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Diploma Thesis

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Name of diploma thesis:

Internal Communication

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P r o c l a m a t i o n

I hereby proclaim that I have written the diploma thesis on the topic of
„Internal communication "
individually, with the usage of literature and information, which are
properly referenced.

In Prague, 24th August 2015   Signature

Acknowledgement

Název diplomové práce:

Internal Communication

Abstrakt:

Diplomová práce se zaměřuje na charakteristiku interní komunikace, zavedení jejich forem a analýzu interní komunikace v dané společnosti. Po analýze současného stavu v moderní nadnárodní společnosti práce navrhne zlepšení v oblasti řízení lidských zdrojů, s důrazem na možné globální implementaci.

Klíčová slova:
Komunikace, interní komunikace, globální firma, lidské zdroje, EYELEVEL

Title of the Diploma Thesis:

Internal Communication

Abstract:

The diploma thesis focuses on characteristics of internal communication, its implementation in various forms in different companies and analysis of the internal communication in one selected company. After the analysis of its current state in the multinational company, the thesis will recommend improvements to the areas of internal communication and human resources, with the main focus of global implementation of these recommendations.

Key words:

Communication, internal communication, global company, human resources,

EYELEVEL

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Introduction

Communication is one of the most crucial parts of our lives. It helps us to share our thoughts and ideas with other people and it is an aspect of our life that can make someone very happy, or very sad. Start a new life, or end one.

When it comes to a company and its employees, communication is a tool thanks to which we have found out about the company in the first place, it is something that guides us through the admission process when we are applying for a position and a mechanism with which the company constantly shares the latest information with its employees.

Sharing successes, learning from mistakes, letting other employees know which direction is the company going to take in the next 3 years, this is all automatic within a company that has roughly 10 employees, mainly because the information is easy to share. Colleagues are just a desk away and talking to them is so easy that one does not think of internal communication, when the company is still in its infancy.

But when the company grows, hires people from different cultures who speak different languages, expands to other continents and starts creating new divisions, the team starts to wonder why the newly hired people don't understand the concepts that all the experienced people do understand or the values the company represents.

When business grows, new IT managers, production and account managers are usually among the first positions to be hired, but the department of internal communication is either still non existent, or not given enough importance. [1] It is however the internal communication that works as a tool to motivate the entire team and push it forward to achieve sales and financial targets better.

The aim of this diploma thesis is to analyse the characteristics of internal communication, introduce its various forms and critically analyse the specifics of internal communication in one selected company. After the analysis of the current state of internal communication in the multinational company, the thesis will recommend improvements to the areas of internal communication and human resources, with the main focus of global implementation of these recommendations.

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[1] Holtz, S. (2004). *Corporate conversations*. New York: AMACOM, p.ix.

To fulfil its main objective, following chapters describe communication and tools and forms, which then creates the necessary base for the practical part of the thesis. The theoretical part of this thesis mainly focuses on the aspects of internal communication and the effectiveness of its forms and tools.

The practical part focuses on analysis of a global company called EYELEVEL, in the offices of which (Prague and UK) the author of this thesis has been working for 3 and half years. A thorough analysis of the various forms of internal communication that are used at EYELEVEL is elaborated in the following chapter. The analysis critically views each of the used tools with an emphasis of its current implementation and global execution.

Besides the internal communication in EYELEVEL's main headquarters in Prague, the author analyses the differences of the EYELEVEL's Digital department and the differences and similarities in EYELEVEL UK, where he spent his mandatory CEMS internship.

The thesis concludes with recommendations to the internal communication that can be implemented both locally in Prague and globally in all EYELEVEL's offices.

1. Communication within a company

In order for all teams to work properly, employees need to have a set of tools that will allow them to communicate with each other, share ideas and work together on projects and assignments. In the following chapter, the thesis will focus on where internal communication evolved from, what the differences between external and internal communication are and see how much harm can non working communication within a company cause.

1.1 Communication

Communication can be characterised as a

> **"process of sharing information with the objective of lowering uncertainty on both sides of communication entities"**.[2]

More importantly, communication must be understood as a two-way process, as there is always one receiving and one transmitting party. Throughout the history, every society has created their own set of communication tools, its language and gestures. But even when we speak the same language and use commonly known gestures, our communication is full of misunderstandings and faux pas in both personal and professional life. [3]

It is important for us to understand that communication involves both verbal and nonverbal language and also involves senses, intellect, intuition and emotions. This means that our behaviour, all things that we chose to do or not to do are also part of how and what we communicate. Even if we are standing and doing nothing, our body is sending signals to the people around us who perceive us and try to understand us.

When it comes to companies, they usually keep track of the information in their external environment – how the market is evolving, what competition is doing and how taxes are going to change next year. However, companies should understand that the stream of information flowing within the company has the same importance and in many cases it is in fact much faster than the external one. [4]

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[2] Holá, J. (2011). *Jak zlepšit interní komunikaci*. Brno: Computer Press. p. 19
[3] Farrant, J. (2003). *Internal communications*. London: Thorogood. p. 17
[4] Smith, L. and Mounter, P. (2008). *Effective internal communication*. London: Kogan Page. p. xi

1.2 Internal vs. external communication

Before the thesis covers internal communication and its objectives and forms, the similarities and differences between internal and external communication should be pointed out as they are both forms of corporate communication and they have much in common. [5]

Advertising, sales promotion and direct sale are all ways of how companies market themselves among external subjects. The reasons behind external communication can vary from increasing the share in specific customer segment to improving general awareness among consumers but the main aim of the external communication is to directly increase the profit of every company.

Creating a better known brand and thus expanding the customer base, showing new products to current customers and selling the them up into more premium product range, those are just a few ways how company can make more money from executing external communication campaign. As it will be explained in next chapter, even though the form of internal communication might seem to be similar to the external one, the objectives vary significantly.

When it comes to target audience, the groups are also different. As one of the goals of external communication is to create brand awareness and thus increase the number of people who know the company or the brand, the large part of target audience is either completely unfamiliar, or only partially familiar with the company in question. This of course contradicts the target audience of internal communication, which is primarily aimed at employees of the company. Moreover, external communication can take more of a mass approach (e.g. TV and radio campaigns), whereas internal communication is much more targeted and BTL[6] oriented. [7]

As described before, when it comes to environment, there are two different (and yet in some ways very similar) ways in which companies communicate. Internal communication is mainly used for sharing company values and latest info with

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[5] The Business Communication, (2013). *Differences between Internal and External Communication*. [online] Available at: http://thebusinesscommunication.com/differences-between-internal-and-external-communication/ [Accessed 20 May 2015].

[6] Below the line. Type of communication that is not displayed in general mass media (TV, radio), but more targeted.

[7] UKEssays, (2015). *Budget Allocation For Internal Communication Marketing Essay*. [online] Available at: http://www.ukessays.com/essays/marketing/budget-allocation-for-internal-communication-marketing-essay.php [Accessed 20 May 2015].

current employees, external communication helps the company to be more visible and competitive on the market.

1.3 Objectives of internal communication

When a company creates a TV campaign, it raises its awareness and thus sells more products. When company doesn't market itself in any way, the revenues do not grow because the company does not attract new customers or the sales might even fall, as the competitors usually do not stop to market themselves.

The relationship with sales and profit as a main driver is not so direct under internal communication activities and thus it cannot be the main objective. Human resources departments usually have a more prosaic and simple reason for their internal communication activities and that is to make the employees more informed and happy. Needless to say, in some cases internal communication can indeed increase profit of a company, although this is more indirect goal that is definitely much harder to measure. [8]

We can state that the objectives of internal communication are[9]:

- Fulfilling information needs of all employees and thus making sure that everyone has enough information for executing their role, knows the objective of their work and the connection of their work to different processes within the company
- Ensuring that employees understand the goals of the company and their role in fulfilling them (what is expected from managers and regular employees)
- Motivating employees and sharing goals and the vision of the company with them
- Guiding employees to a desired behaviour
- Maintaining stability and loyalty of employees
- Ensuring that company receives a proper feedback and thus constant improvement of the communication within the company
- Building employee's trust in the company

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[8] Eichner, B. (2014). *10 Ways to Increase Profit & Productivity by Making Employees Happy - RecruitLoop Blog*. [online] RecruitLoop Blog. Available at: http://recruitloop.com/blog/10-ways-to-increase-profit-productivity-by-making-employees-happy/ [Accessed 20 May 2015].
[9] Weal, R. (2014). *Creating a Basic Internal Communications Strategy*. [online] LinkedIn Pulse. Available at: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140323234100-50813842-creating-a-basic-internal-communications-strategy [Accessed 21 May 2015].

If the objectives of internal communications are fulfilled, employees will not only have better understanding of what is happening within the organization and why, but they will also be more motivated and excited about working for the company. Proper internal communication can not only increase the overall morale within the team or a company, but also lower or eliminate the fluctuation of people in the organization.

When employees see the broader picture and the consequences that their everyday work has (especially in larger global companies, e.g. that because of their effort and hard work, their sister office in China was able to launch the new marketing campaign on time.) and if this picture is properly communicated back to them, they will believe that they are part of something greater and it will motivate them to keep on working and doing the great job they were doing.

This can indirectly save a considerable amount of cost, as the Human Resources team does not have to spend as much time and efforts on hiring and training new employees. [10]

Moreover, when all the projects that employees work on are communicated within the company, people outside of the project teams can bring some fresh new ideas as they usually think outside of the box and are not bound by tunnel vision. [11]

1.4 Negative effects of non-working internal communication

At the start of every business, when companies are still young and all employees sit in one office, internal communication is organic and intuitive. One employee shares his latest success from a business meeting with a new client with the other while smoking or having a coffee in the kitchen. He doesn't have to create a PowerPoint presentation and upload it to the company intranet system, simply because there are only 10 employees in the company and most of the information is shared dynamically through word of mouth.

But if the company is successful and it continues to grow, it reaches a point when this uncoordinated internal communication stops working properly. This point isn't defined in any way, but it can be renting a second office in the city or

[10] Mueller, A. (2011). *The Cost Of Hiring A New Employee*. [online] Investopedia. Available at: http://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0711/the-cost-of-hiring-a-new-employee.aspx [Accessed 21 May 2015].
[11] Ferlic, K. (2015). *Mind set and tunnel vision*. [online] Ryuc.info. Available at: http://ryuc.info/creativityphysics/mind/mind_set_tunnel_vision.htm [Accessed 21 May 2015].

expanding to a different country. To put it in a simple way, it is a point when the internal communication as it is slowly stops working, misunderstandings start spreading and employees do not receive enough or good quality information that is necessary for their work.[12]

The consequence of such improperly executed internal communication can be vast, ranging from employee's frustration and lack of trust in the company, to lower productivity and as mentioned in previous chapters, the increase of fluctuation of employees. [13]

Moreover, if the company doesn't share enough up to date information with its employees and doesn't create enough space for a two-way discussion, rumours start to spread through the company and so called "kitchen talk" starts gaining importance when it comes to obtaining new information.

The less formal communication the company generates (e.g. official statement of CEO, company's website or intranet), the more intense the informal communication within the organisations gets. This can be a huge problem especially in the time of a crisis when employees want to be ensured of the stability of the company and not fumble about their own future. Luckily, a properly set up internal communication strategy can solve most of the problems mentioned in this subchapter. [14]

To limit the negative effect of badly executed internal communication and to transform it to a tool that increases productivity within the company, human resources departments should focus on communication all the information that employees need for their every day work, as well as the culture and values that the company was build on and its clear strategy for the future.

Also, internal communication should use latest technologies in order to stay effective in today's interconnected world, help to integrate newly hired employees to the company more easily and make sure that the communication with the organization remains to be two-way and ensures that employees have the option to share their feedback with the management. [15]

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[12] Farrant, J. (2003). *Internal communications*. London: Thorogood. p. 44
[13] Holtz, S. (2004). *Corporate conversations*. New York: AMACOM. p. 146
[14] Gillis, T. (2011). *The IABC handbook of organizational communication*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. p. 153
[15] Hume, J. (2015). *Internal Communication Toolkit*. 1st ed. [ebook] Johanesburg: CIVICUS. Available at:
http://www.civicus.org/view/media/CIVICUSInternalCommunicationToolkit.pdf [Accessed 25 May 2015].

