

## **TURKISH CORPORATE COMMUNICATION EXECUTIVE'S ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS ABOUT EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*One of the most important areas in Public Relations are the employee communications or internal communication. As a broad definition, employee communications is a process that aims to achieve and maintain or organizational objectives and operations by providing constant information and idea exchange between the departments that constitute the organization and its environment and also it is a process of maintaining required relations among the departments. Like the practices in the world, in Turkey many academicians in this field has also mentioned the importance of employee communications in their studies. The main purpose of the employee communication is the internalization of the business targets by their employees and participation of them to the aimed target actively. Consequently corporate communication is also referred as employee communication.*

*This study is specifically conducted to determine the corporate communication executive's responsibilities toward employee communications in the company and to obtain information about their ideas for corporate communication.*

**Keywords:** *Corporate Communication Executives, Employee Communication; Public Relations*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

For years, employee communication has been disregarded in public relations practices. Today, public relations and corporate communication departments in organisations have realised the importance of employee communications and the "old" public relations saying "Good public relations begins at home" cannot be neglected any more. The main idea is that employees can only work effectively where they can participate in the organisation and they can only participate effectively if they are fully informed. Full information implies each employee and needs to have a complete understanding of aims and objectives of an organization (Kitchen; 2002:80).

Excellent internal/employee communication is essential in any organization if it is to survive and thrive. As a management tool, it helps identify, establish, and maintain relationships between an organization's management and its employees. Existing research results have shown that as a middle-range concept of public relations, effective internal/employee communication contributes to the building of a satisfactory organization–employee relationship, thus increasing the value of communication and public relations functions to the organization. Studies have also found a correlation between employee ratings of their managers' communication and business unit profitability (Chen, 2008: 189-190).

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Employee communication is one of the most important areas of public relations. Many articles written in the field of public relations in Turkey deal how much important is the employee communication. In its most general definition, internal communication or employee communication as may also be called constant knowledge and opinion exchange between various departments and parts which form the organization, between the organization and its environment and is a social process which provides the establishment of

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necessary relations between departments in order to provide the functioning of organization and to achieve its goals (Sabuncuoğlu ve Tüz, 2001:74-75).

The communication channels that provide information flow in the organization are vertical, horizontal and cross departmental which is the vertical communication defines communication between managers and employees, horizontal communication defines communication between employees. Cross (interactive) communication defines communication between managers and employees in different departments (Gürgen, 1997:34-37).

The messages sent and received are evaluated and used during the work process in the organization. That is to say, a constant communication process runs within organizations. The employees by listening, talking and sending work related documents to each other create a constant communication process. Continuous message traffic exists in the process of organizational communication. This constant information flow is an indispensable system of the organization (Bantz, 1993:1).

Employee communication has been an important element to overall employee satisfaction, productivity and, ultimately, organizational success. Employee communication identified four eras; The first are, labelled 'entertaining employees' was popular in the 1940s; this was followed by the era of the 'informing employee's in the 1950s. The 1960s era was one of 'persuading employees'. And 1980s as a new era of symmetrical employee communication or talking with employee (Poore, Pit, 2000:232)

The best way to assess the effectiveness of a company's internal communication efforts is to determine the employees' attitudes about the firm. This assessment can be done through an internal communication audit. Based on the audit results, communications professionals can design the right program for the organization (Boyd and Houwen, 1997: 53-59).

According to Peltekoğlu (2007), while there is an apparent relation between the structure of the company, the view it adopts and its internal communication system, in small or traditional companies where there are employees in smaller numbers, the communication of the company with its employees is not complex and mostly based on face-to-face interaction. As the companies get bigger the communication system extends and grows. But either small or big scaled, in all companies correspondence is required especially for the information that will be used more than once (Peltekoğlu, 2007:521).

As the importance of internal communication gains recognition, it is not surprising that public relations and consulting firms are developing capabilities in the area of employee communications or that companies are increasingly turning to them for assistance. Regardless of where the employee communications is positioned and whether or not an outside consultant is used, it must work closely in conjunction with external communicators to integrate the messages disseminated to both internal and external audiences (Argenti, 2009:187).

Employee communication consists of the basic components of messages, media, and audiences, but it is also much more. Effective employee communication is the glue that holds an organization together, and during major change, that glue becomes even more critical. It allows the smooth operation of the organization and links all other process of the organization, such as the strategic and business planning process together (Barrett, 2002:231).

The aim of the internal communication enables employees take an active contribution in the organization by internalizing business objectives. The expression of "Employees are our most precious resource" is often coincided. How this conviction becomes reality, is arguable in Turkey as it is in the world.

Kohtes and Klewes (1999), advocate that internal communication has three dimensions. According to this:

a. It has to inform: The organization has to inform its employees about its goals and strategies, current work results, products, etc and improvements. The aim is that the employee should have all the necessary information in order to be able to reply the questions that may come from outside and be able to work efficiently having his own work environment known.

b. It has to motivate: The employees should be motivated by conveying them the company's standards of judgments, by showing the humanitarian side of the company and by forming emotional connections with the company. The aim is to improve the employees' personal activities, creativeness and satisfaction.

c. It has to lead: It should provide the employees to find a direction for themselves and to become integrated with the company. So that, the company can create loyalty should be convincing and personal (cited by;Okay &Okay,2005: 232-233).

In Thayer's (1975) model based on system theory, the components form the companies' communicational structures, communication's goals and functions in terms of administrative and institutional behaviors. Thayer's model of corporate communication takes organizations as open systems that are fed on knowledge (information). The organizations owe their presence to the communication between the sub systems which form them and their interaction with their environment. According to Thayer, there are three basic communication sub systems which correspond to the organizations' communicational requirements and functions: functional-operational communication system, regulative communication system, preventive and constructive communication system (Paksoy, 1996: 24-26).

