



VIRTUAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR COMMUNICATIONS

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Abstract: Mass data production and distribution of this production by computer technology in particular are among the indicators of the postmodern era. Formations emerged depending on the modern ages have led to the differentiation of the organizational structures as well. The new-generation information technologies have been helpful for the implementation of flexible organizational models. Virtual organizations are one of the leading post-modern organizational structures developed with intent to accommodate globalization. In this study, formation process of virtual organizational structure, causes of its emergence, its types and characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of virtual organizational structure etc. are discussed with the method of literature review. In addition, an answer is sought for the question of how the communication of a virtual organization must be. In this context, communication of the Turkish company CicekSepeti.com that collaborated with Amazon a short time ago has been investigated. The problems arising in communication of virtual organization have been tried to be identified and solution suggestions have been made.

Key Words: Post Modernism, virtual organization, communication, virtual communication, web page

INTRODUCTION

When humans bored with the rationalistic and functional structure of modernism, the differentiation-seeking, the desire of getting away from rationalism and reality created a suitable basis for postmodernism. Postmodernism that questions the basic principles of modernism and looks at it with critical eyes when needed has destroyed many known values in every area, and has introduces different concepts to our lives. Thus, postmodernism emerges as a new social and cultural formation. In this new postmodernist

era, the information society gained a larger place for itself, on the other side.

Information society is a society where information is the principal power and the major source of capital. Information is the major power that illuminates and leads every stage of social life. In an information society, information is a life style and a way of thinking and living. In an information society; development levels of countries began to be measured by using computer and with the amount of obtained, processed and stored information, not with the material values

that they produce such as steel and energy. The incredible progress in information and communication technologies led to great changes in human life, particularly after the 80s.

It is known that the developments in communication and information processing technologies and the consequent developments in computer applications brought out “information age”. As for the development in computer applications, it entered into almost every stage of life, and began to bring out new ideas, attitudes and behavior (Black & Edwards, 2000:567). One of the most important problems of the enterprises struggling to survive in the competitive environment of our age is the difficulty of adapting quickly to changing environmental conditions. In this process, virtual organizations integrated into our lives by information society seem to be in line for being the basic management trend in the future.

Changes caused by information technology, and concordantly by the globalization process led to creation of new opportunities. These new opportunities caused management understanding in enterprises to be changed; and besides, led to restructuring of organizations. Koçel combines under three groups the reasons of the changes in thought of the management, caused by this process (Koçel, 2010: 371).

Developments in communication and information technologies: Computer, communication via satellite and the change in Internet technologies in particular eliminated the concept of distance in communication. It created the opportunity of accessing any desired information for everyone. The dizzying development in this area changed all the social life and also led to change of the structures of organizations.

International competition: National boundaries have lost their meanings in terms of economy, and this fact urged enterprises to adopt globalization. Enterprises faced with the indispensability of surviving by competing in the international market during this period encountered the necessity of reorganizing the principal enterprise functions such as procurement, production, sales as well as the secondary functions such as human resources, accounting and finance.

Humanistic values: The postmodern period led to a change in humanistic values to a great extent. For example, the concept of personality changed, and human began to be perceived as the most valuable being. The education levels of people raised and their expectations and behavior patterns began to change. The creative aspect of human was discovered, and enterprises began to take care of ensuring people to benefit from this human nature. In particular, human capital representing the creative power of hu-

man became the most important production factor. Enterprises began to be evaluated depending on their human capitals. These changes caused the organizational understanding in enterprises to undergo a change.

AN OVERVIEW OF VIRTUAL ORGANIZATION

Organization is a social being, which has a joint work order intended for specific goals, and which is in connection with its surroundings. In today's world, in which new information technologies gain speed, there are a wide variety of emerging organizational structures.

Certain organizational structures of post-modern organizations developed to adapt to globalization can be classified in thirteen groups as; flexible organizations, aggregated organizations, network organizations, organizational structures getting smaller, hybrid organizations, virtual organizations, joint venture models, learning organizations, plain organizations, organizations benefiting from external sources, organizations that adopted the approach of the core skills, self-governing organizations that adopted the approach of self-administered team, and organizations that adopted the approach of total quality management (Kanbur, 2008). Among these types of organizations, especially virtual organizations come

into prominence, with the development of Internet technology.

Virtual organization is an organization with a geographically dispersed form, members of which are related to each other with long-term common interest targets, which keep each other informed about their works and coordinate each other by means of communications technologies. Contribution of each participant organization to the field where it is the most powerful, i.e. with its own basis skill, constitutes the basis of a virtual organization. In this kind of structure based on a sort of partnership federation, organizations cooperate in order to commercialize their existing skills and to follow up a common purpose (Simsek, 2002). At this point, the fact that especially communication technologies have a vital importance for virtual organizations emerges as a result. Because any problem that may arise from these technologies can be large or small, but in any case, it would directly affect the organization's business processes.

"Virtual Organizations" can also be defined as enterprises in different geographic regions tied together with the help of communication technology, for the purpose of production of certain products, which became in accord with each other, and works as though there is only one enterprise (Yüksel & Murat, 2001:113). Virtual organizations mean that organization employees partici-

pate from different geographies in a global environment, with the support of communication technologies.

