



## Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VI

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

6. Integrate strategies of communication for managing organizational performance.
  - 6.1. Analyze the communication strategy of a chosen organization.
  - 6.2. Explain how to integrate the communication strategy of a chosen organization.

## Reading Assignment

In order to access the following resource(s), click the link(s) below:

Kaplan, R. S. (2001). Strategic performance measurement and management in nonprofit organizations. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 11(3), 354-370. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=5006650&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Krovi, R., Chandra, A., & Rajagopalan, B. (2003). Information flow parameters for managing organizational processes. *Communications of the ACM*, 46(2), 77-82. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=12497727&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Click [here](#) to view the Unit VI Presentation.

Click [here](#) to view the Unit VI Presentation transcript.

## Unit Lesson

### Introduction

Many organizations only appraise organizational performance at the end of the fiscal year, but numerous experts believe that it needs to be continuously assessed and evaluated. The analysis of organizational performance focuses on how goals set by the organization have been translated into results, not just by individual employees but also by teams and the organization as a whole. If an organizational performance analysis is conducted on a regular basis, managers and employees can evaluate both individual and organizational performance issues and then develop a strategy to resolve the issues.

Krovi, Chandra, and Rajagopalan (2003) believe that managing the flow of information in an organization (and not just the information itself) is a key element to improving business efficiency. They also believe that organizations are often unprepared in this regard and need to develop a strategy to measure and report information. Setting up a strategy of communication for the organizational performance analysis will help to manage the process effectively.

In "Strategic Performance Measurement and Management in Nonprofit Organizations," Robert Kaplan (2001) describes strategy as equally focused on what an organization does and what it does not do. It is a crucial step in the management of any organization. By creating a strategic plan for communication, the organization can guide fundamental decisions and actions that shape the organization, what it does, and why it does it.

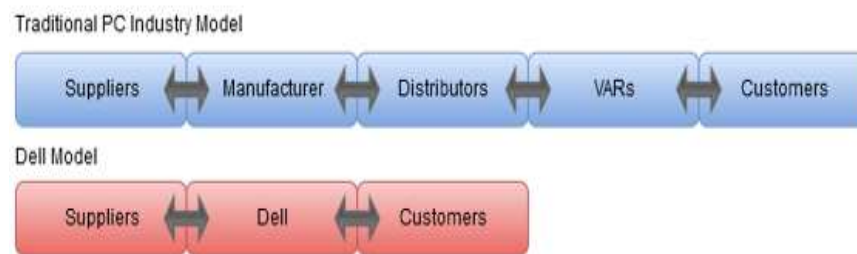
Kaplan (2001) believes that many organizations have difficulty in defining strategy because of a poor planning process that includes measuring initiatives rather than objectives and failing to set priorities. Although organizations may value employee input, there is a disconnect when trying to communicate these suggestions into a coherent strategy. Most strategy documents do not focus on the outcomes the organization is trying to achieve. Kaplan (2001) explains that there must be a clear statement of strategy right from the

start to measure the performance an organization is attempting to achieve. The strategy statement helps eliminate uncertainty and misunderstandings about objectives and methods while, at the same time, allowing employees to focus on the mission. Clear communication through the consistent use of the strategy statement is a key aspect of success.

Without an emphasis on clear communication, difficulties can occur when organizations attempt to utilize the strategy statement. This can be viewed as a continuous loop that is fraught with potential areas of failure; in order to improve performance, the organization needs to develop a strategy to measure and report information. Since the organization may not be prepared, there is a potential disconnect in the communication process when developing and implementing the strategy; the strategy may not focus on the outcomes the organization wants to achieve. Breakdowns in workplace communication can directly impact profitability, efficiency, and effectiveness.

### Case Study: Dell Computer Corporation

In order to understand how a clear strategy of communication will raise individual performance, foster ongoing employee and supervisor development, and increase overall organizational effectiveness, it can be helpful to review a case study that demonstrates the principles. Krovi et al. (2003) compare the traditional computer industry communication model to the Dell Computer Corporation communication model.