As Gürgen (1997) points out communication functions almost as a "mortar" by constructing all kinds' interpersonal relations, companies (organizations) and gradually societies and by holding them together. In corporate structures many functions of communication can be discussed. As Gürgen (1997) mentions, the most important one of them is the coordination function. (Gürgen,1997:35)

Without a good flow of communication in companies, assessment of organizational goals would not be possible and organizational achievements would depend on chance or coincidence as the activities of employees within the company would occur independent and detached to each other. Paksoy and Acar (1996) compiled the overall functions of the employee communication within the company in four major categories as follows:

- **The function of information providing:** Corporate activities cannot be done if top management does not provide employees information related to the company's policy and goals, produced goods and services, production methods and improvements.
- **The function of convincing and affection:** The effective and profitable working of employees towards the organization's goals is also related to their adoption to the company's goals, to their identification with the company. Therefore the functioning of conviction or affection oriented communicational process is necessary.
- **Instructional and educational function:** The administrators in organisation communicate with their subordinates not only to give them information but also to delegate their responsibility. In this perspective they can lead them or give their behaviors a direction. Therefore educational programs based on interaction are used.
- **Consolidation and coordination function:** Communication which brings individuals around the goals of the company at the same time has an important function on preserving the individual's psychological integrity and steadiness. With communication, members of the company can solve the conflicts which derive from moral, belief and attitude differentiations, which is important as a motivation and morale booster (Paksoy&Acar,1996: 26-27).

On the other hand, another functional approach which is similar to the Tyaher's model Shockley-Zalabak (2006) states that employee communication typically serves with three functions or goals. Firstly, communication has relation function. Relation function is significant for the company's employees' socialization and integrated the employees into the work environment. Second is that communication has organization function. Communication controls, directs and leads organizational activities. Finally, communication has development function. By communication company's employees can analyze the problems, solve them, and then they can develop advancements by making various changes (Shockley-Zalabak, 2006:5-6).

In addition to the factors stated above, the following results in researches related to the advantages provided by employee communication have been acquired: Each of the company employees is a voluntary spokesman and a representative. Loyalty raised within the company employees may inherently contribute to the reputation of the company by each employee telling about his or her own contentment in his or her own

social environment as well as it would affect the quality of moral and material products offered (Okay, and Okay, 2005; 177).

Although scholars have conducted significant research in the area of organizational communication, the area of internal or employee communication remains relatively undeveloped. Arguing for open employee communication and participative decision making culture as keys for excellent internal organizational public relations, Grunig has stated that public relations managers must have access to the organization's dominant coalition or decision-making leadership to influence the company's public relations worldview. (McCown, 2005: 2)

Most of the researchers of corporate communication, as Grunig (1992), public relations theorist, abundantly clung to the importance of communication and tried to show it as a solution to every problem. Weick (1983) stated that employee communication could not be a key that solves problems every time on every condition, but could be an effective factor depending on the conditions and every company's own specific circumstance. On the other side, as Grunig conveyed while many researchers see internal communication as it is at the same level with behavioral variables such as motivation, leadership and job satisfaction, some researchers by going even further advocated that it is the employee communication that made all these variables possible and if employee communication had not existed, motivation, leadership and even the company itself would not have existed (Grunig, 1992:574).

Other similar research is done in a Ph.D study in Turkey. According to the related study; "The companies which receive public relations service should be encouraged to receive service in the area of employee communication. The area of employee communication hasn't been understood adequately yet, is not practiced efficiently. Even though public relations consultants offer projects, companies' demand for consultancy and practice services in this area is not adequate. Employee communication is usually perceived as a sub function of human resources but not as another area which requires expertise. External communication considered much more important than employee communication. Companies which receive public relations service do not allocate an adequate time and budget in the area of employee communication. Employee communication is mainly limited to the activities like producing a periodical or celebrating birthdays. Human resources and corporate communication departments should work together, receive a survey based on strategic consultancy and make applications (Tunçel, H, 2007:355-356).

Today, information technologies have changed the way we create, archive, access and introduce information. New technologies have made the access and the use of information more egalitarian, less proprietary (Goodman, 1998:218). Parallel to this, corporate communication has gained different dimensions. Many enterprises convey corporate communication in electronic environment. Finally e-communication has been added to the internal communications channels such as face-to-face or written communication. Nowadays, the internet, mobile phones, advanced wired telephone networks enable internal communication to be done much more easily and faster. Thanks to electronic mails, blogs, mobile messaging etc employees can communicate each other outside the company consistently without any hitch in any part of the world no matter what time or place is. In a near future, general company and private meetings would more often be done outside the company with the development of video mobile phones and widespread of video conference systems. The features of written communication in electronic environment are being replaced by forms of face-to-face, verbal (oral) communication which also have qualifications of written communication with technical possibilities such as recording, storing, putting audio into text, printing in paper. As Griffin (2005) states, verbal (oral) communication is relatively easier than written communication (Griffin, 2005:543-544).

Some researches specifically focus on the web and argue that practitioners have not taken full advantage of new technologies. They conduct little research, planning, or evaluation in programming web sites. Although practitioners see the web as a valuable tool to enhance their organizations' images, maintaining web sites has not been a high priority because of perceived lack of urgency and deadlines, and lack of resources and support. (Porter and Sallot, 2003:604)

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is specifically conducted to determine the corporate communication executive's responsibilities toward employee communications in the company and to obtain information about their ideas about corporate communication. Below it is shown some of the questions that are asked;

- What media tools do corporate communications executives use most often to deliver corporate messages to employees ( i.e. written, electronic and face-to-face)?
- Do corporate communication executives consider themselves integral members of the decision-making team?
- Do corporate communication executives and the employee communications programs have the support of senior management?
- Is the employee communications program an integral component of the company's overall public relations/ public affairs/ communication function?
- Do corporate communications executives provide employees with the information they need and want in order to perform more effectively?

The questionnaire is based on Ph.D thesis of Kimberly Ann Seitz named "Employee Communications: Attitudes and options of Corporate Communications Executives". Pilot study is conducted before the application of the questionnaire.

## **SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION**

The sampling is taken from 100 organizations taking place in first 500 successful companies determined by Capital Business Magazine in Turkey. The questionnaire is conducted to the upper level corporate communication executives and senior public relations executives in the corporate communication departments.