From another point of view, it is possible to consider virtual organization as a structure, where basic capabilities, resources and customer-market opportunities are brought together (Goldmann, 1995: 202). Virtual organization is an enterprise, club, community, institute, organization or any similar organization, which came into existence completely or partially together with the communication technologies, and which is connected to Internet through cable systems, telephone systems and other similar systems (DeCenzo & Robbins, 1999: 232).

REASONS FOR THE EMERGENCE OF VIRTUAL ORGANIZATIONS

Virtual organization and virtual company that was initially only a vision of the futurists intended for the future became a necessity at the present time. The factors led to this necessity can be listed as follows; (Sarıhan, 1998: 253).

- The rapid development of technology, particularly information technologies.
- The change in the nature of economic relations emerged in consequence of the gained international character of the economy, reduction of the protectionist customs barriers between countries, and

generalization of the economic integration between nations.

- It enables to make employments in the country where the cheapest labor is available, with intent to reduce the cost of production and market penetration, while having designs made in the countries, where highest quality designs are made.
- Very low capital intensity of virtual companies, in comparison with that of other companies
- The risk of loss of economical speed for those who are not fast in production, which emerged in consequence of the fact that the speed factor gained importance in product and service productions as well as in time based competition.
- The necessity to make production for people from different cultures, who have different tastes, with the increasing importance of customer demands in production.

The Industrial Revolution emerged in Europe in 18th and 19th centuries, upon the appearance of the mechanized industry caused by the effect of the new inventions on production. This revolution led to an increase in the capital accumulation in Europe. In the subsequent process, the increased accumulations contributed especially to the technological developments and development

of information technologies, which were at an incredible pace. Boundaries were eliminated upon globalization, and goods or services began to be produced through the collective production and distribution of different cultures from different geographies. The companies making cheaper production came into prominence in a short time, and within this process, the structures providing the fastest, easiest and cheapest coordination gained a special place in the market. The demand for these structures increased dramatically.

TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF VIRTUAL ORGANIZATIONS

Virtual organizations can be classified in two types, based on the meaning of the term ‘virtual’ in the literature (Bultje & Wijk, 1998).

1 Balanced virtual organizations: Virtual organizations, in which cooperation between organizations has more or less permanent feature, and risk and ownership are distributed to enterprises are called “balanced virtual organizations” (Palmer &

Speier, 1997). Enterprises coming together to ensure critical inputs with desired quality to be obtained in desired time, in a balanced organizational structure, work in the coordination realized by the leader enterprise.

2 Dynamic virtual organizations: Although in dynamic virtual organizations the network mostly can obtain a permanent feature, a “temporary cooperation” relation is in question, within the framework of shared leadership. In a dynamic network, independent enterprises, each specialized in a particular topic, share their knowledge and skills in order to meet a temporary demand of a customer, in line with its own targets and interests, and to penetrate market by developing a product/service. Relations between companies in a dynamic network are established in accordance with market mechanism, not a central plan and coordination, and they are based on opportunism rather than a long-term trust. In a dynamic structure, partners in the network work under the coordination of an organizer enterprise (Palmer & Speier, 1997).

Figure 1 Differences Between Virtual Organization Types

	Balanced Virtual Organizations	Dynamic Virtual Organizations
Cooperation Period	Permanent	Temporary
Limitations	Clearly Defined	Uncertain / Variable
Reliance on opportunities	No	Yes
Use of Information and Communications Technologies	Shared infrastructure (hardware for the group, WANs, remote)	Marketing and distribution channel, reconstruction of physical infrastructure (Web, Intranet)
Principal Partners	Known	Unknown
Structure	There exists a leading enterprise	There exists an organizer enterprise (broker); leadership is shared
Logic of Work	A leading enterprise establishes market-based relations with different organizations	Organizations, each of which is independent, come together to create the specific values, by means of permanent or temporary relations.
Relations between Enterprises	Chain of command, central plan and coordination of the leading enterprise	Coordination of the organizer enterprise, depending on the market mechanism
Membership	Typically smaller, but adjustable	Typically bigger
Mission	All functions and the full functionality, as an active organization	Acceptance of many functions by different enterprises, in order to meet a market opportunity

Source (Bultje & Wijk,1998)

According to the table above, cooperation continues uninterruptedly in Balanced Virtual Organizations. Organization's boundaries are clearly defined. Continuous change according to opportunities or disabling the organization is out of question. Use of in-

formation and communication technologies is seen to be highly intensive. Leader enterprise's structure and the working principle in conformity with that structure is in the foreground. Chain of command is dominant, while memberships are smaller. In Dynamic

Virtual Organizations, cooperation is temporary. There is an uncertainty for the organization. ‘What and when will occur’ is not known exactly. Marketing and distribution channel as well as re-establishment of physical infrastructure are important in terms of using information and communication technologies, while the principal partners are not known, and partners are replaced from time to time. Leadership is share in organization, and completely independent organizations come together to create specific values by means of permanent or temporary relations. Membership is typically larger and many functions are undertaken by different enterprises, in order to meet a market opportunity.