2. Tools of internal communication

Managers can share information with employees in the company through multiple tools of internal communication, among which the most frequent are face-to-face talk, regular meetings or email. Every tool has its specific attributes and advantages that help the manager decide which he or she will use in different situations. [16]

When describing a very complicated assembly process of an engine, the manager will preferably not use an email as the tool to communicate the process with. Vice versa, some aspects of employee's job such as rebuke or praise are better to be handled in person with face-to-face talk. This selection of which tools to use in which situation is either a result of company's internal guidelines of internal communication, or basic logic that the manager applies to those specific situations.

When it comes to forms of the internal communicating, we divide them to two basic types[17]:
- Oral (e.g. meeting, telephonic conversation)
- Written and electronic (e.g. internal directives, email or intranet)

As mentioned above, we cannot state which of the two forms is the most effective, simply because different forms are suitable for different situations in manager's life. The following part of the diploma thesis will go deeper into the tools that any manager can use for internal communication and will analyse their advantages, negatives and best practises.

Oral form of internal communication is very specific, because it's not just the words that are being communicated to the other person (as it is in written or electronic form), but also the gestures and other parts of nonverbal communication. This means how the manager stands, what gestures he has when he talks and if he/she frowns or not. All those aspects of communication matter as well, but managers often overlook them. [18]

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[16] Farrant, J. (2003). *Internal communications*. London: Thorogood. p. 33

[17] Veber, J. (2000). *Management. Základy, prosperita, globalizace*. Praha: Management Press, p.199

[18] Thebusinesscommunication.com, (2015). *Non-Verbal Communication*. [online] Available at: http://thebusinesscommunication.com/category/non-verbal-communication/ [Accessed 28 May 2015].

Especially in multinational companies, employees should have in mind that team members with different cultural background can have a different opinion on the amount of gestures or the distance that the other person is speaking from. For instance, Italian, Spanish or Mexican colleagues are used to speak to other people from much closer distance and generally don't mind touching the other person or invade his personal area. Something that German or Japanese colleagues might not be used to and which could potentially spark a conflict. [19]

On the other hand, the oral form of communication gives both the managers and employees one great advantage over any written or electronic form and that is instant delivery of the intended message and feedback, which is it main difference from the written or electronic communication.

2.1 Meetings

Team meetings have become a common part of employee's everyday life as they help to increase efficiency within the team and to build relationships in the company, even though they can sometimes be more time demanding than expected. The efficiency of a meeting stands and falls by the preparation of the person who leads the meeting, on his managerial abilities and also by the structure of the meeting.

Before the meeting starts, all people should have the knowledge of the previous meetings and be familiar with the agenda. Ensuring that everyone has up to date information and is familiar with what was discussed last time, usually relies on the person who is responsible for taking notes. In a client – supplier relationship, it is always the supplier who takes notes of the meeting and sends them back to the client for reviewing. But when it comes to internal communication and internal meetings, there is often one dedicated person who writes the report, or a project manager responsible if the meeting is about a long-term project.

The meeting itself must be lead by one manager only, who besides the meeting itself leads the discussion that often follows. He must ensure that the atmosphere in the room stays positive and that all participants have equal opportunities to express their ideas.

When it comes to efficiency, meetings are sometimes feared as a form of communication that can become inefficient quite easily, especially when the meeting itself is too long. When solving a problem, adults can usually fully

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[19] Fadel, L. and Garcia-Navarro, L. (2013). *How Different Cultures Handle Personal Space*. [online] NPR.org. Available at: http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/05/05/181126380/how-different-cultures-handle-personal-space [Accessed 28 May 2015].

concentrate only for 90 minutes and when a meeting is too long, people will stop coming up with fresh ideas and loose focus. For this reason, all team meetings should be finished under the 90-minute mark in order for all members to be efficient with their time. [20]

However, if the team meeting really needs to be held longer than few hours (for instance when strategy of a project is discussed), the meeting should be at least broken down to shorter sessions so that people will have time to refresh themselves and rest.

One interesting example of how to ensure maximum efficiency of a team meeting is a 20-minute rule, which was explained by Ing. David Duron during his lecture of Simulation in strategic marketing course at VSE. David mentioned a case when he was hired as a new Managing Director of Atlas.cz web portal and his task was to stop the decline of sales and to stabilize the business. After an initial analysis, he found out that there are internal meetings of large groups held for large part of the day and more than 50% employees are blocked by those meetings every day. David therefore came up with a 20-minute rule that said that after 20 minutes, every employee can decide if the meeting is or is not is effective use of time for him and was given an option to leave without any negative consequences. [21]

2.2 Telephonic communication

Telephonic communication differs with personal communication or a meeting in one main aspect and that is the absence of any form of nonverbal communication, which can be both advantage and disadvantage for the employees.

The greatest advantage of telephonic conversation is that employees can have "almost like personal conversation" instantly with anyone around the world, which helps them to quickly obtain new information and sort out small tasks. Also, when one has to deal with a very dominant colleague or somebody who could misunderstood our gestures and expressions, the telephonic call provides him an opportunity to hide some of the nonverbal aspects of communication. Moreover, telephonic communication also gives employees the ability to better prepare and manage the course of the conversation as one can have a paper with notes on the table while dealing with his colleague on the other side of the world.

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[20] Baer, D. (2013). *Why You Need To Unplug Every 90 Minutes*. [online] Fast Company. Available at: http://www.fastcompany.com/3013188/unplug/why-you-need-to-unplug-every-90-minutes [Accessed 28 May 2015].
[21] Duron, D. (18.11.2014). Lecture of *3MG639 - Strategický marketing v simulacích*. University of Economics in Prague.

However, as the telephonic call lacks the personal, and more importantly, the visible aspect of a meeting it is not the best tool with dealing with large and complex problems.

As part of an internal communication within a company, telephonic communication should be mainly used for quick clarification and decision. Also, phone calls will usually be preferred in areas with only one time zone (e.g. Western Europe), but much less popular in countries with multiple time zones (such as Russia or USA). [22]

2.3 Internal training

Internal trainings are a great tool for sharing experience with new and existing employees. Not only do they help with transferring of the knowledge and know how that the company has learned during its existence, but they also help to build loyalty among employees and help the company to achieve its goals. Moreover, internal training can give room to the managers who are leading them to improve their presentation skills and get more familiar with newly hired employees.

Speaking from personal experience, just mere invitation to a training course for account managers by the CEO can make employees feel that they are welcomed and needed. Also, meeting colleagues from different teams and on different positions (e.g. during a presentation or time management skills training) can spark new business ideas, as the people might have otherwise never meet.

2.4 Conference

Whereas team meetings serve as a tool of frequent internal communication, internal conferences are used on more infrequent occasions and mainly for special announcements. Conferences do not just give managers an opportunity to share the latest company news with all employees, but also allow them to receive feedback on the presented ideas or plans from much larger and diverse audience than if the idea was presented internally to a single team. [23]

Sharing a new strategy for next few years or introducing new company structure are both great reasons why managers see conferences as an effective tool of communication, but speaking from my personal experience, the best benefit of any conference for regular employees is networking.

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[22] Holtz, S. (2004). *Corporate conversations*. New York: AMACOM, p.180
[23] Farrant, J. (2003). *Internal communications*. London: Thorogood. p. 34

Conferences give regular employees an opportunity to meet with their colleagues from different teams or even different countries in a very informal way, which not only makes the workplace friendlier for them after the event, but can also spark new ideas or projects within the firm. Employees with different background, experience and from different teams usually have unique approach to solving problems and overall think differently, which can help the company with new challenging tasks and projects, where out of the box thinking is necessary.

That's for instance why Google gives its employees 20% of their work time to work on their internal projects with other colleagues from different teams, diversity sparks innovation. [24]

2.5 Notice boards

Notice boards are a very simple and yet effective tool how to visibly communicate certain information to employees, especially on locations within the office, which the staff frequently visits. They are particularly handy when it is needed that employees see the information every day, for example when sales of each sales manager are measured and compared, which increases competition and also indirectly the sales of the entire company.

Quite a big disadvantage of notice boards is that they require somebody to physically look on them and they are usually located in places where people came to do something else (e.g. kitchen). On the other hand, if they are located in eye level and if the staff members know they should look for new information on them, notice boards can work quite well. Also, they are quite easy to be updated.[25]

2.6 Company clothes and other forms of merchandising

Pens, paper notebooks, cups, key chains and other small gifts with the company logo are primarily created for company's customers, but if employees have access to them and use them as well, they can increase the sense of belonging to the company and subsequently improve the performance of employees.

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[24] Baldwin, H. (2012). *Time off to innovate: Good idea or a waste of tech talent?* [online] Computerworld. Available at: http://www.computerworld.com/article/2506129/it-management/time-off-to-innovate--good-idea-or-a-waste-of-tech-talent-.html [Accessed 2 Jun. 2015].
[25] Cooper, A. and Matthias, J. (2011). *Communications Case Study - Using notice boards effectively*. 1st ed. [ebook] Available at: http://www.1000livesplus.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1011/Communications%20Case%20Study%20%28FINAL%29%20%2D%20Noticeboards.pdf [Accessed 6 Jun. 2015].

These small items are also suitable as a Christmas or anniversary gift to the employees. Moreover, t-shirts with logo of the company and other form of clothing can be used at company's informal sports event, or as a way to represent the company outside of the office.

2.7 Internal magazine

A great way to communicate the inner workings of a company in a form that is consumed by both the employees and people in their close proximity is to create a printed version of an internal magazine or internal newspapers.

Apart from company news, internal magazine can also contain section where new employees are presented or a part where some professional tips and tricks are shared with the employees (e.g. 10 steps how to make your PowerPoint presentation stand out). The number of employees who read such magazine can be increased when its content is of very good quality and also unique. CEO's monthly column with his opinions and views of the company's future can greatly help in this regard.

Moreover, when the internal magazine is very popular within the company, it might become a very prestigious medium and the employees will want to actively write the articles themselves. This also might increase the sense of belonging to the company, because the employees will have a visible proof of how they are actively participating within the company.

Large Telco companies, international banks and other financial institutions create the best quality internal magazines. One of the best according to Czech institute of internal communication[26] are T-Mobile's magazine ECHO[27] and ČSOB's magazine Kompas[28].

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[26] Institut interní komunikace, (2011). *IIK Grand Prix 2011 - Institut interní komunikace*. [online] Available at: http://www.institutik.cz/knihovna_333/iik-grand-prix-2011/ [Accessed 7 Jun. 2015].

[27] Sidó, M., Opekarová, B. and Tučková, L. (2011). *ECHO*. 1st ed. [ebook] Available at: http://www.institutik.cz/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Tmobile_ECHO_2011_1.pdf [Accessed 7 Jun. 2015].

[28] Lejčarová, K. (2012). *KOMPAS*. 1st ed. [ebook] Available at: http://issuu.com/boomerangpublishing/docs/csob_kompas_01_12 [Accessed 7 Jun. 2015].

2.8 Emails

There is no denying that email is the most widespread form of written and relatively quick conversation in most companies as it is very effective in both one to one and mass communication. That is partially because email can be quite variable in its usage; employees can share both simple messages with emails or help solving complex tasks. Send one sentence emails or attach images and documents. They also allow the sender to spread the same message to multiple people thanks to features such as carbon copy and blind carbon copy.

Moreover, employees can send messages whenever they want, even when the receiving person is not at his computer or mobile phone as the receiving person will get the message the first time he opens his email app.

Even though email has been helping companies to deal with communication for many years, it is not the most effective communication tool today. Email communication is not instant; the sender does not have confirmation that the other side received the email, which also means that in most cases, he will not have instant feedback to his message, as opposed to for instance a telephone call.

Also, as most of employees receive multiple emails per day, there is a chance that the person will overlook one or unintentionally mark it as read. Lastly, email conversation can get out of hand if there are too many people contributing at the same time. Collaborative platforms solve this problem of emails, which will be described later in this chapter.

2.9 Intranet

Intranet is a large database of information that only the employees of the company have access to and it usually stores internal company information that support employees in properly executing their job, such as guides, presentations, documents and job descriptions.[29] One of its largest benefits is that its search function allows employees to find what they are looking for quite quickly, even though the intranet itself contains many gigabytes of internal documents.

Another advantage is that the information on intranet stays on the same place and it doesn't require any action from the other party to retrieve the information,

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[29] Mitchell, B. (2015). *What's the difference between an intranet and an extranet?*. [online] About.com Tech. Available at: http://compnetworking.about.com/cs/intranets/g/bldef_intranet.htm [Accessed 11 Aug. 2015].

as opposed when employees need to receive the information from other colleagues. [30]

Some of the more advanced intranets do not only support file sharing, but also holiday and home office requesting or are integrated with some form of chat or social aspect. However, intranet can properly function as a form of internal communication only in a company where majority of all employees have access to the internet are used to using computer or other electronic devices for their everyday job.