The questionnaire consists of two parts. On the first part of the survey there are 4 multiple choice questions and on the second part of the study there are 23 agreement statements scaled from 1 to 10.(1 being strongly disagree and 10 being strongly agree).Return rate is 64 out of 100.

## **FINDINGS**

Quantitative data analysis consisted of examining frequency distributions, measures of central tendency and running t test and one way ANOVA, which were used to detect significant mean differences between dependent variables.

As the general results of the survey, Table 1 shows us the fact that senior corporate communicators mostly prefer and use written communication in order to communicate with their employees within the corporation. Whereas, the results of Wright's (1997) survey carried out in 1997 reveal the fact that only %19 of the employees prefer written corporate communication and that employees believe their immediate supervisor is the key to any effective employee communications program.

Most of the public relations executives declared that half of the communication performance is spent for internal/employee communication. These public relations executives stated that they regard employee communication as important as other parts of corporate communications practices and that half of total corporate communication performance is spent for employee communication. Employee communication is regarded as an inseparable part of corporate communication. Employees of a foundation are its spokesmen outside. After designating the method of communication with employees, another factor is to specify the ratio of employee communication in the total communication activities carried out by corporate public relations executives. This also determines the ratio of employee communication in the total communication performance of top-level public relations experts in Turkey.

Public relations executives suggest at a high level that their internal communications program has not been developed with cultural diversity in mind. However, corporate culture is regarded as one of the most important variables that determine employee communication method. It is seen that those who declare that employee communication program is structured in conformity with the culture of the foundation is less in

numbers. This is a rather striking result. Because corporate culture is the model of common beliefs, attitudes, estimations and expectations that show how individuals behave and how they affect each other within the foundation. (Akyürek, 2005:28) Therefore, employee communication program is expected to be developed by taking corporate culture into account. However, 64% of communication experts said no to this question. As a result, it is seen that employee communication is used as a means of spreading the culture of the foundation but, it does not develop corporate culture.

**Table 1: The Distribution Of PR Executives According To the Independent Variables**

		Frequency	Percent
What percent of your organization's employee communications is written(newsletter, memos, etc.) ?	%0-25	10	15.63
	%26-50	41	64.06
	%51-75	13	20.31
What percent of your organization's employee communications is face-to-face?	%0-25	43	67.19
	%26-50	18	28.13
	%51-75	3	4.69
What percent of your organization's employee communications is electronic (TV, e-mail,video,etc.)?	%0-25	35	54.69
	%26-50	26	40.63
	%51-100	3	4.69
What percent of your organization's corporate communications performance is spent for employee communications?	%0-25	22	34.38
	%26-50	37	57.81
	%51-75	5	7.81
Has your internal communications program been developed with cultural diversity in mind?	Evet	23	35.94
	Hayır	41	64.06

In Table 2 ,following frequency distribution of 23 attitude expressions and information display the answers the 64 respondents gave when asked to indicate how strongly they disagreed or agreed with the following statements, using a 10- point scale: 1 being strongly disagree and 10 being strongly agree. Total percentage may not equal 100 due to rounding the numbers to the nearest one. A zero indicates no response was given.

The average of those who agree with the expression, "Communication with employees is an inseperable part of other public relations functions" is 7,95. This high average is important as it shows that public relations executives regard communication with employees as an integral part of public relations. The average of those who agree with the expression, "The biggest share of employee communication work is spent for establishing the communication line from the employees towards senior management" is 5, 67. This shows a medial agreement. It means that, not much importance is paid to develop a communication line which flows from the employees towards senior management. Besides, the averages of those who agree with the expressions "My company views front-line managers as the primary information source for employees" is 7,52 and "My company uses employee communications to inform employees of the priorities of our business and why these priorities exist" is 7,59. The average of the statement "Our front-line managers are the tie between all actions and the corporate vision, mission and purpose" is 7, 08.

Such a high agreement reveals the fact that a vertical communication from the senior management towards employees is more supported and implemented. This also shows that senior managers are regarded as core information resources and within the process of information flow from resources to receivers a top-to-bottom communication is appreciated. At this point, another factor shall not be missed out: the average of the expression "In my company, communication among employees that have equal authority and responsibilities is encouraged" is 7,91. Besides, the average of the statement "In my company, communication among employees of uneven authorities and interunits is also encouraged" is 7,16. public relations executives have stated in attitude expressions that, communication among employees with equal authorities and responsibilities as well as employees of uneven authorities and inter units communication is established. This is important to determine the method of communication in the established communication line. A horizontal communication line is being established among those of uneven authorities and different units. In the communication method, senior management is still regarded as the resource of information regarding expectations and priorities.

The average of the statement, "My company uses communications to treat our employees like capable partners in an important undertaking in which their effort is crucial" is 7,44. The averages of those who agree with the statements "Senior management in my company is open to the contributions of employees" is 7,42, and "Senior management in my company is active in soliciting new ideas from employees" is 7,36. The fact that senior management uses communication to include employees in the business as skillful partners and encourage them to generate and offer ideas is another significant factor for us to specify the method and content of communication.

The average of those agree with the statement, "The majority of our employee communications is proactive" is 7,45; whereas the average for the expression "The majority of our employee communications is reactive" is 2,91. The difference between the averages of these attitude expressions is meaningful. In parallel with public relations executives' answers given to these expressions, it is seen that applied employee communication programs are proactive. This implication is satisfying Because, proactive communication is problem-preventive instead of problem-solving and it is the process of creating corporate opportunities and corporate image out of problems. In public relations, communication shall be continuous to reach planned goals and this depends on proactive employee communication. Reactive communication is used only in urgent circumstances for the foundation. An information flow from the foundation to the environment is provided, but the feedback is ignored. In reactive strategy, the important thing is how it has been said. (Akyürek, 2005:84)

Another important factor in the evaluation of attitude expressions is whether an evaluation of the effectiveness of employee communication is done. The average of the expression "My company uses research to monitor the effectiveness of its employee communications programs" is 2,88. This quite low average is important as it shows that such an evaluation is not carried out. Besides, they agree with the expression "To be successful, a company has to promote and nurture the capacity to improve and to innovate with employee communications" with the average 7,69. This means that, such an evaluation is deemed important by PR Executives to correct lacking and negative sides and to provide development, but such evaluation is still not carried out. The average of those who agree with the expression, "In my company, actions support what is written and said" is 7,30. The average of the expression "My company's formal employee communications program never deals with bad news" is 3,56 and the average of the expression "My company's formal employee communications program only deals with good news" is 3,28. These two attitude expressions support each other. It reveals the fact that bad news do not take place in the communication program established among the employees of internal communication line.