Virtual organizations engaged in electronic commerce can be classified as follows, (Ölçer, 2007).

- *Virtual company*: It is a temporary network of independent companies linked each other through their knowledge and technologies, which share their costs and capabilities in order to reach the market.
- *Web-based organizations*: They are organizations that provide information on the web about the products they sell to consumer groups, and make their sales through the Internet.

- *Strategic networks*: They are networks established by enterprises, in order to make strategic cooperation with intent to evaluate market opportunities and meet customer expectations.
- *Virtual teams*; They are groups formed to conclude a project in cooperation, and they are mostly based on electronic techniques, regardless of whether their members are in different geographic regions, time periods and organizations (Hagen, 1999: 90).

The main characteristics of virtual organizations can be summarized as follows (Kanbur, 2008:394).

- Virtual organizations are organizations with high ability to meet customer demands.
- Virtual organizations have high ability to the ability to adapt to changing conditions.
- There exists mutual bond of trust between enterprises in a virtual network.
- Face to face relationships of virtual organizations decreased due to modern communication technologies.
- Virtual organizations adopted the principle of co-manipulating outside sources, instead of doing all the work themselves.
- Knowledge and expertise constitutes the

basis of a virtual organization.

Akkavuk listed characteristics of virtual organizations, which are a different structure, as opportunism, perfection, technology, unlimitedness, trust, human-human relation through machine instead of human-machine relationship, information flow different from the hierarchies, having a decentralized management approach, and being a floating structure (Akkavuk, 1997:31-38).

Virtual organizations are similar to network organizations, at first glance. Therefore, the differences between both types of organizations are as follows (Kanbur, 2008:395).

- Virtual organizations are actually a special form of network organizations.
- Network organizations can be both permanent and temporary. However, most of virtual organizations have a temporary organizational structure.
- In network organizations, there is only one leading enterprise, while leadership varies in virtual organizations, from project to project, depending on the purpose.
- In network organizations, the process of being divided and added occurs on the basis of the unit. In virtual organizations, this can be reduced to an individual basis.

An organization has to pass the following stages, in order to become a virtual organization (Koçel, 2010:364).

- All works must be done with computers and with the aid of computers.
- There is no need to establish computer network in organization.
- Organization should be connected to the Internet network.
- Determination of the organization's basic skills is a necessity.
- Employees should be knowledgeable and sensitive about organization's mission, vision and objectives.
- Strategic business partners should be determined.
- That structure created should be set in motion and operated by means of communication.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF VIRTUAL ORGANIZATIONS

In our age, in which everything is changing at a great pace, perhaps the biggest advantage of virtual organizations is that they have a structure that can respond quickly to these changes. Virtual organizations, which are able to act independently of time and space due to the fact that everything is done with computer and with the aid of comput-

ers, can meet a customer in the shortest time possible. The ability to adapt to changing conditions adds plus value to virtual organization.

Besides, improving productivity, providing competitive advantage, improvement in management style through management and implementation styles suitable for objectives, providing flexibility when workload is intense, ensuring continuity of works during natural disasters, labor strikes and other disruptive events and actions, ensuring reduction in rates of illness and staff absenteeism, improvement in performances of employees, enhancement in employees' morale and providing job satisfaction, decreasing the rate of change in labor force, less training and recruitment expenses as a result of keeping valuable employees in enterprise, savings in office expenses and office related general expenses, adaptation to legal regulations, sensitivity of enterprise to environmental issues etc. are the advantages of a virtual workplace practices, at the organizational level (Akkirman, 2002:64).

The foremost difficulty encountered in virtual organizations is that everything is connected to a computer and internet technology because any breakdown that may occur in the Internet and computer technology may cause big problems, and loss of time and money. In addition, virtual organizations are still not known by many people.

Generally, people may tend to stay away from organizations that do virtual business.

Another problem is security that is of a great importance for most people. In virtual organizations, often lack of guarantee of a regular income for the employees is in question. This insecurity may keep many organizations away from virtual organization jobs. If there is not a permanent structure, and if human communication is very limited, it is hard to create a sense of belonging to a virtual team or organization. Naturally, loyalty to organization would not exist. Employee's motivation and desire to take responsibility for company would be lower (Ataman, 2009: 491-492). In addition, it has some disadvantages such as the facts that employees feel lonely since they are away from social relations, employees are afraid if the thought of "out of sight, out of mind" become effective on rewarding and promotions, employees' possible resistance to a new management style, problems that may arise with the selection of virtual employees, employee training, problem of accessing only resources in central office, and the possibility of being a workaholic due to virtual employees' different works and working places (Akkirman, 2002: 67).

