

# **Dissertation Report on Social Media and HRM: The New Mode of Internal Communication**

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## CERTIFICATE FROM THE INSTITUTE

This is to certify that the Project Report titled “*Social Media and HRM: The New Mode of Internal Communication*” is a bonafide work carried out by Ms. Tanya Saraswat of MBA 2012-14 and submitted to Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, Bawana Road, Delhi-42 in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Masters of Business Administration.

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## DECLARATION

I, Tanya Saraswat, student of MBA 2012-14 of Delhi School of Management, Delhi Technological University, Bawana Road, Delhi-42 declare that Dissertation Report on “*Social Media and HRM: The New Mode of Internal Communication*” submitted in partial fulfillment of Degree of Masters of Business Administration is the original work conducted by me.

The information and data given in the report is authentic to the best of my knowledge.

This Report is not being submitted to any other University for award of any other Degree, Diploma and Fellowship.

Tanya Saraswat

Place:

Date:

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The satiation and euphoria that accompany the successful completion of the project would be incomplete without the mention of the people who made it possible.

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I hope that I can build upon the experience and knowledge that I have gained and make a valuable contribution towards marketing in any industry in coming future.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Social media is well-established as a consumer and brand-oriented set of tools. Increasingly, social media is being offered as an innovative solution for internal effectiveness. When strategy and governance are integrated with social media tools, they can positively impact your organization. An organization that thoughtfully embraces social media can realize opportunities across four areas:

- 1 Collaboration: Constant, transparent, and effective collaboration with employees, candidates, customers, and suppliers.
- 2 Talent management: Top performance delivered through robust and real-time training, development, and support.
3. Administration: Employee-centric Human Resources (HR) operations, regardless of where employees are in the world or organization hierarchy.
- 4 Employee engagement: Single, unified culture with engaged employees driving business success.

Companies that don't embrace social media as a communication and recruitment tool might risk losing potential business and quality candidates to their competitors that are focused on such outreach.

"Other companies are doing it, and if you're not, you're missing out on a large candidate audience and top talent." In this new millennial cult of web browsing, socialization through Social Media Websites has become the new trend. Befriending someone who is sitting at other part of the world in front of computers with the help of internet, sharing ideas and thoughts, expressing views, supporting others views on issues of common interest, have become the new order among Internet users. As a recruiter needs the most talented, qualified and largest applicant pool, leveraging on the SMW to tap potential talent is called Social Media Recruitment. And, to retain such employees, keep growing in business, is required effective communication, using Social Media Tools.

A CareerBuilder survey of more than 2,500 employers, released in August,2012, indicated 35 percent of respondents use social media to promote their companies. Of those employers, 21 percent are using it to recruit and research potential employees, and 18 percent are using it to strengthen their employment brands.

Hence, it becomes inevitable to understand how Social media is entwined with the Human Resource functions in the modern times. In the report we shall try to answer of the following questions, some in brief and some in great detail.

- How much one is familiar with role of Social Media in Internal Communications in an organization and to critically evaluate the same?
- How Social Media is replacing traditional methods of communication?
- What are the current trends in organizations in using Social media portals and target the Management graduate, among working professionals and online HR Professionals?
- To understand the usage patterns of social media in different organizations.
- Common mistakes companies commit while implementing social media tools for employees.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Internal Communications in Organizations and its Importance

Effective internal communication is crucial for successful organizations as it affects the ability of strategic managers to engage employees and achieve objectives.

Internal communication happens constantly within organisations and includes informal chat on the “grapevine” as well as managed communication. Despite its importance to practice, there are considerable gaps in internal communication theory and theorists have called for research on its mandates, scope and focus (Forman and Argenti, 2005). Poor internal communication is a major concern for organisations since it results in workplace inefficiency. The term internal communication is used throughout this project because it is preferred by corporate communication theorists (Van Riel, 1995; Forman and Argenti, 2005). However, alternatives are used in the literature, sometimes interchangeably, including:

- internal relations (Grunig and Hunt, 1984)
- employee communication (Argenti, 1996; Smidts et al., 2001)
- internal communications (Cornelissen, 2004)
- employee relations (Grunig and Hunt, 1984; Argenti, 1996; Quirke, 2000)
- internal public relations (Jefkins, 1988; Wright, 1995) and;
- staff communication (Stone, 1995).

Grunig et al. (1992) provide a review of internal communication research and conclude: “In spite of all of this research, however, we emerge from this section with little theoretical understanding of how internal communication makes organizations more effective.” While they propose symmetrical communication as a way to improve effectiveness and achieve excellence, gaps in the literature on internal communication continue to be highlighted. Argenti (1996) argues: “... no other corporate communication subfunction offers more of an opportunity for genuinely sought-after research than employee communication.” Similarly, management scholars Smidts et al. (2001) suggest that internal communication is a “rather neglected” management instrument and Kitchen and Daly (2002) call for definition and discussion of internal communication. In another text on public relations, Yeomans (2006) observes that: “Very little attention is paid to internal communication by public relations scholars yet it is viewed as part of an organisation’s strategic communication function.”

Given the need for definition and discussion of internal communication established above, existing definitions will be discussed next.

Argenti (1996, p. 94) refers to a paucity of definitions of internal communication and notes that literature reviewers “turn up the same few articles over and over again.” Since, there are few definitions it is not surprising that over the past decade or so, a

number of writers have cited the same passage from Frank and Brownell (1989) as a definition of internal communication (Van Riel, 1995; Smidts et al.,2001; Dolphin, 2005).

The passage these authors cite as a definition of internal or employee communication reads:

“the communications transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialisation that are intended to design and redesign organisations, to implement designs, and to co-ordinate day-to-day activities” (Frank and Brownell, 1989).

Van Riel refers to this definition to describe internal communication as an element of organisational communication, within his model of overall integrated corporate communication, shown in the Figure below. Likewise, Dolphin (2005) refers to the definition and explores internal communication in the context of the corporate communication function. Smidts et al. (2001) interpret it as employee communication and apply it to their consideration of employee communication with supervisors and colleagues.

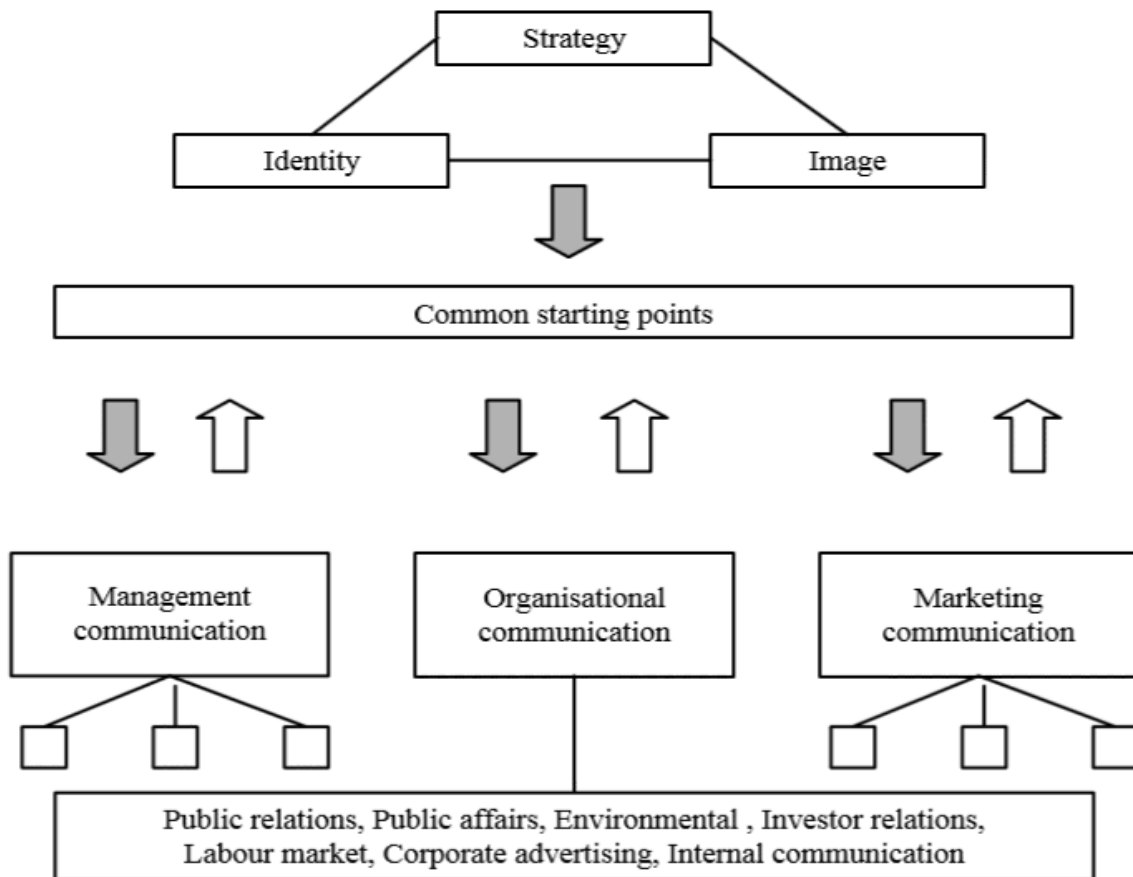


Figure 1: Internal communication positioned within van Riel's (1995) integrated corporate communication model

Research shows that the most talked about subjects that dominate social conversations focus on our places of employment and our specific work. Even though we have instant messaging, blogs, newsletters, personal digital assistants, town-hall meetings, social networking, conference calls, employment manuals and a host of other modern communication aides—the tried and true “water cooler” still seems to be the hottest spot for employees to share what they “know” and learn what they “don’t.” Of course we can’t forget the virtual water cooler represented by today’s wired global environment. Word travels fast—and whether or not it’s truthful or accurate seldom tempers its spread. The speed with which this limitless forum breeds rumors and false statements can be alarming at times and should be a call to action for an equally robust internal mechanism for the dissemination of accurate news and information. The virtual water cooler is most definitely not the only kind of internal communication an organization should rely on to share information throughout the enterprise.

