

## **ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND INNOVATION IN MICRO AND SMALL COMPANIES: A STUDY ON THE APPLICATION OF THE “INNOVATION RADAR”**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper is a study on corporate communication and the ability to innovate in small businesses. The guiding question seeks to respond whether organizational communication is able to make progress and / or support innovation in micro and small companies, and the main objective is to analyze the relationship between innovation and organizational communication. It was applied the case study method and document research for interpreting a diagnosis instrument called “Innovation Radar” in a small business company located in the countryside of São Paulo state. The diagnosis is made based on assessment dimensions aimed at checking the maturity and the degree of innovation in micro and small companies. By evaluating these dimensions it was possible to build analytical frameworks and highlight the influence of corporate communication in promoting innovation. The results indicate that every dimension of the “Innovation Radar” can improve their performance by means of corporate communication.

### **KEYWORDS**

Corporate communication; innovation; micro and small companies; “Innovation Radar”

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### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the biggest challenges faced by contemporary organizations is they have to be in constant advantage, both in the midst of a highly competitive economic environment and before their consumers and other stakeholders. Companies around the world have improved their management, evaluating strategies and reviewing actions in order to achieve competitive advantages by incorporating technological and communication advances.

Nevertheless, the incorporation of these advances alone is not enough to ensure a good position in the market and hence makes it more competitive, and also does not guarantee that it keeps up with the demands of the current consumer. It is necessary to work strategically to the development of distinct features in several organizational contexts.

Competitiveness depends on the ability that organizations have to adapt to fluctuations and vulnerabilities of the environment in which they operate. Thus, it is right to state that the search for strategies that enable this adequacy and provide competitive advantage goes through the capacity to generate, absorb and implement innovations.

Innovation, therefore, should be incorporated into the organization’s management model and be part of their corporate culture as a structuring expertise of its organizational

routine. It means that innovation should be an organic part of the organization that guides its activities and instructs its actions and mission, but above all, that builds shared organizational meaning, streamlining the routines of their players.

We start from the assumption that in order to be innovative a company has to develop a corporative innovation culture, since according to Ahmed (1998), innovation is the driving force of transformation, and culture is its major determinant. Krumholz and Moura (2010) refer to the development of an innovation ecosystem where culture is the foundation that supplies all synergistic relationships that form it.

Better saying, an innovative organization depends on how the organizational agents - employees, managers, governing body, etc - and other stakeholders - customers, suppliers, etc - assimilate, incorporate and understand the corporate culture of innovation. It also depends on their appreciation and how much they are willing to do for the spread and dissemination of innovation by means of communication processes that are able to legitimize it.

In this scope, it is highlighted the corporative communication playing a central role in innovation, although the complexity of relationships within organizations and individuals themselves, combined with the growing demand for competitive innovation, presents challenges on how to think and perform organizational communication (Cajazeira & Cardoso, 2009).

However, micro and small businesses, despite their great contribution to the global economy, yet face difficulties in both questions - innovation and communication. Therefore, the guiding question that underlies the present study is on how organizational communication can make progress and / or support innovation in micro and small companies.

In order to do so, this paper aims to analyze the relationship between innovation and organizational communication. It was applied the case study method and document research for interpreting a diagnosis instrument called "Innovation Radar" in a small business. The "Innovation Radar" is part of the Local Innovation Agents (in Portuguese, ALI) program from the Brazilian Service of Support for Micro and Small Enterprises (in Portuguese, Sebrae). The diagnosis is made based on assessment dimensions aimed at checking the maturity and the degree of innovation in micro and small companies. By evaluating these dimensions it was possible to build analytical frameworks and highlight the influence of corporate communication in promoting innovation.

This paper is based on an empirical analysis of a small company located in the city of Bauru, São Paulo, Brazil. Chosen as the unit-case of the research, the company is granted by the ALI program and it was applied with the "Innovation Radar". Furthermore, in a first moment the paper presents the theoretical framework used to give basis to the analysis, and in a second phase, there is the implementation of methodologies and presentation of analytical frameworks.

#### REFERENCE CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE ANALYSIS

According to Perles (2007), so that human communication reached the current stage in volume, formats and speed, several physiological changes and revolutionary

technological processes were necessary. Thus, although Man had already developed ways to communicate and express their will, it was necessary to improve such mechanisms, that is, to innovate.

In this manner, communication and innovation have always been associated with human evolution, with the development of social, political, cultural and economic relations, and with the organizations and institutions.

In the organizations scope, communication is now valued as a strategic attribute after the changes and developments in the society, especially after the Industrial Revolution, due to the massive structural change in the mode of production, work and trade, communication had to be understood as an important competency of organizational processes and originator of competitive advantages.

With the globalization and the introduction of new technologies of information and communication (NTICs), a new time has come to be experienced by organizations, since they expanded their business to actuate globally and related with an increasingly heterogeneous public. New features linked to the digitization and virtual processes of its activities and purposes become part of their strategies, as well as their concerns. The competition became fiercer, to the extent that organizations started to compete on a global level, the competitive action was focused on the setting of the new contemporary economic and market scenario.

Conceptualized by Toffler (1980) as the Third Wave or the Information Revolution, the contemporary scenario presents some challenges and opportunities:

The Third Wave brings along a genuinely new way of life, based on different and renewable energy sources; production methods that make assembly lines in factories obsolete; in new non-nuclear families; a new institution that might be called “electronic cottage”; and schools and companies of the future, radically modified (Toffler, 1980: 24).

The Third Wave is based on technological and information evolution: Internet, cyberspace, hypermedia, digital world, a myriad of technologies and some others still to be created and developed by mankind. It is also based on globalization: on the manner countries interact, on how they bring people together, and on the globalization of cultures.

In this context, identified by new forms of relationship, whether in economic, social, cultural or political dimension, knowledge acquired new status, thus making itself essential. Not surprisingly, current organizations seek competitive advantages necessarily related to the generation of knowledge which, in turn, is inexorably linked to the ability of an organization to innovate.

It is right to declare that the search for strategies that enable this adequacy and provide competitive advantage goes beyond the systematic and socialized organizational knowledge, and also beyond the ability to generate, absorb, and implement innovations. Thus, innovation can be a source of distinct features and competitive advantages.

In past times, productivity growth was determined by investment in infrastructure and new capacity established. Today, an important part of the

productivity growth of major economies, as well as emerging countries, is credited to innovation.

This is true for Brazil, and will be even more in the future. In most countries, the gains from greater use of hand labor and economy explain only half of the increase in productivity. Greater efficiency, better institutions, and especially innovation explain the other half (Mattos; Stoffel & Teixeira, 2010: 8).

However, Drucker (2001: 47) states that “innovation is not a flash of genius. It is hard work, and should be organized as a regular part of each unit within the company and each management level.”

Although there is not a consensus towards the concept of innovation, in general we can understand it as the introduction of a novelty, renewal or increase in any activity, whether human or business-wise.

The word “innovation” derives from the Latin term “*innovatio*” and refers to an idea, method or object which was created and bears little resemblance to previous standards. Innovation is also used in the context of ideas and inventions. Schumpeter (1982) makes a distinction between innovation and invention. For him, invention can be considered an idea, a sketch or a model for a new or improved product, process or system. In the economic sense, an innovation is only complete when there is a commercial transaction involving an invention, thus generating wealth. For this author, the engine that drives the development of capitalism is the innovation (Schumpeter, 1982).

According to Freeman (1982), innovation is the process that involves the technical activities of design, development, management, and all that result in commercialization of new (or improved) products, or in the first use of new (or improved) processes.