COMMUNICATION OF VIRTUAL ORGANIZATION: THE EXAMPLE OF CICEK SEPETİ

The foundation of the firm CicekSepeti.com was begun at first in 2001, with the foundation of the website ciceksiparisi.com by Emre Aydın. The foundation purpose of the company that gained its current form in 2006 as ciceksepeti.com was to fill a gap in the market. The idea of CicekSepeti was born when Emre Aydın's brother wanted to send flowers from the USA to his family. CicekSepeti.com that is today one of the biggest online flower websites of Turkey increased its success rate in a short time. The new target set by the CEO Emre Aydın and his team is to maintain their leadership in the flower sector, and to become the leader of the online gift sector in Turkey as well. The organization has more than 500 thousand customers, and every day hundreds of flowers are sent to each corners of Turkey. Every month, approximately 80 thousand orders are received.

Orders coming to the site via the Internet and call center are transmitted to the distribution point in the related region on an online basis; they are prepared in accordance with their formats in the website, and delivered in the desired period of time. Cicek-Sepeti Gurme that was put into service in

2011 consists of cakes, cookies, bouquets, chocolate and pastry products. The product orders of Gurme are prepared in the workshops in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, and the orders from these cities are delivered from these places.

CicekSepeti.com has more than 160 employees. The employees have at least bachelor degrees, and they are accepted for the work after interviews and eliminations made by the company's human resources. The employees' working hours is between 9:00 am and 18:00 pm. As for the Call Center employees, they are employed in shifts. In special days (Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, New Year's Day, Father's Day, etc.), during which the number of orders increases in the company, personnel with short-term contracts may be added to the team, for supporting the call center employees. The company provides uninterrupted service to its customers 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

The organizational structure of CicekSepeti.com is a corporate structure rather than a flexible structure that is accustomed to be seen in virtual organizations. All the units of the company work under the CEO's direction. The finance department is affiliated to the CFO, and CFO is affiliated to the CEO. The company's headquarter is located at 4th Levent. The company sends flowers to its customers by the agency of its contracted florists (stakeholders). In every city

of Turkey, distribution is provided by its contracted florists. CicekSepeti.com operates the agency of its 150 contracted florist throughout Turkey. As for the gift sector, the company procures its products from the suppliers.

Besides CicekSepeti.com, there are also the brand names Frutation and Magicgift under the under auspices of CicekSepeti.com. It communicates with its suppliers and supplementary firms, which are located in different cities, through the interface. Any of its florists serving out of the city gives information to the system on an online basis, after the sale.

In January 2011, Hummingbird Ventures made an investment in CicekSepeti.com. In December 2011, Amazon.com became the minority shareholder of the company. Amazon.com started its partnership in Turkey and made an investment in the flower sector for the first time.

Within the scope of social responsibility, CicekSepeti.com organized a campaign to raise money for the Turkish Foundation for Children In Need Of Protection–TKMÇV (Koruncuk Foundation). TKMÇV is supported with some part of the income obtained from the sales of the flowers bearing determined code numbers. CicekSepeti.com has strategic partners on the business basis. CicekSepeti.com receives more than

three thousand orders a day. The In-house training is provided depending on demand. When necessary, training can also be provided on the basis of product and business.

The most frequently encountered problem of CicekSepeti.com is related to the deliveries in special days. Since flower is a gift that is not ordered previously and should be delivered in the same day, the intensity in special days may sometimes cause complications. In order to avoid this problem, the number of their contracted florists is planned to be increased. One other problem is that the personnel are interfered by security barrier at the entrances of Turkish public buildings, hotels, and plazas. They may encounter the problem of being unable to deliver the flower due to such security barriers.

Cicek Sepeti is in scope of balanced virtual organizations, in the category of web-based organizations. In its website, it gives information about the products that it sells to the consumers groups in Turkey, and sells the products over the Internet.

All works in CicekSepeti.com is done with computers and the aid of computers. The organization is connected to the internet network. The basic ability of the organization is floristry. The organization frequently hold meetings intended for giving information to its employees, about its mission, vi-

sion and goals; and ensures them to become sensitive. The organization has strategic business partners. CicekSepeti.com is an organization engaged in outsourcing. This structure created is set in motion and operated with communication.

In Cicek Sepeti, knowledge and expertise of various organizations are connected to one another, in order to use them for a common purpose. CicekSepeti.com is an organization with a high adaptability skill that can operate in such a way as to meet customer demands in the shortest time possible. CicekSepeti.com is an organization with a high responsiveness skill, i.e. an organization that can reply its customers about their demands in a short time. It guarantees that any mails from customers are replied within 5 minutes. As other virtual organizations, CicekSepeti.com's blind side is any problem that may arise from the communication technology.

The success of a virtual organization depends on a high degree of confidence (trust) between the units in the network. In the environments without the element of confidence, it is hard to put forth a high performance. The confidence of CicekSepeti.com's employees in their units creates positive results in the reports of the human resources department. In CicekSepeti.com, there are only the titles expressing the nature of the job (marketing staff, R & D en-

gineer, etc..). CicekSepeti.com combining the sources coming from various companies into a single project and penetrating the market with new products has a considerable advantage of speed. In a virtual workplace, an independent structure in terms of work, place and time is out of question.

In a virtual environment, communication includes mutually exchanging ideas, and accessing, using, distributing, changing and sharing the information and data. In order to provide an effective communication in a virtual environment, a communication arrangement must definitely be designed. An effective communication system can be provided; by ensuring all the virtual employees have the communication technologies used in the virtual team; ensuring everybody working in the virtual environment to be able to communicate with each other, any time and at any place they want; and encouraging the employees to use the communication technologies, to develop and apply certain protocols, and to communicate with each other.

