity and a specific culture, which are founded and spread according to uninterrupted planning and communication exchanges, cannot but offer a valuable opportunity for a more effective definition and management of organizational bodies, enabling the innovation of the dynamics and the actions of governance, as well as favouring the implementation of development policies of human resources (Bolognini, 2003). Undeniable is, in these terms, the link between cultural and communication models and norms that orientate and direct behaviours, as well as between the types of culture and the tendency to change, and therefore between the achievement of change and the ways in which the company 'communicates it'; in other words, the ways of promoting change by making its implementation faster and easier.

Sociological and organizational studies have long acquired the concept that communication represents the main organizational resource, and that it is even more relevant than the very intentions and goals directing the actions of individuals; actually, without mutual communication between individuals, no organization might start working, because cooperation and the adoption of common goals, generally recognized as fundamental processes of any organizational reality, could not be triggered (Barnard, 1938). Ultimately, cooperation is made possible by communication, since it is based on the learning, and the knowledge exchange and sharing that it enables. (De Michelis, 1998).

For the organization, communication represents more than a mere resource; it is a *conditio sine qua non*, in its formal as well as informal aspects, on which depend the possibility of assigning tasks on the basis of the availability of specific techniques, as well as the task of communicating cognitive, ideological and emotional premises to organizational decision-makers, who, in their turn, are responsible for orientating individual behaviours, and, therefore, for regulating and running the organization itself (Simon, 1947). At the same time, such process enables the organization to exercise a sort of 'discreet' control on individuals, by

operating in a communicative form, without giving out the traditional form of direct and bureaucratic control, which remains operative (Perrow, 1988).

On the other hand, by drawing on the psychosocial studies that have long sanctioned how any behaviour communicates something, the metacommunicative axiom must be asserted also for organizations; the axiom can be referred to the theoretical model of the *pragmatics of human communication*, which, by maintaining that one cannot not communicate, makes it impossible to work in organizations without communicating (Strati, 2013).

Among the most significant changes affecting the very structure of companies over the last years, which go together with the deep socio-economic transformations, we must emphasize two main trends: on the one hand, the substantial decrease of hierarchical levels, in response to a widespread need to streamline procedures, which often used to take longer than admissible on the market. On the other hand, a progressive externalization of activities and functions not necessarily linked to the distinctive competences of the companies, which has also paved the way for the rise of the model of network-centric organizations and of the so-called transnational companies,[2] yet more clearly related to financial reasons of cost reduction for the company, which ends up belonging less to its workers, providers and to the place where it is situated, and more and more to investors, without arousing sensation, as we could have expected not so long ago (Bauman, 1998).

Also the modes of production management have been affected by change, which can be mostly connected to the transition from a prevailing production of goods to the predominant supply of services, thus bringing about phenomena such as the *terzialization of labour*, the *globalization of markets*, the *emergence of social instances in commerce and finance*, which had already taken shape and were widespread at the beginning of the third millennium. It is a scenario of growing complexity, which offers unknown opportunities, yet it increases competition a great deal, extending it beyond traditional national borders, towards different social, historic and cultural realities of countries with rather different histories (Arcelli, 1997).

Without entering into the merit of the contents and the opposing positions in a theoretical debate that has been growing for a couple of decades on the theme of globalization – on which there is today a wide bibliography and which, as Bauman points out, is one of those terms so fashionable and overused that risks ending by making more obscure the experiences they claim to be clarifying – we cannot ignore that, from a certain moment onwards, the process of irreversible interconnection has marked the destiny of us all, involving us to varying degrees and forcing us to come to terms with it, regardless of what we subjectively decide it must represent.

The complexity and the extent of this phenomenon are such that they somehow prevent a clear definition and understanding of all its developments and effects, since they represent a radicalization and acceleration of the processes of interconnection – begun in the past and now spread to a global scale – of processes and activities of an economic and financial, as well as political and cultural nature on the basis of complex flows and exchanges of capitals, knowledge and technologies. Nonetheless, the process of globalization, as we have been experiencing it since the 1980s, has affected our whole existence by imposing new rules not only on the world economy but also on the 'governance' of the whole social life, thus concerning the most intimate dimensions of our emotions and relationships (Beck, 1999; Giddens, 2002). And we cannot claim that globalization has been ushered in by these dynamics, if we think that for millennia travels and trade, migrations and exchanges of acquired knowledge have represented a mode of globalization enabling the progress of human kind (Sen, 2002).

