DEVELOPING KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR CORPORATE COMMUNICATION IN THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the Master's dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree MCom Communication Management at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at another university.

________________________________________________________________________

Celeste Shackleton

November 2006
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the development of performance measurement tools, in the form of Key Performance Indicators (KPI), for corporate communication in the Information Technology (IT) industry, to aid in the alignment of its strategic intent. Furthermore, the performance measurement tool has to be able to capture the intangible value, contributed by the corporate communication department, and integrate it with the performance measurement model utilised by the organisation.

There were three specific objectives in this study. The first objective epistemologically conducted a focused literature review in primary, secondary and tertiary sources of data, to question the true nature of the concepts dealt with in this study. The second objective ontologically explored the existence of corporate communication measurement, among specialists in industry. The last objective critically analysed the information gathered from both literature and industry, and assembled a proposal suggesting a means to measure communication in an organisational context.

Qualitative exploratory research was conducted in the form of in-depth personal interviews, with selected corporate communication practitioners, consultants and people knowledgeable about, and experienced, with performance measurement, or KPIs. Data was analysed using a thematic content analysis. The themes identified in the data analyses were studied and compared with the findings from the literature synopsis, and conclusions as well as recommendations were established.

Important differences were noted and established, between the perceptions of literature and industry, regarding the purpose, roles, goals and functions of corporate communication. These differences contributed greatly towards understanding what should be measured when developing KPIs for corporate communication.

The main conclusion drawn from the study, is that organisations should aspire to obtain the ability to communicate. The purpose of corporate communication is to assist with this process, by providing communication support to the rest of the organisation. The ability of communication may be measured by incorporating communication into the performance
measurement model of the organisation. This can be done by developing KPIs for communication that are represented on every level of the organisation.

The recommendation emanating from this study, illustrates how communication may be incorporated into a performance measurement model such as the Balanced Scorecard. Subsequently, communication KPIs need to be custom-developed based on the strategic objectives and the critical success factors of the organisation. The development of KPIs should be constructed in such a way, that it measures the communication efforts of the entire organisation, and not just the efforts of the communication department.
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