The principles that should be taken into consideration in establishing the virtual communication are given below (Gienier, & Metes, 1995:232-237).

- Determination of how the employees away from one another would be in an

electronic contact, and how such a contact can provide cooperation, and how can it support the management,

- Determination of the cases in which face-to-face meeting should be held,
- Taking care of ensuring that the communication arrangement is established in such a way as to encourage teamwork,
- Selecting the communication technologies to be used, by considering that the communication arrangement would constitute the basis of trust and cooperation,
- Providing the virtual employees with the required training, in order to ensure the selected communication technologies to be used effectively,
- Ensuring the maps, diagrams, and graphs to be utilize as needed.

The features of virtual communication allows for formation of trust between departments or organizations. According as trust is provided, a better communication arrangement would be established, everybody working in the virtual workplace or anybody who makes a contribution would be ensured to be informed of the emerged events, learning would be easier, accessing data and information would be possible, team, organization and changes in the environment would be revealed, synchronous work would be easier, virtual employees

would be enabled to express and tell about themselves, and be easily in contact with each other (Gienier, & Metes, 1995:230). In this context, team work is important in CicekSepeti.com, and there is a structure supporting and encouraging team work as well as a communication form suitable for that structure. There are team leaders and project leaders within the structure of the company.

The general name assigned for all the electronic communication options used in a virtual environment is “groupware”. “Group software” provides communication and collaboration, by integrating software and hardware systems. Today’s most widely used groupware are e-mail, sms, and messenger. Other widely used groupware is computer-supported video conference. Groupware can be divided into two general categories as synchronous and asynchronous software. Synchronous groupware applications enable the virtual employees to interact with each other simultaneously. In asynchronous groupware applications, interaction between virtual employees occurs at different times (Duarte & Snyder, 1999:31). The communication tools such as e-mail, sms, messenger, computer-assisted video-conference are frequently used in CicekSepeti.com. The use of these tools that enables the employees to connect with each other may take shape depending on the needs. And

those who work in the workplace as away from each other are continuously in contact with one another by means of e-mail, phone etc. Every morning a managers meeting is held at CicekSepeti.com's headquarter.

Leaders should enable virtual employees to use commonly used communication tools without difficulty. For this reason, managers should pay attention to ensure that the people who will be employed in virtual workplace programs have sufficient technological knowledge and skills, which should be kept updated by continual training programs.

Establishment of a healthy and regular communication in a virtual workplace depends on establishment of an effective communication between managers and virtual employees, and between virtual employees and those who work at headquarters. For success of virtual workplace programs, managers should regularly communicate with virtual employees, and call them at certain intervals. Communication has a critical importance in virtual business programs. The questions such as "Who communicate with whom for which subject, through which communication method, and how often" should be clearly and unambiguously replied (Chase, 1999:1). Emre Aydın, the company's General Manager, attaches importance to contacting his employees. The employees define him as a modest leader,

who has a high ability to communicate, who can be reached any time, and who can be met also out of the office. Thus, the employees become motivated, and their loyalty to the company increases.

Continual feedbacks given by the managers to the virtual employees, who can meet with the managers face to face limitedly or who cannot at all, are important. Managers should continuously give feedbacks to virtual employees about the works carried out in this regard. Such a feedback can be made by a phone call, e-mail, voice mail, and electronic chat. Thus, a person working in a virtual environment receives regular information about his work, and feels that remaining away from the enterprise does not mean he is forgotten. Feedback is made continuously in CicekSepeti.com. Particularly with e-mail and voice mail service, communication is established between employees and team leaders and managers. In addition, CicekSepeti.com that receives customer's opinions, requests and complaints through the website, telephone or e-mail guarantees the requests to be replied, and comes up with a solution for recommendations or problems as soon as possible.

Intranet is a system that connects only computers, local area networks and wide area networks with each other in a specific organization. On the Intranet, it is possible to operate various accounting, human re-

sources and production automation software; and to carry out some works such as keeping various databases and distributing documents. Intranet is a system providing in-house communication. Extranet is expressed as an external communication. An organization can communicate with its customers, dealers and other organizations that it cooperates with (Güçdemir, 2010:76). CicekSepeti.com uses intranet and extranet. Thus, it can establish both an in-house communication with its employees and external communication with its customers and stakeholders.

One of the tools that allow for communication between the customer and organization is blogs. Blog application began in the United States for the first time. There are blogs in many subjects such as technology, health, music, politics... etc. Since blogs are the platforms, where the target group can freely express their opinions about the companies, they are highly essential.