2.10   Instant messaging

When it comes to sharing information within a company in an electronic written way, it is safe to assume that most of all firms have adopted the technology of email.

However, as technologies evolve, there are few fundamental problems with email in the year of 2015. As a form of electronic communication, emails are quite slow, employees receive too much of email and they might be ineffective when collaborating on a difficult task, which are all aspects that instant messaging solves much better.

Imagine a situation when client calls employee, he wants to know when will the new graphical materials be delivered. But the employee in question didn't do the materials, but by your colleague who is sitting in the other company office 10 miles away. As the employee does not want to end the call with his client, he has two options, sending his graphic designer colleague an email from his computer, or sending him a message through the company's instant messaging system.

The whole process of composing an email, adding a signature takes some time, but more importantly, it takes the email service about 1 or 2 minutes to deliver the email itself. And when your graphic designer colleague has 12 unread emails in his inbox, he will know about your request long after the client is gone and angry because you were not able to answer his question.

Instant message on the other hand displays instantly and it takes users roughly 5 seconds to reply. Its main goal is to deliver short and informative messages quickly and in this regard, it does so much better than email.

Instant messaging however is not appropriate for the entire internal communication. It's definitely not a place to share anything official such a

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[30] Holtz, S. (2004). *Corporate conversations*. New York: AMACOM. p. 97

strategy decisions or other important news. When this division of internal electronic communication is properly executed, both email and instant messaging platforms can operate in the organization very effectively. [31]

To give few examples, one of the most popular instant messaging services are Skype[32] and Slack[33]. Similarly to intranet and emails, instant messaging as a form of internal communication only work in organizations where all people have access to the Internet.

2.11   Internal social network

With Facebook and other social networks being popular among people, companies have started to wonder if they could utilize them for internal communication as well. The great advantage of social networks is that they build on human need for social interaction, transform traditional communication monolog to dialog and those who only consume content to people who create it as well.

Social networks are as a form of internal communication beneficial for the company in two ways. The first one is that it gives managers and HR employees a tool that they can use for quick sharing of company news, newly opened positions or photos from the last conference. In this regard, an internal social network is very similar to intranet.

The second aspect of social network is that it gives employees a tool to better communicate among each other and also with management. Imagine a newly hired employee that needs to know which floor material is the best to use for the new retail store you are building for your client. Normally, he would send his colleague an email and ask him, but because it's his first week he doesn't know his colleague's names and the departments they are working in. Luckily, because his company is using an internal social network, he can post there a question about his problem and his colleagues (many of who he might not know that are capable of answering the question) will post their suggestions there. One of the most famous social networks that are used by companies around the world is called Yammer[34].

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[31] Nardi, B., Whittaker, S. and Bradner, E. (2000). *Interaction and Outeraction: Instant Messaging in Action*. 1st ed. [ebook] pp.79-88. Available at: http://www.interruptions.net/literature/Nardi-CSCW00-p79-nardi.pdf [Accessed 6 Jun. 2015].
[32] See http://www.skype.com/en/business/
[33] See https://slack.com
[34] See https://about.yammer.com

Internal social networks can also work as a collaborative tool that the company is using. Employees can create groups around specific projects on the network and share their documents, progress and ideas there. McKinsey Global Institute has found out that employees who are connected in some form of social network are about 20 to 25 % more productive. [35]

[35] Chui, M., Manyika, J., Bughin, J., Dobbs, R., Roxburgh, C., Sarrazin, H., Sands, G. and Westergren, M. (2012). *The social economy: Unlocking value and productivity through social technologies*. 1st ed. [ebook] McKinsey Global Institute. Available at: http://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/dotcom/Insights%20and%20pubs/MGI /Research/Technology%20and%20Innovation/The%20social%20economy/MGI_The _social_economy_Full_report.ashx [Accessed 6 Jun. 2015].

3. EYELEVEL

EYELEVEL started under a name Linea Recta about 10 years ago as a Czech company focusing on retail marketing in the Central and Eastern Europe region. Since then EYELEVEL has grown into a multinational company with presence in USA, Brazil, UK, Netherlands, Prague, Moscow, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Australia. The company mainly focuses on retail marketing for big brands such as Adidas, Nike or Tommy Hilfiger, which it does in a very unique way that is almost unparalleled across the globe. The scope of services EYELEVEL provides to its clients ranges from creating graphical design of a new retail store, finding right materials and suppliers, managing the supply chain and shipping individual packages to a client and assembling the actual store itself on a place where client chooses. [36]

EYELEVEL is a global company now but it hasn't always been. US Portland office was the first international office and it was opened in 2010. In that time, the company was also rebranded from the original name Linea Recta to EYELEVEL and changed the focus of the company from CEE market to Western market. Since then, many international offices have been opened, among which the most important is the one in Shanghai, since a big part of the production is currently done in China.

Also, with Prague office being the Headquarters of the company, the office has grown enormously as the business grew and the number of employees rose from 40 in 2012 to 174 in 2015.[37] This fact presents us with a great opportunity for our analysis, because people who work at EYELEVEL usually get into contact with employees in other offices and cultures, which can often cause conflict or delay.

In 2013, EYELEVEL was bought by a NASDAQ traded US company called Innerworkings[38], as both EYELEVEL's and Innerworkings' CEO saw great synergies and mutual benefits in this acquisition. Acquisition by Innerworkings didn't bring just more opportunities and new projects to work on, but also new standards that EYELEVEL has to comply with after the acquisition, some of

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[36] Academy.eyelevel.com, (2014). *001 - History*. [online] Available at: https://academy.eyelevel.com/homepage/lesson/2?categoryId=1 [Accessed 17 Jun. 2015].
[37] Internal statistics. Number of employees on 31.7. 2015
[38] Moore, B. (2013). *InnerWorkings Announces Acquisition of EYELEVEL | Business Wire*. [online] Businesswire.com. Available at: http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20130731006606/en/InnerWorkings-Announces-Acquisition-EYELEVEL#.VYCgSWBTWZ4 [Accessed 16 Jun. 2015].

which closely related to internal communication, which will be described in great detail in the following chapters.

3.1 Internal structure

Most of the teams in EYELEVEL are formed in a vertical structure[39] in terms of what value they add to the company and the vertical team is always assigned to one or few clients that the company handles. EYELEVEL has about 15-20 clients and based on the client's size and how demanding they are, those vertical teams were created around them.

For example, Adidas as EYELEVEL's historically oldest and largest client, is handled by one team of people, who are focusing only on this client's projects. Other teams however focus on multiple clients (e.g. there is a team that handles projects of both Dyson and Fred Perry). The reason for this is that EYELEVEL has always been a client-oriented company, who listens to client's needs and proactively comes up with solutions.

There are multiple positions in every client-oriented team, but mainly there are three, Account Manager, Production Manager and Rollout manager.

Account manager is in close proximity to the client, analyses briefs, prepares business of the new projects and presents its outcome. People who are account managers are mainly communicative and they have ability to plan well and to listen.[40]

Production managers are the ones, who are making sure the company is able to produce and ship what the account manager sold. Production managers have deep knowledge of manufacturing processes and materials (e.g. wood, metal, print) and they are specialists in their field. Externally, they communicate on daily basis with EYELEVEL's suppliers and make sure that the company either produces enough stock to build the promised retail stores, or has enough stock in the warehouse.[41]

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[39] Vertical hierarchy means that the people in the team report to their superiors, who then report to their superiors.

[40] Intranet.eyelevel.com, (2015). *Account Manager*. [online] Available at: https://intranet.eyelevel.com/index.php?option=com_sobi2&sobi2Task=sobi2Details &catid=12&sobi2Id=131&Itemid=50 [Accessed 11 Aug. 2015].

[41] Intranet.eyelevel.com, (2015). *Production Manager*. [online] Available at: https://intranet.eyelevel.com/index.php?option=com_sobi2&sobi2Task=sobi2Details &catid=12&sobi2Id=164&Itemid=50 [Accessed 11 Aug. 2015].

If an account manager is at the start of every project, rollout manager is at its end, ensuring that the store is installed properly at the right place and time and in the quality the client desired. Rollout manager communicates with production manager on daily basis, making sure that he is able to ship the articles for every store (wooden tables, metal hangers, graphical prints) and that all of those articles are either in the local warehouse, or they will be produced on time and delivered to the warehouse. Rollout manager also naturally communicates with EYELEVEL's logistics department and with both internal and external installation teams, which make sure all the components are installed properly in the store of the client.[42]

Apart from the teams that are organised more vertically around every client, EYELEVEL also has many horizontal departments that support the business. The most important horizontal support teams are Human Resources, IT, logistics, Accounting, Supply chain, Office management, Quality Control, Installation team and Warehouse team. Some of these horizontal departments are purely internal (e.g. Human Resources, IT), but some of them are also in contact with external parties, mainly suppliers (supply chain team, logistics and Quality Control).

Interesting part in this structure plays EYELEVEL Digital, which is EYELEVEL's internal department that handles purely digital projects. In this regard, EYELEVEL digital plays both of these roles as it has its own independent clients (vertical, client oriented) and it also supports EYELEVEL with internal digital projects (horizontal support). The specifics of EYELEVEL Digital from the perspective of internal communication will be described in one of the following chapters.

3.2 Corporate culture and team values

EYELEVEL Prague consists of 174 employees[43] and the average age among them is 31 years. Given the nature of the company and the brands it works for (mostly sports brands such as Adidas, Nike and Fred Perry), EYELEVEL manages to maintain young dynamic employees, who learn and adapt quickly, are fast paced and enjoy sport activities.

The passion for sport doesn't just give employees advantage when working on projects for famous sport brands, but it has also become part of EYELEVEL's corporate culture, as a large and fully equipped gym was built inside the office

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[42] Intranet.eyelevel.com, (2015). *Roll-Out Manager*. [online] Available at: https://intranet.eyelevel.com/index.php?option=com_sobi2&sobi2Task=sobi2Details &catid=12&sobi2Id=165&Itemid=50 [Accessed 11 Aug. 2015].
[43] Internal statistics. Number of employees on 31.7. 2015

that is accessible to employees every day and sport activities are very frequent team building activities during internal conferences.

Given the average age of employees and the focus of the company, the corporate culture is very informal, employees are addressed on first name basis (even the CEO) and there is no mandatory dress code. The only moment when dress code is required is when client of one sports brand visits the office. EYELEVEL employees usually know this beforehand and are asked not to wear clothing of the client's competitors. As EYELEVEL is an international company with global reach and offices around the world, its official language is English.