Globalization has allowed a fast reduction of transportation times, together with the nullification of the time needed to communicate information, thus increasing the pace of social life and redrawing the whole organization of the planet. Moreover, it has enabled the expansion of the capitalistic economy, based on the

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[2] Unlike multinational businesses, developed and spread since the 1960s, which chose to establish their head offices in countries with high levels of industrialization and development of production technologies, with commercial and productive branches in other strategically selected countries, transnational companies, appeared in the following three decades, do not localize only their commercial or productive activities in a multiplicity of countries, but also the very structure of the organization, which therefore becomes less centralized by outsourcing several organizational units in different countries, following an extreme logic of parcelling out of the productive activity, which enables to cut costs, by choosing the different operational branches according to the most convenient costs for both raw materials and labour.

fast exchange of goods, information and capitals, thus involving a new economic model worldwide, which, due to its intertwined dynamics, can be defined as an informational, global and interconnected model (Mattelart, 1998). Within this economic form, in fact, productivity and competition, either if we deal with companies or states, are linked to the informational capacity to process and apply information based on knowledge. Furthermore, the activities of production, circulation and consumption of goods and services (including their components, such as capital, labour, information, technology, etc.) are organized on a global scale, through a network of economic agents. Finally, since productivity and competition operate within a thick tangle of interactions between organizational networks, we can say that it is an online economy.

The new socio-technical pattern

The new socio-technical or techno-economic paradigm resulting from the combination of technology, economy and society, is grounded on some distinctive features, which together tend to 'reshape' the essence of the new society: (a) first, in the new paradigm of information technology, information represents the first matter, and the novelty is that *these technologies are used to act on the information itself*; (b) the second characteristic element is related to the *pervasiveness of the effects of the new technologies*; as an integral part of every human activity, technology pervades all individual as well as collective processes of existence; (c) the third feature refers to the typical mode of any system or set of relations that use the new information technologies, that is the *network logic*, which is implemented in the different types of processes and organizations, being the most suitable for the complexity of interaction and for its unpredictable models and developments; this logic wouldn't be easily applicable without the support of these technologies; (d) the fourth distinctive feature, linked to, and at the same time separate from interconnection, is the *flexibility* of the paradigm itself, which enables – thanks to the reversibility of the processes – the transformation of organizations and institutions, through a rearrangement of the different components, thus fully exemplifying the capability and the tendency to a constant reconfiguration, typical of a society marked by change and by the resulting organizational fluidity; finally, (e) the fifth characteristic, which somehow includes all the other features, is the *convergence of specific technologies in an integrated system*, where different information instrumentations, routes and contents converge in an indistinguishable manner.

The new matter substantiating the technological paradigm of the last decades ensures that information becomes a product of the process of production, and that the products of the information industry are, in their turn, a processing of information or tools that may achieve this goal. Information and its uninterrupted flow of communication become the cornerstone of a great part of the interactions, social exchanges and processes that characterize today's life, in what has been appropriately defined the information society, where globalization is the result of the new political and economic order, where technology and capitalism are united, under an expanding imperialism, and where some areas are still marginalized within a global scenario featuring also imbalances and injustices (Castells, 1996).

Yet, we must not neglect the political, social and cultural dimensions of globalization, which are mostly represented by the technological advancement of communication systems, which have fostered an immediate exchange of information and knowledge and their worldwide spread. All this has affected the life of organizations, directing logics of growth and transformation across the world, although in different forms and extents for each organization. Globalization has introduced a different paradigm of reference mainly in the sphere of productive and organizational activities, thus enacting a revolution in the structural and procedural patterns (Sapelli, 1999). The changes occurred in the wider context of work organization have affected means, times, places, structures, and processing modes, thus providing a new operational model, full of new priorities and trends in the structure and governance of the company, as well as in work procedures and processes highly enriched and influenced by the great development and spread of the new communication technologies, which have literally invaded the daily horizons of our existence.