Blogs are a dialogue tool, most of which enable their readers to send their comments about the opinions. It is important to ensure blogs to be open to dialogue (Güçdemir, 2010:30). CicekSepeti.com prepared a blog page with intent to communicate with its customers. In the page <http://www.cicek-sepeti.com/blog/>, information about discounts to be made in special days as well as news about various subjects (such as

the news of the bridal bouquet.) are given. However, when the page is examined, it is seen that it is not a very active blog, and that the news and comments in it are very old in terms of their dates. Therefore, this company must update its blogs, in order to strengthen its communication with the customers. CicekSepeti.com is also available in social media such as tweeter and facebook. The number of its followers in tweeter is 6113. This number is not high. CicekSepeti.com must accelerate its studies intended for enhancing its social media communication. As a web-based company, it must receive support from professionals for using social media.

As a useful tool of public relations, websites of organizations would be helpful for enhancing the awareness and understanding of the target group about the products and services. More importantly, the effective use of the internet plays an important role for communication management, when considering the potential of web pages for improving mutual communication. However, the use of technology alone does not make contribution to establish and maintain useful communication between organizations and their target groups. The way of using technology with the mutual communication understanding is more important (Park ve Reber, 2008:409). Therefore, the corporate web pages are the platform, whereby the

companies establish direct communication with the target group over the web. For this reason, it is of great importance.

Since CicekSepeti.com is a web based organization, webpage is important for the company. However, as a virtual organization CicekSepeti.com's corporate information is not available on its website. Company's authorities have stated that the company's priority is to serve customers, and since they are not a stock exchange listed company, it is not a necessity to give corporate information. However, since today the expectations of the customers about the company increased, all kinds of information would be required to be available in the webpage, which can express the corporate features of the organization. Thus, the communication established by the organization with the customer would be enhanced.

Stakeholder communication should also be given importance in a virtual organization. In a very short period of time, the Internet became a communication channel serving for all the purposes intended for interacting with stakeholders in a vast field. Organizations began to use the Internet more intensely with each passing day, for some purposes such as for marketing their products customers, doing business with suppliers and brokers, communicating with employees etc. (Merwe, et al 2005:40). CicekSepeti.com maintains the stakeholder communica-

tion with an infrastructure that can ensure it 24 hours a day 7 days a week, at any time and in any environment.

CicekSepeti.com effectively uses all of the online advertising tools. As for offline advertising tools, it prefers brand co-operations. The Company does not prefer radio and TV advertisements too often.

Crisis communication is important in virtual organizations because the problems that may be related to this type of organizations reach people very quickly via the Internet. Therefore, crisis communications must be actualized quickly and decisively.

Organizations also need new crisis communication strategies that they would develop through the Internet for crises period. According to Weick (1995), crises periods are the most difficult periods for organizations. In life cycle of an organization, crisis is considered as only a step, and crisis is not a problem by itself for the organization; and what is important is the organization's response. Organizations and its executives have to take some critical decisions during crisis. However, there are some difficulties that companies have to face under these conditions. These are (Holtz, 1999:199): Excessive pressures, high stress, increase in external examinations, rush hours and the complexity of information. The Internet's role in crisis communication is important.

The Internet is usually used for communication by organizations, while it is used for crisis communication to a lesser extent (Taylor & Perry, 2005:211). A virtual organization should make crisis plans for crisis communications, according to crisis scenarios that may be designed beforehand. A crisis spokesman should be available for crisis communication as well.

CicekSepeti.com has never faced a big crisis. However, a crisis definition should be made in organizations in any case. CicekSepeti.com has not made any the crisis definition. Which department will take care first in case of a crisis has not been determined or a crisis commission has not been established. Regarding this issue, the authorities of the company stated that in case of crisis, the person who is responsible for the unit from where the crisis arises can produce a solution.

Two important obstacles as technological and cultural are encountered in establishment of virtual communication arrangement. Technological obstacles are the obstacles and restrictions in communication and information system, inadequacy of the technological support given for communication technologies, and the inadaptability of the technologies used in the communication arrangement. These difficulties can be overcome by means of multi-media, wireless technology and developed standards (Gienier, & Metes, 1995: 234). Even if the ob-

stacles such as the difficulties and obstacles in accessing the communications and information system, the inadequacy of the technological support given for communication technologies, and the inadaptability of the technologies used in the communication arrangement do not be caused by CicekSepeti.com, the company's works are interrupted in case of a breakdown in TTNNet, since the company works with TTNNet. In addition, studies are carried out from time to time, with intent to minimize technological barriers and strengthen the infrastructure that will perform the virtual communication and coordination.

Nevertheless, managers should recognize these obstacles, take the required measures and minimize them. During technology selection, task and team type, virtual work experiences and skills of virtual employees should be considered. In addition, a continuous technical support service" should be established, and by this means, the virtual employees encountering technical problems should receive the required support without delay (Akkirman, 2002:118).

CONCLUSION

One of the principal postmodern organizational structures developed to adapt to globalization is virtual organization. The new generation information technologies helped

the implementation of flexible organization models, and the number of virtual organizations is increasing with each passing day, upon the generalization of computer technologies in particular. These organizations gained acceleration for some reasons such as rapid development of information technologies, removal of economic borders, and differentiation of customer expectations.