When it comes to team values, EYELEVEL deems open communication, quality, personal development, team work and proactivity to be one of the most important values that every employee should have and tries to train and coach their employees according to them. Open communication is especially important for EYELEVEL and in practice it means that every employee has contact on management and the CEO of the company and can ask them whatever they have on their mind. The exact EYELEVEL team values are listed on the image below. [44]

EYELEVEL TEAM VALUES

AN INNERWORKINGS COMPANY

QUALITY
keep promises
be professional
check and control

OPEN COMMUNICATION
be open minded
be honest, be trustful, be direct
express your feelings

DEVELOPMENT
ask and give feedback
learn from mistakes
getting out of your comfort zone

TEAM WORK
encourage each other
shared responsibility
accept and use differences

RESULT DRIVEN
"failure is not an option"
see the whole picture-end goal
define the goal together
be committed to the outcome goal

INITIATIVE
be proactive
plan before acting
take responsibility

UNIQUE RETAIL SOLUTIONS   EYELEVEL.COM | Prague | Portland | Shanghai | Curitiba | London | Mocsow | Honk Kong | Amsterodam | Sydney
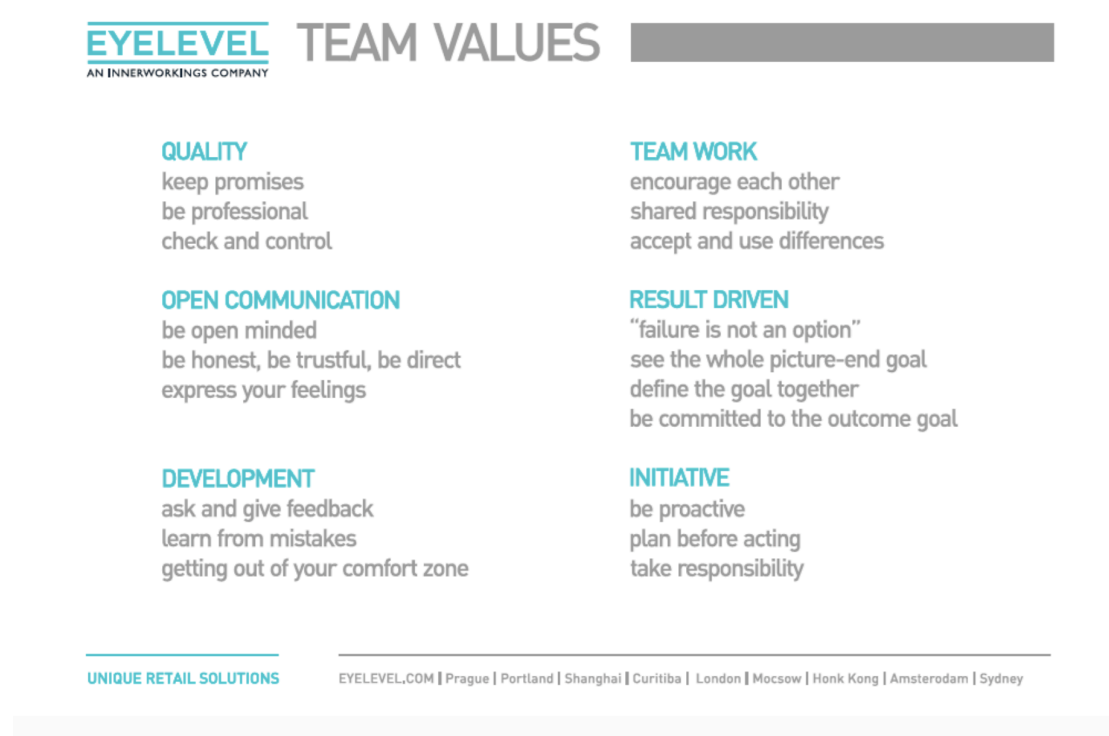
Image 1 - EYELEVEL team values

Source: Internal document of EYELEVEL

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[44] Internal EYELEVEL document

3.3 Methodology

EYELEVEL is a very interesting company from the perspective of internal communication, especially because of its diversity and global reach. EYELEVEL's employees have to communicate with their colleagues from Brazil, China and Australia on daily basis, which creates an interesting mix of multicultural individuals who are each used to different ways of communication. EYELEVEL headquarters in Prague then has to unify this internal communication to suits each of the subsidiaries and has to make sure that this communication is effective.

For the past 3 and a half years that I have been working at EYELEVEL, I have noticed that the company has grown significantly, expanding to new territories and acquiring new clients, but the internal communication hasn't kept up with this growth. Information that used to be shared few years ago is not shared any more and it is hard for newly hired employees to understand the values EYELEVEL was built on. Also, it is quite easy to communicate that if a group of 30 employees is a large family, but when a company grows five times to 174 employees, it is hard to maintain the family spirit that surrounded the firm a few years ago.

When talking to the Human Resources team, we came to the mutual understanding that the internal communication has to be analysed and upon this analysis, improved.

The practical part of this diploma thesis builds on the theoretical knowledge that the author obtained during his research for the theoretical part. The practical part is based on a critical analysis of numerous internal EYELEVEL documents, internal processes, all internally used web services and qualitative interviews with various EYELEVEL managers.

The qualitative interviews were conducted with the aim to clarify aspects of EYELEVEL's internal communication, for which the information found in the analysed internal documents wasn't sufficient. The interviews were conducted with several experts in their corresponding fields, namely:

- Andy Evans, Managing Director, EYELEVEL UK
- Wendy Gibbens, Finance & Office Manager, EYELEVEL UK
- Vera Stankova, Communication Executive, EYELEVEL Prague
- Laco Baca, Global IT Manager, EYELEVEL Prague
- Petr Ivancak, Managing Director, EYELEVEL Digital

Thanks to CEMS and the internship abroad that I partook in EYELEVEL's UK branch from May to July 2015, I had the ability to compare how the communication works within a large organisation (EYELEVEL Prague currently employs 174 people)[45] and newly starting subsidiary (EYELEVEL UK has 12 employees)[46].

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[45] Internal statistics. Number of employees on 31.7. 2015
[46] Internal statistics. Number of employees on 31.7. 2015

4. Analysis of Internal communication

When I joined EYELEVEL in 2012 and it only had about 40 employees, there was no Human Resources department that would manage recruiting, training or internal communication. Two managing directors, who were in charge of the company, executed all of the activities mentioned above. Hiring, promoting employees, sharing success, failures and best practises with colleagues was all done by 2 people, who were running a company with presence on 4 continents.

Since that time, the situation has much improved and the Human Resources team now consists of 4 people, who are focusing on recruiting, employee development, knowledge sharing and internal marketing (or internal communication).

HR is partially supported by office management when a large event such as internal conference or a Christmas party needs to be planned, and partially by IT department, if new online services that would improve performance development or internal communication is needed.

4.1 Email

Email as a form of internal communication is used in virtually every situation in EYELEVEL, which makes a very effective communication tool cluttered with too much information. Email is used when working on common projects or to ask fellow colleagues if they found sunglasses that somebody lost.

The CEO and main managers use email as a tool to share their achievements and successful installations. When for instance a new concept of retail store is executed by EYELEVEL for the first time, the team that manages the project usually shares the project's challenges and pictures with the whole company.

The main problem is that most employees receive about 20-30 emails every day (account managers who are in close contact with a client even more) and if the intended information is very important, it can get lost between the rest of the emails.

What does help keep things organised is distribution list groups, which were created to address multiple people at the same time. Different distribution lists were created around different teams, which means that one has the ability to send email to all people within one team (or even subgroup in one team) without having to know the people in the group and also without having to type their email addresses. An example of those groups and subgroups can be distribution list called "Adidas production managers", which means that the email will be

received by all production managers (see chapter 3.1 for understanding of the position), who work in EYELEVEL on Adidas projects.[47]

This is a great tool that saves time, but it can bother people when misused as occasionally people send messages such as "who ate my lunch" to the entire company. This is one of the reasons why the CEO requested to be withdrawn from the distribution list called "DL ALL", which contains email addresses of all employees of EYELEVEL Prague.

Another problem with distribution lists is the non-existent transparency that surrounds them. People don't have any tool to find out what distribution lists are in, which can be especially confusing for newly hired employees.

Also, distribution lists are not named properly. The name of the list "DL ALL" would suggest that the email would be delivered to all EYELEVEL employees (meaning globally), but it consists email addresses of only Prague employees. Instead, "DL ALL Global" list exists and so do other lists (e.g. DL Netherlands or DL Australia).

As English is the primarily language of EYELEVEL, most of the emails written internally are either in English (especially when communication with colleagues who do not speak Czech), or in Czech (only emails that are shared locally and only in some teams (e.g. accounting, which consists of only Czech employees).

When an official email by HR is distributed, it is written primarily in English, but it also contains the Czech translation in the second half of the email. This emphasises the fact that EYELEVEL clings on English language, but also wants people who haven't mastered it completely to understand all official messages. Emails from the CEO are written in English, as they are often addressed to global branches.

Informative emails that are send by the support teams of EYELEVEL Prague (office management, HR) usually contain information about newly hired employees, official activities such as conferences and other events, and lunch information for the next week. From IT perspective, EYELEVEL's emails run on Microsoft's technology called Microsoft Exchange.

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[47] Distribution lists available internally in Microsoft Outlook

4.2 Meetings

There are 7 meetings rooms in EYELEVEL Prague that can be used for project discussions, team meetings and personal evaluation. The meeting rooms can range from small ones with 6 chairs, to a large meeting room for 80 people, which is used for meeting of the entire company. Regardless to its size, every meeting room has either a projector or a TV for presentations and an Apple TV, which helps to share the screen from a computer wirelessly.

Employees used to book these meeting rooms through intranet, but because EYELEVEL has started integrating software of its mother company Innerworkings, Microsoft Outlook is used for this operation since April 2015. Also, every meeting room has a small tablet on the wall, which shows what meeting room is taking place at the moment and more importantly, the schedule of all meetings in that meeting rooms on that day.

Historically, the meetings rooms used to be called "Aquarium, small aquarium, Adidas 1, Adidas 2 and large meeting room" but as the company expanded to more floors in the building and more people joined in, EYELEVEL's HR team quickly understood that these names don't have any deep meaning and new employee find it hard to remember which is which.

Human Resources team therefore came up with a competition where employees could come up with ideas for new names of the meeting rooms.[48] The new names of the meeting rooms had to have meaning for foreign employees and offices as well (as similar renaming will take place in other offices as well) and had to be scalable so that if additional meeting rooms were created, they could be named in the same manner. [49]

The internal competition was quite successful, 31 employees came up with new names for the meeting rooms, which at that time was about one third of EYELEVEL Prague. The final decision from all the employee input was made by the HR team, which chose the meeting rooms to be named after large and globally famous shopping centres, where EYELEVEL has built retail stores or shop-in-shops. When this idea (the employee who had this idea received a voucher for massage as a gift) was chosen, HR held a second round of the survey, where employees could come up with names based on the chosen key.[50]

The new names of the meeting rooms are Harrods (largest meeting room for about 80 people), Macy's, Plaza 66, Las Arenas, La Fayette and Palladium. The meetings rooms were renamed in all internal documents and the new names were painted on their glass door and windows.

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[48] Stankova, V. (2015). *Get a massage for your idea. NAME OUR MEETING ROOMS!*. [email].
[49] App.smartsheet.com, (2015). *Smartsheet.com*. [online] Available at: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form?EQBCT=93438b9befd542c5b45ab21817238858) [Accessed 16 Jun. 2015].
[50] Stankova, V. (2015). *Name Our Meeting Rooms - Results*. [email].

Apart for regular meetings about on-going projects, every first Monday morning of each month is dedicated to a Global Company Status Meeting, where new strategic decisions and some project updates are introduced. The Global Company Status Meeting takes about 2 hours and every employee from EYELEVEL Prague takes part in it. Apart from sharing latest update by the CEO who leads the entire meeting, newly hired employees are introduced to the rest of the company.

Employees from other offices outside of Prague have the ability to join this meeting through WebEx conference tool and offices that are in similar time zone are indeed almost every time present. Every Global Company Status Meeting is recorded on multiple cameras and it is then stored on intranet, where employees who could not take part in the meeting can view it.

This Global Company Status Meeting also used to be recorded by an internal graphic designer, who drew the key highlights of the meeting into a 1-page cartoon. HR team then shared this as a PDF so that other employees could have visual record of what was discussed. Sadly, as the graphic designer left the company, the visual record of the Global Company Status Meetings does no longer take place.

Image 2 – „Meeting minutes" comics used to graphically record monthly All staff meetings

Source: Internal document of EYELEVEL

Team leaders and EYELEVEL key employees meet every 2 weeks for breakfast in either Sokolovna restaurant close to Prague office or in one of the company meeting rooms to discuss the latest financial news and overview of the global and international projects.

4.3 Conferences

Internal conferences are a common part of EYELEVEL's internal communication and they are held on regular basis every year. As EYELEVEL has many offices throughout the world, for the purpose of conferences, countries are divided into regions, when one office hosts the conference for other offices in the region. The regions are following: EMEA (London, Amsterdam, Prague, Russia), Asia Pacific (Hong Kong, Shanghai, Australia) and Americas (Portland, New York, Brazil).

Conferences usually take 2-3 days and all employees of the corresponding offices in the region take part in them and they are held mainly for 2 reasons – presenting new updates to the employees (new clients, strategic decisions, vision of digital projects etc.) and networking. The conferences themselves are planned and executed by HR, office management and IT departments.

Every conference usually starts with an opening speech of the CEO, following by status update of projects of each department, where successful executions of retails stores and other things are presented. Departments also usually review their goals from last conference and set new ones that will guide them in the following 6 or 9-month period.

As sport is in the very DNA of EYELEVEL, team sport activities usually take at least 30% of the program of the conference, which helps all the colleagues from various departments or countries to know each other better. Other fun activities at previous conferences involved a Halloween costume party, where the person with best costume received an extra week of holiday.

