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Internal Communication as a Tool for Stakeholder-Organization Identification

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ABSTRACT

Identification has long been considered to be one of the main concepts in organizational behavior. Fortunately, organizational identification has also shifted into marketing and communication literature. Recent streams of marketing literature suggest that organizational identification may be a key to connecting employees and consumers to an organization on much deeper level than any other relationship known before. Due to the possible impact of customer-organizational identification on performance, marketing scholars have become increasingly interested in possible advantages of this relevant construct. Identification with an organization is popular in both management and marketing research as the means of fostering a relationship between an employee, the customer, and the organization in anticipation of retaining both groups of stakeholders.

To increase organizational performance, researchers suggest focusing on multiple stakeholders. Since employees who interact with consumers can impact consumers' perceptions and their behaviors, it is important to initially focus on employees. This holds especially true because in our current era where most businesses are mainly service-oriented as opposed to goods-oriented, a high quality interaction between employees and consumers is likely to allow organizations to foster customer (and other stakeholder)-organization identification.

With the immense amount of research in different disciplines related to organizational identification, it is crucial to find a common ground and develop a comprehensive model in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomena and clear up misconceptions between the fields. In that respect, this paper attempts to review and combine the existing concepts related to organizational identification from different disciplines heavily relying on the relationship between employee-organization and customer-organization identification.

This paper attempts to integrate and extend the existing marketing models and suggest new insights by introducing communication as an influential aspect of stakeholder relations management with an emphasis on employees and internal communication. The rationale is that communication may affect identification with the organization because group norms and values are necessary for social identity development and can only be taken into consideration by an individual if they are communicated.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Ania Izabela Rynarzewska received her PhD from The Florida State University in August 2012. Her degree is in Communication with emphasis in Marketing and Quantitative tools. Her research focuses on stakeholder relations (employees, customers and suppliers) and means of increasing organization's effectiveness. Additional topics include organizational crisis and sports marketing.