The Oslo Manual (OECD, 2005) refers to innovation as the improvement or implementation of new products or services, processes, marketing methods or organizational methods. In short, there are four types of innovation pointed by the Oslo Manual: product, process, marketing, and organizational, the latter also called “business model”.

Nevertheless, we can say that innovation is a strategic decision that the organization takes for itself and shares with its stakeholders by means of interactive processes and exchange of private and collective experiences and life. In this perspective, innovation, above all, is a human, cultural, social and relational process, once the cooperative effort between the players is a central element.

In this manner, innovation must be incorporated into the organization’s management model and be part of what in the business world is usually conceptualized as DNA of the company. It means that innovation should be part of the strategic organizational dynamics which directs several activities, and guides some actions and the business mission, but above all, builds organizational shared meaning, streamlining routines of participating agents and transforming them into innovative agents. In order to do so, an organization that intends to innovate needs to foster communication among its agents to establish freedom of expression, and also considers the creative use of knowledge by accepting suggestions, ideas and proposals for new perspectives on organizational processes, that is, it is necessary to make innovation be part of the organizational culture.

As for such issue, Mambrini et al (2011: 32), quoting Hargadon and Sutton (2000), add that:

Innovation is fostered by the existence of a conception strategy by means of Knowledge-brokering, which means analyzing and disseminating knowledge of a company among its different sectors. This process is cyclical, and divided into four parts: a) capturing good ideas; b) keeping them alive in the organization; c) imagining new use for them, and d) turning promising concepts into services, products, processes or business models.

The authors attribute these characteristics to a culture of innovation in which an organization acquires the exchange of knowledge by enabling a proper environment to incorporate the value of the innovation process.

According to Christensen (2003), any innovation initiative may fail if it is not conducted by an organization as a priority since organizational values do not allow the recognition of its importance.

Therefore, we start from the assumption that organizational communication can be an important factor to induce innovation in organizations, in other words, an innovative company depends on how the organizational agents and their stakeholders assimilate, incorporate and understand innovation. It also depends on their appreciation and how much they are willing to do for the spread and dissemination of innovation by applying communication processes that are able to legitimize it.

When debating over organizational communication, Kunsch (2008) offers a comprehensive view of communication in and of organizations, and takes into account all aspects of the complexity inherent to the nature of the communication phenomenon. His view reinforces “[...] the adoption by organizations of a philosophy of integrated communication and also of non-fragmentation of this communication” (Kunsch, 2008: 114).

For the author, the integration of the key areas of organizational communication - internal and administrative, institutional and marketing - must be strategic.

Kunsch (2008) emphasizes the importance of understanding the complexity of organizational communication, which would prevent, for example, the reduction of the role of communication in the organizational reality, then leading it to be understood as a structuring process of organizational reality (Caldas, 2010).

Thus, the concept of organizational communication adopted by an organization, its importance in the organizational dynamics and the degree of strategic applicability can interfere in the way of promoting the innovation process, since the organizational culture and, in turn, culture innovation are linked to the effective capacity of an organization to communicate them.

According to Bachmann and Destefani (2008), an aspect that characterizes the organizations willing to innovate is the existence of mechanisms and strategies that stimulate employees to present ideas, and suggest creative solutions emerged from a proactive, participatory and communicative environment.

The effectiveness of such environment, however, may be linked to the value attributed by an organization regarding its organizational communication. According to Cajazeira

and Cardoso (2009: 2), “innovation and communication exist to generate results, and to do so, it is necessary that both processes are aligned to generate the expected value.”

Moreover, organizations whose communication is aligned with its principles and values, and are considered an essential and constituent part of it, they tend to create environments for ongoing, open dialogue, and for the empowerment of their agents, reinforcing in each communicative action their interest to build a culture of innovation.

We agree with Manucci (2008), who states that the concept of communication in an organization is directly related to its model of management that, in turn, defines the model of relations with its agents and public. These relationships are crucial to the development of a culture of innovation not only by the participation of agents in finding solutions and new ideas for the improvement and expansion of its products, services and processes, but above all, in the commitment and engagement of them and their audiences.

By understanding innovation as a process which depends on an organizational culture capable of boosting organizational routines with innovative behavior, we must consider the organizational communication as an inducer of this process. In addition, innovative behaviors are incorporated by the organization for public communication actions aimed at the learning process of their employees and at the awareness of the increase, improvement, and adaptation of external audiences. That is, organizational communication can generate the implementation of innovation in a company and, more importantly, will also be the driving competence and disseminator of innovation among other audiences, especially its customers. It is a considerable effort, admitted by the organization as a major factor for innovation.

#### *INNOVATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN MICRO AND SMALL BUSINESSES*

In the scope of domestic economy, the need to innovate surrounds almost exclusively micro and small companies (in Portuguese, MPEs), since in “every hundred businesses opened in the Brazil, 99 of them are MSCs. This type of business is still responsible for two thirds of all job vacancies in the labor market, and accounts for 25% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)” (SEBRAE, 2013)<sup>1</sup>.

Although in Brazil there is not a single and consent classification to characterize MSCs, for the purposes of this research, we characterize microbusinesses as those whose annual gross operating revenue is less than or equal to 2.4 million, while small businesses have gross annual revenues greater than 2.4 million and less than or equal to 16 million (BNDES, 2010).

Furthermore, it is important to consider that the MSCs are embedded in a complex, changeable environment in which the penetrability of communication and information technology constitutes some decisive elements in a digital context that redefine the space and time of information and communication exchanges. The effect of this new dimension slips on important factors to the survival and sustainability of MSCs in Brazil:

<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.sebraesp.com.br/index.php/component/content/article/76-noticias/multissetorial/10110-salado-empreendedor-vai-simplificar-formalizacao-em-botucatu>. Accessed in October 15th, 2013.

increased competitiveness, need for internationalization and innovation; emergency elements that need to be streamlined in the organizational structures of these companies.

In 2012, MSCs were responsible for generating 891,700 new jobs (Azevedo, 2013). These figures show their importance for the Brazilian economy in a way that many policies have been developed aimed to strengthen the sector. This policy visibility is enhanced by support measures towards the sector in order to ensure greater sustainability and increase the business. However, it does not guarantee competitive advantage, and longevity and success.

Due to very special characteristics, MSCs are daily challenged to become more professional, especially for their better performance and more active participation in a globalized and competitive market share. These challenges face internal and external barriers that interfere directly in their performance and their productivity and, consequently, in the possibility to become more innovative and creative.

Considering the situation of Brazilian MSCs and the difficulty in making micro and small entrepreneurs develop resources to innovate, the Support Service for Micro and Small Enterprises (Sebrae), in partnership with the National Center for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) launched the Local Agent of Innovation (in Portuguese, ALI)<sup>2</sup>, a program aimed to bring information and guidance to micro and small entrepreneurs on innovation and especially on how to innovate their sectors, diagnose areas that offer opportunities for innovation, provide tools that contribute to this process, and also generate intellectual capital by means of production, distribution and dissemination of articles about their experiences in the field, thus fostering innovation through the union of theory and practice, adding value to the academic activities and the current economic scenario.

This program is intended for bringing information and guidance to entrepreneurs of micro and small enterprises on innovation, especially on how to innovate in their sectors, diagnose areas that offer opportunities for innovation, provide tools that contribute to this process and also generate intellectual capital through production, distribution and dissemination of articles about their experiences in the field, thus fostering innovation through the union of theory and practice, adding value to the academic activities and the current economic scenario.