The previous conferences that were organised by EYELEVEL Prague were mostly held in the Czech Republic and in sport resorts in Krkonose mountains or South Bohemia. However, in January 2012 when EYELEVEL had much less employees and only consisted of 3 offices (Prague, USA and Moscow), one global conference was held in Dubai that was attended by all employees of those offices.

As opposed to regular internal conferences, "recharge conferences" (also called Recharge meetings) are held approximately once a year. Recharge conferences only take 1 day and are usually held in close proximity to EYELEVEL Prague office and as they are 1-day events, only the local office attends it.

Recharge conferences are held to "recharge employee's batteries", to present new successful and visionary projects and to give employees opportunity to network. The last recharge conference was held in June 2015 for its occasion, and internal smartphone Application was created internally by EYELEVEL Digital to help employees track the agenda better and to vote which team had the best presentation during the conference. The Application also used a technology called iBeacons and so when the coffee ended, the Application reminded them that the next speaker is on the stage and they should get back from their smoke break.

There are also informal events held throughout the year to which employees can bring their families and which mostly serve as opportunity for employees to network and have fun.

4.4 Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing is a fundamental part in operating every company. Employees work hard on getting new clients and winning tenders but the information they learned needs to be saved somewhere, so that other employees can learn from it as well.

When new employees in EYELEVEL start, most of their first week consists of training by various groups and people within the company. Firstly, the history of the company is presented to them along with what projects the teams are working on at the moment and for which clients.[51]

Newly hired employees are then walked through all offices and departments (including warehouse) and are introduced to all employees within the company, who tell them what projects they work on and what role they have. This helps the newcomers to visually see what everyone is doing and helps them remember the scope of that EYELEVEL is working on.

After newcomers have the general overview of the company, they are trained by subject matter experts in various fields that they will need for their work at EYELEVEL. These trainings consist from both educational videos that are uploaded on EYELEVEL's knowledge sharing platform called EYELEVEL Academy, and workshops where employees can try what they have learned.

For example, training for position called roll out manager (see chapter 3.1 for description) starts by a 2-hour education training video that was recorded by CEO of the company about a year ago, where he explains the details of the position, how does it fit to EYELEVEL's value chain in comparison to other positions and what tools the person will need for every day job. [52]

This video is then followed by a multi-day workshop on the internal ERP system, which is used for warehousing, quotation of new projects and for basic project management tasks.

Apart from about 8 educational videos that were recorded during previous workshops or trainings, EYELEVEL Academy also contains some basic IT

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[51] Academy.eyelevel.com, (2014). *001 - History*. [online] Available at: https://academy.eyelevel.com/homepage/lesson/2?categoryId=1 [Accessed 17 Jun. 2015].

[52] Academy.eyelevel.com, (2014). *007 - Roll-out*. [online] Available at: https://academy.eyelevel.com/homepage/lesson/20?categoryId=1 [Accessed 18 Jun. 2015].

manuals for its employees, for instance "how to connect to VPN" or "how to operate remote desktop".

Unfortunately, EYELEVEL Academy started as much bolder internal project about a year ago. At that time, EYELEVEL wanted to create a knowledge-sharing platform that would contain lectures and test so that the enrolment of new employees could be more automated. More importantly, EYELEVEL Academy was originally supposed to contain the knowledge and best practises that various international offices gained and mistakes they made during their projects and therefore give other employees from different office opportunity to learn from colleagues' mistakes and repeat the best practises.

Many employees in EYELEVEL have great knowledge of how to create engaging presentation for a client, how to quote properly to win a tender, how to build a new distribution centre and the specifics of dealing with Chinese clients and suppliers, but sadly they are not sharing it in any recordable way.

Also, regular employees do not know what their colleagues in Australia, Shanghai or Brazil are doing and what projects they are working on, and apart from conferences that are held once a year and brief email communication, this knowledge is not shared at all. EYELEVE UK for instance doesn't know that EYELEVEL Prague Adidas team is doing a part of the projects that are directly associated with UK office. And most of the employees don't know what EYELEVEL China is doing, unless they directly cooperate with them on some projects.

There are a lot of benefits that sharing of existing projects and best practises could bring to EYELEVEL, as similar problem was most likely solved by another office a year ago and local office could just implement the solution, without having to come up with it.

Last but not least, as EYELEVEL Digital has moved its office outside of EYELEVEL office building in Nupaky to Pankrác, no one in the company except few people who work with EYELEVEL's Digital department directly know, what projects are solved in this division and how it could help in new tenders for new or existing clients. Needless to say that if only few people in EYELEVEL Prague know what its digital section is doing, no other offices outside of Prague know what this division is doing. And as EYELEVEL Digital doesn't know what projects EYELEVEL is handling for their clients Adidas or Nike, it cannot offer its digital services.

4.5 File sharing

EYELEVEL employees create a lot of PowerPoint presentations and Excel spreadsheets during their work and as they quite often collaborate on various projects with their colleagues outside their department or even internationally, they need a proper way how to share these documents and collaborate on its creation.

When collaborating on various projects, most of these files are shared through email. As mentioned in the theoretical part (see chapter 2.8), email can be a good tool for quick sharing of information because everyone has an email address, but they lack versioning of documents and they are quite hard to keep an eye on.

For this very reason, EYELEVEL has an internal file server that is physically in Prague office, but is accessible throughout the world through VPN. The internal file server is mostly used by the accounting department for the purpose of filling in a mileage sheet or expenditure report. It also stores some legacy documents, but it is it is not used as often for new documents as it used to be.

EYELEVEL also has its own Dropbox account and that's when file sharing starts to be quite confusing for the employees. Dropbox account can be used by any office in the world, but unfortunately it isn't used to its full potential. Employees use Dropbox mainly for storing pictures from some of the installations of our retail stores and some presentations.

But there isn't any unified structure of what should be shared where. This isn't such a problem when all employees are present in the office and their colleagues can ask them for those documents, but when somebody goes on a long holiday or leaves the company (which is a case that personally happened to me), not having presentations and financial Excel sheets that your colleague created for the client can cause quite a lot of trouble.

Also, Dropbox has been actively blocked by the Chinese government for about a year now, which means that our colleagues in Shanghai cannot use this service for file sharing, because they cannot access it through the Chinese firewall. [53]

When some large files cannot be shared through emails because of their size and employees want to share them with other office or even clients quickly, they

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[53] Kan, M. (2014). *China cuts access to Dropbox*. [online] PCWorld. Available at: http://www.pcworld.com/article/2365540/china-cuts-access-to-dropbox.html [Accessed 28 Jun. 2015].

either use an internal service call "Send it" for this, or an external service called "WeTransfer"[54].

Some of the files are also shared on an internal collaboration platform called Smartsheet, but more on that in following chapter. It is quite clear that EYELEVEL should define what documents should be shared through which service and keep the structure for all its offices.

4.6 Project management

As EYELEVEL employees often work on multinational projects and have to cooperate with their Chinese or American colleagues, they need to be using tools that will enable them this level of collaboration.

Since February 2015, EYELEVEL is using a web service called Smartsheet[55] that allows all EYELEVEL employees to create and share basic spreadsheets with their colleagues across the globe. The platform allows them to write down project statutes, set time dates, deadlines, track them with Gantt time chart[56] and make simple computations. Even though Smartsheet also allows users to upload files to certain rows within the spreadsheet, it cannot and doesn't event want to replace file-sharing platforms such as Dropbox or WeTransfer. Smartsheet also allows different people to be assigned with different rights and so the created spreadsheets can also be shared with a client or a supplier.

It is true that Google Docs also provide similar features for business, but Google docs has a very fundamental, very EYELEVEL specific flaw, and that is that Google Docs are unfortunately not available in China, where EYELEVEL has its third largest office. Also, Google Docs do not have some of the advanced features such as time planning, Gantt time chart and file uploading, which are important for project management.

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[54] Accessible at www.wetransfer.com
[55] Smartsheet, (2015). *Online Project Management Software | Smartsheet*. [online] Available at: https://www.smartsheet.com [Accessed 1 Jul. 2015].
[56] Gantt chart is a project management tool that helps employees to visually see how long does each step in any project take and how are these steps necessary connected

4.7 Instant messaging tool

To make quick chatting with colleagues faster, EYELEVEL adopted Microsoft Lync[57], which has since then been renamed to Skype for Business. This service, which was accessible from computer, web browser, smartphones and tablets allowed employees to see who is online, chat with each other, share screens and commence video conference calls. The conference video calls created by Microsoft Lync also allowed suppliers, clients or employees who did not use this service to connect to the initiated internet conference call by calling to a special number and entering the conference number ID.

However, the Application performed very badly on EYELEVEL employee's computers as it was very unreliable, crashed very often and did not remember chat history. Because of that, EYELEVEL employees have quickly stopped using the service for internal communication and don't have a reliable platform for instant quick messaging.

4.8 Internal social network

With the rise of Facebook as an established social network and with the focus on innovation and networking, EYELEVEL decided about 2 years ago to adopt an internal social network for businesses called Yammer[58]. The main reason for this adoption was to improve internal communication, make offices and employees more connected and to limit the number of received emails every day.

Multiple groups of users and channels were created on the network, which allowed them to share relevant content only with the colleagues that were interested in the topic. As on Facebook at that time, the platform allowed its users to share text, files and pictures, comment and like statuses and interact with other users.

Unfortunately, Yammer was never used for anything else than sharing basic statuses and photos from formal and informal events at EYELEVEL. Majority of the content was informal and even though the service was fairly easy to use, employees stopped using it regularly after a few months.

As the service was free to sign up for at that time, EYELEVEL's account is still active and accessible by its employees. However, not a single employee has used the service in the past 12 months.

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[57] Microsoft Office, (2015). *Online Meetings with Skype for Business, Formerly Lync*. [online] Available at: https://products.office.com/en-us/skype-for-business/online-meetings [Accessed 1 Jul. 2015].
[58] Yammer, (2015). *Yammer Business Collaboration Software*. [online] Available at: https://about.yammer.com [Accessed 1 Jul. 2015].

One of the reasons why the internal social network failed at EYELEVEL is that employees were not properly trained for it and it wasn't clearly decided and communicated, what information will be shared on Yammer and what communication will remain in emails. Also, at the time when EYELEVEL started using Yammer, it only employed 50 people in its Prague office and information used to spread through word of mouth rather than emails. The situation with the use of internal corporate social network might be different now, as the number of EYELEVEL's employees in its Prague office has increased to 174[59].

4.9 Intranet

Intranet has been used in EYELEVEL for more than 5 years, but with EYELEVEL adopting multiple services for very specific tasks (project management tool Smart sheet, Dropbox for file sharing and internal social network), the intranet has stopped being used by both regular employees and managers who would create the content.

Historically, EYELEVEL's intranet contained job descriptions and newly opened positions, information about existing clients, their sub brands, structure, contacts and internal marketing materials. All of the information mentioned above is still present on the intranet, but most of them have not been updated since the year 2010.

The only feature in the intranet that is still used today is requesting of holidays, sick days and home office. The main reasons why employees still use these functions there is that they have not been yet migrated elsewhere and that the accounting software that creates salaries is directly linked with the intranet. The intranet also contains some additional features such as a calendar of employee's holidays and links to internal services such as Send it (see chapter 4.5), but most of those functions are also not up to date.

4.10 Internal iPhone Application

In order to better communicate with EYELEVEL employees in both the EYELEVEL Prague office and during the latest Recharge conference in June 2015, EYELEVEL's internal digital department EYELEVEL Digital created an iPhone Application, that used location based technology called iBeacons.

iBeacons are small 3 by 3 centimetre plastic boxes that contain small Bluetooth chips, which communicate with smartphones or tablets. Based on the close proximity to the iBeacon, user can receive personalised message and content on his smartphone, based on where he is standing. [60]

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[59] Internal statistics. Number of employees on 31.7. 2015

[60] iBeacon.com Insider, (2014). *What is iBeacon? A Guide to iBeacons*. [online] Available at: http://www.ibeacon.com/what-is-ibeacon-a-guide-to-beacons/ [Accessed 1 Jul. 2015].

EYELEVEL has decided to create a special iOS Application called EYE Beacon to demonstrate the digital capabilities of EYELEVEL Digital and to help its employees receive more information and better personalised content while working in EYELEVEL's Prague office. As all employees have iPhones as work phones, the programming and distribution of the Application was fairly easy and straightforward.