Leaders and managers often fall into the common trap of assuming that their employees understand the vision and values of their organization, as well as staff requirements to help advance the mission. Without a doubt, an internal communications strategy will be tested most during times of crisis and organizational transition. However, strategy—being the key word to watch in this process for simply relying on internal communications in its purest form—is only half of the equation. Not until an organization overlays a strategic and measurable component to the internal communications function do we achieve desired results and elevate internal communications activities from an informational-only approach to one that both influences and engages to achieve desired results and strategic outcomes.

Every organization has need for internal communications, but it means many things to many people. In reality, however, the primary driver of this function is simple—employees and management must communicate in order to function. Whether or not these exchanges are up and down often remains a mystery unless properly designed and deployed strategic messaging methodologies are embraced and implemented.

## 1.2 Changing trends in Internal Communications

These days, it seems everywhere you go, you are hearing about someone's Facebook post, a most recent tweet or a pinned post! And, while this is not a terribly new phenomenon around the water cooler or at the happy hour, it is now popping up in corporate meetings. What once used to be reprimanded as a waste of company time and employee resources, online social portals are now being embraced as internal tools to facilitate communication.

I had heard and seen companies using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, and Other Social Networks (OSNs) as marketing and recruiting tools but their use was mainly as another external communication tool-leaving out the newspaper and yellow pages for the internet. But, the new concept is mainstream companies using it internally. Some of the companies' top executives, recently have been sending out Facebook updates, LinkedIn messages, and tweets during conferences, board meetings, and strategic planning sessions.

Social media today has emerged as a powerful business and HR tool. These tools are now being applied to enhance employee engagement and talent acquisition, improve internal communication, promote team companionship, communicate on a global scale, and create internal points of contact that were previously unavailable.

## 2. Project Work Undertaken

It's no secret that social media is transforming the way people communicate in the workplace.

As more and more companies are realising the value of engaging their employees online, social media is quickly becoming a preferred way of increasing knowledge sharing, encouraging teamwork and collaboration and adding value to the employee experience. To this effect, many businesses and organisations are using social media tools, like forums, blogs and social networks, to enable their staff and stakeholders to converse, collaborate and connect.

Using social media as part of your internal communications plan has a number of benefits. For one, companies are able to have real-time, authentic conversations with employees. Plus the very nature of social media means that anyone can participate in discussions, allowing communication to flow from the top down, bottom up, and even from side to side. If you are part of a global company it also means you can connect with people all over the world on a more involved level than just email and phone, thanks to the picture, profile and forum features available on tools like Facebook and MySpace.

Hence, this project has been undertaken to analyse the patterns and effects of the changing modes of communications used by organisations these day with the 'viral' social media.

This project focusses mainly upon:

- To know the current trends in organizations in using Social media portals and target the Management graduate, among working professionals and HR Professionals.
- To understand the usage patterns of social media in different organizations.
- The pros and cons of changing mediums of communications.
- Common mistakes companies commit while implementing social media tools for employees.

## **2.1 Dissertation Subject and Research Questions**

The thesis subject is the changing internal communication with the advent of Social Media. Most international companies have a well-established internal communication channel as a priority. I will, by this project, introduce beforehand researched internal communication analysis with practical solutions and recommendations for more effective internal communication channels to be used.

Communicating instantly with co-workers in a professional manner is important. Internal communication is even more essential when the employees are working in different offices, locations and departments. Thus, nowadays organisations are putting a lot of effort into establishing a self-sustainable internal communication flow. Organisations have hierarchical structure, different department teams and expect employees to make decisions and take action in collaboration with other departments. (Guffey & Almonte 2007).

## **2.2 Research problem and objectives of the thesis**

The research objective is to research and analyse the current internal communications channels used by various organisations and the ways to improve internal communication channels through Social Media tools. The research problem is defined as the study of current internal communication channels and their inability to function as effective as they are supposed to. And, in the concurrent times, the evolution of internal communication with the social networking websites.

The research will focus on current employees in various organizations, and their satisfaction level of existing internal communication channels. The main purpose of the study is defined as: "How current internal communication channels are evolving with the advent of Social networking websites?" In this research I am also finding out the answers to the following sub questions:

- What are the current trends in organizations in using Social media portals, among working professionals and HR Professionals.
- Which communication channels are used and are preferred by the employees?
- How internal communication within organisations could be improved based on the research and suggestions by employees?
- What Common mistakes companies commit while implementing social media tools for employees?

To answer these research questions I shall research and analyse the current internal communication channels used in 45 different organizations.

## 2.3 Thesis limitations

This project has been set to various limitations in order for the study to be relevant and valid.

These limitations are as follows:

- Focus of the study is internal communication channels and the use of Social Networking websites in 45 different organisations, not focusing on the content of the internal communication channels used.
- Second limitation that has been set for the project is that the quantitative research survey is distributed to the staff and employees of various organisations, not the entire clientele and partners of the company.
- Furthermore, the research questionnaire will be based on the interview module survey; this limitation is set due to the geographical challenges.



### 3. Literature Review

Much has been written regarding the positive measurable impact Social Media Marketing has had on the competitive business landscape. It's given a voice to companies and consumers alike, asserting the power of collective communication by empowering and liberating those who had been stifled by their inability to share their values, experiences, opinions, knowledge, and expertise to mass audiences in traditional settings. The ability to participate in local and global conversations has created a phenomenon where consumers don't have to be blasted with traditional messaging anymore. They can now interact with these businesses thus creating a higher level of understanding and loyalty that carries forward and tempts all to participate. Confucius said, "...tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I will understand..." A philosophy applied generationally for the last 2,500 years, and one that at the core will continue push the evolution of the business landscape for years to come.

As Social Media tools are reaching new levels of sophistication within the B2B and B2C playing fields, a new trend is emerging in the way businesses interact internally. Social tools are now being applied to enhance employee engagement, improve internal communication, promote team camaraderie, communicate on a global scale, and create internal touch points that were previously unavailable. Whatever the vernacular of your choice is, New Media, Web 2.0, or Social Media, the fact remains that these once misunderstood and often overlooked tools are creating efficiencies, inspiring innovation, promoting information sharing, and fostering an extremely high level of effective cross-functional communication for those businesses who have the savvy and vision to utilize them.

Henceforth, I will introduce the key theories and definitions of internal communication within an organization. This section will allow the reader to understand the fundamental aspects of internal communication used throughout the report.

### 3.1 Workplace communication

Communication is an essential part of everyday work interaction. Employers and employees as well as the customers of the particular organisation who are buying, selling and working within the organisation are directly or indirectly involved in workplace communication. Knowing the tools needed for successful communication at work place will lead to wider influence on other people and increase of effectiveness at set organisation. (Gerson, 2007).

According to Blundel (2004), communication is an instrument used by humans in their everyday interaction. Essentially, communication is a process where information is transmitted between the sender and the receiver. Clear message exchange between two parties is a sign of good communication and in order for the information to be transferred successfully to another person, the receiver, needs to know how to communicate in the modern age. (Blundel 2004).

Communication is used as a means of any organisation to coordinate communication and information exchange within the organisation to establish effective coordination of activities between the members of organisation. Organisations persuade effective communication in order for the members of organisation to achieve set aims, goals and have a clear vision of the organisation. In organisations communication is an essential part of the business strategy to motivate members of organisation and increase overall satisfaction in the organisation leading to increase of the organisations work-load and revenue. (Argenti 2009).

Organisational communication is also defined as the process of transmitted messages interpretation within the organisations units. The overall purpose of the communication and tools used in communication is to establish and moderate mutual beneficial understanding between the units in order for the organisation to successfully achieve set goals for the business. (Gerson 2007).

In communication within the organisation there are three distinct dimensions which are defined as communication flow dimensions. These dimensions are as follows: downward communication, upward communication and horizontal communication. (Hartley & Bruckman 2002).

A downward flow communication is an exchange of information within the organisation from one level, usually the managerial level to the lower level. The Board of Directors, the leadership group and the management level coordinators are setting goals, providing instructions and training to the employees, informing about the policies used in the organisation and urgent matters that need attention of the lower levels of work force. With this downward communication the feedback that has been collected in the process is used to inform leaders of the current status in the organisation. (Downs & Adrian 2004).

An upward flow communication is an information flow from lower levels of organisation, employees, up the organisation's structure. This communication can be defined as formal or informal communication. Upward communication is defined in a sense when the employee has finished their current assignment and the employee sends the work report to the supervisors for feedback or instructions. Organisation environment tone is set by how available is the ability for the employee to communicate with the direct or indirect supervisors. When successful upward communication is established in the organisation it will lead towards more relaxed and friendly atmosphere in the organisation's surroundings leading to more efficient work environment. On the contrary, if upward communication is struggling and lower levels of workforce are unable to freely communicate with the supervisors it can lead to a stressed work atmosphere where there is no room for error due to the lack of feedback which is needed for the successful completion of the task. Upward communication has to be filtered and only the task at hand and useful information is presented to the higher levels of organisation. (Downs & Adrian 2004.)

