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MANAGING COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES
IN AN ORGANIZATION THAT WORKS IN A HYBRID WAY

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction (Including the problem of the research):
Today, a large number of Lithuanian organizations carry out activities combining both contact and remote working methods. It is believed that contact work helps employees to become more involved in the activities of the organization, strengthens the sense of closeness, promotes cooperation. Meanwhile, in remote work employees are more focused on individual tasks, thus make them faster and more efficiently. Each of these methods requires different communications, therefore combining these methods is a new challenge for managers.
Problem: how to manage communication challenges when some employees in the organization work in contact method and others remotely?
The aim of research: to reveal aspects of managing communication challenges in an organization that works in a hybrid way.
Objectives: to identify communication challenges in organizations that work in a hybrid way; to reveal the impact of these challenges on the organization's operations; to provide guidance to managers on managing these challenges.
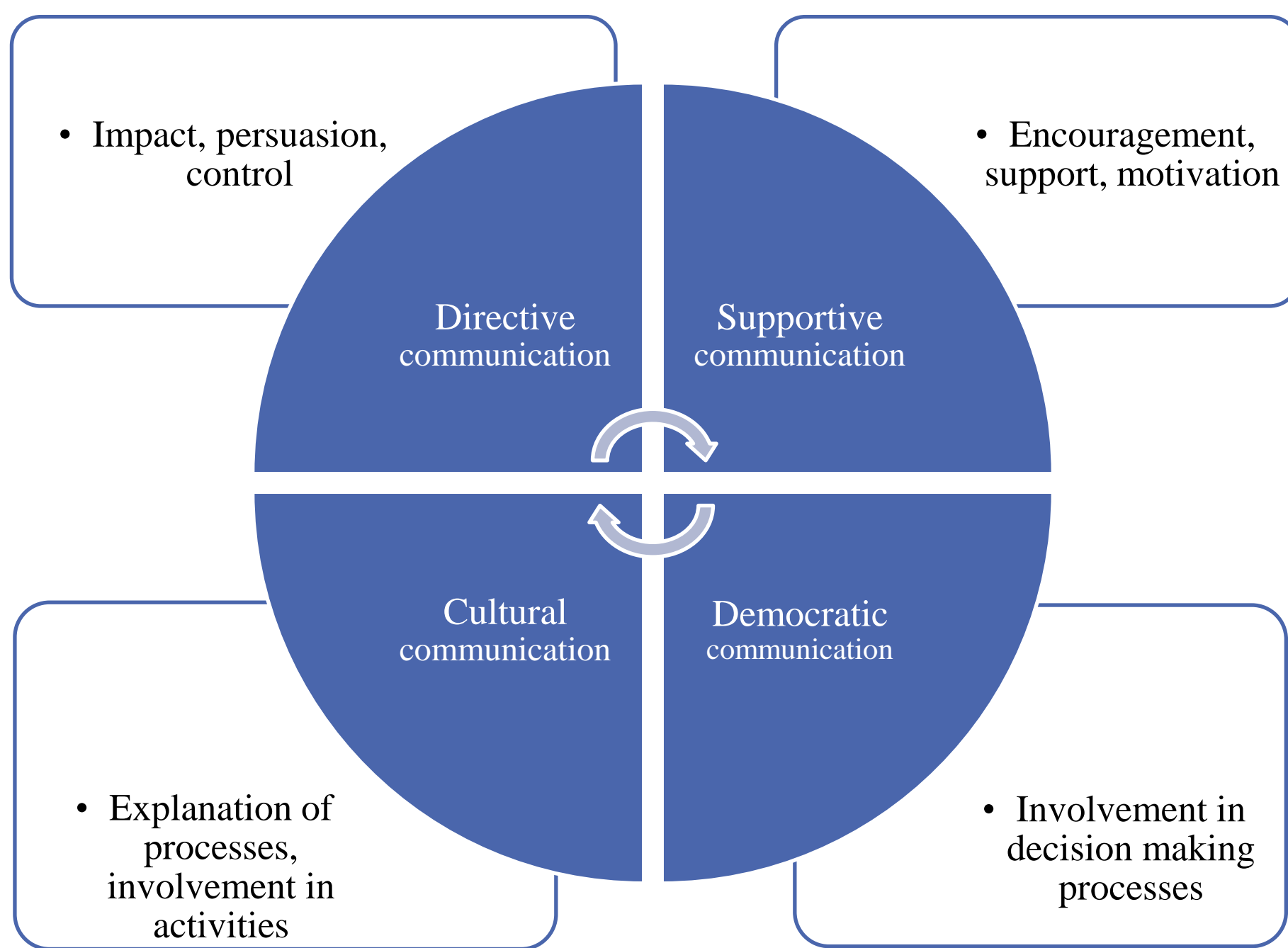**The methods of the research:**
The following methods are used in the work: descriptive method, comparative method, analysis of scientific literature, semi-structured interview, and standardized questionnaires. The study was conducted in a manufacturing company. 92 respondents took part in the anonymous survey, which accounted for 97% of all employees in the company.