As described in Chapter 4.3, the Application allowed employees to see the Agenda of the latest Recharge conference in their smartphones, raise question through the App and vote in an internal video competition, where internal departments presented other departments within EYELEVEL Prague in a special format, usually a fun video. The Application also notified users at the end of a coffee break when the next presentation was about to start.

In connection with the iBeacon technology and the Prague office where the iBeacons were installed, employees receive a notification about daily lunch menu to their smartphones every morning when they walk past the reception. The daily menu (EYELEVEL has its own canteen in its Prague office) is available in the Application even in offline mode, but the close proximity to the iBeacon that is located at the reception is the way how the notification is triggered and how the employee finds out about the daily menu while walking to his desk, without having to physically go to the canteen or check some website on his computer.

One of the benefits of EYELEVEL Prague are fresh juices that are delivered to the office every Tuesday and Thursday and similarly, employees in EYELEVEL Prague now a receive notification when the fresh juices arrive. Because the application is smartly using iBeacons, the notification is only delivered to the employees who are physically in the office that morning and it does not bother those who are on business trips or on their holiday. The use of iPhone application and iBeacons also limits the email communication in this regard, because previously email was sent every time the fresh juices have arrived to the office.

As meeting rooms in EYELEVEL Prague were renamed a few months ago (see Chapter 4.2), some employees struggle with remembering their new names. The EYE Beacon Application therefore contains a map of internal meeting rooms with their names and a user also receives a notification on his smartphone when he walks into a specific meeting room and spends at least 1 minute in it.

This not only helps the employees to orient themselves better within the office, but also helps EYELEVEL to gather valuable internal data, which can for instance help EYELEVEL to analyse how the meeting rooms are used. Based on this data, EYELEVEL can then decide whether it can limit its 7 meeting rooms to a lower number, or if more meeting rooms are needed.

This is a great showcase how internal communication can create valuable synergy, as not only does the EYE Beacon Application reduce internal email communication, make employees more informed and give EYELEVEL valuable

data, but it also allows EYELEVEL Digital to properly test technology on a sample of 174 people[61] that can be later provided to EYELEVEL's clients.
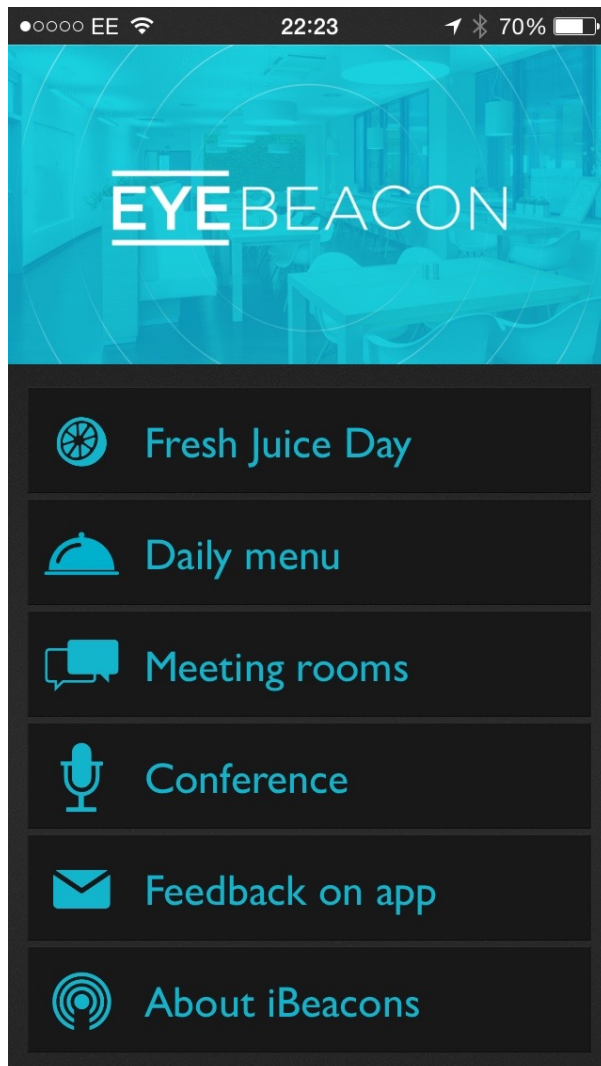
Source: Internal document of EYELEVEL

4.11   ERP system

By definition, Enterprise resource planning is a business software that integrates product planning, manufacturing, inventory management, shipping and payment activities and as the core business of EYELEVEL is to create retail experiences for its clients, ERP system is one of the main pillars of internal communication. [62]

EYELEVEL is using an ERP system called Track it, which is used as a collaboration tool by almost all employees. It is a tool in which account managers create quotations, production managers place production orders, rollout

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[61] Internal statistics. Number of employees on 31.7. 2015

[62] Wikipedia, (2015). *Enterprise resource planning*. [online] Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enterprise_resource_planning [Accessed 3 Jul. 2015].

managers check stock that is in warehouse and accounting department checks invoices.

Internal ERP system is a vital tool that EYELEVEL as a global company could not live without as multiple teams from multiple countries need it to serve its clients properly and manage global projects. For example, Rollout managers usually check the system every Monday if the stores (and assigned articles) that are to be rollout are either in our warehouse, or they have been put into production. Based on the information they then talk to Production managers in order to have more articles produced, or warehouse managers to prepare the goods for shipping. When the order is physically shipped, Logistics department put custom documents to the ERP system so the goods can be transported successfully and the team can track the shipment.

Trackit is used by all EYELEVEL's offices, however to connect to it, employees must connect to a VPN and remote desktop, because the servers the ERP software is physically running on are located in Prague office. This has unfortunately caused notable downtimes in the past, when the service was not working because of electric outage in Prague. Also, Chinese colleagues find it very hard working with the system, because the Great firewall of China notably slows all outward Internet communication. [63]

Because some of the problems mentioned above and in order to make the global collaboration better, EYELEVEL is currently transferring from Trackit to an ERP software called M3. [64]

4.12 IT helpdesk portal

To limit the internal email communication towards IT department, EYELEVEL adopted a ticketing system few months ago. Previously when employees had an IT technical problem (e.g. computer not working, password reset), they had to send an email request to a specific IT employee. This naturally caused some problems when additional IT workers were hired, because employees did not know which to write emails to regarding which issues.

The IT helpdesk portal that was adopted allows employees to write down their IT issues and upload error screens that they might be getting. IT helpdesk manager then sees the issue in his system and can respond to it. The individual ticket in the system that represent employee's issues can be marked with a status, which helps IT employees significantly with tracking of what has been finished and what is being solved at the moment.

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[63] Dou, E. (2015). *China's Great Firewall Gets Taller*. [online] WSJ. Available at: http://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-great-firewall-gets-taller-1422607143 [Accessed 3 Jul. 2015].

[64] Infor, (2015). *Infor M3 - lawson m3, lawson distribution*. [online] Available at: http://www.infor.com/product_summary/erp/m3/ [Accessed 3 Jul. 2015].

The IT helpdesk portal not only limits email communication, but also helps to make IT employees substitutable, because it stores all the communication with employees about the problem. Multiple IT employees can now work on the same issues and when one leaves for a holiday, his colleagues can substitute him with solving of the IT problem.

4.13   Evaluation of employees

Every 6 moths, goals of all employees are evaluated and new ones for the following six months are set. This evaluation and setting new goals of every employee is handled by the employee's manager and an HR manager. The new goals are created based on SMART rules and they are saved into a web service called Trakstar[65], where they can be checked by the manager and employee and later their fulfilment measured as well. The level of fulfilment of the goals directly affects the bonus that is paid to the employees. [66]

4.14   Clothing and merchandising

One significant part of internal branding is merchandising items such as pens and paper notebooks with EYELEVEL branding, which are used internally. For some events such as conferences and Recharge meetings, new sets of special pens, USB sticks or t-shirts are produced and given to employees.

Also, special type of clothing is a mandatory part of equipment of Quality Control inspectors, who check quality of goods in EYELEVEL warehouse or directly at a supplier. Quality Control employees wear a special orange t-shirts and orange vests, with "QC" sign on them. This helps them to be more visible within the warehouse so that warehouse managers can swiftly distinguish between regular worker and Quality inspector.

[65] Available at www.trakstar.com

[66] Topachievement.com, (2015). *Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals — Top Achievement.* [online] Available at: http://topachievement.com/smart.html [Accessed 3 Jul. 2015].

5. EYELEVEL Digital

As EYELEVEL wants to be a leader in the field of retail stores, it must focus not only on physical retail fixtures such as shelves, tables and counters, but also on the digital perspective of every store, which is something that clients use to distinguish their brands from the competition.

As various digital solutions (large TV screens, touchscreens, iPads and mobile applications) have become more and more popular, EYELEVEL founded its digital division in Prague in September 2011. This division (also internally called touch2shop) is making sure that EYELEVEL can stay competitive with other companies that also focus on fitting of retail stores by creating technologies that will help customers with choosing of the products in retail stores or allowing him to pay in the retail store faster without queuing.

One of the projects that EYELEVEL Digital worked on and that can be disclosed is the EYE Beacon iPhone application that was used internally by EYELEVEL employees at the latest Recharge conference in June 2015.

Luckily enough, I have been part of EYELEVEL's digital division for three and a half years, in which it has changed tremendously. Originally, the division consisted of about 4 to 5 people (mostly programmers) who reported directly to the CEO and worked on mobile applications that had potential usage in retail environment. Since then, the team has grown to about 13 people as account and project managers were hired to the team.

Because of the growth of the Digital team and because other teams within EYELEVEL also needed to expand in the existing office building, it was decided that EYELEVEL Digital will leave the existing office building of EYELEVEL (in Nupaky, just outside of Prague) and move to an office in the centre of Prague. Since February 2015, EYELEVEL Digital is located in Pankrác office centre.

This relocation didn't just give the digital team to hire more talented programmers or designers from Prague, but it also had to learn how to be more independent and how to communicate within the team and with rest of the company (located in different office building 15 km away) differently.

5.1 Internal communication

EYELEVEL Digital is using all forms of internal communication that the rest of the company does, but as the way of work in digital teams vary significantly, EYELEVEL Digital is also using some specific tools for internal communication that are not known to the rest of the company.

For project management, EYELEVEL Digital is using a tool called Redmine[67], which helps project managers to measure goals, manage projects and have better

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[67] Lang, J. (2015). *Overview - Redmine*. [online] Redmine.org. Available at: http://www.redmine.org [Accessed 19 Jul. 2015].

overview of on what each team member worked on that week. The tool allows project managers to create projects and tasks within those projects, and assign them to responsible programmers or designers who work on them. In this way, managers can share description of the tasks with their team, along with their deadlines and priorities. Because programmers and graphic designers log in how long they spend of each task that day, Project managers have a general overview in which state the project is and whether or not the deadline that was set in the beginning is reachable.

In this regard, Redmine is a tool with which most of the work is given to team members and because all information that employees need for their work is in the Redmine system, one of its largest benefits is that some of the employees can work remotely from home.

Redmine is tool that is more static, as it is a place where team members look for what they need to do on that day and when they have done so, log in their time. For real team communication however, EYELEVEL Digital is using a different service called Slack[68].

Slack is a great internal communication instant messaging tool that is used by many famous companies around the world.[69] Slack allows users to instantly share text and documents with each other and create groups of people around projects. As Slack was in the beginning developed for graphical studios and programmers, it is also integrated with many Internet services that graphic designers or programmers use every day. For instance, Slack does have a Redmine integration, which means that when an Internet link with Redmine task is shared in a conversation, the person doesn't have to click on it to see the description of the new task, but the description is smartly shown inside the Slack communication tool.

EYELEVEL Digital is using Slack mainly for quick discussions over projects and to share the latest information we have found on the internet, because Slack is much faster than any email conversation could ever be and as it is "live", it allows multiple people to contribute at the same time. At the moment, Slack is used only by EYELEVEL Digital and it has not been yet introduced to EYELEVEL.

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[68] Slack, (2015). *Slack: Be less busy*. [online] Available at: https://slack.com [Accessed 19 Jul. 2015].