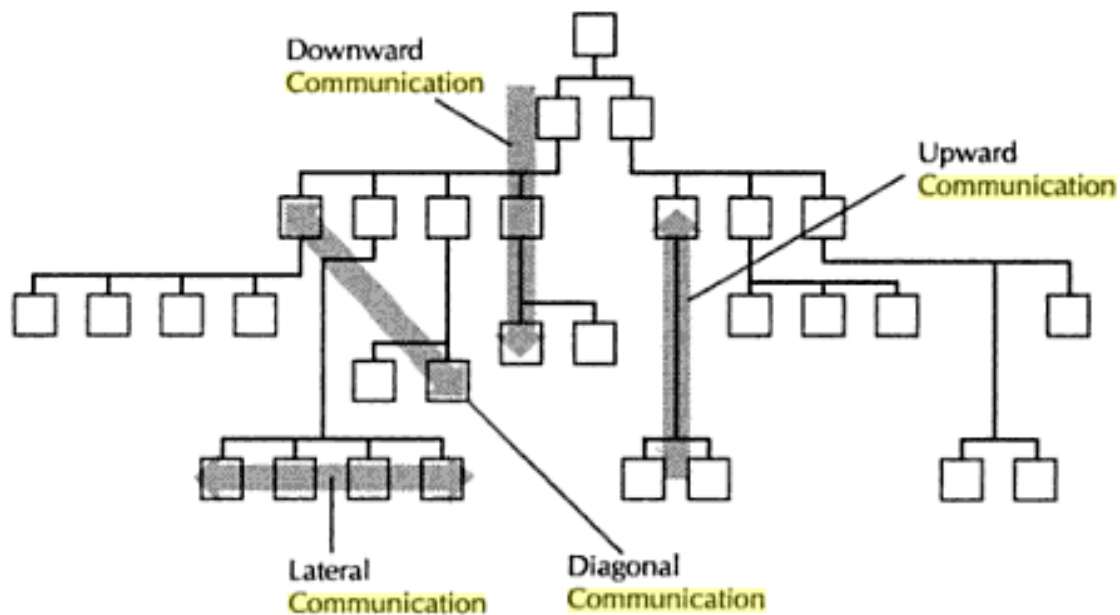


Figure 2: Forms of organisational communication (Montana & Charnov 2000)

A horizontal communication flow is the most common dimension of communication at organisations. Communication takes place in a horizontal way in a perspective from the organisation's structure module including communication with peers, colleagues and fellow workers with whom they are on the same hierarchical level. Furthermore, an informal communication style is used more likely than formal communication depending on the social reasons and the internal structure of the organisation. (Downs & Adrian 2004)

Workforce has more initiative to work harder and stay in the organisation because horizontal communication is stimulating the individual to continue employment in the organisation when there is friendly work atmosphere. Horizontal communication is overlooked and neglected in some case organisations, focusing more on the tangible aspects of the organisational process. However, horizontal communication remains unmistakably necessary process in organisation structure. (Downs & Adrian 2004). Communication is meant to be an equal process between the sender and receiver in order for the message to be fully understood and perceived in a manner that it was intended. Need to communicate is essential part of process in organisations as well as the society itself even in relatively small groups which is defined as two way communication module. (Downs & Adrian 2004).

### **3.2 Internal communication in an organization**

Organisations are putting the most effort on customer satisfaction. The more satisfied are the customers with the product, service and meaning of the organisation the more turnover the organisation can generate. In today's competitive business world organisations are expected to focus their attention to the employees' knowledge of the organisation in order for the organisations core message and values to be communicated with the customers. Successful internal communication is a key factor in organisations ability to create increasing financial performance indicators. (Argenti 2009).

Internal communication is cooperate culture building tool that is not just persuaded as the method, broadcast or publication of the daily interactions between organisations employees'. Strengthening the relationships with employees is one of the main aspects of creating well integrated internal communications module. (Argenti 2009).

Internal communications is also defined as relevant tool in creating understandable, clear and precise organisations image within the internal process of the organisation. Approaches of the internal communication are to motivate, discipline and educate the employees of the set organisation, in order for the recipient to clearly understand the fundamentals of the organisation and be ready to discuss the arising issues presented in everyday communication. (Kalla 2006).

Internal communication is a concept stated as data and information transactions between individuals or different size social groups within the same or different levels of expertise in an organisation. Intent is to create smooth daily transactions of information between the employees of the organisation in order to secure coordinated work process. (Blundel 2004).

Internal communication is a tightly organised process through which organisations workforce is coordinating the work process on daily basis to ensure the functionality of the organisation. Addressing every employee's communication skills and functions are essential in building a self-secure communications module. Organisational communication addresses communication skills of all employees, management communications is focused on the development of the managerial competences of the managers, cooperative communication focuses on the formal cooperate function and organisational communication provides understanding to the employees of spiritual issues and more theoretical based challenges that may accrue working in an multicultural organisation. (Kalla 2006).

Increasingly complex and highly competitive nature and environment of today's business world is creating a demand for well-established internal communication and is putting more pressure in the employees and their communication skills. (Argenti 2009). In any organisation employees are expected to know all the processes of the organisation they are employed in. It is not only personal relations departments' responsibility any more and more emphasis is on employees' ability to communicate organisations structure, meaning and values to the public. When presented with an explicit question about the organisations, an employee has to be able to discuss, explain and motive answers whatever kind of question might be asked. Asked questions may vary from mission and vision of the organisation till current situation in organisation topic. Internal communication has to provide understanding and ways how to communicate with the public when the conversation is touching sensitive subjects such as investments, financial stability or working policies in an organisation. Employees' preparedness and ability to freely discuss and explain in a clear and understandable way about the organisation to the customer shows organisations professionalism and preparedness towards PR. (Kalla 2006).

Organisations internal communication development is based on the current state of the internal communication. In a process of developing internal communication strategy the information of the current methods, existing channels and service are collected for the purpose of examination to determine whether the internal communication target is met in the organisation. Knowing the results of analysis of the current state is essential for reliable internal communication plan implementation. (Smith 2008).

Internal communication system requires three self-preserved communication stages. Crucial information has to be distributed freely in the organisation in order for the employees to know the current state in which the organisation is in. This information can be perceived as appointments, investments that affect lower level in the organisation as well as the modifications in business strategy. Furthermore, internal communication system has to have servers, databases where the needed information is stored and the channels from which the person can access the needed information for easier access from the employees' perspective. Needed information is defined as catalogues, contact information, client register, legislation documents and privacy policies. The third necessary action that is needed for internal communication system's effective work is to

know where needed information is stored and how to get to that particular information. It can be achieved by reminders for important happenings, such as business trips, meetings or upcoming events. These reminders can be done via e-mail, face to face meetings, bulletin boards or internal news server. (Grunig 1992).

In order for the internal communication to be effective internal communication channels has to be modified so that there is no leakage or interpretation of the information provided. Information has to be structured in a set way by the organisation, a module to follow in order for the message to be delivered correctly. The system via messages are sent in the organisation has to be analysed for the information flow channels to be improved. (Grunig 1992).

Internal communication methods are used in organisations. In organisations communication basic assumption is defined as: communication regarding organisations image, mission, vision, and future trends. Communication regarding organisations strategies is a key aspect for the employees' ability to understand the importance of their tasks. The other concept which is being used to describe internal communication in an organisation is day-to-day matters, defined as current organisational structure, financials of the organisation, future aspects of the organisation, changes in the organisation, personal development possibilities, training, employee policies, other department progress, products and services. (Turner 2003).

In organisational level the most important is to receive clear messages from the supervisors. The upper management is setting the tone for the entire organisation. Senior staff has to be fully committed to the importance of the internal communication to create fluent communication flow within the organisation. Managers are communicating with the lower level in the organisation to get hard data, information and process report of how the work is being carried out. This information has to be filtered before presenting to the managers. Professional coach whose task is to develop employees' internal communication skills, is an effective method to remedy internal communication challenges. In addition the managers have to be precise what kind of information is presented later on to the senior staff. Board of directors are expecting short, concrete and insightful report in which it is stated the progress review. (Turner 2003).

When approaching internal communication structure it is important that communication style is led by a supervisor's example. Superior communication directly impacts the whole organisations style and atmosphere. Communication affects workers motivation level and willingness to put an extra effort for the good of the organisation. (Kalla 2006).

Information that is exchanged in the organisation is perceived as information received directly or indirectly from the managerial level. Unofficial communication is a type of communication that is gathered or perceived when communication is between employees. This unofficial communication is perceived as a rumour or half-truth. Only when the information is received from the supervisors only then the information is official and there is no room for speculation of 'Who said what?'. (Blundel & Ippolito 2008).

In many organisations, communication is seen as a function that is done by special departments such as cooperate communication, public relations and marketing communication departments. Communication is a specialised function used by all the departments in the organisation in formal and informal communication. Communication plays important role in all areas of the organisation particular in overall integration of the organisation, and in shareholders relations. (Barker & Angelopulo 2006).

### **3.3 Forms and channels of internal communication**

Internal communication has three methods in transmitting information in an organisation. These two methods verbal communication, written communication are perceived as the most reliable. Gestural communication which can be interrelated with two main methods is becoming hard to predict and used only as an addition to verbal communication. Two most reliable communication methods are verbal and written communication, because gestural communication is very hard to predict, understand and interpret in a business life. Verbal communication is defined as a casual conversation, formal conversation. Non-verbal communication also called gestural communication is active when an information sender is transferring the information to receiver through body language and gestures. It can range from salutations, greetings and expressions. Written communication is defined as all the information that is transferred in a written form such as memos', notifications, notes, posters and any form where the information is passed through written text. (Stuart & Sarow 2007, 200).

Forms of internal communication are defined as follows: Intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, mediated communication, business communication and integrated business communication. Intrapersonal communication is an activity that occurs within your own body. Intrapersonal communication is helping one individual to gather thoughts and information within the mind and play out a scenario in mind of an interpersonal conversation. This communication form is used in order to be precise and organised when the information has to be delivered to other person in the organisation. (Stuart & Sarow 2007).

Interpersonal communication is defined as exchange of information between more than one people. In theory it is persuaded as communication in one on one conversation or individuals interacting with many people in the organisation or society. It is a process where ideas, thoughts and feelings are communicated between sender and receiver. This process can include all aspects of a conversation such as listening, assessing, persuading and also non-verbal communication. Furthermore, interpersonal communication can be made using direct and indirect communication channels such as face to face meetings and indirect interaction such as computerized setting interaction. (Stuart & Sarow 2007).

Mediated communication form is when the interaction between employees or staff in the organisation occurs via computer-mediated communication tools such as instant

messaging, e-mails, chat rooms or internal communication network. Social media is also part of this form of communication, because nowadays companies have their own internal social networking site where the interaction between the employees can be carried out in secure and safe fashion. (Stuart & Sarow 2007).

Business communication refers to message transfer which is a part of a business sector. This form is also called formal communication within an organisation due to its subject matter. Business communication can vary from personal e-mails, office memos, sales presentations, conferences and staff meetings to daily greetings, cooperate branding strategies and department meetings. (Stuart & Sarow 2007).

Integrated internal communication form is defined as organisations current forms of communication. This form is usually persuaded in small and medium size organisations, due to the fact that the departments are closely interrelated and the communication forms are overlapping and creating united communications network. (Stuart & Sarow 2007).