Virtual organizations are organizations with a high ability to meet customer demands, with high ability to adapt to changing conditions, with a bond of trust between them, and with the future of basing on knowledge and expertise. An organization should do its entire works with the aid of computers, in order to be a virtual organization. Organization needs to connect to the Internet network. The basic skill of the organization should be determined and employees should be ensured to be knowledgeable and sensitive with respect to mission, vision and objectives of the organization. In this process, it is important to determine the strategic business partners.

In a period of our age, in which everything is changing rapidly, the certain and maybe the biggest advantage of virtual organizations is their structure that can quickly respond this change. Since all the works are done with computers and the aid of computers, the virtual organizations having the ability of acting independently of space and

time can meet a customer in a short time but problems may arise due to the fact that everything depends on computer and the Internet technology. Because any interruption that may occur in the Internet and computer technology, may led to big problems as well as loss of money and time. Therefore, attention should be paid to this issue.

As for virtual organizational communication, it began to gain more importance with each passing day. Communication in a virtual environment involves mutual exchange of ideas. Accessing, using, distributing, editing and sharing the information and data are the process required to be available in virtual communication. In virtual environment, a communication arrangement should definitely be designed in order to ensure an effective communication. Some communication tools such as e-mail, sms, messenger, and computer aided video conference should be used in this process. In communication of a virtual organization, managers should regularly communicate with employees, and call the virtual employees at certain intervals. They should establish dialogues particularly with e-mail, voice mail, video conference services. Communication with Intranet and Extranet arranges both in-house and external communications.

Tweeter, Facebook and blogs used in social media gain more importance with each passing day, in terms of an organization's con-

nection with a customer. Such environments enable an organization and target group to establish a relation with each other. Corporate web pages are the platforms, where companies communicate directly with the target group on the web. Therefore, the design and its content should be taken care of. In addition, direct communication is established here with the target group.

Stakeholder communications should also be given importance in a virtual organization. Within a very short period of time, the Internet became a communication channel serving for all the purposes intended for interacting with stakeholders in a vast field. Virtual organizations should act with this awareness.

A virtual organization should effectively use advertising tools in media communication, and support social responsibility projects and sponsorships. In virtual organizations, possible crisis scenarios should be developed beforehand for crisis communication, and the required persons should be given tasks. In this study, CicekSepeti.com was investigated in order to examine how the communication of a virtual organization is carried out. CicekSepeti.com is within the scope of balanced organizations, and in the category of web-based organizations.

CicekSepeti.com continuously uses some communication tools such as e-mail, sms, messenger, computer-aided video-conference and so on. A regular communication

takes place between the leader of the virtual organization's structure and the team leaders as well as between the team leaders and the employees. Especially e-mail, voice mail, and video conference services are used for this communication. Communication with Intranet and Extranet arranges both in-house and external communications of CicekSepeti.com.

CicekSepeti.com is not active in social media. The number of those who follow this website through Tweeter, Facebook and blogs is not high. Such environments are very important in terms of establishing communication between a virtual organization and the target group, therefore, studies should be carried out on this subject. The corporate webpage of the organization should be rearranged, the company's information should be updated, and the basic values should be added to these pages. In CicekSepeti.com, all kinds of communication tools are used within the scope of stakeholder communication, and feedback is attached importance.

Although virtual organization has some studies such as effective use of advertising tools in media communication, and supporting social responsibility projects and sponsorships, their number should be increased. Because the projects currently are being carried out are not adequate for such a position, since it is the leader in its sector. Any

study has not been carried out CicekSepeti.com for crisis communication. And this puts forth the possibility of problems that they may encounter in case of any possible crises in the future.

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SANAL ORGANİZASYONLAR VE İLETİŞİMİ

Özet: Modernizmin akılcı, işlevsel yapısından insanlar sıkılınca, farklılaşma arayışları, biraz akıldan uzaklaşma, gerçeklikten uzaklaşma isteği postmodernizm için uygun bir zemin oluşturmuştur. Modernizmin temel ilkelerini sorgulayan gerektiğinde eleştirel bir gözle bakan postmodernizm, her alanda bilinen birçok değeri yıkarak farklı kavramları hayatımıza sokmuştur. Böylece post-modernizm, yeni bir toplumsal ve kültürel oluşum olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu yeni post modernist çağda, bilgi toplumu da kendine daha geniş bir yer edinmiştir. Kitlemel bilgi üretimi ve bu üretimin özellikle bilgisayar teknolojisi ile dağılımı, postmodern çağın göstergeleri arasında yer almaktadır. Yeniçağa göre ortaya çıkan oluşumlar, organizasyon yapılarının da farklılaşmasını sağlamıştır. Yeni kuşak bilgi teknolojileri esnek örgüt modellerinin uygulanmasına yardımcı olmuştur. Küreselleşmeye uyum sağlamak üzere geliştirilmiş post modern organizasyon yapılarının belli başlarından biri de sanal organizasyonlardır. Bu çalışmada literatür tarama yöntemi ile sanal organizasyon yapısının oluşum süreci, ortaya çıkış nedenleri, türleri, özellikleri, sanal organizasyon yapısının avantajları ve dezavantajlarına vb. değinilmiştir. Ayrıca sanal organizasyonun iletişimi nasıl olmalı sorusuna cevap aranmıştır. Bu kapsamda kısa süre önce Amazon ile işbirliğine giren Türk şirketi Çiçek Sepeti com'un iletişimi incelenmiştir. Sanal organizasyon iletişiminde ortaya çıkan sorunlar tespit edilmeye çalışılarak, çözüm önerileri sunulmaya çalışılmıştır. Sanal organizasyon iletişimi ise her geçen gün daha da önem kazanmaya başlamıştır. Sanal ortam içerisinde iletişim karşılıklı fikir alışverişi yapılmasını kapsar. Bilgi ve verilere erişilmesi, kullanılması, dağıtılması, değiştirilmesi, paylaşılmasını da sanal iletişimde olması gereken süreçlerdir. Sanal ortamda etkin iletişimi sağlamak için mutlaka iletişim düzeni dizayn edilmelidir. Bu süreçte e-posta, sms, messenger, bilgisayar destekli video konferansı vb. gibi iletişim araçları kullanılmalıdır. Sanal organizasyon iletişiminde yöneticilerin çalışanlarla düzenli iletişim kurması, sanal çalışanları belirli periyotlarla araması gerekmektedir. Özellikle e-posta, sesli mesaj, video konferans servisiyle diyaloglar kurulmalıdır. Intranet ve ektranet ile iletişim ise hem kurum içi iletişimi hem de kurum dışında gerçekleşen iletişimi düzenlemektedir. Sosyal medyada kullanılan tweeter, facebook ve bloglarda sanal