[69] Kim, E. (2015). *Here's another chart that shows Slack's incredible growth*. [online] Business Insider. Available at: http://uk.businessinsider.com/heres-another-chart-that-shows-slacks-incredible-growth-2015-5?r=US&IR=T [Accessed 19 Jul. 2015].
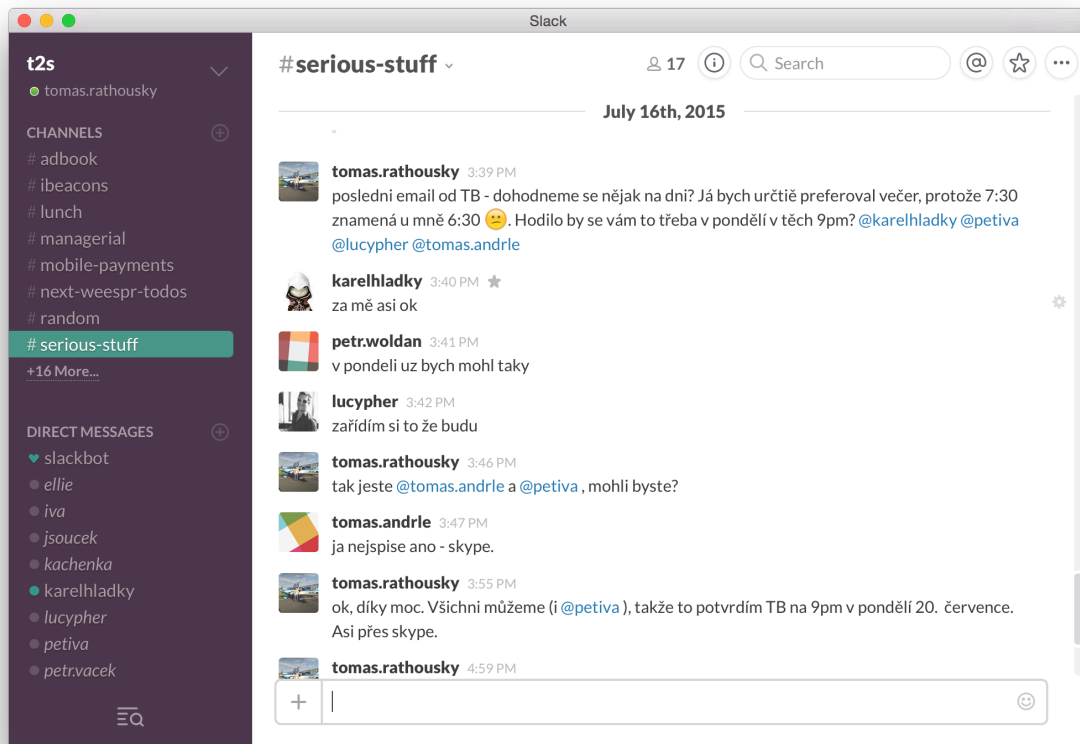
Image 4 - Example of internal communication on EYELEVEL Digital's Slack account

Source: Internal document of EYELEVEL

On the note of knowledge sharing, EYELEVEL Digital is similar in this regard as the rest of the company, which means that not much knowledge is shared. As the team is quite small, some knowledge of the current projects is of course shared within the team members, but rest of the company unfortunately doesn't know what EYELEVEL Digital is doing.

Example of this was an email communication of successful implementation of special fixtures with touchscreens and large LCD screens that EYELEVEL created for Adidas stores. The team leader, who is managing the Adidas unit within EYELEVEL, shared this successful implementation in an email conversation with the rest of the company.

However, there was no information that the entire unit (software, computers, touchscreens) was created by EYELEVEL Digital and if the team leader of such team doesn't know that, it is hard for the digital department to stand out and be recognised as a division that can create such solutions for EYELEVEL clients.

On the positive note however, EYELEVEL Digital usually presents its projects on every company conference. But only this one presentation per conference is made, the presentations are not saved for future use and they are not accessible to employees who could offer these services to our clients.

Also, as EYELEVEL Digital is physically about 15 kilometres from the rest of the company now, it does not know what projects are handled in EYELEVEL and whether or not there is any room for digital projects in those stores. The current development of digital projects is based on the activity of managers in EYELEVEL and whether they do or do not know about EYELEVEL Digital.

6. EYELEVEL UK

EYELEVEL UK was founded in 2013 because of the increasing demand for projects in the United Kingdom that EYELEVEL was facing from its clients. EYELEVEL UK has started as a one or two-man office and has quickly grown to about 12 people to date and it is working for both locally acquired clients and also some clients of EYELEVEL Prague, which need to execute retail stores in the Great Britain.

As part of mandatory CEMS international internship that all students must partake during their studies, I was sent to EYELEVEL UK to help with local retail and digital projects. During the 10-week stay, I was able to observe the internal communication of the UK office and then analyse it especially in the contrast with the internal communication within EYELEVEL Prague.

The largest contrast of the communication is given by the fact that EYELEVEL UK office consists of only 12 people, who sit in one large room. Because of this, most of the communication in the office is done on a verbal level.

Meetings on various topics do take place as well, but unfortunately no regular weekly or monthly meeting that would enlighten employees to what has happened in the past 7 days or a plan for the next week take place in the UK. This step is somewhat logical as most of the information needed has already been shared with the employees verbally, but people who are new to the company or people who were traveling on business trips for the entire week sometimes do miss on some of the information.

As employees in the UK office travel to meetings, business trips or installations quite frequently, email communication is also often used to share information. For this reason, a distribution list called LONDON that incorporates all of the UK team members has been created few months ago.

Unfortunately, the UK office does not use some of the tools that are used by EYELEVEL Prague or globally properly. One of those tools is Trackit, which is an ERP software that helps EYELEVEL with planning of the production and with consequent roll out of the stores. UK version of the Trackit does exist, but British employees don't use it for entering what was produced or was shipped to our clients. Rather than the Trackit ERP software, they use online spreadsheets at Smartsheet.com.

This not only means that it is very hard for the UK office to share the production or warehouse information with EYELEVEL Prague, but the UK office is at this point not certain of what amount of products is in their warehouse.

The second consequence of not using the internal ERP software is that the UK office does not keep shipping and customs documents on one place, which could potentially make it hard for them to find such documents, if they were requested by the UK government.

Most the knowledge from the projects is either stored in the heads of the people who work on them, or exists in basic email communication. This doesn't pose as a problem in a small team such as EYELEVEL UK, until however one of the key employees chooses to leave the company or would like to take a longer holiday. Also, almost no knowledge from the UK office is shared outside of the British borders to regular employees in other EYELEVEL offices. If there was enough information and knowledge shared globally, other employees would be more intrigued to rotate to different EYELEVEL offices, which could help EYELEVEL UK with their current problem of being understaffed.

7. Recommendations

From the analysis in chapters 4, 5 and 6 we can see that there are many aspects of internal communication that EYELEVEL is doing very well. A new portal for communication with IT support has been created to limit the number of internal email and new internal smartphone application have been created, which are both very progressive and effective tools how internal communication in EYELEVEL can be improved.

However, there are still many aspects that need to be addressed and improved. As EYELEVEL has grown from local into large global company in the course of 8 years, some aspects that could help to support EYELEVEL's business were left out. These aspects will be addressed in this chapter, which will focus on the specific recommendations that EYELEVEL could adopt to make the internal communication more effective, employees happier, which can ultimately lead to increase of revenue thanks to higher client satisfaction.

In this chapter, I focus on knowledge sharing, unification of all internal tools, internal communication tool, improving existing internal smartphone application and various other aspects of internal communication. I believe the strongest emphasis from EYELEVEL's point of view should be put on improving knowledge sharing, as this is more and more relevant due to EYELEVEL's continual global growth.

7.1 Knowledge sharing platform

The largest shortcoming of EYELEVEL's internal communication is the lack of knowledge sharing that currently happens. The expertise and knowledge of EYELEVEL's employees is immense, ranging from local production in South America to creating global interconnected digital solutions.

EYELEVEL has launched a global company from Prague, produced bespoke articles for many clients on global scale, managed to set up a warehouse in China and created a digital solution that is currently operational in 27 countries, but the knowledge of how these things were achieved remains in the heads of the people who did it.

This can become a problem if the key people responsible leave the company and at the same time, it makes it very hard to pass this knowledge on to newly hired employees.

Also, ordinary employees who work in London don't know what projects are being worked on in Prague and it is therefore hard for them to connect the dots and see the picture-end goal. Without this overview they don't know if the problems that they are facing have been solved by another employee in different office already and have to reinvent the wheel over and over again.

I suggest to solve the problem of knowledge sharing in EYELEVEL on three levels, sharing project updates from every office to make them more connected, create best practices from already executed projects and educate employees in retail and digital knowledge.

7.1.1 Global project updates

To make all global offices connected and to let regular employees know what is happening around the world, I suggest that one- or two-page summary from every office to be created and shared with all EYELEVEL around the globe on monthly basis. This information about current projects, best practices used, mistakes made and lessons learned will help all global employees not to repeat the mistakes that their colleagues already made and will result in more smoothly managed projects.

Also, sharing detailed latest project updates from every office might result into increased demand for office mobility and rotation and also spark some new local projects if other global projects are taken as an inspiration.

I suggest the content to be teased through email, which will display first paragraph of the article along with a link to an internal website, which will display the whole article along with related documents. Employees from EYELEVEL Prague can also be notified through the current EYE Beacon smartphone application that they have installed on their work phones.

Managing directors of respective offices should the ones who will collect the project updates and lessons learned for every office. They will be asked to fill in a simple form that will guide them through the article creation with questions such as:
- What projects did you execute during the last month and what are their specifics?
- What challenges did you have to solve and how did you overcome them?
- What did you learn as a team while working on the project that could help other EYELEVEL employees?
- What is your largest success in the last month?

Once managing directors of all offices create content for their countries, the final article with corresponding documents and photos will be manually created and uploaded to a dedicated internal website. A teaser email will be then sent to all global employees that will contain first paragraphs from every office and link to the internal web page where can employees see the entire content.

7.1.2 Best practises

As EYELEVEL grew from a local Czech office to a Global company, there were challenges that repeated themselves along the way as the business grew. How to set up a new office in remote location, how to look for suppliers abroad and how

to deal with diversified cultures. Questions that are still very relevant today, but questions that there are not any written answers to.

To share the vast knowledge that EYELEVEL employees gained while working on global projects, I suggest this knowledge to be summarized and put into a "how to" guide at will address the specific topics of EYELEVEL's business.

This guide will help other EYELEVEL employees who are solving similar challenges to take a look at a solution that they colleagues came up with and apply them to their local specifics, which will save them time significantly.

The summarized knowledge should be related to various business and legal aspects of the inner workings of EYELEVEL, answering some of the questions written bellow:

- How to win a client?
- How to create an engaging presentation?
- How to set up a new office?
- How to find new suppliers in a new location?
- How to set up a distribution network in China?
- How to create a proper quotation and cost estimate?
- How to check quality of articles?
- How to work with Chinese suppliers?
- How to manage diverse teams?
- How to successfully run own warehouse?

These articles with relevant documents should be put into the existing internal webpage called EYELEVEL Academy, which currently hosts technical guides (e.g. how to set up VPN, how to connect to remote desktop) and few videos from employee trainings.

7.1.3 Retail and digital specific education

To provide the best service for clients, EYELEVEL employees should be educated in the retail and digital environment and have access to the latest information and best global practices from those fields. As the job at EYELEVEL is fairly demanding, employees can sometimes struggle with keeping up with the latest trends from project management, retail and digital environment.

I suggest two sections of the EYELEVEL Academy internal webpage to be created for the purpose of sharing the latest news from the respective business fields, which will be called "Retail news" and Digital news". Those sub-websites will be linked to electronic Flipboard[70] magazine, which will be moderated by selected employees who work as production, rollout, account and digital managers and

[70] See www.flipboard.com

who have the most knowledge from the respective fields.[71] When those selected experts find an interesting article that is relevant to EYELEVEL employees, they will share it to one of those Flipboard magazines. Employees will then be able to browse all relevant news and best practices that are relevant for their professional development on one place and will not have to actively look for them.

The newly created Flipboard magazine can be also put into the new internal EYE Beacon application that employees have preinstalled on their work phones.

7.2 Unify all internal tools and web services

There are many internal tools and services that EYELEVEL has developed or adopted throughout its long history, ranging from simple Dropbox account for file sharing between offices to advanced internal portals where employees can approve purchase orders and invoices. Some of these services are tied to every user, some of them to an office or team.

Unfortunately, there is nor any list of those internal tools available to employees, neither any overview or description of how these tools can help them with their everyday job.

