Integral Communication Tool: What It Is, How It Works, Where It Helps

Ozren Rafajac, Polytechnic of Rijeka, Rijeka, Croatia
Alen Jakupović, Polytechnic of Rijeka, Rijeka, Croatia

ABSTRACT

An integral communication tool is producing a coherent message while attempting to achieve synergy among different types of communicators. By encouraging a purposeful dialogue and automatic exchange of relevant information, these kinds of tools can improve our mutual understanding, cooperation, collaboration and competitiveness. The main problem in collaboration is finding compatible partners, friends and people (with similar interests) with whom we can build long-term relationships in different fields of life, such as family relations, education and leisure. The same applies to all economic activities. The authors find a solution to this problem in the development of an integral communication tool that has the three main objectives: self-improvement, relationship improvement and qualitative improvement of collaboration. By analyzing the requirements of potential users, the authors have developed a conceptual model of an integral communication tool that explains its basic functions, subsystems and information connections.

KEYWORDS

Collaboration Improvement, Collaboration, Conceptual Model, Integral Communication Tool, Relationship Improvement, Self-Improvement

INTRODUCTION

From the time of the first letters and images depicted in caves, stone monuments and ceramic plates, to messages written on papyri, books and cell phones and up to the development of World Wide Web and IT networks, humanity has been continuously improving its communication abilities. All of this is happening simply because of people’s necessity to search and share information about locations, ideas, know-how, preferences and all other subjects that can help them to improve their efficiency and quality of well-being. These days, communication technology has become so advanced that it can be easily utilized for further reduction of cost and effort that is needed in empowerment of cooperative and collaborative behaviour. Despite the existence of many different IT platforms, such Google, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc., that are trying to connect people on different grounds, this article is trying to stress that there is a lot of space for further improvement and invention of new communication tools that could improve our competitiveness. The pure fact that something similar already exists does not mean that we use it optimally. The problem of this research consists in the fact that people still have not developed a communication tool that could help them exchange their information and preferences automatically or at least with minimal use of time and energy. Even though it is possible to identify many different obstacles that prevent us from being substantially more efficient in collaboration and cooperation with others, among those that are most important are the lack of communication tools and platforms that can support these endeavours.

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A great example of how a majority of people still has substantial problems in communication can be found in the following statistics. Around 50% of marriages in the United States end in divorce. According to The Marriage and divorce statistics of the Eurostat (2011), the divorce/marriage ratio in Belgium is 71%, Portugal 68%, Hungary 67%, Czech Republic 66%, Germany 49%, the UK 38% and in the EU an average is 44%. Although indirectly, these results suggest that people should reconsider their current and invent new communicational patterns and techniques that will improve their mutual communication and understanding. The trouble with finding compatible partners, friends and people (with similar interests) with whom we can build long term quality relationships, are something we all face on a regular everyday basis. The same applies to all economic activities. Everyone knows that motivated employees and satisfied customers represent crucial ingredients of a good and sustainable management and that the best strategy to accomplish this is intense communication. Despite the fact that big companies are already applying advanced psychological methods in recruiting and motivating their human resources, as well as in communication with their customers, they usually do not do it often enough. If in the largest business systems these tools and techniques justify their efficiency, why everyone else would not use such tools in their everyday communication? As the time goes by, people’s interests, experiences and preferences are changing. In order to be optimally informed, every management needs communication techniques and tools that can register these changes on a regular basis. In the last decades, the total number of online available information has been rising at such a large pace that we often cannot find and follow all the information that we find relevant and interesting. Even when they are doing their best, normal, average people usually spend a lot of time and energy in these tasks. In order to become more efficient in their mutual relationships, people need personalized communication tools and platforms.

In the last decade the number of authors who are suggesting that people should develop integral communication tools and techniques is constantly rising. However, up to recently, most economists who have been writing about a need for integrated communication (IC) were focused on marketing and corporate communications. Even though IC models are rooted in the advertising agency level, according to Holm (2006) these techniques have failed to appear on management level, whose communicative ability has remained insufficient, mainly due to obsolete tradition. Of course, not all companies are equally developed. By conducting qualitative analysis of the world-leading multinational companies, Kalla (2005) finds that knowledge sharing is an important and strategic function of integrated internal communications. Other authors who write about this subject are Thorson and Moore (2006) by describing IC as the synergy of persuasive voices and Jo (2011) who claims that IC represents a catalyst for the growth of e-business management. At recent time, there are more and more authors, such as Leonard (2004) and Östmar (2014), who recognize that integral communication techniques should be applied in wider socio-economic context. Since people do not merely operate with one worldview, according to Brown (2005) the best strategy for communicating is to use language and images that appeal to multiple worldviews simultaneously. On the same track is Collins (2005) who defines integral communication as a skill, an art, a state of mind, and a state of being that encourages dialectic tension in our exchanges; by allowing diverse concepts, inclinations, emotional states, and spiritual insights to coexist so that new and unanticipated synergies take shape within a neutral field.

Despite the fact that e-collaboration technologies sometimes pose obstacles to communication, if virtual teams adapt their communication to be more focused, clear, precise, neutral, concrete, concise, persuasive, considerate and complete, then is possible to overcome the obstacles and achieve success and the desired quality of the team outcome (DeLuca, Gasson & Kock, 2006). By using semantic networks, GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and Web3D (all interactive 3D content which are embedded into web pages) e-collaboration technology may substantially improve awareness of participants in globally distributed organizations (Sultanow, Weber & Cox, 2011). According to Silic et al. (2014) the unified communication and collaboration (UC&C) platform is the perfect choice for organizations that want to improve employee productivity and reduce costs.
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