

COMMUNICATION-MANAGERIAL TOOL IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

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Abstract: *In the current context of a constantly evolving information age, emerging technological and information advances have brought about changes in many fields, including agriculture, introducing new features, based on a progressive vision that dramatically transforms the way agricultural enterprises operate in the 21st century. Even if the emphasis is on improving the various nutritional, breeding and breeding programs, the farm employee is in fact the bridge, being responsible for the successful implementation of research in order to streamline production processes in agriculture. In this case, communication becomes a key factor in any agricultural operation, guaranteeing success, whether we are talking about training or motivating employees, or the implementation of new technologies or practices.*

Key words: *communication, agricultural production, agricultural communication, agricultural processes*

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays a vital role in Romanian culture, it has a traditionalist image, with the image of the iconic farmer standing in the tractor or digging. While some Romanian farmers are stuck in subsistence farming, making great physical efforts to earn a living and feed their families, a considerable proportion enjoy the fruits of modern technology [2,12]. At the same time, the communication industry has grown steadily in recent decades, although this rise has not particularly affected the agricultural sector, there is an opportunity to develop this concept of communication in agriculture, an area of expertise developed in other European countries and beyond [13]. Communication in the field of agriculture was born, as an independent branch, since the 1800s, due to the primary need to exchange ideas about good practices to farming communities that needed to generate considerable, higher yields, but faced various issues such as: temperature fluctuations, climate change, animal nutrition, etc [3]. In this system, the information obtained from the research undertaken could be transmitted through various radio programs, thus reaching the farming communities. Today, however, due to the ongoing fluctuations in the distribution of information through various media channels, coupled with the rapid expansion of technology and high demand for food, there are more and more controversies regarding interpersonal relationships, human health, animal welfare [10,11]. Therefore, communication in the field of agriculture, as a separate field, it is essential in areas such as: efficient human resource management, public dialogue, agricultural policy development and research. Regardless of the size of the farm, communication must be seen as a foundation in the agricultural business, because once an efficient communication structure is implemented, all related parts of human resource management, crop management, and increasing employee job satisfaction will be easy [4,8]. As an overview, in order to establish a plan for effective communication, an initial step would be to remove communication barriers and misjudgments that could have been generated for the farm [15]. The study, understanding and application of methods and processes of verbal and non-verbal communication will help all bodies involved in the actual work process to relate to each other, improve farm production, thus increasing both production and employee satisfaction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methods and materials applied in this work are meant to analyze the role of communication in the agricultural production processes. The data taken from bibliography were confronted with the data from national and international statistics. The validity of our research is based on some theoretical documentation based on bibliographic resources in the fields of communication, sociology, logic and agriculture.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Due to the fact that there is a lot of controversy on food, agriculture and the environment, effective communication makes any agricultural company use both the scientific basis and the skills needed to translate all the information of any kind of public. Any actor involved in the production process must establish a productive dialogue with his audience, explain the process by which he reaches the cup of coffee he orders in the restaurant or the bottle of milk he buys from the shelf of the hypermarket. . As an area of study in its own right, communication in agriculture combines two major concepts of agriculture and communication. To emphasize this idea, we used the Venn diagram [6] (Figure 1), a tool used to illustrate the intersection of two sets, in our case the two concepts of agriculture and communication.

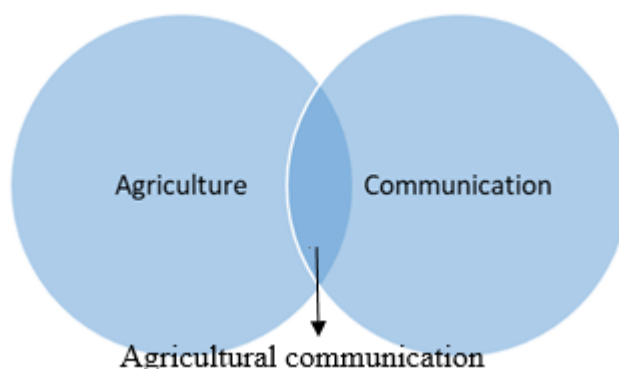


Figure 1. The syllogism of communication in agriculture

In order to maintain a positive communication climate and segment the controversies related to the agricultural system, a two-way communication between researchers, farmers, consumers and government officials is effective. Researchers are the ones who study the phenomena in agriculture, whether it is about agricultural practices, land sustainability or about improving the production processes in agriculture. It is for this reason that good communication from researchers to farmers is needed, if farmers know and understand the results of the research, the problems of agricultural productivity will surely be solved.