EYELEVEL is currently using those tools and services for internal purposes:
- Office 365 (Microsoft office with online collaboration possibilities)
- Intranet
- EYELEVEL Family (list of EYELEVEL employees with their photos, names and teams they belong to)
- Sendit (internally developed service for sharing and sending very large files such as presentations or internal videos)
- Smartsheet (online spreadsheet platform with collaboration ability)
- Mindmeister (platform for creating mind maps)
- Blueworks (online collaboration tool for creating process charts)
- Trackstar (tool for setting personal goals and managing personal development)
- Webex (service for hosting worldwide conference calls with the ability of screen sharing)
- Lync (internal chat tool)
- Property (web service with list of company computers, phones and other equipment assigned to every employee)

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[71] About.flipboard.com, (2015). *Tutorials | Flipboard*. [online] Available at: https://about.flipboard.com/tutorials/ [Accessed 11 Aug. 2015].

- Suppliers portal (web portal that allows employees to approve supplier's purchase orders)
- Client portals (web portal that allows clients to order fixtures for their stores and EYELEVEL employees to monitor those orders and compare them with forecasted numbers)
- Trackit (internally developed ERP system that helps with planning of production and roll out of produced stores)
- M3 (new ERP system that will replace Trackit ERP system in Q3 2015)
- Dropbox (platform for sharing internal documents within teams or offices)
- EYELEVEL Academy (internally developed platform for sharing educational videos and recorded trainings)
- EYELEVEL events (internally developed platform for sharing photos and videos from past conferences and important global company status meetings)

In order to help new and current employees with orienting among various internal tools that EYELEVEL is currently using, I suggest creating a simple webpage that will have all of them listed along with their description and how they can aid employees with their everyday tasks. This web page should have employee login with single sign on function, when employees enter it for the first time. Thanks to the single sign on login, when employees log in once to this portal, they will automatically be logged in in all of the services on the portal. When they click on one of the services, they will be automatically directed to the desired web page when they will already be logged into their individual account.

In order to achieve this, all of the services that will be on the portal need to have the single sign on feature and the portal must be programmed in a way that will allow this ability.

The portal in question should be designed in EYELEVEL colours and with responsive design, as it will be quite likely that it will also be used on employee's smartphones and tablets.

This guidepost-like internal webpage will hopefully organise all tools and services that EYELEVEL employees are using and help newly hired employees to discover services that could make their work more effective.

7.3 Internal communication tool

Email is a very effective form of communication, especially when it comes to official communication with clients, but it might not always be the fastest and easiest way to communicate electronically within a company or a team.

As mentioned in previous chapters, EYELEVEL tried to adopt instant messaging platform Lync, which is however not very popular and used among employees mainly due the lack of basic features such as history and also due to some technical problems. The fact that people don't open up Lync when they arrive to work in the morning because they had technical difficulties with it the previous day then results into social networking problem, which is sometimes referred to as chicken and an egg problem.

This means that the people who don't mind using the service have limited possibilities who to write to, because their colleagues who don't find the service reliable stopped using it. Because of that, the network starts losing participants as more and more people leave it because their colleagues who they wanted to reach are not there. As Lync is one of Microsoft's products and EYELEVEL obviously doesn't have any way of fixing those technical errors and adding new features.

Rather than waiting for precious months, I suggest that EYELEVEL starts using communication platform called Slack, which has been thoroughly tested by EYELEVEL's Digital department for over 6 months. Slack allows users to write messages, share documents and form project related chat groups.

Not only has this platform been tested by one of EYELEVEL's department, but many large multinational companies such as eBay, Sony, Yelp and Adobe have adopted it to replace their internal communication tool or email as well. [72]

Slack is especially handy for newly hired employees, who will have access to all previous communication and exchanged documents of all employees within the group that they will be added to in Slack. This can then rapidly shorten the time that the new employee needs to understand the history and background of various projects.

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[72] Hamburger, E. (2014). *Slack is killing email*. [online] The Verge. Available at: http://www.theverge.com/2014/8/12/5991005/slack-is-killing-email-yes-really [Accessed 31 Jul. 2015].

This also goes into strong positive contrast with email, where the newly hired employee starts with a clean slate and with zero email in the inbox, which however also means zero information shared. [73]

For the specifics of implementation in EYELEVEL, it will be required to ensure that employees will be able to log in with their current company user name and password. Luckily, Slack does support this single sign on function. [74] Slack also has an iOS Application of the service, which will make it especially convenient for EYELEVEL as all of the employees have company iPhones.

However, one of the largest drawbacks of Slack is that it currently does not support video calling or screen sharing, which are most likely to be very demanded features. However, Slack has acquired a company called Screenhero that has this technology and is at the moment in process of implementing these two highly demanded features into its core application. [75]

7.4 EYE Beacon mobile application

One of the areas of internal communication where EYELEVEL is very progressive is the mobile iOS Application, which was created in order to communicate news with employees who are in the office more effectively. Since the launch of the Application at the June Recharge conference in 2015, it has been downloaded 114 times[76], which means the adoption rate of 66%[77].

Thanks to the high adoption rate among EYELEVEL employees, it creates a great opportunity for further improvement of the internal communication, especially when it comes to limiting email communication.

Currently, lunches for employees are cooked automatically every day, unless the employees cancel them before 1pm on the previous day. This opt out is done through email communication, when the employees who don't want their lunch for certain day to be cooked need to send and email to a front desk receptionist, who then confirms that the opt out was received. Based on that information, the

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[73] Themobilesurge.com, (2015). *The Mobile Surge — What a Successful Slack Implementation Looks Like*. [online] Available at: http://themobilesurge.com/post/117485911695/what-a-successful-slack-implementation-looks-like [Accessed 31 Jul. 2015].
[74] OneLogin, (2015). *Slack Single Sign-On (SSO) - Active Directory Integration - LDAP Sync - SAML*. [online] Available at: https://www.onelogin.com/connector/slack-single-sign-on [Accessed 31 Jul. 2015].
[75] Kastrenakes, J. (2015). *Slack is going to add video chat, voice chat, and screen-sharing*. [online] The Verge. Available at: http://www.theverge.com/2015/1/28/7917857/slack-buys-screen-sharing-app-screenhero [Accessed 31 Jul. 2015].
[76] Internal statistics
[77] 114/174

front desk assistant then reports the employees who will be in the office next day and send this report to the chef.

Employees cancel the lunches for some days because if they don't do so, their lunch is still cooked and even though they are not in the office, the price of the lunch will be deducted from their salary.

This process is however not fully effective, because of a lot of back and forth email communication going from employees to front desk receptionist. Also, some employees forget about cancelling their lunch or are too busy to write the cancelation email, that they sometimes don't do it and the food is wasted.

I suggest upgrading the smartphone Application with "Cancel your lunch" function, which will in one click let employees choose which days they want their lunch to be cancelled. After selecting the dates, one click submit button will send the information to the server and store it there. Every day at 1pm, an Excel file with all employees who will have lunch on the next day (created from list of all employees, minus the one who cancelled their lunch through the App) will be automatically generated and sent to the Chef's email. This way, all email communication regarding lunches can be limited or even fully eliminated, which will help employees to focus on their key competencies.

Implementation of the new feature described above will be relatively easy, because when employees opened the current Application for the first time, they were asked to fill in their company credentials along with their email address. This means that the information about lunch cancelation for selected days can be paired with the name of the employee who used the Application.

In the long term future, the application could also be enhanced with features for creating business trip expenses directly from the smartphone by taking photos of the receipts and sending them in an unified form to the accounting department and with ability to request holiday, sick day or home office.

7.5 Intranet

As described in the 4th chapter of this thesis, EYELEVEL's intranet is currently used for only one function and that is holiday requests. Furthermore, most information on the intranet is 2 to 5 years old, which makes it confusing and hard to find relevant information there.

I suggest EYELEVEL to either update the intranet with new job offers, company presentations and other content, or stop using the intranet and move the last remaining used feature – holiday requests – to the newly developed smartphone application called EYE Beacon. Switching the function of requesting holiday from computer to smartphone will not be an issue in EYELEVEL, because all employees are equipped with company iPhones.

For the sake of saving development time and moving this function from the intranet to the application as soon as possible, the approval of the holiday by

employee's supervisor will be done in the same way as it currently is. The supervisor will receive an email with the employee's name and the dates for which he requested the holiday and it will have buttons that will allow the supervisor to either approve or decline the holiday request. Once one of these actions is selected, the employee will receive another email that will inform him of the supervisor's action.

7.6 ERP system

The ERP system is used correctly in the Prague office, however EYELEVEL UK is struggling with getting used to using it on daily basis. The ERP system is at the moment not fully understood by all employees who should be using it and employees who do use it use it either wrong, or not to its full capacity. One of examples of not using the ERP system properly is that some stock level of goods in the warehouse for certain projects is rather kept in Smartsheet service, rather than the ERP. As the majority of EYELEVEL Prague does work with the ERP system, having similar information on multiple locations creates confusion between the teams.

The entire EYELEVEL UK office should therefore receive a thorough training by Prague's ERP subject matter experts, especially on the topics that the employees are currently doing wrong. They should also receive printed or electronic manuals that will help them to remember the ERP system even when the subject matter experts from Prague leave.

7.7 Evaluation of employees

Currently, employees receive feedback during their performance reviews that happen 2 times a year only from their superiors. This may be sufficient for some positions and employee, however the employee doesn't receive the whole picture of how the team is accepting him and how he manages to work with his subordinates. Also, the manager who reviews the subordinated can be biased in a positive or negative way, because he might not be present during all employee's actions and decisions.

Because of that, I suggest that all employees will be reviewed through 360-degree review, which will give them the best possibility to understand the full scope of what they are doing wrong and what they are doing right.

Apart from the regular review by manager, 360-degree review consists of review done by peers and subordinates. Employee's colleagues will be asked how they see the performance of the employee in question and subordinates will share how well the employee manages them.

For this specific case, EYELEVEL can use a number of free services that are tailored specifically for the 360-degree review. One of the suggested free services is Selfstir[78] and the other Employee Free Review[79].

One of the most important aspects of this review is that all entries must remain anonymous, to guarantee that all employee's colleagues and subordinates will want to share their honest opinions.

I believe that it will be best to start with this process with managers and employees who do have subordinates and then adopting it also for regular employees in order to help them understand how they are viewed by their peers.

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[78] Selfstir.com, (2015). *360 Degree Feedback - Selfstir.com*. [online] Available at: http://www.selfstir.com [Accessed 31 Jul. 2015].
[79] Employeepeerreview.com, (2015). *Employee Peer Review*. [online] Available at: http://www.employeepeerreview.com [Accessed 31 Jul. 2015].

Conclusion

Internal communication is one of the aspects of human resource activities, on which companies focus when they want their employees to be satisfied and effective. Unfortunately, it does not always get as much attention at it deserves. When new human resource departments are established, they usually begin to focus on recruiting and training of new and current employees and internal communication comes as third or forth most important activity for this department. [80]

However, properly executed internal communication is an aspect of inner workings of a company that distinguishes excellent companies from the average ones, leaders from followers. Internal communication is then something that is managed almost naturally in small companies, but it has to be defined, analysed and managed when the firm starts growing and expanding to foreign countries.

When internal communication works properly within a company, employees have a full set of information that they need for their work and become more effective. Also, if firms allow their employees to participate on some of the internal company decisions, it makes employees happier with their everyday job and more loyal, which lowers the employee fluctuation.

Good internal communication also allows companies to share the internal knowledge that it gained through years of conduction business and thus educates its employees. This is especially useful when some of the challenges that employees are facing were have been solved by different internal team or in another country. It is indeed true that humans learn from mistakes, but sometimes those mistakes don't have to be their own.

From my critical analysis of EYELEVEL's current internal communication, I must conclude that EYELEVEL is doing exceptionally well in some areas such as IT support portal and internal smartphone application, both of which lower the amount of emails that employees receive.

However, EYELEVEL is lacking in sharing its gained knowledge, even though it has been in business for almost 10 years and currently has offices on 5 continents.

In the last chapter, I recommend EYELEVEL to focus on and improve some of those aspects of internal communication that are still not executed perfectly. EYELEVEL should also focus on further reducing the internal information that

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[80] Holtz, S. (2004). *Corporate conversations*. New York: AMACOM, p.ix.

employees receive in emails and replace some of it with the proposed internal communication tool.

If those recommendations are implemented, I believe that EYELEVEL will improve its competitiveness and its employees will become more effective and happier. When implementing those recommendations, EYELEVEL should keep in mind its global presence and create the solutions in a way that they are usable in all EYELEVEL offices around the world.

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