Throughout the program, MSCs are personally supported towards the enhancement of their strongest features in order to take advantage of market opportunities and minimize weak points by eliminating possible threats to their activities. This is done from a diagnosis applied by ALI, and in order to accomplish such a diagnosis, the ALI Program is supported by the application of the instrument “Innovation Radar”, a diagnose tool for innovation management developed by Mohanbir Sawhney, Robert C. Wolcott, and Inigo Arroniz from Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University (Mattos, Stoffel & Teixeira, 2010: 25-26).

Originally this instrument presents twelve assessment dimensions, out of which four are considered the major anchor of any business: supply (what), customers (who),

<sup>2</sup> Further information about ALI in: <http://www.sebrae.com.br/sites/PortalSebrae/Programas/Agentes-Loais-de-Inova%C3%A7%C3%A3o-receba-o-Sebrae-na-sua-empresa>.

processes (how), and presence (where). Information provided by these dimensions is able to offer a global vision of the company, and the dimensions were added intermediate sizes, resulting in a radar composed of twelve dimensions (Mattos; Stoffel & Teixeira, 2010).

However, the Sawhney, Wolcott and Arroniz model (2006 apud Mattos; Stoffel & Teixeira, 2010) apparently ignores the internal environment of organizations. In this manner, a thirteenth dimension was developed so that the program ALI fills the gap, as shown in Figure 1.

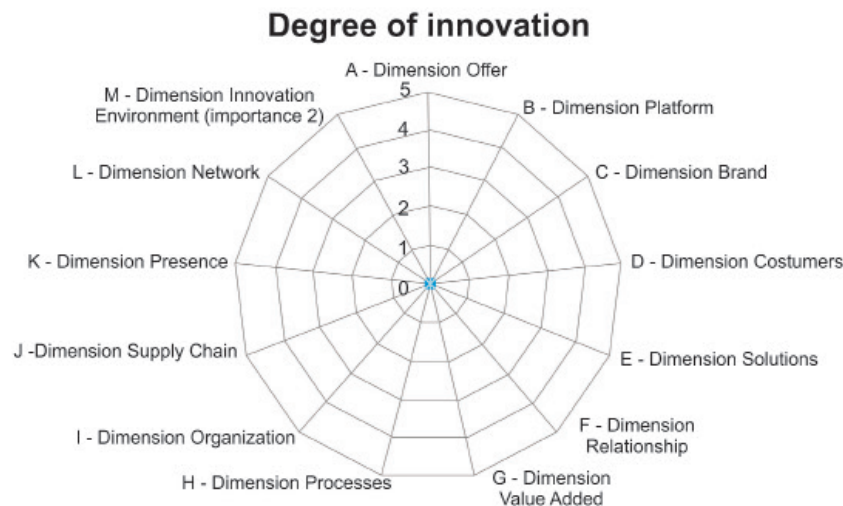


Figure 1 - Model "Innovation Radar" used by Program ALI  
Source: SEBRAE (2013)

With this instrument, the ALI program applies the "Innovation Radar" diagnosis by means of an evaluation form which includes questions and quantitative concepts (scores) assigned in each dimension, which are: a) 0-1 - no innovation; b) 2-3 - incipient innovation; c) 4-5 - current innovation.

Indeed, the higher the score attributed to the dimensions, more favorable and prepared to innovate the MSC is. The opposite, however, depicts the need for efforts and changes so that the MSC can innovate and thus become more competitive. The result of applying this tool allows the organization to check its needs and to highlight areas that offer opportunities and / or challenges to innovation.

From the result of applying the "Innovation Radar", it is important to know how organizational communication could move forward dimensions that present challenges, problems or failures to innovation. The question that motivated this research dealt with the possible relationship between organizational communication and innovation in MSCs.

Following the proposal of this study, the relationship between the dimensions of "Innovation Radar" and organizational communication becomes an important analytical criterion, in the sense that it allows to check the relationship between both and hence identify the influence of organizational communication in promoting innovation in MSCs.

In this manner, organizational communication is seen as an important competence for inducing innovation in companies in general and in particular in MSCs. There is the assumption that communication can advance innovation in a company when it becomes a core competency able to develop skills that make its management model to be based



on innovation. For core competence, it means “sets of tacit and collective knowledge, developed through learning processes and constitute a source of competitive advantage for the company” (Fleury & Oliveira, 2008: 18).

We describe core competence as repertoires acquired and dominated by people or companies that make them stand out from others in certain contexts (Levi-Leboyer, 2002). Thus, core competency is a competitive advantage for a company since it becomes a different feature.

In this perspective, when becoming a core competency in a company, organizational communication is able to transform its internal public communication in autonomous agents. It implies turning them into protagonists of communication processes, also able to cope with daily challenges and problems imposed by the communicative and organizational routine, developing creative ways to solve them and re-signifying the organizational reality.

It is paramount to mention that communication goes beyond the organization, their routine, processes, and dynamics. It is the base of its processes, and according to Duarte and Monteiro (2009: 334), “it is the oxygen that gives life to organizations.” Also according to the authors, communication:

(communication) is present in every sector, every relationship, information flow, space for interaction and dialogue. The consensus is that a good understanding and a good use of communication is able to qualify management practices, improve operational performance, promote significant changes in multiple relationships between the institution and its stakeholders, and add value to the organization (Duarte & Monteiro, 2009: 334).

In this manner, we understand that in a process of innovation development or in the promotion of a culture of innovation, communication becomes an essential skill, in a sense that it is a proactive and constituent part of the organization.

In literature, there is some common understanding about innovation in the fact that an organization significantly reduces its ability to innovate when it cannot promote and enhance communication among its members, and those with external audiences (Shaw & Perkins, 1993 apud Cajazeira & Cardoso, 2010: 275).

This involves that decision-making is adjusted to the change of internal mindset that values communication as a key factor for corporate performance. It implies, therefore, to consider complex communication so that socio-cultural dynamics, technology, media, symbolic and constitutive processes create a network of meanings and signifiers that give meaning to organizational arrangements aimed at innovation.

Therefore, innovation is linked to the ability of a company to create and convert knowledge into innovation, mediated by communication of potential exchanges of information and experiences that emphasize ongoing learning and encourage the co-participation and co-creation of agents, especially its internal workforce to innovate in a daily basis, proposing new ways of thinking the company, its challenges and products, services and relationships.

## MATERIAL E METHODS

According to the above stated, and also to reach the objectives proposed in this article, we chose a qualitative research, with descriptive / analytical purposes. The descriptive research “is intended for verifying and explaining problems, facts or phenomena of real life, as accurately as possible, by observing and making relationships and connections, in the light of the influence environment has on it” (Michel, 2009: 44). Furthermore, in descriptive research “[...] the facts are observed, recorded, analyzed, classified and interpreted without the interference by the researcher” (Andrade, 2001: 124).

In order to make descriptive research feasible, we applied the method of case study. For Michel (2009: 53), “the case study method consists in investigating isolated cases or small groups with the purpose of understanding facts and social phenomena. It is a technique used in field research characterized by being a unit of study, i.e., a family, an institution [...]”.

In the present research it was used the case study in a small business sector of glass optimization, under the ALI program from SEBRAE, and located in the city of Baruru, São Paulo, Brazil. As a technique of data collection, indirect observation was applied by means of documentary analysis, “[...] which means to query documents, records which belong or not to the object of study, for the purpose of collecting useful information to understand and analyze the problem” (Michel, 2009: 65). In this particular case, we analyzed the assessment instrument of the ALI program called “Innovation Radar”.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The document research was carried out from the reading, interpretation, and analysis of the instrument “Innovation Radar” (Figure 2) applied to the unit-case in March 2013. It was taken into account the instrument used in a small business (unit-case), the theoretical reference developed, and the description of each dimension of the “Innovation Radar”.