Internal communication is higher management and employee joined network. Meetings, conferences, happenings and gatherings are regular occurrence in weekly schedule of employees and personnel. Meetings are used in order for the operational information to be communicated to the responsible department or a person. Meetings and gathering are also process used to discuss the on-going organisational development, news feeds and relevant external information that affects the organisation. Partly the operational information is being communicated horizontally from a person to person at the same level in the company and it can be positive and negative at the same time. Positive aspect is that the information is being transferred fast and to the right person, but the negative aspect is that the information can be misleading and altered in the process. When the information has been past from a person to person the original meaning can be lost in the interpretation of the set individual. (Stuart & Sarow 2007).

Considering the formal channels of internal communication aspect in the organisation the employees are aware and on edge when receiving the information, because formal communication involves more stress factors than informal. Informal communication network include processes from private conversations between employees till personal jokes and gossip shared in the common room. Informal communication is in cases more important than formal communication, due to the reliability of the content and the fast message delivery time comparing to formal memos and staff meetings. Organisations are putting more effort into the informal communication due to the increase of productivity because of it in the recent years. (Argenti 2009).

Communication with the management level is important process of internal communication. With this process the management is present in the eyes of the employees and who the interest of their work as well as acknowledgment of their effort. When manager is expressing regular interest in employees work it gives the incentive to work harder and prove the worth of the job their doing. Communication in a group is proving to be the best indicator of the work efficiency due to the instant feedback that



employees present to the management level representative. In organisations where there is clear hierarchy managers should arrange frequent meetings with the employees and daily “check-ins” on the employees floor. (Argenti 2009).

Distant communication channels also known as online communication transmit information in instant messages within the organisation community. This process is reaching wider target group personnel with less effort saving time in arranging regular meetings. Organisations internet platforms serve as the data transmitter for the online communication which is preserving privacy of the information provided as well as the urgent information is very unlikely to be misunderstood. Consequently companies have to invest considerable time and thought effort into ensuring that these messages that are communicated through the online communication are getting through the employees and to the intended target group. Organisations intranet, internal communication, has to be dynamic and engaging with the home page regularly updated. It also has to be communicated to the employees that it is their responsibility to daily check the intranet for details, news, announcements and changed that can occur on a spot. Employees who are checking the intranet every morning before they start their work day are the ones who have insight information of the organisation and are on top of their day to day duties and responsibilities. (Argenti 2009).

Corporate meetings are held when urgent and very important information has to be delivered as soon as possible to the target group. These meeting usually affect the organisations community in whole and are important to be held at least one in a quarter. It is efficient way to communicate important message that otherwise could be interpreted in different ways in which the message is losing the original impact and importance. (Kalla 2006).

Operational guidelines in internal communication are specifically designed for the integration in all communication projects in the organisation. These guidelines are set by the superiors in order to create standardised communication method. When there are set operational guidelines the personnel in the organisation are able to understand, modify and explain the information communicated to them by the higher level of the organisation. (Barker & Angelopulo 2006).

### **3.4 Cultural diversity in multicultural organisation**

Most of the 21st Century workforce is diverse, regards to the research on internationalisation aspect in Section 2.3 of the report, meaning workforce is consisting of people from many different national and ethnic backgrounds. From the legal stand point people are entitled to freedom of speech, differing sexual orientations, religious affiliations and family structures. People diversity has to be acknowledges and respected in all interactions and communication aspects. (Brief 2008).

From around 1960 International companies are pressured to establish equal opportunities to minorities in the work place starting from admission to the work till day to day interaction with them. The initial statement that is upon for the companies to follow is stated as: "Equal rights necessarily came to mean we are all the e same". Although in nowadays companies are pressured to follow modified version of the statement which has developed into one in regards of internationalisation and uniqueness of a person at work: "Viewing people having equal writes while being different. Each person has its own personality, background, culture and ideas that should not be tossed in one category rather than taken each person as a unique and rare specimen. (Guirdham 2005).

Workplace diversity focuses on empowering people to not shy away from their culture and difference rather to develop and contribute with their unique talents and skills in solving organisations business challenges. Organisations strive to encourage personnel to interact with all the employees to achieve the most effective solution to the problem or task. Recently the need to adapt for cultural difference has become major concern of organisations' general management. Reasoning behind the concern is the fast growing internationalisation in business life. Furthermore, research shows that cultural differences in the society and in workplace strongly effect on subconscious level how people behave. (Guirdham 2005).

Internal as is external communication draws people to speak in one language and also use nonverbal messages. Factors such as context, mood and individual personality plays significant role in the day to day communication. As communication is interactive influencing the tone in the company the set rules of the day to day communication has to be established within the organisation. Miscommunication may lead to hostile work atmosphere, conflicts and unsatisfied behaviour. (Guirdham 2005).

Cultural differences are known to affect people's purchasing power and knowing how to market to specific target market is essential in organisations development of strategic planning. For instance Scandinavian countries are prawn to faster take of rates meaning that the introduced product or services is exception in the society faster than in other countries. In service economies, meaning most of the European countries, business success depends on the effective interaction and communication with customers, partners and other levels in the organisation. Employees have to be well trained in the art of persuading people to buy or use the product provided, requiring well-developed interpersonal knowledge of the target market. (Guirdham 2005).

Well established internal communication tools and channels help to avoid the multicultural differences in workplace. Thus, making sure that the organisation has up to date work etiquette and set riles to follow through can help to avoid confrontational situations. A person who comes from different culture, environment and beliefs has to have a neutral mid set coming to the workplace, if that has not been done then the organisations responsibility is to communicate company's work etiquette, rules and present work atmosphere to the set individual as soon as the misunderstandings has accrued. (Brief 2008).

### 3.5 The role of Social Media in Internal Communications

**Social media is not a tool designed merely for external business communication and marketing. Many companies have begun to include social features in their corporate intranets with the goal of encouraging employee collaboration and improving internal communications.**

A survey of 290 large and midsize organizations from across North America, Europe and Asia conducted by global professional services company Towers Watson found that 56% of the employers surveyed currently use various social media tools as part of their internal communication initiatives in order to build community.

Employers are now utilising a host of social media tools such as instant messaging and social networks to communicate with their employees, a new study has found.

The tool most in use is instant messaging (73%), followed by streaming audio or video (61%), blogs (55%) and employee profiles (54%). Mobile technologies such as text messaging and apps were used by 51% and 44% of organizations respectively.

Among the companies surveyed, instant messaging, used by 77 per cent, and streaming audio and video, used by 61 per cent, were the most popular social media tools, 'Business News Daily' reported.

Other tools being widely used include human resources or employee blogs, enhanced online employee profiles, social networks, SMS messaging and mobile apps, according to the study by global professional services company Towers Watson.

"We believe that social media can be a great tool for communicating with employees in the workplace," said Kathryn Yates, global leader of communication consulting at Towers Watson.

"By its nature, social media is designed to build community and could help engage employees on key topics such as performance, collaboration, culture and values," Yates said.

Despite the increased adoption, reviews regarding each tool's effectiveness have been less than overwhelming. The study found that for each social media tool, less than half of those using it find it to be effective.

Also, only 40 per cent rated the use of social media technology as cost-effective.

However, researchers believe the importance of social media tools will only grow as businesses become more dependent on remote workers.

Currently, just 23 per cent of those surveyed said their company is effective at building community among its remote workers.

A separate study conducted by intranet consulting firm Prescient Digital revealed similar findings:

- 76% of organizations have instant messaging.
- 75% of organizations have blogs.
- 70% of organizations have discussion forums.
- 67% of organizations have wikis.
- 67% of organizations have user commenting.

However, just because socially-infused intranets are becoming the norm does not mean employees are altogether happy with their use. Prescient Digital found that only 29% of organizations rate their intranet tools ease of use as good or very good, and 28% rate the quality of content in a similar range.

This could be due to the fact that social intranets are still in their formative stages and not every software platform is as easy to use as it ought to be.

A white paper from Prescient Digital stated, "Social media on the intranet is a relatively new phenomena having only appeared behind the firewall in the past 4 or 5 years." However, it added that use of social media has become "mainstream," and that nearly two-thirds of organizations in the western world have some form of social media on their intranet.

Another reason that might explain the apparent dissatisfaction is that companies have failed to put enough thought, time and effort into planning their social intranets. Prescient Digital found that, in order to be successful, use of these tools requires proper planning, engaged and supportive executives, and participatory employees.

### **Social Intranet Rationale**

According to internal communications expert Edwin Huertas, social intranets offer the following advantages and benefits:

- Help employees remain focused on and aligned with corporate objectives.
- Flatten corporate hierarchy, empower individual employees at all levels and provide a direct path to decision-makers and executors.
- Encourages people to connect and communicate with each other, cross pollinate ideas and develop valuable insights.
- Communicate issues, insights and solutions leads to generating new ideas.
- News and information reaches people more quickly.
- Share resources and information easily and effectively.
- More easily and effectively search for and consolidate employee skill-sets to match specific project requirements.

## **Social Intranet Features:**

The same features you would find on social networks like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter also exist on social intranets. Most often, these include:

- Real-time status updates
- Blogs
- Activity streams/feeds
- Groups
- Discussion forums
- Wikis

The difference is that activity is shielded by a firewall so that only those with log-in credentials can gain access.

Corporate intranets that are either built on or incorporate social features such as groups, blogs, activity streams and discussion forums are becoming the norm, yet successful adoption demands proper planning, support from company leadership and active employee participation. The development of user-friendly software platforms will likely play a significant role, as well.

## **3.6 Social Communications: The lifeline of current day business activities**

Today, we get to see different generations of employees working together in the organisations. Though each one of them contributes in a unique manner to organisational success, handling multiple generations is certainly not an easy task. Organisations introduce a number of HR practices with an intention to promote understanding among the various generations and prevent conflicts and chaos. Often streamlining of communication methods and tools forms an important part of these initiatives.

In every organisation communication or information sharing forms the lifeline of all its activities. Good communication tools and methods play a crucial role in eliminating misunderstanding or misinterpretation of information. Mr. Saumen Chakraborty, President and Global Head of Quality, HR and IT, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd, says, "Methods and tools are enablers to effective communication. Effective communication will help employees absorb organisational priorities in an effective manner and work towards achieving common goals. It also helps in internal brand building, increasing engagement and motivation levels of employees and giving the right perspective during times of crisis."