Communication, with the continuous development of its digital technologies and the wide employment of information networks, has deeply transformed, formally and informally, the modes of interaction and management of organizational praxis, in its procedural modes, as well as in the relations and the definition of its meanings and identity values (Camussone, 2000).

The renewed relation between organizational dynamics and communication technologies has actually redrawn both the theoretical horizon and the operational maps of each organization. In particular, with the

advent of information technologies, an organization has now the power to intervene in the operation of communication networks, so as to favour innovation and change, and to optimize the use of resources, in the prospect of a more efficient governance of the company. In this sense, communication has become the most essential ingredient in successful organizations, which are compelled to create a system of efficient and efficacious communication. The use of Web 2.0 technology has offered many advantages particularly to commercial companies, in terms of collaboration and management of information; the intranet and extranet have benefited the strategic integration of levels and functions in work processes, within a bidirectional communication in real time either internally, between individuals and units, or externally, between the organization and its relevant stakeholders (Andriole, 2010; Mason, 2010).

In addition to the objective of producing goods and services to place on the territory or on the market, the organization conveys a series of messages with different contents and finalities (Morelli, 2004). These messages are addressed to a number of interlocutors and stakeholders of reference – conveyed intentionally or unintentionally and subjectively interpreted – which contribute to the creation of the image of the company. The organization itself is involved in specific procedures aimed at the creation of this image, in order to better communicate its own mission, what it wants to represent and the messages it intends to send to the outside world (Rossato, 2008).

Far from representing a mere means to spread and share knowledge, communication represents, therefore, a moment of encounter and integration of cultural differences within the organizational spaces, viewed either as productive business, or as administrative contexts and public bodies. The organization itself is, somehow, communication, since this latter tends to increasingly shape organizational norms, procedures and processes. Within the new globalized contexts, which have sometimes become highly competitive, the communicative dimension constitutes a vital strategic factor for organizations, which need a constant legitimation, and to make their activities and finalities known and visible. The different technologies play a primary role in the definition and/or modification of communicative and structural dynamics, in particular for specific typologies of organizations.

Information and Communication Technologies in organizational practice of postindustrial society

As the cultural perspective on organizations emphasizes, communication and organization are two sides of the same coin, since communication is the mechanism which articulates the processes that create an organization. In fact, it is through conversations, meetings and documents production that the members of an organization can coordinate their activities, creating and, at the same time, transmitting their culture to each other (Pettigrew, 1979; Putnam et al., 1996; Pepper, 1995; Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

Within each organization operates a series of symbols, of explicit and unspoken beliefs which, together with the system of roles, influence individual behaviour. Worked out in the form of assumptions, culture is inherent in the life of any organization, as a result of the processes of external adaptation and internal integration of its members (Schein, 1985; Smircich, 1983). These assumptions give rise to complex belief systems which determine the way we work, communicate and evaluate our own, as well as others' activities within each organization (Alvesson-Berg, 2010).

The traditional relevance of communication in organizational practice has further increased with the spread of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Technical innovation has become crucial in managing communicative actions, as well as in defining operational practices, thus bringing forth organizational change in companies, and promoting interactions and practices that support work processes and cooperation networks.

The new relationship between communication and organization, therefore, has redrawn the theoretical framework, as well as the praxes, of organizational dynamics, thus assigning a different and greater significance to a new set of variables. The combination of communication and organization has thus assumed new features in relation to: (1) technological innovations and information systems; (2) transformations of work organization (contents, relations, times, spaces); (3) and interactions between individual and organization (Malizia, 2005).

From being a subsystem of complex organizations, communication mechanisms have become essential in shaping the structure and processes of organizational realities. First of all, the emergence of knowledge as a

factor of production and a resource for entrepreneurial activities has fostered the spread of practices aimed at knowledge sharing among the different members within organizations. In this sense, communication – especially for commercial organizations that produce goods and services to be placed on the market – has today the role to support the overall strategy and development of the company, in order to highlight the relevant and useful aspects in the construction of the '*company image*' for all its relevant stakeholders (Bernstein, 1988).