In the present research, we were not interested in knowing the reasons why each dimension obtained a certain score, but in relating the dimensions, that is, the scores obtained with the organizational communication. With the application of the “Innovation Radar” diagnosis, it was possible to identify lacking dimensions and relate those needs to communication, besides understanding how organizational communication contributed to the dimensions with better scores. The option was to propose an exchange of the features of this instrument applied in the unit-case with the organizational communication. Our intention it to prove as organizational communication is present and necessary to promote innovation in MSCs.

It is important to add to this analysis that the shape of a circle in the chart “Innovation Radar” means the integration between dimensions. In view of the ALI Program, the 13 dimensions are complementary, integrative and interdependent. This means that one dimension affects the other interactively. This can be seen from Figure 2 in the graphical representation of the instrument “Innovation Radar” applied to the unit-case of this research.

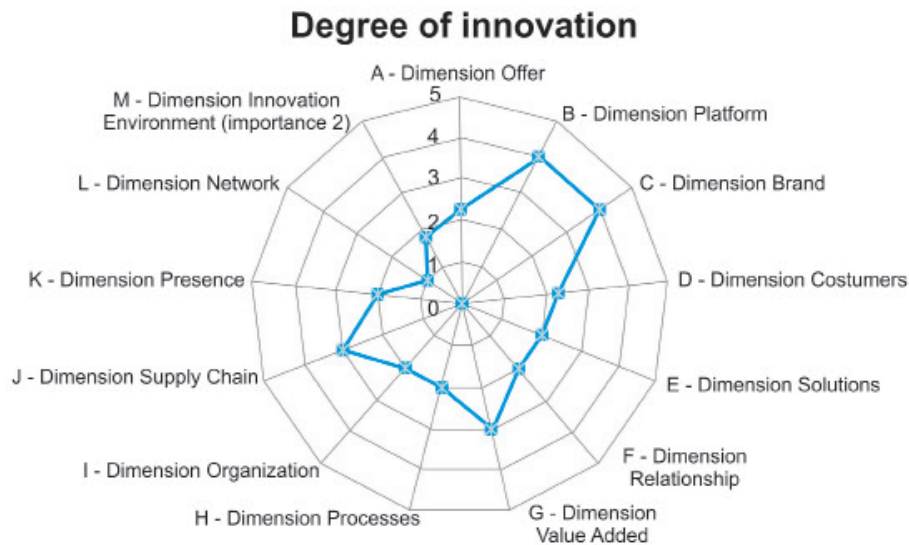


Figure 2 – “Innovation Radar” applied to the unit-case  
Source: SEBRAE (2013)

In Figure 2, it is possible to observe the implementation of “Innovation Radar” performed by ALI program with the unit-case and highlight the scores obtained by it in each dimension. In the analysis result, it was decided to add each dimension to the score obtained and its description, and then proceed with the analysis, relating these elements to organizational communication. Thus, the following tables will be presented. It was developed thirteen tables considering each dimension of “Innovation Radar”.

| Dimension | Score | Analysis  |
|-----------|-------|---|
| Offer     | 2.2   | It refers to the products offered to the market by the company.   |
| Analysis  |       | This dimension focuses on the efforts of a company to identify the products and services that are valued by customers, since they must be refined and enhanced as they are a permanent source of revenue for the organization. In applying the “Innovation Radar”, the dimension “Offer” showed some inadequacies such as lack of new product launches over the last three years of the research development, and disability in innovating products and searching for information to improve products and services which valued sustainability. In the same vein, to innovate means to differentiate products and services most valued by customers and becoming thus a more competitive organization. For a company to identify what is most valued by clients should maintain direct communication channels, going beyond the marketing bias. As Kunsch (2003: 161), “Communication is an act of communion of ideas and the establishment of a dialogue. It is not simply the transmission of information”. In the same manner, to innovate means to differentiate products and services most valued by customers, in order to become a more competitive organization. To identify what is most valued by clients, a company should maintain direct communication channels, going beyond the marketing bias. According to Kunsch (2003: 161), “communication is an act of communion of ideas, and the establishment of a dialogue. It is not only the transmission of information”. Thus, while a company dialogues with your customers and is open to hearing them, there is the opportunity to distinguish itself since it meets their clients’ needs more effectively. This not only explains the need for an integrated management of communications to generate reliable and participatory relationships, but especially the opportunity to leverage these relationships on improvements and innovation in their businesses. |

Framework 1 – Dimension’s analysis “Offer”

| Dimension | Score | Analysis   |
|-----------|-------|--|
| Platform  | 4     | <p>Platform is the name given to a set of basic components, methods of assembly or the technology used in a “modular” manner when developing a portfolio of products. The understanding is that the ability to use the same Platform to offer a larger number of products reflects a greater innovative capacity.</p>  |
| Analysis  |       | <p>This dimension addresses two issues about the physical resources of the company - machinery, equipment, facilities, parts, and technologies - and the mix of products and services offered - different versions of products, adaptation and tailoring of services. With the application of “innovation radar”, the company was able to optimize its equipment to manufacture some of its products mix, involving not only the glass, but also mirrors, as well as variations of sizes, designs and customized projects. These variables have impacted positively in the analysis of this dimension. According to Sawhney, Wolcott, Arroniz (2006), innovations along this dimension are neglected, although its power to create value is considerable. This is because organizations often do not have an investment plan, whether in technology, machinery, equipment or production values, and ends up investing in different machines, processes and the like, impacting on internal costs and causing little impact on innovation (creating something new, changing or improving) of the product mix.</p> <p>Additionally, the concept of value creation is closely linked to this dimension, because investment and optimization technologies that impact the mix of products and offered services should be related to the ability of a company to create value for the consumers, otherwise they do not make sense. We consider a strategic failure to invest in physical resources to innovate without knowing what is relevant and meaningful to consumers. We can list many products that have failed or have not obtained the expected market success. The justification lies in the inability of consumers to know their business - their expectations about the products, their needs and wants - to take into account what they have to say. In this manner, while this dimension gets good score, we can relate it to organizational communication and advance it from there. Knowing the consumer can lead a company to generate more value to it. This can be achieved by means of “interaction points” (Prahalad &amp; Ramaswamy, 2004). When interacting with the consumers to obtain from them knowledge of what is relevant, a company can invest in physical Platforms with more assertiveness, and reverse this investment opportunity to create value to its product mix. In this case, organizational communication acts as an important “link” between the company and its consumers because we start from the concept of communication anchored “in its original meaning: “comunicare, become common, that is, to enable dialogue and interaction, facilitating access, understanding and participation, and to foster the recognition to the attention to others “(Duarte &amp; Monteiro, 2009: 336).</p> |