Today, communication technology has advanced by leaps. While younger generations are well-versed with the latest communication techniques, organisations are training their veterans to adopt state of the art methods. Mr. Vikram Talwar, Vice- President

Marketing and Capability Development, Fiserv India says, “Technology enables communication and makes it more effective to govern. Today we have various technology tools that enable collaboration between teams. Tools like SharePoint and CMS (content management system) based intranet act as knowledge repositories and collaboration tools for associates. The geographic spread encourages us to adopt convergence web tools like live time video conferencing solutions, webex, webcasts / podcasts to ensure effective communication among others.”

Aniisu Verghese, India Internal Communication Lead, Sapient, believes that keeping the communication process simple, consistent, service-oriented and compelling can create a better experience for its people. Aniisu reveals, “Vox is Sapient’s internal social business platform launched about a year ago. It allows our people spread across geographies and time zones to share advice, opinions, solutions and information about technology, design, development, trends, processes and personal interests.”

Usually, in the organisation younger generations who yearn for faster information sharing and opportunities to learn real-time, adopt quickly to internet based communication techniques. But old timers, who are used to working with more structured tools, take little longer to adapt. However, Sridhar V Head - Human Resources, VIT, says, “Communication issues in the workplace can seem difficult to manage, but these are not insurmountable obstacles. Raising awareness of communication issues and focusing on productive behaviours can bring teams together and enable them to function more efficiently.”

In spite of best efforts, sometimes deviations from established and endorsed communication methods take place. This again gives rise to communication gaps and conflicts. Speaking on how to handle such deviations Mr Sridhar says, “We try to understand the reasons behind such deviations. Ineffective communication begins to stir when employees feel as though their voices aren’t being heard.

Prevention is more important in dealing with conflicts from gap in communication or miscommunication. Every leader in an organisation should check the concerns and successes of their teams. By having consistent conversations, potential problems can be avoided.”

According to Veetika Deoras, Head Brand Marketing and Corporate Communication, Tata Capital, in organisations where multiple generations work together transparency in communication helps a lot. It builds trust and encourages a culture of information sharing among employees.

“At Tata Capital we follow a communication framework that comprises a mix of online and offline tools, and which ensures a mix of upward, downward and peer to peer communication. We also work towards encouraging face to face communication, with a view to build trust and transparency and a sense of participation,” she explains.

While transparency begets trust, collaboration platforms help promote understanding and bonhomie. Usually misconceptions and misgivings exist between different generations of people.

Therefore good organisations don't go by formal lines of communication alone. They encourage face to face meetings, seminars and discussion forums involving different generations of employees at regular intervals.

As a result people understand the opinions, needs and expectations of each other better. And when people understand and acknowledge their differences, obviously, there is no room for conflict. Instead, the generational diversity actually becomes the strength of the organisation!

## 4. Research approach and method

Henceforth, I would like to introduce the readers to the research approach and method. The research approach is explained earlier. This research is a mix of Quantitative and Qualitative approaches, targeted to explain the decision of the respondents. Afterwards, data gathering and data analysis will be explained.

### 4.1 Quantitative approach

Quantitative research method is providing projectable research outcome. With this methodology the researcher employs a large sample which is the representative of the whole population. Quantitative research method is usually done by mail, telephone or internet solutions to reach a larger scale of respondents to receive large quantities of hard data, usually expressed by numbers within a scale, but not focusing on the open ended questions. (Muijs 2011).

Quantitative approach is useful as it helps the researcher to prevent bias in gathering and presenting research data. Quantitative data collection can be viewed as more subjective and the results can only be realized by means of transcending personal perspective. The quantitative data gathering methods are useful especially when a study needs to measure the cause and effect relationships within the organisation. The purpose of the quantitative approach is to avoid subjectivity by means of collecting and analysing information which describes the experience being studied. (Newman & Benz 1998).

I have chosen quantitative research method. Quantitative research approach is used due to the thesis objectives, aims and limitations. Firstly, various organisations are located across different geographical borders but the thesis author is doing the research from New Delhi, India and geographical challenges accrued. The author is un-able to have face to face meetings, interviews or discussions with the respondents directly. Hence, the respondents will be more eager to fill the questionnaire when given time to finish it without pressuring time deadline. As for some employees English is not a native language it is essential to give time to process the information provided rather to put them on the spot with semi-structures, in-depth interviews regarding qualitative research approach method. Taking into consideration above mentioned reasons the author is convinced that the quantitative research approach is the most effective approach to be used.

Quantitative approach will generate hard data concerning internal communication current situation in 45 different organisations as well as the preferences in internal communication from respondents point a view. Using this method I am creating quantitative survey questionnaire to be distributed among employees at 45 different organisations, seen in the Appendix 1 of the thesis.



## 4.2 Qualitative approach

**Qualitative research** is a method of inquiry employed in many different academic disciplines, traditionally in the social sciences, but also in market research and further contexts. Qualitative researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. The qualitative method investigates the *why* and *how* of decision making, not just *what*, *where*, *when*. Hence, smaller but focused samples are more often used than large samples.

In the conventional view, qualitative methods produce information only on the particular cases studied, and any more general conclusions are only propositions (informed assertions). Quantitative methods can then be used to seek empirical support for such research hypotheses.

## 4.3 Sample and population

The project aim is to research the internal communication tools in different organizations and the preferred communication tools by the current employees.

The companies to be surveyed were chosen from the following sectors:

1. IT Enabled Services Sector.
2. Manufacturing and Power sector.
3. Hospitality Sector; and,
4. Media and Marketing Sector.
5. Banking Sector.

Employees from 10 companies, from each of the sectors were sent the Survey Questionnaire, out of which the employees from the following 45 companies responded:

1. Markit
2. Codeplatter Softwares Pvt. Ltd.
3. Adglobal 360
4. Reliance Power
5. Punj Lloyd Ltd., Abu Dhabi (UAE)
6. JSW Steel Ltd
7. HCL
8. Tata housing development company
9. Indian Hotels Company Limited
10. NHSRC
11. Jones Lang Lasalle

12. Accenture
13. Isgec Hitachi Zosen Ltd.
14. Crow creative lab
15. Capgemini Pvt. Ltd.
16. Sapient
17. Enhancesys
18. Infosys
19. Power zone
20. Hungama
21. NTPC Ltd
22. iGate
23. Techlet Solutions Pvt. Ltd
24. VLCC
25. ACI
26. Genesis Burson-Marsteller
27. Sandvine
28. Recent Group of Company
29. Piquor
30. Khaitan Electricals Ltd.
31. Wipro Technologies
32. Techmahindra
33. Accenture
34. Tata Consultancy Services
35. Proton Multiventures Ltd.
36. IBM
37. ICICI BANK
38. Snapdeal
39. Geisecke & Devrient
40. Fiserv Inc
41. Bechtel
42. FBD
43. Casio India
44. Tuesdays Research
45. Ayyati Green Tech

## 4.4 Data analysis process

After gathering the completed questionnaire from the respondents, total responses from each question is obtained and extracted from the source excel sheet to research report. Data analysis process is based on the gathered data, theoretical framework and current internal communication situation as a baseline. Data analysis process is active from the point when the quantitative research survey link is made inactive and further recipient participation is not allowed.

Quantitative research survey is based on the theoretical framework information and the theories behind the questions are made to link the theoretical part of the thesis to practical part, also known as empirical part.

The analysis covers three sub-sections, following the research survey's structure. The three parts are defined as follows: internal communication flow, current internal communication effectiveness, and preferred internal communication tools. This study has a structured questionnaire and analysis following these set sub-sections for more structured and valid results.

Results involving numerical scale, multiple choice questions and preferred communication channels will be analysed from information displayed as graphs. This is done for the reader to understand the data presented for better understanding in a visual way. For data gathering the quantitative survey approach is used meaning there are no open ended questions presented to the recipients.

## 5 Results and data analysis

This section of the thesis is presenting the results of the quantitative research survey distributed to the employees of the various organisations and analysis of those results. Analysis is done based on the answers given from the recipients linked to the theory presented in sections above.

A quantitative research survey was distributed to employees working in different organisations, out of which 45 responded. The survey results showed no pre-meditated answers. The survey was anonymous and the questions were to be answered truthfully.

Respondents were from various nationalities and all respondents are from different age categories.

### 5.3 Mode of Internal communication flow

The results show that the employees are mostly communicating among each other using Electronic modes of communication. The link between the departments is strong and information is shared freely between the departments. Most of their daily information needed for the tasks successful completion is received from co-workers meaning that horizontal communication flow is used, shown in Figure 3.