Equally important is the communication between farmers and researchers. Farmers are the ones who have valuable experience, so we can say that researchers can not develop ideas to improve different agricultural practices if they do not first understand the mechanisms of farmers' own farms, and why farmers cultivate as they do. In order to develop agricultural systems, it is imperative to integrate research into the basic knowledge of a simple farmer [16]. This process of integrating knowledge can sometimes be difficult due to the lack of experience of researchers on farms, all based on differences in status, otherwise these two factors are a major barrier to communication.

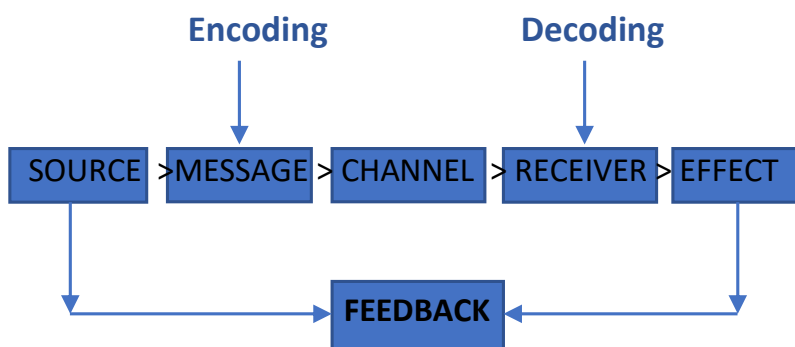


Figure 2. Communication model developed by Berlo

Source: Baker, 1990 [1]

If we are talking about effective communication between researchers, farmers, consumers and civil servants, we must also address Berlo's communication model (Figure 2) which helps to increase the efficiency of communication [5,7]. He emphasized the relationship between source and receiver and suggested that the more the knowledge and communication skills of sources and receivers grow, the more efficiently the message will be encoded and decoded. Berlo was also aware of the importance of the culture in which communication takes place, the attitudes of broadcasters and receivers, and the choice of channel. The following models emphasize the transactional nature of processes and how individuals, groups, and organizations construct their meanings and goals. Today, the model is more complex due to new media and high-speed, multi-directional communications. However, the core components continue to persist, especially in formal communications. Organizational leaders and communication specialists first develop strategies to achieve their goals, then build relevant messages that they convey through various channels to stimulate communication with employees and members of the organization. This interactive model of effective communication increases the ability of farmers to find relevant solutions to the problems they face, because Berlo states that it is necessary for the sender (source) to know not only the message but also the receiver (audience).

Communication from farmer to farmer is important and necessary at the same time, in order to increase product quality and competitiveness. Research clearly shows that most farmers adopt new farming practices after hearing from other farmers about their success. Apart from the fact that it would be useful to organize workshops in which farmers share their experiences and learn from each other, a good communication link between farmers would be necessary in order to propose and take collective decisions that could have beneficial effects on sustainable agriculture .

Communication between civil servants and farmers and vice versa is also very important. There is an interdependent relationship between these two actors, because the regulations given by the government, transmitted by civil servants to farmers, will only have an impact if they comply with the requirements and needs of farmers. And corroborated by the communication relationship with those who consume the products is important. Manufacturers need to be transparent, to provide real information about the product, because often the natural products of farmers may not have the same aesthetic appearance as that of products with a high chemical content. Thus, if consumers refuse to buy the products or, on the contrary, pay a low price for them, small producers cannot survive in the market. External factors in agriculture are often common and cannot be controlled by farmers, and even more so they can cause great financial difficulties: climate factors, fluctuations in market prices which can lead to stressful experiences in agricultural

business. Tensions and worries can arise between employees, as they could lose their jobs, thus the production will decrease considerably. Maintaining good communication and seeking social support can help producers get through difficult times.

The key concept of all the communication relations mentioned above is represented by the types of communication that take place between these pillars of communication: formal and informal communication. Maintaining good communication and seeking social support can help producers get through difficult times. The key concept of all the communication relations mentioned above is represented by the types of communication that take place between these pillars of communication: formal and informal communication.