Framework 2 – Dimension’s analysis “ Platform”

| Dimension | Score | Analysis  |
|-----------|-------|---|
| Brand     | 4     | <p>Brand is understood as a set of symbols, words (slogan) or format by means of which a company conveys its image or promise to customers. The innovation in this dimension implies, for example, to take advantage of the brand to leverage other business opportunities, or conversely, to use other businesses to enhance the brand.</p>  |
| Analysis  |       | <p>In this dimension, the company obtained a favorable score because although its brand is not registered in the Patent and Trademark Office, the organization seeks to explore the use of its logo not only internally, in the products and services offered, but has also developed a partnership in domestic trade, where another company also sells and launches its image and products. Nevertheless, the company still lacks a communication plan targeted to use its brand and image more widely and assertively. We believe that a brand has strong physical and symbolic content and creates some differentiation from a company to its competitors. I.e., “a brand means not just a product or service, but it incorporates a set of values and relevant tangible and intangible attributes to the consumer, and that contributes to differentiate from those similar to it. Therefore, when purchasing the product, the consumer does not buy just an asset, but the whole set of values and attributes of the brand” (Pine, 1996: 43). Therefore, it goes far beyond the representation of a product or service, in that it is expressed values, tangible and intangible, psychological and emotional attributes. Not surprisingly, organizational communication is praised by an organization that seeks to strategically differentiate its brand for consumers. According to Rouen (2004: 19), the brand image “is an impression created or stimulated by a set of signs resulting from all forms of communication between the company and its stakeholders.” Thus, the principles of organizational communication proposed by Kunsch (2003) are linked to the concept of integrated communication set in different communication modes, namely, internal and administrative, marketing and corporate communication, forming a communicative whole that leads an organization to direct the “convergence of different areas, allowing a synergistic action” (Kunsch, 2003: 150). Also, Petit (2003: 13) states that “in order to build a homogeneous image, communication must be a whole, a complete package that everyone receives it equally, with the same impact, the same messages, because only then a build a solid image can be built.” Thus, in this perspective, we can say that organizational communication influences the way the image and the brand of the company are perceived by its consumers. Although the score has been positive in this dimension, the manifestations of the entrepreneurs about the disclosure of their brand and products reinforce the individuality of the company, demonstrating a lack of information about the public perception of its products, services and organizational image. In this sphere, Kunsch (2003) indicates that it is still experienced an individualistic business culture that emphasizes concentration and the increase in profit over other modern business behaviors. According to the author, this orthodox mentality has stalled economic and social development in Brazil. To overcome it has also become a major challenge for organizational communication, since the organizational culture, very much determined by the entrepreneur mindset, may facilitate a more participatory and interactive processes.</p> |

Framework 3 – Dimension’s analysis “Brand”

| Dimension       | Score | Analysis  |
|-----------------|-------|---|
| Costumers       | 2.3   | <p>Those are people or organizations which use or consume products to meet certain needs. Methods of customer-focused innovation differ from traditional approaches, characterized by the pursuit of innovation by means of technological advances or the optimization of business processes. To innovate means, for example, to find a new niche for certain products.</p>   |
| <b>Analysis</b> |       | <p>According to the description of this dimension, one of the characteristics observed for innovation is the ability of an organization to identify niches for new customers and /or meet new needs which were hidden up to then. The result of applying the “innovation radar” showed the deficiency of the company to develop and implement mechanisms to identify the customer’s needs. Although the organization has found two new market niches (laminating and safety glass) and thus developed a new product (glass stairs), it still needs to advance in order to create interactions with their customers to the point that these reverse into knowledge about the needs and desires the customers have. Nevertheless, in face of the speed of business, an organization needs to have customers in a cooperative and interactive manner so that they start to provide subsidies for innovation. It is considered that customers, as well as other public organization, are a source of information that impacts its main and support activities. Therefore, this information is fundamental for the organization to get balance with the market and customers, in a feedback system of information promoted by communication so that it can substantially improve their commercial and social relation. In this sense, it is reinforced the contribution of organizational communication as essential factor for this to occur. Additionally, it is seen that for a company to identify new audiences and serve them with excellence, it should move from some logic from the sender to the logic of integration, interactivity between sender and receiver. The more an organization approaches its customers, the greater its chance to develop a collaborative and interactive network that will certainly impact not only in recognizing the importance of maintaining effective relationships for business continuity, but also the viability of new businesses. Not coincidentally, we believe that organizational communication means to be “in a relationship with”. It represents the action of bringing together, sharing our ideas, feelings, attitudes. In this sense, it is identified with the basic social process: the interaction. It is an exchange of socially meaningful experiences; an effort towards the convergence of perspectives, reciprocity of views, and therefore implies some degree of cooperation or joint action. In order to do so, every society adopts a set of signs and rules that, by virtue of tacit and collectively accepted standards, are arbitrary” (Menezes, 1979: 49). It is noteworthy that, in scenarios of change, impacted by digital processes, customers tend to influence the decisions of an organization. Therefore, customer engagement has an impact on organizational, corporate and institutional activities, and it is essential for an organization that searches for innovation. It is for sure that to engage requires interaction, which justifies to understand organizational communication as a strategy so this aspect goes forward to flow and allow interaction between the company and its customers.</p> |

Framework 4 – Dimension’s analysis “Costumers”

| Dimension | Score | Analysis  |
|-----------|-------|---|
| Solutions | 2     | It is the customized and integrated combination of goods, services and information able to solve the customer's problem.  |
| Analysis  |       | <p>This dimension highlights the ability of an organization to provide creative and innovative solutions to their activities, be it in commercial and market scale or in its processes, products and services. Moreover, it comprises the competence of an organization to solve problems and daily challenges with innovative ideas that span all organizational activities. According to the diagnosis obtained after the "innovation radar" is applied, it can be observed that although the company offers some solutions by complementary products to their customers, methods that can add value to its products and services are still not applied in a comprehensive and systematic manner. Nevertheless, a communicative and open organizational environment is essential, since the solutions are driven internally by the workforce of an organization. Creating an environment for organizational learning is important because the generation of ideas and solutions is linked to the ability of an organization to promote and manage new knowledge, which requires understanding the internal communication as a strategy for the fostering of cooperative values (Kunsch, 2003). In this same line, Kunsch (2003) reveals the need for change in the exclusively profitable business mindset, which exceeds the market logic. It is necessary that the enhancement of the workforce goes from "[...] rhetorics with no echo into the organizational context" (Kunsch, 2003: 158). The author criticizes that the investments in the communication are being targeted for external communication. Surely this is a practice performed by the MSEs especially because they typically have scarce financial capital and privilege propaganda and advertising, not taking into consideration that workforce is the main constructor of its reputation and the leading proponent of its activities. In addition, in the "Solutions" dimension, the internal audience is crucial in solving problems in a creative and innovative way. Kunsch (2003: 159-160) corroborates that "the importance of internal communication lies mainly in the possibilities it offers for dialogue and exchange of information between the executive management and the operational base for total quality of products or services, and the fulfillment of the mission of any organization". Finally, we emphasize that solutions are presented and represented by everyday practices and experiences of the workforce of an organization. In this manner, they need to be communicated to slip back into effective solutions and, consequently, into the quality of the product and services provided by the company.</p> |