Controlling almost completely the processes of knowledge management, the new technologies have reshaped the field of organizations and work, creating an economic interconnection network that invests in technology and new knowledge what has gained, in the same terms, of knowledge and technology, along a circular virtuous path, capable of generating, in suitable conditions of institutional and organizational change, higher levels of productivity and efficiency. Everything responds to the so-called 'informational model of development', which has triggered a series of processes by which organizations have come to constitute 'communication nodes', in which communication has come to represent the pivot around which all the aspects and levels revolve, including non-verbal or unintentional messages, the layout or the design of products (Trabucchi, 2002).

In this perspective, we can understand the development of knowledge management systems and the consideration for organizational learning, which favour the emergence and the development of 'communities of practice and learning', whose task and specific aim is the production of knowledge and the pursuit of excellence, selecting what each one produces best, following a pattern of sharing that cannot but benefit the growth and the success of the organization (Wenger, 2006; De Michelis, 2005).

Therefore, communication is today the main strategic tool for organizational development. Moreover, the availability of more powerful and faster technologies has enabled the increase in the amount of information flows that are exchanged daily. However, while facilitating the decision-making processes at the basis of the strategies and of the whole governance of companies, these technologies risk complicating such processes.

We need only consider the innovative potential of the Web 2.0 tools in the organization of work processes, with the combination of new technologies, new types of applications, new patterns of interaction and principles of organization that they enable (Levy, 2009). Web 2.0 is a general label that somehow synthesizes a complex phenomenon that includes a set of new generation services that allow people to collaborate, and to create and share information and knowledge. Whereas Web 1.0 offered top-down contents in an unidirectional manner, the Web 2.0 platform provides sites where users can "load" their content (blogs, wikis, social networks), thus marking a new phase, in which bottom-up interactivity and production complement the functionality of the traditional web. Likewise, the term 'Enterprise 2.0' is emerged following the use of Web 2.0 applications in companies, including the organizational change that accompanies technical innovation. Web 2.0 may serve as a resource for organizations, since it provides both workers and management with new opportunities and different tools able to cope with changes and complexities and to solve problems (Mangrum et. al., 2001).

Nonetheless, most studies show a sceptical attitude concerning the usefulness of Web 2.0 in the companies, with the exception of the information industry sector. Results from available surveys, based on relevant case studies or empirical quantitative research, reveal some contradictory data and general trends relating to the diffusion of web 2.0 in companies, the range of its application and benefits. As research has recently shown, not many companies use web 2.0 applications and tools and the rate of the usage in enterprises depends on the business sector the company is engaged in and the size of the company. Whereas the rate of the companies that know the main tools, such as blogs and wikis, is approximately 90%, the rate of users drops to 20%, according to studies based on a socio-technical definition of web 2.0.

As for its benefits, the findings show that the biggest impact of the use of Web 2.0 is expected on knowledge work, innovation processes and cooperation, since its adoption allows a faster and easier exchange of information (Andriole, 2010). Moreover, the results show that similar benefits are expected in the achievement of higher levels of cooperation between employees beyond departmental barriers, and a general better integration of the employees. More limited benefits related to the adoption of Web 2.0 technologies are expected in improving the decision-making processes.

The Italian scene reflects a similar situation, in which the use of Web 2.0 tools in commercial organizations does not exceed 20%, while their knowledge is much higher, exceeding 90% for blogs and wikis (Osservatorio Enterprise 2.0, 2009). However, with regard to the application of Web 2.0, there is still no statistical data that correlate its use to productivity indices.

We must say, however, that most of the studies have some weaknesses, since in almost all of them the interviewees are members of the management, so that we cannot conclude that the Web 2.0 applications known by the management are used efficiently by the employees. Another the question is whether all the tools used by the employees are known to the management. Besides, whereas many studies emphasize that the use of Web 2.0 in companies is increases and will continue to do so, some others conclude that companies do not regard Web 2.0 as a solution to their problems, but as a trend which has to be followed.
In general, we can say that a number of cultural, economic and technical factors still represent an obstacle to the use of Web 2.0 in companies, especially because of the doubts of the top management about security risks and inadequate control over contents. Although Web 2.0-based information systems represent a means to provide space for the collaborative production of knowledge within a company, and the social software is commonly provided for intra-company practice, in many cases its usage is below expectations, due to the persistence of these cultural and organizational barriers. Such factors as adequate decision-making policies, corporate governance and value-systems ingrained in the corporate culture are preconditions for the acceptance and a sustainable use of web 2.0 technologies in companies (Schneckenberg, 2009).