It is pleasing to see that expressions "As a communications executive, I am an integral member of the decision-making process in my company", and "In my company, internal communications is an integral part of the total quality management process" get 7,67 and 6,39 averages respectively, which were asked to be evaluated in order to specify internal communication positions of public relations executives and to see how much importance is paid by the management to internal communication. Today, foundations give place to public relations executives in the decision-making process and regard employee communication as an integral part of the total quality management. While examining the results of the survey, it shall not be forgotten that these public relations executives are highly experienced. But, still this result is pleasing. It shows that as days pass, public relations experts reach the positions they deserve. Again, the public relations executives agree with the expression "There is a positive correlation between effective communications and degree of employee commitment" with the average 7,63. This result shows their belief in the fact that employees' commitment to their company increases by effective communication.

<b>Table 2: The Dependent Variables- The Means of PR Executives' Attitudes Toward Employee Communications</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Internal employee communications is an integral part of my company's public relations/public affairs/communications function	64	7.95	1.25
The biggest share of employee communication work is spent for establishing the communication line from the employees towards senior management	64	5.67	1.16
In my company, communication among employees that have equal authority and responsibilities is encouraged	64	7.91	1.28
In my company, communication among employees of uneven authorities and interunits is also encouraged	64	7.16	1.55
My company uses employee communications to inform employees of the priorities of our business and why these priorities exist	64	7.59	1.16
My company uses communications to treat our employees like capable partners in an important undertaking in which their effort is crucial	64	7.44	1.28
Senior management in my company is active in soliciting new ideas from employees	64	7.36	1.40
Senior management in my company is open to the contributions of employees	64	7.42	1.33
The majority of our employee communications is proactive	64	7.45	1.44
The majority of our employee communications is reactive	64	2.91	1.41
In my company, actions support what is written and said	64	7.30	1.19
There is a positive correlation between effective communications and degree of employee commitment	64	7.63	1.05
My company views front-line managers as the primary information source for employees	64	7.52	1.14
My company trains front-line managers to make them effective facilitators of the communications process	64	7.16	1.31
Our front-line managers are the tie between all actions and the corporate vision, mission and purpose	64	7.08	1.55
My company uses research to monitor the effectiveness of its employee communications programs	64	2.88	1.45
To be successful, a company has to promote and nurture the capacity to improve and to innovate with employee communications	64	7.69	1.07
In my company, information always is delivered to employees in a timely manner	64	7.67	1.48
My company's employee communications process has the support of my company's senior management team	64	7.44	1.44
As a communications executive, I am an integral member of the decision-making process in my company	64	7.67	1.36
My company's formal employee communications program never deals with bad news	64	3.56	1.90
My company's formal employee communications program only deals with good news	64	3.28	1.73
In my company, internal communications is an integral part of the total quality management process	64	6.39	1.81

1 being strongly disagree and 10 being strongly agree

The following tables and results of analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests run on chosen variables with each of the other variables in the survey. The tables represent the ANOVA results with statistical significance of  $p < 0.05$  and supported by significant mean distributions. ANOVA's were run to examine the statistical significance between all the statement on the survey with the following survey statement which were treated as independent variable:

- What percent of your organization's employee communications is written?
- What percent of your organization's employee communications is electronic?



- What percent of your organization's employee communications is face-to-face?
- What percent of your organization's corporate communications performance is spent for employee communications?
- Has your internal communications program been developed with cultural diversity in mind?

Table 3 shows whether and how the 23 attitude expressions differ from another according to the level of face-to-face communication used in internal communication by the public relations executives. Those who state that face-to-face communication is less in their company, agree with the statement "The majority of our employee communications is proactive". Those who mark that face-to-face communication is more common in their company, agree with the expressions "The majority of our employee communications is reactive" and "In my company, information is always delivered to employees in a timely manner". This supports the difference between proactive-reactive communications. On the other hand, those who indicate that face-to-face communication is more common in their company, do not agree with expressions "My company's employee communications process has the support of my company's senior management team" and "public relations executive, I'm an integral member of the decision-making process in my company". By evaluating this result, it can be said that, they do not deem face-to-face communication as a method of communication. The more the level of face-to-face communication increases, the less the public relations executives agree with the statement "My Company's employee communications process has the support of my company's senior management team". Public relations executives feel to be an integral part of the upper management having important responsibilities, authorities and controlling the corporate communication formally. However, when the level of face-to-face communication increases, it can be concluded that they feel to lose this power and support.

The more the level of face-to-face communication increases the less the public relations executives agree with the statement "In my company, information always is delivered to employees in a timely manner". Face-to-face communication is a strategy mostly used in reactive communications and thus, it causes time constrains for public relations executives which would be difficult to manage and also limiting their power and authority.

Corporate communication experts of companies which prefer face-to-face communication less, agree more with the expression "In my company, information is always delivered to employees in a timely manner". Again, the result of the same expression is also valid for companies that prefer communication on the electronic media more. That is to say, either on the internet or via a written document, it is regarded more effective for the delivery of information in a timely manner. Actually, this is a surprising result, because face-to-face communication is faster, it saves time and more information can be given in a shorter time. But, companies that deliver information within a systematic communication process prefer proactive communication to face-to-face communication, which is urgent and actually takes a shorter time. This also supports the above evaluation. Also, in companies which prefer face-to-face communication, the number of those who agree with the expression "My company's formal employee communications program only deals with good news" is more.