Framework 5 – Dimension's analysis "Solutions"

| Dimension    | Score | Analysis  |
|--------------|-------|---|
| Relationship | 2     | Originally called “Customer Experience”, this dimension takes into account everything that the consumer hears, feels or experiences in some way to interact with the company in every moment.   |
| Analysis     |       | <p>In the instrument “Innovation Radar”, this dimension proposes two questions: one deals with the easiness and resources used to improve relationships with customers (e.g. birthday cards, appealing showrooms, giveaways, etc) and the other deals with the use of computer data, digitization and convergence to digital media (social networks, websites, email, etc), which tighten the relationship and promote the interaction with customers. On this subject, the company obtained an average score since it has just developed an electronic voucher system, which it does not consider to work very well. This system allows the service control that ensures the customer the acquisition of the product according to the order of arrival to the store. In what concerns computer data, the company has no social networking website and is not used or updated, and the e-mail system of the company is not well managed and does not offer quick and assertive answer. Given the above, we conclude that, besides the company will not follow the advance of digitization and digital convergence, it does not maintain communication and interactivity with its customers, a fact that prevents them from developing and maintaining strategic relationships with them.</p> <p>The need for adjustment to the new ICTs gives to the organizational communication some differentiation between the organizations by means of strategic relationships which lead to the search for excellent communication. Grunig (2009: 27) states that “organizations that communicate well with the public to which they relate know what to expect of these stakeholders, and the public know what to expect from them.” This is relevant for the company we studied, since understanding its customers is the first step to maintain trustful relationships with them. Our attention is drawn to the fact that the dimension “relationship” has an original sense of “customer experience”. From this premise, we believe that providing the customer experience is the same as providing meaning to their relationships, be it commercial, social, cultural or psychological. Thus, the experience that consumers have with the company defines the quality of their relationship, and “customer experience” is a measure of innovation, since it can affect consumer satisfaction. In this sphere, it means putting customers and their relationship with the company as a central strategy of the business. Nevertheless, “many companies openly declare their concern for the customer and seek to demonstrate that they are focused on the market, however, have failed to achieve the ideal level in what concerns to provide customers with something more than the satisfaction of needs or fulfillment of demands” (Tischeler et al, 2012: 91). One of the current strategies to create, develop and maintain ties with the customer is to make use of digital media. In other words, to develop a set of skills in performing organizational communication in digital environments (Correa, 2008). In the words of Correa (2008), it is a strategic process that involves the possibilities of relationships with stakeholders - including consumers - through integration, according to the propositions of Kunsch (2003), an integrated communication mix, including digital communication. It does not mean to restrict the use of digital communication to one or another type of digital media such as social networks, website, and e-mails, but above all, to understand digital communication “as the use of digital technologies for information and communication, as well as all the tools resulting from them to facilitate and streamline the construction process of any integrated communication in organizations” (Correa, 2008: 173).</p> |

Framework 6 – Dimension’s analysis “Relationship”



| Dimension       | Score | Analysis  |
|-----------------|-------|---|
| Value added     | 3     | <p>It considers the mechanisms by which a company captures part of the value created. This is usually performed by the analysis of the Value Chain aimed at discovering non-explored revenue flows and manners to capture value from interactions with customers and partners.</p>  |
| <b>Analysis</b> |       | <p>Value added refers both to the opportunities to generate revenue using resources already owned by the company, and the possibilities of promising partnerships with institutions that offer complementary products and services. Sawhney; Wolcott; Arroniz (2006) argue that to capture value refers to the mechanism that a company uses to recover the value it creates. In order to innovate, the company may discover non-explored revenue flows, develop innovative pricing systems or otherwise expand its ability to capture value through the interactions with customers and partners. In this manner, the company in question innovated by adopting two ways to generate revenue using its own resources and products, providing services of lamination (rolling) to other companies during time slots when machinery is not working, and reuses leftover material in the production of racks and bathroom fittings. On the other hand, with regard to the ability to innovate by the interactions with customers and partners, it still needs to advance, since new opportunities generated from this interaction are minimal. Companies that add value are attuned to clients because value is added by means of the level of knowledge about market and customers, thereby developing a value chain which can result in innovation. Value chain is usually created through interactions that the company develops via communication directed at capturing value. Partnerships with other companies or institutions can help to capture value, since to establish a continuous flow of communication between/and with them, a company can generate more knowledge about the market, competitors, and consumers. Between the company and its partners, it can be developed a learning network about quality acquisition that may impact on its business, products or services, thus enabling innovation. It is necessary that the client fully understands the value add. In this sphere, organizational communication can help the company to publicize valued business, product or services. It must be clear to the company that value is added only if it is perceived as such by their customers. It is paramount in adding value because it establishes the level of benefit, utility, and attributes which are important and relevant to them or not. Therefore, communication can act in two spheres: the capture of value, i.e., the ability of the company to interact with customers and partners in order to generate knowledge about them and to extract essential information to add value, which implies establishing open communication channels; and in the disclosure of the value to be understood by customers. In this matter, especially marketing communication may be used to support the company's position towards its customers and offer them the possibility to make the value added familiar to the public.</p> |

Framework 7 – Dimension's analysis "Value Added"

| Dimension | Score | Analysis  |
|-----------|-------|---|
| Processes | 2     | <p>These are configurations of the activities used to conduct internal operations. The innovation in this dimension assumes redesign their processes to seek greater efficiency, higher quality or shorter response time or call (cycle time).</p>  |
| Analysis  |       | <p>Since the “innovation radar” is an instrument aimed at quantifying shares that lead to positive changes, mainly to companies in the industrial and service sectors, this dimension presents six indicators targeted to organizational and manufacturing processes. The first indicator addresses the improvement of internal processes (inventory, manufacturing, etc); the second focuses on the implementation of management systems (Excellence in Management Model, Guide of Good Practices, etc); the third refers to the certifications received; the fourth to the implementation and use of management software; the fifth to environmental changes, and the sixth to the management of waste. Given the complexity of this dimension, the analysis of the company identified that it innovated in just two indicators: the acquisition of equipment to optimize the loading and unloading of glass sheets, and in waste management, where the company began manufacturing bathroom fittings with leftovers, generating revenue for the organization. To innovate in this dimension, a company has to redesign their processes for greater efficiency, quality and faster turnaround time. But for many Brazilian MSEs, the process innovation is something that needs awareness, since much of the business is directly involved in production processes and clings to the initial working models. It is worth clarifying that organizational communication is recognized as a structuring process of the organizational context (Putnam, Phillips, Chapman, 1999 apud Marchiori, 2010), meaning that it is essential for the structure of an organization (Barbard, 1938 apud Marchiori, 2010). Thus, when redesigning the process, the company depends on the value it attaches to communication. For so long communication was understood as a tool used exclusively to transmit messages. This way of understanding communication surely slipped into organizations, and the impact that can be felt in a number of companies that simplify communication skills, reducing them to a relationship between sender and receiver with the transmitted message, the channel and the feedback. In more recent studies, communication goes far beyond the functionalist logic and can be understood as a constitutive part of the organizational reality (Putnam, Nicotera, 2009 apud Marchiori, 2010), that is, it is a process that structures the organizational everyday life, giving it meaning, visions, opinions, etc. Therefore, “the view of communication as a process allows greater understanding of different organizational behaviors, since communication naturally constitutes these behaviors, observed from this premise the possibility of yielding knowledge and innovation in these environments” (Marchiori, 2010: 2). With this reflection, we realize that the ability of organizational change or process redesign are directly related to organizational communication and to how the leader of the researched company realizes and appreciates such ability.</p> |