Formal communication is increasingly focused on the needs and problems of recipients. Employees also communicate informally with each other inside and outside the organization through fast communications. Thus we can distinguish between formal communication that takes place when messages are transmitted on predefined channels, and informal communication, which in fact takes place in parallel with formal communication, takes place when the exchange of information takes place outside the official communication channels. This informal type is based on affective criteria, common interests, colloquial language and often makes a significant contribution to streamlining communication between employees and knowledge of the facts within the agricultural business. On the other hand, formal communication is imposed by the structure of the organization, using communication channels pre-established by the company's management [14]. The deficiency of this type of communication can cause damage to the agricultural business in terms of employee efficiency and lack of coordination in relation to work tasks and the creation of a negative image on the outside. Formal communication can take place in three directions: vertical, horizontal and diagonal. Vertical communication can in turn be ascending (bottom-up) and descending (top-down). Using bottom-up communication, employees have the chance to communicate to their superiors a personal feedback on the positive and negative aspects that influence their activity in the company. Unlike uplink communication, in which the communication is made from subordinate to superior, in the case of top-down communication this is done from the hierarchically higher level to the lower hierarchical level [6]. This communication provides a flow of information on certain instructions, regulations and responsibilities.

Horizontal communication is that which takes place between similar hierarchical levels, between departments, or between persons with similar functions, based on a functional and cooperative character. The last type of formal communication is the diagonal one, which refers to a direct communication between employees in various hierarchical positions. This type of communication encourages direct relations between a superior and a subordinate, ensuring that there are no distortions of information or filtering.

Whether we are talking about formal or informal communication, in both cases social relationships develop in the workplace, due to the need for interactions between individuals. In the following we will summarize the dynamics of the most common relationships at work: the relationships between colleagues, the relationships between the superior and subordinates and also the relationship with customers [7,13].

As in any organization, in an agricultural business, you can connect social relationships with friends and co-workers, especially if they work in the same department, share common knowledge, and spend most of their professional time together. In most cases, an employee is influenced at work by the relationships he establishes with various people he comes in contact with, and despite the fact that these relationships are beneficial, they can also have negative effects. The reason is based on the two dimensions of both social order (personal relationship) and task-oriented dimension (professional relationship)

that are often taken care of can conflict with each other. This is not only true in the relationship of friends with colleagues, but also in the relationship between superior and subordinate. The same tensions can occur, thus causing an imbalance in the two dimensions, so both sides must keep the proportions balanced (Table 1.).

Table 1.

Maintaining the balance between the social dimension and the task-oriented dimension.

What?	Why?	How?
Delimit exactly the boundaries of the social and task-oriented dimensions.	So that potential conflicts between the two dimensions can be easily managed in social relations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set priorities and rules of operation from the beginning. ➤ Resolve conflict situations with sincerity.

Source: Kory Floid, 2013 [8]

The same principle is valid in the social relations with customers or suppliers, with the mention that here, in addition to the two dimensions, the part of professional ethics also intervenes [9]. Friendships like this can often cause ethical problems due to possible tensions that arise along the way. Both parties, both customers and employees have expectations, as an employee to provide a quality product or service, and as a customer to complete the financial transaction in a timely manner. If one of the two parties does not fulfill its functions, the social relationship will certainly be affected [11].

CONCLUSIONS

Whether we are talking about social, economic, religious, political or educational development, communication plays an important role, thus becoming a powerful managerial tool in the development of agricultural processes. The communication process involves a large number of actors who actively participate in the development and maintenance of social relations from farmers, to researchers, civil servants, or in other words colleagues, managers and clients. By creating strong communication between all these communicators, many changes can be made, including the acquisition of new skills to find the best solutions to major agricultural problems: the sustainability of current agricultural systems, consequences and alternative solutions.

Communication strategies focus on the perceptions of the participants in the communication process, which is why both the sender and the receiver must perform several functions simultaneously, in addition to their own ability to perceive the flow of information: to facilitate dialogue and exchange of ideas within the group. , the development of a two-way communication process adopting one of the three types of formal communication (vertical, horizontal, diagonal) and the objective moderation of discussions, with the possibility to create opportunities for continuous reversibility of roles in the communication process.

Undoubtedly, the communication provides support for initiatives to develop agricultural processes with a major impact on community participation in the development of Romanian agriculture.

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