The use of Web 2.0 is also seen as a potential source of distraction for the employees. From a certain point of view we can say that management as well as employees still seem to be quite reluctant to adopt Web 2.0 technologies and applications for doing business, since often the benefits from these applications are intangible, therefore companies, especially the smaller ones, tend to do without it (Lee et. al., 2008).

Somehow, the results of most of the studies seem to suggest that rather than discuss whether and how social software may or may not change organizations, we should consider and better understand the new forms of work organization. In general, it appears that employees using web 2.0 software for knowledge production struggle with the ambiguity between the instances of these new forms of work and the existing organizational structures (Riedl-Betz, 2012). More research is needed to better understand the consequences of this development, in order to bridge the discrepancy between traditional organizations and the expected participation of the employees in the Enterprise 2.0.

Everything shows that technology is not enough. What really matters is the so called 'human factor', namely the management's ability to select communication tools useful for a specific organization, adapting them to the needs and characteristics of the team that it leads. Only by optimizing and facilitating the underlying information we can support intranet 2.0 initiatives, aiming at collaborative production of knowledge and prevent the probability of failure. In order to do so, the organization itself should enable its employees to use social software, by allocating sufficient time resources and implementing non-hierarchical modes of communication and culture, which would eliminate barriers and encourage any project based on web 2.0 technologies.

Communication, therefore, confirms its vital role in the organizational development, particularly in a time of change and uncertainty like the present one, which helps to face and govern (Tourish-Hargie, 2003). Especially communication conveyed through the new channels of web 2.0 technologies, can represent a highly innovative tool, able to stimulate the active participation of users and to encourage emerging communication (Mc Afee, 2006).

Actually, despite investment in collaboration software does not always fulfil the expectations of better knowledge management or increased productivity, social software based on web 2.0 principles is widespread in organizations, precisely because of the opportunities it offers for sharing and building information and content, as well as spaces for the collaborative production of knowledge and better management of work processes.

The development of new communication technologies has brought about such a deep change in organizational practice that we may foresee that the forthcoming revolution will consist of the transformation of an organization into a real living organism, whose strength will reside in the immediate

and functional connection between its components, as suggested by Meanti, the almost legendary manager of Microsoft, who imagines future business scenarios driven by 'digital nervous system' (Meanti 1999).

Therefore, it is through communication channels and practices that organizational change can be mainly managed. In these terms, communication does not simply amplify and spread the 'value' of the company by exporting it on the markets; it actually create value, since it is capable of multiplying the material and immaterial resources of the company (Corvi-Fiocca, 1996).

In an age of radical social and organizational change, when placing a product or service means selling also the symbols attached, communication has the role of a leading tool in the global governance of an organization, as it is a leverage and strategic support in the hand of management, as well as a source and a privileged channel for its members, since it is capable of favouring, at the same time, the creation of sharable meanings and of a distinctive culture for the organization, as well as favouring the growth of the intangible resources of the company.

In this phase of modernity, also called post-industrial phase, the organization is therefore characterized as a 'communication node', where the symbolic production, far from representing an accessory activity, tends to be identified with the organization itself, that is, its capability of managing a complex, articulated system of relations supported through communication modes and tools that are fine-tuned on the basis of sophisticated technologies, which enable the maintenance and decide the future of the organization.

This means that in order to function and maintain its efficacy, the company has the priority to organize an adequate apparatus and must be able to construct a winning 'communication strategy', since today's business world has entered an age of 'super-symbolic' economy, centred on the uninterrupted exchange of communication flows, thus creating a system of wealth almost totally dependent on the instant communication and spread not only of data, but also of ideas and symbols (Toffler, 1984). The forms and tools guiding the communication processes within organizations, therefore, dictate the modes and courses of management, by setting objectives and redrawing operational frameworks, and therefore deciding the success of organizations.

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