(Krovi, Chandra, & Rajagopalan, 2003)

Traditional PC industry model vs. the Dell model

Dell Computer Corporation created an innovative strategy for communication that removed non-value added portions of the information flow. By communicating directly with the suppliers and the customers, the company shortened the time between order and delivery. Selling computers directly to customers over the Internet, offering a build-to-order sales service, and then linking suppliers and customers directly through the organization has resulted in a rapid-response communication strategy.

Donald Cushman and Sarah Sanderson King (2003) explain that Dell created four rapid-response systems that allowed real-time communication via the Internet. The communication strategy employed by Dell involves reducing the time it takes to get the product or service to the customer. It also assists in streamlining its dealings with suppliers.

First, Dell developed a rapid-response sales link to its online customers that let customers order and track their purchase through every stage of the manufacturing and distribution process (Cushman & Sanderson King, 2003). This type of communication between the company and the customer became so popular that it has been copied and implemented by many other companies. Indeed, it is a standard communication process in the online sales industry today to provide up-to-date information about the stage of manufacturing, packaging, and shipping to the customers via e-mail or text message.

Dell also allowed customers to customize their purchase in order to meet their unique needs. Cushman and Sanderson King (2003) explain that Dell has worked with an Internet superstore since 1998, which provides everything a customer would want to customize on his or her computer. Dell tracks these preferences to build product-communication profiles. The choices a customer makes during one part of the customization process will prompt other notifications of useful add-ons or services. These choices are designed to meet the customer's needs. When filling out the order form for a new computer and choosing options, the phrase "Dell Recommends" appears next to upgrades or add-ons. The Dell model assists the company by providing a better way to manage the flow of information from the customer and to then use that information to increase sales.

The second rapid-response system in the Dell communication strategy deals with providing customer service (Cushman & Sanderson King, 2003). Dell created a worldwide, multilingual service that is online or toll free and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This service assists customers with issues, and the company monitors the service interactions in order to develop maintenance profiles for their products and to develop repair sequences for each type of problem.

The third rapid-response system links all of Dell's suppliers, workers, managers, and customers to the value chain. As Cushman and Sanderson King (2003) relate, the company monitors the information and then uses it both internally and externally. The company will receive information on coordination sequencing and quality control, for example, and develop performance profiles for suppliers, managers, and workers. Along with the feedback, the company conducts online training and workshop programs to develop stakeholder skills.

Finally, Dell has a rapid-response communication system for the continuous improvement of all organizational activities. This system is designed to help develop teamwork between the outsourcers, suppliers, managers, and staff. A goal of 20% improvement is set each year. Each of the teamwork processes is monitored and effective team leaders and members are identified and rewarded (Cushman & Sanderson King, 2003).

The four rapid-response communication systems—sales, services, value chain, and continuous improvement—are all designed to increase organizational performance. As Cushman and Sanderson King (2003) note, this communication system is a key to Dell's success. The organization's stakeholders all have a real-time and interactive way to communicate; the profiling activities guide the communication so that it is targeted on customer needs, product use, and service issues; the value chain targets updates as customer needs and technology develops; and the continuous-improvement program helps the organization stay ahead of competitors.

## References

- Cushman, D., & Sanderson King, S. (2003). *Communication best practices at Dell, General Electric, Microsoft, and Monsanto*. Retrieved from <http://www.sunypress.edu/pdf/60758.pdf>
- Kaplan, R. S. (2001). Strategic performance measurement and management in nonprofit organizations. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership, 11*(3), 354-370.
- Krovi, R., Chandra, A., & Rajagopalan, B. (2003). Information flow parameters for managing organizational processes. *Communications of the ACM, 46*(2), 77-82.

## Suggested Reading

The resource below shares more information on the Dell Computer Corporation case study, which is covered in the Unit VI Lesson. Copy and paste the link into your browser to view the relevant chapter from the e-textbook.

- Cushman, D., & Sanderson King, S. (2003). *Communication best practices at Dell, General Electric, Microsoft, and Monsanto*. Retrieved from <http://www.sunypress.edu/pdf/60758.pdf>

## Learning Activities (Non-Graded)

### Apply What You Have Learned

Consider organizations where you have worked in the past or where you are currently employed. Does the organization have a communication strategy? Do you believe it is effective? Why, or why not?

Non-graded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to submit them. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information.