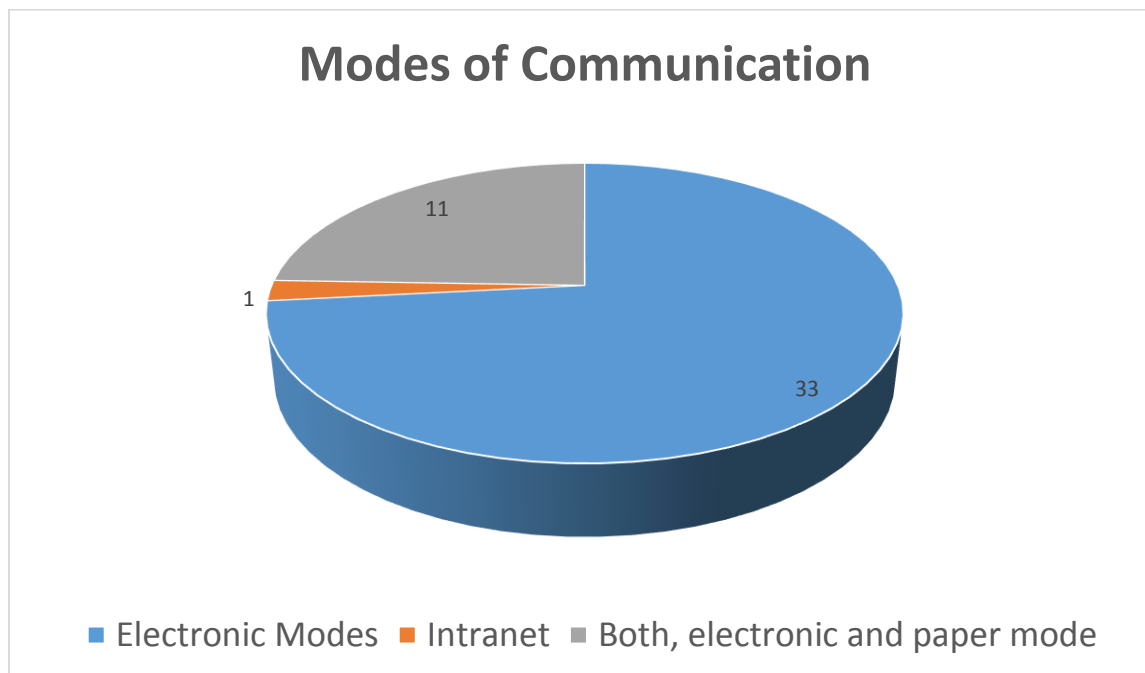


Figure 3: Modes of Communication

## 5.4 Utility of Social networking portals in Business practices.

The results show, that 32 of 45 companies find the use of Social media, beneficial for their business. Following is the figure representing the same:

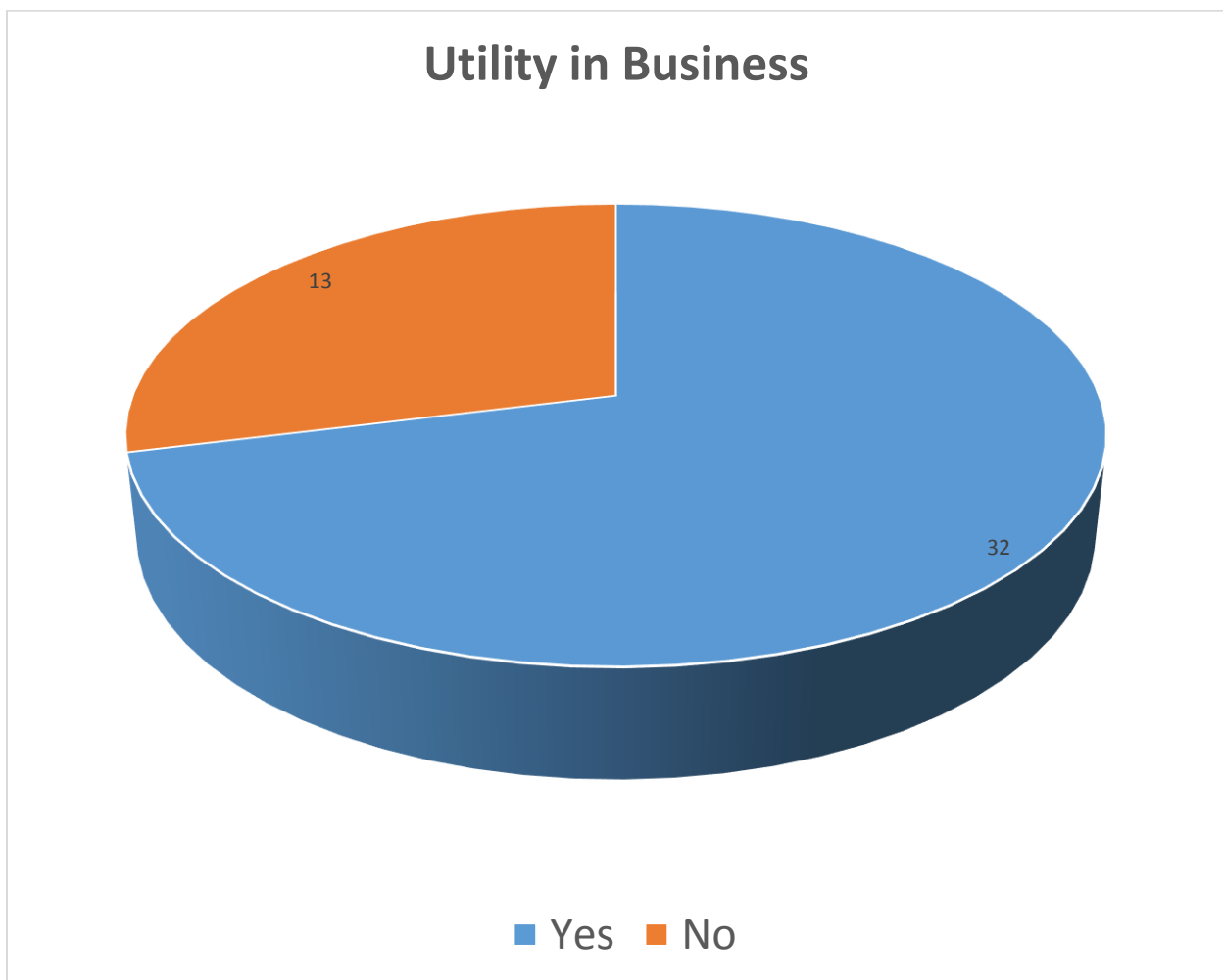


Figure 4: Utility of Social Media in Business.

## 5.5 Employees' perspective on information flow with the use of Social Media portals.

Following are the results, about the employees' perspective on how well is the information flow in their organisation with the help of social media tools:

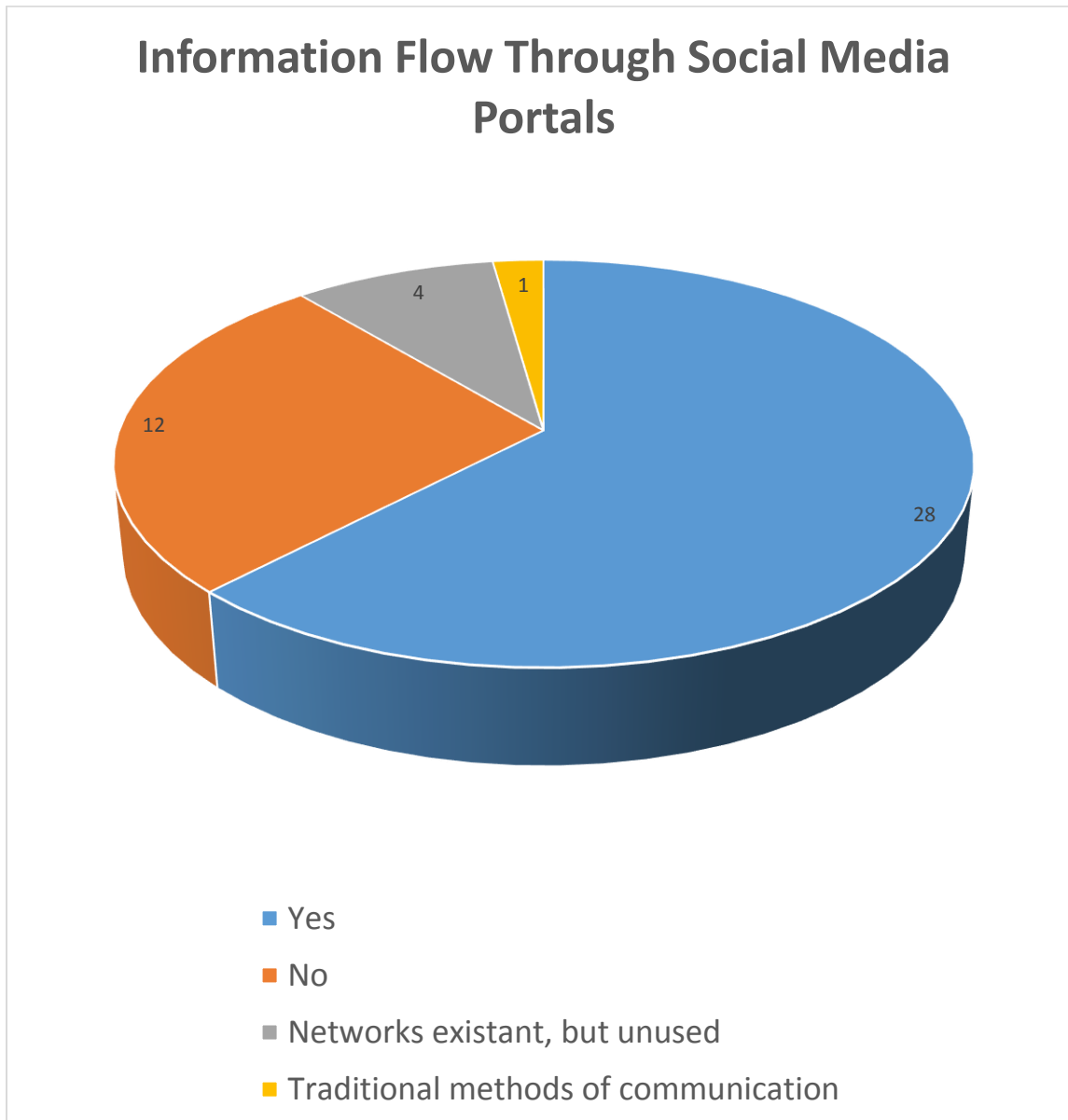


Figure 5: Information flow with Social Media Tools

### 5.4 Encouragement of Green practices by the organisations, with use of electronic modes of communication.

Following are the responses for the adoption of green practices by encouraging electronic modes of communication over traditional paper based methods:

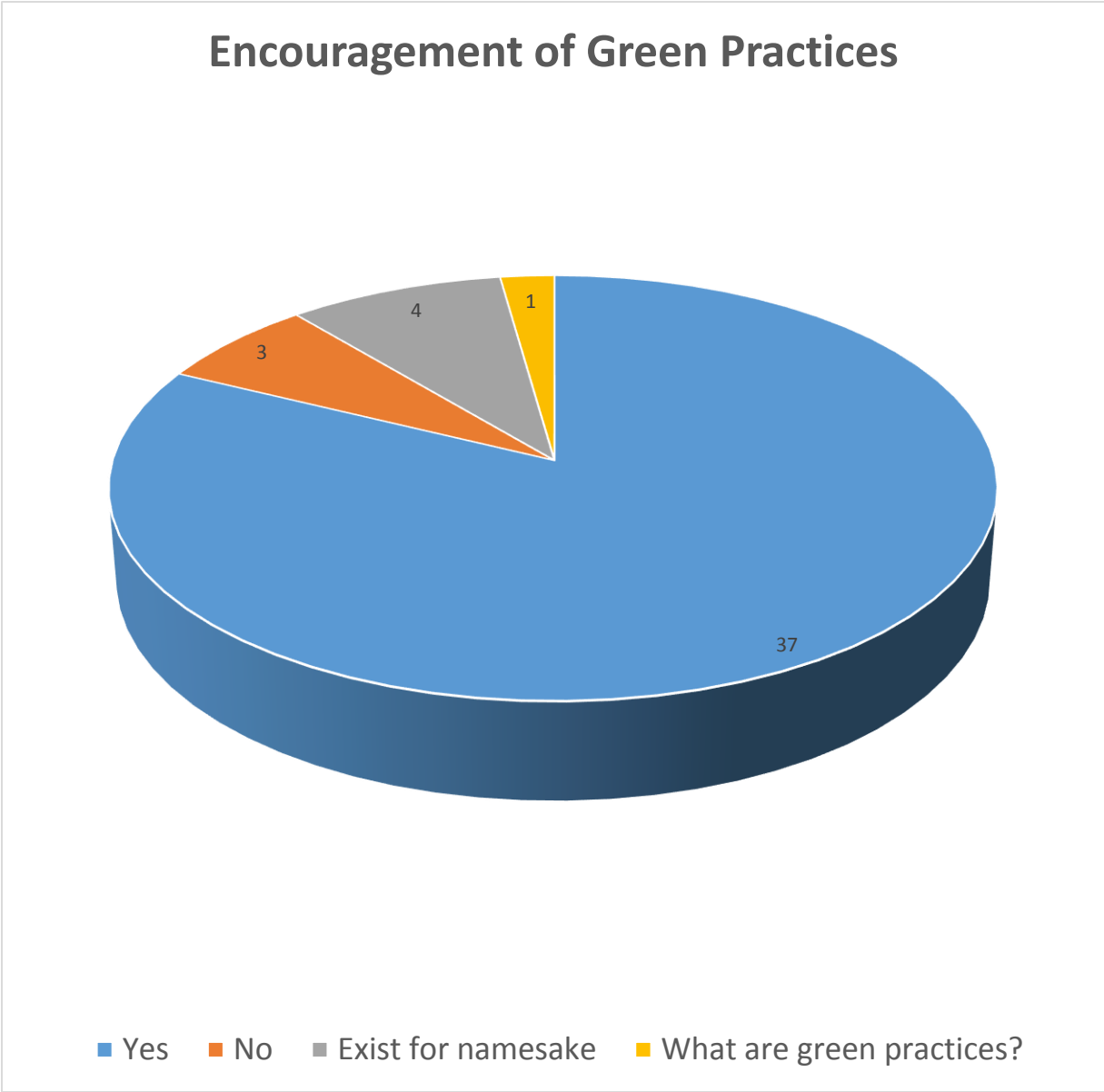


Figure 6: Encouragement of Green Practices

## 5.5 Preferred internal communication tools.

Respondents expressed their opinion on preferred communication tools and the most effective way to communicate with them. Mostly used tools are the social networking portals, i.e. Facebook (groups), LinkedIn, Twitter, Yammer (Company customized), and MS Outlook (e-mails), Gmail.

A brief look at the various tools used in different companies:

S.No.	Organisation's Name	Does your organisation use any of the following Social Networking Media, to keep the employees connected?
1.	Markit	Company's own Network
2.	Codeplatter Softwares Pvt. Ltd.	Microsoft Outlook, Skype
3.	Adglobal 360	Gmail
4.	Reliance power	LinkedIn
5.	PUNJ LLOYD LIMITED, ABU DHABI (UAE)	Facebook, Microsoft Outlook, Gmail, Skype, LinkedIn, Google+, Twitter
6.	JSW Steel Ltd	Microsoft Outlook
7.	HCL	Company's own Network
8.	Tata housing development company	Microsoft Outlook, Gmail
9.	Indian Hotels Company Limited	Facebook, Microsoft Outlook, LinkedIn
10.	NHSRC	Microsoft Outlook, Gmail
11.	Jones Lang Lasalle	Microsoft Outlook, Yammer, LinkedIn, Twitter
12.	Accenture	LinkedIn, Company's own Network
13.	Isgec Hitachi Zosen Ltd.	Microsoft Outlook, Company's own Network
14.	Crow Creative Lab	Facebook, Gmail, Skype
15.	CAPGEMINI PVT LTD	Facebook, Yammer, Skype, LinkedIn



16.	Sapient	Microsoft Outlook
17.	Enhancesys	Gmail, Yammer, Skype
18.	Infosys	Microsoft Outlook, Company's own Network
19.	Power zone	Microsoft Outlook, Company's own Network
20.	Hungama	Microsoft Outlook
21.	NTPC Ltd	Company's own Network
22.	iGate	Microsoft Outlook, LinkedIn
23.	Techlet Solutions Pvt Ltd	Gmail, Skype
24.	VLCC Skin Care Institute	Gmail
25.	ACI	Gmail, Skype
26.	Genesis Burson-Marsteller	Facebook, Microsoft Outlook
27.	Sandvine	Microsoft Outlook, Skype
28.	Recent Group of Company	Facebook, Microsoft Outlook, LinkedIn, Google+, Twitter, Yahoo! Mail
29.	Piquor	Facebook, Gmail, Company's own Network, Gtalk
30.	Khaitan Electricals Ltd.	Microsoft Outlook, Gmail, Skype, LinkedIn
31.	Wipro Technologies	Microsoft Outlook, Company's own Network
32.	Techmahindra	Skype, Company's own Network
33.	Accenture	Microsoft Outlook
34.	TCS	Facebook, Microsoft Outlook, Gmail, Skype, LinkedIn, Google+, Company's own Network
35.	Proton Multiventures Ltd.	Facebook, Gmail, Company's own Network

36.	IBM	Microsoft Outlook, Skype, Company's own Network
37.	ICICI BANK	Facebook, Microsoft Outlook
38.	Snapdeal	Company's own Network
39.	Geisecke & Devrient	Company's own Network
40.	Fiserv Inc	Facebook, LinkedIn, Company's own Network
41.	Bechtel	Company's own Network
42.	FBD	Facebook, Yammer, LinkedIn, Google+, Twitter
43.	casio india	Gmail
44.	Tuesdays Research	Gmail
45.	Ayyati Green Tech	Facebook, Microsoft Outlook, Skype, LinkedIn, Twitter

Table 1: Organisations and their preferred internal Communication tools.

## 5.6 Internal Networking tools used by organisations themselves.

A brief look at the various personalized social networking tools used by the organizations:

- Markit uses Spark and Sharepoint for communication amongst its employees.
  - Spark is a messenger to exchange messages between employees (mode of informal communication) and also stores each employee's profile which includes - Name, Designation, Contact Number, Address, Email id etc.
  - Sharepoint is used for official communication apart from the mail (Outlook).
- HCL uses CISCO JABBER. It is a commercial product by CISCO, and is an implementation of XMPP, an open technology for instant messaging and presence.
- Accenture uses Yammer along with Sharepoint, wherein employees can connect with others, chat, view other's profiles. Basically, it can be related to a social networking website.
- Sapient uses Vox, which is their internal social business platform. It allows their people spread across geographies and time zones to share advice, opinions, solutions and information about technology, design, development, trends, processes and personal interests.
- Infosys uses Microsoft Office Communicator, which is an instant messenger by Microsoft, with feature set that is targeted toward corporate environments.
- Even PSUs like, NTPC are encouraging networking lately. They use, SAP and Zimbra mail services over dedicated intranet.
- Piquor uses Squirrel Mail and company's own resource planner to delegate daily tasks and share the progress report.
- Wipro Technologies uses LAN connecting VOIP at each desk, to keep all the employees well connected.
- IBM uses IBM connections, a form of social forum for all the IBMers.
- Geisecke & Devrient uses e-Planet, where all the major policies, news, updates about the company are displayed.
- Fiserv Inc. uses Mainstreet which convergence web tools like live time video conferencing solutions, webex, webcasts / podcasts to ensure effective communication among employees spread across geographic boundaries.
- Bechtel uses Salesforce Chatter, customized for the company.
- Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer uses Company customized Yammer, and Flipboard.

## 6 Interpretations and Findings:

These days, it seems everywhere you go, you are hearing about someone's Facebook post, a most recent tweet or a pinned post! And, while this is not a terribly new phenomenon around the water cooler or at the happy hour, it is now popping up in corporate meetings. What once used to be reprimanded as a waste of company time and employee resources, online social portals are now being embraced as internal tools to facilitate communication.

I had heard and seen companies using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, and Other Social Networks (OSNs) as marketing and recruiting tools but their use was mainly as another external communication tool-leaving out the newspaper and yellow pages for the internet. But, the new concept is mainstream companies using it internally. Some of the companies' top executives, recently have been sending out Facebook updates, LinkedIn messages, and tweets during conferences, board meetings, and strategic planning sessions.

Social media today has emerged as a powerful business and HR tool. These tools are now being applied to enhance employee engagement and talent acquisition, improve internal communication, promote team companionship, communicate on a global scale, and create internal points of contact that were previously unavailable.

Below are 10 Social tools most popularly being used by organizations in India and worldwide for internal communications:

**Facebook:** Well...does it really need an introduction? Anyways...Facebook is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. When Marriott International announced it was opening a new Courtyard by Marriott property in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, India it got over 300 CVs through its Facebook page. The page had 1.1 million likes in just one month!

**Yammer:** Yammer is a private social network that helps employees collaborate across departments, locations and business apps and, can be considered the enterprise version of Facebook. Yammer focuses on businesses, and only individuals with the same email domain can join a given network. A few months ago, Godrej Consumer Products started using Yammer. What surprised Sumit Mitra, head – group HR and corporate services, the most is the rapidity with which employees caught on to it, irrespective of age, location and hierarchy. It is rapidly emerging as a platform to share

best practices across the business, and has now been rolled out across the Godrej Group.

