FIT1049: IT professional practice

Week 10: 'Messages' in organisational contexts

Things to cover today…

At the end of this lecture, you will broadly understand:

1. How different workplace situations and contexts demand different means of organisational communications; and
2. How different platforms of online communications can be used (and abused) by organisations as part of their professional activities.

Organisational goals

Organisational objectives

Legal frameworks

Social surrounding

Policies

Procedures

Guidelines/best practice

Operational documents

Int. doc. not legally/org'lly req'd

Legally/org'lly req'd int. doc.

Legally/org'lly req'd ext. doc.

Ext. doc. not legally/org'lly req'd

3

Organisational goals

Organisational objectives

Policies

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Messages

Legal frameworks

Social surrounding

Int. com. not legally/org'lly req'd

Legally/org'lly req'd int. com.

Legally/org'lly req'd ext. com.

Ext. com. not legally/org'lly req'd

Week 10 ePub revision: Recall and apply…

Please head to **https://flux.qa** and sign in with your Monash account (you should then stay logged in for the semester).

Hit the plus button in the top right and type in code **8JQJ4J** to join the FIT1049 group. The code is case sensitive.

*Please note that this is a Monash system, and your responses to questions are not anonymous.
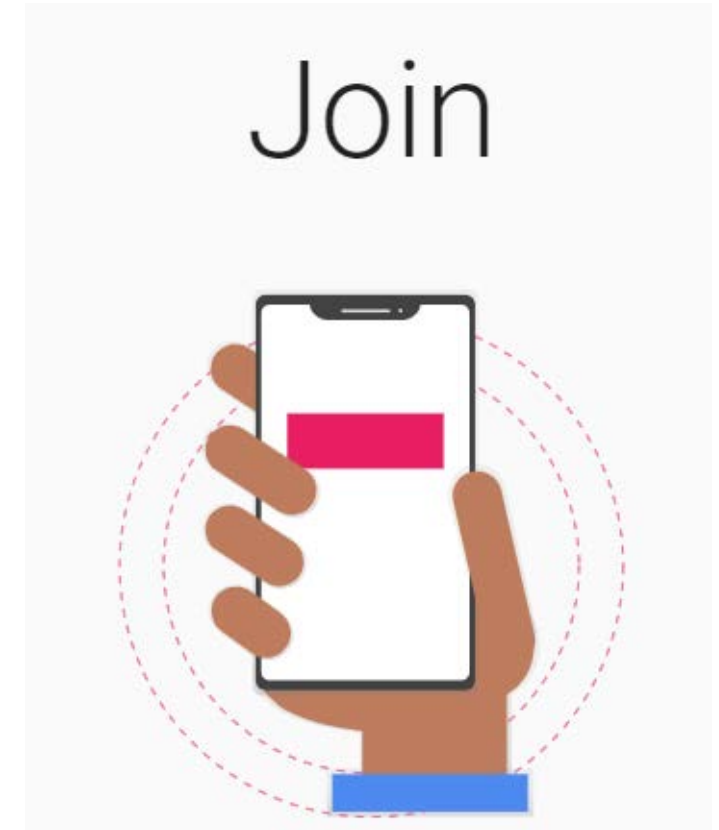
Question 1: Workplace communications 1

You are an IT consultant managing a project that aims to implement a new customer management system in a client organisation. For a reason beyond your team's control, the project's timeframe is becoming increasingly tight, and your team now needs additional resources in order to complete it on time. Tom, who is responsible for legal matters for the project, suggests that the team would benefit greatly if the team gets another staff member from the Legal Department, and you and the rest of the team agree. You in your capacity as the Project Manager now write an email to the managers in IT (i.e. your boss) and in Legal (from which you will hopefully get an extra staff member) to see if they are prepared to deploy an additional Legal staff member for this project. Based on this description, which management structure does your company have?

1. Matrix
2. Functional
3. Divisional

Question 2: Workplace communications 2

In the same scenario, which of the following would be the best approach to seek advice from the two managers?

1. "Due to the reason beyond the team's control, the timeframe of the project is becoming increasingly tight. In light of this constraint, Tom suggested that the team should have an additional staff member from Legal so that the team can complete the project on time. Would you confirm that this arrangement would be possible?"
2. "Due to the reason beyond the team's control, the timeframe of the project is becoming increasingly tight. In light of this constraint, I as the Project Manager have decided that the team would require an additional staff member from Legal so that the team can complete the project on time. Would you advise if this arrangement would be possible?"
3. "Due to the reason beyond the team's control, the timeframe of the project is becoming increasingly tight. In light of this constraint, the team have agreed that we would benefit from having an additional staff member from Legal in order to complete the project on time. Would you let us know if this arrangement would be possible?"

Question 3: Workplace communications 3

Again in the same scenario, you in the end obtained authorisation form the two managers to deploy an additional staff member. You are now writing to let your client know of this arrangement. Which of the following would be the best approach?

1. "On behalf of the project team, I am writing to let you know that we now have an additional staff member from Legal so that the project can be completed on time. Please let us know if this is an acceptable arrangement."

2. "I am writing to advise you of the deployment of an additional staff member from Legal, and this is in response to the unexpected delay caused by a reason beyond our control."

3. "Please be advised that our company has decided the deployment of an additional staff member in order to meet the project deadline. This is in response to the unexpected delay caused by a reason beyond our control. While there is no action necessary on your part, please let the project team know if you have any questions."

Question 4: Social media for organisational use

You have just secured a graduate role at a major consulting company, and are working as an IT consultant. Being one of the latest recruits in the company, you find lots to learn about the internal protocols and acronyms, and thought of creating a portal where all the newer recruits could share their knowledge so that many would benefit from it. You have spoken to other recruits, who all thought that was a great idea, and obtained an approval from the relevant managers. Which platform would you use?