Table 3: Attitudes according to face to face communication levels		N	Mean
Internal employee communications is an integral part of my company's public relations/public affairs/communications function	%0-25	43	8.14
	%26-50	18	7.61
	%51-75	3	7.33
The biggest share of employee communication work is spent for establishing the communication line from the employees towards senior management	%0-25	43	5.67
	%26-50	18	5.56
	%51-75	3	6.33
In my company, communication among employees that have equal authority and responsibilities is encouraged	%0-25	43	8.09
	%26-50	18	7.67
	%51-75	3	6.67
In my company, communication among employees of uneven authorities and interunits is also encouraged	%0-25	43	7.28
	%26-50	18	6.94
	%51-75	3	6.67
My company uses employee communications to inform employees of the priorities of our business and why these priorities exist	%0-25	43	7.72
	%26-50	18	7.39
	%51-75	3	7.00
My company uses communications to treat our employees like capable partners in an important undertaking in which their effort is crucial	%0-25	43	7.65
	%26-50	18	7.06
	%51-75	3	6.67
Senior management in my company is active in soliciting new ideas from employees	%0-25	43	7.60
	%26-50	18	6.89
	%51-75	3	6.67
Senior management in my company is open to the contributions of employees	%0-25	43	7.65
	%26-50	18	6.94
	%51-75	3	7.00
The majority of our employee communications is proactive*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	43	7.74
	%26-50 <sup>b</sup>	18	7.11
	%51-75 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.33
The majority of our employee communications is reactive*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	43	2.49
	%26-50 <sup>a,b</sup>	18	3.56
	%51-75 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.00
In my company, actions support what is written and said	%0-25	43	7.47
	%26-50	18	6.89
	%51-75	3	7.33
There is a positive correlation between effective communications and degree of employee commitment	%0-25	43	7.65
	%26-50	18	7.67
	%51-75	3	7.00
My company views front-line managers as the primary information source for employees	%0-25	43	7.51
	%26-50	18	7.56
	%51-75	3	7.33
My company trains front-line managers to make them effective facilitators of the communications process	%0-25	43	7.26
	%26-50	18	7.06
	%51-75	3	6.33
Our front-line managers are the tie between all actions and the corporate vision, mission and purpose	%0-25	43	7.23
	%26-50	18	6.72
	%51-75	3	7.00
My company uses research to monitor the effectiveness of its employee communications programs	%0-25	43	2.93
	%26-50	18	2.72
	%51-75	3	3.00
To be successful, a company has to promote and nurture the capacity to improve and to innovate with employee communications	%0-25	43	7.77
	%26-50	18	7.44
	%51-75	3	8.00
In my company, information always is delivered to employees in a timely manner*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	43	8.16
	%26-50 <sup>a,b</sup>	18	6.89
	%51-75 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.33
My company's employee communications process has the support of my company's senior management team*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	43	7.79
	%26-50 <sup>a,b</sup>	18	6.83
	%51-75 <sup>b</sup>	3	6.00
As a communications executive, I am an integral member of the decision-making process in my company	%0-25	43	7.95
	%26-50	18	7.17
	%51-75	3	6.67
My company's formal employee communications program never deals with bad news	%0-25	43	3.42
	%26-50	18	3.67
	%51-75	3	5.00
My company's formal employee communications program only deals with good news*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	43	2.84
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	18	3.89
	%51-75 <sup>b</sup>	3	6.00
In my company, internal communications is an integral part of the total quality management process	%0-25	43	6.60
	%26-50	18	6.06
	%51-75	3	5.33

\* p<.05, Anova Test, Cells in the same column with unlike superscripts differ at p<.05

Table 4 shows whether and how the 23 attitude expressions differ from another according to the level of written communication used in internal communication by the public relations executives. As seen, there is not any significance among the answers given to attitudes.

Table 5 shows whether and how the 23 attitude expressions differ from another according to the level of electronic communication used in internal communication by the public relations executives. There are significant differences between the answers of corporate communication executives who state that they prefer communication on electronic media. For example, they agree less with the expression "Employee communications is an integral part of my company's public relations/public affairs/communications function". They also agree less with the expressions "My company uses employee communications to inform employees of the priorities of our business and why these priorities exist" and "My company uses communications to treat our employees like capable partners in an important undertaking in which their effort is crucial". Though it is an interactive way of communication, e-communication is not deemed as effective and bi-directional as interpersonal communication. Actually, e-communication does not provide an efficient and a friendly effect, but it is effective in a reactive communication especially if the time is limited. The reason of such evaluation may be the fact that every aspect of e-communication is not used in employee communication effectively by public relations executives. More interactive applications increase the power of e-communication. But still, however it is not used efficiently enough and at its maximum potential (as for blogs, videoconferences, intranets, forums and etc.), e-mail is a common method for employee communication.

Furthermore, the answers given to both "The majority of our employee communications is proactive" and "The majority of our employee communications is reactive" statements indicate that electronic communication is seen to be a tool of reactive rather than proactive communication. Thus it can be concluded that electronic communication is mainly perceived as a tool of informal communication by public relations executives. This is also supported by the finding that mean agreement level to the statement "In my company, actions support what is written and said" significantly decreases as the electronic communication increases.