**Twitter:** Twitter is an online social networking and microblogging service that enables users to send and read short 140-character text messages, called “tweets”.

**Skype:** Skype is a software application that allows users to make telephone calls over the internet. Features include instant messaging, file transfer, and video conferencing. It can foster face-to-face communication with colleagues located all over the world without the travel and cost.

**LinkedIn:** LinkedIn is a business-oriented Social networking service. It is mainly used for professional networking. One purpose of the site is to allow registered users to maintain a list of contact details of people with whom they have some level of professional relationship, called Connections. It can also be used to find jobs, people and business opportunities recommended by someone in one’s contact network.

**Google+:** Google Plus is a social networking and identity service by Google Inc. It is not simply a social networking website, but also an authorship tool that associates web-content directly with its owner/author. It is the second-largest social networking site in the world after Facebook. It includes all of Google’s applications for networking, like Hangout (video calls and texts).

**Pinterest:** Pinterest is a visual discovery tool that people use to collect ideas for their different projects and interests. People create and share collections (called “boards”) of visual bookmarks (called “Pins”) that they use to do things like plan trips and projects, organize events or save articles and recipes. Businesses these days are using it like a virtual noticeboard. Rather than printing notices, and ripping pages out of notebooks and putting them onto noticeboards, executives simply “pin it” onto their very own virtual noticeboard (boards).

**Wiki:** A wiki is a website that allows for the easy creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages. Wikis are often used to create and power collaborative community websites. The collaborative encyclopedia Wikipedia is one of the best-known wikis. At Xerox, Chief Technology Officer Sophie Van Debroek turned the process inside out by setting up a wiki that would allow researchers in the R&D group to define collaboratively the company’s technology strategy.

**Podcast:** A podcast is a series of digital media files, usually either digital audio or video, made available for download via web syndication. Internally, podcasts would be extremely useful for instructional videos, messages from senior management, information sharing, tutorials, etc.

**Digsby:** Digsby is an instant messaging (IM) application that supports most mainstream IM protocols such as AIM, MSN, Yahoo, Google Hangout, ICQ, Jabber, and Facebook Chat. Digsby also supports e-mail notifications and alerts from MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

**Alternatives by companies themselves:** Once, considered as a disciplinary offence in most premier companies, Social tools are now being highly encouraged. But, because of security concerns, some companies have built their own social networks. These networks offer the advantages of Facebook while maintaining a closed network environment. For instance, Yum! Brands (you better know it for Pizza Hut, KFC, Taco Bell, etc.), world's largest fast food restaurant company, runs a closed social network called iCHING. They believe that creating their own social network would enable teams in India to share information with teams at their headquarters in Louisville, KY. They have created a space for employees to share ideas and get feedback from others around the globe who are working on new products for Yum! and for communication to flow freely.

The usage of social media tools has increased how quickly employees get information straight from the top to the bottom without any filters. It is flattening out the curve and creating an environment where line employees know just as much as their bosses do...and sometimes more. It may even become a technically advanced version of a Grapevine! Although some barriers to entry still exist (slow adoption, security concerns, senior management apathy, fear of technology), the HR departments of most organizations, today realize that effective internal communication is one thing that can't be compromised when striving for a happy and effective workforce that directly relates to the long term success of a business.

## 7. Conclusion:

The usage of social media tools has increased how quickly employees get information straight from the top to the bottom without any filters. It is flattening out the curve and creating an environment where line employees know just as much as their bosses. Most of the companies today are encouraging, the social tools, which were once regarded to be unimportant and harmful for organisations.

Companies that don't embrace social media as a communication and recruitment tool might risk losing potential business and quality candidates to their competitors that are focused on such outreach.

"Other companies are doing it, and if you're not, you're missing out on a large candidate audience and top talent." In this new millennial cult of web browsing, socialization through Social Media Websites has become the new trend. Befriending someone who is sitting at other part of the world in front of computers with the help of internet, sharing ideas and thoughts, expressing views, supporting others views on issues of common interest, have become the new order among Internet users. As a recruiter needs the most talented, qualified and largest applicant pool, leveraging on the SMW to tap potential talent is called Social Media Recruitment. And, to retain such employees, keep growing in business, is required effective communication, using Social Media Tools.

Also, observing the feedback, most employees and work force too feel well connected with their peers, subordinates, superiors and clients with the advent of these Social media tools in the organisations.

## 8. Recommendations and Suggestions:

As suggested by the respondents, following are the recommendations:

- Sahil Kakkar, Assistant Manager at Reliance Power suggests, Employees should be encouraged to find contacts on social networking sites to keep them up-to-date on the company's policies and other important news or achievements.
- Abhishek Tripathi, Junior Manager at JSW Steel Ltd., says, Technicians should be trained to use outlook, and other social media so that less paper should be used.
- Abhishek Jain, Marketing Evangelist at Codeplatter Softwares Pvt. Ltd., believes, Social media is more of a weapon of mass distraction than connecting with people or employees. It should be very carefully used in any organization. Every organization cannot use same practices for implementing social media network.
- Hitesh Demla, Materials Executive at Indian Hotels Company Limited (Taj Group), adds to inform that, his company, along with many other companies these days, are using Whatsapp messenger (groups) to communicate important messages and information.
- Pallav Kumaria, Senior Software developer at Jones Lang Lasalle, has a suggestion to get all communication processes at one place where things can be categorized, but viewed at the same place. For e.g.: Instead of using Outlook for emails, Facebook for leisure, Twitter for tweets, companies should have their own internal network which interacts with all of them from one place and makes their life simple. This will help increase productivity as well.
- Rahul Agarwal, senior consultant at Capgemini pvt. Ltd., says, his organization believes in electronic media rather than paper work. Still there are some certain levels and times when paper communication is needed for example: Employee anniversaries, farewell etc. The reason is because Indians are usually very emotional and for some precious occasions, want precious courtesy.
- Shardul Kapooria, Group Marketing Head at Recent Group of Companies, feels, spending more on latest technology, updating the latest technologies for communication and working on customized softwares would certainly enhance the communication flow in an organization.
- Ayesha Khan, Business Analyst at Wipro Technologies, mentions that network systems at Wipro are based on a centralized server. Every time the server gets an error, the organization spread across multiple locations loses connectivity. Since the LAN and VOIP systems are connected, the VOIP also loses connectivity. So, she feels there should separate serves or network employed in an organisation.
- Giri Bora, technical associate at Techmahindra, supports the idea of Open Door Policy for a more effective communication, through implementation of Social media portals in organisations.



Hence, considering the suggestions by the respondents, and the immense literature review, I would like to suggest:

- Most of the organisations today, should encourage and implement the usage of Social Media tools in the organisations.
- The implementation of social media tools, should obviously not be at the risk of curbing personal meetings of the employees, but, to keep them connected, even when a personal meeting may not be feasible due to geographical or time constraints.
- Every organization cannot use same practices for implementing social media network, so, they should try to choose the practice most apt for their own organisation.
- Having a social network, for communications in an organisation is a very powerful tool, for multinational firms to connect employees across geographical boundaries. Hence, it becomes very important to develop and maintain a smooth electronic communication channel for such virtual offices.

## 9. Limitations and Future Scope:

This study adds to the literature and the understanding of the usage of Social Media Tools for efficient Human Resource Management (HRM); however I am aware of several limitations of the study that suggest opportunities for future research. These limitations are as follows:

- Focus of the study is internal communication channels and the use of Social Networking websites in 45 different organisations, not focusing on the content of the internal communication channels used.
- Second limitation that has been set for the project is that the quantitative research survey is distributed to the staff and employees of various organisations, not the entire clientele and partners of the company.
- Furthermore, the research questionnaire will be based on the interview module survey; this limitation is set due to the geographical challenges.

Thus future research can be done in this regard. The information and the data may not be accurate, so research can be done to check the reliable source of the data. Moreover, since, my data was limited to the choice of communication channels, further research can be done in other fields like the content of communications used, the hierarchy of communication flow, etc.

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## **11. Appendix**

### **11.1: Survey Questionnaire:**

# Internal Communications in Your Organisation.

Here is a brief survey to determine the methods of internal communications, being employed by your organization, specially with the use of electronic portals and social media websites.

**\* Required**

**Name \***

**Organisation's Name \***

**Designation \***

**Mostly, how are you communicated with information and announcements in the organisation? \***

- Through Paper.
- Through Electronic modes.
- Both Paper and electronic modes(depending on type of information).
- Other:

**Is the use of electronic media encouraged in your organisation? \***

- Yes, certainly!
- Not really.
- Sometimes.

**Do you use Social networking websites during office hours?**

- Yes.
- No.
- Sometimes.

**Do you use Social networking websites to connect to your Superiors/Subordinates/Prospective employees, employers or businesses?**

- Yes.
- No.

**Do you think these Social networking websites are helpful in business communications? \***

- Yes.
- No.

**Does your organisation use any of the following Social Networking Media, to keep the employees connected? \***

- Facebook
- Microsoft Outlook
- Gmail
- Yammer
- Skype
- LinkedIn

**Does your organisation use any of the following Social Networking Media, to keep the employees connected? \***

- Facebook
- Microsoft Outlook
- Gmail
- Yammer
- Skype
- LinkedIn
- Google+
- Pinterest
- Twitter
- Yahoo! Mail
- Company's own Network
- Other:

**If you chose the Option: "Company's own Network" in the question above, please describe the network in brief. \***

Please specify the name of the network, and how you use it. Incase, there are more than one, please specify details about one that you know of. And, simply write "N/A", if this question is not applicable to your firm.

**How well do you feel connected to employees or business partners, located away from your own office? \***

- The Internet connectivity makes me feel very well connected.
- It is better when I actually meet the person.
- Depends on the type of communications to be made.

**Do you feel the usage of Social networking media keeps you well informed about your organisation? \***

- Yes, very well informed!
- Not really.
- Networks exist in my organization, but are rarely used.
- My organization still employs traditional methods of communication(like notices on paper!)
- Other:

**Does your organisation encourage Green Practices by using electronic modes over paper? \***

- Yes.
- No.
- Green Practices exist for namesake!
- What are Green Practices?

**Suggestion for improving communication practices in your organization.**