1. A social media page (e.g. Facebook)
2. A wiki
3. A blog

Question 5: Online communications and public relations

You are working as an Online Content Manager in a small design company that has recently grown its popularity through using an extensive marketing strategy using social media. The designs the company produces are often provocative, which is probably part of why it gained such popularity in recent months. One morning there was someone posting a very abusive and discriminatory comment on the company's social media page, criticising one of the company's designs recently produced. By the time you got work, there were already hundreds of responses, many of which were also abusive and inflammatory, and from your experience, you know instantly that there are some 'agitators' who are trying to provoke others. What would you do? Choose what you consider is the best approach below.

Question 5: Online communications and public relations (cont'd)

1. Ignore, and let it keep happening. Any publicity, whether good or bad, is still publicity, so why not?

2. Post your company's official response to the original post, defending your company's design policy and the designer's intentions.

3. Take the original post down, noting the abusive and discriminatory nature of the original post is not acceptable.

Question 6: 'Private' vs. professional use of social media

Matthew is working as a Business Analyst in a major bank that is known to be a very conservative organisation. In his private life, Matthew is also an enthusiastic gamer who writes for his own private blog in which he reviews a range of games, and this blog has been extremely popular and read by many. His online persona on this blog, however, is known to be rather controversial and combative against others who post anything negative against what he wrote.

One evening he was in a fierce exchange of words with one of this readers, and wrote something as a joke that could be read derogatory to a certain cohort of the society. His post got quickly re-posted out of the original context, and it was spread as a 'horrific' comment, even attracting some media attention with his identity as an employee of the bank already identified. Would this affect his professional life as a Business Analyst? Which one of the following best describe the situation?

Question 6: 'Private' vs. professional use of social media (cont'd)

1. Even though his post was inappropriate to start with, it was posted in his personal blog as a joke in the original context. It thus should not affect his professional standing as a Business Analyst.

2. Even if the blog was of personal nature, he should not be posting anything that could be taken as inappropriate and/or offensive. Nevertheless, this was done in his private life, and it should not affect his professional standing as a Business Analyst.

3. His identity as a bank employee is already identified, and it is very possible that this would affect his professional standing.

Question 7: How to keep a secret

You are engaged as a programmer in a project that is highly confidential within your organisation. Which one of the following is NOT an effective strategy to maintain the secrecy of this project?

1. Give a codename for the project so that others won't know what you are talking about.
2. Implement a set of strict protocols that define who could access which information.
3. Have the anti-eavesdropping physical facilities specifically for the project in a secret location.

Answers and comments for the quizzes

1) The answer is 1. This is a recap from the last week's lecture/ePub, so review if you weren't sure.

2) The answer is 3. The option 1's attribution of the proposal to Tom undermines the writer's role as PM, and may give a false impression that there is a split view within the team. The option 2 reads as though the writer is assuming the authority he/she does not have; the 'decision' is to be made by the managers, not the writer. The option 3's wording is accurate in that the team has agreed on this option, and that the managers hold the authority to decide. Consider the context, as I always say, of the communications.

3) The answer is 3. The option 1 reads as though the decision was exclusively made by the team, but the team itself does not have that authority. Also the last sentence is problematic; the client should not be deciding if this is an acceptable deployment option. The option 2 is one of those messages that leaves the recipient wonder "thanks for letting us know, but so what?" For a message to be effective, it needs an initiative/instruction for the recipient to follow. The option 3 fulfills those requirements.

Answers and comments for the quizzes (cont'd)

5) The answer is 2. Note that the options 1 and 3 are not conducive to consolidation and systematic management of know-how, and depending on the platform, the organization may not retain the ownership of the information uploaded. This of course is not a definite answer, and much depends on the context. One has to, though, be very mindful of different factors before committing to a particular platform as a means of organisational communications.

6) No 'correct' answer as such, and we have heard all of them one way or another with varying consequences. Consider the legitimacy as well as the limitation of these arguments.

7) The 'answer' is 3, though this is more reflective of how things are nowadays in the world, than this being a 'correct' answer to it. The point to highlight is that the whole idea of 'private' is no longer valid in the realm of social media.

8) The answer is 1. Codenames are not very useful in this context to maintain the secrecy, and you shouldn't be taking about it (even with a codename) with others' presence if the project deserves such a high level of secrecy anyway.

So, how will this week's topics be assessed in the exam?

Sample question 1 (based on this week's ePub): What does it mean when a mode of online communication is said to be 'linear'? Give an example, and describe how it can be used in professional practice by taking advantage of this 'linear' character.

<u>Hints</u>: See the ePub for the definition. It deals with the extent of control the sender has over the information they transmit. You see lots of examples everyday…

So, how will this week's topics be assessed in the exam?

Sample question 2 (based on this week's ePub and lecture): The spontaneity social media can offer as a means of communication often make oraganisations vulnerable. Explain why.

Hints: We know that it takes lots of time and effort planning and developing a piece of organizational communication. How is this conducive (or not) to the nature of social media? Have a think about it.

Next two weeks…

Week 11 lecture

- Lecture on workplace issues and management
- Lecture on organisational approach to the management of workplace issues (guest lecture)

Week 12 lecture

- Lecture on organisational approach to the management of security risks and incidents (guest lecture)
- Exam revision

Things to do this week…

1. Attend your Tutorial session(s) this week, and continue working on the Assignment 2, and

2. Read the ePub for Week 11 before the lecture next week. You will also see in the Week 11 tab on the Moodle Site a summary of what to come in Week 11.