<b>Table 4: Attitudes according to written communication levels</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Internal employee communications is an integral part of my company's public relations/public affairs/communications function	%0-25	10	7.60
	%26-50	41	8.07
	%51-75	13	7.85
The biggest share of employee communication work is spent for establishing the communication line from the employees towards senior management	%0-25	10	5.90
	%26-50	41	5.63
	%51-75	13	5.62
In my company, communication among employees that have equal authority and responsibilities is encouraged	%0-25	10	7.60
	%26-50	41	8.00
	%51-75	13	7.85
In my company, communication among employees of uneven authorities and interunits is also encouraged	%0-25	10	6.80
	%26-50	41	7.37
	%51-75	13	6.77
My company uses employee communications to inform employees of the priorities of our business and why these priorities exist	%0-25	10	7.20
	%26-50	41	7.68
	%51-75	13	7.62
My company uses communications to treat our employees like capable partners in an important undertaking in which their effort is crucial	%0-25	10	7.00
	%26-50	41	7.59
	%51-75	13	7.31
Senior management in my company is active in soliciting new ideas from employees	%0-25	10	7.00
	%26-50	41	7.51
	%51-75	13	7.15
Senior management in my company is open to the contributions of employees	%0-25	10	7.10
	%26-50	41	7.63
	%51-75	13	7.00
The majority of our employee communications is proactive	%0-25	10	7.40
	%26-50	41	7.63
	%51-75	13	6.92
The majority of our employee communications is reactive	%0-25	10	3.20
	%26-50	41	2.71
	%51-75	13	3.31
In my company, actions support what is written and said	%0-25	10	7.10
	%26-50	41	7.37
	%51-75	13	7.23
There is a positive correlation between effective communications and degree of employee commitment	%0-25	10	7.60
	%26-50	41	7.73
	%51-75	13	7.31
My company views front-line managers as the primary information source for employees	%0-25	10	7.80
	%26-50	41	7.54
	%51-75	13	7.23
My company trains front-line managers to make them effective facilitators of the communications process	%0-25	10	6.90
	%26-50	41	7.24
	%51-75	13	7.08
Our front-line managers are the tie between all actions and the corporate vision, mission and purpose	%0-25	10	6.40
	%26-50	41	7.32
	%51-75	13	6.85
My company uses research to monitor the effectiveness of its employee communications programs	%0-25	10	2.80
	%26-50	41	2.88
	%51-75	13	2.92
To be successful, a company has to promote and nurture the capacity to improve and to innovate with employee communications	%0-25	10	7.40
	%26-50	41	7.76
	%51-75	13	7.69
In my company, information always is delivered to employees in a timely manner	%0-25	10	7.00
	%26-50	41	7.88
	%51-75	13	7.54
My company's employee communications process has the support of my company's senior management team	%0-25	10	6.90
	%26-50	41	7.56
	%51-75	13	7.46
As a communications executive, I am an integral member of the decision-making process in my company	%0-25	10	7.40
	%26-50	41	7.83
	%51-75	13	7.38
My company's formal employee communications program never deals with bad news	%0-25	10	2.70
	%26-50	41	3.61
	%51-75	13	4.08
My company's formal employee communications program only deals with good news	%0-25	10	3.30
	%26-50	41	3.07
	%51-75	13	3.92
In my company, internal communications is an integral part of the total quality management process	%0-25	10	6.10
	%26-50	41	6.54
	%51-75	13	6.15

\* p<.05, Anova Test, Cells in the same column with unlike superscripts differ at p<.05

The more the level of electronic communication increases the less the public relations executives agree with the statement, "In my company, communication among employees that have equal authority and responsibilities is encouraged. Thus electronic communication is not seen as a useful tool for formal horizontal communications. Besides, as the level of electronic communication increases, the public relations executives less agree that front-line managers are good catalyzators and connectors of the corporate communication which again indicates electronic communication is not seen as an effective tool for formal employee communication and perceived as a threat to their authority.

The significant decreases in the mean of the answers given to the following statements also support this conclusion:

- "In my company, information always is delivered to employees in a timely manner"
- "My company's employee communications process has the support of my company's senior management team"
- "As a communications executive, I am an integral member of the decision-making process in my company"

As a conclusion, as the level of electronic communication increases, the level of good news increases from the perspective of public relations executives. That means in the electronic communication process organizations tend to send more positive messages to their employees. Press releases about organizations achievements can be given as an example.

Table 6 shows whether and how the 23 attitude expressions differ from another according to the level of corporate communication performance which is spent for employee communication by the public relations executives. When the answers given to the question, "What percent of corporate communication performance is spent for employee communication?" are compared with the following attitude expressions:

- "My company uses employee communications to inform employees of the priorities of our business and why these priorities exist", "Senior management in my company is active in soliciting new ideas from employees",
- "The majority of our employee communications is proactive",
- "My company views front-line managers as the primary information source for employees",
- "In my company, information is always delivered to employees in a timely manner"

Table 5: Attitudes according to electronic communication levels		N	Mean
Internal employee communications is an integral part of my company's public relations/public affairs/communications function*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	8.09
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	8.04
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.67
The biggest share of employee communication work is spent for establishing the communication line from the employees towards senior management	%0-25	35	5.66
	%26-50	26	5.77
	%51-100	3	5.00
In my company, communication among employees that have equal authority and responsibilities is encouraged*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	8.03
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	8.00
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.67
In my company, communication among employees of uneven authorities and interunits is also encouraged	%0-25	35	7.43
	%26-50	26	7.00
	%51-100	3	5.33
My company uses employee communications to inform employees of the priorities of our business and why these priorities exist*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	7.69
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	7.69
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.67
My company uses communications to treat our employees like capable partners in an important undertaking in which their effort is crucial*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	7.66
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	7.38
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.33
Senior management in my company is active in soliciting new ideas from employees	%0-25	35	7.60
	%26-50	26	7.19
	%51-100	3	6.00
Senior management in my company is open to the contributions of employees	%0-25	35	7.63
	%26-50	26	7.31
	%51-100	3	6.00
The majority of our employee communications is proactive*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	7.63
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	7.46
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.33
The majority of our employee communications is reactive*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	2.71
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	2.92
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.00
In my company, actions support what is written and said*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	7.31
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	7.46
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.67
There is a positive correlation between effective communications and degree of employee commitment	%0-25	35	7.63
	%26-50	26	7.77
	%51-100	3	6.33
My company views front-line managers as the primary information source for employees	%0-25	35	7.51
	%26-50	26	7.54
	%51-100	3	7.33
My company trains front-line managers to make them effective facilitators of the communications process*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	7.29
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	7.19
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.33
Our front-line managers are the tie between all actions and the corporate vision, mission and purpose*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	7.17
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	7.31
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	4.00
My company uses research to monitor the effectiveness of its employee communications programs	%0-25	35	2.71
	%26-50	26	3.12
	%51-100	3	2.67
To be successful, a company has to promote and nurture the capacity to improve and to innovate with employee communications	%0-25	35	7.77
	%26-50	26	7.73
	%51-100	3	6.33
In my company, information always is delivered to employees in a timely manner*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	7.83
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	7.85
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	4.33
My company's employee communications process has the support of my company's senior management team*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	7.66
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	7.46
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	4.67
As a communications executive, I am an integral member of the decision-making process in my company*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	7.89
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	7.62
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.67
My company's formal employee communications program never deals with bad news	%0-25	35	3.34
	%26-50	26	3.88
	%51-100	3	3.33
My company's formal employee communications program only deals with good news*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	35	2.97
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	26	3.42
	%51-100 <sup>b</sup>	3	5.67
In my company, internal communications is an integral part of the total quality management process	%0-25	35	6.66
	%26-50	26	6.23
	%51-100	3	4.67