Framework 8 – Dimension’s analysis “Processes”

| Dimension    | Score | Analysis   |
|--------------|-------|--|
| Organization | 2     | It refers to how the company is structured, which are the established partnerships, and the role and responsibility of employees. The innovation in this dimension includes, among others: changes in the organizational chart; reorganization to gain speed or quality; reorganization to give different treatment to customer segments..   |
| Analysis     |       | <p>The dimension organization in the “ innovation radar “ is demonstrated by four indicators that deal with reorganization of activities in order to increase competitiveness and agility (e.g, casual day, redistribution of tasks, etc.), new partnerships, external view (means of communication with suppliers and competitors), and changes towards the search for competitiveness and market (sales strategy). An organizational is seen in this dimension when implementing a new organizational method in a particular company. This method can be developed in its external relations, in business practices or simply when organizing its workplace (Finep, 2004). Additionally, this dimension reflects the perspective of organizational change, since the innovation relates to the ability to reorganize the activity or personnel for obtaining improved outcomes; establishing some kind of partnership or participation in any cooperative project for product development, process improvement, the search for new markets, and whether the company has adopted some new idea or way of exchanging information with suppliers and competitors (Bachmnn &amp; Destefani, 2008). The application of the “innovation radar” demonstrated that the company is developing a career plan and rearranging its internal activities, and also has established a new partnership to deliver more complete products. Besides, it reports that the shortage of manpower interferes significantly on the demand for services, and its strategies end up not working properly. Not coincidentally, Kunsch (2003: 61) draws attention to the need to adapt or change by which contemporary organizations goes through because “[...] as open systems, organizations relate to the environment and are subject to independent environmental variables that drive them to adjust internally and institutionally”. In this manner, “to adopt transformation strategies that are effective involves understanding, beyond the aspects relating to political, social and economic processes, the inter-relationship that develops between individuals, the organization and the context in which the change occurs. This relationship can be analyzed primarily through the discourse of communicative processes taking place inside and outside the organization “(Barros &amp; Santos, 2010: 6). In this respect, it is lain the inter-relationship among this dimension, organizational change and organizational communication, in that the latter acts as a facilitator and mediator to implement changes, reorganizing the structure and stimulating interactions, besides promoting understanding and cooperation between groups or individuals participating in this process, weaving the organizational context to receive those changes (Reis, 2004).</p> <p>It is noteworthy that in a changing organizational setting or internal and external adaptation there are several players involved, which, in turn, do not always share the same vision about change, making this it a complex and challenging process. Not surprisingly, many organizations fail in this regard not because the change is unnecessary, but because it is not assimilated by the participants. Therefore, they legitimate it institutionally, a fact that requires a company to share the feeling of strategy and necessity of change. In innovative environments, organizational change is necessary for the simple fact that it establishes meaning by sharing ideas about the intentions and prospects of the company. We agree with Baptista (2003: 3) who states that “when a worker is aware of the plans of the company where he works, he will collaborate with the proposed changes.” Moreover, “it is important to analyze the existing forms of communication, and the lack of communication management can lead to poor results in other strategic plans of the organization” (Baptista, 2003: 2).</p> |

## Framework 9 – Dimension’s analysis “Organization”

| Dimension    | Score | Analysis  |
|--------------|-------|---|
| Supply Chain | 3     | It corresponds to the sequence of activities and agents that deals with the goods, services and information from the source to the delivery phase. It also covers logistics aspects such as transportation, storage and delivery  |
| Analysis     |       | <p>The benefits of this dimension can be seen when it is noticed that the company has taken some action to minimize the costs of transportation or supplies of raw material or finished product, and also when it adopts some solution to optimize the flow of information for inventory management or shipping (Bachmann &amp; Destefani, 2008). In this regard, the company sought to acquire a new transport vehicle, envisioning greater agility, quality and safety in the conveyance of its products. On the other hand, the supply chain is linked to the ability of a company to develop a trustful relationship with the suppliers of raw material, input and other services that add something to the production. Therefore, this relationship should be guided by a communication that fosters trustfulness to contribute to the engagement of these companies towards collaboration, and a commitment to a socially and environmentally responsible management. That is because the environmental commitment in developing products is one of the trends of new models of business management which aims not only to the economic development of enterprises, but also to the social and environmental impact their products have on society.</p> |

## Framework 10 – Dimension’s analysis “Supply Chain”

| Dimension       | Score | Analysis   |
|-----------------|-------|--|
| Presence        | 2     | It is related to the distribution channels the company uses to put their products into the market and also into the places where these items can be purchased by consumers. The innovation here means the creation of new points, or good use of the existing ones.  |
| <b>Analysis</b> |       | This dimension is related to the company's ability to improve its product distribution, that is, to make it accessible for their consumers. It requires not only the recognition of the importance of the location where the product will be exposed, but mostly that this site means a point of communication between company and consumers. The point of communication is an important link between the company's brand with their consumers, and between its ability to make its importance recognizable and the differentiation from the competitors. So it is not simply a physical or virtual location where the products are exposed. Although this is very important, it should be recognized as if this "local" will communicate with customers. Here we highlight the importance of integrated communication, more specifically, the marketing communication "responsible for all the communicative production around the marketing objectives in order to disseminate the advertisement of the company's products and" (Kunsch, 2008: 162). This communicative production may be related to innovation because it represents an important competency the company holds when paying attention to the way which this "local" or media interacts with customers. Aspects such as architecture, furniture, air conditioning, parking, colors, decoration, and employees garment can make difference at the time of purchase. When a company is aware of these, the level of differentiation from its competitors may elevate. Blesa (2005) emphasizes the idea that "a store can talk". This means that a sales point is in non-stop communication with customers. Not surprisingly, some of the marketing communication tools are important to keep the degree of interaction between a sales point and customers. We can mention, for example, merchandising. The understanding and recognition that marketing communication is essential to present products or services to customers can generate improvements in this dimension, and also improve innovation in interaction. |

## Framework 11 – Dimension's analysis "Presence"

| Dimension       | Score | Analysis   |
|-----------------|-------|--|
| Network         | 1     | This dimension comprises aspects related to the network that connects the company and its products to customers. It is essentially the resources used for quick and efficient communication between company and customers. The innovation in this dimension is to make improvements which are able to extend the value of the company and offer often bring logistical benefits.   |
| <b>Analysis</b> |       | By means of networking, the company, its products and services are connected to customers. Therefore, the development and implement of this dimension can become part of the company's competitive advantage. Innovations in this dimension consist of improvements to increase the value of the company offer (Sawhney; Wolcott & Arroniz, 2006).<br>In this dimension, the company we studied reported it had not developed any new mechanism to communicate with their customers. It believes that there are many flaws in this process, and it fears to implement a tool that could expose a large amount of dissatisfaction about the sales and delivery process. By observing the "Innovation Radar" and the concepts of the dimensions, it is possible to see the relationship between this dimension and the Relationship one, since it is a non-existent network with no established relationships between publics. Additionally, the formation of a network is linked to the ability of a firm to absorb NICTs because they facilitate the expansion of communication spaces and information flows. One must also consider that with the digital processes, the internet in particular, the ability to communicate widened. Today we are able to talk a lot to many people; a fact that leveraged different and new ways of interaction between a company and its customers. It facilitates the contact between them and allows consumers to express their opinion in a more active way. Surely, a company unprepared for the network world tends to have problems with their clients. The problem, however, does not lie in the use of NICTs or in the use of on or off line communication features, but it mostly lies in the culture of the company and its management model that determines their processes and relationships. A company with sales and logistics problem, such as in this specific case, can certainly be exposed in a networked environment, especially in virtual. In this sphere, we reaffirm the connection with "Relationships", in that the deficiency of this dimension is established between the company and its consumers. To create and develop a network by using communication resources in a company involves primarily taking responsibility for the improvement and innovation of its organizational processes in production, logistics, and sales. |