Theoretical background

The employee's sense of belonging to the organization is enhanced by conscious communication that is stable and 'rhythmical', expressing concern and trust. There are four main types of communication that relate to different objectives and impact effects (*see Figure 1*)

Figure 1. Types and purposes of communication

- Impact, persuasion, control
- Encouragement, support, motivation
- Directive communication
- Supportive communication
- Cultural communication
- Democratic communication
- Explanation of processes, involvement in activities
- Involvement in decision making processes

It is emphasised that employees understand easier the communciation, in which:
- the messages are distinctive, consistent and / or contractual;
- manager's opinion and personal interpretations are being disclosed;
- diversity and the expression of opinion in a ''bottom-up'' way is encouraged.
It is emphasized that:
- implicit (Tacit) information is usually lost when communicating remotely;
- direct communication is indispensable for providing complex information;
- some tasks are much more convenient to perform remotely, but others require a natural social environment and direct contact.

Main findings

The purpose of the anonymous employee questionnaires was to reveal: 1) the need for communication that employees consider a priority; 2) acceptable communication methods for employees; 3) prerequisites for effective feedback communication; 4) significant barriers affecting (a) understanding and (b) acceptance of the communicated information (*see Table 1*)

Table 1. Analysis of the factors determining the nature of communication

The nature of communication and its factors	Directive communication	Supportive communication	Cultural communication	Democratic communication
The need for communication (1)	53%	6%	38%	3%
The method of communication (2)	Remote communication	Contact communication	Remote communication	Contact communication
Effective feedback (3)	-	51%	-	48%
Obstacles for understanding the information (4a)	Inconsistency of communication 39 %	Lack of communication 12 %	Inconsistency of communication 30 %	Excess communication 19 %
Obstacles for accepting the information (4b)	Technological disruption 39 %	-	Technological disruption 15 %	Lack of competence 46 %

It was revealed that:
- employees lack communication that helps to understand the changed operating rules (53%) and explain the impact of these rules on operational efficiency (38%);
- communication revealing business processes and rules could be provided by means of distance communication;
- employees expect to develop motivating and supportive communication through contact.
Significant barriers to information acceptance and comprehension have been identified as:
- Inconsistency of information (69 %), its lack (12 %) and surplus (19 %) ;
- technological disruption (54 %);
- lack of competence of employees (46 %).

MAIN RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Communication challenges in hybrid organizations that were revealed follow as:
- the identification of communication relevant to employees;
- the methods of communication and their coordination;
- the efficiency of feedback;
- interferences with the understanding and accepting of communicated information.
The mentioned challenges affect:
- the identity of the employees with the organization;
- the involvement of the employee in the activities of the organization;
- the resilience of workers;
- the organizational resilience.

Below are provided tips for managers on managing communication challenges:

CHALLENGES		REMOCENDATIONS
Directive and cultural communication	→	Remote communication method
Supportive and democratic communication	→	Contact communication method
Effective feedback	→	Contact communication method
Consistency of communication	→	Elimination of conflicting provisions
Interference with remote means of communication	→	Preventive monitoring and updating
Staff competence	→	Learning practices in organization