\*p<.05, Anova Test, Cells in the same column with unlike superscripts differ at p<.05

It is found out that they agree less with the above mentioned statements. Public relations executives, who state that they spend a rather big part of corporate communication performance for employee communication, have more duty, responsibility and workload in terms of employee communication. because senior management does not take an effective place in the communication process and undertake the duty of core information resource. Also, senior management is not active in encouraging employees to generate new ideas. Communication among employees and units that have equal authority and responsibility is not supported. The biggest part of employee communication work is spent for establishing a communication line from the employess towards senior management. Those who establish this communication line are again public relations executives.

Table 7 shows whether and how the 23 attitude expressions differ from another according to whether the internal communications program has been developed with cultural diversity in mind or not. When answers given to question, "Is your in-house communication program is developed by taking corporate cultural difference into consideration?" are compared with other attitude expressions, the following results are found: "My company's formal employee communications program never deals with bad news." No significant differences are found between these attitude expressions. This situation may be the result of the fact that in Turkey, corporations' employee communication culture is evaluated in the same way. In the Turkish culture, bad news does not take place in employee communication line and generally a top-to-bottom communication line is established. Besides, public relations executives who declare that employee communication program is developed by taking corporate culture into account, agree more with the following statements. These may be regarded as statements that shape employee communication culture. Basically, the structure of employee communication, its flow and the extent of encouraging employees to communicate are related with the structure of corporate culture. It is possible to divide formal communication flow into two, as vertical and horizontal. Vertical communication is commonly used for transmitting corporate culture elements to employees. Horizontal communication is type of communication among employees of the same position or authority. It is important when there is need for high coordination and integration. (Erşen, Öz-Alp, Seçim, Bir, 1991:31)

<b>Table 6: Attitudes according to electronic communication levels</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Internal employee communications is an integral part of my company's public relations/public affairs/communications function	%0-25	22	8.05
	%26-50	37	8.03
	%51-75	5	7.00
The biggest share of employee communication work is spent for establishing the communication line from the employees towards senior management	%0-25	22	5.59
	%26-50	37	5.57
	%51-75	5	6.80
In my company, communication among employees that have equal authority and responsibilities is encouraged	%0-25	22	7.95
	%26-50	37	8.00
	%51-75	5	7.00
In my company, communication among employees of uneven authorities and interunits is also encouraged	%0-25	22	7.55
	%26-50	37	7.03
	%51-75	5	6.40
My company uses employee communications to inform employees of the priorities of our business and why these priorities exist	%0-25	22	7.73
	%26-50	37	7.68
	%51-75	5	6.40
My company uses communications to treat our employees like capable partners in an important undertaking in which their effort is crucial	%0-25	22	7.64
	%26-50	37	7.46
	%51-75	5	6.40
Senior management in my company is active in soliciting new ideas from employees	%0-25	22	7.68
	%26-50	37	7.30
	%51-75	5	6.40
Senior management in my company is open to the contributions of employees	%0-25	22	7.68
	%26-50	37	7.43
	%51-75	5	6.20
The majority of our employee communications is proactive*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	22	7.82
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	37	7.46
	%51-75 <sup>b</sup>	5	5.80
The majority of our employee communications is reactive*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	22	2.68
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	37	2.84
	%51-75 <sup>b</sup>	5	4.40
In my company, actions support what is written and said	%0-25	22	7.36
	%26-50	37	7.32
	%51-75	5	6.80
There is a positive correlation between effective communications and degree of employee commitment	%0-25	22	7.73
	%26-50	37	7.68
	%51-75	5	6.80
My company views front-line managers as the primary information source for employees*	%0-25 <sup>a</sup>	22	7.86
	%26-50 <sup>a</sup>	37	7.49
	%51-75 <sup>b</sup>	5	6.20
My company trains front-line managers to make them effective facilitators of the communications process	%0-25	22	7.50
	%26-50	37	7.11
	%51-75	5	6.00
Our front-line managers are the tie between all actions and the corporate vision, mission and purpose	%0-25	22	7.09
	%26-50	37	7.19
	%51-75	5	6.20
My company uses research to monitor the effectiveness of its employee communications programs	%0-25	22	2.86
	%26-50	37	2.81
	%51-75	5	3.40
To be successful, a company has to promote and nurture the capacity to improve and to innovate with employee communications	%0-25	22	7.68
	%26-50	37	7.81
	%51-75	5	6.80
In my company, information always is delivered to employees in a timely manner	%0-25	22	7.82
	%26-50	37	7.76
	%51-75	5	6.40
My company's employee communications process has the support of my company's senior management team	%0-25	22	7.55
	%26-50	37	7.49
	%51-75	5	6.60
As a communications executive, I am an integral member of the decision-making process in my company	%0-25	22	8.05
	%26-50	37	7.57
	%51-75	5	6.80
My company's formal employee communications program never deals with bad news	%0-25	22	3.18
	%26-50	37	3.73
	%51-75	5	4.00
My company's formal employee communications program only deals with good news	%0-25	22	2.82
	%26-50	37	3.38
	%51-75	5	4.60
In my company, internal communications is an integral part of the total quality management process	%0-25	22	6.32
	%26-50	37	6.46
	%51-75	5	6.20