## Framework 12 – Dimension's analysis "Network"

| Dimension              | Score | Analysis   |
|------------------------|-------|--|
| Innovation Environment | 1.8   | <p>One of the manners to evaluate the “Innovation-friendly Environment” or companies willing to innovate is by mechanisms such as suggestion programs that encourage employees to submit ideas. It involves identifying if there is a spirit of valuing the innovation. To evaluate the innovative competence, it is interesting to know whether the organization knows and applies specific tools of creation processes</p>   |
|                        |       | <p>With specific focus on innovation, this dimension presents a larger number of indicators related to the central theme of the “Innovation Radar”, which is to identify the innovative maturity or level of innovation in a company. These indicators address issues ranging from the pursuit of knowledge to the use of funds from the government to invest in new projects. This dimension, the company we studied stated that had regularly visited fairs; an attitude that favors the acquisition of new knowledge. It also revealed to have taken the idea of the laminating process from a supplier, besides knowing and having already used government resources for technology investments. However, it had no strategy, action or internal communication tool, either to collect ideas or communicate new knowledge, and shared information about the industry directly with their employees, among other issues related to individual and collective development of creative affairs. The company also said that does not stimulate the emergence of new ideas in the workplace, and does not intend to apply, disseminate or develop any suggestion process, product or service that comes from employees.</p> <p>Pessoni and Portugal (2010) point out that the organizations are also inserted into this emergence scenario of having the citizen as protagonist and producer of content. These organizations are compounded by professionals who interact with the outside world, therefore, more and more companies need to integrate their public and organizational communication processes in order to foster a collaborative environment not only for the resolution of problems, but mainly for developing innovations that can be turned into competitive advantages. There are several ways to check if the company has a good environment for innovation such as participation in competitions focused on innovation, showing the importance of innovation for the company; registration of patents or utility model; knowledge and/or application of instruments aimed at the creation process such as brainstorming; research and development work; acquisition of technical and scientific knowledge coming from other companies, customers or suppliers; technologies obtained through the rights of trademark use and patent exploitation license; use or intention to use tax incentives or resources from agencies which promotes innovation (Bachmann &amp; Destefani, 2008). Another way is the implement of a program of formal and documented suggestions that encourages employees to express their ideas, because most of the MSEs is stimulated, but in an informal and non-documented manner, which makes data collection difficult (Bachmann &amp; Destefani, 2008). By the foregoing, it is possible to conclude that the dimension Innovation Environment is present in an organization that has a plan for effective communication, focuses on the integration of ideas, and praises a collaborative communication environment.</p> |
|                        |       | <p><b>Analysis</b></p>   |

Framework 13 – Dimension’s analysis “Innovation Environment”

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

To generate strategies that lead to successful innovation, organizations increasingly need to build strong, lasting and quality bonds with every group of customers. It is necessary to be able to establish successful models of collaboration not only with customers but also with suppliers and internal stakeholders. Therefore, we necessarily have the effective involvement of three groups that interact to consolidate innovations: internal stakeholders (members), target audience (customers), and public partner (suppliers).

Cajazera and Cardoso (2010) point out that “there is no innovation that dispenses of communication processes in the three main fronts which act for their development: the public partner, internal stakeholders and target audience – the consumers”.

Given the above, it is possible to verify that the difficulty of implementing an innovation management in the unit-case business is also related to its ability to change organizational communication into core competency.

In the analytical frameworks it was verified that organizational communication is under interference in all dimensions of the “Innovation Radar”. Even in those dimensions presenting better scores, it was found that the effectiveness of organizational communication could make innovation advance.

The “Innovation Radar” itself indicates the relationship between innovation and communication, since there is interdependence between their evaluative dimensions. Thus, the result of the other dimension interferes decisively in a synergistic process. Therefore, we can infer that dimensions communicate with one another in a feedback and dependence system. That is, every activity and action of a company in favor of innovation, contemplated by the instrument and its dimensions, has a link of interactivity which impacts on the innovative company results. As Cajazeira and Cardoso (2009) proposed, when considering the need for alignment between communication and innovation to generate the expected result for an organization which is or intends to be innovative, we consider organizational communication as a structuring factor of this process.

It is worth mentioning that innovation is a complex and systemic concept, as well as its applicability and promotion in a MSC. In this respect, from the neo-Schumpeterian understanding of innovation, we recognize that its complexity is linked to a network of institutional relations which depends on their social, political and cultural environments to be feasible. Thus, innovation can be perceived as a social and systemic process generated and sustained by inter-firm relationships (Cassiolato, 1992, quoted in Costa, 2011) and other institutional, economic and market relationships. It is in the interaction provided by the participating agents such networks and relationships that a company can obtain necessary inputs to innovate.

As for the MSCs, this network of relationships is essential because they have a myriad of unique obstacles and problems compared to larger companies which, besides finance resources, normally have investments in Research and Development (R & D) and the ability to take on more risks, skilled human capital, and an organizational culture more open to creativity; characteristics usually apart from the reality of MSCs. Therefore, their efforts to achieve innovation require them to turn to internal and external relational processes that account for their activities – among them, organizational communication.

From the theoretical framework studied and research applied, it is possible to notice that communication may act as a mediator between the MSCs and the different agents that contribute to innovation. Therefore, it requires changing organizational communication into core competency to stimulate the MSCs to move towards an innovative organizational culture, thus fostering innovation as a management model, because

[...] so-called sustainable organizations must invest in transforming communications into a core competency. They also need to constantly renew its oxygen by creating a *communicative competence* to transform their members into autonomous agents of communication (Duarte & Monteiro, 2009: 346) (our emphasis).

Although achieving communicative competence implies a certain strategic complexity, it is understood that this process requires organizational learning environments that enhance organizational communication and foster the development of shared meanings about innovation among agents related to the organization. These environments became spaces of communication for development and conversion of knowledge, thus being able to promote a culture of innovation from the management model whose participation, collaboration and cooperation with and among agents of this organization would enhance the process of organizational learning for “[...] acquisition of abilities to process the information that circulates into the organization and also to acquire knowledge in communication; spaces for individual and collective learning in which knowledge is shared and reconstructed” (Duarte & Monteiro, 2009: 346), because “communication spaces deal with the creation of opportunities for dialogue, interaction, exchange of information, knowledge, experiences” (Duarte & Monteiro, 2009: 350).

Thus, promoting the culture of innovation would be linked to the ability of an organization to create and turn knowledge into innovation, facilitated by a communication space for potential exchanges of information and experiences that foster the learning of communicative competence.

Undoubtedly, we suggest a new approach to organizational communication for MSCs focused on innovation, a fact which requires a deal of effort in all directions in order to break some paradigms which immobilize organizational routines and prevent these companies from moving forward. It is especially necessary that the MSCs go beyond the mechanistic view of communication that objectifies it “as another instrumental element available to the manager in pursuit of organizational performance” (Caldas, 2010: 34-35).

Nevertheless, historically and culturally, MSCs have more conservative structures in what concerns changes. This is surely related to the fact that changes and improvements imply in investment risks. These companies, with lean organizational structures and narrower working capital, resist to the idea of changing, as well as innovating.

We understand that the role of organizational communication for generating changes and improvement is essential, since it is necessary that people responsible for MPCs change their mental model, separate from behavioral paradigms, and create a new model of management that allows cultural transformation. We believe, therefore, that innovation should be linked to the prospect of cultural transformation that precedes it. This is because the vectors of MPCs require significant changes to their way of thinking about business and the role of innovation in its development, in order to ensure sustainability and competitiveness.

Finally, it is believed that organizational communication must be aligned to the innovation process. This is due to the fact that for innovation to produce the expected positive results for the organization, it is necessary to think strategically about the clients involved and their needs, as well as to conduct research and analyze scenarios. Furthermore, it is necessary that the culture and the organizational structure are conducive to innovation, which includes that managers and employees are aligned to the same goals. //

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