organizasyonun müşteri ile kurdukları bağlantı açısından her geçen gün daha da önem kazanmaktadır. Bu tür ortamlar sanal organizasyon ve hedef kitle arasında ilişki kurmasını sağlamaktadır. Kurumsal web sayfaları ise şirketlerin web üzerinde hedef kitle ile doğrudan iletişim kurdukları platformdur. Bu yüzden tasarım ve içeriklerine özen gösterilmesi gerekmektedir. Ayrıca hedef kitle ile buradan direkt iletişimde kurulmaktadır. Sanal organizasyonunda paydaş iletişimine de dikkat edilmelidir. Çok kısa sürede, internet çok geniş bir alandaki paydaşlar ile etkileşimde bulunmak için tüm amaçlara hizmet eden bir iletişim mecrası haline gelmiştir. Bu bilinçle sanal organizasyonların hareket etmesi gerekmektedir. Sanal organizasyonun medya iletişiminde reklam araçlarını etkin kullanma, sosyal sorumluluk projelerine ve sponsorluklara destek verme gereklidir. Kriz iletişimi için ise sanal organizasyonlarda daha önceden olası kriz senaryoları geliştirmeli ve gerekli kişiler görevlendirilmelidir. Çiçek Sepeti com, dengeli sanal organizasyonlar kapsamında yer almaktadır ve web tabanlı örgütler kategorisi içindedir. Tüketici gruplarına sattıkları ürünler hakkında web sayfasında bilgi sunarak, satışlarını internet üzerinden yapmaktadır. ÇiçekSepeti.com'da e-posta, sms, messenger, bilgisayar destekli video konferansı vb. gibi iletişim araçları sürekli kullanılmaktadır. Sanal organizasyon yapısının lideri ve takım liderleri ile de çalışanlar arasında düzenli iletişim gerçekleşmektedir. Bu iletişim için ise özellikle e-posta, sesli mesaj, video konferans servisleri kullanılmaktadır. Intranet ve ektranet ile iletişim ise ÇiçekSepeti.com'da hem kurum içi iletişimi hem de kurum dışında gerçekleşen iletişimi düzenlemektedir. ÇiçekSepeti.com'da sosyal medyada etkin değildir. Tweeter, facebook ve bloglarda bu siteyi takip eden kişi sayısı fazla değildir. Bu tür ortamların sanal organizasyon ve hedef kitle arasında iletişim kurması açısından önemi büyük olduğu bu konuda çalışmalar yapılmalıdır. Organizasyonun kurumsal web sayfası ise yeniden düzenlenmeli şirket bilgileri güncellenmeli temel değerler bu sayfalara eklenmelidir. ÇiçekSepeti.com'da paydaş iletişimi içinde her türlü iletişim aracı kullanılmakta ve geri beslemelere önem verilmektedir. Sanal organizasyonun medya iletişiminde reklam araçlarını etkin kullanma, sosyal sorumluluk projelerine ve sponsorluklara destek verme gibi çalışmaları mevcut olsa da sayısının artırılması şarttır. Çünkü kendi sektöründe lider konumda olduğu için şu anda yürütülen projeler bu konuma göre yeterli değildir. Kriz iletişimi için ÇiçekSepeti.com'da her hangi bir çalışma yapılmamıştır. Bu da ileride olası bir

krizle karşılaşılsa sorun yaşayabilecekleri ihtimalini ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Sanal iletişimin önemi kavranarak şirketlerin bu konuda eğitimler vermesi ve çalışmalar yapmasında beklenmektedir. Böylece organizasyonlar daha da başarılı olacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Post modernizm, sanal organizasyon, iletişim, sanal iletişim, web sayfası