\*p<.05, Anova Test, Cells in the same column with unlike superscripts differ at p<.05



**Table 7: Attitudes according to whether the the internal communications program has been developed with cultural diversity in mind or not**

		N	Mean
Internal employee communications is an integral part of my company's public relations/public affairs/communications function*	Yes	23	8.65
	No	41	7.56
The biggest share of employee communication work is spent for establishing the communication line from the employees towards senior management	Yes	23	5.74
	No	41	5.63
In my company, communication among employees that have equal authority and responsibilities is encouraged*	Yes	23	8.57
	No	41	7.54
In my company, communication among employees of uneven authorities and interunits is also encouraged*	Yes	23	8.04
	No	41	6.66
My company uses employee communications to inform employees of the priorities of our business and why these priorities exist*	Yes	23	8.13
	No	41	7.29
My company uses communications to treat our employees like capable partners in an important undertaking in which their effort is crucial*	Yes	23	8.17
	No	41	7.02
Senior management in my company is active in soliciting new ideas from employees*	Yes	23	8.22
	No	41	6.88
Senior management in my company is open to the contributions of employees*	Yes	23	8.17
	No	41	7.00
The majority of our employee communications is proactive*	Yes	23	8.13
	No	41	7.07
The majority of our employee communications is reactive*	Yes	23	2.30
	No	41	3.24
In my company, actions support what is written and said*	Yes	23	7.78
	No	41	7.02
There is a positive correlation between effective communications and degree of employee commitment*	Yes	23	8.17
	No	41	7.32
My company views front-line managers as the primary information source for employees*	Yes	23	8.00
	No	41	7.24
My company trains front-line managers to make them effective facilitators of the communications process*	Yes	23	7.78
	No	41	6.80
Our front-line managers are the tie between all actions and the corporate vision, mission and purpose*	Yes	23	7.87
	No	41	6.63
My company uses research to monitor the effectiveness of its employee communications programs*	Yes	23	3.65
	No	41	2.44
To be successful, a company has to promote and nurture the capacity to improve and to innovate with employee communications*	Yes	23	8.09
	No	41	7.46
In my company, information always is delivered to employees in a timely manner*	Yes	23	8.17
	No	41	7.39
My company's employee communications process has the support of my company's senior management team*	Yes	23	8.17
	No	41	7.02
As a communications executive, I am an integral member of the decision-making process in my company*	Yes	23	8.39
	No	41	7.27
My company's formal employee communications program never deals with bad news	Yes	23	3.26
	No	41	3.73
My company's formal employee communications program only deals with good news	Yes	23	2.78
	No	41	3.56
In my company, internal communications is an integral part of the total quality management process*	Yes	23	7.26
	No	41	5.90

\* p&lt;.05, T-Test

When corporate communication applications are structured in the required way (horizontal, vertical, top-to-bottom or bottom-to-top), there will be no need for public relations executives to spend much of their performance to establish these communication lines. This situation may reveal the fact that employee communication work is still not regarded important by the senior management. However, the need to build a strong manager communication network, one that makes every supervisor at every level accountable for

communicating effectively with his or her employees. The needs to be more than just job related information and should included key business and public issues affecting the total organization (Cutlip, Scott M. 1999:288).

It is seen that even among the most successful 100 firms of Turkey, vertical communication is still more commonly used. In corporate communication, planned implementation and management of employee communication includes gossips and rumours that stem from lack of information. This is why, a company shall, first of all, introduce its corporate identity to its employees. In order to reach these goals, with its bi-directional communication feature, public relations transmit information regarding production, finance, technology, innovations provided, management structure and policy of the company, while employees may distribute various needs and demands to the management. The importance of employee communication lies in bottom-to-top communication besides top-to-bottom, in other words information flow from the management to employees (Akyürek, 2005:86).

## **CONCLUSION**

As the “Intellectual Capital” has increased in importance, the new information economy has led business managers realise their most important assets are their employees. “Employee communications” then, has become a key way to sustain and nurture that intectual capital. For years, employee communications was considered less important than the glamorous and presuambly more “critical” functions of media, government, and investor relations. Today, with fewer employees expected to do more work, staff members are calling for improvement- for more of a voice in decision making. Just about every researcher who keep tabs on employee opinion finds evidence of a “trust gap” that exists between management and workers. To decrease the gap, employee communications play a pivotal role (Seitel, F. P. 2010 :232).

Between most succesful 500 organizations selected by Capital Business magazine, as a sampling the first 100 organizations are selected. As a result of the study, it can be seen that upper level corporate communication executives of first 100 companies, mostly prefer written communication with their employees. With the rapid growth of information technologies, as a way of effective communication, the executives started to prefer electronic communication (e-mail,etc.) Formal communication methods are mostly preferred.

As an immediate feedback is not received, written corporate communication requires a proactive structure. There is no way to understand how many of the messages are received and read by employees. Its effect may not be measured as in-house communication efforts are not evaluated. In fact, it is important for corporate communication to create occasions where employees may meet managers and discuss their views and exchange ideas regarding common goals. In time of a crisis, face-to-face communication in reactive communication strategies is essential for immediate actions.

A succesful management of information flow from employees towards managers (bottom-to-top) is important as well as flow from managers towards employees (top-to-bottom). In-house communication is regarded as an integral part of corporate communication. They declared that in-house communication is as important as corporate communication and that they spend half of the firm's communication performance for in-house communication.

Again, a striking result is that they stated that they have not established an in-house communication structure in conformity with the corporate culture. It is used as a means of spreading corporate culture, but they have not improved in-house communication. Because senior managers do not spend efforts for the development of in-house communication, corporate communcation experts spend most of their performance for improving the structure of in-house communication.

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